Chapter 1: Understanding Activist Research

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Beginnings and a rationale

Ruth Heloise First (1925-1982) might be considered a luminary in various ways as will become evident in the pages of this volume. Her persona looms large in both near and distant memories of the history of political struggle in South Africa. Ruth First, perhaps as a name and identification, conjures up evolving ideas around assigned nomenclature: for example, the investigate journalist; the non-orthodox activist; the subject of apartheid brutality; the complexities of power; the meaning of truth and democracy and perhaps more importantly, the relevance of her body of writing and thought as part of further interpretation in the contemporary context. How do we make sense of First, the inspiring thinker, journalist, scholar and activist? More specifically, what has been the influence, effect and impact of her thought and activism?

In *Research and Activism: Ruth First and Activist Research,* we gather a suite of contributions to mobilise a range of interpretations that describe, analyse, interrogate, celebrate, perform and open up, what we believe to be a projective scholarship on her extraordinary body of knowledge. We explore her original making, her writing as a journalist, her role in movement building as an activist, and her practice in some of these domains to consider the material and intellectual weight of her life and work and its nuanced textures.

"Activist research", loosely defined as research connected with political and social movements and projects, has a long history in South Africa (Broodryk 2021; Choudry 2009, 2014; Gutierrez and Lipman 2016; Lewis 2012; Tendi 2008). Some scholars, and intellectuals more broadly, consider their theorising, analysis and empirical research as "activist research". There is, however, little scholarly or public engagement on "activist research" in South Africa—its meanings, character, history, institutional locations, role in society, place in universities, what distinguishes it from other kinds of research and the complications and the challenges that arise for activist scholars and intellectuals (Cantwell 2022;

Fisher 2005; Walker 2012; Wright 2019).[1] This edited collection contributes to thinking on research and activism and activist research and seeks to stimulate greater research on, and the analysis of the issue. It has its genesis in an invited presentation by Saleem Badat on Ruth First and activist research at a colloquium on *Ruth First in the North – Understanding Activist Research* held in the United Kingdom in October 2021 and organised by the Ruth First Educational Trust, Durham University and its multi-institutional, interdisciplinary Knowledge for Use project concerned with demonstrating 'how to put scientific research and common knowledge together to build more decent societies'(Durham University 2024: n.p.). First had been a respected Durham University academic during the early and mid-1970s, and the colloquium was held on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of her assassination in Maputo in 1982. The colloquium sought to celebrate First's life and work at and beyond Durham and explore 'the issues faced by activist research in relation to objectivity' (Durham University 2021) It included presentations by Gavin Williams of Oxford University on 'Ruth First and Durham', by Jonny Steinberg on 'Ruth First's Prison Diaries: Writing about Oneself' and on 'Values and Social Science Research'.

Of course, the questions of research and activism and activist research, when undertaken by university scholars, raise the issues of the purposes, functions and roles of universities in general and in South Africa in particular (Alexander 2005; Choudry 2020; Nguyen 2021; Price 2020). Neo-liberalism and its pernicious impact on knowledge and universities has resulted in "academic capitalism" (Kauppinen 2015; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Venditti and Ferone 2012)—the incorporation of universities and their core activities into key instruments of the reproduction of capitalism and class rule and commodified, corporatised universities that are less 'sanctums of education and research than businesses that aim to maximise revenues and take advantage of the competitiveness of spaces in which they operate' (Vally, as cited in James 2021: n.p.) This has implications for the idea of serving the common public good (Calhoun 2006; Fisher 2005; Pasquerella 2016) and for Neville Alexander's invocation that 'academics should be accountable, not only to their colleagues, but also to the various constituencies beyond the institutional walls' of universities (James 2021: n.p.). Those external constituencies cannot be reduced to the state and business and their needs because of their funding and "purchasing power", they must, however, extend to subaltern social classes and their needs, and those of the institutions, movements and organisations that articulate and represent their interests.

