CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Colloquy

CITING BLACK WOMEN: From Citational Refusal to Recognition

ANNE-MARIA B. MAKHULU
Duke University
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0289-6950

The tradition of "great books" in which I was trained taught me to prioritize intellectual genealogies that not only on occasion denied the histories of empire and colonial expansion that stood at the center of my research but were themselves produced and had their origins in those histories. In me, like many junior faculty, this tension between the "important" names that one should reference and the often invisible if entirely relevant works that spoke to my project produced anxiety about how to make a solid argument, but also about the relative value of my own work. Conflating personal responsibility to work harder and more compellingly with the "wider systemic" problem of attribution (Gebrial 2018, 31) generated heightened anxiety and the worst possible conditions for intellectual growth.

And yet, simply adding other kinds of names to bibliographies and endnotes could not by itself address the problem of anthropology's colonial legacy. Rather, that certain great books and those who indiscriminately cited them might be responsible for intellectual and curricular erasures and that those great books were born of empire also meant that they were prone to silencing the very arguments made against their claims to Enlightenment rationality. Anthropology has served as both the best and the worst illustration of Enlightenment arrangements of knowl-

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Vol. 37, Issue 2, pp. 214–224, ISSN 0886-7356, online ISSN 1548-1360. *© American Anthropological Association 2022.* Cultural Anthropology *journal content published since 2014 is freely available to download, save, reproduce, and transmit for noncommercial, scholarly, and educational purposes. Reproduction and transmission of journal content for the above purposes should credit the author and original source. Use, reproduction, or distribution of journal content for commercial purposes requires additional permissions from the American Anthropological Association; please contact permissions@americananthro.org.* *DOI: 10.14506/ca37.2.06*

edge-power. Both an ardent critic of abstract universalism and willing to bring Kant into the igloo!

THE "HERE AND THE ELSEWHERE" IN AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

The Archimedean point from whence anthropology ventured into the world arguably continues to train disciplinary thinking and to draft that thinking into compliance with North Atlantic universalism. Michel-Rolph Trouillot has described this as the "gap between the Here and the Elsewhere" (Trouillot 2003, 2). He goes on to note that the "geography of imagination" that established the "West" endures in the discipline. Historically, where anthropologists conducted research and where they lived and worked remained necessarily distinct. The discipline's commitment to that "Elsewhere," on the one hand, and its inability to transcend its role as a tool of North Atlantic knowledge-power, on the other, is what Trouillot refers to as anthropology's "Janus face." But what does this mean from a citational perspective? In my view, broadly two things: there are those writing about "Elsewhere" whose translation point assumes a "North Atlantic" readership; and there are those writing about "Elsewhere" who, in some form or another, embody and experience the world precisely from the position of that "Elsewhere," whether because they are "indigenous" anthropologists or because they work in locales they see as intellectual homes.

Black women scholars routinely work in the tense conjuncture between "the Here and the Elsewhere" and within force fields that *intersect* with race and gender, racism and misogyny or "misogynoir" (Bailey 2021), as well as *transecting* the Black Atlantic world.[1] By extension they are fugitive in the disciplines, including anthropology, in which Black women's membership is both assumed and questioned in much the same way that the concept of fugitivity defines freedom (and hence inclusion) as an impasse (see in particular Hartman 1997; cf. Moten 2017). And though many non-BIPOC anthropologists operate in locales beyond those in which they labor and publish, their burden of translational work is distinct. Non-BIPOC scholars may not feel responsible for the intersectional webs in which minority authors function between locations of inquiry and personal entanglements. Further, in specifically racial terms, non-BIPOC authors go unmarked, relieving them of a certain kind of translational responsibility.

Distinctly attuned to the challenges of reconciling local particulars and universal knowledges, such efforts can place minority intellectuals at a disadvantage given a citational value system that puts abstraction ahead of historical and cultural

specifics. Ezekiel (Es'kia) Mphahlele, the great South African writer, knew all too well the difficulties of representing the apartheid quotidian, referring to it as "the tyranny of place" (de Kock 1987). For Mphahlele, a distinction obtained between "local" and "transcendental" modes of creative expression inclusive of genre (see, for example, Mphahlele 2013). The latter was not something afforded South Africans of political conscience and sat in opposition to "white writing" (Coetzee 1988). In parallel, those who embody and experience the world precisely from the position of an "Elsewhere" find themselves committed to articulating a theory of the local. This is theory at times denied the status of *theory* as such and labeled "mesearch" for its apparent concern for the Other.

