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Exile and Estrangement in the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies

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What may exile and estrangement bring to one's life?
Hongyu Wang (2004, 3)

Experience, despite its often being understood in subjective terms
alone, comes only with an encounter with otherness
in which the self no longer remains the same.
Martin Jay (2005, 356)

Can internationalization provide opportunities for the intellectual advancement of U.S. curriculum studies? The problem of proximity is paramount. Traumatized by forty years right-wing reaction, we American scholars seem unable distance ourselves from our tragedy, from our victimhood, from our culpability. Like the fly mesmerized by the spider, we remain enmeshed in the web of our present circumstances. As Edward Said (1996) has observed, distance – even estrangement and, as Hongyu Wang implies, exile – may be prerequisites for understanding the history of the present. Not all of us can literally leave our homelands. For those remaining at home, exile and estrangement can be construed as subjective opportunities for intellectual advancement.

One may choose to go into exile, but estrangement is, ordinarily, an unintended consequence of unhappy events, not an end-state to which one aspires. Thirty years ago, however, Maxine Greene (1973) suggested that estrangement enables education (see Block 1998a). Studying international scholarship¹ can function to separate us from our situation. Such distance can provide the space for intellectual advancement, for grounding our present in the past, for discerning passages into a future more cosmopolitan² than our present proximity permits. With Wang (2004, 3) we might ask: “What may exile and estrangement bring to one's life?” As we learn from Wang's powerful posing of the question³, its answering requires leaving home (Block 1998b).

Leaving Home

Home itself can be a third space.
Hongyu Wang (2004, 9)

Contrary to common sense, home is not preexistent or fixed; it is, Wang (see 2004, 6) suggests, always in a process of creation. The stranger – to whose call Wang responds so remarkably – is the fabled “other” invoked by psychoanalytic and multicultural theory. Wang’s conceptualization seems more evocative still: the stranger is another person, yes someone unfamiliar, even (given our parochialism) strange. But the “other” can also be someone quite familiar, a parent perhaps, one’s child or spouse. Who has not discovered something unknown (which we might disavow as “that’s not you”) in someone we thought we knew? Even more intimately (presumably), we might discover the stranger within ourselves.

For Julia Kristeva, Wang (see 2004, 5) reminds us, “woman” enjoys the “peculiar” status of the stranger who is estranged both at home and in the public world. For woman, Wang (2004, 5) reports, the stranger “whispers” from the “shadow.” I am reminded of the famous epistemological metaphor of the campfire (associated with Karl Jaspers). We stay close to the light the fire generates so we may see what surrounds us, but we know the larger world exists beyond the shadows the fire casts.

Wang employs auditory, not visual, metaphors to depict the exploration of what is simultaneously subjective and social, characterizing woman’s journey as one “within,” in search of “lost voices” and “invisible traces.” It is as well a “journey home,” the “return” of what is “repressed, excluded, and alienated.” During such a journey, home does not stay the same; indeed, it is “renewed” (Wang 2004, 5). *Leaving in order to return home*: this is, I submit, the educational potential of internationalization. Ending our narcissistic isolation, our problem of proximity to the nightmare that is the present, we Americans can encounter the “other,” and in so doing, reconfigure our present, thereby providing passages into the future.

By performing intellectually and individually the internationalization of curriculum studies, Wang is also studying herself, a Chinese woman who has come to the United States to study curriculum theory. She has left home – her nation, her parents – to respond to the call of the stranger. In doing so, she discovers that “home” has become strange: “Going back home does not bring me home, but has turned my mother into a stranger. I have become a stranger to myself too” (Wang 2004, 7). Perhaps thinking of Greene and Said, Wang (2004, 7) wonders if the relation between self and stranger is a “central theme” of education?

The teacher as stranger and the intellectual in exile may be familiar images for students of curriculum theory, but Wang answers her question in Kristevan terms. Not only the defamiliarization of the everyday through exile from one’s homeland and estrangement from one’s circumstances enables the critical distance necessary to think creatively. It is, Wang writes, one’s capacity to acknowledge alterity lovingly that initiates an educative process. In this “expansive” process, there is a risk of feeling “uncomfortable,” even among the “familiar,” but such estrangement, Wang (2004, 7-8)

suggests, “inaugurates” the very “possibility” of education. Moreover (here her reference to Kristeva is explicit: see 2004, 8), it is one’s own alterity one encounters in the presence of the stranger.

In this double encounter – alterity in the other and the other in oneself – Wang locates the “third space”⁴. Wang (2004, 16) explains that this is a space wherein one travels “beyond the current forms of life.” It is the third space that opens when the stranger calls one out of oneself, when the stranger inside oneself emerges, enabling one to move away from home toward a destination not yet known.

