Location as Method

Abstract

Using 'location as method' as an example of the mutually constitutive relationship between content and methodology troubles the idea and practice that methodology is something to be 'done' to content. This paper grapples with a number of intersecting predicaments to frame a necropolitical question of, who and what is allowed / not allowed to inhabit and survive the locations of our research, writing and the academy? Drawing on Audre Lorde's thinking about the racist tactic of 'historical amnesia' (Lorde, 1980:117) as an example of the mutually constitutive relationship between content and method, this paper argues that putting a hypervigilant anti-racist remembering to work tells us that there is nothing contemporary about the recent debates in academia concerning questions of: 'why isn't my professor Black? And, why is my curriculum white? Utilizing Derrida's (2000) examination of the impossibility of hospitality this paper interrogates questions of: why is the activism of Black feminist theory is either not on the guest list, the last guest or an afterthought guest to the locations of our thinking and our actions? Why does the activism of Black feminist theory 'have to go around to the back door' (Crenshaw, 1989:161)? If 'the space and place we inhabit produces us' (Probyn, 2003:294) then location is everything. Location moves from noun to location as verb; location as locator and allocator with wide ranging implications for necropower relations of enmity, injury, absence and death (Mbembé, 2003). This paper uses a range of practice and research examples to propose location as an

event and an intervention rather than merely the place we go to intervene. A detailed deconstruction of inhabiting an inevitable implicated undecidability in the co-writing of a published book chapter with a group of Black women asylum seekers is presented. Rather than using research methodology to resolve or tidy up tensions, this paper argues for the inhabitancy of locations of tension, aporia and impossibility.

Introduction

> 'Recall the story about a worker suspected of stealing: every evening, when he was leaving the factory, the wheelbarrow he was pushing in front of him was carefully suspected, but the guards could find nothing, it was always empty. At last they got the point: what the worker was stealing was wheelbarrows.' (Žižek, 2006:21)

> 'Writers who are unsettling, calling into question, taking another, deeper look. . . . The thought that leads me to contemplate with dread the erasure of other voices . . . outlawed languages flourishing underground, essayists' questions challenging authority never being posed, upstaged plays, cancelled films – that thought is a nightmare. As though a whole universe is being described in invisible ink' (Morrison, 2009:1, 3-4)

The activism of Black feminist theory is a 'politics of location' (Boyce Davies, 1994:153, 2013; Kaplan, 1994; Radhakrishnan, 2000:56-57) that functions simultaneously as content (the what) and method (the how). Just like Žižek's wheelbarrow story, quoted at the beginning of this paper, where the wheelbarrow functioned as both the content of the stealing (the 'what') and the method of transporting the stealing (the how), I am arguing that 'location' is an example of the mutually constitutive relationship between method and content. Thus, in

terms of research methodology and writing practices, the lesson of Žižek's wheelbarrow

story is: don't make the mistake of approaching content and method as separate entities or

phenomena. In other words, methodology is not something to be 'done' to content. An

example of the mutually constitutive relationship between method and content is found in

the activism of Black feminism where the interdependency of the 'what' and the 'how' are

configured of three key intersecting locations (Nayak, 2015: xiii, 31-34, 122-123); the

dialectic, the dialogical (Hill-Collins, 2000: 30) and 'the erotic' (Lorde, 1978):

- Location of the dialectical - The activism of Black feminism arises out of the very
  oppression it seeks to confront.

- Location of the dialogical - The activism of Black feminist theory arises out of
  collective engagement with struggles for social justice.

- Location of the erotic – The activism of Black feminist theory is 'a lens through which
  we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects
  honestly in terms of their relative meaning within our lives…not to settle for the
  convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe' (Lorde,
  1978:57).

Research and writing practices of splitting theory and activism and/or content and method

into separate zones of thinking and action are in danger of missing or even killing off the

data/happenings located in the in-between space of the 'mutually constitutive'.   The

activism of Black feminist theory's use of location resists the paranoid-schizoid splitting

(Klein, 1975) of the activism of theory, into the binary of, the location of theory and the

location of activism. The activism of Black feminism is '[T]heory as Liberatory Practice'

