

Narrative Fictions and Covert Colonialism: Linguistic and Cultural Control through Education in the Colonies

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1. Introduction

Language builds reality. It codes how we view the world and ourselves. Around the world, language and its derivatives – discourse and narrative – have been constructed, organized, used, and made available to and by the powerful. This concept is particularly important when considering colonial contexts, and especially the education systems set up by representatives of the powerful, and foreign, colonizer. Missionary schools, while located outside the economic and political spheres of domination, were a field of colonial cultural authority and dominion nonetheless. In this paper I will utilize two texts, one fictional and one autobiographical, in my exploration of missionary schools as a site of colonial cultural ascendancy. Concentrating on English missionary schools for clarity and to maintain a center of focus, I will look at the trauma that intermingled with arguably the most positive and emancipatory aspect of colonialism: education. Through Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, we will be given a fictional glimpse of life under official colonial rule in Rhodesia, fiction being one of the best mediums through which we can see both the personal and the public effects of colonial education. Fiction is a voyeuristic view into the private, not a public look at a private space, but a breakdown entirely, which will add greatly to our discourse. Our other text, Zitkala-Sa's book, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*, has an autobiographical section in which Zit-

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kala-Sa describes her own experiences with colonial schooling and its long-lasting effects. While Zitkala-Sa's account does not take place under conventional colonial rule, I argue that because of the continued, internal colonial domination of the indigenous peoples of the United States, Zitkala-Sa's narrative of her education can be markedly illuminating in a postcolonial analysis. Summaries of the two texts will not be unnecessary, for I will only be looking at the small cross-section of colonial education and its effects, a narrow – though essential – aspect of the larger narratives. Through these texts as well as several postcolonial analyses, I plan to show that education is a fundamental subject of postcolonial study. It is through education that colonialism moved out of the public realm into the private. Through the use of the English language as a medium for instruction, missionary teachers taught more than the subjects of school; they instructed their students in the culture of the colonizer, teaching their students to speak, act, and, more importantly, think through the mindset of their colonial subjugators.

English missionary education enforced, however unconsciously or purposefully, European cultural modes. Students were taught the correct and natural faith (read Christian), the correct way to speak (read English), and the correct and natural relationship types (read monogamous, heterosexual, companionate marriages within nuclear families) – 'correct' and 'natural' of course being defined linguistically and culturally by the colonial powers. Education, in teaching compulsory heterosexuality within a European relationship structure, forced itself into the most private sectors of personal life. It literally worked to gain access to the bedrooms of the colonial subjects. Students were taught from the inside out – from the private to the public – to separate themselves from their culture and to champion the 'better', more 'natural', 'civilized' cultures of Europe.

The private/public binary is a narrative fiction founded upon a colonial economy that divided the public and private realms between the paid labor of the market and the unpaid labor of the home. This economic divide was the foundation of the fiction that colonial rule had left the private realm of colonized peoples 'untouched'. But colonial influence extended far beyond economic control. Through missionary schools, an appendage of colonial society that was not connected to the structures of colonial government, European domination ran deeply into the 'private' sphere of people's lives. The private/public divide is invalidated when colonial influence is considered from all its many fronts. From the economy to the government, from the law to the schools, colonialism left no facet of society untouched. This binary is a fiction that persists today, and one that is in fact very damaging for efforts, past and present, to combat (post)colonial (discursive) control.

2. Narrative Fictions and Colonial Education

The public/private binary was not the only narrative fiction constructed by and for colonialism. The terms of the binaries slip into each other, making such terms as 'natural', 'European', and 'heterosexual' linguistically synonymous. The slippage between terms turns each individual binary into one, long, interconnected dichotomous fiction. Literary theorists Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan write: "All power structures are contingent; that is, they lack a logical ground or a natural foundation. As a result, they must rely on cultural narratives that assure their legitimacy" (Rivkin and Ryan 646). Colonial powers depended upon narrative fictions; among the many are those of cultural and racial superiority, and those of 'normativity'. Anything that deviated from the white, wealthy, heterosexual male norm was subordinated hierarchically beneath it. Infiltrating this narrative into the cultural narratives of the colonial subjects was essential to spreading and sustaining the domination of colonial discourses, both during colonialism, and long after its political eradication.

