

25 'The Feeling in my Chest': Unblocking space for people of colour in critical whiteness studies

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The improbability of *us*

I am a Sikh woman of Punjabi descent; the love of my life is a white German man. We often marvel at the improbability of *us* – that one evening, the first time we met, changed the whole course of our lives and yet, it almost never was. My epic Punjabi–British–German tale of love starts not with our chance encounter, but begins with the histories that made *us* possible. *We*, our stories, begin to intersect through the Spice Trade, with the European colonial project, in the throes and aftermath of the Second World War, with the rebuilding of Europe using labour from the colonies, with the European Union and the modern project of Globalisation. For any of us to sincerely honour our origin story, we must employ the concept of *presencing* as a tool. Gail Lewis writes:

... *presencing* is an epistemological and ontological praxis of emergence based on felt connection among human and non-human; ancestral and contemporary life. It contests and has the potential to detoxify the effects of colonial discourse (historical and contemporary) in which indigenous people are rendered invisible and/or insensible.

(Lewis 2017: 4)

Presencing refers to a bringing forth of that which has become buried or rendered invisible. *Presencing*, similarly to *wonder* (Ahmed 2004), allows us to see the world '*as made* and as such ...opens up ... historicity' (2004: 179).

When I refer to these events, I refer not only to the spatial possibilities that, when layered together through history culminate in our physical presence that night but also how these histories produced the social and psychic overlaps that shaped our compatible subjectivities and ontologies. The fact that Germany lost the war and spent many years reconciling with the reality of their modern imperialist project and the devastation it caused, acted as an interruption in the flow of the social relations of power that we understand as white privilege in Germany. My partner grew up as a young man in the 1990s with interests in history, politics and sociogeny which meant that interrogating, reckoning with and identifying the dangers and mechanisms of imperialism, racism, ethno-nationalistic supremacy and political projects of 'othering' eventually *became possible* for him.

It is our shared understanding of the 'produced' nature of social relations and of our social world more widely which form the foundation that our relationship is built on. This alone, however, is not enough to make us *both* legible to one another. *We* are also made possible because of the privileges that flow into me as a colonial subject from India, one of the most historically significant British colonies. I currently reside at the heart of empire, in London, England, and benefit from all of the advantages this comes with. I have internalised and benefitted from *whiteness* enough to be legible to my partner, he has developed a sense of criticality that makes him legible to me. I find it important to say here that I love him, not because I hate my people or my culture or myself, as has sometimes been suggested, but because my lived experience is evidence that subjectivity *is* multiple.

My intention here was to draw attention to how strangely complex the existence of our compatibilities are, some of which are personal (a love of Death Metal being one of them) but many shaped by our respective, but familiar to one another, socio-historical contexts. It is important to say too, that *we* are also not *inevitable*, my partner has a twin brother, whose politics are the polar opposite to his own – the way in which our world shapes us, is often unpredictable. For me then, any discipline called 'Critical Whiteness Studies' must be able to hold space open for complicated interpersonal analyses of the lived experience of people like me whose relationship to whiteness is not linear, unidirectional, or singular.

Throughout this chapter, I use my own lived experience as a woman of colour, an antiracist activist and someone who has intimately built her life with white people, to dream new potentialities for the discipline; to explore what happens when we make space for thinking people of colour into the work of CWS. I ask what happens when we centre antiracism, decoloniality and intimacy in this frame? I also employ the tool of wonder to explore what it might look like to *really* honour the word 'critical' in 'Critical Whiteness Studies'? I argue that for CWS to be a relevant contribution to the project of racial justice, contributors to the discipline must grapple with the way in which the discipline engenders

an anti-relational, substantialist, essentialising way of theorising that we see from normative social science. I conclude that if, as a critical discipline, CWS is to be relevant to the project of social progress, racial equality or social justice, contributions to the discipline must grapple with the lived complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions in living *and* labouring towards social justice (Gunaratnam 2003).

(Un)critical whiteness studies?