For Wang, this journey is both a return home and a journey to a foreign land. She records her lived experience in italicized passages throughout the book. She shares with us her intellectual and cultural passage by working her way through three elements of that autobiographical journey: 1) her cultural heritage, represented by Confucius and the traditions associated with that legendary figure, 2) her subjective and political struggle, represented by Foucault and his calls for transgression and creativity, and 3) her gendered journey, represented by Kristeva and her analysis of alterity. The theoretical and the narrative are, in Wang’s work, intertwined (see Wang 2004, 19).

Likewise, these three figures and Wang’s analysis of these three dimensions do not remain fixed in separate spheres; the issues Wang confronts reside in a space between and among them, yes, a third space where she herself – and we, her students – can engage in a course of study inviting us to go into exile and experience estrangement. “Shifting” in this “contradictory” yet “generative space,” Wang (2004, 18) tells us, she searches for a “transformative curriculum” (Doll 1993) and a “transcendent pedagogy.” It is a curriculum juxtaposing Confucius, Foucault, and Kristeva.

Focusing only on those specific aspects of these figures’ works that speak to her own “journey” into a “third space” (2004, 19), Wang invites us to travel with her through these discourses into our own spheres of “self-creation” (2004, 19). Through cross-cultural philosophical inquiry, gender analysis, and autobiography, Wang attempts to rethink inter/subjectivity in this presumably postmodern age. As an interdisciplinary effort to renew our understanding of self and curriculum, Wang works to disclose multiple and different layers of reality simultaneously.

To focus on the self, on intersubjective individuality, is, then, to focus on culture, politics, and gender. It is to emphasize alterity. The “transformative” and “creative” third space Wang seeks is, she knows, “impossible” unless she journeys simultaneously “both outside and inside,” and unless she listens to the “call of the stranger” (Wang 2004, 20). This call is to return home, but not the home one left, but, instead, a third space “beyond the binaries of self/other, femininity/masculinity, and semiotic/symbolic” (2004, 20).

There, back in a home we may not have known we could inhabit, the self can be “re-created”; there curriculum becomes “self-generative.” To listen to the call requires, of course, yearning, and a

willingness to endure the hardships of the journey. Wang (2004, 24) acknowledges that it was a “personal yearning” that brought her to the West. In the United States, however, she experienced no “induction into Western selfhood,” but, rather, the “deconstruction” of Western traditions, via “the death of the subject” (2004, 24). In the United States, Hongyu Wang met Michel Foucault.

Differentiation, Creation, Innovation

The care of the self requires one to form a political relationship first with oneself.
Hongyu Wang (2004, 36)

Studying Foucault, Wang discovers there is no essential Western selfhood. Indeed, Wang understands Foucault as rejecting subjective essence, embracing, instead, “critical” and “creative” spaces of subjectivity undetermined by any “essential” self (2004, 25). She quotes Foucault: “The relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity; rather, they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation” (1982, 166; quoted in Wang 2004, 25). Through his rejection of an essential identity, Foucault calls for self-creation.

Wang understands Foucault’s call for resistance against the social construction of the “normal” individual as much more than a “negation” of the status quo; it is, she notes, a “creative self-constitution” through challenging the situation and “opening up new modes” of “individuality” from political control by religion, institutions, or media (Wang 2004, 25). Foucault elaborates a “doubled-faced” subject who constantly reconstitutes her or himself – actively reconstructs her or his subjectivity – beyond what s/he has been conditioned or “normalized” to be (see Wang 2004, 27). As Wang (2004, 26) notes, Foucault emphasizes the concrete exercise of “freedom” over the abstract appeal of “liberation.”

Wang summarizes Foucault’s theorization of such “freedom” in ancient Greece and Rome. These pre-Christian forms of self-care, she tells us, were a “soul-oriented” undertaking to be continued throughout one’s life, with specific attention to the body. It is the “practice of freedom” through “mastery” (2004, 28). Through the regulation of food, pleasure, one’s daily regimen, and one’s relations with others, including relations with boys⁵, “moderation” replaced “excess” (2004, 29). In its mastery of emotions and regulation of desires, moderation becomes a “virtue” enabling men to exercise power over themselves and others (2004, 29). In this ancient system of ethics, Wang (2004, 30) points out, the freedom of the individual is “closely related” to the freedom of the polis.

In ancient Greek and Roman sexual ethics, then, freedom was based upon rational self-mastery; today, freedom takes the form of resistance against mastery by social domination. In the Foucault’s ontology of the self, freedom invites transgression against historical limitations, emphasizing creativity and the production of new existential possibilities. Through Foucault’s different versions of freedom there is consistency, Wang (see 2004, 31) suggests: freedom is always contextual rather than abstract or universal (see,

also, Ransom 1997).