As a member of the *American* Academy, I am aware of the "problem space" (Scott 2004) that shapes the kinds of questions regarded as interesting or relevant from the perspective of the "Here," and that the basis for relevance is subtended by the ability of authors to resolve the contradiction of "the Here and the Elsewhere." If gender and race extend otherwise taken-for-granted epistemic limits that determine what is relevant, *national* differences do too. As Faye V. Harrison (this colloquy) notes, "national biases" threaten a heterogeneity of transnational perspectives, on the one hand; and on the other, they have the potential to occlude those solidarities that exist despite heterogeneous realities. Conducting research beyond the national borders of the United States, while publishing through United States–based presses, can limit both legibility and visibility. For bell hooks (1991) this lack of visibility is construed as the difficulty of being named.

But translational work extends beyond transnational differences of reading and reception. Black scholars confront some of the very same predicaments at home, where the fact of enduring racial logics complicate the relationship of "the Here and the Elsewhere."[2] In the United States, slavery's afterlives inform both the sorts of intersectional experiences—of gender, sexual orientation, and class—that guide some of the work of Black scholars and their sense of precarity in the face of race, racism, and racialization. For those committed to theorizing a wide range of questions particular to Black life, to the extent that racially specific concepts are ontologically particular, reception and citation can obscure or invisibilize the critical importance of the work (see, for example, Du Bois 2018; Lorde 2007).

Exceptions exist, and the current prominence of particular theorists of the Black experience—Saidiya V. Hartman (2007), Christina Sharpe (2016), Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007), Fred Moten (2018), and Frank B. Wilderson III (2020), for example—forces a broader engagement with the consequences of racial capitalism and the anti-Black racism that is its legacy as the form in which capitalism

appears and dictates a vast array of racially divergent experiences.[3] That the most *prominent* theorizing of Black ontology happens mostly outside the discipline indicates something of the place of anthropology in relation to critical race studies, Black feminist studies, and other cognate fields. To the degree that anthropology occupies the "savage slot" (Trouillot 2003), the race question appears to have been put to bed. But does anthropology's colonial legacy absolve it of responsibility for addressing other forms of racialization? Does this explain less a silence on matters of race (see, for example, Baker 2010; Pierre 2013; Smith 2016; Shange 2019; Thomas 2019; Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre 2020) than a powerful impulse to de-emphasize the criticality of writing about it?

Many anthropologists think and write about race, racism, and anti-Blackness, but they may not be perceived within the discipline to be doing the most important work. Put differently, Black anthropology has not been recognized *as* anthropology since the very inception of the professional discipline (see Hurston 1990; Dunham 1994; Green on Primus 2001; cf. Mead 2001; Benedict 2005). And much as Black feminism struggled not only to be heard but also to show the way for mainstream feminism—Lorde's *Sister Outsider* being perhaps the most obvious example—Black anthropology struggles for recognition even as Black and other BIPOC anthropologists negotiate processes of double othering, working "Here" and "Elsewhere" as "Selves" and "Others."[4]

RECOGNITION

On the assumption that citational frequency remains a basic measure of scholarly excellence, this colloquy is committed to exploring the mechanisms by which citational frequency is achieved. Citation has several aims: comparison, mention, reference, and even deference to another, all with a view to showing a prior basis for the claims of a given author. Citation can also reflect the impulses and biases of scholarly reading publics—their networks and friendships—as well as their inclinations to trust that those who have already been cited must consequently bear some relationship to the most critical and paradigm-shifting insights in the discipline.

Routine citation remains a hallmark of rigorous scholarship, but to assume that citation and rigor are always one and the same makes consensus and widening name recognition indistinguishable. More seriously, indiscriminate acknowledgment deepens relationships of exclusion for those who remain un- or undercited—tightening access to flagship journals, reputable university presses, departmental appointments, and the talk circuit, as those who remain uncited become, in due

course, *uncitable*. In a moment when decolonial thought is ascendant and institutions are beginning to recognize the value of diversity, the fact of who makes knowledge and who is refused epistemic authority seems more relevant than ever. Here again, I am particularly interested in the experiences of Black women recognizing the continuity between "uncitability" and other similar disavowals including (un)grievability (Butler 2009), un-rapeability (Gqola 2015), and ungendering (Spillers 1987) as a first step in acknowledging the ways in which citational practices reproduce extant inequities in our discipline and our institutions.

