

EQUITY AND ATTAINMENT SEMINAR BEYOND THE BINARY OF THE IVORY TOWER AND THE STREET

Stephen Small, Ph.D.
Department of African American Studies
University of California, Berkeley

Coventry University

Thursday, May 18 2018

Binary of knowledge production

- 1 Academy versus the street!
- 2 Formal credentials versus lack of!
- 3 Legitimate (valued) + illegitimate (devalued) knowledge
- 4 Science and non-science (street and anecdotes)
- 5 Mutually exclusive professional (objective) and personal (subjective)
- 6 Superior and inferior!
- 7 Infrastructure of university departments, lectures, seminars, conferences, workshops, publications and peer reviews
- Patricia Hill Collins – Eurocentric Masculinist Knowledge Validation Process

knowledge production: inside academy!

- Objectivity, impartiality and scientific rigour; the relentless pursuit of truth; and open to all perspectives and questions
- Deficiencies – restricted in access, limited in scope of study, limited in range of epistemologies, lacking ethnic, gender and class diversity. Ignores or rejects 'non-scientific' knowledge (from the street)

Beyond binary of knowledge production

- People occupy multiple roles/identities (professor, mother, sister, Christian, BME Identity, Scouser, etc)
- Better, more productive criteria: clarity of goals, systematic and rigorous inquiry and insight!
- More comprehensive, inclusive,
- Accessible language!

Knowledge production: of/by/from staff and students I

- Diverse cultural knowledge- national and international, global!
- Diverse personal and professional experiences
- International travel and insights
- Knowledge of history, religion, languages, community practices, philosophy, family formations,

Knowledge production: of/by/from staff and students II

- They produce and disseminate creative and insightful information, knowledge and insights about migration, ethnicity, gender and religion that are meaningful, educational and compelling
- And important – they live and interpret the intersections of many identities, professional and personal, class and gender, national and religious
- They are the experts!

Knowledge production: of/by/from staff and students: documents and non-documentary

- Counteract and overcome deficiencies in academic knowledge; draw on wider range of sources, experiences, insights
- Oppositional - to racist, sexist, eurocentric, arrogant research and publications
- Collaborative-professors/staff/students/community
- Independent – (auto) biographies, poetry, music, blogs,

Variety of sources of information

- Professional experience – information and insights into principles, practices of institutions
- General personal experience – eg of community dynamics, other nations (Jamaica, Nigeria, Somalia, India, Malaysia)
- Knowledge of other institutions and operations (health, medical knowledge) in other nations – international comparisons
- Role of social media

Knowledge production: of staff and students

- More extensive, more comprehensive, more multi-faceted, drawing on multiple disciplines and sometimes divergent theoretical approaches
- With inputs from more perspectives, including Black people, ethnic, and religious minorities, and all women

Combining my personal and professional I

- Growing up in Liverpool, in schools, media and museums, all British (whites) were good, all Black people were uncivilized, inferior, needy and subordinate
- Dad's and family experience in Jamaica; reggae music; rastafari; meetings and discussions; monthly meetings; leaders, events, nations, maroons, african empires; books. African Liberation Day!
- Nigerian sailors and students in Liverpool.

Combining personal and professional I

- Black book stores: New Beacon Books, Bogle L'ouverture (Walter Rodney) Elimu Wa Nane and Source Books.
- Analysts: Angela Davis, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael, Eric Williams, Walter Rodney, CLR James, Black Panther Party, Black Power.
- This information, knowledge, concepts, theories, frameworks now integrated into many university courses, and black history tours and courses in UK.

Combining personal and professional I

- BA final year dissertation – Rastafari – the search for an identity
- MSc. Stratification among whites in Caribbean Slave Societies
- Book: Police and People in London: A Group of Young Black people (1983)
- PhD. Course - applying Max Weber's theory of Charisma to Haile Selassie/Ras Tafari;
- PhD dissertation - creation of people of mixed race
- Brazil lecture 2017 Reggae Music and Black Consciousness

Atlantic Slave Trade Gallery, Liverpool -1994.

Peter Moores gave half-million pounds; 1 curator on the slave trade; black and non-black community mobilized; result was impressive transformation

- 1 Nine curators of whom 5 Black people
- 2 Garry Morris – Outreach Worker
- 3 Three main areas – Life in Africa, middle passage and slavery; legacies of slavery
- 4 In 2007 International Slavery Museum opened. The major slavery museum in whole of Europe

Atlantic Slave Trade Gallery, Liverpool-1994.

Individuals and groups, organizations and non-profits.

Consortium of Black Organisations

Federation of Liverpool Black Organisations

Liverpool Black Sisters; then Kuumba Imani

Maria O'Reilly; Dave Clay; artists, poets, singers, performers – Distinction, The Real Thing (Children of the Ghetto) Eugene Lange, Levi Tafari.