(hooks, 1994:59-75) where theory, liberation and practice are mutually constitutive and

mutually contingent, and a good example of this is found in the Black feminist concept and experience of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2017; Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006; The Combahee River Collective, 1977; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The activism of Black Feminist theory uses the metaphor of location to ask: 'What happens if boundaries prove inadequate? If they no longer circumscribe or define spaces within, but themselves become spaces in-between?' (Reif-Hülser, 1999:283) I am thinking of the numerous Black feminist book titles that use the metaphor of location to function as content and method, such as: 'In Search of Our Mother's Gardens', and 'The Temple of My Familiar' by Alice Walker (1983,1989); 'This Bridge Called My Back...': Writings by Radical Women of Color' edited by Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981); 'Walking through fire' by Nawal El Saadawi (2009); 'Elsewhere, Within Here … and the Boundary Event' by Trinh Minh-ha (2011); M. Jacqui Alexander's Pedagogies of Crossing (2005); 'When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women…' by Paula Giddings (1984); 'Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing' edited by Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke (1990); 'In Other Worlds..' and 'Other Asias' by Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak (2006, 2008); 'Moving Towards Home…' by June Jordan (1989); 'Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones' by Carole Boyce Davies (2013). I am also thinking of the ways in which Black feminism uses the metaphor of location as theory; examples of location as a theoretical methodology to trouble racism include; Chandra Mohanty's 'cartographies of struggle' (2003) and Avtar Brah's 'Cartographies of Diaspora' (1996) to map the coordinates that position Black women; Patricia Hill Collins's notion of 'outsider within locations' (1998), 'standpoints', 'situated' knowledge within the 'matrix of domination' and 'working the cracks' (2000); Trinh Min-ha's defiance of 'master territories'(1991) and happenings in the 'boundary event' (2011);

Kimberlé Crenshaw's 'Demarginalizing the Intersection' (1989) and 'Mapping the Margins' (1991); Evelynn Hammonds's 'Black (W)holes and the Geometry' (1995); Audre Lorde's 'masters house'(1979), 'house of difference' (1982), and description of herself as 'sister outsider' (1984); Maya Angelou's 'Caged Bird'(1969); Gloria Anzaldúa's occupation of the 'Borderlands/La Frontera'(1987), and her play on the sewing terms 'interfacing' and 'interfaces' to conjure 'the inter-faces, or very spaces and places where our multiple-surfaced, coloured, racially gendered bodies intersect and interconnect' (1990: xv-xvi); and also, the way Toni Morrison locates the experience of racism in the image of a chokecherry tree in full bloom mapping whiplash scars situated across Sethe's back, 'here's the trunk – it's red and split wide open, full of sap, and this here's the parting for the branches. You got a mighty lot of branches. Leaves, too, look like, and darn if these ain't blossoms. Tiny little cherry blossoms, just as white. Your back got a whole tree on it. In bloom' (1987:93).

I am located in the activism of Black feminist theory and it strikes me that the activism of Black feminist theory is not shown the hospitality it deserves, or rather the conditions of hospitality are problematic. Let me be clear, the thrust of my critical analysis on the lack of hospitality given to the activism of Black feminist theory is not a plea or request for hospitality, but rather, my objective is to inquire about the function and production of hospitality through a deconstruction of the inherent power dynamics of hospitality. Indeed, I propose that the inherent power dynamics of hospitality are a form of necropower relations (Mbembé, 2003) where the deconstructive excess of being host or guest is a potential undoing of the position of host and guest or death of host and guest. I can say that the activism of Black feminist theory it is not a comfortable location; it is an 'unsettling, calling into question, taking another, deeper look' (Morrison, 2009:1, 3-4) location that challenges everything it comes into proximity to. But somehow, the fact that activism of Black feminist

theory is uncomfortably challenging it is not a rigorous enough answer to the questions of why it is so unwelcomed; why is activism of Black feminist theory either not on the guest list, the last guest or an afterthought guest to the party of our thinking and our actions? Why does the activism of Black feminist theory 'have to go around to the back door' (Crenshaw, 1989:161)? Now don't get me wrong, we are not short of parties, the activism of Black feminist theory creates its own parties, and we know how to throw a party! In my home city of Manchester in the UK, we had the party of 'The politics of location' conference in November 2015, and danced at the 'Activism of Black feminism' conference in March 2015 and in 2012 we had a ball 'Declaring the activism of Black feminist theory' convention in March 2012. It is important to say that these spaces were inclusive, accessible international gatherings, where people from our communities out-numbered the academics. These activism of Black feminist gatherings embodied a troubling defiance of two mutually constitutive issues; a) the question of what counts as theory and who count as theorists and (Christian, 1987); and b) the use of location to produce and legitimize what counts as theory and who count as theorists. This is a clear example of method and content co-producing and re-producing each other; location as a procedure in the production, control, selection, organization and redistribution of what counts as theory and who count as theorist; location and locating functioning as an aspect of the 'certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality' (Foucault, 1981:52).