At the time of writing, engagement, both public and academic, with CWS is burgeoning. More and more people in Western contexts are trying to make sense of the myriad ways in which white supremacy has been normalised in places such as Brexit Britain and Post-Trump United States. The renewed interest in CWS suggests that it is here to stay, problematic and contested as it might be. As a social justice practitioner, my investment in academia and in critical disciplines is in their application; for me, theory is the place I come to help me unpick or understand the relational messes that I sometimes find myself in, and to use what I learn to labour towards change. To do my work well, I am consistently untangling. Considering that CWS is a site that people rely on to untangle their racialized messes, I am interested in exploring new possibilities for the subject. I myself had high hopes for my first encounter with CWS ten years ago; I had hoped the discipline would be a place of richness for me. At the time, I had been a community development practitioner for some years, a young woman of colour and somebody who had been active in anti-oppressionist struggle; I was desperate to find ways to understand the confusing dynamics that I found myself in whilst engaged with antiracist work with my white colleagues. I was trying to understand how they could have perpetuated such violence in our shared spaces while being so aware of structural racism, white privilege and while being so committed to realising an antiracist future.

Our love for one another was real and deep, we lived so intimately in the work of challenging racism together, but still, so many aspects of our relationships remained complicatedly entangled in racialized power; so many forms of abuse were replicated in our shared spaces. The confusing thing was that the gaslighting, the abusive behaviour, the refusal to imagine that we (as people of colour) could have the same levels of agency and potential for liberation (as white people), *were not consistent*, and were also accompanied by a deep caring. It took years to identify the behavioural patterns attached to their racism, and to recognise that many of the ways that the racism manifested was truly related to people's individual traumas and subjectivities as well as their whiteness. Gail Lewis (2009) talks beautifully and achingly about the 'proximity of love and racism' in her relationship with her white mother; about the pains and joys of moving 'in and out of the economies of whiteness, and the habits of thinking that it sometimes generates' (2009: 14).

I can wholeheartedly say that the inability to understand or identify the multiplicity and complicatedness of the relational dynamics that I was stuck in, was just as damaging as the behaviours themselves. Given these experiences and the answers that I was searching for, my engagement with CWS was incredibly fraught. I have often felt frustrated at the ways in which CWS scholars simplify the way that we *live* racialized power in the everyday. The replication of normalised academic method in CWS – of theorising 'whiteness' as a '*thing*', an 'organising principle' (Nayak 2007); 'unmarked ideal' or 'universal norm' (Dyer 1997; Fine et al. 2004; Garner 2007; Nayak 2007; Steyn and Conway 2010) is a simplification of the complex processes, paradoxes, and ambivalences that labouring to develop our ontologies in service of social justice births. Before continuing, I would like to make a distinction here between theorists who belong to different disciplines, but write about whiteness, and theorists who align themselves with CWS as an academic discipline. CWS scholars tend to write about whiteness from a 'substantialist' perspective; from the point of view that social life and social relations are made up of 'things ... acting under their own powers, independently of all other substances' (Dewey and Bentley 1949, in Emirbayer 1997).

It is here that I would like to pick up on the dangers of CWS existing as a substantialist canon can pose. The tendency of CWS theorists to write about whiteness *only*, as if it possesses an Aristotelian 'Being', has many damaging implications; 'each time critics focus on the object and not the human labour of production, [social forces] assume a life and logic, an autonomy and agency of their own, independent of the actors who produced them' (Lea 2008: 19). As a critical discipline, I argue that if CWS is to be relevant to the project of social progress, racial equality or social justice, theorists must not replicate the same anti-relational, substantialist, essentialising theorising that we see from normative social science. This form of theory erases the centuries of intentional, industrial-scale practices that went into producing racial inequality (see Said 2003) and also simplifies the ambivalence that we all experience in how we live racialized power in the everyday. Even Adolf Hitler issued his Jewish family physician, Eduard Bloch, protection to allow for him to flee Austria to the United States and saved his life. In the rest of this chapter, I draw on Black Feminist theory and method to explore some of the ways in which CWS can centre relationality and subjectivity. I use ideas of feeling work and emotional labour to discover how closely our selfhoods, hurts, traumas, and joys are a central part of being able to think decolonial possibilities into existence.

The trappings of critical whiteness studies

Learning to *truly see* power and resist perpetuating inequality or participating in the subjection of others and ourselves is deeply internal. Patsisse Cullors, one of the co-founders of Black Lives Matter (BLM), talks about the work of BLM as spiritual, as healing, as a project of 'rehumanising' (Cullos 2019). For me, in my writing, thinking and in my work,

this starts with understanding the effects of, and uncovering and identifying the different textures and residues that the trauma of racism has left behind in my life.

