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Beccy Watson 

Challenge and disrupt, take risks, speak out. Stand up to White, supremacist, capitalist culture. Question the ways and whats of culture. Don't try to own or define culture in static ways. These statements have profound consequences for leisure and our perceptions of it. When I seek to capture how bell hooks informs and impacts my leisure scholarship, it is the connections across creativity and academic rigor, critical at its core, whilst generous and creative, that springs to mind. Her passing at the end of 2021 leads many to pause, reflect upon, and celebrate what a remarkable person she was.

hooks inspires an activism in me that is present, I hope, in my teaching, in my writing and research, and in my academic citizenship in the round. Poetry, hip hop, art, dance, storytelling; cultural resonance, and vitality that hooks encourages you to hear and to share, to shout about and give voice to (not take or take for granted). And all the while she reminds you that you can't just say things (speech acts), that to understand is to change, that theory is a form of healing. Anger is a point of departure for enactment, of embracing and embodying action (but not flaccid, guilt-laden apology). Pain and hope are both fundamental to transformation.

I was introduced to writings of bell hooks by my mentor, my colleague, my friend, Sheila Scraton in the late 1980s early 90s; "I think you'll connect with this" she said, suggesting I read "Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black." In hooks I found a freedom giver and a feminist activist for freedom fighters that spoke to everything I was grappling with regarding difference in feminism. I felt then, and still do, that she animates the possibilities for radical change that keeps asking, keeps questioning and confronting. To state she inspires the act of speaking up sounds, arguably and understandably, somewhat hollow coming from a white European academic. Nonetheless, I stake a claim that she informs my actions in academic and everyday life; others need to read her work (if you haven't done so before) and make up your own minds. hooks's thesis on postmodern Blackness had a profound influence on me, a perfect (angry) subject position that exposed brilliantly how an emergent postmodern discourse denied Black women's voices, and in her words, their very existence. She has such an effective way of forcing you to consider and reconsider, of helping you to think about and move you to what you want (and must) say. hooks represents both a way forward and a warning; appropriating the "right" academic language makes you complicit in the

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reproduction of the very thing you set out to reject or retaliate against. But you have to be prepared to join the fight.

Taking time to offer a brief reflection on bell hooks's influence reminds me how tangible, whilst sometimes transient, our relationships in and across scholarship are; to think about those we know in person and those we know through the page. I never heard bell hooks speak in person and yet she energizes and instills something very "real" inside me. Whether it is in confronting Whiteness, asserting a feminist leisure scholarship, examining intersectionality and leisure, much of it is hooks inspired, albeit to differing degrees. I don't claim to be an expert on her work; I do recognize times and places where her theses inform my collaborations, whether across years of departmental relationships, joint authorships, editorials, visiting scholarships (mine and others) and my student completions (from undergraduate to PhD). I would say that hooks's work on transgressive teaching is perhaps more significant to me now than ever. Where better to share her legacy than in teaching and facilitating leisure scholarship? To harness the potential of leisure as a context for knowing, for healing and for hope. To name and call out White, supremacist, capitalist (patriarchal) culture. It seems to me a befitting legacy. As I update my teaching materials and reading lists for the new term I will look again at how I can employ choice sections from "Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics" through to "Black Looks: Race and Representation" in seeking to illustrate the politics of race across leisure and sport; as I increasingly teach on the latter (sport) I will promote and promise (combining criticality and creativity) that "We Real Cool: Black Men And Masculinity" remains as timely to contemporary society as did its publication year nearly twenty years ago. But, like I say, you need to read for yourselves.

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