Historical amnesia: Hypervigilant anti-racist remembering

Outside of our own activism of Black feminist parties the story is quite different; even when the activism of Black feminist theory would and should be the life and soul of the anti-racism, liberation and social justice party, it is too often ignored or the least popular guest.

This blatant lack of hospitality; this barefaced marginalization of the activism of Black feminist theory is not new and is to be expected (which is different from accepted). Here is where Lorde's attention to 'historical amnesia that keeps us working to invent the wheel… having to repeat and relearn the same old lessons over and over…how many times has this all been said before?' (Lorde, 1980:117) comes to life in two distinct ways: a) historical amnesia functions to dislocate the past from the present, like a divide and rule border, to stop us from being 'able to join hands and examine the living memories of the community' (Lorde, 1980:117); and b) historical amnesia functions to divide us from taking much needed nourishment from the lived experience wisdom of our Black feminist sistas (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Abel,1993; Christian,1987; duCille, 1994; Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 1984, 1989, 1994; hooks, and West, 1991; James and Sharpley-Whiting, 2000; Jordan, 1978; Smith,1977, 1975). In other words, at the very time when the concealed and unconcealed impact of racist abjection hits, historical amnesia leaves Black women depleted, disconnected and located in intersecting spaces of despair. Historical amnesia robs Black women and their anti-racist comrades of the resources required for the daily struggle in the collective resistance to racism (Nayak, 2015:36-38). Put under the lens of necropolitics (Butler, 2004; Kuntsman, and Posocco, 2012; Mbembé, 2003; Puar, 2007), it could be argued that historical amnesia functions as an aspect of racist 'relations of enmity' (Mbembé, 2003:16) designed to deny necessary resources for survival. In the context of the activism of Black feminist theory, Ann duCille's analysis of Black women scholars 'perishing' in the academy picks up on the power dynamics inherent in necropolitics:

> 'Both black women writers and the black feminist critics who have brought them
> from the depths of obscurity into the ranks of the academy have been such bridges.
> The trouble is that, as Moraga points out, bridges get walked on over and over and
> over again. This sense of being a bridge - of being walked on and passed over, of

being used up and burnt out, of having to "publish while perishing", as some have described their situations - seems to be a part of the human condition of many black women scholars. (duCille, 1994:254)

If the location of historical amnesia is performative, then perhaps, subversion of this performativity, by using the struggles and triumphs documented by our Black women warriors, becomes yet another example of method and content in co-production. In other words, the method of Black feminist deconstruction of the racist tactics of historical amnesia has the power to form the construction of a hypervigilant anti-racist remembering.

Putting a hypervigilant anti-racist remembering to work tells us that there is nothing contemporary about the recent debates in academia concerning questions of: 'why isn't my professor Black? And, why is my curriculum white? So, let's do some hypervigilant anti-racist remembering; let us remember and learn from Lorde by picking up on just two out of hundreds of examples she documents about the racist tactics used to marginalize the activism of Black feminist theory. For example, Lorde tells us about the inhospitable racist tactic of locating the activism of Black feminist theory at the bottom or on the reserve list by asking, 'and what does it mean in personal and political terms when even the two Black women who did present were literally found at the last hour?' (Lorde, 1979:110); Lorde tells us about the inhospitable racist tactic of locating the activism of Black feminist theory as being 'too difficult to understand', 'too alien' where the same white people who say they 'cannot "get into" them because they come out of experiences that are "too different"... seem to have no trouble at all teaching and reviewing work that comes out of vastly different experiences of Shakespeare, Moliere, Dostoyefsky and Arisophanes' Lorde, 1980:117). Perhaps here, the message is that the 'too difficult', the 'too alien', the 'too different', is actually that the activism of Black feminist theory is a bit 'too anti-racist'. In

thinking about the, not so, contemporary questions of, 'why isn't my professor Black? And, why is my curriculum white? We may do well to remember June Jordan's experience of inhospitable racism:

'But teaching at Yale was special, as it turned out. There I encountered every traditional orthodoxy imaginable so that, as a kind of flamboyant affirmation, rain or shine, I made myself where very high heels. Let the hallowed halls echo to the fact of a woman, a Black woman, passing through' (June Jordan, 1974:85)

