

# When Black Consciousness Walks Arm-in-arm with Critical Race Theory to Meet Racism and White Consciousness in the Humanities<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

This essay situates *the Black woman subject* as producer of knowledge by locating her within the very site – the university – where knowledge production takes place. Raised and educated on the philosophy of Black Consciousness, which is key to how she enacts her knowledge, constructs it, and as a consequence interrogates the site upon and within which she is expected to produce it, she takes the reader on a tour-de-Azania-a-la-Black Consciousness excursion by constructing the absence of the knowledge of White consciousness at the backdrop of the university's [UKZN] policy on transformation guided by its Transformation Charter. In doing so she situates the White woman and the White man as beneficiaries of apartheid, which draws upon racism as its key tenet, and how through the body, the flesh, agency, acts of racism are perpetuated, reinforced, and reproduced within the university much like outside of it, thus maintaining the very system of apartheid most White academics claim to be against, and better still, assert no longer exists. Invoking Tunisian scholar Albert Memmi's text, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, she draws analogies between the agent of racism and the agent of colonization and in the process revealing the salient features of the 'the colonizer who accepts' begging the question, where is 'the colonizer who refuses'?

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<sup>1</sup> The full title of this article is, 'The Absence of the Knowledge of White Consciousness in Contemporary Discourses on Transformation: When Black Consciousness Walks Arm-in-arm with Critical Race Theory to Meet Racism and White Consciousness in the Humanities'.

**Keywords:** Critical Race Theory, Black Consciousness, Derridean deconstruction, Black existentialism, African Studies, Gender Studies

Autobiography, biography and narrative have been underestimated in philosophical discourse yet given a particular kind of presence in literary criticism; in psychoanalysis without autobiography there is no unconscious to uncover and as such no mechanisms to account for what holds it together ... without autobiography psychoanalysis would not have its reason. We come to our workplace with biographies – with histories of oppression rooted within the history of colonialism and apartheid; to survive it as the oppressed, Black Consciousness as a movement was necessary, urgent, and instrumental to our thinking.

Hegel insists on the subjective moment, why else would self-consciousness precede consciousness of [the thing], Being or surrounding. Self-consciousness is thus the route, the stepping-stone to reason, and the latter – reason – the passage to absolute knowledge (cf. Hegel [1807]/ 1967/ 2014). Hegel's interpretation of the Kantian analysis of experience asserts quite emphatically that consciousness of self is 'the basis of the consciousness of anything whatsoever' (Hegel 1967: 217). However, as the history of Philosophy has revealed, consciousness of self, as racialised subject, has truanted outside of the text, written as absent, especially in view of the fact that philosophers like Hegel, Hume and Locke, to name a few, wrote on or commented on slavery yet did not situate their agency within the very system that they benefitted from. But what then is the relationship between consciousness of self and consciousness of the *Other* as we unearth power relations within the university setting that has a history of being raced?

Racism in the form of the trace, the hint, the gesture, the murmur – are all acts of atrocities. Non-verbal and emanating from within the body of the offending agent, are often present in the first encounter – gut wrenching, pathological, debilitating, potentially psychologically damaging – especially when White professors become acquainted with Black Consciousness scholars. One cannot treat the trace as an act which cannot be written because it is composed of physical and visual gestures more than verbal ones; the trace is an act which speaks directly to the conditions under which the Black consciousness woman professor works and it is from this state of flagrant racism disguised as hostility that she is expected to work without even the

slightest reference to how the traces of racism envelope her as she situates herself as a scholar – a producer of knowledge within humanities, working between and among literary fiction, political philosophy, critical race theory and psychoanalysis.

To trace the trace, to trace the contemporary trajectory of a historical trajectory, requires that both the subject as raced, and the unnamed, unclaimed agents of racism confront the inevitable – that the Black woman subject, schooled in Black Consciousness, is not going to participate in the process of transformation as a silent alibi – she will reveal the unspoken every-day enactment of racism in all areas of her production. Why should the product – knowledge – not reveal the climate, the conditions of its production, she declares?

In this paper I situate agency as key to the formation of knowledge production; I situate my agency as a Black woman professor schooled in Black Consciousness and determined to write Critical Race Theory from the very existential practice of racism itself, and I situate the agency of the beneficiaries of racism who do not situate themselves as agents of racism but who in fact consider themselves as non-racial. I use *her* and *his* interchangeably because both White women and White men are beneficiaries of racism and apartheid and both uphold it in very similar ways. My examination of my location – where I work as a producer of knowledge, how I work as a producer of knowledge, and the conditions under which such production take place, are problematized by examining what constitutes knowledge. As such, my examination of the theme within this broader collection is to unpack the terms employed to frame this discussion and to hold them accountable to the current focus on social transformation in universities across South Africa more generally, my own location at the university of Kwa Zulu Natal, from which I draw my examples more precisely, by simultaneously locating how I study race, gender and identity – key areas in the study of culture albeit the culture of society within which I live and the culture within which the Transformation Charter of my university is immersed. Throughout this paper, I employ critical race theory that draws upon the historical whilst unpacking the contemporary components of social relations in an attempt to examine a society that transitioned from apartheid to democracy for the first time in its history after three hundred and forty-two years of colonialism, and the microcosm of the university, which is but merely a slice from Marie Antoinette’s cake.

*When Black Consciousness Walks Arm-in-arm with Critical Race Theory*

The Black woman subject – whose consciousness is grounded in Black Consciousness – as scholar, writer, thinker, researcher, producer, is a subject that cannot be retransformed; she has already transformed under the apartheid regime. She is the Black woman subject who has been conscientized and politicized, guided by Black Consciousness, in order to take up her rightful place in a democratic society where she anticipated she would utilize all of her education and training to be an active participant in the production of knowledge. Who then is to transform?

The discipline of humanities requires a particular kind of understanding of what one studies within its framework and therefore what one produces in order for others to study. For the most part humanities is composed of relatively large schools that represent a grouping of departments, each with overlapping areas of interest but with the distinct focus on the study of human culture using critical methods as opposed to empirical methods, as is the case with the natural sciences. As such, depending on their variation, one can expect to study social relationships, human culture, arts, development and languages by employing methods that are primarily critical or speculative, and have a historical element, distinguishable from the more empirical approaches of the natural sciences.

