

Ethnocinema: Intercultural Arts Education

Anne M. Harris

Ethnocinema: Intercultural Arts Education

 Springer

Anne M. Harris
Faculty of Education
Monash University
Melbourne, VIC, Australia

ISBN 978-94-007-4225-3 ISBN 978-94-007-4226-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4226-0
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012937294

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Exempted from this legal reservation are brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis or material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work. Duplication of this publication or parts thereof is permitted only under the provisions of the Copyright Law of the Publisher's location, in its current version, and permission for use must always be obtained from Springer. Permissions for use may be obtained through RightsLink at the Copyright Clearance Center. Violations are liable to prosecution under the respective Copyright Law.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

As a scholar of education I have often observed how some of the most compelling insights I have encountered concerning pedagogy come from those individuals living and operating outside the boundaries of educational scholarship. Sometimes such individuals are not formal scholars at all but individuals who have suffered at the hands of educational institutions.

(Kincheloe, 2009:26)

This book is dedicated to my mother, Anna Mae Harris (29 June 1926–25 August 2007), whose death was concurrent with this project's birth. Both my life and this project are imbued with her words of wisdom, some borrowed from Shakespeare, including 'To thine own self be true'.

Ethnocinema: Intercultural Arts Education



Editorial Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of the following chapters were published as journal articles or book chapters in the following publications and have since been significantly revised for this text: Chapter 1, 'Slowly By Slowly: Ethnocinema, Media and Women of the Sudanese Diaspora', is forthcoming in an earlier version as 'Slowly By Slowly: Ethnocinema, Media and the Young Women of the Sudanese Diaspora' in *Visual Anthropology*. August 2011, Vol. 24, No. 4. Chap. 2, "'Too Dark, Too Tall, Too Something": Refugeity and the New Racism in Australian School', was published as the book chapter 'Too Tall, Too Dark, Too Something: New Racism in Australian Schools' in *Trauma, Media, Art: New Perspectives* (Eds) Broderick, M & Traverso, A. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Parts of an earlier draft of Chap. 3, 'Neir Riel: Transgression and Fugitive Spaces', were published as Harris, A. (August 2009) (book chapter) 'Performativity, Identity and the "Found Girls" of Africa: Sudanese Women Talk Education' in C. Baker (Ed.), *Expressions of the Body: Representations in African Text and Image*. UK: Peter Lang. pp 337–361. An earlier version of Chap. 4, 'Singing into Language: Creating a Public Pedagogy', will be published as 'Singing into Language: Creating a Public Pedagogy' in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. Chapter 5, 'The Art of Being Seen: Sexuality and Gender Performance in Sudanese Australia', was published earlier as "'You Could Do With A Little More Gucci": Ethnographic Documentary Talks Back' in *Creative Approaches to Research*, Vol. 2:1, July 2009. Melbourne: RMIT Publishing. Other sections of this text in thesis form have been published as Harris, Anne: 'Race and Refugeity: Ethnocinema as Radical Pedagogy' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1 November 2010:16, pp. 768–777; Harris, Anne and Nyuon, Nyadol: 'Working It Both Ways: Intercultural Collaboration and the Performativity of Identity' in *The Australasian Review of African Studies*, Vol. 31:1, June 2010. pp 62–81.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Enza Gandolfo, Associate Professor Michele Grossman. Thank you especially to Nyadol Nyuon, who has spent many hours in critical dialogue, educating me about multiple ways of knowing and the possibility of a world in which different forms of knowledge can be equally valued. Thank you also to those who gave me priceless academic feedback on this manuscript in dissertation form: Professor Carolyn Ellis, Associate Professor Greg Noble, and to the many anonymous reviewers at the journals who have published these chapters in earlier drafts. Thanks, both artistic and critical, to the many artists, technicians and community arts workers who have contributed to this project in both known and unknown ways: Stuart Mannion, Paola Bilbrough, Curtis Moyes, Antonia Goodfellow, Tamsin Sharp and John Sones at Singing Bowl Media, Maria Vella, Kelley Doyle, Nik Tan and all at SAIL, Kathy Cooney, Gillian Kerr and all at Foundation House, Bronwyn Mason and all at the Western English Language School, Professor Sandy Gifford at La Trobe University, Caitlin Nunn at Melbourne University and the collaborators of the *4US* qualitative research film project, Tim Molesworth and all at the River Nile Learning Centre in Footscray, Dr. Lesley Birch, Professor Helen Borland and all at the Office of Postgraduate Research at Victoria University, and the staff and students of Marian College, West Sunshine, particularly Kerrie Williams and Deborah Wood. My special thanks go to Achol Baroch, Loaner Geng and Aunty Rebecca Long and her extraordinarily big heart and welcoming family. My gratitude and love to Ruth Redden who is home to me and makes everything possible.

