According to John Higham, one of the preeminent authorities on nativism in American history, “Nativism has been hard for historians to define.”\(^1\) Besides the fact that nativism “is distinctly American,” Higham’s questions reveal the difficulty in definition: “Does nativism consist only of the particular complex of attitudes dominant in the antiforeign crusades of the mid-nineteenth century [in the U.S.]? Or does it extend to every occasion when native inhabitants of a country turn their faces or raise their hands against strangers in their midst?”\(^2\)

Higham traces the “antiforeign spirit” in American nativism in the middle of the nineteenth century to show how this movement was a reaction to the unprecedented immigration that the United States was experiencing from Europe.\(^3\) Peter Schrag describes one anti-

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2. Ibid., 3.
Catholic, American nativist reaction in Boston during this period: “In August 1834, a nativist mob, many with Indian-style faces, broke into the Ursuline convent and school in Charlestown, near the site of the battle of Bunker Hill across from the Charles River in Boston, and torched it. . . . In the days following, they returned to torch what was left of the Ursuline property, while other rioters roamed through Boston.”4 This nativist reaction to “foreigners” eventually led to the founding of organizations like the Native American Democratic Association (NADA), which was organized in New York City in 1835, and the Order of the Star Spangled Banner, better known as the Know Nothing party, in the 1850s. Tyler Anbinder describes the growth of the Know Nothings in particular: “None attained greater prominence than the . . . Know Nothing party. Vowing to reduce the influence of immigrants and Catholics, the Know Nothings burst onto the American political scene in 1854, and by the end of the following year they had elected eight governors, more than one hundred congressmen, the mayors of Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and thousands of other local officials.”5 More recently, some scholars have focused on the “New Nativism” in America regarding current issues related to immigration, specifically Proposition 187.6 Within this new nativist movement, the emphasis on speaking English and the fear of terrorist threats from U.S. borders rhetorically function to create an “us”/“U.S.” versus “them”/“foreigner” mentality. In both the historical and modern versions of nativism, there is an appeal to authenticity and purity regarding identity.

4. Schrag, Not Fit for Our Society, 26.
5. Anbinder, Nativism and Slavery, ix.
While these observations regarding the origins of “nativism” in the United States are helpful in situating my argument, this is not the sort of nativism that I describe for the purposes of my reading of the Letter of James. What is described as American nativism is what I understand as a “nativism from above” or a “nativism from the center.” Higham’s second question regarding a definition of nativism is more appropriate for my purposes: “Or does it extend to every occasion when native inhabitants of a country turn their faces or raise their hands against strangers in their midst?” How does the nature of this question shift when the “strangers in their midst” are not immigrants seeking a better life, but colonial forces that seek to destroy native culture, steal natural resources, and take native land? This is what I describe as “nativism from below” or “nativism from the margins.” In this sense, instead of maintaining a dominant culture, nativism is an attempt to preserve or rehabilitate indigenous culture in opposition to assimilating imperial/colonial culture. Nativism from the margins confronts and resists, then, both imperialism and cultural hybridity. This idea of nativism, however, is a contested issue within postcolonial theory and needs to be positioned in the complex postcolonial debate.

Within the larger field of postcolonial studies, nativism functions as a broad category that encompasses liberation movements such as Negritude, Pan-Africanism, and Negrismo. What all these movements have in common is their anticolonial stance from the perspective of a colonized culture. Nativism looks to a nostalgic past that was unencumbered and untouched by the cultural collision birthed by colonialism. While constructing this past, nativists attempt to recuperate, resuscitate, and rejuvenate this historic identity as a unifying force in order to fight for independence from colonial

control. This had a profound impact on the rationale for nationalist movements throughout the colonized world during the 1960s and 1970s and continues to have ramifications for many postcolonial nations today. The possibility or probability of resurrecting a pure native identity, however powerful it is for nationalist movements, has been challenged by many cultural theorists including, but not limited to, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha. One of the most difficult issues related to nativism concerns the material results. In many independence movements, nativism favors “a single dominant cultural group” within the larger movement. By favoring

