Kilomba 7

Grada, writer, researcher and psychologist from the West African Islands of Sao Tomé e Príncipe. Having studied clinical psychology and   
 psychoanalysis in Lisbon, she is living and working in Berlin, Germany where she researches and writes within the area of cultural studies. She is a guest lecturer   
 at the Berlin Humboldt and Freie universities in the gender studies and psychology departments respectively

(“Africans in Academia: Diversity in adversity”, September 3, 2007, <http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=15961>)

Not surprisingly, most of the white students are unable to answer the questions, while the Black students answer most of them successfully. Suddenly, those whose knowledge has been hidden, become visible, while those who have been over-represented become unnoticed and invisible. Those who are usually silent start speaking, while those who always speak become silent. Silent, not because they cannot articulate their voices or tongues, but rather because they do not possess the knowledge. This exercise makes us understand how the concepts of knowledge and the idea of what scholarship or science is, are intrinsically linked with power and racial authority. What knowledge is being acknowledged as such? And what knowledge is not? Who is acknowledged to have the knowledge? And who is not? And who can teach knowledge? And who cannot? Who is at the centre? And who remains outside, at the margins? So, who can indeed speak in the academy? And who cannot? Academia is not a neutral location. This is a white space where Black people have been denied the privilege to speak. Historically, this is a space where we have been voiceless, a space we could not enter. Here, white scholars have developed theoretical discourses which formally constructed us as the inferior Other - placing Africans in absolute subordination to the white subject. We were made the objects, but we have rarely been the subjects. This position of object, which we commonly occupy, does not indicate a lack of resistance or of interest, as it is commonly believed, but rather a lack of access to representation by Blacks themselves. It is not that we have not been speaking; but rather that our voices - through a system of racism - have been systematically disqualified as valid knowledge; or else represented by whites, who ironically become the ’experts’ of ourselves. Either way, we are locked in a violent colonial hierarchy. As a scholar, for instance, I am commonly told that my work is very interesting, but not really scientific; a remark which illustrates the colonial hierarchy in which Black scholars reside: ’you have a very subjective perspective’; ’very personal’; ’very emotional’; ’very specific’; ’are these objective facts?’. Within such masterful descriptions, the discourses and perspectives of Black scholars remain always at the margins - as deviating, while white discourses occupy the centre. When they speak it is scientific, when we speak it is unscientific. Universal/specific; objective/subjective; neutral/personal; rational/emotional; impartial/partial; they have facts, we have opinions; they have knowledge, we have experiences. These are not simple semantic categorisations. They own a dimension of power which maintains hierarchical positions and upheld white supremacy. We are not dealing here with a ’peaceful coexistence’ of words, but rather with a violent hierarchy, which defines who can speak. We have been speaking and producing independent knowledge for a long time. But, when groups are unequal in power, they are also unequal in their access to the resources which are necessary to implement their own voices (Collins 2000). And because we lack control over such structures, the articulation of our own perspective outside the group becomes extremely difficult, if not unrealisable. Moreover, the structures of knowledge validation, which define what true and valid scholarship is, are controlled by white scholars. So, as long as Black people and ’people of colour’ are denied positions of authority and command within the academy, the idea of what science and scholarship are, prevails, of course, intact - it remains an exclusive and unquestionable ’property’ of whiteness. So, it is not an objective scientific truth that we encounter in the academy, but rather the result of unequal power race relations, which define what counts as true and in whom to believe. The themes, the paradigms and the methodologies of traditional scholarship - the so called epistemology - reflect nothing but the specific political interests of a white colonial patriarchal society. Epistemology derives from the Greek words: episteme=knowledge and logos=science, the science of the acquisition of knowledge. It determines, therefore, which questions merit being questioned (themes), how to analyse and explain a phenomenon (paradigms), and how to conduct research to produce knowledge (methods). And, in this sense, it defines not only what true scholarship is; but also in whom to believe and trust, because who is defining which questions merit being asked? And who is asking them? Furthermore to whom are the answers directed? Interesting, but unscientific, but subjective, but personal, but emotional and partial, ’you do over-interpret’, said a colleague, ’you must think you are the queen of interpretation’. Such comments, reveal that the endless need to control the Black subject’s voice and the longing to govern and to command how we approach and interpret reality. By using these remarks, the white subject is assured of her sense of power, and of her own authority over a group which she is labelling as ’less knowledgeable.’ The last comment, in particular, gives two powerful insights. The first is a form of warning which describes the standpoint of the Black woman as a distortion of the truth, expressed here through the word ’over-interpretation’. The female colleague was warning me that I am over-reading, beyond the norms of traditional epistemology, and therefore, that I am producing invalid knowledge. It seems to me that this idea of over-interpretation addresses the thought that the oppressed is seeing ’something’ which should not be seen, and is about to say ’something’ which should not be said. ’Something’ which should be kept quiet, as a secret - like the secrets of colonialism that most of my students could not answer. Curiously, in feminist discourses as well, men try to irrationalise the thinking of women, as if such feminist interpretations were nothing but a fabrication of the reality, an illusion, maybe even a female hallucination. Within this constellation it is the white woman who irrationalises my thinking, and by doing so, she defines to the Black woman what ’real’ scholarship is, and how it should be expressed. This reveals how complex the intersection between gender, ’race’ and colonial power is, and how the idea of a unitary category of women based on the assumption of an absolute patriarchy which divides the world into powerful men and subordinate women is problematic: for it neglects white women’s role as oppressors and the reality of oppression experienced by both Black women and Black men. In the second instance, she speaks then of hierarchical places, of a queen she fantasises I want to be, but who I cannot become. The queen is an interesting metaphor. It is a metaphor for power. A metaphor, also of the idea that certain bodies belong to certain places: a queen or a king naturally belong to the palace of knowledge, but not the plebeians; they can never achieve the position of royalty. They are sealed in their own subordinate bodies. Such a demarcation of spaces introduces a dynamic in which Blackness signifies ’being outside place’. I am told to be outside my place, for I cannot be the queen, only the plebeian. My body is improper. Within racism, Black bodies are constructed as improper bodies ’outside place’, while white bodies are always proper, they are bodies at home, ’in place’, bodies which belong. The same way in academia, in which Black scholars are persistently invited to return to ’their place’, at the margins, where our bodies are at home and where they are proper. Such dynamic reveals how dominant scholarship performs a fruitful combination of power, intimidation and control, which succeeds in silencing oppressed voices. Fruitful indeed, for after this last episode I remember I stopped writing for more than a month. I became temporarily voiceless. I had a ’white-out’, was waiting for a Black-in. Speaking about these positions of marginality evokes, of course, pain. They are reminders of the places we can hardly enter. The places we never ’arrive’ at or ’can’t stay’ in (Hooks 1990). Such pain must be spoken and theorised. It must have a place within discourse, because we are not dealing here with ’private information’. Such apparent ’private information’ is not private at all. These are not personal stories or intimate complains; but rather, accounts of racism. They mirror the historical, political and social realities of ’race relations’ within the academic spaces, and should be articulated in both theory and methodology. Such experiences confirm that academia is not a neutral space. It is not only a space of knowledge and wisdom, of science and scholarship, but also a space of violence. This violence remains as long as we remain outside at the margins, while white others are inside the centre, speaking in our own name. That is the essence of the violence - the violence of always being placed as the white subject’s ’Other’, who defines how to speak. **Therefore, I call for an epistemology which includes the personal, the subjective and the emotional. For, as I mentioned earlier, there is no neutral, no objective no rational. Only the results of specific political interests of a white colonial patriarchy. Besides, once we find our voices, as Black writers, it is impossible to speak or to write disembodied of such emotions, of such passion or pain, because we are transgressing sorrowful boundaries. We are moving from the margins to the centre. This is in remembrance of our ancestors.**

