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Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo

Joining in black study

Knowledge creation and black feminist critique alongside African Norwegian youth

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Chapter 4: Study to transgress, embody the glitch

Black study is a practice that transgresses boundaries between theory/method/data. What lies at the base of such a transgression is my flirtatious relationship with theoretical tools from anti-oppression movements such as black feminism, decolonial and indigenous thought, queer of color critique, and abolition. Doing black study in the academy is a way to survive the academy. Writing about black study I uncover a practice that I have largely been doing in secret, on the fringes of ‘official’ research practices. In uncovering practices of knowledge creation that are glitches in the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021), I also think about what it means to embody the glitch.

Embodying the glitch

Glitch is all about traversing along edges and stepping to the limits, those we occupy and push through, on our journey to defining ourselves. Glitch is also about claiming our right to complexity, to range, within and beyond the proverbial margins. (Russel, 2020, p. 42)

The glitch challenges us to consider how we can “penetrate ... break ... puncture ... tear” the material of the institution, and, by extension, the institution of the body. (Russel, 2020, p. 44.)

Immersing myself in a black study mode, I’ve simultaneously gone through a reckoning with the disciplines I know and work in: anthropology and gender studies. I write about abolition and/of anthropology in Chapter 2, and my critiques of gender studies in the co-authored article with Rahwa Yohannes (Article 2). My critiques of the knowledge regimes in these two disciplines are not limited to anthropology and gender studies. However, they are instead a queer black feminist critique of disciplinarity and the university in itself. The University Machine, also known as the Academic Industrial Complex, is built on so many rules and barriers, inaccessible physically and socially for most, posing as a place of change and progress. Nevertheless, the machine has flaws, glitches, and so do its disciplines. One of the tropes I work to crack open, melt (down), pulverize, burn, and flood is the insider/outsider dichotomy: doing ethnographic work as someone who is

simultaneously an outsider in the university and an insider among the people who participate in research I am uninterested in viewing this as a hindrance. Instead, I see it for the gift it is. This is double consciousness. This is what it means to embody the glitch.

Further in this chapter, I look into what the position as “Decorative Beast” (Gilmore, 2022) can generate by centering care, holding space and using black study as a mode of transgressing academic boundaries. In the background of this chapter there is a scratching sound, the sound of glitching, aided by Legacy Russel’s glitch feminism (2020), Ruth Gilmore’s abolition geography (2022) and Hammana and Klinkert’s critiques of anthropology. Russel (2020) writes: “Thus, glitch is something that extends beyond the most literal technological mechanics: it helps us to celebrate failure as a generative force, a new way to take on the world.” (p.50).

Hammana and Klinkert (2021) take it further, showing us the decolonizing potentials of the glitch: “Delving into the possibility of errors we believe that we can and have been, using these errors ourselves, to ‘decolonise’ (anthropological) study through what we call glitching study back to (its) common use.” (p. 42).

Black study against, under, over and through the university

I intend for this academic contribution to be affirming, acknowledging and supportive of the work done and knowledge produced outside academia by, for and about black/African/Afro-descendant people in Norway. Is this possible, and is an academic contribution really what black communities in Norway need? Believing that I create knowledge *with and for* ‘the community’, then what am I doing in academia, other than perhaps furthering my own career? Audre Lorde said “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (Lorde 1984). Ruth Wilson Gilmore writes that the apostrophe in the possibly over-quoted sentence is the most important: who owns and controls the tools, and to what end? If we can dismantle the master’s house, we can reuse those tools and materials to create “institutions of our own design, usable by all to produce new and liberating work” (Gilmore, 2022, p. 79).

I learn (and keep learning) that substantial and sustainable social change cannot only happen within the academy. However, I am increasingly interested in what a critical way of being and knowing within and on the margins of the academy might look like, perhaps as embodying the

glitch. Black study in one of its forms can be a way to exist and to theorize within the undercommons of the academy (Harney & Moten, 2013) or through the glitches of the University Machine (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021), as we seize materials and tools of the university, and of research to mold our collectives of thought after our own rules. An example of this can be redirecting money from the university back to community organizers and grassroots theorists. It can be taking time from the university to be together in unproductive ways (Diallo & Miskow Friborg, 2021).

As I explained in Chapter 2, it is not only the study participants that engage in black study. It is also something that has been happening personally for me long before I started this research, as well as a practice I have noticed playing out in my collaborations with other African diaspora feminists, thinkers, and community members whom I have worked with during this time.