Missionary education acted as a channel for this infiltration. Postcolonial theorist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, writes in his "Decolonizing the Mind": "Economic and political control of a people can never be complete without cultural control" (1142). In this article, Ngugi analyzes his own experience with missionary education in Kenya, and the system's greater cultural repercussions. He argues that colonial control of the public sphere was sustained by cultural control in the private sphere. The education system was the force that gained access to the deeply protected, private sphere of the cultures of the colonized. Something so innocent and so liberatory as education could hardly be rejected outright, and yet through this avenue, colonial control gained access to an otherwise inaccessible facet of its subjects' lives: the colonized's sense of self. Ngugi writes: "In the field of culture [Africa] was taught to look on Europe as her teacher and the center of man's civilization, and herself as the pupil...thus was the richness of Africa's cultural heritage degraded, and her people labeled as primitive and savage" (1147). The colonial education system was one of regulation, he explains, which worked to teach the people to accept their place as the colonized. It devalued non-European cultures in order to more easily control the masses. Ngugi writes: "To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was

crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized" (Ngugi 1135). The language we use to speak, to define, and to write is the means through which we think. By altering the language, the narratives, and the discourses of the colonial subjects, colonial powers were able to manipulate the cultural imaginary of their subjects, delegating the regulative labor of colonialism to the people themselves.

It was not a battle between good and evil; missionaries educating the children of the colonies were not doing so maliciously, in a purposeful effort to colonize their minds. Most, I gather, genuinely believed they were helping, and often *were* helping, people gain access to better lives. I am not interested in pointing fingers, or arguing who did what to hurt whom; And I am not interested in producing a fiction of egalitarian, non-oppressive pre-colonial societies which colonial rule destroyed. I am interested in the discourses, in education as a tool, whether an intentional one or not, of colonial domination. I am interested in the linguistic/cultural assumptions that played major role in this 'private sphere colonialism.'

Because missionary schools taught the standard English canon – erasing entirely the orature and literature of the peoples they were educating – colonial children learned to see themselves as they were written in European literature (read stereotypes: the good/bad native, the [noble] savage) and in European political theory justifying the colonial 'civilizing' mission (read the 'we deserve our subjugation' myth). Ngugi writes: "Since culture does not just reflect the world in images but actually, through those very images, conditions a child to see that world in a certain way, the colonial child was made to see the world and where he stands in it as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of the language of imposition. And since those images are mostly passed on through orature and literature it meant the child would now only see the world as seen in the literature of his language of adoption" (1136). English literature from this period, for example, is infamous for its construction of the noble savage and the savage savage, the uncivilized, uneducated, exotic child-like Other, and the hyper-sexualized foreigner. Ella Shohat illustrates in her article "Post-Third-Worldist Culture" the trauma these images have on the Othered subject. She describes this trauma as a "psychic violence inflicted by European aesthetics" (202), a violence conducted through language.

The child learns to construct an image of herself as raced and classed Other. She sees herself as alienated from her own culture, which she has now rendered Other. In my discussion of the discourses of Othering, I do not wish to perpetuate this fiction. It is my goal to analyze these discourses, not to justify them. Furthermore, discourses of Othering are not unique to Europe. A group is made a

group by its very nature through the exclusion of others. What separates the colonial context is the internalized Othering, a production of a 'neither/nor' discourse: the learning subject neither wants to be part of his/her own culture, nor *can* he or she be a part of the dominating culture. Missionary schools taught the students in the language of the colonizer, a language that in turn shaped the identity of the colonial subjects. Language constructs reality, and a language that sets Europe at its center marginalizes the colonized, in more far reaching respects than simple linguistics. Ngugi writes: "The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves" (1126). If language, discourse, and narrative are Eurocentric, then the cultural narratives of the colonial margin are rendered secondary, insignificant. The language, which is "central to a people's definition of themselves" (Ngugi 1126), defines a colonial people as Other. They learn to devalue their culture and themselves, having internalized the racist discourses inherent in the Eurocentric language of their colonial education.