### 2AC T/Framework

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(Robert, “Transcendence in the Thought of bell hooks: Some Reflections on Resistance and Self-Creation” Volume 08, Number 2 Spring 2009 NEWSLETTER ON PHILOSOPHY AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE, http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/950518C1-3421-484C-8153-CDA6ED737182/v08n2Black.pdf)

Human being is transcendence. We are characterized more by a dynamic of becoming than the fixity of being; or rather our being is becoming. We are never wholly what we are— never merely teacher or student, worker or boss, colonizer, native, or “Negro.”1 We are always more and other than what we are. We are as perpetual surpassing, an unending going beyond. Ultimately we are human insofar as we make ourselves subject—self-creation being perhaps the most unique manifestation of human freedom. But when transcendence is thwarted by social oppression, it must assert itself as resistance if it is to thrive as self-creation. Transcendence as resistance and self-creation (sometimes politically termed “self-determination”) is an enduring theme in African-American thought. This essay offers brief reflections on this theme in bell hooks, though only in a thin slice of her copious works. bell hooks does not philosophically thematize transcendence, but it is central to her conception of subjectivity—especially “radical black subjectivity.”2 Whether she is discoursing on “postmodern blackness,” making critiques of racial essentialism, challenging “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,” or promoting the “decolonization” of black consciousness, hooks’ essential concern is the enabling of self- creation and a liberated identity. In her own words her concern is with “how the dominated, the oppressed, the exploited make ourselves subject.”3 Now this emphasis on “making” ourselves subject clearly indicates the primary importance of praxis, and even perhaps the philosophical premise that the human being is primarily action.4 We could not meaningfully speak of making ourselves subject if free, creative action were not intrinsic to our existence, or if we were bound by a fixed and given nature. In a sense the human being is always subject. Human being is transcendence even when loaded with chains. But what becomes of transcendence when loaded with chains? Is it not blocked, cut off, thrown back upon itself, denied? The subject is made object. Black philosopher Frantz Fanon attests to this when he writes that he had come “into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things” only to discover himself (under racist French colonialism) to be an “object in the midst of other objects.”5 Similar experiences are attested to throughout the history of African-American literature and popular culture. bell hooks, who has studied Fanon and resembles him in her emphasis on a politics of decolonization, also notes how the imperial white gaze and a culture of white supremacy works to reduce blacks to the status of objects. “A culture of domination,” she writes, “demands of all its citizens self-negation. The more marginalized, the more intense the demand.”6 For American Blacks, as a domestically colonized people, this “demand” has often meant being compelled to “assume the mantle of invisibility, to erase all traces of their subjectivity...”7 Oppression is a dam which blocks the free flow of transcendence. It can be breached only with the weapons of resistance. Transcendence must become insurgent, consciousness oppositional. Without resistance self-creation is impossible. It is evident throughout hooks’ numerous works that resistance, opposition even within spaces of marginality, is indispensable to the freedom of self-creation. This is so especially insofar as oppressed peoples tend to internalize their oppression—the crippling internalizing of white supremacist and patriarchal values by African-Americans being of special concern for her. But is resistance only a necessary condition of self-creation, or is it an active and positive part of self-creation? bell hooks’ own words suggest a clear distinction:¶ How do we create an oppositional worldview, a consciousness, an identity, a standpoint that exists not only as that struggle which also opposes dehumanization but as that movement which enables creative, expansive self-actualization? Opposition is not enough. In that vacant space after one has resisted there is still the necessity to become—to make oneself anew. Resistance is that struggle we can most easily grasp. ...That space within oneself where resistance is possible remains. It is different then to talk about becoming subjects.8¶ Professor hooks’ language seems to reveal a certain tension. Is resistance or opposition merely negative, merely negation of oppression and dehumanization? Or can it also be at least the beginning of the process of “becoming subjects”? In short, is opposition or resistance already the beginning of self-creation, of “creative, expansive self-actualization? bell hooks seems to stop short of making the latter claim, emphasizing only the power of at least some forms of resistance to “enable” creative self-actualization. But enabling creative self-actualization is not the same as constituting or bringing it about. And Professor hooks’ talk of a “vacant space” after resistance wherein it is still necessary to “become” and “make oneself anew” certainly implies a great distinction between resistance and self-creation. Of course, her description of a vacant space after resistance may be read metaphorically.9 Yet the very force of that metaphor suggests that there is in hooks’ understanding of subjectivity a transcending movement of resistance which aims to liberate us from what Fanon calls a “crushing objecthood,” and a quite different and distinctive transcending movement of self-creation.