Critical conversations in MOS: A dual-interview on the continuing struggles against anti-Blackness and racial capitalism

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Framing and approach

Our special issue critically engages with anti-Blackness in MOS by approaching it from a structural analysis of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) and how this has been developed by radical Black feminist thought (Hartman, 1997, 2019; Nash, 2019). Our call for papers invited contributions from management scholars and activists that address the systemic discrimination against Black people in organizations and academia, focus on Black peoples' experiences of embodying difference in these spaces, and highlight efforts at building local and trans-national solidarities against racism and white supremacy.

To access different kinds of knowledges about the special issue themes, the guest editors curated a dual-interview between esteemed academic, Professor Stella Nkomo, and up and coming race scholar, PhD student, Patricia Naya. The interview is a collective reflection on the intersection of MOS and anti-Blackness. Both interviewees approached this intersection by centering their positionalities as Black women and reflected on how Black scholarship is innately connected to the struggle to transform academia towards racially just ends.

Before our interview formally kicked off, we had an informal chat. One of the first things we discussed was an article by Roberson et al (2024) that had just been published in *Academy Management Perspectives*, in which the authors share their experiences about the academic review process and what happens when Black people write back to the Eurocentric canon. Stella said, "*Just an hour before this interview, I made the mistake of reading that article in AMP and then my blood pressure went up, you know? Well, it's what you are asking us about anti-Blackness – Black people supposedly cannot create knowledge. The insult continues, so that breaks my heart. But of course, I am realistic enough to know that the struggle continues too*." By centering this rage and resoluteness, we began the interview.

Sadhvi: I thought we could start with brief introductions about yourselves - not so much to say who you are as academics, but a little bit more about your journey into the study of race.

Stella: Sure. You know, part of my identity with the name Nkomo is really about who I am, but I was born and raised in the USA. My parents made the great migration from a very small rural area of Georgia. My parents were sharecroppers, getting nowhere. So, they decided to leave Georgia and go north to New York, and they left my sisters and I with our grandparents. I was the youngest, I'm one of 10 children. We grew up very poor in segregated communities in New York City. We lived in the projects - what we would recognize in South Africa as townships. My first vivid encounter with racism was when we were bussed to desegregate schools. Children in my neighborhood were bussed to a white neighborhood to a better school. But it didn't mean better for us, just that we got to go to a better school. By the time we were making the transition to high school, I told my guidance counselor that I wanted to go to college. And he told me, no, you can't go to college. You're too poor. You need to get a job after high school, so you need to learn a skill. So, I was pushed into what they called the commercial track, which was for poor black people and for girls where we were taught secretarial skills.

So, my first career was a secretary. I went to college later when I realized that this was not getting me anywhere. I worked for a big commercial bank where I watched every day, all these white men coming in to train as interns, telling us what to do, and I thought something's not right about this. How come I don't see any people who look like me in this role? I was a 18-year-old black girl in the branch of a large bank thinking a lot about why there were no women or black people in management. And that triggered my thoughts about who could be what they wished. Of course, at the time I did not have a theoretical understanding of my experience. And so, I decided to go to school at night. I did my first degree at night, then went on for an MBA. I thought I would study to become one of those white managers till I realized I didn't want to do that and then I moved to education. I thought education is a way to change peoples' lives. So that's what I went for my doctorate, and I ended up at UMASS.

When I was at UMASS I was living a double life, a double life in the sense that I was studying in the business school - the only Black doctoral student - but my community of other third world women was from across the campus and community. We had a group called the Third World Women's Task Force and we were women of African descent, from Palestine, the Caribbean, Africa, and the local community. We were organizing and protesting injustices against Black, Brown and indigenous people. We were part of an anti-apartheid group that demanded UMASS divest their stock invested in companies doing business with South African companies and the racist regime. Eventually, my husband was able to come back home after Mandela was released, and our move hanged my entire intellectual and theoretical framing of the question of race and racism. My theoretical lens moved beyond North America and thinking only about black managers in the US. I started reading post-colonial theory, anti-colonial theory – including the work of Franz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Walter Rodney and many others. And this led me to developing a much broader understanding that in fact racism, anti-blackness is a global phenomenon. So, it's been a long journey because my 40-year academic career has been half in the US and the other half in Africa. And I have developed a bifocal view of anti-blackness with not only a theoretical understanding but deep experience of the connection between its different sites and forms.

