

FICTION IN-BETWEEN: AN INTRODUCTION TO AUTOTEHNOGRAPHY

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Abstract

*This article proposes a discussion of autoethnography as an instrument of decolonizing the academe and creating spaces for the voices of the under-represented and their lived experiences, often queer and/or non-white. This discussion is inspired by Octavia E. Butler's speculative fiction and is part of a larger doctoral project exploring the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and religion in her earlier, more classic, science fiction and her later, pre-visionary, speculative fiction. The objective is to lay out a theoretical foundation to the contention that Butler's fiction is equivalent to self-mapping - and thus autoethnographic -, and that it engages the minority woman and queer reader in a similarly autoethnographic journey. The present article is a theoretic preamble to this contention. An extended version of this article is aimed to be included in my doctoral thesis, where these theories of autoethnography will be tested on Butler's *Bloodchild*, *Parable of the Sower*, and *Fledgling*.*

Keywords: autoethnography, interstitiality, gender, sexuality, race, Roma, queer

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1. Overview

Fiction as autoethnography means simply that we write/read to 'get ourselves' and, by braving out our vulnerabilities, help others like us 'get themselves' and gain in power through empathy (Ellis, 2000: 275; Wall, 2006). This research method emerged in the social sciences in the 70's and has been called various names until the term stuck: autobiography, self-narratives etc. Fiction of course is different from 'scientific' writing, the main difference residing in the realm of 'objective versus subjective.' However, some works of fiction have the capacity to illuminate the answer to an important question readers have been seeking an answer to, because the writer was tormented by the same question/s.

This applies to the author on which my doctoral project focuses, and to me as a reader of her work, as follows: on one hand, the author's situated self designs her protagonists' characters as expressions of Butler's own obsessions, dilemmas and aspirations - especially in her almost cult novel, *Parable of the Sower* (1993). On the other hand, entering Butler's literary universe has been an autoethnographic experience for me as a reader, guiding me towards a new realization of my own relationship to (my) gender, ethnicity, sexuality and religion. Olamina, the

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protagonist of the *Parable*, is thus a standing mirror beaming in, on one side, the author's experiences and values - and mine, symmetrically, on the other. It is as if Butler and myself were 'beaming' Olamina together, out of our shared experiences as slave descendants born to economic and social precarity, exposed to discrimination and abuse our entire lives but not wanting to make that the centerpiece of our discourse - but rather advance forward pro-actively and pragmatically, in hopes that other like us will follow suit.

In recent years, autoethnography is receiving more and more attention in academic spaces, especially from non-white, non-Western/American and queer scholars who perceive academia as a colonized and colonizing establishment. Traditional academic voices are increasingly disrupted and replaced by autoethnographic research; people of colour and queer scholars thus have a (better) chance to speak for themselves. Chawla and Rodriguez (2008) propose autoethnography as a 'postcolonial turn' that ethnography, traditionally rooted in a discourse and practices of colonialism, has taken. Autoethnography re-centers the researcher (the Other) and their story as subject/participant and context in the field. Chawla and Atay (2018) add, however, that

Even though autoethnography's intent was to provide scholarly space to the lived experiences of the under-represented, oppressed and marginalized, academic publishing within this tradition remains limited to the White majority group in the United States. (Chawla and Atay, 2018: 4)

I concur that postcolonial scholarship is still largely dominated by minority voices eager to gain the same respect that their dominant class professors enjoy. Moreover, among the different queer and non-white identities, many groups remain under-represented or even absent. Roma and post-communist queer narratives, in our own voices, are still rarely valorized - or even encountered - in Western and Balkan scholarship alike. This paper addresses this gap by sharing an autoethnography of gender, race and sexuality that in turns embraced and transcended the colonized (cis-hetero) norms of my (Romanian) geography and (Roma) ethnicity.

To begin with, we will lay out some key ideas related to (de)colonizing autoethnography in the academe. By re-visiting Patricia Hill Collins, Devika Chawla and Edward Said, we will situate the proposed autoethnography against a background that will help illuminate our search for a decolonized positioning inside the body of discourse on race, gender and sexuality. Next, we will see how autoethnography can be used as a way of abducting the self from the constraints of self-colonization - where it arrived searching for belonging, safety and recognition by the Eurocentric heteronormative establishment. Finally, a journey towards discovering and embracing (own) hybridity will be mapped - as an autoethnography of gender, race and sexuality outside the 'scientific' and cultural norms of my

background, dominated by male and non-Roma supremacy, inculcated by colonizing dichotomies such as (west) Europe-Balkans, forward-backward etc.