¶ But is there necessarily a blank space after resistance? Could it be that at least the beginning of self-creation, of making oneself anew is part of the very movement of resistance itself? We can agree with Professor hooks that resistance is not enough insofar as it is mere negation. Any human identity is likely to be impoverished if it exhausts itself in mere resistance. But what if resistance cannot be genuine if it is not also creative? What if it is an affirmation as well as a negation? Perhaps there is something to Fanon’s claim that decolonization, itself a movement of resistance, is also a veritable creation of “new men” with “a new language and a new humanity.”10¶ Now, I do not allude to Fanon gratuitously or as mere coincidence. bell hooks has frequently mentioned in her writings the intellectual influence of Frantz Fanon. And we can find between them a common emphasis on the need for decolonization and for radically making oneself anew—in Fanon’s language trying to “set afoot the new man.”11 For both of them this entails a radical transformation of the social structure and human consciousness. This transformation is seen by both of them as being as much moral, spiritual, and cultural as it is political and economic. For both thinkers this transformation must be radicalif it is not to be deflected and thwarted.12¶ But for Fanon this radical transformation of person and society must at least begin during the phase of resistance, perhaps as part of the resistance, or it is unlikely to be realized at all. The transformation which begins to “set afoot the new man” must certainly continue after revolutionary resistance to the colonial system has triumphed, and most profoundly after that triumph. For if the process of personal and social transformation does not continue, colonialism may be replaced by neocolonialism; and the formerly colonized native may then learn from painful experience that “exploitation can wear a black face” as well as a white one.13 But the process of self- transformation, self-creation, does not seem to begin in a blank space after resistance. Resistance and self-creation seems at least coterminous in Fanon, with perhaps more of a continuum than a blank space.¶ bell hooks, who is no less desirous of radical change than Fanon, and who, as a revolutionary feminist black woman, goes further than Fanon in radically criticizing patriarchy and rethinking gender relations, puts more emphasis on the difference between resistance and self-creation. In her essay “Love as the Practice of Freedom,” she mentions how her reading of one of Dr. King’s essays reminded her of where “true liberation leads us.” And she finds that it “leads us beyond resistance to transformation.”14 Of course, genuine¶ transformation of self cannot simply reduce itself to resistance. Yet I wonder if it isn’t possible from within bell hooks’ own conceptual framework to understand resistance and self- creation as at least partially coinciding in one movement of transcendence.¶ In her essay on love hooks recalls Dr. King’s statement that the aim of the freedom movement is “the creation of the beloved community.” Yet Dr. King believed he saw at least the beginnings of the beloved community in the Selma movement— in the struggle against disfranchisement of blacks. In Black Looks, bell hooks notes that the “oppositional black culture that emerged in the context of apartheid and segregation has been one of the few locations that have provided a space for the kind of decolonization” which makes “loving blackness possible.”15 Yet in Yearning, bell hooks recalls within that very space of resistance a vital experience of community, of deep relational love that she thinks so essential to self-transformation.16 And in the “Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity” she quotes with obvious approval Toni Cade Bambara’s comment that “it perhaps takes less heart to pick up the gun than to face the risk of creating a new identity...via commitment to the struggle.”17 But isn’t creating a new identity via commitment to struggle self- creation through resistance? And when bell hooks calls upon her black brothers to “reconstruct black masculinity,” and to radically challenge limiting “phallocentric” and “conventional construction of patriarchal masculinity,”18 isn’t she advocating a transformation of self and consciousness so radical as to be already a praxis of resistance? To what extent is a liberating self- creation itself a form of resistance? Perhaps what is called for is a more thoroughgoing inquiry into the meaning(s) of resistance itself. At least some forms of resistance are movements of self- creation. At least some efforts at self-creation are inexorably praxes of resistance.19¶ In short, while we may agree with hooks that “opposition is not enough,” we may still wonder if there may not be creative moments within resistance rather than a “vacant space” preceding the making of ourselves anew. A transcending movement of “expansive self-actualization” may coincide with, and partly emerge from, the transcending movement of resistance. Self-creation may prove to be coterminous with resistance. Instead of a blank space, we have a continuum. Human transcendence always involves becoming, but for oppressed people whose transcendence is denied self-creation often finds its founding moments in resistance. For people who are radically oppressed it may be otherwise impossible to reclaim their transcendence at all.