Here are two more examples of well-worn racist tactics, documented by Black feminist, in the degradation of the activism of Black feminist theory, which we would do well to remember and learn from, namely a) the issue of where Black women are physically located in their departments, namely the issue of the 'office'; and b) the issue of distorting Black women's names:

'Being located in the corner, isolated, marked space 'I was given an office in the main hallway of the English department and one of the thirteenth floor where African American Studies was located. I took the latter as my primary office rather than the promise of isolation and solitary existence in the English Department as the then only black faculty member. I was told by some colleagues that there used to be another black faculty member years before. This symbolic choice would mark my entire career, and I would relive it in all other professional locations.' (Boyce Davies, 2013:24)

'Location of name in public, at conferences for example, I insist that my full name appears on my name tag. In a society that cannot accommodate names that come from "other" cultures, this can be a frustrating exercise. It is no wonder that many Black children will

Anglicize their names to avoid playground taunts . . . and much worse. We are still fighting colonialism.' (Simmonds, 1996:113; ellipsis in original)

'Sojourner': Name as method

Not being invited to the party of social justice functions as 'the line that circumscribes what is speakable and what is livable'…what views will count' (Butler, 2004:xx). An example of not being invited to the party of social justice can be seen in the life of the Black feminist slave woman Isabella Baumfree, known better as, Sojourner Truth (Gilbert, 1850; Krass, 1988; Mabee and Mabee, 1993; Mckissack and McKissack, 1992; Painter, 1996; Rockwell, 2000). Isabella chose the name Sojourner because it means 'traveller;' the event of travelling between and within the politics of location. Sojourner Truth's movements challenged implicit assumptions about what is located in constructions of 'truth' and where constructions of 'truth' are located. So, back to my metaphor of the party; there was a declaring the rights of women event in Ohio in 1831 and needless to say Sojourner Truth was not allocated an invite, not put off by this, Sojourner turns up. Sojourner turns up and is not recognized. I don't mean she was not recognized as a friend or colleague. Sojourner was not recognized as a woman; even when baring her breasts, she had to repeat over and over ''ain't I a woman?'' As a Black slave woman and Black migrant she was not seen as belonging in the location of the event. Now, that was in 1831 in Ohio and repeatedly on the news, I hear a similar cry from asylum seekers crossing razor wire fences repeating over and over, "ain't I a human?" and, is this not an example of 'death that lives a human life' (Mbembé , 2003: 15)? And a day does not go by where I do not hear a Black woman repeating different variations of ''ain't I a woman?'' I am reminded here, of Mbembé's analysis of necropower relations necessitating the 'distribution of human species into groups, the subdivision of the

population into subgroups, and the establishment of a biological caesura between the ones and the others' (Mbembé, 2003: 17). In the context of research methodology and writing practices, the imperative is towards an uncomfortable critical questioning of power relations encapsulated in the dynamics of hospitality that concern the conditions of location and position. All research methodology and writing practices in all contexts (i.e. not just in the humanities or social sciences), where the ethics of method is concerned, must inhabit the uncomfortable question of where and how is the violence performed. Put another way, the location of ethics within research methodology and writing practices is constituted of what/who is allowed to survive or not which points to an inquiry about conditions of regulation.

If 'the space and place we inhabit produces us' (Probyn, 2003:294) then location is everything. In this equation location is active. Location moves from being a noun to location being a verb; location as locator and allocator. I want to think about location as an event and an intervention rather than merely the place we go to intervene. Let me give you an example of how this might work: what if in the location of health and social care caseloads the names of patient Mrs A, service user Mr B, Offender juvenile C were replaced by the 'local condition of life' (Assmann, 1999: 57) in the names of the oppressive situations they inhabit such as racism, patriarchy, homophobia and capitalism. Perhaps then interventions would be less about the '"individual-society" dualism' (Parker and Spears, 1996:4) 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1975, 1982) of locating problems with and as individuals and more about tackling the oppressive locations they inhabit.

My point is that: if the location we inhabit produces us, then content and method is bound up; they co-construct each other. 'Sojourner' was not just a name it was a method, a form of

intervention. Sojourner Truth performed the idea of a name functioning as a politics of location. Similarly, I am arguing that the concept, act and experience of the invitation or lack of invitation is both content and method where to be invited is constituted in and through not being invited. Indeed, the issue is not about the invitation or lack of invitation rather, the issue is about the conditions of invitation. Furthermore, the issue is about the 'state of injury' (Mbembé, 2003: 21) established and maintained in and through the conditions of the invitation.