Patricia: I didn't come to UMASS, Boston, to study race. I think this work found me; it's a story of being at the right place, at the right time, and with the right people.

So, my back story is that I'm from Ghana in a small village called Logre, in the Northern part of Ghana. This is one of the very deprived communities in Ghana. I'm the first born of four siblings and then I have two step siblings. I was born in Kumasi in the Southern part of Ghana. At the time of my birth, my parents were living in a crap truck in Suame Magazine, so that was home. It's typical for people from the north to travel to the south to work so my parents moved so much, they would work in Kumasi during the dry season and then go back to the north to farm in the rainy season. And so I became, what you would probably call, a seasonal student because they couldn't enrol me in Kumasi full-time; they couldn't afford that. Neither of them had access to formal education. They've never stepped into a classroom for educational purposes. That meant that they thought of education differently. I'm actually the first, not in my nuclear family, but in my extended family, to go to university, to have a Master's degree, and then would be the first to have a PhD.

One of the most important moments for me that probably changed everything was my final year during my undergrad in 2019. This Professor called Ibrahim Osman texted me, 'I want you to apply for Commonwealth scholarship'. He had always asked for my semester's plans and held me accountable at the end of each semester. Well, anyway, at the time, I didn't even know what Commonwealth scholarship was. And he didn't ask me if I wanted it, he said, 'I want you to apply'. The back story is that I alongside another girl were the first women at the time to get First Classes in the school of Business and Law. And I the first in my programme. So, he and others took it upon themselves to help us. He had approached Dr. Mauzu, another lecturer and Commonwealth Alumni to guide us through the scholarship application process. That is how I had a chance to do my masters in the UK through the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship at UCL.

During my time in the UK, and even in Ghana, race is not a conversation in school, not even ethnicity – back home, things like tribalism exist but are never discussed. It's just weird, because even though you live with the experience and different elements of race, you don't talk about it. It's like it's non-existent. In my 11 months in the UK, I didn't once talk about race.

It wasn't until I arrived at UMass, Boston, that things started to change for me. One of the early conversations with my advisor and now my dissertation chair, Professor Alessia Contu, sort of disrupted everything for me because nobody ever asked me what is your interest? What is your passion? what is that thing that bugs you? These questions gave me a headache! Where I come from, we don't talk about passion, we talk the things that make you employable. Passion is a luxury we can't afford, but then she told me about her own journey and why she came to study what she studies, and this helped me to reflect on my own interests.

A month or so after that conversation, she pitched a research idea on Justice, Equity, diversity, and inclusion [JEDI] in the business school with me. Sometimes I have weird dreams, but that night, I actually dreamt about doing something on DEI proclamations. When I got up, I was like, what was that? It felt like a sign. I then took the pitch and ran with it. My first reading following that conversation was Professor Nkomo's 1992 paper, *The Emperor Has No Clothes*. Everything accelerated afterward. The day before, I was working on green HRM for my qualitative class, and the next day, I changed my topic to look at Black students' experiences. That was all in my first semester. Interestingly, when I started reading about race/ racism, I wasn't a pain. I don't know. Like just reading those papers invoked something in me. I wanted to read more. I could get up late in the night to read, listen, or watch something or just record myself thinking about these things.

I like to think of it as a 'calling' I am just lucky to have found myself in the right place, at an important moment, with the most amazing mentors.

Sadhvi: You're connecting to stories of travel and change and pursuing education, which came up for both of you. Something about the meaning of education in your lives and switching continents to continue journeys that recover insights into race. Perhaps you can both reflect on that: how you came to be where you are situated now.