1. , all strategies will amount to an interest convergence, wherein token advances pacify resistance as the system continues on unscathed.

**Dillon 12**

Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at the University of Minnesota.

(“State of White Supremacy: Racism, Governance, and the United States” (Book Review) August 28, 2012, http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2012/08/28/book-review-state-of-white-supremacy-darkmatter-journal/)

Here, the first two essays discuss racial discrimination in education. George Lipsitz provides a masterful reading of U.S. court cases (including a powerful rereading of Brown v. Board of Education) concerning racial discrimination in education to highlight how racism continues under the names equality, desegregation, and protection. As Lipsitz observes, the wording of Brown allows school districts to declare non-discriminatory intentions without taking reparative action. In this way, the state uses laws intended to end white supremacy in order to preserve it. Thus, the law (like the citizen and the human) is a not a vehicle of liberation but a tool of subjection. Lipsitz’s analysis of legal white supremacy authorized by Civil Rights legislation is complemented by the work of Sanford Schram, Richard Fording, and Joe Soss on what they term “neoliberal-paternalism.” Neoliberal paternalism apprehends the ways contemporary forms of poverty governance resurrect older modes of population management in order to connect them to more recent neoliberal modes of governance. Past forms of racialized state violence become sutured to newer forms of control and punishment. As more and more poor people of color abandoned by neoliberal restructuring are captured by an unprecedented regime of incarceration, welfare has increasingly mimicked the penal sphere. We might add the education system to the massive network of racialized state power outlined by Schram, Fording, and Soss. This almost unimaginable regime of racialized management and control produces a system where, as Joy James writes, “Whites are to be protected, and Black life is to be contained in order to protect whites and their property (both personal and public or institutional)” (169). These critiques of the state are powerfully extended by the work of Andrea Smith and João H. Costa Vargas in the book’s final section. Smith continues the collection’s critique of the law by observing that “genocide has never been against the law in the United States” because “Native Genocide has been expressly sanctioned as the law” (231). Like Rodríguez, Smith argues for a politics of abolition and undoing rather than reform and inclusion. In her analysis of hate crimes legislation, Smith argues that instead of making racialized and gendered violence illegal (given that racialized and gendered violence is already executed through the law in the prison, reservation, and the ghetto), we must make our organizing, theorizing, and teaching against the law. If the state is foundational to racialized, gendered, and heterosexist violence, then the state should not be the mediator of pain and grievance because “the state is now going to be the solution to the problem it created in the first place” (232). The work of João H. Costa Vargas complements this analysis by making clear the ways the law produces anti-black genocide. For Vargas, the black diaspora is a “geography of death” where the premature and preventable deaths of black people are authorized by a “cognitive matrix” that systematically renders black life devalued. Vargas would surely understand the preventable deaths produced by the medical industry as a form of genocide, namely because intent is not central to his theorization of the concept. Instead, creating or tolerating conditions that produce mass-based uneven vulnerability to premature death is genocidal, making white supremacy itself a genocidal project. Accordingly, genocide is at the core of our ethical standards, is foundational to modern politics, and is central to our cognitive apparatuses (269). To challenge genocide we must undo the epistemologies that support systems of value and disposability and make possible the slow deaths that are the “condition of possibility for our present subjectivities and modern politics” (269).