Critics of Foucault's notion of self-care accuse him of blurring the boundaries among politics, aesthetics, and ethics. Chinese culture does not demarcate among the three, Wang tells us; if Foucault is guilty of blurring boundaries, she is not distressed. Her interest, Wang notes, is to support self-creation through "*critical aesthetics*" and "*relational ethics*" (2004, 35). Given many men's expectations of women as nurturers, she continues, men's restructuring of ethical relations with others inevitably invites women's subjective reconstruction.

"For me," Wang (2004, 37) tells us, "the priority of self-care over the care of the other, as masculine as it is, becomes an important moment in establishing my identity as a woman." After all, a complex and critical relationship with self cannot be achieved independent of relationships with others. Such caring for others does not, however, require self-effacement. As Wang (see 2004, 38) appreciates, Foucault's ethics and aesthetics are simultaneously a politics against social submission and a private politics against an essentialized self, creating a passage to a politics of cultural creation, that is, to think, to perceive, and to live "otherwise." Differentiation, creation, and innovation characterize these intellectual movements of subjective and social reconstruction.

Under the Gaze of the Soul

Sexuality is not so much about our secret desires as about new possibilities for creative life.
Hongyu Wang (2004, 39)

The care of the self in ancient Greco-Roman ethics was, Foucault insisted, concerned with the mastery of the self. The body was the passage to a beautiful soul. In this ancient period, Wang notes (see 2004, 41), boys' so-called passive sexual postures with adult men was not only "feminine," it was immoderate, given the conflation of femininity with the inability to master one's appetites. In sexually aggressive positions, men were, presumably, able to establish a virile attitude toward oneself in the exercise of active freedom.

Especially in his later interviews (see, also, Eribon 2004), when speaking about "becoming gay" and against homosexuality as the secret truth defining the self, Foucault expressed his conviction that sexuality, through the exploration of bodily pleasures, enables us to create new forms of relationship, new forms of thought, new forms of life, new forms of self (see Wang 2004, 30). In particular, Foucault believed that experimentation with bodily pleasures not confined to sexual desire can, Wang (2004, 39) summarizes, transport one to the "edge" where the (Cartesian) ego dissolves. In Foucault's view, the body is also not only physiological, but cultural and historical. Wang (2004, 40) wonders if women can appropriate Foucault's ethics and aesthetics of self-creation to "expand their ... freedom?"

With the hegemony of Christianity, self-mastery was replaced by obedience to God: the body today remains, in the West, “under the gaze of the soul” (Wang 2004, 45). Without restructuring this relationship between body and soul, we cannot undertake the refashioning of self. Without the experience of sexual experimentation restructuring the relationship between body and soul, Foucault seems to be suggesting, subjective and social reconstruction cannot occur (see Bersani 1995, 90). In gendered self-care, Wang (see 2004, 46) underscores, the self becomes a site for registering and contesting social injustice.

Such contestation occurs not only in the public sphere, but in the private as well. In Foucault’s later works, transgression is transfigured into a rupture within oneself. In several interviews, Wang (see 2004, 47) points out, Foucault claims repeatedly that he writes in order to become somebody else (see also Miller 1993). He seeks not to arrive at some final destination known as “self-knowledge” but, rather, to travel somewhere unknown, not yet extant. In Foucault’s ethics of the self, Wang (2004, 47) notes, an “intense interiority” is transformed into social change. She wonders (see 2004, 48) if, in Foucault’s interest in becoming somebody else, there is also a certain gendered element. Is self-sacrifice necessarily negative? Women’s self-cultivation is more likely, Wang (see 2004, 51, n. 1) believes, if women can avoid choosing between self-sacrifice and self-creation. To employ Foucault’s ideas for feminist identity politics, then, Wang (see 2004, 50) argues that women need to rethink the dualities already encoded in the Greco-Roman traditions Foucault attempts to surpass.

“To Light the Path Under My Feet”

I am deeply suspicious of any efforts
to break with the past completely.
Hongyu Wang (2004, 54)

For Wang (2004, 54), to return to Confucianism is an “ambivalent project,” and not only because Confucianism has long been “condemned” for persisting problems of Chinese culture, and specifically for “suppressing women.” She does so, however, to recover the Confucian antecedents of contemporary Chinese culture⁶, hoping to “reclaim” this tradition in order to create “new forms of life” (Wang 2004, 55). In that phrase, we hear the echo of Foucault as Wang confronts her cultural and gendered past. She wonders how Confucius’ teachings were converted into a dogma suppressing individual freedom. She (2004, 55) asks: “How can we regenerate this tradition without being caught in its shadow?”

I wonder: can we Americans confront our own cultural past with such candor?