Transformation Charters and/or Transformation documents are now fully entrenched in most South African universities; they are meant to provide a vision of a future, post 1994, and guide staff and students towards a process where each recognize the need to work together from the knowledge of a legacy of racism under apartheid, known to both the beneficiaries of racism and the recipients of racism. As such, the point of departure that the Transformation Charter at UKZN makes clear is one that openly declares the history of apartheid (cf. <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ukzn-transformation-charter>). However, I contend that whilst one can legislate for, and against, almost anything and everything one cannot legislate attitude! There is no reference made to how to address racist attitudes within the university context in any of the Transformation Charters adopted by South African universities, certainly not the UKZN one, nor any assertion as to how previous racist attitudes, despite the newly established context of democracy, still has the ability to stifle, thwart, alienate, humiliate and undermine Black professors to the point of exclusion and silence. UKZN, like most South African universities, retained its White academic staff; thus whilst apartheid got the boot, they did not. The history of apartheid itself speaks loudly and clearly to the systemic,

structural and institutionalized forms of racism that was alive and well within the university system; the question is, and remains, since the context of apartheid provided the breeding ground and the battlefield for racism to be enacted on every possible level, including within the university context, how by the sheer event of one person one vote will the university setting offer Black professors the possibility to work and produce knowledge, let alone thrive, at the backdrop of the experience of apartheid? As such, how will the production of knowledge – Black Consciousness knowledge – take place within conditions that has previously stifled its emergence? And, what will this knowledge look like?

It is generally understood that knowledge – ideas, verbal and in writing, already in circulation, accepted among peers who are engaged with the said idea, theme, concept – is treated as such, noted as intellectual property by the owner because its consumers recognize it as such. Knowledge production, like any form of production, requires a critique of the political economy out of which the said production takes place; the production of knowledge cannot be separated from the production of a product under capitalism, and Steve Biko would argue, *racial capitalism*<sup>2</sup> as per his analysis of Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Knowledge is an intellectual product; knowledge is produced by the workings of the mind. It is the condition of that mind – how it operates, the composure and history of its functionality and *the conditions* under which the mind labours that determines the nature of its production, and as such the product that is produced. The production of knowledge is a process whereby the labour of intellect is used to produce a product.

The production of knowledge, like all forms of production within the broader system of racial capitalism demands that we question the process. Who are the producers? Under which circumstances and/or under which historical conditions does production take place? These are crucial questions as one examines the role of the colonizer past and present when that colonizer

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Rodney, in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, makes the argument that race was crucial to the development of capitalism for Europe; that it was the racialization of the African, the depiction of Africans as savages, that led to the deliberate exploitation of Africa by the Europeans. Biko uses a similar argument to critique the development of capitalism in South Africa, calling its development, racial capitalism.

is your colleague, the beneficiary of the very system of racism you are examining and that she claims to be against, alongside whom you work to produce knowledge within the humanities, where she remains the benefactor despite the newly democratic South Africa. Many a time, scandalized by the moral rather than the political implications with which it testifies to their compliance, White women colonizers, despite their identity as feminists, often display great verbal and physical gestures to indicate their disapproval of racism, yet how often is their public display of indignation accompanied by a programme of political action that also allows for self-interrogation and self-examination of their White privilege?<sup>3</sup> Our university environment, set within the geographical region of Kwa Zulu, formerly known as Natal, described as ‘the last outpost of the British Empire’, is a breeding ground for this sort of moral display for English and Afrikaans speaking White South Africans alike. (cf. [www.linscoot.co.za/outpost.asp](http://www.linscoot.co.za/outpost.asp)).

For the present what needs to be noted, given the ways in which apartheid operated, is that White professors were taught by White professors before them; Black professors were also taught by White professors for the most part unless you were fortunate to be a student during the 1980s at the University of the Western Cape [UWC] (named by the Afrikaner police during the turbulent 1980s as ‘University of the wild Coloureds’, where I took my undergraduate degree), Fort Hare, and a few noted universities who employed a handful of Black scholars to teach and not only mark papers – those the apartheid regime ensured were educated toward servitude but rose above it. White South African scholars currently employed at universities in South Africa, as has regularly been verified despite the discomfort upon asking the question, have not been taught by Black professors and they treat the matter as ‘normal’ without even the slightest concern for what it says

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<sup>3</sup> I restate the question asked by Albert Memmi in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* when he addresses colonizers who in their verbal protestations seem to be scandalized by the moral rather than the political implications of racism and who have no political plan of action for its dismantling. I ask the question of White feminist Philosophers in particular who work in the field of ethics, and who regularly claim their place at the table for anti-racist politics. See also Peggy McIntosh, ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’. Cf. [www.deanza.edu/faculty/lewisjulie/White%20Priviledge%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf](http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/lewisjulie/White%20Priviledge%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf).

about the ways in which Africans and African scholarship is kept out of university institutions in South Africa. The most recent resurgence of articles in *City Press*, ‘Why are white professors silent on lack of black scholars?’ by Neo Lekgotla Iaga Ramoupi in November 2014, is certainly not the first to address questions of the absence of Black and African scholarship and the low numbers of South African scholars within Higher Education, especially those who are known for their Black Consciousness scholarship.

African scholarship does not in any way suggest that as scholars who work within the Southern African context we abandon or neglect the strengths of any scholarship, however mainstream, that we have been taught and upon which sound theoretical frameworks have been built;

African scholarship is the recognition that Africa is a continent composed of fifty-four countries whose histories have not been told in ways that convey its strengths but whose histories have been interpreted by its colonizers for the purpose of ensuring that its people are invisibilised or looked at as appendages of the very history that has shaped their lives.

African scholarship is the recognition that scholars and researchers of the continent need to work towards uncovering and unearthing the unnamed histories that lie buried in unmarked graves, in sand and earth, at the bottom of the transatlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans and envisioning a way forward that recognizes the past and build upon its unwritten heritage to fruitfully and purposefully educate the younger generation towards intellectual prosperity;

African scholarship recognizes that it cannot fruitfully develop in isolation nor can it ever prosper without the full and whole-hearted recognition that all forms of scholarship are connected and need to borrow from one another in order to stand testimony to their future place in history; African scholarship is an act of courage that recognizes that African scholars produce at the backdrop of the colonial experience of Black existence.