Impossibility of hospitality: Method and content, the problem of insecure tenancy

Patricia Hill Collins insists that, 'the shadow obscuring Black women's intellectual tradition is neither accidental nor benign' (Hill Collins, 2000:3) or put another way, the fact that the activism of Black feminist theory is not the guest of honour at the parties of social justice is 'neither accidental nor benign'. The point is that the lack of hospitality afforded to the activism of Black feminist theory is not unintentional. It seems to me that '…what is at stake is not only the thinking of hospitality, but thinking as hospitality' (Friese, 2004, cited in Molz and Gibson, 2007:2; emphasis in original). In a situation where thinking involves opening the doors of the mind to allow proximity to that which is to be thought about, the practice of 'thinking as hospitality' is problematic when what is to be thought about is a phobic object; the unthinkable phobic object of racism (Cooper, 1997). There is 'nothing accidental nor benign' about the emergence, establishment and maintenance of a phobic object; phobias are hard work. The hard work is in sustaining an intentional and purposeful inhospitable stance towards the phobic object. The unthinkable phobic object of racism is by definition inhospitable; racism is in every sense of the word and experience inhospitable.

Here, again the phenomenon of the mutually constitutive relation between content and method can be seen in their shared inhospitableness.

When asked about how he survived theory, Homi Bhabha's reply invoked connotations of an insecure tenancy, saying that it was 'an experience of how, in motion, in transition, in movement, you must continually build a habitation for your ideas, your thoughts, and yourself' (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000:373). I propose, that here, Bhabha gives us yet another example of the mutually constitutive relationship between content and method. The unstable, always in transition, constantly moving motion of oppressive social constructs that constitute power relations, such as race and racism, demands an architectural methodology of deconstruction and construction where the content is not simply moved around the same old building structures. The idea and implications of inhabiting our research and writing practices on the basis of insecure tenancy is personally and institutionally challenging; here I am thinking about the rules and regulations concerning the examination and measurement of the coherence, rigour and structure of research for example in the written and oral defence of a PhD thesis or presentation of research report/ paper; the task is of being simultaneously 'in' and 'out' of the habitation of our ideas.   In terms of the activism of Black feminist theory Bhabha's methodological imperative that 'you must continually build a habitation for your ideas, your thoughts, and yourself' (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000:373) requires building projects based on historical Black feminist architectural designs. After all, lest we forget that the, '*the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*' (Lorde, 1979:112; emphasis in original).

I have inhabited the subject of this paper for some time now and it inhabits me; '[i]t has become, and continues to be, my home. . . So I say to you and to myself, "Welcome, make

yourself at home; my home is your home" and, yet, as will become evident, this is impossible' (Nayak, 2015:92). The impossibility is not just because I keep moving and rebuilding my habitation. The impossibility of my hospitality is because the conditions of motion, transition and movement required of the host and guest particles that constitute hospitality make it impossible to locate who is host and who is guest, and, as such the particles deconstruct themselves. In other words deconstruction involves a violence that threatens annihilation; in this case the death of the host and/or guest. It would seem that the structure of hospitality is yet another example of how the subject under analysis constitutes the method for analysis.

An example of the implications of the co-productive relationship between content and method is that instead of trying to find research methods to resolve tensions, perhaps the methodological task is to occupy the site of the tension(s). Indeed the principles and issues under examination go beyond the activism of my/our Black feminist research and writing to include the detail of every encounter in our daily lives. I am arguing that the inherent tensions of the relationship between host and guest are at the heart of feminist praxis. Indeed, to go a step further, I am arguing that it is not hospitality but the location of the 'impossibility' of hospitality that needs to be inhabited. In regards to the co-productive relationship between content and method the task is one of inhabiting the tension of the possible in the impossible (Nayak, 2015).

The tensions of who or what is host and guest in politics of location are complicated by the fact that we all occupy simultaneous 'multiple contested' locations (Radhakrishnan, 2000:56-57). We are multiply located and these locations do not act in splendid isolation. We could think of this in terms of a cartography of intersectionality of locations where 'the

intersectional experience is greater than' the sum of the location of our race plus the location of our gender plus the location of our class (Crenshaw, 1989:140). In the context of research methodology, the intersectional cartography of researcher, researched, content and method is 'greater than' researcher, plus researched, plus method, plus content.