Stella: Yes, that's interesting. I think unfortunately, even though one has switched continents, the experience of being a Black person in a world that is anti-Black – there's familiarity. And that may sound very strange, but that connection, it's like a *déjà vu experience.* It plays out differently, but the marginalization and the spread of systems of racism are central. So, for example, to make that more concrete when I was in the US, I was always the first Black woman. I was the only black woman in my 1976 MBA class. When I got to UMASS, I was the only Black doctoral student in the School of Management at UMass Amherst. When I graduated, one of the academics said to me, '*I didn't think you were going to make it, so it's really nice to see you at the graduation*'. Right? So, I learned they had taken a risk on me. And then I got a position at UNC Charlotte in 1983. I'm the first Black woman they hired into the Bellk College of Business on a tenure track. I'm always surrounded by all of this whiteness, white men. Then I come to South Africa and because of South Africa's system is anti-Blackness apartheid, I'm the first Black woman Professor in the School of Business Leadership. So, I get into the elite space of all the white men who are making all the decisions, selection, the curriculum, and so again being the first. So even though South Africa has become a place where Black people have political power, they do not have knowledge power, nor economic power. And so, the familiarity of recognizing the global reality of practices and structures of racism remain.

I call it the quicksand of global racism and racialized capitalism, and the way the world is divided into the Global North and the Global South. Despite struggles of people and nations to escape its depths, its grip is relentless. So even though South Africa wants to be this new society, she's mired deeply in these structures of anti-Blackness and global capitalism that make it extremely difficult to figure out what is the alternative, how do we create it? How do we make it happen? I think it has made me glad I left the United States and came to South Africa because it broadened my understanding of the interconnectedness of struggles for liberation. And we must figure that out. We who are oppressed, who are the other. I think the key for our liberation is building these bridges of solidarity and to declare our own independence from this system. But that is extremely difficult, you know, because of the legacies. And it's like you're dragging the shackles with you. I hate to say it. They're there. Patricia, when I heard your story in many ways, your story was like mine. Poor black girl trying to get an education, you know, even though the context of Ghana may be different. You know, if you think about it, why was it so hard for you to get an education? Why was it so hard? That is the question. You wanted it. You had the desire, you had the intellect, but it was a struggle to get educated. And I felt that same struggle.

Patricia: Yeah, that is it. I think the familiarity for me is in process. I am still going through that process of self-discovery. Now I have the language to make sense of things that I saw all around me but couldn't analyse. I'm now able to answer the questions I asked myself about why in primary school, 80% of the students were girls and then by the time they get to high school those girls become a minority. Why are they mothers so early? So, for me I have this sense of relief that, OK, I can make sense of this. It is not that these girls are wanting to get pregnant, or they don't want to do other things. So, the language that an education about race has given me enables me to see those things and to link them to bigger structures.

And then I read a lot of papers that talk about the global struggle that is not so distinct. One struggle is linked to another one: probably one African country is linked to another one. Those struggles are always linked, and Stella talked about solidarity. The crisis is so deep

that if you focus on one element, by the time you finish the work on it, another element will come up in its place. So, its reproducing itself in a way that the work to undo it must be done collectively.

So, for me, that is how the continental switch works: I discover myself. Part of that discovery is becoming black! But importantly the switch also allows me to ask questions and to have the privilege to respond. I'm realizing there is a lot of miseducation and misinformation that is going on with these things. So, for me to be able to have like the right resources - this is a privilege. To talk to the right people and hear from the right people. For me that has been really powerful.

Stella: But you know, one of the other things that happens when you come from the US, and you come to a place like South Africa and there's that same management textbook with the same case studies of white heroic male leaders. And that is what you're supposed to teach South African Black students who are struggling with issues of inequality and transformation, ending apartheid, changing the lives of the people of South Africa. And Patricia, I'm thinking you come to UMASS Boston. There is no representation or anything about where you come from. As if Ghana did not exist, Africa did not exist, and it just speaks to the whole thing of the domination of Eurocentric knowledge and how it dominates. And so that's what was part of the motivation for the paper I wrote, you know, the post-colonial and anti-colonial reading of leadership. The field of leadership has left us totally out; it has proclaimed that Black people cannot be leaders. And then you are in a country where phenomenal Black leadership had liberated the country, amongst other things. So that irony of denying the existence of Black leadership stinks of the whole thing of anti-blackness and so, wherever you are a Black person, a person of colour, there is this anti-Blackness that hangs over all of us like a cloud. It is there, you know, and it has confined us to certain spaces, physically and what knowledge we can contribute. We've been dispossessed of our land, of our knowledge, our culture and it's even more frightening right now with the current anti-blackness attacks. And I may be jumping ahead, but frankly, it frightens me to see the continuing coloniality.