2. (De)colonizing autoethnography

One of the first scholars to point out the Euro-centrism of the academe was Edward Said. His *Orientalism* essentially marks the inception of this discussion and by this, one may argue, an awakening towards decolonization. Said introduced the concept of “discourse to re-order the study of colonialism” and posited that “the formal study of the Orient consolidated certain ways of seeing and thinking which in turn contributed to the functioning of colonial power.” (Said, 1978). Said’s famous illumination was that the discourse of/on Orientalism was “ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds as conceived.” (Said, 1978: 43)

Patricia Hill Collins, in around the same era (1986), coined the term “outsider within” to refer to her and other Black women’s experience in sociology. Regardless of their own perceptions and definitions of own culture, stemming from their lived experiences, they had to submit to the interlocking oppressions (‘academic’ norms, white-maleness domination etc) until they got their degrees: “to become sociological insiders, Black women must assimilate a standpoint quite different than their own.” (Collins, 1986: 26) This, as Ruth Pearce points out in her *Methodology for the Marginalized* (2020), speaks of all non-white non-male non-cishetero aspiring academics’ experiences, and still applies to a large extent if one has managed to penetrate the shield protecting the status quo in a neoliberal establishment, run by largely white (male) cishetero authorities. Pearce quotes Collins as relevant to her own experience as a trans feminist scholar, and I read this as very relevant to my own experience as a Roma feminist scholar: “Black women’s experiences highlight the tension experienced by any group of less powerful insiders encountering the paradigmatic thought of a more powerful community.” (Collins, 1986: 49)

In her autoethnographic paper (2020), Pearce also notes something that speaks to my experience in the academic realm as well: in the neoliberal establishment of the academy, we can easily give in to self-colonization by abiding to institutional metrics more than our communities - thus silencing ourselves and our communities. Colonization of the academia is something that Pathak also notes in *Theorizing the Possibilities of Postcolonial Approaches to Autoethnography* (2010). As a non-white professor often being assigned students of colour to advise, she notes that her work and that of her students is less visible to her white, often male, colleagues and superiors: “My work with students of colour and/or other at-risk students, my work on issues of race and gender, my scholarship was/is ultimately seen as nothing more than an obvious extension of my dark body.” (Pathak, 2010: 3)

This too speaks to me very loudly, as my academic efforts are often subscribed to my human rights activism, secondary teaching and political agenda as a Roma and queer community organizer. While these activities create more venues for fellow Roma or queer peers to have their voices heard and lived experiences added to the corpus available for analysis, they are less valued as part of my prestige and authority than, say, having an article published on a platform that my Roma and queer peers have never heard of, nor will they ever do - or should, for that matter.

Devika Chawla completes this discussion on outsider-insider in the academia. In her Introduction: Decolonizing Autoethnography, she remarks that a postcolonial frame is needed in order to “shift marginal voices to the center.” (Chawla, 2018: 13) She reminds us the questions that are so important to autoethnography, initially laid out by Clifford (1986) as tools of self-reflection in the crisis of representation that anthropology went into after the 1970’s, after the colonial project (in which it had played an important part), began to crumble: “who speaks? who writes? when and where? with or to whom? under what institutional and historical constraints?” (idem). Chawla offers her reflection on the ambivalence of feeling that she belonged “to neither a wholly Indian nor a wholly British world” (idem) and refers to her experience as an expat Indian as ‘living in-between’ - a term she later came to assimilate with Homi Bhabha’s ‘interstitiality’ (Bhabha, 1996). Living in-between, interstitiality, these are terms that encapsulate my experience as a great-granddaughter of Roma slaves in Romania, involved with the queer world in ways that transcend mere activism into kinship and family outside prescribed norms.

Faced with the pressures of white heteronormativity, enhanced by prevailing racism, homophobia and transphobia, my community of Roma and queer peers have had to find creative ways to support each other and propel our voices and experiences forward into the academic, artistic or political arena. Pursuing institutional academic recognition is an effective strategy for this, mindful as we must be of the perils of (self)colonization: structural resistance or opposition to our projects, internalized complexes of inferiority, individualizing our pursuit rather than contextualizing our efforts as part of a collective strife, this further meaning that we are set against each other in competition, etc.

