

Postcolonial Narratives Discourse and Epistemological Spaces

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Introduction

BY BRINGING together critical discourse analysis of personal narratives and postcolonial theory, this work addresses other ways of knowing in the academy and provides different lenses of discourse analysis. In this way we are able to investigate narratives from a different perspective that draws upon the notion of discourse as an absent power that gives authority, validation, and legitimization. “A discourse author-ises certain people to speak and correspondingly silences others, or at least makes their voices less authoritative. A discourse is therefore exclusionary” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 90). Discourses of travel, home, and cultural knowledge emerge within the United States (U.S.) academy (Bhabha, 1994; Pratt, 1992). The work presented here attempts to study the manifestation of discursively produced relationships within the social network. Because:

Power is manifested as relationships in a social network. It comes from below, induced in the body and produced in social transactions. Power, through knowledge, brings forth active ‘subjects’ who better ‘understand’ their own subjectivity yet who in this very process subject themselves to forms of power. (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 89)

To this end, we have benefited a great deal from the work of Phillion (2002) and He (2002) in developing this manuscript. Their work provided a space for response and an opportunity to present our stories as legitimate curriculum narratives in the U.S. academy. We have struggled with these stories for some time and have presented them at various conferences, and the feedback we have received suggests that the stories are important and should be presented but it has been difficult to find a space to do so. However, upon reading Phillion’s (2002) and He’s (2002) works which link the issues of multiculturalism, curriculum narrative, experience, and outsider-

ness in productive ways we saw the articulation of our experiences as an extension of the space/line of discourse inquiry that their works open up. While we have used this work as a starting point to analyze the discursive production of epistemological spaces, we have added another layer, postcolonial theory, to situate our stories. We have traveled to this point in the U.S. academy from Australia and Kenya, respectively, therefore, rather than focus solely on discourse, we have incorporated the lens of postcolonial theory as a way of bringing our narratives together. Phillion (2002) describes her approach as follows:

Narrative multiculturalism focuses on understanding derived from a starting point in experience rather than in theory; involves passionate, intensive, upclose participation rather than distanced objectivity; takes place over long periods of time; depends on the development of close relationships with participants often from different cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds; and values the kind of knowledge that is co-created in these interactions. (p. 536)

Narrative, Cross-Cultural Contexts, and Discourse

The work of He (2002) provided a model for our paper when she wrote of herself and her participants working through the “relationship between the cultural impact of their move to Canada and their experience of learning to become North American academics, a cultural process no less of an upheaval or displacement than the Cultural Revolution” (p. 514). In much the same way, we write about our negotiation of the U.S. academy and our displacement as a postcolonial moment. Such narratives are a constant reinvention of the self and are stories forever unfinished (He, 2002). Additionally, Phillion’s (2002) conception of narrative multiculturalism provided us a way of thinking about, organizing and articulating our narratives, which, while different in a number of ways, shared a strong nuanced similarity when viewed from the standpoint of postcolonial theory. We have worked together for over five years and have undergone a number of critical changes, for instance accepting teaching positions in different universities, and have witnessed the growth and emergence of our narratives from a shared experience over a long period of time. Through our extensive ongoing interactions, we are co-creating knowledge, the beginning of which this paper attempts to articulate. We consider this the beginning of a research agenda focusing on the lives of ‘foreign’ faculty members in large research institutions in the United States of America in light of the events of 9/11. After these tragic events, we decided it was important to present our stories and also to situate them in a theoretical framework to highlight postcolonial tensions and issues. This work has opened a space for understanding. “It opens up possibilities for establishing a linkage between cross-cultural lives and identities, cross-cultural teacher education and curriculum studies. It also cultivates educational possibilities for establishing linkages among cultures in multicultural contexts” (He, 2002, p. 515).

Furthermore, it highlights seduction and resistance as we work within and against the normalizing aspects of the U.S. academy. Indeed, He (2002) speaks to this when she talks of the balance between stability and change. “We do not want to be totally transformed because we want to keep our own identities. Sometimes, even when we want to be transformed, that does not mean we can successfully be transformed” (He, 2002, p. 528). This desire to maintain a forever unfinished story is important because, as Phillion (2002) states, “narrative inquiry has the

untapped potential for studying multicultural phenomena and increasing understanding of multiculturalism” (p. 553).