3. Education as Violence: Separation from Community

The child's education is so separate from her own life experience that s/he finds herself detached, cut off from her family and community. Missionary education becomes a site of violence for the child, a violent severance from culture and community. In describing the course of colonial domination Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes: "the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom" (1130). Education, more so than sheer violence, made the colonial conquest permanent. Initial physical violence and political and economic subjugation precede the cultural violence that work(s)ed to defeat a people's soul.

Colonial education separates students from their community by forcing its way into their private lives. Ngugi writes that because of his colonial education, the "harmony was broken" (1131). By this he means that through his colonial education, the harmony between his language and his life, between himself and his community, between his sense of self and others' view of him was broken. The missionary-run, English language education Ngugi experienced in reality mirrors the fictive experiences of the characters in Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions* which I will explore later on, as well as the lived experience of Zitkala-Sa as articulated through the autobiographical section of her book, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*. Each experienced the loss that was the connection with their community. Each lost a vital arterial connection to the life-blood of

their culture: language. Like Ngugi, Zitkala-Sa's education was a violent experience of removal and amputation. Though the two authors come from very different colonial contexts – Kenya under traditional colonial rule and the Sioux tribe in the United States under, what I argue, is the perpetual colonial domination of the indigenous peoples of the U.S. – each experienced, and vividly describes, the violent breakdown of the connection to their communities, their families, and themselves. Ngugi's 'broken harmony' was Zitkala-Sa's "first turning away from the easy, natural flow of my life" (Zitkala-Sa 83). Discord and isolation are their first descriptions of what their educations added to their lives.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, attempting to explain this sense of disharmony, argues that the language of colonial education has everything to do with this break from one's culture and community. Language is culture; it carries within it the history of the speaking subjects, their perceptions and constructions of reality, and the means to form mutual understanding over common experiences, ideals, and values as constructed through language. "Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication" (Ngugi 1134). An education in English divides the pupil from his or her community, not because English is a different language, but because the English language carries the Eurocentric colonial, racist, and sexist discourses of the English culture. Ngugi writes: "English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all others had to bow before it in deference" (1131). The physical act of bowing means bending one's head in one direction and exposing one's back to the other. And as the students were taught/forced to bow, they could not help but turn their backs to their own culture.

What interests me is not the many differences between the two authors' experiences or between the two particular schools or the two authors' cultures, though each is tremendously important to an analysis of a different sort. What interests me are the points of convergence, when the two very different stories become unexpectedly similar. Despite the cultural, the spatial, and the temporal divides between the two authors' experiences, both undergo a trauma, a trauma enacted through language. Indian missionary-run boarding schools, like the missionary schools in Kenya, forced English upon the students, a language that defined them, and taught them to define themselves, as Other. Ngugi explains of language that "There is a gradual accumulation of values which in time become almost self-evident truths governing their conception of what is right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, courageous and cowardly" (1134). These 'self-evident truths' are what need to be deconstructed.

4. Colonial Language and Western Binaries

The reigning, Western binary system of meaning is linguistically constructed to attribute a positive connotation to one side of the binary and a negative connotation to the other. The man/woman, natural/unnatural, us/them, normal/other binaries through which the postcolonial world (both Europe and postcolonial nations) is constructed, assign dominance and meaning to one side of the binary, leaving the other to be defined relative to the first. In terms of the colonial subject, then, this means that the colonizers, defining themselves as the positive side of the binary, are able to define the colonized peoples as occupying the negative side. The colonizers are 'us'; the colonized are 'them'. The colonizers are 'natural'; the colonized are 'unnatural'. All the terms begin to slip into one another.

The danger with this linguistic construction is that it inserts into the cultural imaginary, however imperceptibly, an assertion of what is 'natural'. By definition, *natural* is not constructed; therefore the narrative, fictional structures behind the definition of what is and is not natural are rendered invisible. A colonial student taught the European=white=civilized=patriot= heteronormative=natural pole of the binary must invariably recognize that he or she belongs to the non-European=non-white=uncivilized=unpatriotic=non-heteronormative=non-natural pole. Due to the slippage of terms, equating to one term means equating to all the others. In that case, all non-European colonial subjects then become tied to the other terms – uncivilized, non-heteronormative, and the like – and Europeans become associated with 'civilized' and 'heteronormative' whether or not these terms apply. The binary erases differences among the peoples representing both sides, converting difference in all its many manifestations to a singular entity: that which is foreign and unnatural.