In sum, to be or to become uncitable, and hence to be unthought, is to labor absent recognition.

Recognition in the philosophical sense assumes another's existence or humanity. For scholars, *gaining* recognition requires an audience or readership. My concern is to combine the two definitions and to work through the implications of recognition for those who by dint of gender-race are effectively "the unthought" (Hartman and Wilderson 2003). In *Phenomenology of Spirit* (cf. Du Bois 2018; Fanon 2008; Marx 1998; Althusser 2001; Butler 1997) Hegel (1977) theorizes self-consciousness—awareness of another's awareness of oneself—an idea that appears to be exclusively Hegel's own. Yet Susan Buck-Morss's revision of Hegel's thesis shows he is likely to have been influenced by unfolding events in Haiti in the lead-up to the Haitian Revolution (Buck-Morss 2009; also see Robinson 2000; cf. Chu 2018; Lamola 2016; More 2015; Willett 1995). Reading German newspaper reports on what was at first a slave rebellion and then the revolution that established Haiti as the world's first free Black nation in 1804, Hegel was inspired by radical practices of *marronage* that were foundational to what he later termed the "master-slave" dialectic. Enlightenment philosophy, in sum, benefited from the working out of the terms of freedom of and by Black people, and yet the origins of the idea remained concealed. French and American Revolutions became elevated to the status of archetypes of political liberation—even as these were built on the unfreedom of the Other.

Put differently, the ruse of Enlightenment lay in its embrace of its own negation.

CITATIONAL REFUSAL

In showcasing a writer's contributions to scientific and humanistic knowledge; citation sets the terms of the intellectual communities we inhabit and their potential for fairness and generosity, intelligence, and curiosity. Systematically ignoring the work of Black and other minority authors unmakes worlds and proves

especially damaging for those who are de facto perceived as lacking expertise because of their complexion and gender and whose contributions are therefore deemed irrelevant. What appears between parentheses, then, represents complex and varied motivations, ranging from desire for precision and transparency, to exclusion in the case of negative citation, and, in the extreme, refuses to engage with the work at all. Consider "(Marx 1990)." The parenthesis references a large and well-known corpus. Most writers cite this first volume of Marx's *Capital* that situates debates about the history of modern capitalism. Some do so perhaps to signal something about themselves and their membership in the ranks of left and Marxist intellectual circles. At base, in-text parentheticals reveal almost as much about the person doing the citing as about those being cited, which is to say that citation can be an act of ego. Others still cite "(Marx 1990)" along with "(Harvey 2003)" to highlight the conceptual relationship between accumulation and dispossession. Marx and Harvey are referenced frequently, and a quick Google search suggests that "David Harvey" generates more than 250,000,000 results.

With the mainstreaming of an idea, concept, term, attribution may fall away. For example, citing Marx is no longer essential to writing about the commodity, labor, or value. Marginal voices, on the other hand, may well go unattributed from the very start—erased in ways critical to citational refusal as the antithesis of recognition (in both the philosophical and political senses).

Early in his 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, W. E. B. Du Bois (2018, 3) opines: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." Frantz Fanon likewise describes the malaise that overcomes him when a small child perceives Fanon first as a "Negro" (in the French original, *un nègre*, with its double meaning) and hence a "nonperson" (Perry 2018). In the well-known passage from the 1952 *Black Skin, White Masks*, the reader becomes acutely aware not only of the child's response to Fanon but also of Fanon's working through his relationship to the child's perception of him:

> "Look, a Negro!" It was a passing sting. I attempted a smile.
> "Look, a Negro!" Absolutely. I was beginning to enjoy myself.
> "Look, a Negro!" The circle was gradually getting smaller. I was really enjoying myself.
> "*Maman*, look, a Negro; I'm scared!" Scared! Scared! (Fanon 2008, 91)

The end of *Black Skin, White Masks* infers (in my reading of it) that Hegel's master-slave dialectic misapprehended the relationship between the two: the necessary struggle for self-emancipation and self-knowledge in which the slave engaged, and the mutual determination of the master's condition in his dependency on the slave. Self-consciousness is achieved in the relation between them, something each of them consents to, but unevenly so. For what seems so apparent from Fanon's account of the "slave" or "Other" is that the master has little self-consciousness, if any. And that the perpetuation of white supremacy as a structure within which the master and slave operate tilts the scale in a particular direction—namely, in the direction of double consciousness as a fuller self-knowledge for the slave than for the master.

