

# The Purposes of History?

## Curriculum Studies, Invisible Objects and Twenty-first Century Societies

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IN *DECONSTRUCTING HISTORY*, Alun Munslow (2006, p. 1) articulates what is now commonplace, that “It is generally recognised that written history is contemporary or present orientated to the extent that we historians not only occupy a platform in the here-and-now, but also hold positions on how we see the relationship between the past and its traces, and the manner in which we extract meaning from them. There are many reasons, then, for believing we live in a new intellectual epoch – a so-called postmodern age – and why we must rethink the nature of the historical enterprise to meet the needs of our changed intellectual beliefs and circumstances.” Munslow goes on to posit that contemporary doubts about the nature of history, especially in terms of accuracy of representation and realism, are both part of history’s awkward relation with social sciences and an extension of modernity’s self-reflexivity:

One of the main points about the Age of Enlightenment modernism from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was its self-consciousness in asking questions about how we know what we know. In a peculiar sense, perhaps modernism was always going to end up fundamentally critiquing itself. Maybe postmodernism was the inevitable consequence of modernism?...it is important from the start to recognise that history was always going to be in the forefront of this modernist will to self-criticism. It is as a result of this postmodern condition for knowing that history, as a discipline, has always been particularly susceptible to debates about its nature (Munslow, 2006, p. 2).

Munslow’s observations regarding a new intellectual epoch and the necessity of new enterprises to suit changed beliefs and circumstances captures a widespread sentiment in formal historiography and at the same time reduces the sentiment to the question of how knowledge is gained and represented in narrative form. Over the last century, studies of curriculum in Anglophone-dominant sites of production have been similarly and significantly dedicated to the

question of knowledge and the different value-systems that generate different knowledges. Such studies have helped move the conceptual lens away from claims to objectivity, neutrality, and some universalisms. They have less frequently, however, moved beyond planetary geopolitically-based thinking, a place-knowledge reduction, or questioned how epistemological debates have been tied to human-centric imperatives in ways that “protect and isolate their primary categories from external accountability” (Carrette, 2007, p. viii).

This paper attempts one such disruption by subjecting some primary categories to an interrogation that disallows their historico-philosophical protection and isolation. Taking Munslow’s insights regarding the importance of 19<sup>th</sup> century debates as significant, as well as the tension between social science and historiography, the paper moves through several layers that highlight the lack of settlement regarding the endowment of objects for study with the status of the scientific. It ultimately examines the impact upon curriculum history’s lines of sight and foci of the positing and retracting of doubt in regard to objects’ legitimacy. It traces relations within and between less-visited texts on education to unpack the possibilities and limits for object-formation, and considers the implication of uneven and relatively different logics formed through the social sciences and education-related fields on the conceptualization of reality and what it means to conduct an analysis. Whether the nature of history and conceptions of knowledge are, or ought to be, central considerations in curriculum studies *and* reducible to purposes or elevated as “present orientated,” thus operates as a less effective incitement to discourse than disrupting the protection and isolation of primary categories whose troubling is overdue but not without precedent – hence the question mark in the title and the redirection that follows.

The first section of the paper offers four juxtapositions that generate a bricolage of conceptions of history and/or a past drawn from popular culture, academic publications, and policies. This bricolage provides a horizon against which the uniqueness of curriculum history as practiced in Anglophone-dominant sites of production might be located (typically, for instance, Division B of AERA – the American Educational Research Association) relative to the history and historiography of education (typically Division F of AERA). Second, in drawing upon some thematics that mark curriculum history’s institutional and academic uniqueness, the paper traces how some things have been included within its purview as objects of study and not others. The focus here is the making of things deemed invisible into scientific objects (or not) and the specific site of analysis is the work of William James (1842-1910) at the turn of the twentieth century. James studied multiple disciplines and an enormous array of topics. Two topics that he studied for over twenty-five years were child mind and the ghost, or more accurately, spirit-return. Both objects for study could not be held in the hand or photographed at the time. Contrasting the invisibility attributed to child mind and the ghost, the former of which becomes scientized and legitimated for further study across the twentieth century, opens key points for reconsideration regarding conditions of proof, validation criteria, and subject matters. These points, in turn, directly pertain to the theme of Disrupting History (capital “H”): If disciplines require compartmentalization and boundaries and if written History in the Academy in a variety of geopolitical locales must be predicated on an empirical condition of proof which requires an ocular portal and consensus around what is seen, how is it that some objects described as invisible become legitimated as real and continuously operationalized and not others, and why? The third and final section of the paper examines what the political implications for curriculum history in Disrupting mode might offer to twenty-first century curriculum studies amid societies in mass transformation. In generating a series of future dialogic pathways rather than a prescribed set of checklist solutions, such discussion points open onto competing

conceptualizations of reality, challenging some of the foreclosures within standard or well-rehearsed notions of progressive politics and education.

### **The Broth of Conceptions of History and/or A Past**

If a bubbling cauldron is what competing conceptions of history and/or a past conjures up, such a metaphor also requires further mixing and its own undoing. This would be a metaphor mixing that includes and shifts the image from boiling fluids contained in the same pot in the kitchen to utensils and tools that do not lie within any singular toolbox, tools that remain available to remake the elements attributed to a past into something more than elemental, without being positioned a priori as utilitarian.

#### **Juxtaposition 1: Retaining, Reworking, or Banishing the Past?**

In 2011, UNESCO announced it was moving into the second phase of the *General History of Africa Project*. The main preoccupation of the first phase was articulated as providing a culturally relevant view of African history based on an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on a history of ideas and civilizations, societies and institutions in order to correct previous misrepresentation and stereotypes. The rationale for the first phase was especially concerned with challenging the conventional reading of history:

Following their decolonization, the African countries expressed a strong desire to understand their past and build knowledge of their common heritage. Through history, they hoped to combat certain preconceptions about African societies, enhance their cultural heritage and reinforce their common aspiration to achieve African unity. To this end, it was felt that the conventional reading of history should be challenged in order to improve understanding of the continent's past, its cultural diversity and its contribution to the general progress of humanity. Accordingly, at its 13th session (1964), the General Conference of UNESCO invited the Director-General to prepare a *General History of Africa (GHA)*. This monumental work, completed in 1999, was published in eight volumes, with a main edition in English, French and Arabic (UNESCO, 2011, p. 1).

The second phase, titled *Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa Project*, was designed to take the content from the General History into school curricula, giving history education a specific purpose: "As history education helps to shape peoples' identities and to improve understanding not only of cultural diversity, but also of the values and heritage shared by all regions of the African continent, UNESCO has decided, in cooperation with the African Union, to start the second phase of the General History of Africa in order to promote history education from an African cultural standpoint" (UNESCO, 2011, p. 2).