'Natural' sexuality, then, is an important part of our discourse on the reaches of education into the deeply private spheres of life. Education, in any context, will infiltrate students' conceptions and perceptions of their reality. It is designed to do this, to teach the students knowledge and ways of thinking they previously did not have access to. What we must work to uncover is what makes the colonial context distinct. I would argue that what renders colonial education, and English missionary schools for our purposes, more regulatory and more of an upset to the students' lives than other educational contexts are the linguistic-cultural assumptions at the center of their language of instruction. The students' worlds are divided into the two halves of English's imbalanced binaries. On the one hand, the discourses of official (i.e. economic and political) colonial rule are artificially divid-

ing the domain of the colonized into private and public spheres as if the two were mutually exclusive, and on the other hand, the people are learning and internalizing the binaries that define them as Other, as uncivilized, as sexually abnormal, and as unnatural. They are told that the private sector is unsullied by colonial rule at the same time that, through the unofficial avenues of colonial domination, the most private areas of culture, home, mind, and even sexuality are being permeated with colonial discourses.

5. Sexuality and Education

The fiction that there exists such a thing as a 'natural' sexuality commingled with the fiction that Anne McClintock describes as the "porno-tropic tradition" (22), produces an impossible sexual narrative for colonized peoples. There were no positives. They were both 'unnatural' and hypersexualized. Colonized women, McClintock explains, were seen in the colonial imaginary as "so promiscuous as to border on the bestial" (22), and colonized men were seen as lustful, lascivious, sexual monsters (Fanon). The hypersexual characterization of colonized peoples created a sense that the only way to be seen as a human being was to be asexual.

Zitkala-Sa is a prime example of one who internalized these discourses. In her efforts to resist them, we see her distancing herself from all forms of sexuality and human connection. Zitkala-Sa's education had cut her off from her community, her family, from every relationship entirely. She explains that her education had stifled her: "I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for home and friends" (112). Having internalized the racist heterosexist discourse of her educators, Zitkala-Sa extracted herself from all relationships. Asexualizing herself separates her as a human being from the stereotypes that define her. She is no longer the unnatural, nonheteronormative, non-European stereotype, nor is she the 'hypersexual Indian'. The further removed she gets from the expression of her sexuality, the further she gets from the expression of all human connection. It is a slippery slope from the fear of sexual expression to a fear of all expression – emotional, cultural, religious; the list goes on. Again, explaining her sense of solitude, Zitkala-Sa writes: "For the white man's papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother's simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up, also. I made no friends" (112). She is "mute" (112), unable to express anything, even 'sympathy and love for home and friends'. Her ability to reach out and connect with others – her 'branches' – has been shorn off. Zitkala-Sa learns most from her education to internalize the negative stereotypes against her and to react to them as

such. Cut off from her community, she describes herself as an “uprooted tree” (112) slowly dying out of soil.

Zitkala-Sa deeply questions whether her education has provided her with the emancipatory opportunities it had promised. She had begged to go to school. She had returned each year of her own volition. She knew the potential an education had for her, and took full advantage of the opportunities it provided, becoming among other things a teacher, an author, an editor, and the founder and president of the Washington-based tribal advocacy group, the National Council of American Indians. Even having acquired the ability to support herself, to be a success in capitalist Euro-America, and to advocate for her people in the language and in the capital of her oppressors, she still questions whether what she has really gained is “long-lasting death” (113). For all that she gained through her education, she lost all that a positive conception of sexuality can give, from connection with others to love for oneself.

While sexuality is not specifically taught, it comes along with the other aspects of culture that become ingrained in the students’ minds. Sexuality, gender roles, ‘correct’ and ‘natural’ relationships between people of different races, genders, classes, and so forth were all narratives that attended the cultural edification of colonial subjects. In Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*, a male character, Nhamo also loses his ties to his community because of his missionary education. His sister, Tambu, describes this break: “But then something that he saw at the mission turned his mind to thinking that our homestead no longer had any claim upon him, so that when he did come home for his vacations, it was as if he had not: he was not very sociable” (Dangarembga 7). His schooling changed his attitude toward his friends and family. Perhaps, as I would argue, Nhamo had begun to internalize the attitudinal structures of his educators.