Whilst I am not in any way suggesting that Black scholars are by virtue of our racialised identities automatically drawn to African Philosophy, African Psychology or African Literature I am merely pointing out that the production of knowledge is produced from the site of usurpation of our ancestral land – the location, communally, physically, geographically and psychologically, out of which the knowledge emerges as knowledge, where the seeds are planted communally, where they grow from interaction with our families, our friends, our peers, wherein lie the particularities of our complex and extensive lived experience. And herein lie some of the falsehoods of

knowledge production because reason, a central ingredient in the act of thinking, demands that we have logic and that we are rational. I am fully aware that this is a contested debate in philosophy<sup>4</sup>. Charles Taylor, taking his cue from Martin Heidegger, has argued that reason should always have the faculty of disclosure – in other words, the revelation of how we make sense of everyday life.

Geography – and by this I mean place, space and location – and the production of knowledge as the mapping of the geography of reason<sup>5</sup>, are key factors in the maintenance of White Mythology<sup>6</sup>. Jacques Derrida is noted as a French Philosopher by European thinkers because they are determined to situate him outside of Algeria, where he was born. The last time I checked Algeria was still in North Africa, not the south of France. Apart from my personal, scholarly relationship with Derrida which spanned just over ten years, his autobiographical book written with Geoffrey Bennington, notes with painstaking detail how he was kicked out of school in 1942, at age 12, when Vichy declared that Jewish children could only constitute 3.7% of the French Algerian student population<sup>7</sup>. In the same text he offers an account of his mental collapse and hospitalization upon setting foot on the land of the Empire – in Paris upon entering the university system for the first time, which shows precisely, by his own admission, these experiences were drawn into how he developed his approach to examining, in a genealogical way, the history of the subject. Derrida has written at length of the colonization of

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<sup>4</sup> I refer here to the question of reason and unreason.

<sup>5</sup> For further examination of the geography of reason, see Mignolo (2009); Dussel (1996); Gordon (2011). All three scholars make a similar argument of Europe claiming to be the centre of thinking, and European Philosophy claiming to be the conscience of logic – that it is within European Philosophy where we come to know the meaning of reason.

<sup>6</sup> In ‘White Mythology (1973)’, Jacques Derrida argues that Metaphysics is created through the establishment of White Mythology – a creation that is due to ‘the white man takes ...’ a taking, an appropriation of Indo-European Philosophy to create the myth of White presence.

<sup>7</sup> See book titled *Jacques Derrida* (1993) by Geoffrey Bennington wherein this particular event of Derrida’s expulsion from school as per the Vichy government’s demand to remove 96.2% of Jewish children from schools is chronicled.



Algeria by the French regime, and how he was not immune to anti-Semitism – both anti-Arab and anti-Jewish. It is with this scrutiny of the history of the subject and how the subject is situated historically that Derrida undertook to examine philosophical texts, reading them through other texts and holding them accountable to a process that philosophy later began to call deconstruction just as they pronounced his name alongside it because it was in his work – how he tackled it, where he examined the hidden, the forbidden and the repressed – that his experience of Being lie and with it, how he revealed the salient features of White Mythology posing as philosophy.

Racist normativity is nothing new – it is, in the new democratic South Africa, an off-the-cuff shrug of the shoulders immediately followed by, if you're a White liberal, the odd reference to the new in-vogue reading of Fanon, popularized by British academic Homi Bhabha, whose writing style has been hailed by White Liberals as superior (the Obama reference: a good writer, a good speaker, for a person of colour) due to his very obvious reliance upon English metaphors, his upbringing and schooling in the UK, and his insistence at maintaining a particular kind of discourse borrowed from Victorianism where the Black, African and colonized remain, as per the intention he argues but perpetuates – oversexed, mad or invisible<sup>8</sup>. So whilst

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<sup>8</sup> I refer here to the English texts upon which Homi Bhabha relies in order to stage his postcolonial criticism. His constant references to Shakespeare and the English classics, and the manner in which he asserts their significance, suggest that these examples are compulsory reading and only with solid knowledge of them can one effectively develop a critique of postcoloniality. Surely, he can look at the vast acts of atrocities committed in the name of Empire the British carried out in order to embellish his texts! Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues quite persuasively that to decolonize the mind one has to interrogate one's use of the colonizer's language. I am not arguing against the use of the colonizer's language here since I believe one can also make it one's own and inject it with one's one history of speaking it, I am rather critiquing the fact that there are many aspects of English coloniality (in the case of Bhabha) that one can point to in order to develop such a critique. It seems to me that entrenching Englishness is more evident when one relies upon it in order to further one's critique of postcoloniality itself defeats the purpose. Audre Lorde's infamous phrase, 'The Master's tools cannot dismantle the Master's House', rings with clarity in this paper.

Bhabha's work on Fanon brought him international notoriety the manner in which he has conducted his critique has concerned itself with ensuring that Englishness, and more poignantly Englishness steeped in Empire, is in charge of the critique of coloniality and postcoloniality. Race soon becomes absent within the critique – expelled from the text, truanting outside of it, ghettoized, tamponised, because this particular British postcolonial scholar put it there.

Argentinian Marxist feminist, Martha Gimenez, based in Boulder, Colorado, notes in *Marxism and Class, Gender and Race: Rethinking the Trilogy*:

We are, in Marx's terms, 'an ensemble of social relations' and we live our lives at the core of the intersection of a number of unequal social relations based on hierarchically interrelated structures which, together, define the historical specificity of the capitalist modes of production and reproduction and underlay their observable manifestations<sup>9</sup>.

In *The Racial Contract*, Jamaican-born professor Charles Mills – fellow colleague at the Caribbean Philosophy Association – argues that racism is at the core of the social contract and is not the misguided, unintended actions of illogical, oftentimes well-meaning White men, as many of us would like to believe (cf. Mills 1999). Racism, he argues is intentional and deliberate and an integral characteristic of the social contract – one he emphasizes persists to this very day. The social contract was popularized by philosophers like Rousseau, Locke, Hobbes and Kant. In *Of The Social Contract, Or the Principles of Political Right*, (1762) Rousseau argues that the best way to set up a political community in view of the difficulties commercial society encountered some of which he identifies in *Discourse on Inequality* (1754) is to overthrow monarchies and the hierarchies that they generate. *Of The Social Contract, Or the Principles of Political Right* is cited as being instrumental to revolutions in France and many parts of Europe as it argued against the divine right to rule, which monarchs believed they had. *Of The Social Contract, Or the Principles of Political Right* is also the text that influenced Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the *Declaration of Independence* (1776)

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<sup>9</sup> Martha Gimenez, *Race, Gender & Class* 8,2:.23-33.

and which prompted his election as the third president of the United States (1801-1809). Much like the beneficiaries of apartheid, despite his grandiose gestures – mainly verbal protestations without the possibility of placing his role as a beneficiary of the very system he criticized and sought to fight against at the center of his critique, Jefferson owned enslaved Africans until his death.