For Confucius, Wang (2004, 56) reports, self-cultivation is fundamental to both individual and society; social reform is

achieved through that personal transformation which occurs through education. Morality, politics, and education occur through personal cultivation; this becomes, Wang tells us, a “cornerstone” of Confucius’ teaching (2004, 56). Selfhood is, for Confucius, a “lifelong project” that is never finished, an “unfolding process” of “continuous transformation” and “becoming” (Wang 2004, 56). It is profoundly relational: “*belonging*, instead of *identity*” (2004, 128) is the key term. Moreover, Confucius believed that everyone has the capacity to become a sage; he insisted that education is for everyone, not just the elite (see Wang 2004, 57).

Students are guided to different paths, but each path follows the same “Way” (see Wang 2004, 57). To illustrate, Confucius advised one student who was audacious to become more retiring; he advised a timid student to become more aggressive. “This pedagogy of responding to differences,” Wang [2004, 58] notes, “indicates that the Confucian Way is not a fixed principle but, instead, is situated.” As the U.S. progressives appreciated (see Dewey 1934), the arts must be central in such a curriculum; Wang (see 2004, 59) explains that Confucius’ curriculum of self-cultivation begins with poetry and culminates in music.

This is no Western “cult of individualism,” in which the collective is condemned for the sake of individual profit and power. Confucius’ self-cultivation does not proceed in isolation; it is embedded in relationships with others (see Wang 2004, 59). Wang (2004, 60) quotes Confucius: “wishing to be enlarged himself, [one] seeks to also to enlarge others.” Confucius sought harmony without conformity (see Wang 2004, 60).

Indeed, cultivating an independent personality is a Confucian virtue. Fully realized, such independence can be expressed either in open rebellion against despotic rule or in silent retreat to cultivate one’s own inner self (see Wang 2004, 61). Such a search for “inner light,” supported by personal integrity and dignity seems, Wang (2004, 61) suggests, “similar” to the ancient Greco-Roman traditions of struggling with the self to achieve a fulfilling life. Study for the sake of the self rather than for the approval of others implies, Wang (2004, 62) points out, that for Confucius self-cultivation was an “end in itself” and that “self-realization is immanent in every person’s effort to achieve humanity.” The Confucian Way, Wang summarizes, enables both individual and social transformation. If we appreciate the inextricable relation between self and society in Confucius’ teaching, Wang (see 2004, 62), explains, we realize that the point of personal cultivation is simultaneously subjective and social. “Unfortunately,” Wang (2004, 65) laments, “only one side” of Confucius’ teachings was encoded in the “institutionalization” of his teaching. Confucianism – in contrast to Confucius’ teachings - functioned to strengthen the control of the state and the family over the individual in general and over women in particular.

As the “state cult” (Wang 2004, 65), the fate of Confucius’ teachings constitutes a Chinese “tragedy,” Wang (2004, 65) believes. For instance, the degeneration of Confucianism into an “ossified dogma,” Wang (2004, 66) asserts, “contributed” to the decline of ancient China. If, as Foucault argues, the ancient Greco-Roman

tradition of self-care was usurped by a Christian compulsion for self-knowledge and a quest for spiritual salvation through self-sacrifice, likewise, Wang (2004, 68) suggests, Confucius' teaching on personal cultivation is "shadowed" by Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

Thinking of the West as it is represented in Foucault and the East as it is encoded in Confucius, Wang identifies limitations in both traditions, specifically regarding the construction and experience of "difference." In Confucianism, Wang (2004, 72) acknowledges, alterity can be accommodated, while in the West there is a tendency to "objectify" the other. However, Wang (2004, 74) believes it is "simplistic" to characterize Chinese thinking as "relational" and Western thinking as "dualistic." Indeed, Wang (2004, 76) finds "common themes" of self-cultivation in both traditions. These are, she believes, "affirmative" themes, among them "lifelong commitment, critical self-reflection, and personal integrity." There are "destructive" themes as well, especially "elitist" and "patriarchal tendencies" (2004, 76).

To become creatively engaged in a dialogue with the West, Wang (2004, 76) believes, it is necessary for Chinese to reclaim the Confucian affirmation of "relationality" while, at the same time, searching for new ways of promoting "individuality." Moreover, and the "we" in the following sentence need not refer only to Chinese but to Americans as well, "I believe we need to generate a new sense of relational individuality, situated in dynamic and complex cultural connections, social interactions, and cosmic processes" (Wang 2004, 76).

How can we generate this new sense of relational individuality? Internationalization may provide one opportunity: "The more profound one's participation in dialogic encounters across differences with others and with the world," Wang (2004, 76-77) writes, "the more deeply and creatively one's own individuality evolves." While one need not leave one's homeland to encounter difference, the alterity internationalization forefronts cannot be so readily subsumed in local patterns of prejudice and objectification. These "dialogic encounters" may lead to a common curriculum vocabulary, but its aim is not the universalism globalization threatens. "Mutual transformation does not aim at universality," Wang (2004, 77) believes, "but attempts to bring forth the creative imagination of each party, depicting new sceneries of the self while contributing to the other's own self-creation."