As I discuss in Chapter 1, my work cannot be reduced to fieldwork, participant observation or anthropology; it is something else. First of all, I seek to challenge dominant conceptualizations within social sciences of how theory is developed by grounding the theoretical process in collaboration and what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) might call “what people are already doing” (Gilmore in podcast “Millennials are Killing Capitalism”, 2022). This is what I have called joining in study. I challenge the Western colonial university’s need for classification, hierarchy and order. I transgress boundaries between knowledge and experience and between black study and research.

Navigating the Academy as Decorative Beasts

In this thesis, a central methodological question is about doing black feminist research on blackness in the Nordics. I have explored this question throughout all four articles, with a more explicit investigation together with black feminist colleagues in two articles: first the exploration of friendship between black feminists as a locus of theorization (Article 2), and second, a letter-writing practice of counter-archiving and care among a group of four African diaspora feminist from Norway, Sweden and Finland (Article 3). In both texts, we discuss the current times, the Covid-19 pandemic, the global Black Lives Matter uprisings of 2020, and how those events have shaped the way we think about our work in the context of Nordic exceptionalism. In Article 2, I

reflect on the implications of doing black feminist work in Norwegian gender studies as a black person. This position is marked by isolation, both academically and politically. It is partly this isolation that has drawn me to collaborations outside of the AIC and across borders and disciplines.

In a recent sparring session with black feminist researcher at Høgskolen i Innlandet, Prisca Bruno Massao, I was telling her about the concept of black study and we quickly realized that we were doing it too. We had arranged a call to give each other feedback on our chapters in a Norwegian book on racism (Article 1 in this thesis). Instead, we dove into an analysis of the erasure of black scholars in Norwegian academia, especially black feminists. We talked about our journeys into research and about how it was possible that I had not heard of Prisca's work on antiblack racism in Norwegian sports, which she began publishing in 2010 (Massao & Fasting, 2010; Massao, 2016), while some of her work is taught at Swedish universities. I had experienced a similar thing regarding my work on misogynoir in Danish academia, which is also taught at university courses in Norway, but hardly known in Denmark. Gilmore (2022) calls the roles of black women in academia Decorative Beasts, which is building on Collins' concept of Outsider Within (2000) among others. Gilmore argues that Decorative Beasts are alibis for the Academy, or commodities that can support the Academy's ideologies of production, capitalism, equality, diversity and so on. At the same time, Decorative Beasts are fighting to change the academy, or perhaps undo it so it can be done differently. We must shift the perspective from viewing Decorative Beasts as objects or alibis to subjects and as agents of disruption. This is how we, according to Gilmore, "become able to negotiate positions from which to disarticulate the power of the alibi - through our goals and actions to instigate insurgency and provoke transformation." (Gilmore, 2022, p. 52). Gilmore continues her argument, stating "Decorative Beasts are fighting for power in the Academy in crisis. The stakes are the control of epistemology: *Who teaches? What is taught? Who learns?*" (Gilmore, 2022, p. 75). The crisis of the Academy, which Gilmore originally wrote about when she published this piece in 1991, might be similar to the current crises in Scandinavian academia today. The (reactions to the) anti-gender movement, the (reactions to the) decolonizing academia debate, and the many many white cis tears and political targeting of critical scholars that have taken up much space in Norway and Denmark in the past 5 years come to mind. Gilmore (2022) urges Decorative Beasts

to use the crisis, to embody the glitch by accessing “the money, time, space, books, and equipment, and people constitutive of and constructed by the academy” (p. 52).

Holding space as a black study method

What does black study offer to decorative beasts? What happens when we employ the methods we use in our lives, outside and within the university? What happens when we trust ourselves, collaborate, hold space for and uplift each other, as well as theorize together? Then something different arises—an opening, and possibly a way for us to use the university, its resources (buildings, books, money and time), for our own liberation?

As I was seeking a black Nordic feminist analytical community, I got involved with the co-authors of the third article. The four of us all needed intellectual and communal exchange of ideas, thoughts and emotions in a time of struggle. As we began writing to each other, a special atmosphere was created. We could hold space for each of our theoretical interests and analytical engagements, as well as our personal stories and reflections on our work and its connection to our families. Cultivating a black feminist care practice we could think together about the violent structures of Nordic exceptionalism, the specificities of Nordic antiblackness, and the erasure of the African diaspora in Nordic archives (national, cultural, public). This collaboration also illustrates a process of co-theorizing in action. We let the conversation flow, in and out of personal testimony, black feminist concepts, family storytelling, and ethnographies of contemporary black resistance movements in our countries while picking up on threads and tying together patterns, overlaps and silences. What unfolded was a theorizing that could not happen in isolation, but springs from collaboration.