## **Transformation is not Negotiable**

The now late, former President, Nelson Mandela's presidency was one that tried to actualize the vision offered by the Freedom Charter almost immediately upon taking office. This is evidenced by the Notice of 196 of 1995, 'The White Paper on Education and Training', where Prof. S M E Bengu began the process of addressing transformation vis-a-vie the Freedom Charter as early as March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1995 at a meeting held in Cape Town. The masses had waited long enough, and hence the first three years saw an abundance of ideas along with firm plans to put them into place, taken up by like-minded ministers all keeping their fingers on the pulse of the struggle for liberation still so fresh from the hands that voted for democracy. The Department of Education's White Paper 3, July 1997, notes in the forward, written by Prof. S M E Bengu, Minister of Education:

The transformation of the higher education system to reflect the changes that are taking place in our society and to strengthen the values and practices of our new democracy is, as I have stated on many occasions, not negotiable. The higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. The White Paper outlines the framework for change, that is, the higher education system must be planned, governed and funded as a single national co-ordinated system. This will enable us to overcome the fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency which are the legacy of the past, and create a learning society which releases the creative and intellectual energies of all of our people towards meeting the goals of reconstruction and

development. I have no doubt that the journey is not going to be easy<sup>10</sup>.

What interests me, not only the passage I quote here, is the general tone with which the entire document was written and the language, which conveys a Marxist analysis, injected with the kind of critique of the materiality of race Robert Mangoliso Sobukwe, and Stephen Bantu Biko were known for (Biko 1978). There is a clear understanding of how social relations are transformed when the conditions for social existence is transformed, where creative and intellectual energies are released of ‘all of our people’. Dr. Bengu, at the end of the sentence, acknowledges: ‘I have no doubt that the journey is not going to be easy’. There is no plan of action attached nor a step-by-step process of how one dismantles the legacies of racism deeply entrenched within its agents nor was I expecting there to be. As such, what I have encountered in pursuing the process of transformation within my work environment is resistance to my expression of Being, and resistance in recognizing that the identities previously known to the agent of apartheid, is one he created alongside the system of White domination, which supported it and which supported him.

### **The Black Subject, the White Discipline**

Gaining knowledge by direct or indirect means through observed phenomena – this is what is described as empirical research ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empirical\\_research](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empirical_research)). Yet, how does one conduct empirical research when your Black feminized identity is drawn into the very terrain where teaching, learning and research is conducted – within the university setting when neither you nor your colleagues are the subject of the research but where your interaction with them leaves you with little else but the determination to write about the very experience of racism you had just encountered, at their hands, on a topic you are working on ... often times, so too are they? How does one then write papers, produce research in the humanities as a feminist

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<sup>10</sup> See, ‘General Notice, Notice 1196 OF 1997, Education White Paper 3. A Programme For the Transformation of Higher Education’, Department of Education, Pretoria, 24 July 1997.

Philosopher and critical race theorist, when your attentions are always drawn away – from your formal research work into the setting where you work, where you are racialized and/ or where your racialization continues from the systemic, to the structural, to the institutionalised? In responding to this question, I take my queue from existential Philosophers – colleagues with whom I have been in attendance at the Collegium of Black Women in Philosophy [CBWP] – Kirstie Dotson and Donna-Dale Marcano, and Caribbean Philosophy Association members Lewis Gordon and Charles Mills, all of whom argue that the materiality of race places the Black professor in a position to account for her lived experiences within the very environment where she constructs existential Philosophy, and I would add where she writes on critical race theory<sup>11</sup>. They all seem to agree – that the materiality of race allows the Black professor to situate herself as raced, and it is from that position that existentialism has to take its queue: from the acknowledgment of the politicization of presence, in the flesh, of the Black woman whose very existence offers existential Philosophy its lack. In this vein, I wish to draw attention to the ways in which Black presence, in the flesh – as teacher, professor, researcher, scholar – when accounted for within empirical research, is either treated with suspicion or as too much. In doing so, let me momentarily draw attention to the fact that many witnesses to the German holocaust, people who experienced the forced removal by the Nazis from the cities to the concentration camps, have written and published extensively within the humanities; some are scholars, many are not. There has never been any question about the validity of their experience and/or that the humanities is not enriched because of it. Rwanda, least we forget, was a territory assigned to Germany at the Berlin conference in 1884. Germany wanted the region but it was also claimed by Leopold II from the Belgian Congo, and thus, the conflict to own the natives and divide them accordingly began one hundred and ten years prior. The Rwandan genocide took place for approximately 100 days between April and July on 1994 – 20 years ago. A few years ago I met a young woman who lived through the process who had taken cover with her mother in a cave in a wooded area and had seen more dead bodies than she cared to remember. In writing a paper for submission on

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<sup>11</sup> For an argument on the materiality of race see Charles Mills', *The Racial Contract*. See also the work of Donna-Dale Marcano (2012); Dotson 2014; and Gordon (2000).

the Rwandan genocide she was told to reference German scholars, the crème-de-la-crème of genocide studies, who had written on this – those who were not hunted down to be murdered nor witness to the event – and that she could not write of her first-hand experience because she was subjective. Her and I shared notes on this phenomena – that Black people are more often than not the subjects of racist and other inhuman atrocities and yet the protocol of research papers within the humanities, even in Black universities because we have inherited it from our predecessors who studied us and who continue to study us, suggests that somehow race and racism has to be studied under tightly managed research procedures devised and developed when we were the colonized. What Black people experience in a racist world is what is known as experience (I have also heard the word perception offered up as a substitute), and what White scholars do is theorize, produce knowledge, because they are appropriately detached. Gayatri Spivak’s essay ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ rings very loudly here. Spivak examines the power dynamics of race, class and gender involved in the banning of sati in India. Spivak notes that all we hear about sati are accounts from British colonizers or Hindu leaders of how oppressed women set fire to themselves, but we never hear from the sati-performing women themselves. This lack of an account by the women themselves leads Spivak to reflect on whether the subaltern can ever speak? Spivak (1998) and in particular the group who started subaltern studies, use the term to describe the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland. In the case of South Africa, the Black population of South Africa, I use the term *Black* as employed by Steve Biko in *I Write What I Like*, when writing on the divide and conquer tactics of the apartheid regime in its system of classification. Biko insists that it means all of us who are not settler colonials<sup>12</sup>.