Before departing the city where she had completed her undergraduate degree, Wang went to the home of a professor with whom she had studied. Known as a "great" Confucian, this professor had always encouraged Wang to "keep going" and to "cultivate a rich inner life" despite the distractions of a "turbulent" world. After saying goodbye, she descended the stairway into the darkness of night; her teacher remained behind her, holding a flashlight to "light the path under my feet." She muses: "Light. Held by a Confucian for me, for my future. This is a powerful image I have always kept deeply in my heart." Years later, struggling with Confucianism in the United States, this image suddenly returned.

I knew at that moment that, despite all odds and difficulties, I was going to carry and renew this light. It is a light within, shining on a continuous path of an old civilization that could be rejuvenated, a part of me already existing long before I was born. (Wang 2004, 53)

The rejuvenation of Chinese civilization – as Foucault’s analysis implies civilizational rejuvenation in the West – would seem to be, at least in part, a gendered project.

“Polyphonic Dialogue”
Hongyu Wang (2004, 88)

Can we imagine new visions of humanity and cosmology through listening to the call of the stranger that is woman?
Hongyu Wang (2004, 85)

While disinclined to use Western feminist theory for a gendered critique of Confucianism (that would be, she says, a “decontextualized project” [see 2004, 79]), Wang is clear that Confucianism is patriarchal. The metaphysics developed in the institutionalization of Confucius’ teachings in Neo-Confucianism made women’s situation “much worse” (2004, 82). Facing this historical and cultural fact can “plant seeds” for “cultural reconstruction” (2004, 82). She exclaims: “How I wish these Confucian masters had been more loyal to their mothers’ teaching!” (Wang 2004, 83) It is clear to Wang (2004, 84) that the “ecology” of Confucian subjectivity, however “relational” and “cosmic” it is, does not offer women a “space of their own.”

Despite the patriarchy of Chinese culture (patriarchy and its complement, misogyny, are hardly unique to China, of course), Wang points out that motherhood is regarded an “important stage for education” in contemporary China. The gendered image of teacher – in China, too, teaching is a women’s profession – as a “candle” that lightens the lives of others is a “common” metaphor (2004, 84). Wang confides: “My own mother has been a key teacher in my life. An outstanding professor herself, well loved by her students, she dared to challenge authorities” (2004, 83). Wang’s mother’s influence and coming of age during a period of official equality between women and men contradicted Wang’s social experience of gender (see 2004, 83-84). Following Kristeva’s lead, Wang (2004, 84) comes to believe that “psychic transformation ... is key ... in rearticulating woman’s space.”

“Let us ... listen carefully to ourselves through Kristeva’s voice,” Wang (2004, 85) admonishes her readers. That voice, Wang (2004, 89) believes, is “revolutionary” as Kristeva’s work destabilizes the subject through “regenerating” the significance of the maternal for the human psyche. Wang (2004, 92) characterizes the Kristevan concept of the semiotic (gendered feminine) as the “rejected

stranger” whose return challenges the stability of the (especially paternal) subject. This return is inevitable due to the constitution of the subject in spaces between alterities (see Wang 2004, 92). Does the subject come to form, then, in a third space, between the feminine and the masculine? Is the call of the stranger an invitation to regress to an earlier state of self-constitution, and reconstruct subjectivity?

While I focus on the reconstruction of men’s subjectivity (Pinar 2001, 2006), Wang attends to questions of women’s. “What is the feminine after all?” Wang (2004, 93) wonders. “Is it possible,” she (2004, 95) asks, for women to surpass their estrangement in language by “embodying the unnamable” and “reorganizing psychic structure” through a “new space” of reading and writing? She answers this question affirmatively, suggesting that the efforts of women to “think the unthinkable” and to “represent the unrepresentable” create passages towards the “unknown ... world of plural singularity.” This last phrase restructures in gendered terms Sartre’s conception of historical subjectivity as the “universal singular” (1981, ix) and Zizek’s (1991, 156) fantasmatic conception of subjectivity as the “absolutely particular.”

It is women’s recognition of the strangeness “inside” that enables, Wang (2004, 95) suggests, the transformation of femininity into a “creative site” within society. Not only men create difficulty for women’s self-transformation, Wang (2004, 96) implies, pointing to the incest taboo and daughters’ developmental movement away from the mother as creating “double difficulty.” Despite this double difficulty, Wang (2004, 95) believes that writing “through” and “about” lived experience may enable women to “negotiate” those “difficult passages” between the maternal and paternal and thereby create new forms of knowledge.