3. Autoethnography as Abduction

In their collection of essays *Decolonizing Autoethnography* (2018), editors Chawla and Atay use a decolonial framework to join together autoethnographies of different experiences which are both process and experience, or process and product. They point that focusing on “hybrid experiences, practices and identities, as well as on the ideologies, performances, and practices that actively question, critique, and challenge colonization. [and] also focus upon the colonizers,” (Chawla and Atay, 2018: 5) may be a solution out of identity conundrums and related postcolonial belonging crises. In simple words, rather than struggling to find a definitive answer

to questions such as ‘what does it mean to be x?’ (fill in with any identity label that applies to you: Roma, queer, etc), autoethnographers may help both insiders and outsiders understand *how* they are being x - inside a system of intersecting histories of oppression and power, incarceration and extermination, sexual revolutions and civil rights breakthroughs. In their introduction to this collection of nine essays, Chawla and Atay posit that the process of decolonization

...positions the colonized and the colonizer as inherently entwined. With its focus on everyday practices, decolonization can be empowering for individuals and, in our case, academics who might enact this process in their research, in reflecting upon the education system that reproduces colonial practices, and their own training. The outcome of decolonizing processes is the ability of subjects (both the colonized and the colonizers) to achieve disidentification. (Chawla and Atay, 2018: 6)

Why/how is disidentification a good thing, one may ask? The answer to this question requires us to acknowledge the mechanical similarities between colonization and decolonization. Out of the everyday cultural and political clashes and negotiations, hybrid identities and cultures emerge - in decolonization as in colonization. Bhabha (1996) offers to this discussion the concepts of ‘third space’ - an ‘interstitial’ position which comes with the potentiality of being simultaneously disempowering and empowering.

It would be hard to offer a generally valid evaluation of this potentiality. My autoethnographic account in the last section will hopefully aid the reader to evaluate what in a hybridity such as mine is empowering and what is not. More importantly, I hope that sharing some of my vulnerabilities will inspire a process of reflection and a desire to share in other fellow Roma and queer family. One of the tenets of autoethnography is to make oneself vulnerable, so as to provide others with a space where they may recognize their own vulnerabilities. The ensuing text is not presented for the approval of scientific (Eurocentric) (hetero-normed) academic authorities; it is offered here as an example of how we can use the academia to build solidarity with our own, and eventually rid the university of the norms that constrain and limit those like us.

4. Queering (My) Gender, Race and Sexuality

The ensuing autoethnographic snippet renders my trajectory from self-colonized to decolonized Roma and postcolonial ‘in-between’ activist and scholar of gender, race and sexuality. Religion is also an important part of my life and work and is an important part of the discussion in my doctoral project on the intersections of gender, race, sexuality and religion in Octavia E. Butler’s speculative fiction - but, given the limited space of this article, it would be perhaps wiser to focus only on the first three given elements of my interstitial identity.

‘Stop walking like a tank!’

What did hearing this over and over and over in my early teens do to/for my understanding of gender? Not much good. I got that fat girls with glasses and pimples and uncool clothes were not feminine or attractive enough to get a guy. My response: very early sexual pursuits, validation through promiscuity, overdrinking at all tea parties² to show that I can still stand after all the guys have fallen. It was really very close to BDSM, with me as the dominatrix outside of bed and other people as the dom or master wherever the sex occurred. I would be trampled over during these moments of intimacy, only to start over the next day by showing how I was the strongest, funniest, best at whatever - so that I could ‘get a guy’ or as many guys as possible, despite being what I saw myself as: fat, ugly, in horrible clothes, with pimples and thick glasses. Perfecting my technique to dissimulate between being macho and a rag was the first stage in my ‘becoming woman.’ I acted like a guy in order to be noticed and validated, and in this way I also got people’s interest in me as a woman - it was an intuitive strategy, which was quite effective like that, but which also put me a million times at risk of HIV infection, STIs and different forms of aggression. More importantly, it put my gendered self in a straitjacket. I was choking.

Enter race.