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### YANCY BRACKETING

Yancy 5

[George, associate professor of philosophy at Duquesne University, “Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body,” The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 19.4]

I write out of a personal existential context. This context is a profound source of knowledge connected to my "raced" body. Hence, I write from a place of lived embodied experience, a site of exposure. In philosophy, the only thing that we are taught to "expose" is a weak argument, a fallacy, or someone's "inferior" reasoning power. The embodied self is bracketed and deemed irrelevant to theory, superfluous and cumbersome in one's search for truth. It is best, or so we are told, to reason from nowhere. Hence, the white philosopher/author presumes to speak for all of "us" without the slightest mention of his or her "raced" identity. Self-consciously writing as a white male philosopher, Crispin Sartwell observes:¶ Left to my own devices, I disappear as an author. That is the "whiteness" of my authorship. This whiteness of authorship is, for us, a form of authority; to speak (apparently) from nowhere, for everyone, is empowering, though one wields power here only by becoming lost to oneself. But such an authorship and authority is also pleasurable: it yields the pleasure of self-forgetting or apparent transcendence of the mundane and the particular, and the pleasure of power expressed in the "comprehension" of a range of materials.

### Recentering Whiteness

Yancy Explains

(George, Prof of Philosophy at Duquesne University, Black bodies, white gazes : the continuing significance of race, 2008 p. 229)

The white student's objection raised the issue of how white interlocutors, when in discussions involving race and racism, may (more than they realize) deploy theory as a way of not being forced to examine aspects of their own white subject position. Indeed, the deployment of theory can function as a form of bad faith. **Whiteness**, after all, **is a master of concealment**; it is insidiously embedded within responses, reactions, good intentions, postural gestures, denials, and structural and material orders. Etymologically, the word "insidious" (insidiae) means to ambush-a powerful metaphor, as it brings to mind images and scenarios of being snared and trapped unexpectedly. Whiteness as a form of ambushing is not an anomaly. The operations of whiteness are by no means completely transparent. This is partly what it means to say that whiteness is insidious. The moment a white person claims to have arrived, he/she often undergoes a surprise attack, a form of attack that points to how whiteness ensnares even as one strives to fight against racism. Shannon Sullivan states, "Rather than rest assured that she is effectively fighting white privilege, when engaging in resistance **a person needs to continually be questioning the effects of her activism on both self and world**.,,3 Although there are many white antiracists who do fight and will continue to fight against the operations of white power, and while it is true that the regulatory power of whiteness will invariably attempt to undermine such efforts, it is important that white antiracists realize how much is at stake. While antiracist whites take time to get their shit together, a luxury that is a species of privilege, Black bodies and bodies of color continue to suffer, their bodies cry out for the political and existential urgency for the immediate undoing of the oppressive operations of whiteness. Here, the very notion of the temporal gets racialized. My point here is that even as whites take the time to theorize the complexity of whiteness, revealing its various modes of resistance to radical transformation, Black bodies continue to endure tremendous pain and suffering. Doing theory in the service of undoing whiteness comes with its own snares and seductions, its own comfort zones, and reinscription of distances. Whites who deploy theory in the service of fighting against white racism must caution against the seduction of white narcissism, the recentering of whiteness, even if it is the object of critical reflection, and, hence, the process of sequestration from the real world of weeping, suffering, and traumatized Black bodies impacted by the operations of white power. As antiracist whites continue to make mistakes and continue to falter in the face of institutional interpellation and habituated racist reflexes, tomorrow, a Black body will be murdered as it innocently reaches for its wallet. The sheer weight of this reality mocks the patience of theory.