lamija čehajić / answers for block III

/ Describe the processes of contextualising, de-contextualising and re-contextualising in Gunaratnam's case study of Edwin. What is the ambiguity of meaning in this case? How can this three-pronged approach be useful for understanding and questioning differences of emotion, gender and race between interviewer and interviewee?

Gunaratnam describes the sequence of contextualising the perception of difference within one's own milieu, against one's own points of reference, and subsequent de-contextualising that aims for a distancing from one's own perception of the difference and the analysis of the context that has led to this particular formulation of the perception of difference. With this newly established distance of the researcher from their own perception, one analytically approaches the act of re-contextualising to interpret the insecurities of meaning, and the construction of menacing and subjectivities that constitute the ambiguity. For Gunaratnam this process in the case study of Edwin involved contextualising of her own biographical data related to the domain of care, illness and abandonment, her own racial, class and gender social location that formulate her reading of the data collected, and re-contextualising of Edwin's responses and patterns of expression within the wider context of racialised historical contingencies, class conditions and construction of Black masculinities. The ambiguity of meaning, in this case, emerges in the question of emotional expressiveness and Edwin's seeming refusal to admit any emotional involvement or pain. The approach of wider yet more specific contextualisation through which the researcher attempts to understand the difference and localise the root of ambiguity can also be a tool to avoid essentialisation, and to read these differences not as innate or natural, but as products of social negotiation and formation of identities that are localised in the historical, political, cultural and social context.

/ What epistemic counterstrategies do Maori researchers put forward? What is the best way for oppressed people to make their voice be heard when they cannot speak or be heard?

The epistemic counterstrategies of Maori researchers emerged for the activism that began in the 1960s and 1970s, which involved asking questions about the relation between power and knowledge, between the idea of the Other and the reality, based on the colonial injustices and the inability of western education and democracy to emancipate the oppressed indigenous communities. The establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in New Zealand in 1975 was one of the institutional counterstrategies that aimed to represent Maori researchers and their perspective on the colonial past, allowing *iwi* to pursue their own research projects with local institutional support and funds, including the recovery of Maori language, cultural heritage and forms and methods of knowledge. The reclaiming of traditional Maori knowledge and the emancipation of Maori researchers to research Maori tradition challenges Western epistemology

that positioned them as the Other about whom ideologically-driven claims were made under the banner of the scientific method. It challenges not only the data collected but questions the notion of knowledge as a whole as a tenant of the Western perception of rationality and scientific research — it affirms the possibility of alternative localised knowledges with complex structures and epistemologies.

According to the example of Maori researchers, it seems that the most radical way of obtaining one's voice is emancipation from within that reclaims knowledge and research, demanding a say in the knowledge that is formulated and disseminated about them.

/ What is problematic with the 'retreat position' and the idea that "I speak only for myself"?

'Retreat position' refers to the act of speaking only for oneself, which emerges also in feminist discourse, claiming that one cannot influence the opinion of others, nor has the right to assert the opinion as dominant in any sense. Even if one 'retreats' only to the location and perspective that holds their 'truth', aiming for a seeming awareness of their own partiality, the problem that arises within this faux non-hierarchy is that it actually perpetuates the status quo, avoiding engaging in the process of bringing about a chance for a social change. Thus, 'speaking only for oneself' undermines political actions and enforces privileged positions in the social matrix which in 'retreat' are liberated from any responsibility to engage in the emancipation of those who are oppressed — 'retreating' becomes a deeply individualistic, neoliberal manoeuvre to remain within the discursive practices and social positions of privilege, while projecting the image of social awareness and nonviolence.