When I first started the work of conceiving this article, I was in the middle of an intense period of self-reflection, the fourth of my life. It was six years since the storms within had called me to live in their crosscurrents, so that I might understand more about those forces that are invisible to me in my everyday but that direct my life, nonetheless. Many years ago, I came to understand just how much being forged in the throes of structural, cultural, and personal trauma affected how I experience the world. Relational theory exists as the antithesis to substantialist theorising (Emirbayer 1997); it is the study of how two or more things are connected, and more importantly, what those connections *produce in relationship with one another*. I explore the relational connections between racialized trauma, writing, and imagining decolonial possibilities later.

I argue that any theorist that wants to say something important about race or whiteness, must do so in a way that helps us to come to terms with the ways we may have been hurt, broken, or traumatised by the violence of racialization and project of colonisation – all of us, no matter where we sit on this spectrum at any one time. Developing a shared language that helps us name how these traumas live in our bodies, what they enable and constrain, is imperative for this work. I also argue that any work that has anything of interest to say about liberation must also be *healing*. Black Feminism is such an incredible roadmap for how an academic discipline can create a shared language for this work; a cannon that heals. [Van Der Kolk \(2015\)](#) tells us, ‘the challenge of recovery [from trauma] is to establish ownership of your own body and your mind – of your self. This means feeling free to know what you know, and feel what you feel without becoming overwhelmed, enraged, ashamed, or collapsed’ (p. 204). I argue that developing a shared language for describing and therefore enabling comprehension of the significance of bodily knowledge, feelings, and ways of thinking and knowing that relate to racialized and racial trauma, is essential for the work of CWS.

As anyone who has tried to overcome their demons will know, this ability to ‘show up’, to feel still or to think freely, is not easily accessible to me all the time. It comes to me in the line of a book, in a thought in the shower, in the beauty of friendship; in fits, bursts, starts and paragraphs. When I started writing this chapter, I was in a wonderful place emotionally, this allowed me to *really notice* the ‘stuckness’ that I felt in trying to start writing. I sat in-front of a blank page for days; writing and rewriting the first paragraph for more than two weeks. Not because I did not know what to say, but because *something is not fitting*. My heart skips a beat, is this my way in? What am I trying to fit, and where? Why does it not fit? I often write on race and racism without issue, but somehow having to directly centre CWS in this frame was *doing* something, blocking something within me. In the past, I would have blamed myself for being ‘stupid’ when experiencing such mad-making obstructions in my ability to think. I have since learned, just like all the historicity that has made me legible to my partner, much of this has also made me illegible to myself, the psychic block making it impossible to know where to go from here. It is being caught in this dynamic that I call *unthinkability*.

So where do we go when we are caught in a place which feels so alien, that the language in which it writes itself, does not allow space for us to speak ourselves into existence? I find Gail Lewis’ (2017) work on ‘presence’ and ‘presencing’ offers us a great conceptual starting point. I have to be honest; the article is so rich I cannot be sure that I grasp it fully, but she says that presence is about ‘here-ness’ and ‘alive-ness’ and ‘presencing’ is ‘a decolonial move through which counter-histories, counter-spatialities, subaltern epistemologies and modes of being’ generate meaning. She argues that ‘for meaning to be generated and the possibility of a third space to emerge a capacity for symbolic thought is required and this in its turn is both an effect of, and occurs in, the dynamic space between presence and absence’ (Lewis 2017: 3). For me, if CWS is ever truly to fulfil its mission, the ‘third space’ between the myriad presences and absences needs to be interrogated. Especially important is making space for people of colour to interrogate our own relationship to whiteness. My experience has been that as a person of colour, I struggled to do this, and I explore this in more detail in the next section.