I grew up in a Roma commune 40 minutes south of Bucharest. My mother lived in Bucharest and commuted at weekends to bring goodies and presents. My generation was a baby boomer generation due to a decree criminalizing abortion³. Our parents worked in factories and their parents raised the kids - therefore a weekend commuting mom was a very normal thing for my generation. Both Romanian and Roma kids had this type of early childhood back then. We would move to the city to live with our parents when we started school - in my case, in the second grade. I was 7 when I moved to Bucharest and realized that most people were *not* Roma. I wanted to keep living and doing things the same way I’d always done them in the commune (where I was the apple of everybody’s eye and had finished first grade with a diamond crown for merit) but in Bucharest, with my stealth mother, that was not possible.

I was often corrected, criticized and beaten up for ‘acting like a Gypsy’ by a woman who took pride in the fact that nobody at the factory where she worked or in the Bucharest street where we lived knew she was Roma - nor would they ever have thought it possible. I now know that she was just fooling herself, because she was so desperately colonized - it took me years of hating my mom, then abandoning her, then helping her through her old age and nursing her for two years of terminal cancer

² This is what parties of teens and young adults were called in the seventies and eighties in Romania.

³ Decree 770/1 October 1966.

to be able to finally connect with her as she was finally joining me in-between - where it was okay to be Roma (too), finally. We had some good times there, together, before she passed away.

What is (my) sexuality?

I am shocked at how tranquil decolonizing my sense of self has left me sexually. It is a gift I never thought I would get, after the years and years of trying to construct some sense of validation - in my own eyes and those of others - through undiscerning sex. I don't even think consensual applies to all encounters, frankly. The last illumination of my own interstitiality, what finally clinched my realization that being Roma or queer were both a blessing and a curse, a disadvantage and a privilege simultaneously, especially insofar as my gendered, racialized and sexualized self is concerned, was my relationship with somebody who calls me 'miamor' - and I, in turn, consider the love of my life. He is a man with whom I have never had sex, and probably never will. We are fully devoted to each other, while we may have romantic and/or sexual pursuits with others. Neither of us considers themselves polyamorous. We just are.

I am humbled-in-happiness every time somebody comes out to me as gay, or trans, or Roma, or Muslim. It sends me right back to that eye-embrace me and my mom had, shortly before she passed away, where we really saw and liked each other. No words, no what, no why - just togetherness. Sometimes it's just breathing and sitting back and looking everything in the face and saying no - or yes. Other times it's taking action, like in this email I wrote on July 2016, sitting in an armchair at my dying mom's bedside, shortly after the love of my love had started calling me 'miamor.'

The email was addressed to an American friend living in Romania, who had hosted Andrew Solomon's visit to Bucharest. Solomon gave a talk at a venue secured at the last minute⁴ by Sasha (Ichim) and Patrick (Braila) - because Patrick was a HUGE fan, and he couldn't believe it when I told him I was friends with Solomon's host and he could even get an interview⁵:

"in this rather trying past year i have received a lot of loving support from two of the most gorgeous human beings i've ever met, brothers in transition and now my family - sasha and patrick.

sasha founded transform association about 2 years ago. their mission is to provide support for transgender persons and advocate for legal and medical measures that assist transition with full respect to human rights.

their mission is now part of my mission too. it fits in perfectly with what i have been up to in the past year. i have gathered a small group of lgbt high school students that i counsel and support as i can - their parents and sometimes teachers too. i have

⁴ https://adevarul.ro/cultura/carti/conferinta-andrew-solomon-despre-identitatea-gay-s-a-tinut-unatc-nu-bcu-era-stabilit-inceput-1_539ffe9a0d133766a8a5ee38/index.html

⁵ <http://andrewsolomon.com/coverage/video-asociatia-transform-interview/>

delivered workshops to over 50 high school teachers and 100 school counselors on gender and sexual identities, with a view to create a support network for lgbt kids in romanian highschoools. i have built a small taskforce of some 10 committed high school teachers and a couple of school counselors with whom i keep in touch periodically and exchange support and educational resources with. in october i will train another 100+ counselors to it and will begin discussions with cjrae for a nation-wide project which will hopefully make it possible for me and sasha in 2017 to go train a small lgbt-aware group of teachers and school counselors in every county. sasha and patrick breathe support for every trans person that gets in touch with them. some 150 trans persons from all over the country use transform as a platform for getting information about meds, doctors and legal procedures, as well as to help each other stay afloat during the storms and abysses of transition. their community organizing work is equipped more with love than actual skills. sasha is in the process of deciding whether he wants to go back to school to get a degree in social work, so there is a fair chance that transform's community work will soon be informed by a little technical knowledge as well. in the meantime, i chip in and help as i can. i am happy to connect them with people who can help, as was the case with cohn and jansen, an advertising agency who is doing a pro bono app for transform, to report aggressions and put them on a digital map that we can use in our advocacy campaigns.