In reading through the rationale and complexities entailed in both projects one is not only struck by the language of them, their and they in reference to nations, peoples, and independent cultures of Africa, but also the confidence of the link presumed between history, a corrective, and a broader subjectivity-shaping purpose.

The naturalized association between history, a corrective, and subjectivity-shaping stands in quite stark contradistinction to the opening page of one of the best-selling *New York Times* books, Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*. In the introduction and before his appearance on the *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Tolle posits quite simply: "I have little use for the past and rarely think of it." Throughout, Tolle seems to be suggesting that banishing a conception of the past is necessary to move into "non"-egological, "non"-identitarian conceptions of consciousness that deploy neither past nor future as analytical dependencies or diversions that obscure the realizations available in the Now.

What this contradistinction exposes is the fragility of one of the dominant assumptions embedded in mainstream History, which is that we *must* narrate a past tense, or have an historical consciousness, in order to know who we are. Even if there is convergence on that point in mainstream History and historiography (and arguably there is not), conceptions of a past, as well as allied conceptions such as memory and time are not agreed upon, generating vastly different imaginaries at other levels.

### **Juxtaposition 2: Up the Great Chain of Being, or Down?**

Charles Darwin especially helped to redefine what the term past meant, for which tremendous use has now been found in multiple directions. In discussing plants and animals in *The Origin of Species'* chapter one, titled "Variation Under Domestication," Darwin argued

Let us now briefly consider the steps by which domestic races have been produced, either from one or from several allied species.... We cannot suppose that all the breeds were suddenly produced as perfect and as useful as we now see them; indeed, in several cases, we know that this has not been their history. The key is man's power of accumulative selection: nature gives successive variations; man adds them up in certain directions useful to him. In this sense he may be said to make for himself useful breeds (Darwin, 1859/2009, p. 34).

Darwin seems here to be suggesting that the major reason for differences in appearances of plants and animals is Man's interference, and posits further in the passage that this has often been to the detriment of the plant or animal. Darwin's theories have, of course, been controversial ever since, and not the least in struggles for control of the biology curriculum in the United States. Such struggles have ended up in repeated juridical actions, from the Scopes "Monkey Trial" of the 1920s to contemporary efforts in a variety of school districts in which the counter-discourse has shifted between different strategies. The shift has been from defining all theories as religions (e.g., Darwinian theories as part of a religion called Secular Humanism and creationism as part of a religion called Christianity) to labeling all theories as sciences (e.g., intelligent design theory and evolutionary theory as two different versions of science) (Baker, 1999).

In the twenty-first century, Darwinian theories came under controversy from a different direction, however, after the appearance of Michael Cremo on The History Channel on cable television. Following his co-authored (with R. L. Thompson) *New York Times'* best-seller,

*Forbidden Archaeology: The Hidden History of the Human Race*, Cremona published *Human Devolution: A Vedic Alternative to Darwin's Theory*. In the Introduction, Cremona posits that:

We do not evolve up from matter; rather we devolve or come down from, the level of pure consciousness. Originally, we are pure units of consciousness existing in harmonious connection with the supreme conscious being, we descend to regions of the cosmos dominated by the subtle and gross material energies, mind and matter. Forgetful of our original position, we attempt to dominate and enjoy the subtle and gross material energies. For this purpose, we are provided with bodies which are made of the subtle and gross material energies. These bodies are vehicles for conscious selves (Cremona, 2003, p. 32).

Rather than narrating human existence as a sequenced outcome of plant-animal-human evolution, then, Cremona's supposition is that matter comes initially from pure consciousness which then inhabits our bodies as physical envelopes for the conscious self. This both re-dates human presence on earth and redefines the notion of origin away from a Christian God or its scientized substitutes and analogs.

### **Juxtaposition 3: Is Self Necessary? Is Identity Necessary? And is Community Necessary for Self, Identity, or Action?**

If for Darwin and for Cremona there is a discrete self, albeit of very different fabric and formed through completely different audit trails that drastically redefine the meaning of a body, there is no such thing elsewhere. In the historiography of philosophy, for instance, scholars have questioned whether there is such a thing as self and personal identity attached to it. For James Giles, no such thing as personal identity can be assumed and this puts in jeopardy psychologized notions of a discrete or coherent individual self. In "The no-self theory: Hume, Buddhism, and Personal Identity," Giles (1993) argues that

The problem of personal identity is often said to be one of accounting for what it is that gives persons their identity over time. However, once the problem has been construed in these terms, it is plain that too much has already been assumed. For what has been assumed is just that persons do have an identity. To the philosophers who approach the problem with this supposition already accepted, the possibility that there may be no such thing as personal identity is scarcely conceived. As a result, the more fundamental question - whether or not personal identity exists in the first place - remains unasked. Consequently, the no-self theory, that is, the rejection of the notion of personal identity altogether, is never fully considered. One of the reasons for the ignoring of the no-self theory seems to be the failure of many philosophers to distinguish between reductionism and the no-self view (Giles, 1993, p. 175).

For Giles, then, the middle way offered differently via the work of David Hume and Buddhist epistemologies becomes obscured by the language of pragmatism which maintains assumptions

of personal identity, and by the fear of nihilism, relativism, and extreme individualism that misunderstandings of the no-self theory have generated.

For Susan A. Miller (2008) in “Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography,” however, there is such a thing as identity, but it is exo-personal and not exclusively human. Miller suggests that the Indigenous paradigm in historiography, unlike the American paradigm, generates an identity that is built within a specific worldview that does not match that of the various trans-Atlantic Enlightenments. For Miller, Indigenousness “does not connote merely the earliest occupation of a region. Rather, it is a pattern of characteristics shared by polities that have not adopted the nation-state type of organization.” The keystone that Miller draws out across Indigenous societies and that cements the pattern is a concept of people as communities within a living (animate) and sacred cosmos. Attributing animation is not dependent on the presence of carbon, on whether something is seen as moving or not, or whether labeled as rock, as cloud, or as wood. All things have animation and are therefore sacred in different ways. This has ramifications for how one could or would write History in the Academy:

Because the concept of a living cosmos does not fit comfortably into the American history paradigm, Indigenous scholars who work within the discipline must choose whether to acknowledge it in their work. Most have honored non-Indigenous beliefs in inanimacy by rejecting the notion of a living cosmos or avoiding mention of it in scholarly contexts. Scholarship derives, after all, from a culture that was burning people at the stake for this kind of speech not so very long ago, and whose deterrents are still powerful in the form of professional and economic marginalization (Miller, 2008, p. ).

The contrast between Giles’ questioning of personal identity and Miller’s relocation of identity as exo-personal and sacredly ensconced within an animate cosmos points to the extent of disagreement regarding the nature of Being, of existence, of what is living or active, and what, if anything, gets to count as a “structure of subjectivity.” Such disagreement over origin narratives in multicultural societies and their eventual elision as personal choice, private, religious, irrational, or irresolvable – all the usual negative epithets - has generated a pragmatic, instrumentalist, and technologist turn, especially in social scientific work in the United States. This becomes evident in the following juxtaposition that pivots on the role of technology in causality and the particular level at which one should focus an analysis.