## **The Black Researcher and the White Space: Social Transformation and Resistance**

Definitions of social transformation vary; whilst some focus on the process by which an individual alters the ascribed social-status inherited from parents

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<sup>12</sup> See Biko’s use of the term Black as in *I Write What I Like*.

into a socially achieved status for themselves others refer to large-scale social change, such as in cultural reform or transformation, with the emphasis on social, economic, political and material. The first occurs within the individual, and as such the agency of the individual; the latter within the social system, which in turn also infringes on the individual and demands that the individual alters the ways in which she socially situates and locates herself, at each occasion, because of the conditions of her sociality has been altered, she has to make the adjustment and orchestrate her social performance to suit the new rule, regulation and or law (See document titled: *Stellenbosch University, Institutional Intent and Strategy, 2013-2018*; see also Jonathan Jansen's *Skin Apart: On the Complexities of Institutional Transformation*, University of the Free State , July 2012 ). My concern in this discussion is on the individual agent of White domination and how through her agency she recycles and reinvents her racism rather than refuse it under the conditions social transformation requires.

I am often asked whether there is a difference between the White man who is aware of his racist heritage, had joined the ANC back in the day, went on a few notable marches, became a leader among his White peers, expected Black people to give him the same consideration his peers gave him for being so special because he wrote about racist events then went home to his segregated White neighbourhood at night and received his segregated salary each month, allowed his maid who still used the outside toilet to call him by his name, took his children from his maid's bed at night because it is where they fell asleep while his wife, the marxist-feminist went to university to do her Phd and eventually wrote books called *Madams and Madams*<sup>13</sup> while he continues to tell emerging Black scholars how to think about race, what critical race theory is, how to go about understanding post-apartheid South Africa, and the White man who is aware of the country's history, cannot be bothered to even give it a second thought, greets you in the corridor because you happen to be there, even opens the door for you, has not transformed his language, still uses the term 'lady' and not 'woman', and who attends events on race and gender as though it is a research meeting like any other? Needless to say, I await the answer to those questions myself –

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<sup>13</sup> The fictitious title is a play on Jacklyn Cock's *Maids and Madams*. In the introduction Ms Cock thanks her domestic workers for taking care of her children while she studied towards her Phd.

with baited breath. The descriptions above do not fit any one person they fit several with whom I share the same scholarly space in humanities. But why stop here? Let me return to the description of the former not the latter: among them there is the ardent leader of the pack – the White ‘leftie’ who expects that homage be paid to him, the White woman who is his wife or partner who says that she works from a non-racial framework, referencing the Freedom Charter at every opportunity she can, and tells you how oppressed you are just in case you have risen above your station before your time because she is not ready for you – she has not adjusted to the imposition of your Blackness; the ‘leftie’ who thinks that racism is about other people, not him, those who have never done work on race – White men who are less fortunate because they were educated at the low ranking Afrikaans universities where the poverty of language does not allow them to elevate their ignorance to the level occupied by those whose high-brow articulations, unlike their transparent intentions that are so well composed Wagner would blush, that the act of racism is as far away from their noses least it smell of the rotteness that it is. Then there is the aging ‘leftie’ tempered by age and of late insufficient White privilege who is angered by the reality that Freedom's children – our young Black students – do not recognize him as someone significant enough to warrant the kind of regard they offer the memory of Chris Hani or the manner in which their energetic youthful Black strides would come to an immediate halt if Winnie Mandela walked through the door. They walk past him without the slightest recognition of the person he wishes to be remembered as – that he was once master of the academy, and they unchaining from their histories of enslavement he benefitted from, why else would he expect any recognition at all? But let me be more precise: the everyday enactment of racism within the university institution has no boundaries and it does not end here.

Let me take you on a tour-de-working-in-humanities at UKZN. In the past three years I have worked in two buildings. Let’s begin with the moment you walk up the stairs into Memorial Tower building. Upon entering it, there is a marble wall of the names of White men who fought in the Second World War, listed on both pillars, least we forget. Memory – as the recollection of war, violence, conquer, empire, ownership of the land, and ownership of history – is therefore important as you enter this main building of the university. Like all apartheid memory, we either have days that we are expected to celebrate with our colonizers – as in Jan Van Riebeeck day (there



are several, this is merely one example) where the colonizer usurps your land, kills and murders your people, colonizes you and then gives you the day off to celebrate your demise with him! At Memorial Tower building staff and students enter the building under this physical structure – you enter it under the arch, under the banner of this measure of importance of violence and war for your land, and with the visibility of a list of these colonizers names engraved on each of the pillars at your side.

Then there is the place where I currently work on another side of the Campus – there, upon my arrival, on the White wall, in the corridor, my eyes caught a glimpse of two framed posters, the first one with the caption, ‘Bly Blank my Volk, Stem HNP’ [translation: Stay White My People, Vote HNP (Reconstituted National Party – the far right)]. Right Beside it was a framed poster of White men on horseback in attendance at an Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging [AWB] rally, the brother organization of the Ku Klux Klan. The presence of it took my breath away! I was stunned. I looked around and none of the White staff seemed the least bit concerned that I was even put out let alone horrified that I was to enter an environment where the emblems of White Supremacy were so forceful. When I recounted the event to my South African colleagues they were shocked and horrified, my American and Canadian colleagues found it almost impossible to believe (after all, I am an award winning fiction writer). My UKZN colleagues have tried to find another explanation as to why the posters were on the wall as they found it difficult to believe that they were there in the first place! The point of departure for their outright refusal to believe that the posters hung there in the first place stems directly from the fact that the space within which I work is meant to be one where race and gender are the two main focus areas. This is the institution of learning where we expect 47,000 students to prosper and frequent at some stage during the year, and the site from which we expect teaching, learning and research to take place. As a Black woman, this is the location from which I am meant to sow the seeds of productive labour where its product, knowledge, is packaged, valued, ready for dissemination, and circulated among students I am meant to mentor, guide, supervise and further the aims of African scholarship with. How can such an environment, fraught with liberties taken by White men and White women as decision makers of the present and the future, ever be conducive to effective knowledge production?