DECOLONIAL CURRICULUM, DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGY

This essay has centered on an expanded and capacious set of practices of citation challenging what is currently understood as *canonical* and ranging widely across epistemological boundaries in ways that may seem disciplinarily agnostic. But what I hope I have inspired is the possibility of a fully decolonial citational practice that moves beyond questions of diversity to "open the classroom to the world" (Aparna and Kramsch 2018, 100), collapsing the "gap between the Here and the Elsewhere." To "cite Black women" is an exercise in self-empowerment, certainly, but equally a way of opening Northern Hemispherism to a broad critique (Gebrial 2018, 22–23). Diversifying our ways of knowing is one thing of course; decolonizing them quite another (Harrison 1997). "Otherwise put, the decolonial turn seeks to overcome hierarchies that impede true rigour and excellence" (Maldonado-Torres et al. 2018, 65).

With new tools for thinking Marx via Black feminism, imagining Enlightenment in the image of Kara Walker's *Fons Americanus*, I can write about South Africa in ways that adhere to universal truths and to what it means to be Black while conceding that the particulars of postapartheid remain critical. If so, then my intellectual universe at least will have become broader, wider, more generous.

ABSTRACT

This essay addresses the tension between Northern Hemispheric intellectual assumptions and anthropology's ostensibly critical stance within that intellectual tradition, one. Two, extending beyond the contradictions of the discipline's origins in colonial encounter to address the place of Black women anthropologists caught between "the Here and the Elsewhere" (Trouillot 1995), "Citing Black Women" argues for working

through the problem of canonical disciplinary knowledge formation by prioritizing a Black feminist approach to a new decolonial anthropology. [Black feminist; citational refusal; decolonial; knowledge-power; recognition]

NOTES

Acknowledgments My thanks (in alphabetical order) to Faye V. Harrison, doyenne decolonial anthropologist; Savannah Shange, audacious theorist; Christen A. Smith, inveterate #CiteBlackWomen[5] warrior and my inspiration; Bianca C. Williams, take-to-the-streets-and-back-to-the-ivory-tower-combatant—without you, this colloquy would be for naught, and I would have learned nothing.

1. My thanks to Faye V. Harrison in this colloquy for so clearly making the point.
2. For example, my appointment in Cultural Anthropology and African & African American Studies (Duke University) requires that research conducted in South Africa speak not only to South African readers but also to U.S.-based understandings of racial struggle. As Bianca C. Williams (this colloquy) notes, Black women scholars' appointment in multiple departments and programs intensifies the challenges of translation necessary to intellectual legibility. It also incrementally increases their administrative labor.
3. "South Africa after the Rainbow," an interview with Dean Judith Kelley for *Policy 360 Podcast*, https://sanford.duke.edu/story/south-africa-after-rainbow-podcast/ (accessed December 31, 2021).
4. My thanks to Christen A. Smith for pointing to the parallels between white feminism and white anthropology. As Smith notes, white anthropology is not the totality of anthropology. That Black anthropology might show the way for the discipline has not been seriously entertained.
5. Cite Black Women campaigns to compel "people to engage in a radical praxis of citation that acknowledges and honors Black women's transnational intellectual production" See https://www.citeblackwomencollective.org/. Most recently, a formal statement of citation as "critical praxis" (Smith et al. 2021) and a citational frequency pilot study (measuring frequency by race and gender) (Smith and Garrett-Scott 2021), both published in *Feminist Anthropology*, advance similar arguments to those made in this colloquy.

REFERENCES

Althusser, Louis
2001 *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Aparna, Kolar, and Olivier Kramsch
2018 "Asylum University: Re-situating Knowledge Exchange along Cross-Border Positionalities." In *Decolonising the University*, edited by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 93–107. London: Pluto Press.

Bailey, Moya
2021 *Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women's Digital Resistance*. New York: New York University Press.

Baker, Lee D.
2010 *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Beliso-De Jesús, Aisha M., and Jemima Pierre
2020 Introduction to Special Section, "Anthropology of White Supremacy." *American Anthropologist* 122, no. 1: 65–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13351

Benedict, Ruth
2005 [1934] *Patterns of Culture*. New York: First Mariner Books.