Black and white women mothers and children

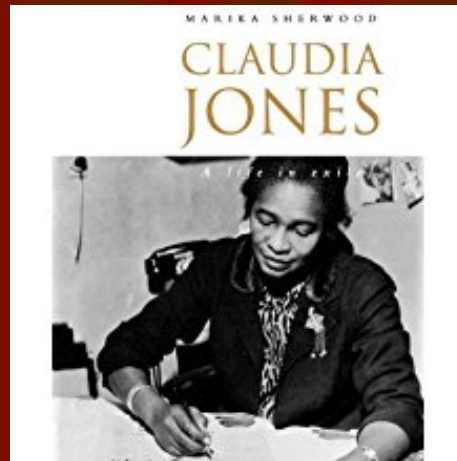
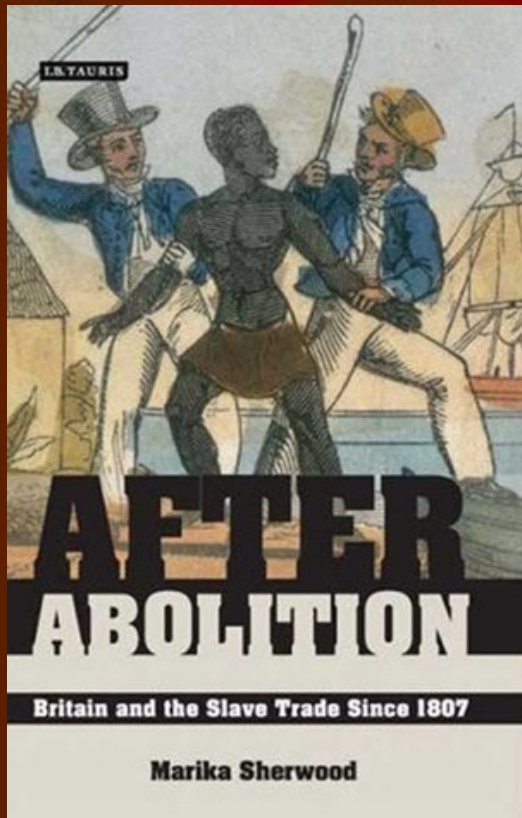
The potential: of staff and students and community

- Can be more extensive, more comprehensive, more multi-faceted, drawing on multiple disciplines and sometimes divergent theoretical approaches
- With inputs from more perspectives, including Black people, ethnic, and religious minorities, and all women.
- Topics: Reparations; Feminism without intersectionality of race, religion, nativity and nationality; Domestic violence in multiple communities

The Challenge!

- How can universities – and staff and students – identify and harness knowledge, experience and insights, in a systematic and mutually productive way?
- How to identify, obtain and utilize knowledge and information in the community?
- How to value, validate and compensate individuals and groups for their contributions?
- What procedures, and organizational practices can be set up?

Knowledge Production inside/outside the Academy in England: Marika Sherwood



Black Womanism. Feminism; and the Politics of Women of Colour Conference, Edinburgh 2016



Final Reflections I

- False/unncecessary binary between academy and street
- People occupy multiple roles/locations/identities/responsibilities
- Knowledge production in higher education not entirely objective, impartial, unbiased.
- Knowledge production outside higher education – can be oppositional, collaborative, independent.
- How to establish procedures to draw on Knowledge from across the continuum; in ways that are mutually benefititl
- To make more comprehensive, extensive, inclusive and draw on multi-perspectives

Final Reflections I

- Sir Karl Popper:
- Science is based on historical traditions myth, superstition, religion, community philosophy.
- Science can often be wrong – speed of light, laws of gravity, distance across planet, origins of humans, number of planets in universe.
- Non-Science can often get it right – resistance to slavery; gender roles; african civilizations; legacies of slavery
- Boundaries between the two are fluid!



Europe is made up of at least 46 nations, and a population of more than 770 million people. Black people of African descent are estimated at more than 7 million, with at least 90% of them in just 12 nations. Stephen Small offers an in-depth analysis of what exactly is Black Europe, and what are the experiences of Black people in Europe. He defines Black Europe and addresses questions about gender and demography; about history and the legacies of slavery, colonialism and imperialism; the politics of racism, political representation and community politics; economics, the legal system, the psychological dimensions of Black people in Europe, faith communities and musical production; knowledge production, Black peoples' relations with other people of color in Europe, the African Diaspora and the challenges and priorities for the future.

Stephen Small is Professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

20 Questions and Answers on Black Europe

Stephen Small
**20 Questions
 and Answers
 on Black Europe**

**WE ARE HERE BECAUSE
 YOU WERE THERE**