As i am talking to all these people in different stages of their transition, it feels sometimes that i myself am transitioning - [...]. my perspective on gender is miles from what it was before i joined patrick and sasha and so many other incredible people in their transition. i am as awed and cautious in turns as alice in wonderland.” *(email excerpt copied here in the original spelling, without any capitals and some colloquialisms)*

My trans and queer family have helped me pierce through the (white, patriarchal, capitalist) debris to the core of (my) gender and sexuality. Am I ‘straight’? Am I bi? Am I ace? Are she/her the best pronouns for me? I think anyone trying to figure that out would in actuality simply be attempting to re-colonize me. If a scientific lens must be applied to the above autoethnographic snippet, I would propose this quote from Erikainen and Vincent:

As social products, our sexual/gendered self-narratives are constrained by the social resources that have been available to us, and we navigate our lives in relation to these. Collaboratively formed self-narratives [...] offer an in-depth perspective on the culturally constrained and relational construction of identities. (Erikainen and Vincent, 2018: 31)

Reading Octavia E. Butler will challenge anyone with a colonized sense of gendered and sexual self. Human-alien love between a young man who gets impregnated by an alien huge worm, polyamorous families comprising lumberjacks and university

professors alike, nourished and protected by a hybrid being who looks like an extremely young girl but is indifferent to gender and especially gender norms - these are just a few examples of things that resonated strongly with my own quest to (re)define my sense of self, the gendered and sexual aspects of which had been feeling blurry and polluted for a very long time - I just did not know why. **Reading “Bloodchild” and “Fledgling” felt as if my sense of gendered and sexual self was finally clearing up as it was beaming out of a mirror, the same one the author had beamed herself into as she was writing.**

As I read in *Bloodchild* (1995) Gan’s first person account of his arranged marriage and consummation by impregnation by the alien huge wormlike creature TGatoi, I re-visited the oft-heard tale of my mother’s arranged marriage with new understanding and empathy, instead of pity or rage: “I knew what to do, what to expect. I had been told all my life. I felt the familiar sting, narcotic, mildly pleasant. Then the blind probing of her ovipositor. The puncture was painless, easy.” (Butler, 1995: 27)

The revelation was that while for me this would be a horrific situation, for others - like my mother or Gan - it was possible to have deep feelings of love for the one they had been assigned or ‘destined’ to have as a mate. Essentially, this helped re-shape my own understanding of something that has been an intrinsic part of my own culture, but which has rarely been documented from a Roma perspective, nevermind a Roma first-person one. I understood that, while for an outsider such a situation is simply not acceptable, from an intimately empathetic insider perspective there can be negotiation and consent between the partners of such a union - even when one of them clearly is in a position of power and imposition. The two can cooperate, in true Phaedrus fashion: a lasting union, however may have been its inception, requires reason for things to work out. The outrage of hubris (acting on desire only, without judgment) is “outrage.” (Plato, 1952: 237).

I also understood, while re-examining through Gan’s eyes my mom’s experience marrying at her grandfather’s orders and subsequently deeply loving my father, that pity is not empathy, but arrogance. Every time someone like, say, Baroness Nicholson speaks for someone in my mother’s or Gan’s situation, they colonize personal identities and public awareness. Conjointly, every time someone speaks - or writes - about such an experience from an inside-situated awareness of it, they will activate empathy, not pity, and foster self-understanding and empowerment for their own and other similarly marginalized groups.

Reading *Fledgling* (2005) reflected to cathartic perfection the way I relate to the idea of ‘family’ - with an added bonus of how substantially kink, embraced naturally and free of the (self)judgmental constraints of ‘morals’ - can consolidate community, including family. Reading about a 11-year-old-looking dark-skinned acting on hypersexual instinct was a liberating autoethnographic experience that relieved me

of a sense of shame and guilt I had been carrying from that same age. Further, entering the realm of polyamorous Ina families where all partners lived in the harmony provided by the one Ina, while all human partners were free to have other romantic and sexual relationship without their relationship with their Ina and fellow-human family members to be invalidated - this reads as an answer to the prayer many of us send out there, secretly or openly, so that we may no longer have to suppress the feeling of shame and betrayal that overcomes us every time we fantasize or act upon our attraction to someone other than our primary partner/spouse.