In Article 3, I write to Lena, Maimuna and Jasmine:

I think you are right, Lena, when you suggest that there is an archival practice happening inward, silently, through our emotions, and I find it very comforting to know that some of our emotions are shared. I remember a passage from the black, biracial, bisexual writer Camara Joof's (2018: 74) book of prose: *Eg snakkar om det heile tida (I Talk about It All the Time)*, in which she writes: “MANI. Eg er besett av detaljer. Eg må hugse alt. Eg har

med meg ei notabok overallt. Skriv ting ned.” (“Mania. I am obsessed with details. I must remember everything. I bring a notebook with me everywhere. Write things down”, translated by the author.) Joof’s words resonate with me because I too have been writing things down to make sure I would remember what happens. The emotional state Joof associates with this practice seems to be desperation, mania. The notes app in my phone is filled with little observations, thoughts, descriptions of situations and feelings. My own little archive. But this practice of archiving has gone from documenting everyday encounters with racism and antiblackness, mostly, to a more pleasurable, explorative practice in which I archive so much more. Ideas. Poetry. Theory. Life. I wonder if this is a particularly ‘black in the Nordics’ kind of thing? Or is it a researcher thing? Or perhaps, is it so that we have become researchers/archivists because we are (have the experience of being) black in the Nordics?

Black feminism is present at the margins of Nordic gender studies, but what happens when we take it further, into our methods, the way we learn to know and to create knowledge together? A black feminist liberatory approach, then, is a combination of *many knowledges* that center a black feminist standpoint. Black understood in the broader sense, as African and the diaspora, as migrants and as descendants of people who were enslaved, as born here, and born there. It is feminist because it understands liberation as an interconnected effort and emancipation from everything, “Change everything”, as Gilmore stated recently in a talk with Paul Gilroy (2020). Care practices include holding space. In Article 3, Jasmine, Lena, Maimuna, and I conceptualized letter writing as a black feminist care practice. We think and demonstrate care and caring as central to our relationship and theorizing. Our collective thought process and witnessing of each other’s archival resistance and reflection is a caring in itself. As we became a collective, we cultivated a practice in which how we feel, and how we are was always relevant. The act of listening to each other and reading each other’s words was done carefully, as we gradually built a space of trust.

Communities of care: A black feminist liberatory approach

I have intentionally included co-authored texts in the thesis to show how the process of analysis that this project builds on is collaborative and is also part of the work that grounds the two

articles where I am the sole credited author. I think of this collaborative analytical process as a practice of black study. In Article 2, Rahwa Yohannes and I write:

Our friendship is our methodology, not only of survival but it is a grounding from which we create (disobedient) knowledge. Our knowledge isn't always documented but developed through our experience. We honour Black feminist traditions of what we can call *theorising from our lives* as we refuse to centre white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks 2014, Lorde 1984, Olufemi 2020, Jobe 2021). Our knowledge creation is grounded in the embodied, shared knowing between Black feminists, a state of deep relation where we only have to say a few words to know what the other is thinking. We write, think and work together to heal ourselves, and to let other Black feminists in the Nordics know that they are not alone (Kelekay 2021). This is the kind of *theorising* we see Black feminists doing across the Nordics, at home, online, between friends, partners and comrades. We question mainstream academic premises for theory and knowledge as we *insist* on existing and theorising and creating (knowledge) on our own terms (Nunes 2019).

In Article 2, we offer a practice of black study as it includes thinking from and with embodied knowledge, experiences with antiblackness and navigating within the framework of blackness in our Nordic context. Rahwa and I write both from our individual experiences and our collective experience, knowledge which we lift in conversation with black feminist resources from our context and elsewhere. This weaving and braiding together of knowledge that is shared and developed in friendship shows an example of a black study practice. My collaboration with Rahwa Yohannes is based on a black feminist politic of care, which we also write about in our text on black feminist praxis of survival. Rahwa and I are differently engaged through activism and research, and sometimes our work overlaps. We support each other in our work and lives through friendship and our way of helping each other deal with and solve the problems we face. When I am unsure how to tackle barriers in the academy or how to write in ways that are true yet mindful of my responsibilities to our communities, I call Rahwa and she advises me. She challenges my views, tells me when I'm wrong, and encourages me, most importantly, when the token fatigue gets the best of me. When Rahwa deals with conflicting agendas of anti-racist

activists and the systemic racism of media/NGOs/funds, she calls me, and we reflect together. How to move forward? Why are people reacting the way they do? How to bring the cause to the front? How to be careful and mindful of intersecting power relations and representations?