Opening up the ‘third space’

By now, my trauma work and the healing that followed, has taught me one thing above all else: The body knows. So, how can I understand what is being stirred up in me as I try to do this work? What is the ‘presence’ and ‘absence’ in this situation, and what does the relationship between them tell me? I search for a presence to help me unpick myself out of this mess, and I come to Audre Lorde. With two chapters of her work ‘Poetry is not a Luxury’ and ‘The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action’, Audre [Lorde \(2007\)](#) taught me more about the importance of tending to my spirit, my soul, my flesh and down to the very marrow of my bones, in recovering my own agency, my best thinking, my most creative, still and loving self than years of therapy. Each time I deeply convene with Audre, her work gifts me with new freedoms that allow me to ‘show up’ in my life in ways that I never knew I could. So I live in the lines of those chapters again as she tells me:

This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas – which are – until the poem – nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt ... as we come into touch with our own ancient, non-European consciousness of living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of power from where true knowledge and, therefore, lasting action comes ... we can train ourselves to respect our feelings, and to transpose them into a language so they can be shared.

(Lorde 2007: 36)

I heed her advice, her wisdom, it grounds me. She too talks about presence, absence and *process of producing language*. I pay disciplined attention to speaking myself into existence, bringing the feelings that I must work through, forward in my consciousness. I sit in my chair, stuck, and begin to do the work of listening to my body; I track the sensation, it is a pressure in the middle of my diaphragm. Still leaning on Audre Lorde, I pay attention to transposing my feelings into words and naming this psychic blockage which manifests in my body, slowly comprehending the weight of the work that I am beginning to undertake. The blockage was a bodily feeling of frustration, when I dig deeper it is not only an epistemic stuck-ness, but feels like an ontological repression in my very *being*; I am cornered, and I am caught, bodily, in the very dynamic that I wanted to explore; how the anti-relational approach of CWS limits my ability to speak easily to the ideas that I want to speak to. I am directly caught in the trap that I am writing to challenge.

But my body takes me back to this weight, and I trust where I am stuck is an important place to stay, I am *presencing*. I realise clearly for the first time how *sentient* this work somehow is; the work of decolonial thinking. It is structured by the very forms of language that we use. This is exactly why the canon of 'Critical Whiteness Studies' is so important, the very form of thinking instituted by the discipline structures our ability to imagine otherwise. *Is this my third space?* Of course, discourse analysis makes this clear, but what I had not understood *bodily*, or experienced in a way that I could put words to, was that the way that language is structured carries its own *ontology*. The feeling in my chest is made up of my present struggle, but also the ways in which the violence of the past materialises in my present. Hortense Spillers speaks to this so masterfully when she describes the sorts of work we have to do as women of colour. She says:

Let's face it. I am a marked woman, but not everybody knows my name ... I describe a locus of confounded identities, a meeting ground of investments and privations ... In order for me to speak a truer word concerning myself, I must strip down through layers of attenuated meanings, made in excess of time, over time, assigned by a particular historical order, and there await the marvels of my own inventiveness.

([Spillers 2003](#): 65)

What I think Spillers is talking about here, is the materialisation of the historic processes of colonization onto/into her own being, and specifically important for this chapter, in the ways that affects the way that she is able to think about, or know herself. I feel I also experienced this in real-time: the emotional and intellectual labour required to do this work. It became an active site of intense struggle – not in the struggle to access myself per se, but to bring those internal thoughts and feelings into being through modes of production incompatible with their expression, for the comprehension of an audience which may also not understand why what I am saying is important. My internal struggle was also compounded by a sense of the violent history that produced it; the weight of colonialism and the way it constrains my ability to express and know myself materialised in these moments; I felt a genuine sense of *oppression* – I mean that with the full weight that this word carries. *The absence has been presenced*. I had to do the work of re-joining and recreating myself, undoing the ways that I compartmentalise to survive, rather than hiding in myself and disengaging entirely. I had to *presence* the atemporal oppressions that I was experiencing internally to really get to the core of what I wanted to say. For me, the most important question to ask here is, what might have happened if I had not known how to resolve my *unthinkability*?