We also found useful the analytical framework provided by Foucault’s (1977) work revealing the normalizing tendencies of total institutions and the discursive production of epistemological spaces through technologies of power. “Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations... Thus discourses construct certain possibilities for thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations” (Ball, 1990, as quoted in Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 90). Foucault (1977) described how the disciplinary practices upon the bodies of the students, patients, and troops were violent and coercive as they produced docile bodies and obedient souls. According to Foucault, régimes of truth that regulate and reinscribe the power relations of the institutions are discourses that function as a dominant ‘Truth’ and thus regulate the behavior and ideological assumptions of the institution:

Each society has its régime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1977, p. 131)

This is applicable to contemporary settings because we continue to categorize, measure, normalize, and regulate, for example, children in schools, and international faculty in Enlightenment institutions. It creates/produces governable bodies—“in disciplining the body, persons as subjects become governable, thus marginalizing the need for coercion in the regulation of populations” (Foucault, 1977, p. 92). However, it is vital to highlight the human subject as an active knowing subject in this position. The resulting epistemological space is one shaped by the effects of power but also negotiated and multiply positioned. The student/faculty/individual ‘knows’ through this negotiation and by surveillance and the use of authority as effects of power. This leads to self-regulation shaped by the technologies of power (for example, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, formerly known as the INS) and legitimate discourses (for example, citizen and alien). It is vital to note that this subjugation also produces the possibility of resistance and this is often lost in discussions of Foucault’s work. This is why it is less deterministic than a critical approach—epistemological spaces are negotiated and power is fluid. Foucault’s (1977) work presents stories of power and the ways it changes—knowledge and power are contingent.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The narratives presented later in this article highlight the way discursive practices shape and make possible and impossible epistemological spaces. As Mills (1997) suggests, “a discursive structure can be detected because of the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving” (Mills, 1997, p. 17). She goes on to discuss how the legitimization of knowledge and ‘truth’ emerges from a position of dominance when she says, “Colonial power enables the production of knowledge, and it also maps out powerful positions

from which to speak” (p. 115). This position enabled us to conceptualize power as discursive and fluid, using the work of Foucault (1977) and Serres with Latour (1995). Thus, we aimed to produce a ‘text’ that highlighted the messy and dangerous construction of the subject through discourse.

The notion of discourse is ambiguous in Foucault. A thinking of discourse as both what is said and what is done, which breaks down the distinction between language (discourse in the narrow sense) and practice, is much closer to what I think he intends than just language, but this is not always how he uses the term himself. Unfortunately, most people who use the word discourse think he is talking about what people say. For me, the only function of discourse is to end the action/language distinction. (Stuart Hall, as quoted in Osborne & Segal, 1999, p. 398)

Critical discourse analysis, as developed by Fairclough (1995), is the analytical method utilized in this narrative study. It is a three level model of analysis of discourses and moves through the social, institutional, and local levels of discourse. This model of analysis allowed us to move from the individual, or local level, to the ways institutions are an effect of power, to the social and educational discourses that frame our lives. Fairclough’s approach also suggests that the analysis of spoken and written language texts and discourse practices (text production, distribution, and consumption) reveals how the discursive events are instances of socio-cultural practice. It enables the broad conceptualization of ‘text’:

A rather broader conception has become common within discourse analysis, where a text may be either written or spoken discourse, so that, for example, the words used in a conversation (or their written transcription) constitute a text. In cultural analysis, by contrast, texts do not need to be linguistic at all; any cultural artifact—a picture, a building, a piece of music—can be seen as a text. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 4)

Why is this useful? Because, studying “discourse practice ensures attention to the historicity of discursive events by showing both their continuity with the past (their dependence upon given orders of discourse) and their involvement in making history (their remaking of orders of discourse)” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 11).

Postcolonial Nuances and Cross-Cultural Contact Moments

The field of postcolonial studies has been plagued by arguments about the ‘valid’ use of related theories. The tensions stem from issues of authority and the literal geographic interpretations of postcolonial spaces. Scholars engaging in such theorizing in ‘postcolonial’ countries such as India, Nigeria, Algeria, Kenya, and other African nations are positioned in this argument as more ‘valid’ due to the re-emergence of indigenous rule after an historical period of colonization. To follow this argument, then, scholars in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia (to name a few) are not as valid as colonial rule still formally exists in some manner. The single-handed emphasis on the temporal-spatial dimensions of postcoloniality masks the identities that coloniality created in its various formulations. As we come from different postcolonial geographic histories, we are complicating the issue of ‘who is more postcolonially valid’ by using postco-

lonial theory as a framework for understanding our narrativized experiences in the U.S. academy. While in this particular narrative we choose not to engage in the war of legitimacy, we are none the less conscious of the brutalities of coloniality in its various formulations under which our identities have been sculpted and continue to be scripted. However, we choose to focus our analysis on our experiences when our existence in the U.S. academy hangs on a nuanced unspoken/unspokeable postcolonial contact moment that at once is reminiscent of and simultaneously encapsulates an entire history of colonial brutality.

Drawing from the work of Bhabha (1994), Gilroy (1993), MacCannell (1994), Ngugi (1986), Pratt (1992), and Spivak (1999), this paper brings together the work and wonderings of two scholars, one from Kenya and the other from Australia. As scholars occupying the two poles of the tensions within postcolonial theorizing, we question the primacy of experience, particularly ‘indigenous insiders’ experience/‘native informant,’ as a necessary precursor for asking the right questions in the pursuit of culturally legitimate scholarship and ways in which privileging of ‘insider’ experience might be problematic. Using the work of Bhabha (1994), Pratt (1992), and others to highlight issues of space and knowing in postcolonial theory, we then explore the im/possible spaces that our deterritorialized consciousnesses inhabit and roam. Further, we explore how our intellectual neo-nomadism allows us to be simultaneously aware of, yet free from boundaries, whilst remaining conscious of the “ideological aggressivity” (MacCannell, 1994) of knowledge production for the U.S. academy in which we are participants. We are, therefore, using this space to present our fictionalized (Visweswaran, 1994) selves as postcolonial subjects in the U.S. academy.