#### **Juxtaposition 4: Technology to the Rescue, Or Rescued from Technology?**

Debates in a new area called the history of postcolonial techno-science are a prime example of the pragmatic and instrumental turn, as Warwick Anderson’s work underscores. Anderson argues, for instance, via Stacy Leigh Pigg:

The postcolonial study of science and technology suggests a means of writing a “history of the present”, of coming to terms with the turbulence and uncertainty of contemporary global flows of knowledge and practice. As Stacy Leigh Pigg puts it,



“we now need to find out more about how science and technology travel, not whether they belong to one culture or another” (Anderson, 2002, p. 644).

In contrast, a quip I came across on the internet “Luddite invents machine to destroy technology quicker”<sup>1</sup> underscores a quite different orientation to technology in an historical analysis. The invention of a machine to destroy technology quicker would mean that there is little left to trace in “empirical” terms given that so much “data” and what gets to count as historical documentation is today electronically stored.

### **Bubbling Over, Pouring Down the Side: Recent Shifts in Curriculum Historical Research**

The broth and bricolage of conceptions of history and/or a past capture only part of the range of available orientations: From purposeful to purposeless, from devolution to evolution, from know Thyself to there is no discrete self, and from owner-origins to system operations. Even so, the juxtapositions not only help to generate a horizon that demonstrates the blur between academic and popular conceptions but also enable us to think about the location of curriculum history relative to such a horizon and relative to the history and historiography of education. Curriculum history’s institutional location as part of curriculum studies has afforded it the possibility of having one foot squarely in the camp of mainstream historiography and one much larger foot outside of it, attending to multiple stakeholders that mark education’s dynamism as a field. Curriculum history scholarship has been attuned to the diversity and irreconcilability of more popular cultural conceptions of a past, and also demonstrated intimate familiarity with academic debates in philosophy, with shifts, ruptures, and nuances in theoretical frameworks that cross the humanities and social sciences, with comparative cosmology, and with cultural studies. This has enabled the field of curriculum history to attend to what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) calls the necessary and the inadequate starting points of analysis, to attend to what gets lost in translation within and between, to that which falls away as a possibility and not just that which has endured, in sum, to what Sara Suleri (1989, p. 1) eloquently summarizes as not being naïve in regard to “fantasies that result in an abundance of resolution.”

Some recent shifts in curriculum historical scholarship which demonstrate these somewhat different intellectual commitments relative to history and historiography of education include:

- From what and whose knowledge is of most worth to what counts as knowledge in the first place
- From subject matter to constitution of “the subject” to post-subject
- From schools, classrooms, and indoor life to text outside of buildings and writing
- From sovereign power to power-as-effects;
- From struggle-submission framework to traveling discourses
- From identity politics to questioning existence of identity and the “Westernness” of the political
- From Occidental thought as arbiter to Occidental concepts as both necessary and inadequate
- From anglophone dominant to im/possibility of translation
- From nationalism-humanism couplet to decoupling of citizenship from nationalism
- From citizen to consumer, cosmopolitan, globalist

•From human-centric to post-human, critical animal studies, digital humanities, visual culture theory, eco-philosophy, comparative cosmology, etc

The following sections of this paper take up some of the thematic and shifts available today, and do so with cognizance of recent exchanges in Division B's main volunteer publication, the newsletter. In the April 2012 newsletter, Donald Blumenfield-Jones' question of whether new scholarship in curriculum studies is in a sense throwing the baby out with the bathwater and Carl Grant's recent provocation in the same regarding what is and where is the curriculum in curriculum studies and in federal policy-making point us toward a rethinking of what has come to count as curriculum, as curriculum studies, and thus as pertaining to curriculum's histories and/or conceptions of a past.

### **William James and Objects for Study: Between the Child's Mind and the Ghost**

It is at this juncture that I want to turn to a series of texts that are rarely studied and that through their dialogue with each other generate some productive insights into the complexities embodied in what has come to fall within and outside of curriculum history's purview. The curriculum that I exam here is the series of assumptions made about what it means to be a human, to be taught as a child, and to function as the teacher.

To that end, I turn to the work of William James because it allows us to interrogate how some things become matters of concern and objects for study and others occluded. This includes James' work itself – even though he had a high profile Professorship at Harvard University and even though his *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (original punctuation) was reprinted over 20 times up until 1930,<sup>2</sup> it has been relatively less studied in both history of education and curriculum history. It has also been (mis)positioned within Jamesian studies as simply a précis of the two-volume *The Principles of Psychology* (James, 1890) published nineteen years earlier to international acclaim.<sup>3</sup>

James' less-visited texts are valuable for further reasons. Not only does he write and lecture across disciplines now called psychology, education, theology, philosophy, medicine, psychical science/parapsychology, psychoanalytics, and physiology, which would by today's standard position him as inter- or multidisciplinary, but reapproaching Jamesian texts from the vantage points of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century makes “new” and “old” collide, illuminating how a 20th century “Western” epistemo-moral compass is formed and suggesting implications for 21<sup>st</sup> century assumptions and approaches, including those prevalent within curriculum studies.

In addition, Jamesian texts enable us to rethink how studies of science and technology were inseparable from processes of nation- and empire-building. The weavings within them enable us to see how the scientization of particular objects could not be divorced from the formation of “superiority effects” at multiple levels beyond them. For the most part, though, the focus in social studies of science and technology which examines how things become scientized as objects has been on what MacLeod (2000, p. 1) calls “conquest, trade, and settlement” and on big things that move – war, machinery, technology, money - while the disciplinary focus has been mostly on geophysics, meteorology, astronomy, and statistics and on nations in Europe. The social, natural history, and life sciences have been relatively neglected in terms of unpacking the implications of the formation of some things and not others as scientific objects. Jamesian texts offer, then, a broader yet particular window onto the formation and separation of social



sciences and allow us to question through, with, and beyond his writings certain dependencies of discourse that have coagulated. This includes especially how belief in the existence and characteristic of *mind* becomes and continues to be an administrative platform, plane of composition, and site of dis/qualification in the face of historical insults and injuries that have divided populations in the United States.

James' elaboration of what could count as mind is thus significant for reasons that include and exceed the "internal" dynamics of how relationships between concepts are formed within his texts. I want to look at James' elaboration of what could count as a "best guide" that psychology (as science in James) could provide to teachers via an understanding of how some invisible things get made into scientific objects and not others. Psychology could only suggest some things to education, then, for James. James was explicit that psychology as a science could only ever be a guide to education as an art. Psychology could never account fully for what occurs in the classroom, but this fairly typical and repetitive division has ramification beyond the foundation of disciplines and their differential pathways to truth-production and practice.