Badat (2008) has observed that prior to 1994, some universities were important sites of critical and rigorous, yet socially committed, scholarship that spanned various disciplines and fields and often connected with the concerns of workers and the rural impoverished, the national liberation and other

1 See the special issue of Globalisation, Societies and Education of September 2023 that addresses activist research.

movements as well as mass organisations, and found expression in various popular publications. Some activist scholars were both academics and members of left-wing political movements and formations and undertook knowledge production in both capacities and sometimes across those boundaries. They were denied academic posts, subjected to repression and denied media space to foster public debate. Such scholarship, whether critical or activist, was a marginal activity (Ahmed 2012; Chetty 2023; Ritzer 2006), in its extent and the number and proportion of academics involved, if not in its social impact. Today, critical and activist scholarship appear to remain marginal activities, with little strong and sustained connection with South Africa's marginalised and excluded social strata and their movements and formations. The lack of collaborative knowledge partnerships with social movements and their intellectuals (Guzmán-Valenzuela 2018; Nixon 2011; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004) that can enhance understanding of conditions, power and struggles compromises the rigour and quality of humanities and social science scholarship; it also precludes the production of knowledge that can meaningfully inform strategies and policies for substantive social transformation.

Over the years, universities have connected with extra-university institutional and other actors in various ways, usually along ideological and political lines, essentially with the state and business and economic and political elites. Connections, if they existed, with working class communities and formations and their needs, were conducted initially usually as charitable, civic and volunteer activities and thereafter, as community engagement. Community engagement as *service-learning* (Arthur and Bohlin 2005; Checkoway 1997; Olowu 2012; Vickers, Harris and McCarthy 2004) emerged to link 'two complex concepts: community action – the "service" – and efforts to learn from that action and connect what is learnt to existing knowledge – the "learning".' (Stanton 2008: 2). Service-learning connects 'universities and communities with development needs'; an opportunity for scholars and students 'to partner with communities to address development aims and goals' and to build 'democratic commitments and competences in all concerned' (Stanton 2008: 3, 2, 3). There is also the idea of universities being social responsive to their political, economic and social contexts. While they must, indeed, be responsive, it does not mean that universities are institutionally involved in community engagement, or such engagement includes activist scholarship and scholars.

There is, currently, much talk in South Africa about the "engaged university" and engaged research (Douglas 2012; Emihovich 2009; Fitzgerald, Burack and Seifer 2022a, 2022b; Hoffman 2021; Kruss 2012). It raises the question of both the synergies and differences between activist research and engaged research as well as the place of activist research in the engaged university, if the "engaged university" is not to be defined in entirely state- and capital-centric terms and reduced to expanded relations between universities and the state and business. Boyer (1996), writing about the United States

(US), locates engaged scholarship in the idea of the common public good. He argues that universities had to become 'more vigorous partner[s] in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems – and must reaffirm [their] historic commitment to ... the scholarship of engagement' as 'higher learning and the larger purposes of American society have been inextricably interlocked' (Boyer 1996: 18–19). The author observes that laws and universities connected US industrial development with university education and the preparation of graduates, that there was insistence on a spirit of 'serviceableness' and that US universities could not 'keep aloof and closet' themselves from the needs of the US and approval that some universities were 'as close to the intelligent farmer as his pig-pen or his tool-house' (Boyer 1996: 19). Post World War II, it was observed 'that universities that helped win the war could also win the peace' (Boyer 1996: 20), a view that resulted in significant funding being allocated for research. Boyer bemoaned the significant decline by the 1990s in the previous commitment to the scholarship of engagement, understood as 'creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other', enlarging human discourse, ensuring better lives for all and 'connecting the rich resources of the university' to urgent and important social problems in which universities are 'viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands but as staging grounds for action'. Importantly, this was not simply about 'just more programs but also a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission' (Boyer 1996: 32–33).

A conference held at the University of the Free State Senate in 2024, suggests that "engaged scholarship" has several features. It is 'an intentional effort to connect knowledge generated by staff and disseminated to the wider public to collaboratively address social issues', to make 'research relevant by bridging the gap between theory and practice in order to counteract the notion of scientific research and practical knowledge being mutually exclusive, with scientific knowledge occupying a privileged position', to undertake 'collaborative enquiry between academics and practitioners that leverages multiple perspectives ("epistemic diversity") to generate knowledge', break 'down established and isolated silos' (disciplinary boundaries, methods, ideas, etc.) and enable 'reflexivity in collaborative learning'(University of the Free State Senate Conference 2024: 3). The similarities as well as the differences between what has been posited as "activist research" and "engaged scholarship" should become evident.