In my immediate scholarly space there is the White woman who

assumes her rightful place among the Black masses, doing community work in Black communities, writing about it, acquiring a doctoral degree in the process whilst refusing to situate her White identity because, in her own words, ‘why does it matter? Why do I have to say it?’ It is unthinkable that whilst she identifies Black people as Black she does not identify herself as White, because by virtue of her upbringing and unclaimed racialised identity she has been endowed with the ability to name her reality and not have it named for her – certainly not by the oppressed on whose behalf she speaks, gleefully. This is the woman who was schooled on the principles of the ANC and who speaks of herself in ways as though her racialised identity is non-existent, it never happened – it is Black people who have been racialised under apartheid, and therefore, in an attempt at working towards a non-racial society (her choice of words which she eagerly quotes from the Freedom Charter) she will proceed to carry out her project of liberating the Black masses who cannot possibly liberate ourselves because we have been oppressed. She is aware that I situate myself as a Black woman, born in the slave quarter of District Six at the Cape and apparently it makes her uncomfortable that I say it! She, accordingly, has told me, that she ‘does not find it necessary anymore. We are not living in the era of classification any longer. I don’t see how it is relevant anymore’. A few months after this exchange, we found ourselves talking about research and publications and again she reiterated, ‘I don’t see how I had been racialised by others playing a role in how I conduct my research’. I refer to her as *beneficiary number one* in this paper.

Then, there is the White woman who is oblivious to the fact that inequality and racism still exists in South Africa twenty years after the first democratic elections and frowns upon hearing that Black students ask questions about White presence within particular university spaces, looking completely puzzled as one explains that Black students have these concerns and do not feel comfortable around her because it is she who calls it ‘her space’. In response me putting forward their concerns she responds: ‘I don’t understand why’, she says. ‘Really? They are asking questions about race? Why?’ she says all at once amid her stammers. ‘Why would they say that?’ she continued. It is impossible for her to conceive that her White presence, along with several others in turn form an overwhelming majority, is questioned by students not only because each time a Black student enters the space she previously had the privilege of keeping White, she runs to lock her door and appears not the slightest bothered that we have

observed her act of White flight. When a potential funder visited, I thought it appropriate to invite some of our students. The funder asked why there were so many White women as staff members and I had no choice but to report on his question at our staff meeting. Once again, she sat cross-legged and awkward, stammered through her response, frowned and said: ‘why would he ask that? I don’t understand? I don’t know what to say ... that’s very strange’, she finally said. Let it be said that each and every time I have raised the issue of racism within the workplace with this White woman she has responded with silence – cold staring, cutting, silence. When she has been witness to me delivering papers wherein I clearly stated that my analysis is informed by Black Consciousness, she frowns, then later offers some response about how she did not understand the need to racialise the way that we work in the academy. On a recent occasion, a research event was advertised that required staff and students to attend; let me add that neither I nor the students who generally frequent this space thought that many people would attend as the topic under discussion is not something we identify as particularly pressing to the intersections of race, class, gender and identity. Be this as it may: one Black man showed up and there was no question that he could possibly be a student? The White woman in question approached him, kept her head back slightly sloping to the side, the posture appropriate to the proportion of condescension she released, and asked him, with indignant righteousness, ‘may I help you?’ In this paper I refer to her as *beneficiary number two*. The scenes of these crimes need further unpacking; it is to this unpacking that I now turn.

## **Unpacking the Absence of the Knowledge of White Consciousness Amid Social Transformation within the Humanities**

When I began to do scholarly work as a feminist in my early twenties, almost thirty years ago now, it was often to the surprise of White women peers with whom I took my Masters degree at the University of York in the UK all of whom identified as feminists, that Black Consciousness as philosophy, and a consciousness of politics would be so central to my understanding of how systems of domination operate and are maintained and reproduced. During my twenties I became less interested in the study of racism as act, derivative

of the structural, systemic and institutional components and more interested in Biko's insistence, and use of the term *White conscience* to describe the actions of White Liberals in South Africa who claimed an awareness of race but who were not prepared to give up their White privilege; those who Biko often depicted as being completely oblivious to the ways in which their actions, however liberal they might think, conveyed their deep investment in the system of White domination of which they were agents even if they argued the contrary<sup>14</sup>. During my Phd years as I was studying world events of the 1960s, especially between 1966 and 1968, looking at how the Black Panthers emerged, the marches on the streets around the world in 1968, and the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania in December 1968 in the halls of the medical school of the University of Natal, I came across Jacques Derrida's essay on 'White Mythology'<sup>15</sup>. It is with these two influences that I began to pin-point what available race theory then, and critical race theory now (and of the last twenty years), did not articulate – that is, what I began to call White Consciousness since the late 1980s, which is also evidenced in the title of my Phd thesis, and the articles that subsequently followed from it, some of which include, 'The Theatre of Racism'<sup>16</sup>.

Often, the White woman as colonizer learns of the operation of White domination and through the Black Consciousness scholar, learns to question how White consciousness is instilled and perpetuated. As one White woman asked following a lecture I gave in 1991 in Ottawa, Canada, titled, 'When Black Consciousness Meets White Consciousness', when I taught there: 'Why is it that I have no knowledge of my White consciousness?' To which I replied, 'It is not the absence of White consciousness that you should concern

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<sup>14</sup> Biko makes reference to White Liberals throughout *I Write What I Like*.

<sup>15</sup> In is Derrida's insistence on what the White man does: 'the white man takes', and Biko's reference in depicting 'white conscience' that I began to theorize White Consciousness; as such, the combination led to a particular interrogation of speech, writing and the imagination along with agency. See select Maart articles listed for further elaboration.

<sup>16</sup> 'The Theatre of Racism' is the title of one of my chapters in *Strangers in the Mirror: In and Out of the Mainstream of Culture in Canada* wherein I offer a critique of the racist events at an Arts Centre in Canada as a theatre of racism.

yourself with but how you perpetuate this absence of knowledge'. Naming and claiming the unclaimed consciousness of being White is perhaps the best way to understand how White domination operates, for it is conscious in its attempts at subjugating Blackness. Now, more than twenty years later, I am still making the same articulations within my home country, of the ways in which Black Consciousness meets White Consciousness within the university setting, more precisely, within Humanities.