James was working amidst a multitude of debates over what belonged to what disciplines, what science was, what rationality was, and more. His work is allied, then, to all four of the juxtapositions above: he participated in the rethinking of history, such as wrestling with how we tell the story of the past and its presumed relation to mind-shaping; he overtly questioned the implications of Darwinian theories of evolution for other Protestant creation narratives; he studied and engaged in debates over the nature of self; and he participated in the generation and trial of new technologies, such as transcripts, planchettes for automatic writing, and laboratory dissections.

In addition, Jamesian texts honor a wide range of possibilities for what could count as an object and what as a *scientific* object. In *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, for instance, Lorraine Daston notes how the enduring Aristotelian belief that insists that "science ought to be about regularities – be they qualitative or quantitative, manifest to the senses or hidden beneath appearances, causal or statistical, taken from commonplace experience or created by specialized instruments in laboratories – has persisted long after the demise of Aristotelianism. Yet regularity alone seldom suffices to pick out scientific objects from the ordinary objects of quotidian experience...." (Daston, 2000, p. 17). As Daston further notes, sixteenth and seventeenth century studies, such as those of Francis Bacon, focused on anomalies, yet still claimed to be science (Daston, 2000, p. 18). Jamesian texts highlight the full range of these possibilities: Between the child's mind and the ghost, the presumed regular and the presumed anomalous, the presumably extant and the presumably questionable, the stakes are raised and the questions multiply. If both "objects"-in-the-making were considered literally invisible to the naked eye, unable to be held in the hand or photographed, then the processes that "highlight some phenomena and occlude others" (Daston, 2000, p. 16) require deeper investigation.<sup>4</sup>

### **Child Mind as Scientific Object**

Boyd Bode (1914) had dexterously opened this area of investigation up in 1914, at least as it pertained to assumptions about what today would be called curriculum and curriculum studies. He questioned the role of educational objectives in a way that pointed to debates over the broader purposes of education and the ensuing ontological assumptions that grounded

epistemological claims. Bode exclaimed quite simply in that piece “What is mind, anyway!”, asking if education was simply about the training of mind and body?

For James, however, as for many of his contemporaries mind exists. The first point to note here, then, is how provincial that assumption is. Only some cultures have developed a conception and a word for mind, for body, and for the category we call the human. So if I took that concept called mind away from you and asked you “What is it that you are seeing when you walk into a classroom or doing when you design a curriculum if the concept of mind isn’t available to you as an explanatory device? No mind, no mind enlargement, no mind building, nothing being stored in a mind, no mind as curriculum’s target. What would you say is going on, then, in the classroom?”

The vacuum that arises indicates the depth and intensity of dependencies of discourse. In *Talks to Teachers* those dependencies link the presumption of mind’s existence to debates over where “it” is, how it operates, and what teachers might do to govern it in their pupils.

First and most important is that education in the text is placed within a national frame and from there the processes of associationist psychology are delineated for teachers’ benefits. James is not typically identified as an associationist and depicts such theories of psychology as exactly that – theories. Despite his prior distancing of such theories in *Principles* he does select them as the most appropriate guide for teachers that psychology could provide and despite his caution, caveats, and distancing at the outset of *Talks*, the language shifts later in the text to one of declaring *facts* as he moves into more specific delineation of associationist theory.

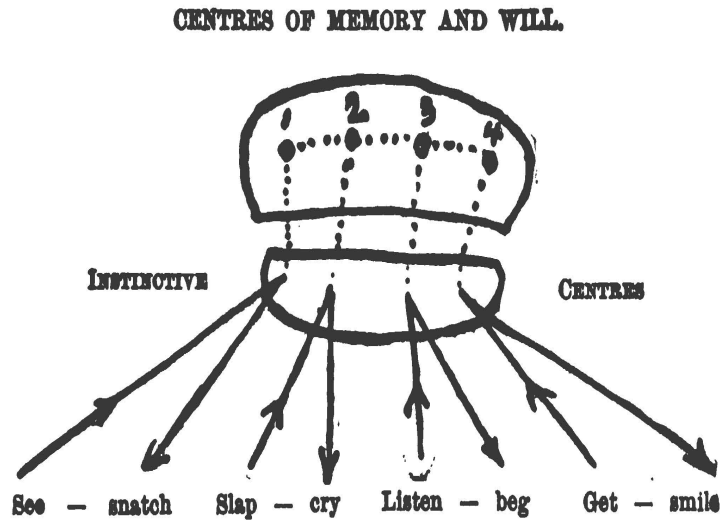
James does not overtly disaggregate which children’s minds he is discussing in the opening of *Talks* via overt statements regarding racialization or sexualization but he is clear that he is not discussing those he calls “feeble intellects.” This does not mean that there are not further inherent spatializations within and beyond the text that Paul Gilroy (2001) might call *raciology* or Toni Morrison (1992) might refer to as *playing in the dark* or Judith Butler (1993) as *performativity*. I will return to this in the later section of this paper, too, when discussing the ghost because it can be a site of potential defensiveness among protectionist philosophy when James (or his intellectual kin like Dewey) are under discussion in proximity to the politically correct terminology of the time that they used – terms such as feeble intellects, race, savage, Oriental, Western, and so forth.

The primary consideration within the version of associationism that James presents is consciousness. James uses the concept of consciousness to describe mind in fluid terms.

You remember that consciousness is an ever-flowing stream of objects, feelings, and impulsive tendencies. We saw already that its phases or pulses are like so many fields of waves, each field or wave having usually its central point of liveliest attention, in the shape of the most prominent object in our thought, while all around this lies a margin of other objects more dimly realized, together with the margin of emotional and active tendencies which the whole entails. Describing mind thus in fluid terms, we cling as close as possible to nature. At first sight, it might seem as if, in the fluidity of these successive waves, everything is determinate. But inspection shows that each wave has a constitution which can be to some degree explained by the constitution of the waves just passed away. And this relation of the wave to its predecessors is expressed by the two fundamental ‘laws of association,’ so-called, of which the first is named the Law of Contiguity, the second that of Similarity (James, 1899/1915, pp. 79-80).

Here, there are streams or waves and key is that the wave that just passed away is assumed to have a relation to the new wave via two central so-called laws - contiguity and similarity. Sequencing, which one has to understand as a politically charged assumption about the nature of relations and not a “natural” event, is built in, insofar as what happens before is considered inherently related in some way to what comes immediately after. Like modernist narratives in History, the past cannot be decoupled from a present. The coupling and historicity presumed to constitute mind’s mechanical-like operation is important in terms of what it makes possible. The purpose for knowing the laws of association is the ability of the teacher to substitute acquired habits in the child for native instincts which James considers inborn, both necessary to maturation and also dangerous if left unabated.