8. It should be noted here that the concepts of nation and nationalism are modern constructions rather than essentialist foundations. Nation is a European product that functioned to galvanize large groups of people for the benefit of a dominant and controlling elite. The ideology of nation or myth of nation constructs a nationalism that hegemonically functions to homogenize a group of heterogeneous people. Due to this hegemonic discourse, nation is always unstable and prone to deteriorate without strong emphasis on “national” symbols, language, traditions, etc. in order to mask the arbitrariness of the construct. The European construction of nation coalesced fully only during the early modern expansionist movements, i.e., modern imperialism and colonialism, due to the necessity of defining “nation” in relation to “other,” that is, colonized people. It is in this interaction between European nation and non-European native that anticolonial or decolonization movements happened. In this sense, nativism is a reaction to (European) nationalist expansion that uses nationalistic ideology only to turn it on its head. See further Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 149–55; and Homi K. Bhabha, ed., Nation and Narration (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

9. I use “material” here in a classic Marxist fashion, i.e., historical materialism, rather than “cultural materialism,” which is more common in literary and cultural studies. Understanding the material results of imperialism as historical realities places a historical problem at the fore rather than politics. Rather than uncritically revert to classical Marxist material history, Benita Parry offers a blistering critique of theory while viewing material history through the lens of colonial violence. In her critique, colonial violence demands a materialist approach to history. The violence of nativism and other liberation theories, then, is understood as a reaction to the violence of colonialism. I use “material results” here based on Fanon’s insistence on violence as purification and Parry’s insistence on keeping the material effects of colonialism in the fore rather than allowing them to be muddied underneath a palimpsest of theory. See Benita Parry, Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 75–92; Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963 [French original, 1961]), 35–106; Robert Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 21–47.

a dominant cultural group, critics argue that nativism replaces one oppressive hierarchy with another.

Benita Parry challenges this postcolonial, theoretical critique of nativism. She shows that what postcolonial theorists either willfully ignore or simply disdain is that notions of communal ethnic identity were invoked in the interests of mobilizing populations against their foreign rulers, while cultural heritages denigrated and despised by colonialism were affirmed as authentic traditions. Such recuperations, however, were not made in the interest of discovering uncontaminated origins or claiming ethnic purity, and were remote from any attempt to retrieve a past known to be irrecoverable.11

Parry not only forces postcolonial theorists to pay attention to the material/real results of colonialism, but also critiques a too-simple notion of nativism that many postcolonial theorists reify. For instance, the negritude movement that promoted a unified identity in a “transnational blackness” resists simple binarisms and essentialisms. Based on the work of Léopold Senghor, one of the founders of the negritude movement, Chike Jeffers argues that “Négritude is part of a cultural exchange through which all peoples are meant to be unified but not made uniform.”12 Senghor’s negritude was not only an attempt to independently define identity/self in opposition to another, but it was also an attempt to understand civilizations as complementary. Through Senghor’s concept of métissage, negritude would help/develop Europe. For instance, “the spiritual wisdom and vitality of negritude would have to supersede the materialistic emphasis in Europe,” but through this encounter both civilizations

11. Parry, Postcolonial Studies, 10.
would flourish.\textsuperscript{13} The first step, however, in negritude, for Senghor, was to be “rooted in the virtues of black people,” and only after “blossoming” there could negritude move toward \textit{métissage}.\textsuperscript{14} Negritude as a particular form of nativism from the margins forces critics of nativism to at least be more specific in their assessment. Mikela Lundahl takes simple critiques of nativism and negritude to task by asking the questions “why certain Western thinkers choose to emphasize this legacy [of essentialism and particularism] instead of the liberating aspects of Negritude” and “why [do] so many commentators choose to ignore the intentions of the Negritude movement?”\textsuperscript{15}

Even early scholars of decolonization, however, were aware of the capacity within nativism to reproduce colonial constructions refashioned as native. Albert Memmi writes with sympathy about nativist reproduction of colonial structures, describing it as nearly a historical inevitability:

The important thing now is to rebuild his people, whatever be their authentic nature; to reform their unity, communicate with it and to feel that they belong. This must be done no matter what the price paid by the colonized. Thus he will be nationalistic but not, of course, internationalistic. Naturally, by so doing, he runs the risk of falling into exclusionism and chauvinism, of sticking to the most narrow principles, and of setting national solidarity against human solidarity—and even ethnic solidarity against national solidarity. But to expect the colonized to open his mind to the world and be a humanist and internationalist would seem to be ludicrous thoughtlessness. He is still regaining possession of himself, still examining himself with astonishment, passionately demanding the return of his language.\textsuperscript{16}

The exclusionism and chauvinism to which Memmi refers is always present in “the colonized’s self-assertion” because the identity politics at work within nativism are always in reaction to colonial epistemology and, therefore, are always related to colonial epistemology. Due to its continual association with colonial constructs, nativism always has the capacity—or it is an essential characteristic of nativism—to recreate oppressive hierarchies.

Aimé Césaire may have been the first “nativist from the margins” when he coined the term négritude as an identity that attempted to unite French-speaking African descendants. While studying with Léopold Sédar Senghor (from Senegal) and Léon Damas (from Guiana) in Paris during the 1930s, Césaire began publishing the journal L’Étudiant noir (The Black Student). In the March 1935 issue of L’Étudiant noir, Césaire wrote a passionate article against assimilation to Francophone culture. It was in this article that he used the term négritude for the first time. It was a call to all descendants of Africa in a diasporic setting to reclaim an authentic African identity. Césaire states this plainly in an interview with Haitian poet and militant René Depestre in 1967: “This, for me, was a call to Africa. I said to myself: it’s true that superficially we are French, we bear the marks of French customs; we have been branded by Cartesian philosophy, by French rhetoric; but if we break with all that, if we plumb the depths then what we will find is fundamentally black.” This fundamental sentiment of a pure and authentic native identity is what defines nativism from the margin. In creating and ascribing to this identity, practitioners create an antiassimilationist stance against a colonial

cultural identity. In this way, nativism adamantly confronts colonialism on a cultural level, which leads to and empowers independence movements. This confrontation is necessary due to the violence that colonialism enacts on native people. Césaire surmises, “Every day that passes, every denial of justice, every beating by the police, every demand of the workers that is drowned in blood, every scandal that is hushed up, every punitive expedition, every police van, every gendarme and every militiaman, brings home to us the value of our old societies.”

Césaire’s sentiments are profound and understandable, but his critics expose the inadequacy of his idealism, which also exposes some inadequacies of nativism. In an attempt to confront imperial power, nativism fails to consider the ramifications of its narrow definitions of identity. In other words, in the attempt to create an antiassimilationist culture, nativism eventually casts off colonial cultural contours only to reproduce the same hierarchical structures of power with new, native faces in charge. The minority voices within the postindependence nation continue to fall victim to hierarchical oppression. Frantz Fanon warns of this outcome in his 1961 masterpiece *The Wretched of the Earth*. In Fanon’s manifesto, he calls the colonized to arms with the conviction that only violence can purify the national consciousness: “The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence.” This violence has three stages: (1) nativist assimilation to colonial cultural norms, (2) nativist rejection of colonial cultural norms in lieu of precolonial native culture, and, finally, (3) the establishment of a national culture with a strong social consciousness. In many ways, Fanon agrees with

19. Ibid., 44.
20. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 86.
Césaire in the first two stages of violence, but he makes a definitive break with his teacher in the third stage:

The mobilization of the masses, when it arises out of the war of liberation, introduces into each man’s consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny, and of a collective history. In the same way the second phase, that of the building-up of the nation, is helped on by the existence of this cement which has been mixed with blood and anger. . . . During the colonial period the people are called upon to fight against oppression; after national liberation, they are called upon to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment.22

It is at this point that Fanon moves away from simple racial unity found in nativism to a social consciousness that brings the populace together around common values that contradict colonialism.23 In a radical departure from looking to the past for a set of precolonial values, Fanon exhorts, “The Third World ought not to be content to define itself in the terms of values which have preceded it. On the contrary, the underdeveloped countries ought to do their utmost to find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be particular to them.”24 In this process of developing a social consciousness for the nation, Fanon is adamant about the people keeping the bourgeois elite accountable to the nation instead of allowing them to become puppets of a past colonialism. Kwame Anthony Appiah recognizes Fanon’s failed predictions: “The national

22. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 93–94 (emphasis mine).
23. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 267, brilliantly comments on Fanon’s transition from national to social consciousness: “His notion was that unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into a social consciousness, the future would hold not liberation but an extension of imperialism.”
bourgeoisie that took on the baton of rationalization, industrialization, bureaucratization in the name of nationalism, turned out to be a kleptocracy.”