Returning to that weight in my diaphragm: I think about racialized trauma, the ongoing struggle to 'be'. The code switching, the self-censorship, the total terror as I walk to school as a 6-year-old girl and crowds of grown men shout racial slurs at me. I start to think of the 'tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of terror, and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability' (Van Der Kolk 2014: 89). *I also think about how hard the work of birthing these thoughts, feelings and ideas are in the wake of the terror and trauma that we carry*. I think of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987): she talks about how 'out there they don't love our children'. What does it mean to strip through the layers that Spillers talks about, and speak yourself into existence, and what happens is that *you speak yourself out of the mouth of a white man, maybe even for the white man, for people who do not love you?* What damage does it do, to live so many years without even realising that the weight in your diaphragm is both the psychic presence and absence of these things? For many years, I carried all of these unspoken traumas around with me. I held them bodily; and they accumulated, they formed a heavier weight over the years in different classrooms, lecture theatres and writing practices, and so the familiar weight 'presenced' itself when writing the first sentence of this chapter, that weight has a *history*. As the CWS project continues, I genuinely want to ask contributors, teachers, activists, academics and students to think deeply about what it means to improve the 'quality of light' that CWS provides, in a way that has an impact on the ways in which 'we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives' (Lorde 2007: 36). What presences and absences can you feel? How might the space between them contribute to a more profound method of meaning making in CWS?

Complicatedness as an analytic

Being a person of colour, belonging to a racialized community and living in the West is complicated. I would describe the way that I grew up as living between *many* extremes; relative privilege and relative subjection, the intense love and joy of belonging to a huge family and the repression of belonging to a traditional Sikh family, the violence of racism in the 1980s and 1990s, truly loyal and life-giving friendships, feeling alien, total withdrawal, intensely anxious presence,

violence and shame from many places, loving and hating being British, loving and hating being Indian, loving and hating my family, *loving and hating my life*. Those periods of intense self-reflection that I mentioned earlier were often about trying to make sense of these extremes, of trying to understand what holding them all together meant for who I am. I am reminded here of how Avery Gordon starts her book 'Ghostly Matters'. Inspired by Patricia Williams, she offers us the following; 'that life is complicated may seem a banal expression of the obvious, but it is nonetheless ... perhaps the most important theoretical statement of our time' (Gordon 2008: 3). When I first read this sentence, I felt so validated; like she'd described something that was so fundamental to the way that I live, but that I had never quite been able to articulate.

Those periods of self-reflection were also about survival. When I talk about survival, I mean much more than physical survival, I mean to have survived as a *whole* person. I love how Christina Sharpe talks about this process. She calls it making liveable relationships, places and moments in all that feels unliveable; working at joy, bringing beauty, of recognising that while I have lived, and continue to experience subjection, I can do the work of 'not living *as* the subjected' (Sharpe 2016: 4). Learning to live not '*as* the subjected' is not only about unlearning the ways that we learn to think of ourselves as less than human but also, in refusing to see myself as a victim, I must face my clear privilege and the ways in which I am complicit with whiteness. So, what does it mean to understand ourselves as complicated? The decolonial frame calls for us to embrace both our privileges and subjections. To be aware of the social, political, cultural, and economic forces through history up until this day which shape my present, including my privilege and the way that I perpetuate an unfair system. As Sharpe and other Black Feminists such as Audre Lorde, Saidiya Hartman, Tina Campt, Hortense Spillers, bell hooks and especially Sylvia Wynter have shown, knowing differently reaches its deepest and most meaningful level when we are able to use this knowledge in service of *living differently*.

What does it really mean to engage with complicatedness as an analytic for understanding how power works through us? What does this mean again, for us as writers, or people who are labouring towards social justice? My own subjectivity is so interlaced with the privilege and oppression that there have been times when, from one frame, one part of myself, I am a complete stranger to myself in the other. And so, what does it mean to do the work of *presencing* (Lewis 2017) myself as a *whole* person not only as a personal practice, but also in service of social justice? I am a woman of colour who lives in a racist society. I am a first-generation British Indian woman who grew up with the privileges of the global North. I have an education that is valued globally. I did not have access to the same opportunities as many connected middle- to upper-class students at my university. I grew up in a loving family. I co-own a gorgeous (to me) flat in London. I grew up relatively poor. My roots are firmly working-class but I have royal ancestry and firmly established middle-class family in India. I only recently realised how much both my royal ancestry, and my familial experience of the trauma of partition has affected my family. My privileges and my subjection are wildly bound up with the project of colonization; I see the intense damage this has caused my family, myself. My family live the privileges of whiteness every day.