The film series *Cross-Marked: Sudanese Australian Young Women Talk Education* would obviously not have been possible without the willingness and generosity of all collaborators and co-participants. What is perhaps not so obvious are the delicious meals, belly laughs and deep kindnesses shown to me by so many who were strangers at first but not for long. I thank you all and hope you will see that these films are making a difference, at least one teacher at a time. This project belongs to:

Nyankir (Margaret) Ajak, Jalab and Joseph Beet, Achol Baroch and Loaner Geng, Amani Deng, Lina Deng, Aktableur Deng and the Deng Family, Noura and

Duniya Douka, Diana Dyagai Eli, Angelina Aluel Kuol, Sarah Kut, Rebecca Long and Bronson and Anna Maria Borlace, Grace Mabor, Arillette and Jaclyn Murekezi, Nyadol Nyuon, Nyayany and Sarah Thong, Lizzie and Rihanna Tung-Marua, Naomi Wei.

Contents

1 Introduction	1
The Absent Presence of Sudanese Women: New Ways of Seeing	3
Alternative Spaces.....	12
Methodology/The Project	16
The Films	18
<i>Grace Mabor's Film Slowly By Slowly</i>	18
<i>Nyadol Nyuon's Film Still Waiting</i>	19
<i>Chick Chat at the River Nile</i>	20
<i>Achol Baroch's Film Singing into Language</i>	21
<i>Lina Deng's Film Neir Chi Puj (Educated Girls)</i>	23
<i>Angelina Aluel Kuol's Film In Transit/ion</i>	25
A Note on the Title of the Film Series <i>Cross-Marked</i>	26
2 <i>Neir Chi Puj: Educated Girls (Co-created with Lina Deng): Sexuality and Gender Performance in Sudanese Australia</i>	29
Role Models and Arts-Based Pedagogy	30
Teachers Who Listen.....	31
Process Reflections	32
Shutter: Squirming Before the Lens	36
Ethnography: Why We Engage.....	43
The Myth of Homogeneity: The Truth of Refugeity	47
Put Your Hand Up.....	51
3 <i>Slowly by Slowly (Co-created with Grace Mabor): Ethnocinema, Media and Women of the Sudanese Diaspora</i>	55
Twice Forgotten: The 'Lost Girls' Are Growing Up	57
What's in a Name?.....	58
Ethnographic Documentary, <i>as It Was (and Wasn't)</i>	63
Ethnographic Documentary in Australia	66
Ethnocinema, <i>as It Is (by Way of What It Is Not)</i>	68
Ethnocinema, <i>as It Might Be</i>	74

4 *Still Waiting (Co-created with Nyadol Nyuon): Refugeity and the New Racism in Australian Schools*..... 79
 From One Extreme to Another 80
 Calling It Like It Is: When Words Are Not Enough 86
 Underestimating and Overestimating: The Double Bind..... 88
 Unintentional Racism..... 90
 Intentional Racism 92

5 *Chick Chat at the River Nile (Co-created with the students of River Nile Learning Centre): Transgression and Fugitive Spaces*..... 97
 Transgression as Refuge 101
 Transgression as Counter-Racism..... 104
 Transgression as Walking Away 105
 Transgression as Liberation 108
 Transgression of (Home) Culture/s..... 111
 Transgression as a Practice of Freedom..... 114