Putting the activism of location under the microscope of the concept of hospitality exposes a set of intersecting tensions. I am arguing that the contradictions inherent in the concept of hospitality help us to understand something of the anxiety, ambivalence and fear of inviting the activism of Black Feminist Theory into our locations. In the location of research methodology in general, the contradictions inherent in hospitality help us to grapple with, rather than disavow, the anxiety, ambivalence and fear inherent in host and guest positions of our writing and research practices. In terms of research methodology it is a call to occupy the tensions, the dialectics, aporia and inherent contradictions rather than seeking out methodologies to resolve or tidy up the tensions (Nayak, 2015). I am arguing that occupying rather than resolving tensions is the basis for ethical methodological encounters. Spivak argues for, 'a placing forth of the solution as the unavailability of a unified solution to a unified or homogeneous, generating or receiving, consciousness. This unavailability is often not confronted. It is dodged and the problem apparently solved' (Spivak, 1985:55). The task is to 'continually build a habitation' (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000:373) for the experience of the event of impossibility.

I propose that the unavailability of a solution to the inherent aporia of hospitality is the reason why the activism of Black feminist theory is either not on the guest list, the last guest or an afterthought guest to the party of our thinking and our actions.

Derrida explains the impossibility of hospitality in the following way:

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'absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc), but to the absolute unknown, anonymous other, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names' (Derrida, 2000:25).

The predicaments, that Derrida pinpoints, for example, in regards to inviting the activism of Black feminist theory into the ivory towers of academia could be translated into the questions of: How do I provide an unconditional welcome of my 'home is your home' extended to you earlier on in this paper whilst holding onto the position of proprietor of the location of the party of my teaching, research and political activism? If my home is your home surely this undoes the position of who is host and who is guest and is this not precisely the contradiction of unconditional hospitality (Derrida and Caputo, 1997:112)? Or, if not, then, perhaps ethically, we need to ask: what are the conditions? How do the conditions function as 'the yardstick by which to encode and represent cultural others.' (Mohanty, 1984:21)? Within the home of collaborative, inclusive, participatory, partnerships can we bear to have the home turned 'inside out' (Westmoreland, 2008:6)? Could we bear to have our positions undone?

The inherent contradiction within the etymology of hospitality is that 'the word 'hospitality' carries its opposite within itself . . . the word hospitality derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis,* which originally meant a 'stranger' and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or '*hostile'* stranger *(hostilis), + pets (potis, potes*, *potentia*), to have power. 'Hospitality', the welcome extended to the guest, is a function of the power of the host to remain master of the premises' (Derrida and Caputo, 1997:110). I propose that the

answer to the questions asked at the beginning of this paper about why the activism of Black feminist theory is the awkward guest, is that, the activism of Black feminist theory represents the hostile 'stranger'; a stranger with messages that disrupt ideas of who owns the house. The performative catch 22 situation is that the lack of invitations accorded to the activism of Black feminist theory forecloses the opportunity for it to be known; which is, of course, highly convenient. My point is that we have a situation where intellectual hospitality across locations of thinking and doing is caught up in an anxiety provoking dialectic of indeterminate locations that destabilise who or what is host and guest.   Furthermore, I contend that ideas of participatory, action, grounded research, where nods to subjectivity, positionality and unequal power relations that dodge the impossibility of hospitality remain woefully inadequate.

So far, I have been arguing that the impossibility of hospitality is bound up with location and that location determines position. I have been arguing that location and position determine who and what survives. Framed in terms of hospitality, the position / survival of host and guest are determined by location.   Now when the positions in question are positions of power that are legitimized within an economy of locations of hierarchy, then '[i]nstitutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity' (Lorde, 1980:115).   Thus, if the position of white supremacy is legitimized within the location of professorships and curriculums, then it becomes clear that, it is 'neither accidental nor benign' (Hill Collins, 2000:3) that 'my professor' and 'my curriculum' are white. An example of the violence of these inhospitable locations of white professorships and white curriculums for Black people is the requirement 'to speak our language, in all senses of the term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome' (Derrida, 2000:15) Black

people into the research and scholarship gatherings. The issue at stake for Black professors and Black curriculums is 'how can the black subject posit a full and sufficient self in a language in which blackness is a sign of absence?' (Gates, 1986:218). Extended to the context of research methodology in general, the task is one of inhabiting the ways in which location and position function within the mutually constitutive relation between content and method in terms of power relations. Thus, the question by Gates, that I have just quoted, could be reframed to ask ''how can the subject and object of research posit a full and sufficient self in a language/ chapter/ research paper/thesis in which certain categories and issues of humanity are a sign of absence?'