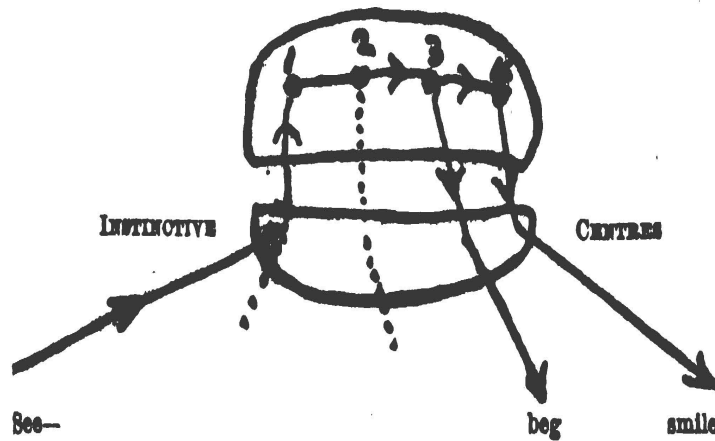
One of the native instincts is ownership and James explains how the substitution and inhibition process might be symbolically represented.



**FIGURE 1. THE BRAIN-PROCESSES BEFORE EDUCATION.**

The child wants the toy and snatches for it. They have not learned to go thru the authority of the teacher or parent. Too many interactions ensue, and I would suggest here that authority is continuously exposed and has to be re-asserted in those interactions.

**CENTRES OF MEMORY AND WILL.**



**FIGURE 2. THE BRAIN-PROCESS AFTER EDUCATION.**

The after shot indicates the automation – linked to theories of memory and the unconscious - that has successfully been achieved. James encouraged teachers to think of their pupils as little associating machines and argued that all great governors had come to so think of their charges.

Crucially, the inscription of child and of teacher is tied to the legibility of motions in the body:

The fact is that there is no sort of consciousness whatever, be it sensation, feeling, or idea, which does not directly and of itself tend to discharge into some motor effect. The motor effect need not always be an outward stroke of behavior. It may be only an alteration of the heart-beats or breathing, or a modification of the distribution of blood, such as blushing or pale, tears etc. But in any case it is there in some shape when any consciousness is there; and a belief as fundamental as any in modern psychology is the belief at last attained that conscious processes of any sort, conscious processes merely as such, *must* pass over into motion, open or concealed (original emphasis) (James, 1899/1915, pp. 170-1).

Motion and body become central to the verification process here – consciousness *must* pass over into motions according to James, so the relation between an “inner state” and an “outer index” structures the domain of the teacher and produces the limits of their professional responsibility, i.e., managing their charges based on such a guide.

At the end of the lectures on associationism targeting primarily teacher education the volumes includes other lectures to students on some of life’s ideals, which are quite different in aim and tone. In one of them James argues:

Tolstoi’s philosophy, deeply enlightening though it certainly is, remains a false abstraction. It savors too much of that Oriental pessimism and nihilism of his, which declares the whole phenomenal world and its facts and their distinctions to be a cunning fraud. A mere fraud is just what our Western common sense will

never believe the phenomenal world to be. It admits fully that the inner joys and virtues are the essential part of life's business, but it is sure some positive part is also played by the adjuncts of the show. If it is idiotic in romanticism to recognize the heroic only when I see it labelled [*sic*] and dressed-up in books, it is really just as idiotic to see it only in the dirty boots and sweaty shirt of some one in the fields. It is with us really under every disguise...But, instinctively, we make a combination of two things in judging the total significance of a human being. We feel it be some sort of a product (if such a product could be calculated) of his inner virtue and his outer place, - neither singly taken, but both conjoined. If the outer differences had no meaning for life, why indeed should all this immense variety of them exist? They *must* be significant elements of the world as well (original emphasis) (James, 1899/1915, p. 284).

The distantiation between inner and outer, subjects and objects, secures here a superiority effect and places the Western observer as the all-seeing Apollonian eye who orders and disciplines other worldviews within their own. In this instance at least, the transcontinental gradations and geopolitical scales meet up with extant domestic systems of inclusion/exclusion: The minute elaboration of theories of association which depict mind's operation in an inner realm cannot be divorced from presumptions about what that description of mind is meant to uphold and secure: a West/Orient division which authorizes the "true" picture of reality and which has implication for which populations could be considered "Western" at home.

As Boyd Bode (1914) noted of Franklin Bobbitt and as Herbert Kliebard (1970) noted of Ralph Tyler, one might understand James' personal belief in a broad-based Protestant philosophic spirit operating here in the guise of the science of psychology and philosophy. Psychology and philosophy for teachers as they emerged through the prism of James' work might not be a secular pursuit, but rather a torsion within the same anxiety of how to rethink origins and causality post-Darwin in a small but far-reaching intellectual circle where Protestant theologies were challenged by mammalian ontologies. Certainly this would seem to be supported by James' depiction of his commitments as a "free-willist" and his openness to a purely spiritual causality within *Talks*:

I myself hold with the free-willists, - not because I cannot conceive the fatalist theory clearly, or because I fail to understand its plausibility, but simply because, if free will were true, it would be absurd to have the belief in it fatally forced on our acceptance. Considering the inner fitness of things, one would rather think that the very first act of a will endowed with freedom should be to sustain the belief in freedom itself. I accordingly believe freely in my freedom; I do so with the best of scientific consciences, knowing that the predetermination of the amount of my effort of attention can never receive objective proof, and hoping that, whether you follow my example in this respect or not, it will at least make you see that such psychological and psychophysical theories as I hold do not necessarily force a man to become a fatalist or a materialist (James, 1899/1915, pp. 191-92).

The usual narrative around James posits his broad-based Protestant philosophic spirit as formative of his wrestling with a number of issues of his day and as the glue within his academic

and social milieu (e.g., Troheler, 2011). I suggest here, however, something otherwise, that the Protestant philosophic spirit upon which James relies is an effect rather than a cause of an uneven but noticeable play of a doctrine of immanence, which continued to have value without being continuous. The doctrine of immanence refers broadly to the search for origins in the form of Life, Spirit, or Motivity within the activity of an agent. It pertains to narratives of world origin and organization and is drawn etymologically from *in manere*, “to remain within.” It has paradoxically been attributed various origins as a doctrine, from ancient Kemetic conceptions to Vedic and Hindu poetics, to Greek hylozoism, moving into the Abrahamic religions in different forms, and becoming a site of overt contestation between Catholic and Protestant doxology well before James was born (Thamiry, 1910).