6 *Singing into Language (Co-created with Achol Baroch): Creating a Public Pedagogy* 117
 Missed Opportunities 121
 Performative Schooling: Ethnocinema as Border Pedagogy 123
 Recognising the Forces 127
 Performative Teaching: Walking Back in 131
 Research Bricolage as Public Pedagogy 132
 Me, Myself, Eye: A Beginning 135

7 *In Transition (Co-created with Angelina Aluel Kuol): Source of Creative Understanding* 139
 Ethnocinema: Addressing the Material Conditions 141
 Ethnocinema: Ethnography *and* Arts-Based Research 145
 Ethnocinema: Where the Political Is Personal..... 149

8 *Conclusion: Minding the Gap*..... 153
 Whose Films, Whose Voices?..... 154
 Arts-Based Pedagogy: New Ways of Being..... 155
 Researcher’s Reflections 157
 Critical Education and Media: New Ways of Knowing..... 158
 Film as a Stepping Stone..... 160
 Film as a Language Acquisition Tool 161
 Recognising Subjectivities Through Film..... 161

9 *Appendix A: Transcript Dialogue: Nyadol and Anne on ‘Good Research’: Looking Back, Two Years on* 167

10 Appendix B: *Ethnocine-ME* (Co-created with All Co-participants) and Doing Arts Education: An International Context 173

 Making Space for Collaboration..... 176

Bibliography 181

Filmography 195

Index..... 197

Author's Note

Ethnocinema as Arts Education: Intercultural Collaboration in Film is a research study, but also an ethnographic account of using an arts method in classrooms and in community research. It draws primarily upon the various knowledges of Sudanese students from refugee backgrounds, arts education theory and upon the intercultural principles of second-wave critical pedagogy, including hooks. The project suggests ways forward for those who wish to engage in more critically conscious, socially just research and educational practices but is not a handbook for teachers or researchers (who I believe must all find our own ways of applying methods in our own contexts and times).

In sharing this one way of doing arts-based research, this text further develops the principles and practices of *ethnocinema*, which prioritises relationship and mutuality in intercultural collaborations over aesthetics or outcomes, and critiques some evolving applications in the practice of critical pedagogy as it is practised in schools and communities. *Ethnocinema as Arts Education* critiques current educational practices, which marginalise, exclude and objectify those who are emerging from refugee pasts; seeks to re-frame refugeity as a state of being rather than a fixed identity and foregrounds ways in which all ethnographic and pedagogical collaborators can share in an evolving criticality, using multiple and creative methodologies and contexts.

The researcher uses her own status as insider/outsider – as immigrant gay educator – to contextualise her reflections on and relationships with these Sudanese Australian co-participants, and as other ethnographic researchers have found, ‘Despite all my connections, relationships, and involvements with [my co-participants], I was still an outsider... and an academician.’ (Wahab 2003: 633). The seven films (six co-participant films and my own reflexive film) and text which comprise *Ethnocinema in Arts Education* comment on the complexities of the performance of identity for both the researcher and her co-participants and challenge ‘paradigms of inquiry that discourage relationship building, emotionality, and intimacy as legitimate components of the knowledge creation process’ (638). Gender, age, race, class and ethnicity intersect as a range of intercultural encounters in this study. Taken together, the films and the text seek to offer new approaches to intercultural collaboration, both inside

and outside of the classroom, which highlight the ways in which 'key aspect[s] of the praxis/social change purpose of qualitative research lies in the relationship between researcher and researched' (Cho and Trent, 2006: 331) and which demonstrate validity as 'the extent to which collaboratively involved participants are co-researchers in the research process' (332).

Please note that the 6-film series is entitled *Cross-Marked: Sudanese Australian Young Women Talk Education*, but the combined book and seven films (including the author's) have been retitled *Ethnocinema as Arts Education: Intercultural Collaboration in Film*.

Viewing/Reading Process

My preference is for the films to be viewed alongside the text. The films inform the written text, and the text contextualises the films, in an evolving and interconnecting manner. Ideally, the reader will also become the viewer, will read the Introduction and then watch the first film before proceeding to read Chap. 2, which is intended to complement this film. The process should be continued – first film and then corresponding chapter – through to the last film, *EthnocineMe*, which forms the Afterword.

The films can be found by name on the last page under *Filmography* and accessed online via YouTube.