Within our own work as postcolonial scholars, we find the work of Homi Bhabha (1994) provides a starting point for rethinking postcolonial theorizing in the new millennium:

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (p. 2)

The narratives below highlight our theoretical and professional journey in the U.S. academy, from the standpoint of postcolonial theory. We contextualize the narrative through our autobiographical/lived curriculum/experiences and who we are in the space we call the U.S. academy. We aim, in this narrative, to show the daily in/visible, im/possible, and im/plausible spaces we inhabit and participate in constructing within the U.S. academy. Additionally, we aim to highlight the complicated and messy ways in which our identities are constructed as postcolonials in a colonializing space. We admit to taking advantage of this thing we call the U.S. academy. We desire and enjoy the ambiguity and uniqueness of our existence that creates spaces for questioning and wondering. Yet we also resist the reductionist and strategic essentialism that frames us *and* our work. Alien professors work within a space that is not indeterminate or unsubscribed (Spivak, 1993).

Discourses that Travel

Excerpts from our narratives are presented below to highlight the presence/disturbance of a number of discourses that have shaped our colonial and postcolonial lives (not that we can separate these political spaces—nor would we want to). There are a number of discourses present. When analyzing the narratives we noted that we often introduce ourselves in terms of our travel stories. This is probably because we are most often asked—‘how did you get here?’—a question that hints of a ‘what are *you* doing *here*?’ default sub-question. And it is also interesting to note that while sometimes we do not mind being asked to share our stories—to justify our presence, other times it drives us mad. However, now that we have both been within the U.S. academy for some time, we sometimes actually bring the travel stories to the attention of our audience in case they assume we ‘belong’ or wish to completely belong. It is all very complicated. Pratt (1992) uses travel writing to discuss the production of spaces in which economic exploitation and erasure of all those Othered may then occur. Her work goes beyond issues of race, class, and gender. “No one was better at the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene than the string of British explorers who spent the 1860’s looking for the source of the Nile” (Pratt, 1992, p. 201). Discovery and expansionism went hand in hand: “Crudely, then, discovery in this context consisted of a gesture of converting local knowledges (discourses) into European national and continental knowledges associated with European forms and relations of power” (Pratt, 1992, p. 202). Thus, erasure of the Other was institutionalized. However, unlike the explorers, our stories and our identities have already been inscribed and our travel is rife with postcolonial moments where we struggle, resist, or attempt to re-inscribe our identities in ways that often challenge the institutionalized discourses that create/d our identities. Following our narratives of travel and home/culture, discourses of raced colonization emerged, and finally we present excerpts that highlight the issues of surveillance and negotiation within/against the U.S. academy.

Travel: Contact Zones and Narrating Identity

Lisa: How did I get here? I ask my students to present autobiographical narratives every semester in my curriculum studies graduate classes. Therefore, I too must ask the question. Sometimes it seems as if I have been here forever. Other times, as if I have just arrived and want to head home tomorrow (especially after the tragedy of 9/11 and resultant hostilities). I am in a state of flux—a space of negotiation and of possibility. I tell my students that I come from a life of privilege—how else was I ‘given’ the opportunity to get here? Meritocracy, the protestant work ethic, hard work? I had every possible chance to succeed in my life—a loving family, good education, health, and then a successful career as a high school teacher and administrator in a small Catholic high school in Western Australia. I come from a long line of diasporic adventurers. My paternal grandparents left Cornwall, England in the early 1900s and migrated to Australia. My maternal grandmother was a direct descendant of the first European female born in Western Australia. We are travelers. I have lived and worked in three countries—Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. But is it only in the U.S. that I have lived the position of ‘outsider.’ This is not a label put on me by others. Rather, it is one I claim myself to address the gaps, the otherness, and the resistance to being consumed by a larger force. I was a ‘desirable’ immigrant, it seemed to me. And it was as if I did not carry the history of Australia with me—I only carried easily consumable bits of information. Deadly snakes, crocodiles, and the

outback. I looked like a 'white' American. It was only when I opened my mouth that a difference was noted.