Doing black feminist research is both healing and tolling at the same time. The same logics and taboos that I critique in this thesis are at play within my own research environment. During the course of the PhD, I turned more and more towards collaborators outside of my immediate field of gender studies. Studying blackness and antiblackness in a very white, cis and normative academic space, while being subjected to those very structures is challenging, and I needed all the help I could get. When I was halfway through the project, the pandemic hit, and with it came increased isolation, followed by a global uprising for black lives. Until that point, I had been working, writing, teaching and learning in a manner that was clearly separated, as if I was simultaneously existing in two different worlds. This meant that my practice of collaborative study was restricted to my time spent with people during events, interviews, and in my free time, while my teaching, conferencing, and writing was happening very much on my own. These two worlds were the University, and the Outside. When the Black Lives Matter uprisings erupted in Norway, suddenly the floodgates opened, and what had been small cracks, streams and drops suddenly broke open, rose and spilled over as my two worlds combined. The emotions I had been careful not to show or share in the University burst out, and I was grieving publicly. I organized and joined in protests, I wept, I was constantly contacted by journalists, panels on antiblackness and structural racism were everywhere, I went overboard, crashed and burned out. After a long period of sick leave, I began wanting to think, theorize and write again, but I was not going to do it alone. It became clear that I needed more explicit and credited collaboration to make it through in a manner that felt true to my ethics.

Building a black feminist archive

A black feminist liberatory approach is also a way of digging up different stories. Stories that exist but that have become whispers in the Euro-patriarchal archive. Some of these stories are about the first labor revolt in Danish-Norwegian history, the Fireburn, led by 'Queen Mary' who together with her comrades burned down plantations to demand workers' rights in the Danish (former Denmark-Norway) colony St. Croix.

Being trained as an anthropologist in the Nordics, I was hardly introduced to any critical race theory or black feminism. I was never taught by or presented with literature from black women and indigenous anthropologists (or black thinkers in general). This was knowledge I had to find on my own. I use black feminist and anticolonial citational politics as a deliberate practice of decentering dominant and traditional hegemonic voices and disciplinary perspectives. As I read and cite black feminist thinkers, I try to avoid cherry-picking, like indigenous anthropologist Zoe Todd warns against. Instead, I am interested in acknowledging the contributions of black feminists to the (anthropological) archive/canon. It is about understanding how black feminist epistemologies shape the way many do fieldwork and how we theorize from lived experiences: privileging language and understandings from those who *know what it's like*. Looking around, I see black feminism being used a lot, not only in anthropology but most social sciences, such as the concept of intersectionality, a pillar in black feminist thought. Intersectionality, a theory of interlocking systems of power, has been transferred/co-opted by the AIC and now figures, often without or only referencing Crenshaw (1989), who coined the term, leaving out other black feminist, womanist, lesbian, and queer thinkers who developed this theoretical and methodological approach (Combahee River Collective, 1978; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981). The appropriation of black feminist thought without citing and centering black women's lives and knowledge is a problem. How do we, as black and Nordic feminists, use these gifts respectfully and responsibly in our context?

In Article 2, Rahwa and I use Wekker's (2016) arguments to help us critique exclusion and co-optation in Norwegian gender studies. As someone who is racialized as black and 'non-western', I am also aware of my geographical location and historical reality. When I borrow concepts from the US, I do translation work, which I must do transparently. This is also important when using indigenous thought from Turtle Island. I study in Norway, which has colonial power over Sami lands, and I have a responsibility to learn about the decolonial thought developed here from Sami thinkers and feminists such as Dankertsen (2021), Stubberud and Knobbloch (2022), Ellen Marie Jensen (2020), Liisa Rávna Finborg (2021) and May-Britt Öhman (2021) from the present, and Elsa Laula Renberg (1904) and Karin Stenberg (Stenberg and Lindholm, 1920) from the past (Svendsen, 2021). Black feminism, in the broad, transnational sense (much like Audre Lorde's

interaction with black queer women in Berlin), tells me to learn about the world I inhabit through listening to people's stories. My starting point in learning to think with black feminism is because I am interested in blackness in Norway and the Nordic context and to understand how racializing processes work here, as well as, political processes of community building and counter hegemonic knowledge creation. I use creation, and not production, to not play into the need for production in the academic industrial complex.