Generally, the search for Life, motion, or action is considered to begin and end in the agent but what gets to count as an agent is part of the dispute and the doctrine’s various inflections and contestations. Unresolved absolutist (closed into the one system of the living World) and relativist (having an opening onto a spiritual causality for the one living World) forms have eventuated. Closed system (absolute) versus partially open (relative) still, then, presume a uni-verse, only one World and one principle of reality that is always already in motion e.g., consciousness, power, forces, discourses, genetics, etc. Such inflections in world origin and organization narratives have appeared not only in the Semitic traditions, but also in the shifts from monism to monotheism to (social) science, which draw upon different versions of immanentist thinking. The typical post-Reformationist examples in European-based thought point to Kantian (reason-based) versus Comtean (experience-based) inflections, which operate only apparently as oppositional once their reliance on such a doctrine is attended to. James’ search for the transcendent within the immanent was a particularly modernist version of the doctrine in which debate focused around whether all forms of creation and perception were attributable to Man or to something singular beyond Man that could not be reduced to Man’s projection. In *Talks to Teachers*, the implications of such debates revolved around the depiction of mind, the nature of reality as the Tolstoi quote indicates, and the what and the where of ethics.

Ethics and morality enter as concepts after, not as part of, the description of the system of mind, a general positioning which had earlier drawn Catholic ire. Under that presumption, the critique was that such immanentist-inspired scholarship naively looks for a new moral compass in a system that already inscribes a universe-al moral principle. This points to a kind of double duty that misrecognizes the initial description of system of mind as neutral rather than subjective and value-laden, a neutrality that the teachers in the audience of James’ lecture seem reluctant to grant as they question him about his commitments, asking him if he is a complete materialist or not (Baker, in press). By the turn of the twentieth century, the locus of Life and/or motion shifts under more modernist versions from “soul” to mind, economy, technology, ideas, or cultures as change agents. For the early James, however, such leaps away from soul should be treated with caution (James, 1890). He relied instead upon the open and relativist version where spiritual causality could be retained as a possibility for forming explanations, but the primary site of analysis will still be *the constitution of Man* and especially for James, Man’s subconscious.



### Investigating the Possibility of a Ghost: Spirit-Return's Incitement to Discourse

One should not read Jamesian texts expecting them to remain the same within and between, however. Significantly, then, other of Jamesian texts potentially explode the inner/outer, subject/object, and religion/science lines discussed above, and this is especially on the back of a century of debate over what came to be called the unconscious and to which James referred as the subconscious and subliminal as well. The term unconscious came into Anglophone texts in the late 1700s and early 1800s as reference to the habitual but not necessarily as diametrically opposed to consciousness, nor necessarily as outside of it. By the turn of the twentieth century, multiple theories of an unconscious zone, domain or operation had formalized, well before Freud (Ellenberger, 1970), in some cases depicting the unconscious as hot, steamy, tropical, erratic and irrational and in others as cold, automated, and ruthless (Richardson, 2005). In the context of debate over prevailing theories and debate over the role of visibility in truth-production in the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR, which James helped to found as offshoot of the Cambridge University branch), James took it upon himself to study whether the death of one of his best friends resulted in his friends' spirit-return, or whether the events being reported could be attributed to what he called a more naturalist explanation, such as the operation of the unconscious.

Richard Hodgson died suddenly upon December 20th, 1905. On December 28th a message purporting to come from him was delivered in a trance of Mrs. Piper's, and she has hardly held a sitting since then without some manifestation of what professed to be Hodgson's spirit taking place. Hodgson had often during his lifetime laughingly said that if he ever passed over and Mrs. Piper was still officiating here below, he would 'control' her better than she had ever yet been controlled in her trances, because he was so thoroughly familiar with the difficulties and conditions on this side. Indeed he was; so that this would seem *prima facie* a particularly happy conjunction of 'spirit' with medium by which to test the question of spirit-return (James, 1909a/1986, p. 253).

James was involved with such psychical research for over 25yrs and had defined psychics as a branch of education (James, 1909b/1986). Hodgson was treasurer of the ASPR when he passed over and had worked more intimately than James with studies of mediumship. Both he and James had worked in person with and studied a woman whom they referred to as a medium, Leonora Piper, and described on occasion as 'the Piper-organism.' After Piper was reputedly channeling Hodgson, James and sometimes his wife Alice attended sittings where several people would observe, listen to, and record via transcripts Piper's utterances in a trance state, sometimes asking "Hodgson" questions through her. Hodgson's name was suspended in quotes in the transcripts to indicate uncertainty over the status (Baker, 2009).

James decided to analyze the transcripts in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to inspect them for any evidence for whether he could say undeniably this was Richard Hodgson's spirit (which he labeled a supernatural causality). Naturalist and simple explanations were to be privileged a priori over more exceptional or supernaturalist ones. Thus, whether some other more "naturalist" explanation could be found, such as the operation of Leonora Piper's unconscious, would impact decisions about whether to study "ghosts" well into the future as well as impact debates about methods and representation in social science research and narrativization.

The transcripts were crucial technicalizing instruments but James did not approach such scripts automatically as data. Unlike the orientation in much qualitative research today where simply recording a conversation is taken as a “data set,” a transcript for James may contain data and it may not. Through maintaining a meta-level distinction, James isolated four incidents that were for him indisputably data in need of an explanation regarding causality and which thus required deeper investigation in regard to the question of spirit-return.

James had a difficult task in front of him and approached it with the usual rigor and caution. The write-up of his conclusions are replete with reflexive attempts to maintain proximity to the notion of rationality and to reconsider the procedures for knowledge-production, which were in dispute. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, data was to be subjected to public consensus but what seemed visible to some was not visible to others, so how could consensus be generated? Here, the technicalizing instrument of the transcript was crucial in becoming an “object” around which observers could gather and return to in order to argue over the interpretation and causality.

Transcripts could become elevated sites amid another transformation where the confidence in a visual portal and its relation to veridicality had waned. In the wake of studies of magic shows and visual illusions, hypnosis, the effects of drugs and alcohol, as well as brain injury studies, the neutrality of what the eye saw was called into question. It was not only easy to trick an individual observer or an entire audience, but also to illustrate that two observers in looking at the “same” scene, saw different things. New theorization regarding the role of an ocular portal in truth-production was thus required and in theories of selective attention, partial perception, and the role of an unconscious template for what could be drawn out of a scene such explanations were forwarded (Crary, 1990, 1999). The range of theories available to James, as well as his familiarity with psychical research (which he did not call a science), landed him squarely in the middle of that rethinking of veridicality amid the displacement of the visible’s role within the corroborative.

James’ task was further complicated by what it meant to perform an analysis within a modern episteme. In the emergent social sciences, the belief that words and things were separate and needed to be organized into orderly tables for knowledge to be recognized as such was increasingly accepted. Proving that one had analyzed something properly often required matching words accurately to things, putting things into hierarchies of relations, searching for their origins, which would purportedly explain their essence, and thus predict their future. The apparent absence of the thing to which to match the words in the spirit-return thesis complicated this sequence of procedural reason, giving James a unique situation to sift through in the absence of consensus over whether ghost exists.