Edward Said echoes Fanon and Appiah in his critique of nativism. One of the most difficult problems Said sees with nativism is how it recapitulates colonial ideology. In other words, in a colonial relationship, there will always be a “clear-cut and absolute hierarchical distinction” between ruler and ruled. Nativism only reinforces the colonial distinction, even when it inverts the binary and gives the greater position to the native. Said’s resistance to nativism parallels his resistance toward imperialism:

But we have evidence of [nativism’s] ravages: to accept nativism is to accept the consequences of imperialism itself. To leave the historical world for the metaphysics of essences like négritude, Irishness, Islam, or Catholicism is to abandon history for essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other.

Concentrating on “the metaphysics of essences” creates an identity that cannot be self-critical or negotiated. Ultimately, what is placed on the old throne of imperialism is simply another dictatorial regime, as Said maintains:

In countries like Algeria and Kenya one can watch the heroic resistance of a community partly formed out of colonial degradations, leading to a protracted armed and cultural conflict with the imperial powers, in turn giving way to a one-party state with dictatorial rule and, in the case of Algeria, an uncompromising Islamic fundamentalist opposition.

27. Ibid., 228–29.
Said is simply unwilling to include a nativist phase in his search for liberation, which is where he differs from Fanon.

Along with Said, Homi Bhabha sees another option for liberation other than nativism.\(^{29}\) Bhabha’s complex cultural analysis takes a radically different approach to confronting colonialism. For Bhabha, colonialism was born with the seeds of its own destruction. In his work on colonial hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, Bhabha cultivates these seeds of de(con)struction. For Bhabha, hybridity can be liberating for the colonized because it “intervenes in the exercise of authority not merely to indicate the impossibility of its identity, but to represent the unpredictability of its presence.”\(^{30}\) As colonial discourse attempted to constrain the native, both the colonizer and the colonized were changed by their interaction. Through this ambivalent relationship, the colonized native began to take on the characteristics of the colonizer, which performed as mimicry. Hybridity is then not simply the interaction between the colonizing and colonized cultures, but it is an identity that threatens the authority of the colonizer as one who controls representations. The colonizer’s authoritative representation of the native as something other begins to disseminate as the native mimics/mocks the identity of the colonized. Ania Loomba reiterates this point, saying, “The converted heathen and the educated native are images that cannot entirely or easily be reconciled to the idea of absolute difference. While at one level they represent colonial achievements, at another they stand for impurity and the possibility of mixing, or to use a term that has become central to postcolonial theory, ‘hybridity.’”\(^{31}\)

\(^{29}\) Said and Bhabha, however, are very different in what they consider valid options to nativism. Said’s exposé of representation regarding the West/Orient binary shows how colonial epistemological structures supported the absolute devastation of colonized cultures. Bhabha critiques Said’s suppositions, arguing that colonial representation is always unstable. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), and Homi K. Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

\(^{30}\) Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 114.
Hybridity, in this case, not only threatens the colonizer’s identity and authority, but also notions of “pure” native identity. Identity in the colonial interactions between the colonizer and the colonized, then, is constantly shifting. In the liminal space of the colony, there is no possibility of pure identity for either the colonizer or the native. There is only hybridity. As an intermingled identity, hybridity poses a problem and a threat to both the imperial power and the nativist. Since the cultural borderline between center and margin is blurred, the ambiguity of othering becomes exposed as representational power. The colonized can no longer be categorized as the ultimate other; therefore, a space is opened for manipulating the sociocultural systems established by imperial power by means of mimicry that slips into mockery. In this way, hybridity not only threatens imperial rule, it also threatens any sense of native identity that is ideologically free of imperial influence.