Organisation of the volume

Research and Activism: Ruth First and Activist Research signposts Ruth First the person, the subject, her critique, her ideological, epistemic and social orientation. The volume engages First in relation to her body of work which is closely aligned to the politics of struggle during particular periods and at specific moments of history. Central in this collection are readings that feature the attributes of activist research (in respect of the latter, the underlying interests, commitments and possible effects) to augment the meaning of First as an intellectual and her role in the ethics of left-wing discourse. What surfaces in this assembly of ideas is the value of First's intellectual activism. We maintain that beyond First's life and death, it is not simply her archive of knowledge that matters, but more so, her ideas in relation to (re)interpreting the world in order to fundamentally change it.

This volume, therefore, first, extends a focused and nuanced perspective that adds a fresh, robust and new dimension to thinking about First as an intellectual activist. Second, the chapters contribute to the paucity of knowledge on activist intellectuals, without constructing predetermined and overarching frameworks. Third, the chapters broach issues of an activist thinker who in her time and in the interpretations of her work, challenged received ideas that have currency in the contemporary context. Fourth, perhaps as a delimitation, this volume does not propose a unified way of viewing First as a person and as a subject.

Rather than summarise the ensuing chapters, the authors invite readers to provide their own lenses for interpreting the volume in relation to the featured contributions. However, a brief word is necessary about the content to navigate readers. Saleem Badat's revised text for the Durham seminar constitutes the first two chapters of Part One of the current book. He begins from the premise that it is not possible to undertake value-free social science research and contests the notion that activist research is biased, not rigorous and not to be taken seriously. Isaacman (2003) motivates that activist research 'must be judged on its own merits – the design and logic of the project, the quality of the evidentiary base, the analytical power of the argument, ways in which the scholarship resolves anomalies and builds upon and opens up new areas of inquiry, while challenging the inherited orthodoxies' (Isaacman 2003: 8). In Chapter Two Badat locates First's ideological, political and epistemic orientation by examining her biography and history as relevant to her activist research and then considers the nature, ends and interests of activist research. Thereafter, in Chapter Three, Badat examines key features of First's research and the institutional conditions that shaped her knowledge creation and argues that First's research was indisputably activist research. The author points to the challenges, ambiguities, tensions and dilemmas that are involved in undertaking activist research, the contexts and situations in which they arise, considers whether they can be resolved or only managed, and analyses how First addressed the tensions and with what success. Finally, Badat draws together some thoughts on First and activist research and contemporary challenges.

An astute critical reader raised some important issues on Badat's chapters that are worth indicating. First, he observed the 'lack of specification or definitional clarity about the concept of "activist"', that there are myriad 'activities undertaken by a wide range of people who are often described self-referentially and by the media as "activists"' (Critical Reader 2024).[2] He The Critical Reader argued that the concept of "activist" needed some thinking, and that is was not enough to assume its characteristics, but necessary to specify the 'special and different attributes' (Critical Reader 2024) of activists who undertake activist research. Badat agrees that clarifying the concept "activist" is important, however, he is not convinced that it is essential for his purpose. Badat stipulates the nature of activist research—indicatively, if not exhaustively. From that, one can read that activists who undertake research—activist researchers—quintessentially connect their research with political and social movements to realise political and social change. Activist research can, indeed, have other attributes—including the 'critique of conventional research, the development of analytical categories beyond those accepted as conventional, its use of methodologies [values and principles rather than simply methods]' that frame research (Critical Reader comments 2024). "Activist research" could include these characteristics; nothing precludes that.

Second, the critical reader posed how activist researchers would be different from other researchers who critique and elaborate alternative approaches to existing society, institutional conditions, academic theorising, and disciplines and curriculum. Is activist research 'simply about radical and critical approaches to socio-political questions' and more than an 'attachment to a political vision as contained in a liberation movement or ... a socialist state?' (Critical Reader 2024) In Badat's view, it is about both and more, including engaging the social relations of knowledge production, dissemination and publishing, and the choices, goals, methodologies and methods of research. Critical is connection with movements, however, it does not preclude activism that takes the forms of everyday insurgencies of scholars who individually and collectively contest Eurocentric academic cultures, epistemologies and curricula or the actions of scholars who use their research to build new movements for social justice. Badat notes that activist research may not only be left-wing in orientation, but also right-wing and liberal. Moreover, since "activist" research is defined by its explicit connection with movements, not all research of "activist researchers" may be activist—some may be just "critical research".