Kagendo: *Whenever I am introduced or I introduce myself to someone, this inevitably is followed, within a short time, by a question about whether I come from Africa. Or better yet, the person to whom I am introduced, in a self-congratulatory way, pronounces me as hailing from Africa. "You are from Africa, right?!" "Africa" in this American/ Northwestern European formulation long lost all resemblance to a verifiably recognizable space on the globe. Immediately following an introduction, no matter how brief, I am often asked if I have an American name. My response to the negative yields one of two responses: an instant lack of interest/dismissal that is typically preceded by a pronouncement that the person will "never be able to remember or pronounce that name." Alternatively, the person adopts an instant familiarity, delving into an intimate inquiry about my personal life that goes something like this: "How did you ever end up in the U.S." "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" "Did you have a scholarship to come here?" "Are any of your brothers or sisters here/do you have family here?" "How often do you go home?" "Do you like it here?" Occasionally, when I am introduced to an "enlightened person," I have found that, in a morbid sort of way, the person is pleased to have an audience to whom to pontificate about the socio-political injustices of Third World poverty and disease and why the Western world is to blame for it. I am intrigued and insulted by the arrogance of this group of people who seem to believe that I am oblivious to the fact that their commitment to their pronouncements is only as deep as it facilitates their neo-liberal posturing. It makes them 'look' and sound good to castigate the west for its hand in the causation of the problems of the South, and unfailingly, their soliloquy ends with a casual inquiry or statement directed to me: "Do you know people who have died of AIDS?" "Are you the first one to go to school in your family?" Occasionally I may be 'complimented' on how well I speak English! As the questions are reeled off, I often think to myself that the inquirer, in their mind, is putting a check-mark against all the answers that correspond with what he/she "knows" about me, or my kind.*

Analysis: Our narratives, while different, nonetheless bring out several discourses that connect them through a postcolonial function. There are several emerging discourses that bear a postcolonial stamp, such as: meritocracy, class, education, race, and language. The British legacy of meritocracy in education makes possible the expectation that we are not all "supposed" to have a good education—the underlying assumption being that access to education is granted to those qualified by gender, socio-economic status, or race. Therefore, we are understood or scripted as outliers or non-examples of our nation state populations because we do not represent the postcolonial norm when it comes to levels of education possible for members of our communities. This position of educated outsider, in particular, speaks to a colonial history where education bred elitism, with only a few select individuals affording or being able to access education, particularly higher levels of education. What is disturbing is not the assumption but rather the passivity of the acceptance with which that situation has been taken. That elitism, synonymous to class and race differences, is the unquestioned and often the accepted consequence of meritocracy/coloniality is enormously disturbing.

Additionally, both our stories point to the desire by others to find bits of information about our lives that are easily consumable. Granted, the degrees of palatability of those tid-bits of our stories, while different, result in our Othering. Those tidbits represent the outermost discursive markers of our differentness vis-à-vis the American. These bits of information emerge from the assumption of our being 'known' or 'knowable.' In the case of Lisa's stories, she is marked as

hailing from the land down-under where crocodiles roam and the outback spells unspoken danger. This exotic story is more palatable than Kagendo's origins in the deepest, darkest jungles of Africa. Kagendo's story, if not frozen in time, where Africans live in trees and walk around naked, is punctuated with disease and malady, the proportion of which begs to be avoided by civilized people. Africa as monolithic, lacking of knowledge of nation states, and its history as deepest, darkest, yet spiritual carries over into contemporary understanding.

Another very interesting discourse in our narratives is the scripting of alienness as permission to ask personal questions, permission to pry. The consistent inquiry/interrogation to which we are subjected appears to be premised on nothing other than our alien status. The often unstated yet expected demand to explain our presence and intentions is the question that stays in permanent default mode. We are required for no other reason other than being alien, to explain what we are doing in the United States. The hypocrisy engendered in the collective amnesia of non-Native Americans who all have an immigrant history but yet make the proximity of our advent into the U.S.A. be of consequence is laughable. We bring with us cultural differences that make difficult the lives of those who have to deal with us or the lives of those who arrived here before us. So, in the U.S., the issue of cultural difference has been constructed as a problem of the alien. In Kagendo's case, it is her problem that people cannot pronounce her name, so it behooves her to make it easier on everyone by taking on an American name. Lisa, on the other hand, has a 'cute' accent and is often asked to speak for no reason at all, other than entertainment!

Colonizer/Colonized Race Identities

Lisa: *Events that have shaped my epistemological spaces in North America include such things as being told I don't sound like I am from Australia because I sound educated (read here—British)! Further, that the phrase 'educated Australian' was an oxymoron! Wow! I was an ambassador—for the successful colonizers. I spent two years working and studying in Canada, and at that time, I was often assumed to be a neutral outside observer of local race issues. I was disturbed that the history I carried so carefully with me of the genocide and ongoing unofficial segregation of Australian life was not seen/heard/acknowledged. Talk about White Privilege! Rather it was as if I was OK because I was innocent of the history that existed in Canada (or the U.S.A. for that matter). It was a clear case of the danger of assumed innocence in international settings and the ignorance of racial tensions that exist in Australia. The 2000 Olympics became a 'coming out' exercise regarding race relations in Australia—but still in that 'we're so sorry—we are all happy now' mentality. Australia lacks a confrontational history of race and the result is an avoidance of the issues and often a denial that such problems exist.*