Last, the possibility of non-discreteness, of a “spirit” either speaking through, inhabiting, being channeled, interpenetrating, or co-mingling with a subject already positioned as “medium” and “in a trance state” troubles any search for mechanical explanation if the object is legitimated. Who would James say is Leonora Piper’s self in that situation, or Hodgson’s, and how would he explain how ghost and medium met such that it could be reliably replicated?

James (1909/1986) concluded that he could not undeniably say that this was Hodgson’s spirit returning but that future reviews may overturn his conclusions if the mass of cognate evidence is considered rather than his approach to four isolated incidences that the transcripts had provided. He offers instead that it is Leonora Piper’s unconscious that is most likely responsible for what is experienced in sittings. In a trance state, she has the supernatural ability (telepathy) to pick the unconscious of observers in the room for unique facts about Hodgson and

then impersonate him, making the performances believable and exposing information thought previously only held by the sitter. What is significant here is not whether James was right or wrong or the titillating fascination of a small group of Harvard and Cambridge scholars with what is now called the occult, but rather what was thought to be at stake in verifying or occluding this “invisible thing” as a scientific object that could be continuously studied?

Such a question points to a horizon of enactment upon which debates over a visible/invisible line and (non)legitimated scientific objects could be said to make sense, that upon which they pegged their hats for meaning and intensity. This peg was not reducible to a desire to maintain proximity to rationality, nor to instrumental rationality. Rather, “Political theory has to attend to the emergence of political rationality in terms not of its rationality, or claims to reason, but in terms of modalities of operation. Behind political rationality does not stand reason, or rather, reason is not the alibi of political rationality; instead, political rationality has to do with the horizon of its enactment” (Mendieta, 2002, p. 6).

Many different possibilities for theorizing James’ conclusion abound which point to horizons-in-the-making and their modalities of operation. My aim is not to adjudicate the multifarious possibilities here, but to think through their different implications for research and practice. James’ conclusion may be re-read via: 1) a more postcolonial orientation, such as the simultaneous protection of whiteness and Westernness that comes with deontologizing the ghost and subtly attributing belief in it to a pagan exoticism - distant, dark, reincarnation-oriented, and/or irrational. Here, scientific rationality as the mark of First World national development and the all-seeing eye of the West can be implicitly preserved, even if and where in James’ case one is sometimes critical of science; 2) a more sociology- and history of science orientation in which knowledge-production within a modern episteme saw projection of science and the visible as the corporeal governing the veridical, i.e., the corporeal-as-density, as flesh, is positioned as holding the final card, thus creating new versions of anomaly and non-scientific or quotidian objects (Daston, 2000; Latour, 2007); 3) a more Foucaultian orientation focused on bio- and thanatopower in which the body becomes the slate for étatisation, for studying Life in terms of capacities and where the social scientist-as-expert gets to determine which capacities are real so that policymakers can decide which to maximize or invest in, For James, this included whether a potential capacity for Life beyond the grave is worth pursuing via more studies into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and whether such studies should be called research or called science; 4) a more Carrettean perspective on discipline formation, including how disciplinary divisions instantiate certain values at their point of inception and protect and isolate their primary categories from external accountability (Carrette, 2007, p. viii). By banishing the ghost, the privilege attributed to child mind could be better secured because mind could be theorized as a closed system within the brain or at least conditioned by it, untroubled by the possibility of after-life or interpenetration from afar by ghostly spirits that would complicate the coherence, discreteness and individuality ultimately valued within a presumed self-mind-brain relation; or 5) a more de Certeauan orientation in which James could be seen as defending an inaccessibility confronted, keeping the veil in place, which in turn aids the formation of “mystics” as a separate and abjected field of interest— a research pursuit, not a science (de Certeau, 1992).

Such interpretive possibilities indicate how the challenge James set for himself and the dilemma and tensions he referenced around it were legitimate ones for the time, and in different ways still now. Confirming or denying the ghost as a scientific object to be studied thereafter meant thinking through profound cosmological assumptions that do not simply begin or end as Munslow posits with questions of knowledge or narrative. It requires engaging, for instance, with

such an apparent abyss as the after-life, unique models of causality, and the mechanics of invisible objects, as well as what “world” and “worlds” could be conceived as part of “worldview.” To affirm the ghost would potentially threaten the neat packaging of nascent disciplines trying to present themselves as sciences, as well as potentially undermine the presumption of a finite, this-worldly horizon, and trouble the enforceability of boundaries around such entities as geopolitical territories, religions, and selves. This was the uneasy dilemma within which James found himself located as adjudicator. Moreover, if the ghost is verified as a scientific object, i.e., not subjected to consideration of whether it exists but continuously analyzed for its attributes, then the reinforcement of a West/Orient division upon which James commented directly in *Talks* is also at stake – the borders around the stereotype of the Orient as mystical, as past-life oriented, as transcendentalist would become blurred. This indicates how objects-disciplines in the making became conflicted sites inseparable from other regionalisms, a location for how “internal” (introspective and domestic) and “external” (perceived immediate environment and transnational) operated in synergistic relation to project a phantasm of “the nation” and “West” as coherent, discrete entities formed against always-shifting pluralized backgrounds.

The interpretive possibilities briefly alluded to above thus cover quite a range and are not easily settled or reduced. The layers of analysis enable different and almost inexhaustible orientations to the question of why it would matter whether there was such a thing as a ghost and as child mind. They open onto all the problems of borders, territoriality, porousness, intersubjectivity, and suggestibility that now mark the social sciences, their inscription as Western, and the (un)availability of authenticity and purity in academic inquiry. Such (un)availability generated a different pathway to object-making relative to the theoretico-experimental sciences, including a desire to manage “invisible forces” and the conflicting trajectories that infused possible perceptions.

### **The New Logics of Perception: Cementing the Constitution of Man as the Starting Point for Analysis**

Putting these two texts *Talks to Teachers* and “Report on Mrs. Piper’s Hodgson-control” into parallel and dialogue, as well as the debates over the visible and invisible, and over what can be scientific objects and what quotidian exposes how the relative elevation of child mind and sublation of the ghost participate in a new logics of perception readily available in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The new logic not only pertains to how geopolitical scales became drawn around the formation of scientific disciplines but also a particular brand of humanism. The logic lodges perception into the subject alone as discrete from environment, shifting the strategies for truth-production, as Merleau-Ponty (1969) has already noted, by transforming openness upon the world into “an assent of self with self.” The location of analysis fully into the mind system of the observer is the instantiation of a logocentric inscription of the human perceiver as the fountain of all knowledge, for even “reflection which turns away from the things in order to back up on the ‘states of consciousness’ through which the things are given to us, upon our ‘thoughts’ taken in their formal reality as events situated in a stream of consciousness” is not free from “the reflective vice of transforming openness upon the world into an assent of self with self...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, p. ).