Black feminism allows several contradictions to be true at the same time. For example, it is true that gender studies are under attack and that gender studies are marginalized within the (Nordic) Academic Industrial Complex. Yet it is also true that gender studies are populated mainly by white, cis women and that trans, non-binary, indigenous, disabled, black and people of color, whose knowledge the field builds on, are systematically excluded from the discipline, the jobs, citations and acknowledgements. These things are true at the same time. Black feminism allows me to hold these truths simultaneously and to employ a queer 'both and' approach to knowledge creation instead of the binary thinking of white Western cis-heteronormative patriarchal knowledge systems.

Some of us are vulnerable to research

Being subject to structural antiblackness makes us vulnerable, but it also makes some of us tough and strong, sometimes timid and secretive about our true feelings. Growing up in a society like Norway that does not understand racism or antiblackness beyond the spectacle or single incident, never as a structural issue and a fact of life, is gaslighting and makes us constantly question our experiences and feelings. I know this, and therefore I also learned how important it would be to create space for vulnerability and reflect the stories people shared with me by listening with care and sharing stories of my own. The mere experience of meeting someone who does not question the legitimacy of your narrative but listens, takes it seriously and has experienced something similar is powerful. The feeling of sitting opposite someone who is both black and speaks your language can be special and for some, rare. Being aware of this reality, I found that with some of the tools I had learned from ethnography, along with black feminist and indigenous methodologies, I and, ultimately, *we* could create the necessary space for learning and thinking together.

Refusing research

Working from a point of having to acknowledge the political and historical power of the institution I am in and the practice of social science research as historically exploitative, harmful, and extractive of local knowledge. Something particularly important in this regard is not to be blinded by ‘optimism’, as I come to at the end of this thesis. Feminist anti-racist scholar Diana Mulinari also talked about the danger of optimism in her keynote at the NORA conference in Iceland May 2019. She said that instead of optimism, which she finds useless and impossible in this current political climate, we should cultivate hopeful knowledge production, which to her signifies a practice of “imagining better futures”. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has taught us that there is a deep connection between research and coloniality. Tuck and Yang (2012), who wrote the famous intervention “Decolonization is not a metaphor”, which reminds us how decolonization is first about land rights, have written extensively about indigenous knowledge production and anticolonial ethics. I draw on their 2014 article, where they introduce a politics of refusal, specifically refusing *research* and the academe, an institution and a knowledge system, which is inherently settler colonial and an extension of the Western nation-state (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 232). This stance of refusal, they say, can be both a theory and a methodology. The article is built on three axioms in their anticolonial research practice: 1) The subaltern can speak but is only invited to speak her/our pain, 2) there are some forms of knowledge that the academy doesn’t deserve, and 3) research may not be the intervention that is needed. (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 224). The point is to explore ways to practice *research* without continuing the histories of exploitation and domination of colonized peoples. How this is done is not easy or straightforward, but Tuck and Yang discuss different actions within research that are ultimately a refusal of research as we’ve been taught to practice it. They show examples of refusal through the works of indigenous scholar Audra Simpson.

Simpson (2007), who interviewed people in her own community of Kahnawake, was mindful in her ways of listening without recording, overhearing without taking notes, and knowing that there are things that have been understood for generations that should not be known by research. She simply refuses to document everything that is known and instead asks “Can I do this and still come home; what am I revealing here and why? (...) Who benefits from this and why?” (Simpson in Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 234). Another point is taking seriously how we are

positioned in the communities we research and in the academe. Thinking through the work of Simpson, Tuck and Yang, I ask: What does it mean to theorize *with* and to theorize *as* at the same time? In other words, what does it mean to theorize with and as black people in Norway? This is what black study is. Tuck and Yang suggest an alternative to what they characterize as the colonial academe's fetishization of damaged communities and pain, namely a knowledge production guided by desire. Desire does, as Tuck and Yang explain it, not ignore the reality of suffering and oppression, but it enables us to catch the complexities of a people, group, individual or community's life, and from there on, imagine our futures. Desire is also a form of refusal, a refusal of the settler colonial knowledge system, in which colonized people, migrants and racial minorities only speak through narratives of suffering. Like critique, refusal is generative, and a politic of refusal comes from anticolonial critique.