Kagendo: *I have come to realize that my epistemological spaces in the U.S. were encrypted long before my arrival to the United States. Even today, I find that I am still undergoing the "fitness test" (a test that determines my fitness for entry/living in the U.S.). This test is raced, gendered, colonial, elitist, etc. as demonstrated by the following incident that took place in the early 90's in Kenya. I had gone to the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to apply for a student visa. I was with my two brothers and my father. The consular officer interviewing—read interrogating—me, wanted to know a number of things including the number of siblings I had and my mom's occupation. I stated that my mother does not work, and I am the last born of seven: four sisters, two brothers. When she re-phrased my mother's occupation as "house-wife," I did not mention my mother quit school to marry my father who, in his lifetime, had been a teacher, politician,*

community leader, and tea farmer, nor did I mention that all my siblings were all well-traveled, and are college graduates in fields of education, law, and medicine, and nor that now they all reside in Kenya. I did mention, though, that I was a tea-farmer's daughter. I lay my claim to the identity of being a tea-farmer's daughter who spent most of her school years in boarding school but always returned to the farm. The consular officer then stated to my father that he must be sending me to America to marry someone there. My father's irritated response was that while he was willing to spend his money on his daughter's education, it was insulting for the consular officer to suggest that he would be willing to mail me off to someone on the other side of the world. (Many years later, I did meet someone on that side of the world and married him!) While the visa was granted—much to my surprised relief given the consular reputation and my father's obvious indignation—I was thus ushered into a world where I am presumed known and understood merely by the mention of my gender and place of origin.

Analysis: There is a strong presence here of the colonizer/colonized subject discourses which suggest that negotiating the subjectivities of both colonizer/colonized occurs always already in one person (Villenas, 1996). These narratives give clear discourse examples of historically inscribed race constructions carrying over into the postcolonial moment or space. Lisa was often treated as 'one who knows,' reminiscent of Pratt's notion of the colonial dominance of Others. She lives an inscribed historical space as a White, 'British sounding,' well-traveled individual. Lisa was told at one point that the reason she was successful in her application for her first tenure track position was because she sounded British! Kagendo, on the other hand, is more often interrogated through a Discovery Channel lens and is often questioned on her legitimate knowledge and cultural capital. Within neo/colonial texts, third world women appear in "technical reports" (Mohanty, 1991), that categorize them by objective indicators of their well-being including their fertility rates (legitimizing the constant questioning of family-size), health, nutrition, education, and ill/literacy, while at the same time freezing them in time and place. Without batting an eye-lid, the consular officer in Nairobi made the generalized assumption that going to America meant a better life for African women and of course marrying an American being the icing. The class and racial undertones of the statement were not expected to be examined, challenged, or questioned. The frozen nature of her history and experience also has set in stone the nature of relationships she can have with the westerners. She is the recipient of help and aide. Therefore, this neo/colonial discursive accords total strangers whom Kagendo's meets the unearned privilege of becoming instantly intimately familiar with her and further legitimates their rude intrusive questions about health, education, family-size, etc. In these ways, through language and accent, and discourses of race, the neocolonial/western discourses or "discourses of masters" (Mohanty, 1991) implicate subordinate groups in their own subordination, tripping them up in ways that manage to validate their master's convictions of their natures (McCarthy, 1996).

Nationalism/Culture

Lisa: And the ever-present influence of popular culture with 'Crocodile Dundee' and 'The Crocodile Hunter.' As I grew up in the southwest corner of the country, in an area devoid of crocodiles, this humorous entrée to Australian life is removed from my experience. However, I don't hesitate to say we have more poisonous animals and insects than any other country and we are 'tough' cookies (!?)... SO, even as I move away from and resist masculine, earthy stereo-

types, I move to claim elements of the stories for my benefit as one of the tanned, earthy people from Downunder! And, of course, everyone wants to go there—a holiday in the sun, on the beaches, in the Outback (NOT the restaurant). Revisiting the romance of “The Thorn Birds,” “A Town Like Alice,” and “My Brilliant Career”—or more recently “Strictly Ballroom” (those crazy zany Australian—thanks Baz Luhrman), “Priscilla, Queen of the Desert,” and “Muriel’s Wedding.” It is a beautiful, harmless place. English is spoken (sort of), Whiteness is welcome, and racial tensions are nicely hidden. An ideal vacation location. However, there are interruptions. A more recent movie ‘Rabbit-Proof Fence’ provides another, less palatable history, of the Stolen Generation of Australia’s Aboriginal children and the erased indigenous knowledge of the land.