Occupying the location of tension: The 'pervertible and perverting' in co-writing

The predicament of the impossibility of hospitality for the activism of Black feminist theory is that the welcomed or unwelcomed location of insider, outside, or outsider-within (Hill-Collins, 2004: 103-126) are caught up in the dialectic of, '[h]ow to be both free and situated: how to convert a racist house into a race-specific yet nonracist home. How to enunciate race while depriving it of its lethal cling' (Morrison, 1998:5). The quandary is that there is no non-racist location. If 'racist social structures create racist psychic structures' (Oliver, 2001:34) then we are all racist subjects (Nayak, 2015:51). The problem is that we are all 'implicated' (Caselli, 2005:105). In other words, the unstable indeterminate positions of host and guest, guest as host and host as guest are caught up in an implicated referral and deferral configuration that cannot escape an 'always-already' racist hailing (Althusser, 1971: 33-34). This tension is, at once, the method and content that all Black feminist activist need to occupy; it is the location that Black feminist movements as a collective must inhabit to give effect to our hypervigilant anti-racist remembering. The imperative to inhabit rather

than disavow the tension of undecidability 'increases responsibility in that it obliges us to make finer and finer distinctions' (Llewelyn, 1992:93). Put another way, inhabiting the location of undecidability configured on the 'always already' (Althusser, 1971: 33-34) is the basis for an ethics of inclusive scholarship; a scholarship that acknowledges rather than disavows the inevitability of being implicated.

I had to inhabit an implicated undecidability in the co-writing of a published book chapter with a group of Black women asylum seekers, entitled: 'Testimony, Tolerance and Hospitality: The Limitations of the HRA in Relation to Asylum Seekers' (Nayak, 2012), in which hospitality was at once the subject under analysis and the method or tool for analysis. Hospitality framed an ethics of co-writing in negotiating the shifting position of the co-writers as guest and host in the text and writing process. In particular, the co-writing relationship inhabited the 'essential "self-Limitations" built right into the idea of hospitality, which preserves the distance between one's own and the stranger, between owning one's own property and inviting the other into one's house' (Derrida and Caputo, 1997:110). The tensions of, how the inclusion of testimony in the book chapter inevitably fell afoul of the mastery of the host in the dynamics of the co-writing is illustrated in the following extract from the book chapter quoting the words of three of the Black women asylum seeker co-writers. This extract brings to life Spivak's (1988) question, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?; question at the heart of the mutually constitutive relation between method and content:

> 'It's crazy, I am not welcome in your country, I am told to leave, but I am welcome in
> your conferences and now in one of your books, make up your minds, do you want
> me or not'.

'If and when I am forced to leave the UK, I will still remain here on shelves in this book and maybe when someone reads this chapter that we are writing and I may be gone I will still be here'.

'I wonder, would my words have power without the words of Derrida, Wendy Brown, Homi Bhabha and others in this writing, I mean they freely give their names, I cannot afford to have my name printed, too dangerous, do we need these other words, I do not want to be a ventriloquist's puppet'. (Nayak, 2012:224)

I want trace Derrida's notions of the 'pervertible and perverting' in the impossibility of hospitality using further extracts from the co-written book chapter. Derrida writes that: 'The law of hospitality, the express law that governs the general concept of hospitality, appears as a paradoxical law, pervertible and perverting. It seems to indicate that absolute hospitality should break with the law of hospitality as a right or duty, with the 'pact' of hospitality' (Derrida, 2000:25).

The book chapter was written with Black women asylum seekers from the Manchester campaign group 'United for Change' (http://www.revive-uk.org/advocaterevive-action-group/united-for-change/) and members of a Manchester asylum seeker support service called 'Revive' (http://www.revive-uk.org/). Members of 'United for Change' and 'Revive' were invited to the conference "Ten years On: A Multi-Perspective Evaluation of the Human Rights Act", hosted by the University of Salford in June 2010. The purpose of the invitation was to include the lived experience of the violation of human rights in the conference programme in the form of 'testimony'; a bearing witness to the lived experience of being disbelieved by the UK Home office in seeking asylum in the UK. Here is an extract from the chapter:

'The paradox is that within the context of the conference the credibility of these asylum seekers' testimonies as a critical lens was contingent on the fact and consequences of the lack of credibility of their testimony within the legal and state processes that establish authenticity of their request for asylum.   The decision that they were assessed as inauthentic made them authentic witnesses' (Nayak, 2012: 223).