Buck-Morss, Susan
2009 *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*. Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Butler, Judith
1997 *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
2009 *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso.

Chu, Andrea Long
2018 "Black Infinity: Slavery and Freedom in Hegel's Africa." *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 32, no. 3: 414–25. https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.32.3.0414

Coetzee, J. M.
1988 *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

de Kock, Leon
1987 "Literature, Politics, and Universalism: A Debate between Es'kia Mphahlele and J. M. Coetzee." *Journal of Literary Studies* 3, no. 4: 35–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718708529840

Du Bois, W. E. B.
2018 [1903] *The Souls of Black Folk*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Dunham, Katherine
1994 [1969] *Island Possessed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fanon, Frantz
2008 [1952] *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.

Gebrial, Dalia
2018 "Rhodes Must Fall: Oxford and Movements for Change." In *Decolonising the University*, edited by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 19–36. London: Pluto Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson
2007 *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo
2015 *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

Green, Richard C.
2001 "(Up)Staging the Primitive: Pearl Primus and 'the Negro Problem' in American Dance." In *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance*, edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz, 105–142. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Harrison, Faye V., ed.
1997 *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation*. 3rd edition. Arlington, Va.: American Anthropological Association.

Hartman, Saidiya V.
1997 *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
2007 *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Hartman, Saidiya V., and Frank B. Wilderson III
2003 "The Position of the Unthought." *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2: 183–201. https://doi.org/10.1215/quiparle.13.2.183

Harvey, David
2003 *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich
1977 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Michael Inwood. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

hooks, bell
1991 "Black Women Intellectuals." In *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life*, edited by bell hooks and Cornel West, 147–64. Boston, Mass.: South End Press.
Hurston, Zora Neale
1990 [1935] *Mules and Men*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
Lamola, M. John
2016 "Biko, Hegel, and the End of Black Consciousness: A Historico-Philosophical Discourse on South African Racism." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 2: 183–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2016.1135672
Lorde, Audre
2007 [1984] *Sister Outsider*. New York: Random House.
Maldonado-Torres, Nelson, Rafael Vizcaíno, Jasmine Wallace, and Jeong Eun Annabel We.
2018 "Decolonising Philosophy." In *Decolonising the University*, edited by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 64–90. London: Pluto Press.
Marx, Karl
1990 [1867] *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin.
1998 [1932] *The German Ideology*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.
Mead, Margaret
2001 [1930] *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation*. New York: Perennial Classics.
More, Mabogo P.
2015 "Biko and Douglass: Existentialist Conception of Death and Freedom." *Philosophia Africana* 17, no. 2: 101–18. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/philafri.17.2.0101
Moten, Fred
2017 *Black and Blur*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
2018 *The Universal Machine*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Mphahlele, Es'kia
2013 [1959] *Down Second Avenue*. New York: Penguin.
Perry, Imani
2018 *Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Press.
Pierre, Jemima
2013 *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Robinson, Cedric
2000 *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Scott, David
2004 *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Shange, Savannah
2019 *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, and Schooling in San Francisco*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Sharpe, Christina
2016 *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Smith, Christen A.
2016 "Facing the Dragon: Black Mothering, Sequelae, and Gendered Necropolitics in the Americas." *Transforming Anthropology* 24, no. 1: 31–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/traa.12055
Smith, Christen A., and Dominique Garrett-Scott
2021 "'We Are Not Named': Black Women and the Politics of Citation in Anthropology." *Feminist Anthropology* 2, no. 1: 18–37. https://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.12038

Smith, Christen A., Erica L. Williams, Imani A. Wadud, Whitney N. L. Pirtle, and the Cite Black Women Collective
2021 "Cite Black Women: A Critical Praxis (A Statement)." *Feminist Anthropology* 2, no. 1: 10–17. http://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.12040
Spillers, Hortense J.
1987 "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2: 64–81. https://doi.org/10.2307/464747
Thomas, Deborah A.
2019 *Political Life in the Wake of the Plantation: Sovereignty, Witnessing, Repair*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
Trouillot, Michel-Rolph
1995 *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
2003 *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Wilderson, Frank B., III
2020 *Afropessimism*. New York: Liveright Publishing.
Willett, Cynthia
1995 *Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities*. New York: Routledge.