Nhamo, taught to assimilate to Western gender roles by the mission, in turn, ‘unreasonably’ enforces them on the family. Nhamo returns from the mission with a new idea of gender roles, one incompatible with the lifestyle of his family. Before he left for the mission, Nhamo worked with the rest of the family in a group effort to survive. After he returns, he expects to be served and waited on, and he distances himself from his parents and siblings. His community and family ties have broken down; he forces a Western view on his family life and Tambu immediately perceives the disjuncture: “That Nhamo of ours had hundreds of unreasonable ideas. Even after all these years I still think that our home was healthier when he was away” (Dangarembga 10). Nhamo had to have learned these ‘unreasonable

ideas’ from somewhere because, to be unreasonable, they could not flow naturally from the reason of home. He learned them; he learned to expect his sisters to carry his bags for him, on top of all their other chores; he learned to speak English and refuse to speak his family’s language; he learned to distance himself from his culture and to align himself instead with the English at the colonial missionary school. It is not as if the family existed in a prelapsarian paradise. Their culture was a patriarchy before colonialism ever entered the equation. Tambu explains: “The needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate” (Dangarembga 12). The women did not live a better life before colonial rule; they still were expected to marry, to have children, to work hard, and to serve their husbands, fathers and brothers. It is not that Nhamo learned a worse system, but rather that he learned an incompatible one, one that separated him from his family. He was left alone, divided from his community.

6. Sexuality and Social Constructions

Sexuality is both one of the most personal aspects of private life and the means through which people connect. It can therefore be construed as a link between the private and public, between the personal and the communal. It is for this reason that I now look to sexuality as a way to understand fully the fictional character of the private/public binary.

Natural sexuality and gender are constructs of the cultural imagination. They are tacitly and unconsciously agreed upon fabrications. This can be seen by the many manifestations of gender and sexuality that have been formed in cultures around the world. Jane Haggis writes in her article “White Women and Colonialism”: “The categories ‘woman’ and ‘man’ are not viewed as fixed identities or natural entities, but as constructions of gender with variable meanings across culture and time. Gender itself is analytically conceived as an aspect of social organization constructed through discourses of power and knowledge which ascribe historically and culturally contingent meanings to sexual difference” (Haggis 162). Because gender and sexuality norms are not “natural,” we must analyze them as the social constructs that they are. Why they exist and what they accomplish as categories of normalcy must be questioned if we are to understand the very deep and personal levels to which linguistic discourses reach.

Just to highlight the fictive character of the discourses on ‘natural’ sexuality, I want to make note of two cultural ideologies that are identical and yet which contradict each other. In her book, *Affective Communities*, Leela Gandhi, describes the transformation of English conceptions of homosexuality. She writes: “Even as

the homosexual was undergoing the discursive surgery that would transform him into a savage, primitive, foreigner, and traitor, a similar ideological-semantic operation was slowly and surely rendering the 'savage' non-West into *the* zone of (homo) sexual perversion" (51). This follows a similar argument to that which I described above; the slippage of terms leads to all difference being classified as foreign and unnatural. In England, during the Victorian period, sexual difference was coded as foreign and the foreign was coded as sexually different. Joseph Massad in his article, "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," makes the case that in the Muslim and Arab world, homosexuality is foreign as well. He writes: "I argue that it is the discourse of the Gay International that both produces homosexuals, as well as gays and lesbians, where they do not exist [in the Arab and Muslim world]" (363). In the West sexual difference was/is foreign (i.e. non-Western) and in the non-West sexual difference is foreign (i.e. Western). The two discourses, though contradictory, are the same. I would argue that Massad is repeating the dichotomous discourses we have been working through. Anyone exposed to European languages and their colonial history is exposed to the assumptions that underlie their discourses.