In this extract it is possible to see an example of Derrida's notion of the 'pervertible and perverting' characteristic of hospitality. One set of conditions of hospitality represent a ticket to cross the border with an invitation to be a guest into the host territory of the conference and then the book chapter; and another set of conditions represent the opposite, namely an inhospitable rejection; a 'no entry permitted' door slammed closed! Thus, each set of 'pervertible and perverting' conditions are contingent on the other, and mutate according to location.

Here is another extract from the chapter:

'Indeed, incorporating the element of testimony in the conference represented inclusivity of the "Other'', an antidote to accusations of exclusivity and the rubber-stamping voice that authenticates. Insisting on the problematics of "authenticism or the authority of authenticity, Spivak argues that, 'the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other' and 'invocations of the *authenticity* of the Other" are used to circumvent the difficulties inherent in representation (Nayak, 2012: 223).

I propose that it is possible to read the 'mechanics' and 'invocations' of authenticity that Spivak refers to as an act and 'pact' of 'perverting' the 'absolute unknown and anonymous other' into a known authentic Other. It is possible to see the conditions of the hospitality

given to the Black women asylum seekers from 'United for Change' and 'Revive' as a 'pact' of 'reciprocity' where the unknown 'foreigner' (Derrida, 2000:25)is transformed into a rubber-stamping, known, authentic witness.

Here is further extract from the chapter:

'Picking up Said's notion of the violence of relentless fetishization of difference, Griffiths states, 'a fetishised cultural commodity, may be employed ... to enact a discourse of "liberal violence" . . . re-enacting its own oppressions on the subjects it purports to represent and defend' . . . inclusion of testimony in this chapter re-enacts the mastery of the host in the dynamics of hospitality' (Nayak, 2012: 223).

Here, I read the violence of 'relentless fetishization' through Derrida's lens of the violence of hospitality, where fetisization perverts the unrecognizable into a regulated recognizable other in order to disavow the violence of hospitality. Westmoreland's check list of absolute hospitality performs its own deconstruction, he explains, ''the conditions for such hospitality are both the conditions for its possibility and its impossibility' (Westmoreland, 2008:4), it would appear that the conditions are 'at once the boundary and the shared space' (Thiongo, 1996:120) where 'the unconditioned needs the conditioned: because the conditioned is constitutive of the unconditioned' (Keating, 2004:np). Nevertheless here is Westmoreland's (2008) list of the conditions for absolute hospitality:

- No questions

- No imposing of restrictions

- No requirement of compensation,

- No payment or debt

- No invitation

- No language

- Without parameters of laws and concepts

The wide ranging implications of this list for research methodology and ethics can be demonstrated in the condition of 'No questions'. Here, the point is not about whether to ask a question or not. The point is that the asking of a question represents an already known; a perverting of the absolute unknown, anonymous other. I am coming to realise something of what Derrida meant, *In Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, where he defines hospitality as 'the whole and the principle of ethics' (Derrida, 1999:50). So, a further dimension to hospitality as methodology is hospitality as ethics. An ethics based on the 'pervertible and perverting', the impossible, and the unknown: actually quite a different basis from that demanded of most research ethics committees. Keating (2004:np) argues, '[n]o question to the stranger is pure because we already assimilate their being into terms that we can arrange into our own conceptions of being'. Translating the impossible 'No questions' into a matter of ethics Derrida comments, 'if I decide because *I know*, within the limits of what *I know* and *know I must do*, then I am simply deploying a foreseeable program and there is no decision, no responsibility, no event' (Borradori, 2003:118; emphasis in original). The impossibility of absolute hospitality is that the conditions are 'what must be given prior to identification' (Keating, 2004:np). The trouble is that racist homophobic patriarchal social structures rely on prior identifications and this determines who gets an invite and who doesn't. In actual fact, the trouble is with the invitation itself which always requires some form of prior identification.

Conclusion

I have argued that the issue of 'what must be given prior to identification' (Keating, 2004:np) is central to the question of who and what lives in the economy of necropolitcs. Returning to the question of why the activism of Black feminist theory is so uninvited the answer is perhaps that, 'hospitality *as ethics* is unconditional . . . and nothing of the guest can be known and no invitation can be made' (Still, 2010:8).

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