Third, the critical reader comments that the challenges of activist research under capitalism are different to when it is undertaken as part of building a socialist society and by functionaries of a socialist state. He adds that activist research loses its critical orientation or is "reshaped" when it takes the visions, goals and strategies of movements and states as given. Badat concurs; this applies in both contexts of anti-capitalist struggle and building alternatives to capitalism. In Chapter Three, in the section on challenges, Badat indicates the tensions and dilemmas that arise and must be mediated as best as possible. Finally, the critical reader clarified in an exchange that one concern is the 'unacknowledged

2 Our thanks to the Critical Reader, an accomplished researcher, activist and activist researcher, within and beyond the academy, for his excellent critical reviewing of all the chapters.

limitations of "activism"' (Critical Reader 2024). He elaborated that beyond 'the whole of the[OP] aims, premises, choices, forms, methods, orientations, prejudices and outcomes of research and the relations of power in its production and dissemination' and 'descriptions specifically of the socially defined relational attributes, forms of democratic and collective account, mutuality and collaboration, collective definition of methods, aims and outcomes, and processes of research' there is 'the profoundly difficult limits of the nature of activist work – especially around its academic relationships and its NGOisation'. This 'raises questions about the nature of the power relations between intellectuals from wherever, social movements and communities' (Critical Reader 2024). The point about the limits of activist research is important. As will be noted, Asanda Benya addresses this issue in her chapter.

Part Two of the book is a reflection by a Durham collective on objectivity and research that takes on the concern that objectivity is compromised when undertaking activist research. The team is part of the Durham Centre for Humanities Engaging Science and Society project, 'Celebrating Ruth First'. Their research concerns are to document First's life and time at Durham from 1973 and 'her impact, not only on the people she came in contact with but also on the University and the wider community' and to undertake a 'philosophical study' that looks 'at how we balance objectivity with more politically participatory methods' (Durham University Centre for Humanities Engaging Science and Society 2024). They present the beginnings of a theory of objectivity that is especially geared towards social-activist research—OBFAR: objectivity for activist research. They make recourse to First's research while she was on leave from Durham University in Mozambique as an example of a self-conscious effort to ensure the objectivity of social-activist research. The argument is compelling and the chapter is compulsory reading for activist researchers in the useful guidance that it provides on the issue of "objectivity" and how it can be enhanced despite all the difficulties faced by activist research.

The Badat chapters in Part One serve as a point of departure for the chapters that feature in Part Three of the book. Authors were invited to engage and critique the Badat chapters and to pursue their own thinking and concerns related to activist research. The call to authors noted that topics could include the idea/meanings of activist research, the character of activist research, the commonalities and differences between activist research and critical research, the purposes, functions, roles and responsibilities of activist research, the roots of activist research in South Africa/Africa, the institutional locations of activist research in South Africa/Africa, activist research at universities and beyond universities, case studies of the dynamics and challenges related to activist research, generally and in specific, institutional locations.

In Chapter 5, Christine Hobden poses how Badat's view of activist research 'might be shaped differently if we began from another anti-apartheid activist who too is always described as both scholar and activist: Richard (Rick) Turner.' She observes that 'both First and Turner were deeply committed to resisting the

Apartheid regime and both viewed academic rigour and critique as necessary tools to do so effectively. Their disciplines and approaches were different yet both, in their life and work, were considered a powerful enough threat to the apartheid regime to be assassinated' For Hobden, Turner provides an approach to utopian thinking that in addition to practical involvement in social change efforts, can shape individual consciousness and 'the scope and orientation of … projects of social change'.