What Massad shows us, above all, is that these are not concepts we have grown out of. They are very much a part of the modern discourse. Joan Scott's book, *Politics of the Veil*, reveals just how relevant these invisible assumptions still are. In discussing the French state's attitude toward the veil, she writes: "French norms of sexual conduct [are] taken to be both natural and universal" (Scott 10), as opposed to the "representation of Muslim sexuality as unnatural and oppressive" (Scott 10). Once again difference is perceived as foreign. This is not 'our' sexuality, but a perversion from somewhere else. Here, Scott is specifically alluding to the veil, but this discourse applies to all forms of difference, particularly sexual difference. The idea is pervasive in colonial and postcolonial thought that sexualities (as opposed to the singular, cultural uni-sexuality) are foreign, external, exotic, other, and universally 'unnatural'; with the colonial, European ideal centered as the 'norm'. Interestingly, the 'foreign perversion' is also always seen as a unitary force, reducing the complexity of sexuality to a single binary: us=natural versus them=unnatural. As a side note, I must point out that exclusion of alternative sexualities is not unique to Europe or colonialism. I am focusing on the slippage of terms, and not the actual oppression of and prejudice against different sexualities; in this way I remain concentrated on the discourses of (post)colonialism.

If we are to move past the linguistic limitations of colonial attitudinal structures, we must deconstruct these binaries. We are reminded of J. Puar and A.

Rai's call to 'disarticulate' in their pioneering article "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Terrorists." They write: "If we are to resist practically the 'war effort' and the Us/Them and 'you're either with us or against us' rhetoric, we must disarticulate the ties between patriotism and cultural and sexual identity" (Puar and Rai 130). Here Puar and Rai are talking specifically about the United States, but I would argue that this should be the aspiration everywhere. In every postcolonial situation we have encountered in this paper, there is a tie that has developed between sexuality and the natural. Disarticulating the ties could be the beginning of a deconstruction of the meanings that come through the cultural relation of terms. Sexuality has little meaning by itself. The fictional constructions that tie certain forms of sexuality with the "natural" and others with the "unnatural/ Other/outsider/foreign" imbue the term with political and cultural meanings. Disarticulating ties is a way to move beyond meanings constructed through colonialism, and therefore beyond the still dominant colonial discourses.

7. Resistance

There has always been resistance within colonialism by the colonized. Ngugi writes: "...imperialism continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa. But on the other, and pitted against it, are the ceaseless struggles of African people to liberate their economy, politics and culture from that Euro-American-based stranglehold to usher a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination. It is an ever-continuing struggle to seize back their creative initiative in history through a real control of all the means of communal self-definition in time and space" (Ngugi 1126). Language may manipulate a people's conception of themselves, but it cannot control it. Restructuring language so that colonial subjects can gain control over their own discourses would not be the *beginning* of resistance to colonialism, but rather another step in a long and difficult journey of resistance. As Simon Ortiz asserts, "the indigenous peoples of the Americas have taken the languages of the colonialists and used them for their own purposes" (qtd. in Carpenter 18). Language, he writes, does not hold the minds of the American indigenous peoples hostage. I am not arguing for a purging of the English language from all relevant postcolonial contexts, a radical idea on which Ngugi wa Thiong'o insists. I am arguing for a continued effort to finish what Simon Ortiz claims the colonized peoples of the Americas have been working at doing all along: gaining control of the language, discourses and narratives that construct one's sense of self, one's relationship with others, and one's understanding of reality.

As I have said, even before this restructuring takes place, nothing can

ever control a people entirely. Colonial subjects were never solely subjects of the colonizers' wills. The term *subject* has two meanings in common speech. Althusser writes: "In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means: (1) a free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author or and responsible for its actions; (2) a subjected being who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom" (Althusser 701). The tendency among academics has been to take a side, to choose one definition over the other. Either we have unlimited freedom and every choice we make is our own, or we are born into a structure that pre-exists us that defines our every thought and action. Those on the one side of the debate would argue that since English culture was not legally compulsory, then it was the colonial subject's choice to adopt it; she is the subject of her actions. Those of the other persuasion would argue that a person internalizes religi-socio-political structures, and therefore the culture was imposed upon her; she is the subject of a higher power. In fact, she is both subject and subject. She, like all people, has within her this dual definition. Each person exists within a structure that both limits and constructs the availability of these things called choice and freedom. The freedom to express one's sexuality, for instance, is both a result of the inherent sexuality of the subject and the religi-socio-political demarcations, regulations, and proscriptions to which the sexual subject is subjected.

