



An Invitation to Know

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Abstract: A critical reflection on an invitation to explore epistemology as a first year PhD Student who happens to be a Black woman.

An Invitation to Know

The Academy is interested in my thoughts, my knowing.
Should I be honored? Should I accept? Should I assume that what I know and
how I come to know what I know will be welcomed?

The validity of what I know might be brought into question and I shudder.
Is there something to hide? Are there some things that must be hidden?
Am I being asked to justify what I know and share my knowing or maybe it's
an invitation to get to know? Where do I begin?

How does one define one's knowledge within the confines of academia?

How does one define oneself in a place that is known to define
what knowledge is acceptable?

...a place where justifications are tested and supported by scholarly articles
and peer review?

How does one compare their knowing in community, at home, at work, at church,
in good company, through travel, through relationships, through fellowship,
through service, through marriage, through teaching, through being a student,
by being an entrepreneur, by being an employee, by being a daughter,
by being a godmother, by being a friend, by being a sister, by being a wife,
by being a leader, by being a woman, by being Black, by BEING?

Maybe there is no test, no justification, maybe I will be welcomed after,
maybe it's just that,
an invitation to know.

Author Biography

Utamika is currently a research project coordinator for the Social Innovation and Research Group (SIRG) and a full-time social work PhD student at Wilfrid Laurier University. In various spaces from Guyana to Canada, she has spent the past twenty years working as a project manager, registered social worker, community consultant and educator with a passion for community research and development, capacity building with not-for-profits, and teaching at post-secondary institutions. Utamika has managed to break barriers by implementing a culture of advocacy for equity deserving groups while demonstrating a servant and transformational leadership approach in the workplace, community and classroom.