In her chapter, *'Activist research in the age of climate change'* (Chapter 6), Janet Cherry reflects on Badat's chapters and draws 'lessons both from Ruth First's scholarship and from her lived experience as an activist-scholar in Mozambique'. Convinced that a regional strategy is imperative for sustainable development as part of a transition from fossil fuel, she links activist research and the role of universities in Southern Africa to developing such a strategy. The lessons have implications 'for the practice of research, bridging the gap between grassroots empirical research and state policy formulation and implementation' and suggest 'directions for the content of such research'. Chery advocates for 'cooperative and transformative approaches to the building of a sustainable economy'. Her exploration identifies four types of activist scholarship. One is 'critical scholarship of the left, which becomes activist scholarship when it is in direct support of popular movements.' A second type is 'critical scholarship in support of the state, in development of policy; this becomes activist scholarship when it reflects the voice of the "grassroots" in asserting a progressive policy agenda'. A third type of activist research 'is participatory research at the grassroots, which empowers the participants, and which can inform both policy and/or popular movements.' The final type 'is participatory action research, which intervenes to challenge power relations and empower the participants to explore alternatives.' Cherry does not consider the various types as 'distinct or mutually exclusive' and acknowledges that there are overlaps between some of the types. However, for Cherry, the typology usefully indicates that the most oppressed in society are best served by activist scholarship that has the greatest transformative potential.

Dale McKinley observes in Chapter 7, that 'a distinction needs to be made between the kind of activist research conducted by activist-academics in the academy and that undertaken by activist-intellectuals who are not just outside the academy but who are active members of the organisations, movements, networks and coalitions that are the "target" of the research'. McKinley notes that writing by academics on activist research (somewhat) tends to focus on issues that arise for academics and this volume could in part, be an example of that. In Choudry's (2013: 130) terms, such literature is 'more concerned with the implications of such work on individuals', university careers and academic disciplines, and its scholarly credibility, than on the considerable research and intellectual work generated from within activist/community organisations on which many movements rely for independent analysis of concerns relevant to them'. Notwithstanding the commitment of academics to support movements, the research and political agenda 'is necessarily moulded and bounded by where the activist researcher is located and to/for whom, their work is directed'. McKinley presents activist research that is neither undertaken by academics nor by researchers removed from the movements and struggles that are the objects of their research, but by activist-intellectuals who are members of movements. The author explains why these distinctions are relevant.

Asanda Benya's Chapter 8 critically reflects on her personal experience, as a feminist activist scholar committed to socialism, of the complexities of activist research, undertaken in Marikana with a women's organisation, Sikhala Sonke, for over a decade. Concomitantly, Benya reflects on her work as it connects with her university teaching and how her position is viewed within the academy. Her chapter documents the challenges, contradictions, tensions and negotiations involved in activist research and that have to be mediated by feminist activist scholars to sustain their work and achieve the political outcomes that are sought. For Benya, if academics and intellectuals seek to participate in research and political struggles for social change, 'critical sensemaking and openness to our collective failures are imperative'. Her writing speaks to the dynamic of the relational issues and how that affects questions of accountability and power and importantly, the limits of scholarly activism. Harnessing conceptually Black feminist thought and social movement studies, Benya adds to the literature on scholar-activism. Given the challenges of activist research, Benya has become modest about the claims that she makes about her work, and acknowledges 'that there is a distance that, even as a committed activist scholar, [she] cannot bridge'. For Benya, the 'class dynamics between activist scholars and community activists cannot be erased or wished away'; they must be 'creatively and productively engaged'. It means that beyond 'good political intentions', scholars must continuously reflect on their purposes, power, personal responsibilities and actions and the benefits that may derive from their involvement critically to ensure that their involvement does not reproduce the existing social relations and inequities or generate new fissures.

In Chapter 9, Ntando Sindane addresses an important issue, in the aftermath of the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements, the relation between law, activist lawyers and the "decolonial turn". The author outlines the meaning of the "decolonial turn" and its implications for the practice of law and its pedagogy. He also sketches the core characteristics that activist lawyers must possess if they are to transform legal practice and education that is predicated on colonial knowing, being and thinking.

In Chapter 10, June Bam focuses on the San and Khoi community as well as University of Cape Town (UCT) dialogues between 2017 and 2022 that raised questions about its institutional transformation which resulted in the establishment of the San and Khoi Research Centre in 2020. Bam reflects on the foundational research and work undertaken as part of a mutually designed knowledge and research partnership with Khoi-San communities and the challenges that arose for activist scholars at UCT's Centre for African Studies. Bam notes that activist research has additional challenges 'if it remains at the margins of the system of higher education due to being '"soft"-funded' and 'when it remains under-theorised (hence invisibilised within contemporary mainstream discourse)'. Drawing on Freire and Macedo (1987), and the idea of naming the world as part of changing the world, Bam urges that 'we should speak *with* the people, not *to* them'; that 'theory is arrived at through practice, rather than inserted and validated in scholarship in the dated 'armchair intellectual way' of theorising without real engagements in social movements'. She calls for a 'a rethinking and systemic repositioning of scholarship activism in higher education in a democratically young and still deeply fractured South Africa'.