Fledgling also read as a kind and fun 'in-your-face' defense of alterity and community based on alterity, a sort of detox from all the things that 'nobody ain't got no time for' anymore: vampirism presented as a cure, an act of giving, was a very fun critique of Christian messianism. A tired and confused humanity, on the way of self-destruct through 'science' informed by 'morality', is presented by Butler with an alternative which essentially spells: don't even defend your kinks, just as long as you're not raping anyone. Also, bear in mind that kink is the most intimate test of cooperation. If you can enjoy each other's kink, you will be able to accomplish a lot together, including finding a way to put humanity off the track to self-destruct. Racism and homophobia have a good slice of eroticization in them, and embracing the simple truth of that - as opposed to treating it like a terrible taboo - can contribute to finding our way out of alt-white or alt-non-white radicalism. I will discuss this in more detail and add more literature on kink as a tool for community, in the extended chapter on autoethnography in my doctoral project.

5. Conclusion

In proposing autoethnography as a tool for analysis in our discussion of race, gender and sexuality, our aim was to contribute to the creation of spaces for under-represented voices - Roma, queer - in academia. This article is an expression of the author's allegiance to the stream of non-Western non-white and queer scholarship which ensued in the 90's (Chawla & Atay, 2018: 4), targeted at decolonizing the academia.

This stream is consolidated now through doctoral programmes, postdoc projects and doctoral courses such as the one I attended at the University of Stavanger, Norway, in November 2021. The process and experience of decolonizing the academia, cleansing it of the constrictions of propriety upheld with ferocity by the (white male cishetero) dons of David Lodge's *Deaf Sentence* or Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, is in full swing. The voices of non-white, queer and other marginalized people is seeking and gaining increasing access to the lectern in the auditorium. As Pearce (2020) warns, we must beware of being mere numerics in a neoliberal equation that the academia is as part of as any other sector of society. This would be tantamount to self-colonization, as we have seen happen before with some of the

leading figures of Black feminism - Alice Walker⁶, for example, re-colonized herself after she obtained positions of power such as editor-in-chief of Ms Magazine. Her voice became the expression of her individualistic quest for power and validation, rather than a medium to create spaces for other Black women's voices. Her 'womanism' is an ample expression of that, as cautiously pointed out by Izgarjan and Markov (2012: 312).

As part of a doctoral project focusing on Octavia E. Butler's speculative fiction, this article offers a theoretical fundament of autoethnography as a research method. The stream of theories offered in the first three sections of this article proposes that positivist knowledge originates largely in a white male cishetero Eurocentric core, while for underrepresented groups it is of more value to look at subjective accounts, including through the senses, of the situated self. We close with the personal reflection that, while not all white male cishetero Eurocentric knowledge is irrelevant or inapplicable to my experience, what remains a priority for me and scholars from marginalized backgrounds such as non-white and/or queer, is that we create the spaces for a variety of voices to be included in academia, without having to succumb to the white-male-cishetero-Eurocentric authority first.

Autoethnography as a method of investigation brings the solid possibility of renewal and democratization, which may substantially redeem the contribution of the academe to the general well-being of society. My Stavanger experience has been an illuminating and hope-giving experience: through autoethnography, it is possible to move the academe from the island of Laputa into a realm of mundane empathy, and make it about community rather than Eurocentric cishetero elitism.

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⁶ Alice Walker (now 78, born 1944) is a writer and social activist who first made history in 1982, when she received the Pulitzer Prize, as the first African-American woman to ever be awarded this distinction. She also notoriously coined the term 'womanism' (in the 80's) as a Black alternative to 'feminism' at the intersection of race, class, and gender oppression. Unfortunately, when Walker became a very entitled Black intellectual towards the 90's, she also manifested stronger and stronger antisemitism and other problematic attitudes such as support for Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange. Walker's trajectory is sadly symptomatic of many fellow Roma women (and men) who access a position of power and then cover for and validate an unethical system for the sake of preserving their hard-obtained privilege.

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