Negotiating passages between the maternal and paternal creates a “generative site.” Kristeva’s work, Wang (2004, 111) acknowledges, is a “daring” and “inspiring” project, one requiring the rethinking of the human psyche through bringing body into language. It challenges the hegemonic formations of identity, self, and inter/subjectivity. Wang believes Kristeva’s work holds particular promise for women, inviting the expression of “individuality” and “strangeness” in “new” ways. Kristeva theorizes, Wang (2004, 111) underscores, a “paradoxical community” comprised of “plural singularities.” She reconstructs self-other relationships based upon the notions of the stranger within and creative maternity. At the same time, she calls for a new politics of nations.

Despite her enthusiasm, Wang cautions us that Kristeva must be read critically and interculturally. Wang (see 2004, 111-112) recalls that Kristeva learned a number of Chinese characters for her study of differences between Chinese as an ideographic language and English/French as phonetically oriented languages. Wang criticizes Kristeva for imagining the Chinese language as preoedipal. Chinese culture is less about Oedipus, Wang (see 2004, 122) insists, and more about the *Tao*.

The Third Space

A third space is about passage and making passages.
Hongyu Wang (2004, 149)

While skeptical of it as a universal theory, Wang (2004, 118) has no intention of dismissing psychoanalysis as “a way” of understanding and interpreting human experience. In her criticism of Kristeva (at which I have here only hinted), she wants to complicate the theory by underlining cultural difference. In particular, she wants to affirm the centrality of both relationships and individual freedom in “a cross-cultural third space” (2004, 118). When the maternal is present in language, as it is in the Chinese language, language learning is not necessarily marked by “separation from, or least not a full break with, the mother” (Wang 2004, 118). Wang notes that the Chinese pronunciation of s/he or her/him is the same (see 2004, 116). There is little gender ambiguity or equity, however, as many pictorial representations portray women “kneeling” (2004, 17). Is this a Chinese version of American “gracious submission”? (see Pinar 2004)

While keenly conscious of the conservative character of culture, Foucault also saw power’s fragility. For him, culture and power are the background against which new visions of life can be imagined and created. Kristeva subverts the conservative through creativity. In contrast, the Confucian self supports both continuity and transformation (see Wang 2004, 119). Foucault seldom provides a vision of community, but he implies that there can be a community that enables the creation of both self and other. Both Kristeva and Confucius focus on the relationship between self and other, but Kristeva pays much more attention to alterity and difference, and the deep psychic structures underlying these. While Confucius also attends to the self “within,” it is not in any psychoanalytic sense; rather, it is in the sense of an inner cultivation of an independent personality situated in the “ecology of selfhood” (Wang 2004, 120).

When she started this project, Wang (see 2004, 121) reports, she had hoped that Kristeva would enable her connect Confucius and Foucault, given her linking of the social with the individual through creativity. To some extent, Wang concludes, Kristeva does bridge the two when she theorizes how the self becomes individualized and creative through the mother/child bond. However, this bridge is “fragile” given her acknowledgement that relationality is fashioned from separation and division. Kristeva shares more with Foucault, Wang suggests, at least in terms of attending to differences, and less with Confucius when she probes into psychic processes structuring the self. Wang hears echoes of certain Confucian traditions of self-cultivation in Foucault’s emphasis upon self-study and self-care. The Confucian emphasis on social relationships seems contrary to Foucault’s focus on the subjectification of the self, however, as it does to Kristeva’s portraiture of paradoxical self-other relationships. And Kristeva’s theorization of “creative womanhood” is “beyond” both Foucault and Confucius (Wang 2004, 121).

Does the work of each complement the others, Wang (see 2004, 121) asks; are intersections possible? Where has her juxtaposition of these three left her? With these questions has Wang’s journey come to a cul-de-sac? She acknowledges that while passages can be stitched among the three, she also faced what felt like “dead ends,”

demanding that she take “detours” (2004, 121). The gender issue became, she concedes, a “labyrinth” (2004, 121).

At this point, it is an image provided by Chinese poetry that encourages Hongyu Wang; it is advice to the weary traveler: “when you believe you have reached a dead end, another village is actually ahead of you” (2004, 121). Wang (2004, 121) expresses this conviction pedagogically: “Beyond dead ends,” she is convinced, there awaits “another passage,” but the difficulty of the journey is something we must not keep a secret but, rather, “share with our students” (2004, 121). Like Confucius, Wang wants to inspire students to stay on their own path even when the way ahead seems blocked or unclear.

For a time her path is blocked. Wang writes that she is “dazzled/puzzled by the light/shadow of an exit, by the im/possibility of coming out anew” (2004, 125). Here the structure of this form of curriculum scholarship - the synoptic text - resembles that of subjective reconstruction, as Wang’s (2004, 125) self-report suggests:

I confront this difficult work of connecting bits, parts, and fragments (all are in me nevertheless), self-imposed effort – mirrored back from the imagined anticipation of my readers – of weaving pieces of the self into a true fiction of a cross-cultural gendered space, an imaginative realm embedded in the undercurrent of unsayable interconnections.