Sadhvi: What about the university context? You're beginning to expand anti-Blackness as part of the racial geography of institutions. How has this shaped the teaching and learning context?

Patricia: Yeah, I taught in the fall. But I wanted to add something about being a Black student. When Stella was talking about education, something sort of clicked for me. When I was at UCL, I attended all lectures and seminars, even programs that I didn't have to attend. But when I was there, I didn't open my mouth, throughout, I didn't say a thing in class. Unless I had a presentation, I was quiet. There were a few things happening for me – first, I didn't think that my opinion mattered, and second, most of the examples that we discussed in class were things I could not relate to. It sort of made me doubt my ability and I started to think that maybe my First Class degree wasn't really a First Class. I felt the UCL classroom reduced my confidence.

On the other hand, I feel being black for almost 3 years has positively impacted my doctoral research in that I approached as an outsider within. It has afforded me some level of opportunity to be able to build rapport with all different participants - including those who are

not Black. For example, when I speak with my white informant, they all say that race wasn't a conversation when they were a young child, and like, yeah, I can say, 'Me too, I understand'. And then, when I speak to Black and brown informants, that is a learning process where I get to understand more about how anti-Blackness and racial discrimination emerges and manifests.

Stella Nkomo: Well, you know, as much as we would like to think that our universities are pro-Black or people of color, they are also part of the way in which racism – that is anti-Blackness - is reproduced in the curriculum, through student access, faculty and staff composition, the financing of education, the marginalization of Black, Brown and indigenous students who are often alienated from their communities.t. And now we see this other phenomenon emerging, the power of rich white alumni who infringe upon academic matters in an effort to silence the pursuit of social justice and those who lead it. We have always known that universities reflect societal relations of power, but the current strategy of the right-wing, conservative movement has the aim to ensure they are permanent vessels for white supremacy. I mean, these efforts are reproducing the very things that we see in society. As you know, here in South Africa, we had the #feesmustfall movement which began at Rhodes University and spread across the country. The students here were very aware of how our institutions, even though this is a politically a Black nation, were perpetuating racism and capitalism to the detriment the majority Black population.

UCT was founded by Cecil Rhodes, one of the worst colonizers of all times—who led the violent extraction of the wealth and was heavily involved in the slave trade. Today, our universities and business schools perpetuate the idea of who is capable of doing business, who gets access to resources. Look at our curriculum, even the basic notions of what is a good business is centered on notions of productivity and efficiency that are inherently associated with whiteness. These are all racialised. For example, many of the articles published in business journals describe Africa as an institutional void as if there are no formal business systems or structures in the continent — as if Africa is not able to function without white knowledge and white business systems. We are not understanding what Walter Rodney knew: how capitalism and imperialism underdeveloped the continent. So, all of this to me is connected to what we're teaching our students. And it's a travesty that there is now an effort in the United States to make sure we don't teach critical race theory, colonialism, and the decolonization of Business School curriculum because it's going make our white students feel bad. You're leaving out facts and you're leaving out history that is critical to understanding the present. I mean, I have to laugh when Harvard Business School thinks that preparing a short teaching note on the transatlantic slave trade represents a decolonization effort. And so, the neoliberal solution that we bought into when we were allowed to bring in DEI into the curriculum, means that we just took the crumbs. I was allowed to teach diversity and inclusion to students. I should be happy, but that's not even the beginning of the story. And now even that is being pushed back, you get my point? The goal is the epistemic erasure of DEI and preserving whiteness.