The truth is, creating liveability within all of this, *psychically*, is not simple work; to claim myself slowly back from the entrapment of colonial violence, racism, sexism, intergenerational trauma and every other force that was designed to make me feel wrong in my body while simultaneously claiming my privilege is sometimes mad-making. I found an intense power in deciding that I deserved better than to live half a life, always denying or hiding one or more parts of myself. While I continue to find personal power in healing the fault lines, fractures and compartmentalisation by challenging the assumption of the incompatibility of 'whiteness' and 'otherness', this work is politically relevant because healing those fractures taught me a lot about how I *live* power. I learned that I had the power to weaken the links in the chains that whiteness places around us, making it possible to *think* a different future. When I started this work at 14 years of age, my only expectation was to cheat my own living death, to somehow find a stable middle ground between numbness and heightened terror – both in many ways linked to the pain in living in the afterlife of colonization.

Over time, I found that in working to actively heal myself, in taking the fractured, bruised and bloody bits that were hastily stitched together out of necessity to survive at the time, to live in them that I give the shame less power over me, to radically accept these experiences as part of myself and to rebuild around them, I have learned more than anything that this healing work is a *radical act of service*. In learning how to connect and locate my struggles in events across time and space, to labour to release the violences that I had internalised, to unwaveringly nurse the strength and beauty of the lessons learned in those places in service of teaching myself how to *live* differently 'Healing the fractures' has become an analytic; learning how to craft stories and analysis that bring together those things that we have been taught to be incompatible; for me this means finding power in creating a fluidity in my subjectivity between those parts of my identity that were never meant to live together; my whiteness, my blackness, my queerness, my privilege, my subjection, they were never meant to exist in harmony. I think this radical fluidity, is the place from which my ability to think of being human anew comes. Sylvia Wynter taught me this, in referring to her work, McKittrick tells us:

... think carefully about the ways in which those currently inhabiting the underside of the category Man-as-human – under our current epistemological regime, those cast out as impoverished and colonized and undesirable and lacking reason – can, and do, provide a way to think about being human anew.

(Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 3)

Over time, I learned that labouring in service of living better for myself, was also a deeply spiritual practice of social justice, a practice in service of my loved ones and others like me – in doing the work, in refusing to be a carrier of hurts and horrors that have wracked the lives of my family, my friends and community, in reimagining a different life for

myself, I refuse my own undoing (see [Hartman 2020](#)). But, more importantly, I can use this time to practise refusing to contribute to the undoing of other people *like me*. This work is also a strong recognition of how power *lives in me*. In working to insulate myself from the fundamental anti-relational currents of whiteness, I was actively working towards not perpetuating its power and violence on others through me. My hope for this work is to call CWS contributors to develop analyses, or analytic methods complex enough to hold all of the complicated ways in which we *live* racialised power, and for us all to use the work of healing the fractures between those parts of us that we have been taught are incompatible, to come to a more complex understanding of human life.

So I ask, one last time, what must you do?

Conclusion

If we are to understand Critical Whiteness Studies as an antiracist discipline, we must challenge the normative reproductions of substantialist, anti-relational and essentialising academic method and that has tended to form the canon. Racism and whiteness are complicated and simplified theorising endangers our ability to fully comprehend and interrupt the byzantine technologies of racism and white supremacy that we live. That CWS scholars replicate methodologies used to produce colonial 'worlding' ([Said 1984](#)) absolutely limits the potential of CWS to be the radical, useful and complicated discipline that it needs to be to support people to identify racism and practice racial justice.

Furthermore, CWS as a discipline holds an ethical responsibility to be a site of critical engagement with whiteness as power. The global shift to a more outwardly imperial politics, especially in the West but further afield too, means that people are both relying on, and using CWS to interrogate, and untangle the web of racialized violences that we all live. In this work, I have explored what opening up a 'third space' for more complicated, relational analyses of power can do. If, as a critical discipline, CWS is to be relevant to the project of social progress, racial equality, or social justice, contributions to the discipline must grapple with the lived complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions in living *and* labouring towards racial justice (Gunaratnam 2003).

One aspect in particular that I have explored in this work is that opening up a 'third space' for people of colour to explore the complicated ways in which we are both caught in, and perpetuate the violences of whiteness. Interestingly, I would conceptualise this work as a Black Feminist critique of Critical Whiteness Studies, but would also argue that bringing Black Feminism into the work of CWS is imperative. If CWS is ever to achieve its full potential, it must make space for the experiences complicated relationships with racialized power, but especially those of people of colour/racialized people.

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