Kagendo: *Representations of Africa as frozen in time rather than historically specific and dynamic provides alibi for its construction as a spectacle to be watched with mounting fear, and alienation: a place that often provokes “bafflement or hysteria” (Spivak, 1999), a place that cannot be taken too seriously. As it is then, as an African woman I am much more “accurately” portrayed in the Discovery Channel or through countless charitable organizations’ television infomercials appealing for “one dollar” that will feed and pay school fees for one disease-infested, fly-flitting-from-eyes child for one school year than through the information I can provide about myself. The information that neo/colonial media texts produce is consumable and necessary to sustain my foreclosure.*

Analysis: Discourses of gender also frame these epistemological spaces. We see the masculinized construction of Australia, which Lisa has both resisted and retained as a useful construction. She is known through the lenses of Popular Culture notions of those ‘crazy Australians’ through film. These are historically inscribed, reductionist, dismissable notions of the Other and celebrations of the successful colony, Australia—a great place for white folks who speak English only and celebrate dominant colonial cultural constructions. Drawing upon the legacy of poststructural thinking, however, makes possible the rethinking of power, its operation and manifestations within institutions where it is re/produced, and the discourses and practices that make possible such re/production of power, particularly the discourses that regulate and construct what “knowledge” is. Monolithic nation state knowings can be interrupted or revealed as effects of power. For example, the production of Africa as a singular monolithic culture/people blurs social agency and subjectivities. This monolithic production of Africa as primitive and static provides a credible alibi for its foreclosure and its invisibility to the western eye thereby legitimating the foreclosure of its people as intellectuals in the Western academy as well as the foreclosure of African knowledge forms (Spivak, 1999). Foreclosure further legitimates our lack of autobiographical identity as either “native insider” or “colonizer.” Ironically, as Spivak (1999) aptly notes, it is within the U.S./Western academy where the field of ethnography has at once monumentally elevated the seriousness with which native informants/insiders are taken, yet paradoxically denied them autobiography. The same neo/colonial discursive that produces the fabrications of Australia and Africa as consumable and “knowable,” places devoid of any meaningful cultural possibility much less intellectual identity, legitimates the rude probing questions that are grounded in the notion that we are already “known”/“knowable” and therefore dismissible.

Institutional Surveillance and Negotiating the Academy

In this section we move into our postcolonial narratives as a place of questioning and ongoing analysis. Thus, they are presented separately as personal as political analytical commentaries with a synthetic discussion to follow.

Lisa: Therefore, as I live within/against this inscribed socio-historical space I am in a state of flux—homeless, unhomely, and unhomed. A lot of my work has been around issues of exclusion through race and gender in social and educational discourses that frame spaces of being—the construction of the ‘good teacher’ and the ‘bad girl,’ for example. But as I have wandered through Australia, Canada, and the United States of America, I developed an interest in the ways international scholars live out their spaces of being in the U.S. academy. And when I met Kagenda, I realized that this is an important conversation—especially in the field of curriculum within a global frame. Bringing together curriculum studies, global education, and postcolonial theory has created an opportunity for the questioning He (2002) began. Such as: Can we really belong? Or more importantly—do we want to belong? What are the possibilities and dangers of not belonging? And now I think the current ‘curriculum space’ calls for even more analysis and investigation from a curriculum studies perspective. The continuing national security crisis is framed by knowledge/power tensions and contingent knowledge in the U.S. academy. I was waiting for my greencard application to be approved when we first began constructing this manuscript. It was a moment of great vulnerability and stress. My life was in the hands of what was previously known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)—now the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services within the Homeland Security (fascinating semiotic signification). I had just received my Advance Parole and I was a Resident Alien. These concepts were coded as dangerous spaces of being—vulnerable and foreign—criminal and ‘out-of-this-world.’ I recently received the news that my greencard application has been approved. The sense of success/relief/freedom is multi-layered and deserves further analysis. I intend to continue writing about this. Although it can also be reduced by inappropriate comments by citizen friends—as one commented, “Now there is just another step to take in deporting you.” Stay tuned.

Anyway, I have written earlier (Cary, 2003) about the immediate effects of power in the days after the 9/11 tragedy. Issues of silencing, surveillance, and the impossibility of interruptions are central in this analysis. If my work is all about excavating how knowledge/power plays out in the academy, I wondered about teaching/writing/publishing in this space? The work presented in this article is a response to the question I raised in Cary (2003): as a scholar of postcolonial and postmodern theories of education, how was I to connect my work to the horrific reality we all faced? I wondered about being a ‘guest’ of the INS and the increased surveillance of homeland security. This is a global moment, yet I am a postcolonial scholar living in an inscribed national space. So, I am vulnerable because it seems as if the spaces for interruption have become more dangerous—not impossible and still desirable but definitely less spacious. These spaces of interruption paradoxically include issues of citizenship as the ‘frame of belonging.’ As a legal Alien, I was always already suspect. And how we define citizenship in times of crisis is limiting and exclusivist (Popkewitz, 1998; Cary, 2001). There is little leeway for transformative talk (Giroux, 2002). So, how important is it to hear voices from the ‘outside,’ Alien voices? Phillion (2002b) and He (2002) suggest it is very important.

From the moments of initial immersion in the U.S. academy, from initial discomfort and the joyous freedom of my outsidership, I have moved to a more dangerous space of a continuing

desire for interruption and disruption that is framed by a strong desire to benefit from this place. This desire to both interrupt and benefit might be seen as ‘in-between’ space and it is an important realization and one that could inform the work of all those who feel ‘outside’ the academy in any way. It becomes here a space to highlight the interstices—the ways we are shaped and framed and thus how we can work against that. “It is in the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2).