If hybridity characterizes colonial identity, then mimicry characterizes colonial action. Specifically, it is the action taken by the colonized, yet initiated by the colonizer, where the colonized imitates the life and culture of the colonizer. This action is most pronounced through language, that is, when the colonized begins to speak/write the language of the colonizer. The problem with this action is that the mimetic product is never a perfect reproduction of the imperial power. The eventual product is a hybrid that is incapable of being an identical twin. Memmi provides a chilling account of this failure to authentically duplicate identity:

To that end, they endeavor to resemble the colonizer in the frank hope that he may cease to consider them different from him. . . . But if the colonizer does not always openly discourage these candidates to develop that resemblance, he never permits them to attain it either. Thus, they live in painful and constant ambiguity. Rejected by the

colonizer, they share in part the physical conditions of the colonized and have a communion of interests with him; on the other hand, they reject the values of the colonized as belonging to a decayed world from which they eventually hope to escape.\textsuperscript{32}

At best, mimicry is a mirror image—almost the same, but not quite.\textsuperscript{33} By means of manipulation, however, mimicry becomes mockery and can function as resistance to colonial authority. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin make this point abundantly clear: “This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized.”\textsuperscript{34} This slippage in mimicry reveals the instability of colonial representation. In Bhabha’s view, this slippage is always present in colonial discourse. In other words, the colonial endeavor “inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.”\textsuperscript{35} This mimetic action that Bhabha outlines only exists in an ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Ambivalence, then, is the context for mimicry and hybridity.

Hybridity, as the state of identity flux and interchange, and mimicry, as the resistant actions of the hybrid that destabilizes colonial power, are both characterized, for Bhabha and Loomba, as ambivalent. Bhabha contends, “Consequently, the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference.”\textsuperscript{36} In another chapter, Bhabha describes this ambivalent relationship of love and hate, compulsion and revulsion as follows:

\textsuperscript{32} Memmi, \textit{The Colonizer and the Colonized}, 15–16.
\textsuperscript{33} Bhabha, \textit{Location of Culture}, 86.
\textsuperscript{34} Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, \textit{Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts}, 139.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{36} Bhabha, \textit{Location of Culture}, 107.
Two contradictory and independent attitudes inhabit the same place, one takes account of reality, the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality. This results in the production of multiple and contradictory belief. The enunciatory moment of multiple belief is both a defense against the anxiety of difference, and itself productive of differentiations. Splitting is then a form of enunciatory, intellectual uncertainty and anxiety that stems from the fact that disavowal is not merely a principle of negation or elision; it is a strategy for articulating contradictory and coeval statements of belief.  

In this paragraph Bhabha deals specifically with the deep psychological impact that postcolonial ambivalence has on the postcolonial hybrid. Based on Bhabha’s definition, ambivalence characterizes hybrid identities. Ambivalence colors both the colonizer and the colonized as less than one and double. The colonized do not fit into tight categories of those who desire colonial comfort and those who resist colonial rule. This desire and disgust happen simultaneously in everyone involved in the colonial project. Postcolonial ambivalence, then, “describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance.” Bhabha also points out that ambivalence has the capacity to subvert imperial power: “The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.” This poststructuralist subversion of hierarchy to which Bhabha alludes provides the foundation for his concept of ambivalence as resistance. This resistance, however, is problematic in the same way hybridity and mimicry are; that is, it is firmly theoretical.

37. Bhabha, Location of Culture, 132.
38. Ibid., 102–22.
40. Bhabha, Location of Culture, 112.
While most forms of nativism are rooted in the material struggle for liberation, much postcolonial theory is conceived in the hallowed halls of the academy. On this point, R. S. Sugirtharajah criticizes Bhabha’s theoretical opposition to nativism:

Hybridity in the postmodern lexicon is defined as possessing emancipatory potential and an antidote to the virulent form of nativist thinking. While nativism seeks to eradicate any form of impurity in the indigenous culture, postmodern notions of hybridity tend to sweep under the carpet the cultural and political impact of colonialism. Such a notion of hybridity is oblivious to the economic hardship, helplessness, and marginalization which are ongoing realities.\[41\]