Not only does the example above apply to beneficiary number one and beneficiary number two in this paper but the salient features which mark their resistance in naming their White identities and recognizing that their silence – the absence of the words to say it – is what I call White Consciousness, keeps their benefactor status intact. It is not the everyday construction of racism, as an act, an event, a moment, an atrocity marked by its cruelty, that I am concerned with – we have been the objects of these acts of racism for so long in South Africa. It is, rather, the ways in which language functions to harbour White Consciousness [the absence of the words to say it], keep its bouyancy afloat, keep the thinking in circulation, shield and protect the beneficiary of White domination, keep her safe from the interrogation that Black Consciousness offers – from the words with which to say it (Maart 1993). Many of us still remember, whether through the enacting of the Steve Biko trial or by reading the transcript from *I Write What I Like*, that Black Consciousness language stood trial because Judge Boshoff tried to convict Steve Biko by referring to the language that Biko used, which Boshoff found unusual and an affront. Biko's words were chosen with care and historical precision; he connected the act to the actor. He did not only call White people settler-colonials, he also called them agents of White domination and beneficiaries of racism and apartheid. Biko situated the agent alongside his agency and insisted on naming agency in accordance with the ability to maintain the system. What I find problematic within the university setting is not my location among the beneficiaries of racism necessarily or how I constantly have to work head-on against their resistance toward transformation but how they continue to make the site of knowledge production one where they believe race does not matter (Biko 1978). The site of knowledge production – the university setting – is also one that has to produce African scholarship, and to ensure that students are educated toward prosperity within this framework and not to simply include African scholarship like a step-child sitting at the table after the main meal has been served. Black scholars are treated as the Oliver Twist of this tale of

*When Black Consciousness Walks Arm-in-arm with Critical Race Theory*

abundance where we constantly have to approach the table of White privilege, asking, 'please Sir may I have some more?' The absence of the knowledge of White consciousness is not only detrimental to the production of knowledge in the humanities but the paradigms that inform it need to be reexamined.

What happens when Black Consciousness meets White Consciousness at the creation and the production of knowledge is that there is an immediate discomfort among White scholars, when one situates oneself as a Black woman who was born in District Six, the slave quarter of the Cape, and not allowed the acquisition of higher education to shame you into neglecting to mention where one is from. To note the history of one's enslavement alongside one's history of consciousness defies the purpose of White liberalism completely. Racism is meant to work; if and when it doesn't it bears testimony to the failure of the agent, and she will quickly remind you, reprimand you into speaking a language that situates her into a zone of comfort for she knows nothing else. If the agents of White domination have not sufficiently colonized you or oppressed you how can they then offer you the emancipation they believe you so rightly deserve?

Then, there is the element of unashamedness: because there are those among us who are not interested in withholding our histories of identity politics, how we came to describe ourselves as Black and came to develop a personal, intellectual and political programme to address the manifestations of racialization – that it is one borne out of struggle – and as such, it puts us in a position to be considered 'a problem'. W.E. B. du Bois' outcry in 1903, 'what does it feel like to be a problem' (du Bois 1903) to which Cornel West responds: 'No, Mister du Bois, it is not I who is the problem ... White Supremacy is the problem!' (<[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRZcfEToN-A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRZcfEToN-A)>).

What happens when Black consciousness meets White consciousness is that it raises questions about when one situates race within the very *construction* and *production of knowledge* because one believes it ought to be there; when one presents it in the presence of White scholars for whom the process is foreign, alien or intimidating, one is placing them in positions of alibis, witnesses to their own demise, their lack, without their consent and as such posing questions about how the English language has served them as a currency of coloniality – if one thinks within a language – a language of White domination where your agency and benefactor status are hidden, silent, unspoken – how can one think outside of it;

When Black Consciousness meets White consciousness is about Black scholars bringing the history of struggle into the university setting, disrupting the neutrality of the universal subject, and asserting that race, and racialization, lie at the heart of the production of the absence of the knowledge of White consciousness, for which the beneficiaries of apartheid and racism do not have the words to say it.

In the particular cases I put forward and upon which I have reflected, revealing the absence of the knowledge of White consciousness becomes the product of knowledge itself. As such, when one places the subject's historical trajectory as indicative of the process by which knowledge production is fostered, one is saying that race, the subject as raced, lie at the heart of knowledge as wisdom and because the production of knowledge on this particular aspect of social relations is one-sided one is pointing to a lack, a deficiency, an inability to construct knowledge from the very absence of the words to say it. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the term 'lack', introduced for the first time by Lacan in 1955 – when the apartheid state with all its trimmings: usurpation, murder, colonialism, theft of land, violence, terror, fear, were already fully in place – refers to it in relation to desire – that lack is always related to desire since it is lack that gives rise to desire (Evans 2006). However, the lack that I speak of here begins to show within the White beneficiary when Black Consciousness scholarship rises to prominence; Biko who, equipped with a language that places the White man and the White man at the centre of the very act, the very event of apartheid, brings forth the conceptualization of the mind as the focus of the colonisation and gives us Black Consciousness as a consciousness of self, and not Other (Biko 1978). The dissemination of Biko's words on small pamphlets to schools on the Cape Flats like Steenberg High, where I was a student, is what influenced my generation as teenagers, and remains to be the foundation upon which my scholarship is built.

The anti-apartheid struggle took many forms; Black student leadership like the kind the South African Student Organisation [SASO] forged, under the leadership of Barney Pityana and Steve Biko, brought the noble White leftie (left of his White parents whose finances he accepts to fund his political stance against them) to a moment of lack when he realizes that despite the apartheid machinery, the Black masses could still rise to think, to think for ourselves, and we did not need the all White National Union of South African Students [NUSAS] leadership to lead us towards the liberation we sought from their oppression. My generation of Black Consciousness students of the 1970s and

the 1980s upon learning of this history thought it was all a horrible mistake, a theatre of cruelty disguised as satire! Could it really be true? And yet, what strikes me as particularly troubling is the Lacanian conceptualization of lack, and certainly as per my present-day examples within UKZN, is that the aging White male who, accustomed to being the *crème-de-la-crème* of anti-racism or non-racialist scholarship that he ‘created’ in our absence, experiences Black consciousness scholarship as a loss of his Being. Thus, what is the lack, the moment of loss, is the desire for Being. Lack is always a desire for Being, itself. How can the White man scholar, schooled on the gourmet diet of racism with an appetite for apartheid retain a sense of Being when the substance of his Being is being chipped away, slowly, even while he stays on at the university to ensure that young Black students give him the recognition he believes he deserves. The desire for Being for the White man and the White woman at South African universities determined to grapple with transformation, is a difficult matter: one I suspect is both traumatic and troubling.