Kagendo: As a Third World woman/African working in the U.S. academy, therefore, I am simultaneously aware of the ambiguity and contradictions that my ascribed identity (as “knowable” and “known” by neocolonial readers or readers of neo/colonial texts) poses that are simultaneously freeing and restricting. It is precisely in working within the hems of my out-of-placeness in the Western academy that affords me the freedom to roam the academy in ways that are at once freeing (because I am clearly a dismissible inconsequential “un-understood, yet known” entity: a strategic essentialism [Spivak, 1993] that I revel in) from the oppressive tyrannies of prescribed/expected membership to particular academic alliances/communities and restricting because I have to constantly swim against the mainstream that often runs deep and muddy as I try to extricate and free myself from the erroneous ways in which my “knowable/known” self has been constructed and encrypted.

The price that I have to pay for this ambiguous freedom is that I often have to live out many “unhomely” (Bhabha, 1994) moments in the academy. The unhomely moments are marked by instances where I am or I am made at once conscious of the inner and outer boundaries that demarcate my dwelling in the U.S./Western academy, the unhomely moments when my survival in the U.S. academy is dependent upon my ability to read my readers and harness the tugging energies of postcoloniality requiring a move away from a world that is defined in absolutes/binaries: black or white, male or female, young or old (Bhabha, 1994). The unhomely moments when my “insider’s outsideness” (Bhabha, 1994) and my outsider’s insideness incidentally touch giving life to the intricate interconnectedness of the multiplicity of my identity as at once neo-nomad, postcolonial, woman, black, African, young, academic. While the multiplicity of my identity in the U.S. academy is at once confounding and confusing, and while I revel in the very freedom the confoundment and confusion creates, performatively, my identity also morphs into many unhomely states of being: the state of being halfway the outsider and the “civilized savage” (MacCannell, 1994) regarded by some as an intrigue, an exception, a token, a “Kizuka.” The Swahili word “Kizuka” aptly captures this unhomely state of being, of being free, of being confined. “Kizuka” tells not only of my experience but also of the deeper exclusionary nature of the U.S. academy by race, class, dis/ability, and gender. It is within this imprecise formulation of my identity that my foreclosure is sealed. Being African provides alibi for Africa’s/Africans’ foreclosure and legitimates my patronization, invisibility, silencing, or juvenilizing. However, the invisibility of “Kizuka” is only apparent to oneself. The state of being “Kizuka” offers unique and powerful lenses through which to view and navigate the academy. Through those lenses, “Kizuka” is the embodiment of and occupies the “implausible possible” (Soja, 1998) space of membership in the Western academy that at once defies and at the same time threatens mainstream definition.

By attempting to position myself smack in the middle of postcolonial discursive practices, “my exercise may be called an unscrupulous travesty in the interest of producing a counter narrative” (Spivak, 1999, p. 9) that renders visible my foreclosure and my lack of access to the

position of narrator/native informant, a position that the discursive of neo/coloniality has produced and encrypted. The “Kizuka” position has provided me my own exclusive and well-cushioned seat of judgment that gives me claim to the right to pass final judgments over all others from my own vision of things. Indeed, my “Kizuka” status gives me claim to exist above the fray of power and politics (McCarthy, 1996)—a proclivity not unlike that shared by other academics, intellectuals, and even politicians particularly in those instances where they have a special claim on intellectual/theoretical super-powerdom or non-partisanship. Within the freedom that my “Kizuka” state provides, I can disavow my ideologies and claim to speak and act from purer more superior motives born of experience. I revel in the identity of “Kizuka” whose encryption is possible only within the discursive of postcoloniality that has emerged as the Western academy undergoes a cathartic self-examination (Gandhi, 1998) that has led to its apologetic desire to include voices previously excluded.

Synthetic Discussion

A number of discourses issues emerged in the narratives and analysis. These discourses include experiences of the journey itself and then negotiating identity in the U.S. academy. What is most important here is the way we center our backgrounds to bring forward the opportunities and sense of privilege that made this journey possible. For example, the privilege of upper-middle class positionalities, excellent educational experiences, and the risk-taking confidence made possible by the ownership of cultural capital. So, who we were, or ‘the way we were’ is just as important as who we are now. And the now includes issues of the institutions we inhabit and the desire for success we carry with us. Other discourses suggest: issues of citizenship (‘good citizen’ versus the Alien and Other); home and travel; language and race; and, political and national identity. We have been sometimes negotiated from positions of being good girls, good teachers, good immigrants, and passive accepting academics. At other times, we have performed elements of resistance. Yet, at all times we desire entrée. The institutional regimes of truth and the effects of power on our bodies are revealed through the discursive production of our epistemological spaces as surveilled, self-regulated, and negotiated possibilities. Therefore, while we center the normalizing and colonizing regimes of truth of the U.S. academy we also hope to make it clear that we are aware of the many advantages of working within such spaces and confess to our desire to benefit from such a relationship.