Sugirtharajah captures the harsh divide and opposition between nativism and postcolonial theory as competing forms of resistance. Parry offers a more nuanced intervention, highlighting the fact that “it remains important to urge more historically grounded directions and greater discrimination in the enquiries of an ecumenical and proliferating field where the material impulses to colonialism, its appropriation of physical resources, exploitation of human labour and institutional repression, have receded from view.”\[42\] Her attempt to reconceptualize nativism in order to remember the devastation of colonialism acts as a constant critique of the theoretical formations of Bhabha. Parry’s insistence on the historical (f)act of violence enacted by colonialists on natives pushes the ethical edges of postcolonial theory. Even if “post-independence regimes blind [postcolonial] critics to the import of liberation struggles conducted in the name of nationalism,” Parry argues that “valorizing hybrid, deterritorialized and diasporic forms of consciousness that are apparently uninflected and untroubled by ethnicity or class” is not a suitable solution.\[43\]

42. Parry, Postcolonial Studies, 3.
43. Ibid., 10.
In her final analysis, Parry concludes that in their “scorning emancipatory expectations as naïve and self-righteous, and liberation movements as self-interested,” postcolonial critics “have rendered nugatory the joining of intelligible and still viable indigenous resources and age-old traditions of colonial resistance with the ethical horizons and utopian reach of socialism.”

Loomba critiques this line of thought while siding with Bhabha, maintaining that “colonial identities—on both sides of the divide—are unstable, agonized, and in constant flux. This undercuts both colonialist and nationalist claims to a unified self, and also warns us against interpreting cultural difference in absolute or reductive terms.” Although Sugirtharajah and Parry are sympathetic to nativism, the evidence of Bhabha and his allies’ analysis of cultural hybridity cannot be denied or overlooked. Nativism’s desire for purity with the exclusion and expulsion of colonial influence is made impossible precisely because of postcolonial hybridity. These theoretical concepts, then, are at odds with one another, and when theoretical concepts become material reality, there is serious conflict between the involved parties.

This conflict between the postcolonial concepts of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity, on the one hand, and nativism on the other is the main lens through which I will read James. I understand the Letter of James as a nativist document that promotes “pure and undefiled piety” as an essentialist identity that opposes Roman imperial oppression and any form of hybridity/assimilation with Roman imperialism. The Letter of James intervenes in the Diaspora—a highly contested space of hybridity—in an attempt to prevent “double-mindedness.” The nativist strategy involved in opposing Roman imperialism is at odds with any form of strategy involving hybridity as resistance. In fact, the entire Letter of James

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44. Ibid., 10.
45. Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 178.
fluctuates between opposing empire and opposing hybridity. Where
the Letter of James attacks hybridity—dead faith (2:14-26), diabolical
dialogue (3:1-12), double-mindedness (4:1-12), and deceptive
business dealings (4:13-17)—there is, as we shall see, a correlation to
certain Pauline sensibilities. The capacity in certain Pauline writings
to assimilate otherness rather than reject it—especially otherness in
relation to Roman imperialism—would certainly be at odds with the
sort of piety prescribed by the Letter of James. The nativism in the
Letter of James functions as a biting critique of the hybridity found
in the Pauline corpus.

Why Nativism?

Now that nativism has been positioned in postcolonial studies, there
are at least two questions left to ask and answer, however
provisionally, before approaching the text of James. As a critical
apparatus, is postcolonialism a legitimate mode of inquiry for biblical
studies; and more specifically, why nativism for the Letter of James?
This interdisciplinary endeavor warrants an explanation and/or
apologia. Many critics within the biblical studies guild chide attempts
to introduce postcolonial theory into the realm of biblical studies.
The primary concern for such critics is the alleged “anachronistic”
nature of the interdisciplinary enterprise. Within the historical-
critical tradition, it is more acceptable to be labeled a heretic, atheist,
or agnostic than anachronistic. It is important, nonetheless, to
acknowledge the vast differences between Roman imperialism in the
first century and European imperialisms dating from the sixteenth
century to the twentieth century. R. S. Sugirtharajah points out,
however, that postcolonial theory has the capacity to go beyond
modern forms of colonialism: “There were other forms of
imperialism: “There were other forms of
modern forms of imperialism: “There were other forms of
colonialism before and after European expansion and withdrawal.”

At every level, this process involves using a modern methodology or