Sadhvi: You're beginning to talk about anti-racist strategies and the institutional pushback, and it's making me think about the next question. As Black women, how are you doing the work and how have you seen the work of anti-racism getting done?

Patricia: One thing I want to look at here is the question of an internal struggle – by that I mean what's happening at the level of the university. Each university is going to be different, and the experience of doing this work will also be different because my study context is not just a public institution; it's a product of the 1960s civil rights movement. At this university, the student population is majority Black/Brown. Over 50% of the students are first generation; often, they will be full-time students and full-time workers; they are caregivers. A lot of students are commuting long distances to come to college. Most of them struggle with basic necessities like home and food insecurity. When you look at all this structurally, then you get to understand why these students will organise and demonstrate almost every semester. Because they aren't OK with what you're giving them in terms of an education. These should all be positive things, right? Because the students are recognizing that they should be getting better.

We would imagine that through this movement, what is taught also changes – that when we are in class, the discussions are going to include their experiences. So, when you're teaching about management, you're doing this with working class students who are in turn challenging your assumptions about 'managing'. The students bring a different lens to the conversation, and this is a sort of disruption I believe. At the same time, this context also has a majority white faculty – the faculty does not reflect the student body. There's also a high turnover among Black faculty and especially among Black women. Why it that? The answer lies not just within this one university because it is systemic! At the same time, the high turnover is not different from the student's protest. They are made to exist in spaces that weren't made for them. If I was in studying a different institution, I know that my experience of this conversation would be different. I may not have had the opportunity to have these conversations. So, there is value in such institutions, but there are also everyday critical conversations going on that aren't taken for what they are. This is their life; it is not something abstracted. There is no alternative, there is justice or nothing.

Stella: Well, you know, I was thinking how I grew up during the time of the Black power movement. I had the privilege of hearing directly from Malcom X. From an early age I was aware that the real-world structures are very often disconnected from what's going on in the university. As I told you when I was at UMASS, I felt like I had a double life because the Business School would work hard to separate us students from the politics. We had some of the top radical economists working over in the economics department and we were told by the business faculty that we should never go over there. We were not allowed to take any of their classes. So, of course, I went. I thought, well there must be something there that they don't want us to hear.

But this idea of doing this work as a Black woman where you have lived in a system of racism and gender-based violence, you know. I think the framing for me that always made sense is what Patricia Hill Collins talked about the *outsider within*. How can you use that space that you have access to that also oppresses you? I don't believe that you should stay silent till you get tenure or till you have security. Do you think your ancestors, the people who took the risk, did they wait till things were less dangerous? So, if you don't speak out, who is going to speak for us? And so, you know, even while I was annoyed that they always put the one Black woman on these DEI committees, or faculty and student selection committees, that's a prompt to figure out how to use that space. There is no point saying, "yes, I will join you", if you are not going to challenge the status quo. If you believe that if you "stay low-key

and do mainstream research in the business school, I'll be fine", that's not true. You're still in a system that is racialized, gendered, homophobic. So, I don't think we have a choice – I could not be inactive. I had to learn how to use my power. That involves exposing the hypocrisy by asking the difficult questions, you know, and to help our students, you know. And in the sense by helping our students, we are using academic freedom, which of course is not pure freedom, but where you have the freedom use it. This is what black women and women of color have always done.

Sadhvi: MOS has recently started to publish more work on anti-Blackness, but this framework still feels new. Do you sense anything shifting in terms of how we make MOS knowledge with and through an anti-Blackness framework?

Stella: I don't know if it's shifted but I think what is good is that there are more people doing this work relative to when I started my career. In the early days, there were people like Taylor Cox, Jr., Ella Bell, David Ford, Jr. and, David Thomas – there just weren't enough of us to get articles out there. I think what has shifted is there are more people, and especially indigenous and Black scholars, who are now writing, writing back if you want to say, writing it in. We are really leading that, but it hasn't ruptured the core, the core understanding of what management and organizations are. It's a deep structure, but people still write as if organizations are race neutral and that is still the dominant body of knowledge. And so here we are on the outside, like knocking on the door, saying, hey, wake up, wake up.