In addition, the above re-opens consideration of how academic disciplines become shaped and develop particular foci within their domains, and how fragile those border-markings are, as they opening juxtapositions illustrated. For example, the marginal position of psychical research across the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be understood beyond the usual framing - less in relation to other sciences, their mastery of “empirical” conditions of proof, and technicalizing instruments that render the (presumed) invisible visible, and more in relation to onto-theo-philosophical regionalism in which “the mystical” comes to be redefined, separated from science, from realism, from literature, and from the West, while operating from “within” as a necessary yet subordinate, constitutively unstable node in the new logics of perception.

The implications of such new logics of perception are profound within the general configuration of how social sciences conduct business as usual. What this analysis of two less-visited Jamesian texts suggest in regard to curriculum history specifically in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is, though, as the opening juxtapositions further illustrated a somewhat different matter given curriculum history’s broader location relative to history of education – that is, beyond social science into the humanities, and attuned to both popular cultural and academic conceptions.

The problem here is not one of utility or instrumentalism (“How can I use this tomorrow?”), nor it is reducible to history or historiography but rather about competing conceptions of reality for which the debates over what gets to count as visible/invisible are but indexical and what gets elevated as a scientific object are but one incarnation of an extant value-system. One way to think about this in so-called modern Western democracies is to examine the broader shifts in conceptions of reality that define what a society actually is – a definition that Susan Miller (above) notes is not universally reducible to the nation-state type of organization.

The presumption within the scholarship of modern Western democracies has largely been, however, this type of organization as the only authentic zone of belonging and analyses of “society” have proceeded accordingly. For example, the shift from Foucaultian-defined (Foucault, 1984) “disciplinary societies” which proliferated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which sought normalization to the one standard to Deleuzian-defined (Deleuze, 1992) “societies of control” predicted for the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> which seek flexible proliferations and maximization of interchangeable parts sit alongside further predictions. These include a mass transformation of consciousness beyond human-based ego, as well as post-humanist projections of the automatic, the technical, the supernatural, and the cyborgic as constituting the new moral compass and the intensification of abilities.

The transition between two different conceptions of reality that redefine what a society is changes what is available to theorization. As such, the theorization of “the invisible” potentially shifts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century metacodes of presence/absence, surface/depth, inclusion/exclusion, and normalizing unity-in-diversity thematics conjured within relatively “closed systems” (e.g., the human mind-body, the experience of death-as-finality, etc) to a search for that which potentially asymmetricizes interpenetrative complex systems, where openness and closure, such as in mind theory, lie not in a relation of opposition but of intensification, and where “the invisible” loses both its oppositionality to the visible and its couplet with the mystical amid the rise of the New Energetics – à la Tolle.



## Implications for Curriculum Studies and Curriculum History

Are we still condemned to circle around “Idea, Logos, and Form,”  
or can the (ex)orbitant at least be invoked?

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Curriculum history has taken child mind seriously, very seriously, as an object for study. The majority of the research in the United States has focused on the elementary school and the politics of knowledge, backgrounded by the pure assumption that if “knowledge” didn’t somehow “get in there” fighting over what is overt, hidden, and null curricula in a school classroom would not matter. Even in the face of attunement to popular culture, the field’s avoidance of anything that could be positioned as parapsychological/psychical research, while notably critiquing developmental psychology in the last few decades, raises interesting questions about the link between geopolitics, the nature of the human, the clinging to perceptions of rationality, and what become dominant foci. The point here should not be misunderstood: it is not a call for more studies of telepathy, mediumship, the unconscious, and the like, but rather an investigation of how criterion such as “invisibility” have not been evenly applied or retracted as a condition of proof. The Constitutional separation of Church and State does not even begin to scratch the surface regarding the complexities in object-discipline formation or their allied strategies-tactics for analysis. There has been an interesting composition of curriculum’s pasts that both court some questions (“How do children see the world based on what worldviews they learn in school?”) and abject deeper existential ones (“Is there really only one World, one earth, one imaginal plane, just differently inflected? Do origins actually matter? What gets to count as life/death? Why focus only on “humans”? What gets to count as a capacity? etc). This leaves us with multiple questions, multiple tensions, and multiple opportunities to rethink points of dialogue and starting assumptions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including but not limited to:

- Timespace: what, when, where, and why of identifying “curriculum?”
- Necessary and inadequate concepts in regard to occidental genres?
- Post-Reconceptualist possibilities?
- Debates in contemporary academic settings – generational clash?
- Impossibility of being outside that which ‘we’ critique?
- The different role, meanings, and strategies of violence?
- The different role, meanings, and strategies of compassion?
- Has inclusion/exclusion become the 21<sup>st</sup> century metacode to which all problems are now reduced?
- Is “knowledge” reducible to “place”?
- Is “community” necessary for “identity” and identity for “action”?
- Problematics of representation, entification, and essentialization
- Dilemma of naming-as-presencing – the saying and unsaying of “container theories”?
- Refusal of fixed definition and closed field-formation?
- Difficulty of translation within and between?
- What is just, equal or right when imaginal domains clash?
- The problem of human-centrism?



- Is there “really” only one world totality within which curricula are then identified as such?
- What and the where of the ethical?

In sum, I want to focus on one of the tensions that the reconsideration of invisible objects and their Disrupting potentials leaves us with, a tension that could conceivably continue to haunt curriculum historical research, that which arises between the continued focus on human-to-human interaction, the politics of knowledge, and repetitive reference to power relations as the proper subject of History and marker of an analysis or explanation, relative to ways of saying and ways of seeing that exceed a subject/object divide, that contest “the subject” as such, and that entertain what Matthew Calarco calls for

the genuine critical target of progressive thought and politics today should be anthropocentrism as such, for it [is] always one version or another of the human that falsely occupies the space of the universal and that functions to exclude what is considered nonhuman (which, of course, includes the immense majority of human beings)... To allow this anthropocentrism to go unchallenged renders thoroughly unradical and unconservative much of what today goes by the name of radical politics and theory (Calarco, 2011, p. ).

The extent to which education at large and curriculum history in particular can handle such challenges can be demonstrated, then, by a final juxtaposition of two different versions of reality perhaps captured in the shift or the abyss between knowledge and wisdom: on the one hand, the desire for centrality, power, authority, and certainty in pragmatic, well-intended, and human-oriented policy-and practice in the power of Now relative to a broader ecological, horizontal, interpenetrative, uncertain, and transversal problem-solving for a future that’s already present.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.thespoof.com/news/spoof.cfm?headline=s5i83952>. June 14, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> James reprints

<sup>3</sup> International acclaim meant in the late 1800s within the United States, parts of continental Europe, and parts of the UK.

<sup>4</sup> I have discussed in more depth the shift from medieval to modern discourses of vision in Baker (2012) and Baker, in press.

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