It is a poetic and gendered space where words come only with difficulty, a fictive space in which one fashions a unified self out of fragments, a “singular rhythm (2004, 125).

This is also a gesture in response to the other, that alterity that is the knowledge of the other, knowledge that summons the alterity within, otherness rendered silent by circumstance or design. I hear Foucault’s call for a “specific intellectual” in Wang’s (2004, 129) depiction of the call of the stranger as inviting movement “toward the beyond,” but not beyond understood in Western ways as absolute or metaphysical truth. Rather, such movement

toward the beyond is *with* the web of interconnections. Only through efforts to reach *out* can the deep connections within be touched, felt, and transformed. In a third space.

For me, this notion is reminiscent of the tripartite identificatory space of the child (Edelman 1994), the child not as abstract signifier (Baker 2001, Edelman 2004), but as Nietzsche’s “overman,” not acting on his own behalf, however, but as midwife birthing the new age. This “overman” is not a man, but a woman, not European, but Chinese.

In this “third space” individuality and relationality “intertwine” and

“collide,” but the image here is not one of dialectical fusion. Rather, for Wang (2004, 131), the two are “separate” yet together, parted yet holding hands, alone yet with the other,” enabling us to seek “independence *through* and *for* interdependence.” This is no U.S. cult of individualism, in which the social is sacrificed for individual gain; this is no Soviet style socialism, in which the individual disappears into the collective.

This is, instead, a third and “gendered story” in which women, not men, are the central characters, women with a “profound sense of interconnection,” claiming rooms of their own, wherein “the silence of the relational and the new words of the singular can begin to speak, in a new tongue” (2004, 131). One hears here the echoes of Foucault’s self-care, self-invention, and the creation of culture. There is, as well, the sound of Kristeva’s symphony wherein dissonance and difference initiate new possibilities (see Wang 2004, 131). In my terms, these are the sounds of subjective and social reconstruction.

These are also acts of freedom “with” instead of “against” the world, reminiscent of Confucius’ ideal of “creative unity” between self and other (2004, 136). Here the dissonance of alterity and transgression recede in an experience of reconstruction as rhythmic. Wang (2004, 135) invokes the imagery of ecology as well as music when she acknowledges that the “pain” of invention is made tolerable by the harmony that is the “simultaneity” of “against” and “with” the world around and in us. In such “double difficulty,” Wang (2004, 135) continues,

Pain no longer splits, but, like the stream of a waterfall, laps against our bodies with regenerative force; harmony refuses to support escapism, but like the slope of a mountain, accelerates our breath with inspiring interconnectedness. In such a third space, the violence of dualism is gently guided back into a larger life force, and the self-contentedness of holism firmly curves out toward new openings. In and out, back and forth, such is the rhythm of the third.

It is rhythm of sound without language as its defining feature (see Wang 2004, 146).

A psychic space of embodiment (see Wang 2004, 144), this pulsating third space is not only inaudible but invisible. “Like the elusive stranger,” Wang writes, “as soon as words are spoken to describe it, the third space shifts away.” It lies “beyond the mastering of language.” Incapable of arrest, indeed as if “invested” in its own absence, the third space “keeps renewing itself precisely at the moment when its own location is displaced” (Wang 2004, 144). It is a space of “dwelling in and stretching out” a “conflicting hybrid interplay of positioning and displacement” produced by “the other in me” (Wang 2004, 147).

About “passage and making passages” (2004, 149; see Daignault 1992), the third space requires “polyphonic conversation” to provide distance from one’s “psychic affiliation” (2004, 148). Such

disaffiliation enables the teacher to be open to the “student-as-stranger” whose potential is structured by “irreducible singularity”; through the student the teacher’s confrontation with “her own otherness within” is mirrored back (2004, 158). After all, “one cannot *educate* without moving oneself” (Wang 2004, 163). “However fluid and relational the self can be,” Wang (2004, 177) asserts, the “singular experiencing” of the individual is “essential” to self-cultivation.

In this third space, there is no demand that the subjective and the social stay separate or become fused; it is (after Aoki: see 2005 [1985/1991], 232), in their tensioned movement that education becomes possible (see Wang 2004, 178). And nothing is possible without the “call from the stranger” (Wang 2004, 179). Wang (2004, 181) concludes: “As a call [from the stranger], this book invites all those who are in search of new spaces to join in this journey, a journey essentially educational.” She asks: “Are we ready - side by side, connected yet apart – to go?” (Wang 2004, 183) Are we?

Connected Yet Apart

The first critical task of genealogy, then, involves distancing oneself from the institution, morality, or worldview that is investigated.