You know, if you look at the issues in the world today, I mean that's why I wrote that article about the pandemic. The pandemic was supposed to make clearer to us the facts of racial power relations. A lot of things became clearer, you know. Who was dying of the virus? Who had access to the vaccines? How much you had to pay for it, who was an essential worker, who had the money to solve the problems? Which leaders led the solution? Which countries had the strongest voice? Unfortunately, even after this clarification, things have not changed much in MOS. You can bring a little bit of race into the conversation, but you can't go too far. You can hire a Black, Brown or indigenous scholar but not too many at once. Increasing representation, in not transformation. It is not liberation.

Patricia: I'm nodding over here because I can see that very clearly in a paper we are working on. In our specific case, and perhaps among other social-oriented organizations, it is particularly contradictory because when an organization that has a long-standing commitment to social justice takes that mandate further by saying it wants to become anti-racist, this becomes a huge controversy. That's just so weird, right? Like why is it so hard for organizations committed to social justice to commit to anti-racism? That is a thousand-dollar question. But in our specific case, we learn that the word anti-racist is a trigger. Anti-racism is a breach that disrupts the dominant colorblind ideology. It breaches this silence and denial around race. And people aren't comfortable with the breach because that bridge disrupts everything. For MOS, that means when we commit to anti-racism, we need to look at scholarship differently; we need to look at what we learn and teach. It can't be business as usual, who wants that?

Stella: Yeah, you can't do that in the Business School – you can't use that language. You see, that's my point. If you say we're going to embrace the principle of anti-racism, we will have to tear down the entire structure of MOS knowledge claims. We'd have to go back to

these fairy tales that we have that tell us about the foundations of management theory, and we'd have to rewrite the history of Frederick Taylor to talk about racial capitalism. Where is that change? How come we don't have this counter-history as part of the curriculum? Why is now DEI being pushed out of what a curriculum should include? Racial capitalism should be taught in the Business School. It should be part and parcel of the curriculum, but we can't tell that story because it would shatter this idea that everything that's human, everything that's efficient and effective is done through whiteness. This is whiteness – it's a perfect imperfect system. The way Taylor is taught – its taught as the white pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness. You know Frederick Taylor was not practicing scientific management, he was practicing racial capitalism. I just came across something while reading up on the history of racial thought. When W.E.B. Du Bois wrote the book, *The Philadelphia Negro*, he went into the factory where Frederick Taylor worked as a first line supervisor and interviewed Black workers. They told Du Bois how Taylor would threaten the white workers by saying "If you don't work harder, these Black workers are gonna get your jobs". That's racial capitalism in a nutshell. Using Black labor to threaten white workers to be more productive – none of that features in what we teach about that history of industrialization. We just tell the students a wonderful story about Europeans and the West and how they figured out how to bring people together in a factory setting and manage them effectively and efficiently. We tell them this is how workers got paid more and how capitalists got their returns on investment. We leave out the enslavement history, we leave out the racial capitalism history, we leave out the real story.

Sadhvi: I would really love to end our interview by talking about Black knowledges and Black methods. There's important work that speaks about Black methods of living and how Black creatives bring methods to the world which enable an anticolonial politics through vibrant disruptions to racist orders and through moments of ordinary resistance. How do Black methods sustain the fight against the normalization of racial violence?

Stella: Different methodologies and a sense of, you know, reaching into the cultural aspect of song, music, telling stories. Listening to the indigenous people's voices must be central. And, yes, 'writing differently' which doesn't always emerge because of what our field expects. For example, when I wrote paper, *The Emperor Has No Clothes*, I wrote it in the first person and AMR said, "no, change it" – they really did. They said, you can't write like that. And I said, but I come from a culture where we think collectively. We recognize that 'I' wasn't made or exist outside of a system of many minds. You know, I don't know if you have that in Ghana, Patricia, but this recognition makes you feel bigger, of being part of something bigger. You know, it's a collective, a sense of community. So, I wrote to the editor and said I can't write the article any other way. We're all in this together, you know? And so, the sense of community, the sense of a collective, is a method that unfolds different knowledges. I just co-wrote an article about a project that covers five African countries. And so, as we were working on the research somebody on the project would said, OK, my friend is doing this really good work, can they join the study? And you say, yes. So, this kept happening and, in the end, we had 22 authors. And the journals pushed back when we submitted the manuscript with all of them. They said to us, "it's too many people". And I said, "Well, there is a saying in Africa - *it takes a village to raise a child*. It took a lot of us to get this research done, and no, we want all of us as co-authors. And another journal said, "Well, why don't just a few of you add your names? Why don't you just include the top five, pick five of you and