Black study as *un*colonial practice

In this section, I explore the *un*colonial characteristics of black study as well as the potential dangers of practicing black study in the University Machine by way of this PhD-project. I think with the work of friends from the River and Fire Collective, Hammana and Klinkert, in their discussion of returning study to common use (2021), as an entryway to thinking with, through and about black study on the borders of the university. And finally, I ask, using my friend and Jamaican-American black geographer Teju Adisa Farrar's idea of *un*colonial knowledge production, whether black study can be seen as *un*colonial, that is a practice of undoing colonial knowledge regimes. Teju (2019) writes:

I've been considering **un**colonization rather than **de**colonization. The reason I prefer to use *uncolonial* as opposed to *decolonial* is because I do not believe we can, should, or need to try to reverse colonialism. The latin prefix 'de-' connotes reversal. We cannot and are not to reverse colonization, rather we need to undo it from our bodies. We must shed the layers of colonization from our mind. We must rebuild institutions with colonial foundations. Reminding ourselves of the *un*coloniality of our ancestors. The indigenous and first nations peoples around the globe and those who populated the ancient civilizations on the continent of Africa, were *un*colonized. *Un*coloniality starts from indigeneity. (para. 8)

At a conference in 2019, Teju explained why she was not focused on publishing her work in academia because of the restrictions and controlling technologies that, as an example, require us to anonymize people we work with. Something that would make her unable to shout-out the black women, femmes and nonbinary activists and artists whose work she learns from. Teju describes the aim of her practice as *uncolonial*, in the sense that decolonization (understood as *reversal* of the violence done by European settlers to lands, animals and peoples) is not possible, but that we can work to *undo* colonial systems, thought patterns and ways of being in the world from our bodies and relations to other people (Adisa-Farrar, 2019). This issue with anonymization feels somewhat unresolved in this project. I have anonymized everyone who signed up as research participants. The broad spectrum of participants in my project does in many ways call for anonymization, as there are not only people who are active and publicly vocal about their experiences and political ideologies but also people who are in and out of groups and who have expressed their need to talk to someone about their experiences and the antiblackness, anti-queer structures and misogyny they endure without it being overheard. At the same time, I feel uneasy about not giving people written credit for their contributions to this thesis. This is where I find solace in black feminism, particularly in articulations of opacity and refusal: insisting on resisting the academy's 'need to know' and instead focusing on the relationships built outside the perimeters of research. The time spent with African and black people in Oslo has been as much about sharing knowledge and experiences as it has been about creating bonds. And these bonds go beyond the initial reason for our encounter, beyond the research.

Returning black study to common use

Two River and Fire Collective members, Hammana and Klinkert, discuss the possibility of returning anthropological study to common use in their piece *Glitching the University Machine*. Hammana and Klinkert take up the notion of *al masha* (Petti and Hilal, 2019), collective land cultivation, in dialogue with glitch feminism (Russel, 2020), in their pursuit of the possibility of decolonizing anthropological study by returning it to common use.

This return(ing) to common use is a way to resist the ongoing violent separation, divide, break-down and individuation that happens within, and also because of, the western modern anthropological discipline(s). (Hammana & Klinkert, 2021, p. 38).

This project is not about anthropological study, but the notion of returning study to common use resonates because of the common nature of black study. Several examples in all four articles point to a kind of starvation of knowledge, a sense of urgency to learn what we were not taught in school as black children growing up in Norway. Black study is already a common practice, in the sense that it is a way of individually and collectively searching for and studying what it means to be black by looking through archives, personal stories and collaborative theorizing, as well as sharing with others in a context where antiblack racism is denied, yet historically woven into the fabric of the country and culture you have grown up in.

Hammana and Klinkert (2021) write about the classic anthropological problem of access, saying:

It is not a question of access in the sense of having to access the University Machine before you are able to join (in) study, it is the contrary, the study we are referring to has been moving, moves, and will continue to move outside of, underneath, over and through the University Machine. If any, us 'academics' have difficulty 'accessing' study. To be able to have access to study would mean that study is demarcated and bordered, closed off and territorialized, this would be antithetical to what study is, which is to say, in a sense, that we cannot access study because study is not accessible. It is not accessible because it is not closed off. (p.38)

Black study is not closed off either, or perhaps it is so to the university machine, as it recognizes the harmful potential of co-optation within the AIC. Yet, black study is a sometimes undefined practice of survival for those of us who are black and working in academia. Without the simultaneous analysis of structures of domination in the university carried out with other black feminists and friends, I would not have been able to withstand this position as a decorative beast. Instead, I have, by engaging in life-affirming black study and black feminist care, been able to craft a research practice that transgresses boundaries and creates space for something new.