Zitkala-Sa and Ngugi wa Thiong'o are both testaments to the dual definition of *subject*. Both were subjected to the trauma of colonial discourses thrust upon them throughout their colonial educations, and both took hold of their subjectivity as authors of their actions to become emblems of resistance to colonialism. But resistance cannot be left up to individuals. We must learn from the discourses set forth in each of the accounts presented above, and create and implement structures to change that which the authors oppose. Each text, article and argument presented in this paper, in its own way, leads to the same proposal. In order to preserve the emancipatory aspects of education with a colonial legacy in postcolonial contexts, we must restructure how and what students learn. Regaining a positive sense of self and collective-being requires a re-evaluating of what colonial education and domination has been teaching and constructing as "fact."

Education is always both emancipatory and regulatory. While it assisted the colonial powers in their effort to 'divide and conquer,' it also, always, had positive effects. Even Ngugi writes, somewhat derisively, that English education was "the ticket to success" (1132). It was a success defined and limited by the colonizers, but a better life nonetheless. Education leads to better jobs; it gives men and especially women access to the realm of ideas, to politics, to power over self, and power

in national and international discourses. In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu works ceaselessly to gain access to her education, knowing well that it will liberate her. Tambu's father asks why she should want to be educated: "Can you cook your books and feed them to your husband?" (Dangarembga 15) he asks his young daughter. Tambu, like the other characters and people I focus on in these texts, begs for, works for, and demands an education for herself. She sees its emancipatory potential. Without it, her father's words imply, her life will revolve around feeding her husband food, and not books. With it, she has the chance to do more, or, if she desires to be a wife, she can be a knowledgeable one.

A critique of education does not mean I am asking for its opposite. No one calls for the end of education all together. We are working outside of such a limited binary. What we need is a constant negotiation. By restructuring language and education, we can de-center Eurocentric discourses that hinge on binary Othering. Education can become far more emancipatory in postcolonial contexts through a restructuring of these linguistic/cultural limitations.

8. Conclusion

Colonial, missionary education was one of the subtle avenues outside official rule that allowed oppressive discourses to seep into the imaginary of the colonized. It broke through the public=colonized/private=uncolonized binary fiction that structured colonial rule and native resistances to it. Colonial, missionary education bled Eurocentric cultural assumptions into colonial discourses through a language that rendered colonial subjects Other. The slippage of terms transformed *Other* into a loaded term. It became unconsciously associated in the cultural imaginary of the English, as well as those who were exposed to these discourses, with the 'unnatural', the 'uncivilized', the 'savage', the 'unintelligent', the 'sexually aberrant'; the list goes on. I have attempted to look closely at one of these narratives – i.e. sexuality – in order to show the damage that can be done through these linguistic-cultural associations. In the words of M. Jacqui Alexander: "In focusing on constructed meaning, one can sever the bond which state managers establish between sex and morality, and between morality and nature...If discourses are read as the instruments for the exercise of power...discourses must therefore be situated contextually. In this instance, it is necessary to explode the negotiated and contested meanings about sexuality" (139). Language is controlled and constructed by the powerful. This becomes particularly important when the power structures of colonialism are involved, bringing in narratives of race, nationalism, 'the foreign', class, the 'good' and 'bad' native, the 'natural', and dozens of other socially constructed

discourses. These narrative fictions are the foundation upon which colonial powers built their domination. These are the discourses that seeped into the most private areas of the lives of the colonized, from their minds to their bedrooms, from their sense of self to their ability to relate to others. These are the discourses that turned the emancipation of education into a trauma.

By restructuring, by "exploding" these discourses as Alexander would have us do, we can work to keep the best of the emancipatory aspects of education as we work to overcome the worst of the colonial discourses. I do not argue that colonial discourses infiltrated and destroyed flawless pre-colonial societies, or that restructuring linguistic-cultural assumptions can only deconstruct colonial discourses. A restructuring of the hidden, constructed narratives that lie beneath the 'common sense' and the 'natural' in every discourse will allow people to overcome oppressive fictions in all their manifestations, from the colonial to the sexist, and from the classist to the ethno-centrist.

In understanding the constructed nature of these narratives, resistance to oppression of any kind can become much more effective because those resisting will be able to fully comprehend how pervasive and deep the oppressive structures run. Without 'exploding' these structures, any change to society can and will only ever be cosmetic.

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