put them in the authorship?" I said, no, I'm not going to do that. Fortunately, the *Africa Journal of Management* where it was eventually published never raised a question about the number of authors.

I'm just telling you all this because the conventions of publishing are cultural as well as political and the journals in the West do not have the capacity think beyond the individual and how to you translate authorship outside of that model by recognizing and respecting the knowledge of everyday people, you know. For example, if we were to truly embrace indigenous knowledge then we would not be writing about them as subjects but include them as co-creators of knowledge. Yes, 'writing differently' remains quite challenging given the conventions in MOS. We're going to have to read outside of the MOS discipline in order for us to really transform our theories and the ways we disseminate knowledge.

Patricia: Personally, I'm still in the process of learning, but also acknowledging that I do not know and going back to look at people that have done the work, the legacies they re-live through writings I can read. It's about not trying to reinvent an idea – this is one of the things that I have been struggling with. There is a whole obsession with coming up with new theories to explain things, so you always have to come up with something new. We were talking about storytelling, and I grew up in a village where evenings were for storytelling – this was always the norm there. Every evening you have stories. You listened. But I don't see a lot of that in the articles I read in MOS. I don't see that in the methods section. The requirements of journals don't enable people to be true with the process that can actually be messy, or incomplete, or multi-vocal, or communal. Instead, you're supposed to provide this finished product that has been written perfectly by a single being. When I read a methods section in a journal article, I think that looks so perfect and I don't see the struggle of creating knowledge in there. I'm like, why am I struggling with my method? Why am I struggling to conduct an interview? So, I think maybe a different way of writing will begin to allow more spaces for people to be authentic and really write about the whole process of making knowledge – including the struggles that they have.

Sadhvi: I am sorry that we have come to the end of the interview, what last words or reflections would you like to leave us with?

Patricia: This was really interesting for me – especially our discussions about how we need to move beyond the individualistic perspective because that has always been a Western capitalist concept. At the same time there is something very important about going back to reclaim our stories. I'd like that now, and, in the future, we will manage to tell our stories ourselves, and in our way. And I want to emphasize that this is a continuation of something, it is not a beginning or something new, because the work has been going on for years and years. I want to emphasize that it's important of Sankofa—"go back and get it".
To reflect and go back, because in the work of yesterday there's wisdom about how to move forward tomorrow. We shouldn't make the same mistakes that were made 30 years ago, we should be able to move forward from this. But if you want to know what the purpose of this work is, then that purpose is the struggle.

Stella: I'm just hoping we can be adults in a room and have these conversations because I do believe that what we currently have in MOS, are divisions between mainstream versus critical and what should be included in 'critical'. So, we need to build capacities to have

difficult conversations that will address the deepening polarization around race. I was thinking about that piece in *AMP,* and I was wondering, would it be possible for the three authors to be brought into conversation with the reviewers? Could there be a conversation to understand the harm of what the reviewers did? You know, the epistemic violence of discrediting their work - let's talk about that! Like the journal leadership should say, let's talk and have the real conversation about the review process and really look at the kind of comments that prominent white male scholars might get versus what Black scholars get. It feels like nobody tries to intervene to stop the structural reproduction of anti-Blackness. It's what we do in truth and reconciliation processes in Africa, the people doing harm must confess what they did – the people doing harm need a space to do that and to learn. We need to get all the voices in the room, as difficult as it may be. I'll end on that note.

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