Living in the Landscapes

This work has been an attempt to personalize theory in narrative and live between the spaces (He, 2002). It is important because it troubles our own claims to authentic knowing/experience as ‘Australian’/‘Kenyan’ or ‘Other,’ yet provides a politics of identity that resists the colonizing project of the U.S. academy while highlighting the complicated nature of that negotiation. The present historical moment is both hopeful and disturbing. From hopefulness with the increased discussion around issues of exclusion and diversity, even within the Supreme Court, to dangerous, antagonistic, conflictual, and inconsolable tensions of the National Security Crisis and the War in Iraq—these tensions and hopes inscribe the subsequent curriculum space (Bhabha, 1994; Britzman, 1998; Cary, 2003). And our journey continues. We no longer work at the same institu-

tion—we live in different states, work at different universities—and this also shapes our researcher relationship. We sometimes think we have ‘arrived’—only to be reminded of the temporary nature of any ‘arrival.’ We think of settling down, and then the siren song of the neo-nomad beckons. We desire modernist trappings—and then feel trapped. We think it is vital to excavate our journeys and our desires as we (Aliens, Outsiders, International Faculty) negotiate the U.S. academy. This epistemological space provides career possibilities that are few and far between ‘at home.’ And yet, the expatriot’s heart is always in-between these spaces—we are unhomed but not homeless (Bhabha, 1994).

In conclusion, as decolonized subjects/post-colonial academics in the U.S. academy it is clear while we desire the spaces of exotic interruption, we also suffer through the epistemic violence of that position.

This is the risk that one must run in order to understand how much more complicated it is to realize the responsibility of playing with or working with fire than to pretend that what gives light and warmth does not also destroy. (Spivak, 1993, p. 283)

And as we engage with postcoloniality, we are conscious of the transformative power inherent in the prefix “post.” “Post” is neither indexical of a mere act of going beyond colonialism in a linear sequential fashion (after colonialism) nor of polarity (anti-colonialism), but rather we have attempted to reveal the discontinuities, the inequalities, the minorities that post/neo/colonialism produces. “Post” is the discursive marker of the beginning of the “presencing” (Bhabha, 1994) of new identities formed within an ex-centric site of postcolonial experience thereby neither limiting postcoloniality to a mere celebration of the fragmentation of colonial texts nor of their dismantling.

Our play on postcoloniality, therefore, bravely attempts to go beyond the rather parochial binaries of critiquing colonial and postcolonial texts thereby suggesting a straight-line progression from the past to the present. The term postcolonial has been anatomically analyzed in literature in terms its morphological anatomy, i.e., with or without a hyphen—post(-) coloniality (see Appiah, 1991).

Heeding Spivak’s (1999) caution, we remain careful not to reinscribe those very texts that place colonialism securely in the past and not to create forced polarities and degrees of validity of postcolonial scholarship. Recognizing the profoundly parochial nature of such an enterprise, rather, we revel in the im/possible discursive space of postcoloniality and attempt to harness its restive energy to transform the present into an expanded more inclusive discursive site where new/possible identities can be hatched and inscribed.

These narratives emerged from collegial discussions and professional experiences within the U.S. academy. It is our belief that the colonizing mentalities of the institutionalization of knowledge are oftentimes obscured and unarticulated. It is our hope that International faculty can read this and begin to find both comfort and possibilities in their own journeys and U.S. (or nation state citizen) faculty might find the stories here complicate their understandings of what it means to exist in this ‘foreign’ space for those of us from Other places. It is important to note that culture and cultural knowing is not static. It is situated, partial, and contingent and this implies that there is no historical location from which a “full comparative account could be produced” (Clifford, 1997, p. 11). Serres and Latour (1995) discuss the nature of time and knowing as a mobile confluence of fluxes:

What I seek to form, to compose, to promote—I can't quite find the right word—is a *syrrhèse*, a confluence not a system, a mobile confluence of fluxes. Turbulences, overlapping cyclones and anticyclones, like on the weather map. Wisps of hay tied in knots. An assembly of relations. Clouds of angels passing. Once again, the flames' dance. The living body dances like that, and all life. Weakness and fragility mark the spot of their most precious secret. I seek to assist the birth of an infant. (Serres with Latour, 1995, p. 122)

We have aimed here to assist in the birth of an intersection or interstice for critical discourse analysis, curriculum studies, and postcolonial theory in order to provide other spaces and different ways of knowing in the field. In particular, we aimed to add another level of analysis to the discussion of narrative in the field of education. Traditionally, research (science) has prescribed a static and fixed subject which, according to Serres with Latour (1995), spawned static systems of knowing and histories of being even though they claimed to describe a process of becoming. But we believe as follows:

It's better to paint a sort of fluctuating picture of relations and rapports—like the percolating basin of a glacial river, unceasingly changing its bed and showing an admirable network of forks, some of which freeze or silt up, while others open up—or like a cloud of angels that passes, or the list of prepositions, or the dance of flames. (Serres with Latour, 1995, p. 105)

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