The former agents of apartheid, still its beneficiaries, are not willing to allow others insight into the lives of the privilege they once lived; as such, they experience transformation, especially social transformation within the university alongside Black Consciousness scholars, as loss and with loss lack is the gaping whole, the emptiness, the feeling like one does not know one’s self because one’s license to ownership of the world has been revoked. I have seen many a White liberal scholar lose their temper (my Black consciousness speech accompanied by high heels and lipstick somehow seem to provoke it), try hard at maintaining a particular kind of decorum in my presence as I am constructed as the difficult and problematic, even ‘the ungrateful Black’. Lewis Gordon’s chapter, ‘Problematic People and Epistemic Decolonization’ (Gordon 2007) springs to mind and offers an astute account of the matter under discussion. Gayatri Spivak, in ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ wherein she elaborates on Foucault’s notion of the episteme (how within society things, events, are ordered in particular ways and as such produced with purpose and intention) draws our attention to ‘epistemic violence’ noting the ways in which the structural damage of colonialism is produced. It is the hearer in my work environment who is no longer the speaker; and the speaker, who had been the hearer, who now insists on speaking, and who in turn transforms the rule of speech – she offers testimony and declares this as scholarship, while the hearer becomes the seen, and the seer visibilises the racialised identity of the seen.



The uneasiness of this journey is measured by the resistance of the colonizer who refuses to untie himself from the system of White domination that offered him the best opportunity to attain power and privilege; the same colonizer who speaks disparagingly of the rising Black middle class, warning students that class is still at the core of the production process – be it the production of knowledge or the production of consumer products that facilitate materialism – failing ever so blatantly to address the difference between class and wealth. Black professors may have acquired the possibility to earn better salaries since the first democratic elections, some even on par with White professors who now scoff at the array of cars, which fill the university parking lot – the BMWs, the Mercedes, and Land Rovers. It is however, wealth – a deeply entrenched heritage of money handed down from one generation to the next – that the average White professor is still rewarded with on a regular basis, alongside the land, the forget-to-mention-farms *that they will never give up*, as they speak lovingly of their gardener whose pension they have supplemented with a few hundred rand a year – *pin money*.

When I took up my post in 2011 I immediately began to host events that discussed the Transformation Charter of the university and spoke to staff and students alike, each time trying to gauge the extent to which the process was in operation, however slight (see Transformation Charter UKZN). What I have learnt in the process is that transformation is a term used to assess the extent to which the beneficiaries of White domination have adjusted to the imposition of Blackness. To lament the advantageous prerogative of legislation, be it the introduction of Transformation Charters (or Transformation documents) of universities across the country post the brutality of White students at the University of the Free State [UFS] in 2008, is to expect that legislation, because it is the law, is meant to demand that those it is intended for – White folks who have never had to follow legislation designed to restrict their racism, deprive them of domination, curb their coloniality, is suddenly going to commit to unlearning their racism and White privilege and transform the way that they oppress Black people just because legislation expects it of them. Nowhere is agency mentioned in any of the Transformation documents I have examined. In perusing Transformation documents of a number of universities, each in their own tapered to the conditions that apartheid has produced in their particular province or city, it is clear that there is a complete lack of understanding that the process of

unlearning racism requires more than following regulations – it demands a complete altering of thinking and Being, and this process, much like racism and colonialism is deeply psychological in nature, which in turn requires self-examination and self-interrogation, and who would lead such a process? Better still, who would drive the agenda when universities now speak of stakeholders? Thus, depersonalizing the process of decolonization that the Transformation Charter at UKZN demands without having to name it means that racism and colonialism have been depersonalized *again!* All of what I have offered accounts of earlier on in this paper speak directly to Fanon's assertion of the negation of the colonized by the colonizers, even those who wish to fight alongside the colonized for their freedom. Walter Rodney and Amílcar Cabral in speaking of the impact of colonialism on Africans, spoke of 'a negation from history' (cf. Cabral 1966).

The protestors of May 1968 in Paris, a movement has to be linked to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and, which cannot be severed from the pavement politics which also linked the Black Panthers, and later the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania [December, 1968] to the very core of the psychoanalytic and philosophical nexus – that is, the relationship that consciousness has to politics, and both with a very decided focus on the mind. The May 1968 protestors were referred to as the protesters with a Freudian fling, as they made their interest in freedom very clear: *Egalité! Liberté! Sexualité!* (translation: Equality, Freedom, Sexuality), they shouted in the streets of Paris. We see here equality, freedom, sexuality, as the culmination of an expression of the idea of freedom itself – that relations between and among forms of freedom cannot be separated ... with one come the other. These were students of philosophy who were in attendance at the lectures of Jacques Lacan, where the unconscious was the focus for several weeks and who among them was pupil and protestor, Jean-Paul Sartre. Negation and repression are key terms, referred to as mechanisms of the unconscious by Freud; philosophers who draw on psychoanalysis are well aware that the main focus of Lacan's work is concerned with following on from Freud, primarily, expanding Freud's work on the unconscious. In the mid-1960s the Black Panthers began to speak about the mind as they were influenced by the writings of Fanon and Ngugi, among others of the anti-colonial era. As Black scholars, determined not to have callous acts of colonialism curl into the coronary functioning of our vessels, we are at risk of chastisement by non-Whites in positions of leadership, and those you seek to

pummel us into the ground by not behaving like freshly emancipated slaves grateful for the crumbs of the first stage of democracy<sup>17</sup>.

There is a spoken discourse on transformation and an unspoken one; The unspoken discourse is concerned with whether the agents of White domination has managed, within the given time allocated, to transform their beliefs in the inherent right to White privilege and all that it has brought in the past into one that embraces the rewards of freedom of the very people upon which their White identities are built. With respect to allocated, I am employing it here to indicate that Transformation Charters emerged when universities had to recognize the role they played in paving the way towards freedom and to an incident in 2008 that had the possibility of retrenching the process because of the deeply racist nature of the said incident. Can the Black woman scholar survive, thrive, and produce knowledge within this context?

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<sup>17</sup> I use the term non-White here with intent to indicate how there are Black people who willingly accept this form of identification using White as the backdrop against which they see themselves as. And, as such, as a negation of White but certainly not Black and more importantly who are happy to play along as pseudo Whites whilst jumping on the bandwagon of the liberation struggle at their hearts content.

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