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***Gender studies scholars seek to examine differences without reifying it. How does Gunaratnam conceive of difference (examples)? Is this different from how Alcoff and Smith conceive, use or problematize differences?***

Maybe start by saying that G is interested in ‘researching across difference’ (137) where difference seems to refer to but is not limited to ‘cultural difference’ Gunaratnam argues ‘**the value of difference’** (2003, page) related to the nature of dialogue which is not about forgetting the location of the researcher but pay attention to the co-creation of meaning) by the researcher and research participants. She states this co-construction process bring ethical and power questions. According to her, insecurities of meaning comes from social (and psychic or intersubjective (141) differences between researchers and participants. Engaging with the ambiguities attached to meaning creates ethical challenges but also insights for the researcher.

Gunaratnam uses one qualitative interview example with Edwin, who is an old man dealing with cancer and living alone. She exemplifies the phrases of him to show how asking certain questions can challenge and eliminate essentialisms in research. For instance, his references to not sleeping in his bed include the meanings related to his life and relationship with his wife. There is the insecurity in the meaning because while he is saying ‘from my wife gone’ he is implying indicating how a feeling of abandonment is terrible for him but he also maintains that is mostly for practical reasons ... Or his references to bed showing his ideas about marital relationship. He is talking about his choice about where to sleep but it shows the researcher how it is linked to his feelings about his life. Gunaratnam also states the context of speaking affects this insecurity in the meaning. While she is asking certain questions and interpreting his answers, the interviewee is also interpreting orienting them to himself. This is affecting the production of insecurities and ambiguity in meaning because they depend on the social and intersubjective differences –such as ethnicity, gender age or health between researcher and research participant. Researchers identify the possibilities in research participant’s life and on the other hand make visible his or her social positionings. Working with those differences gives us different ways of knowing and becoming aware of not knowing.

According to Alcoff, speaking for others can be problematic because there is the risk of reselling or creating the sexual, national and other hierarchies. Alcoff argues that while speaking for others, the researcher may want to be in the position of mastery. This is problematic because speaking for others may lead desire of privilege which may lead not to the empowerment of oppressed groups but a self victory. Yes – but what is her notion of difference? She is concerned both with differences within (any one group) and differences in location/discursive contexts and privilege. (meanings and differnece vary contextually)

For Smith, the position and understanding of the researcher affect the result of the research. She exemplifies the Maori society, whose experiences and living have been defined by Western social scientists who produce knowledge in a ‘superior way’. She criticizes rationality in Western society which makes researchers unable to extend further knowledge about what they research about. For instance, since the cultural definition of Maori does not reflect the western one, the knowledge and notions about Maori are distorted. According to her, this comparative appeal (creation of knowledge by comparing) reduces the decontextualizes the values and practices of Maori people. According to Smith, to eliminate that undervaluation or misrepresentation, researchers should recognize that their assumptions affect their interaction with research participants.

***What is problematic with the ‘retreat position’ and the idea that “I speak only for* myself”?**

The problem is that there is no position where somebody can be unconnected to others in his or her ‘authentic’ self. The autonomy from others given certain conditions cannot be achieved.

No neutral place exists that researcher can stand free because there is no clear cut boundary between one’s location and others. I speak only for myself idea is only for avoiding the responsibility of effect on others. Any speaking on behalf of my own expereinces will affect others with similar experiences (rape example)

***According to Alcoff, what exactly do we have to address to examine a speaker’s location and why this accounting important? Is Alcoff’s reasoning different from standpoint epistemology?***

According to Alcoff, we have to examine the speaker’s location because in many cases not taking into account that position or location reinforces the oppression of the group spoken for. Speaking on behalf of fewer privileged groups may arouse the desire of privilege for the researcher. To examine the location of the speaker is important because “the work of privileged

authors who speak on behalf of the oppressed is coming more and more under criticism from members of those oppressed groups themselves.” (1991, p.)

what about difference from standpoint?