In Chapter 11, Petro du Preez begins by noting the Israeli genocide in Palestine, aided by western democracies, and the 'disbelief, frustration and helplessness [that] crept in'. Du Preez observes that her becoming a 'scholar/activist was re/configured through [her] ongoing intra-actions with posthumanism' and that her 'understanding of activism, [was] also re/configured in line' with the thinking of Rosi Braidotti. Braidotti writes that 'in defining activism as the process of becoming-political, Deleuze speaks of the European left of the 1960s and 1970s in terms of a specific sensibility, which he connects to a creative imaginary about possible futures' (Braidotti 2011: 268). Du Preez understands activism as the process of becoming-political, a 'creative and critical' process and describes her 'becoming-political through various creative and critical engagements'. For Du Preez, the chapter can 'be seen as introducing another way of understanding activism as radical self-styling that requires critique and creativity, which is different from dominant understandings of activism as outwardly mobilising social movements and campaigns. The author begins by discussing the posthuman condition, posthuman theorising and argues for methodological renewal in scholar/activism within this condition. She then explains agential realism as a post-humanist approach, unpacking the meaning of an 'agential cut' and 'agency' to queer scholar/activism. Du Preez proceeds to discuss scholar/activist entanglements by engaging with some of her activities related to becoming scholar/activist. This allows her to cut together/apart scholar/activist-abilities as it relates to response-abilities, sense-abilities, and in/ex/press-ability. Finally, Du Preez considers a neologism, 'intr/activism', and suggests that a scholar/activist may wish 'to think along with and through in their becoming.'

In Chapter 12, Ingrid Bamberg discusses using activist research to shift perceptions of institutional value and challenge social hierarchies and power structures at the KwaZulu-Natal Society of the Arts (KZNSA), a community-based non-government organisation in Durban, South Africa that seeks to promote the visual arts and support emerging artists. She argues that this is critical due to declining local support for the arts. She observes that soon after 1994 there were discourses of transformation and inclusion, but that a major problem remains— 'the normalisation of European culture and European models for art organisations and educational institutions'. Despite demands, as part of the 'decolonial turn', to decolonise institutions and their traditional practices, there is 'no clear evidence of the KZNSA, established in 1906, interrogating its legacy as a historically White organisation positioned in the formerly White suburb of Glenwood' and the subtle exclusion of Black South Africans in formerly White spaces continues. Bamberg's concern is that despite the professed commitment to equity and redress, the KZNSA has failed to engage substantively with its colonial legacy.

She draws attention to the appearance of graffiti art on the KZNSA exterior wall to question its 'belief in neutrality' and contend that its lack of an ideological or political position affects its orientation, work and impact. For them, Black South Africans experience 'covert forms of symbolic violence' that post-1994 are 'rooted in subtle mechanisms of coloniality of power'. Considering herself an 'activist researcher, their target is 'the epistemic violence caused by persisting colonial hierarchies in knowledge production'. The author is 'committed to unpacking the complexities of power structures' and 'to advance the interests and ideas' of those who are marginalised by cultural institutions (Piven 2010: 808). She shows how activist research can result in 'processes of meaning making and collaborative knowledge production' that destabilise social hierarchies. The research by this author aims to make power visible and help 'dismantle power structures', and she seeks to use her 'expertise to foster dialogue, share knowledge, and create inclusive narratives'. Bamberg considers resistance to change by those previously hegemonic and the position of neutrality as perpetuating epistemic violence as key barriers to creating a transformed institution.

Conclusion

This volume is invested in recuperating, recovering and perhaps rediscovering Ruth First, over four decades since her passing. By bringing together original contributions on the creative tension of her assigned identities, we seek to offer new thinking about First the person, the subject and indeed, as an object of knowledge, to expand and complicate our understanding of her various legacies (whether intellectual, journalism or activism) and hope to stimulate renewed critical reflection about her life and work. We invite readers to engage the ideas that follow critically and to help to advance thought that can inform the practices necessary for creating the egalitarian future that First lived and died for.

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