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Are we ready to confront alterity within, a subjective encounter with double difficulty⁸? In contrast, it seems easy to accommodate “diversity” outside us, safely segregated in the social. Are we ready to abandon the culture of careerist self-promotion, that cult of individualism within curriculum studies, in order to extend to others, especially to those whose generational and cultural locations position them as “other” to senior scholars⁹? Are we ready to support “the next moment”¹⁰ in curriculum studies in which our accomplishment becomes background for the present accomplishments of others whose time has now come? Can we¹¹ engage in democratic dialogue with scholars whose national cultures compel questions of curriculum that do not resemble our own?

No monosyllabic declarations of affirmation will suffice, of course. These are complex cultural questions, answers to which require self-cultivation and social transformation. These are - after Foucault – “specific” questions addressed by and to “specific” intellectuals and scholars. They do not require grand events, say, the eclipse of capitalism (although that cataclysmic event would restructure both the questions and our individual and collective answers to them); they require us to confront the “space” we have inherited and inhabit as individuals and as a field of study. As Wang’s work makes clear, this self-confrontation requires study – academic and subjective – as it is ourselves as existing individuals we must reconstruct.

Our self-absorption intensified by the sense of victimhood the 2001 terrorist attacks instantiated (and right-wing politicians exploited), Americans seem unable to attend to the world around them. We suffer the problem of proximity. We require distance. Not all of us enjoy the opportunity of exile, but we can cultivate a state of

estrangement. Within curriculum studies, this means studying the work of others, especially scholars working in other nations as well as foreign nationals and immigrants working within the United States. While hardly without historical precedent in the field (see Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 14), the contemporary movement toward the internationalization of U.S. curriculum studies provides an opportunity we can seize to reconstruct ourselves subjectively and socially. To begin, we must study the work of our colleagues who are not like us, who do not share our history, who may not share our interests, who may not understand curriculum as we do.

Through exile and estrangement, we might initiate what Wang (2004, 135) has characterized as the “pain of invention.” Recall that it is a pain made tolerable by the harmony that is the “simultaneity” of being “against and with” the world around and in us. In such “double difficulty,” Wang (2004, 135) tells us, “pain no longer splits, but, like the stream of a waterfall, laps against our bodies with regenerative force.” Are we ready to go? Given our internal exile within the United States, given our estrangement from the schools and from those policymakers who would keep us divided not only from school teachers but among ourselves, where else shall we turn but the borders? Let us follow Hongyu Wang (see 2004, 75) in her search for a third space through intercultural conversation, a space wherein new forms of life can be created.

This is the space for which I search in the complicated conversation that is the internationalization of curriculum studies. It is a space wherein we can create new forms of educational life, including the emergence of a worldwide – transnational (see Gough 2004) - curriculum studies field with a vocabulary and intellectual agenda that expresses and addresses both national and international curriculum questions. To participate in this complicated conversation, let us listen to the call from the stranger. S/he will take us there, a “there” that is an unknown destination we might someday call home.

Notes

1. That is, scholarship undertaken abroad and scholarship conducted at home but undertaken by foreign nationals and immigrants.
2. From the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, cosmopolitan is defined as a) having worldwide rather than limited or provincial scope or bearing, b) having wide international sophistication: WORLDLY, c) composed of persons, constituents, or elements from all or many parts of the world, d) found in most parts of the world and under varied ecological conditions. Each of these definitions is relevant here.
3. I refer to her 2004 book entitled *The Call from the Stranger on a Journey Home: Curriculum in a Third Space*.
4. Ted Aoki, too, appreciated international – and multicultural

- curriculum work as creating a “third space” (2005 [1996], 318) and, specifically, between East and West.
5. Foucault draws a sharp distinction between the ancient love of boys and contemporary homosexual relationships (see Wang 2004, 29).
 6. Other contemporary Chinese curriculum scholars also attempt to resuscitate Confucianism: see Zhang and Zhong 2003).
 7. See Dworkin (1974) for an introduction to misogyny worldwide.
 8. I am thinking of the gendered and cultural difficulty of subjective reconstruction, difficulty through which Wang has moved as she listens to the call of alterity.
 9. Generational tensions were forefronted during the 1970s Reconceptualization of the field (see Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 4). Recently, they have surfaced in practices associated with the “peer review” of scholarly manuscripts (see Kumashiro et al. 2005).
 10. I am referring to the state-of-the-field conference held at Purdue University February 16-19, 2006: www.education.purdue.edu/thenextmoment
 11. I have employed a rhetorical “we” throughout, meaning, at times, senior curriculum studies scholars and, at other times, simply, Americans. Of course, I intend *no* implication of uniformity or homogeneity (culturally, politically, intellectually) in any use of “we.” Identities are splintered, contested, multivariate.

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