#### Blackness and identity should not be viewed as static events rather they should be embraced as a constant process of becoming.

Okwedadi ‘9[2009, Frank, “The Commodification of Blackness”, http://sosophrank.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/the-commodification-of-blackness/]

WHAT IS BLACKNESS? In cultural terms the idea of ‘blackness’ carries with it a lot of power and socio-cultural significance. It has been used to reflect the black cultural heritage in multiple ways, yet one might find that there is no quick, all-encompassing definition for the meaning of the words ‘black’ or ‘blackness’. What does it mean to be black? Looking into this question it becomes rapidly clear that stereotypical norms and ideas of being black do not comprehensively reflect the realities existent in the lives of all people with black cultural heritage. Considering the argument on the authentic basis for measuring blackness, correspondent Latoya Peterson said: “Later, as I let go of society’s collective opinion about what it means to be black, I began to think being black only meant having a solid grasp of history and collective responsibility to the community. While I like that answer the most, it is not entirely true – there are many blacks who are wilfully ignorant of their history, or devoid of a sense of collective responsibility. In the eyes of society, that does not make them any less black. So scratch that theory (Peterson 2007).” What makes blackness so elusive to define is that, it implies that there is a specific black existential experience that can be used as a reference. The ethnic societies that constitute the global black community vary in socio-cultural habits and experiences to the extent of incongruity. The individual form Haiti encountering the Zulu descendant from Africa, with a black British citizen in Diaspora thrown into their midst will only reflect the true extent of difference that exists in the cultural heritage of varying societies that make up the global black community. At certain instances, in an attempt to give this abstract notion of blackness form, it is presented with certain hints of rigidity: In order to be black, you must be X, say Y, and look like Z. Other times, the concept becomes so abstract that we lose focus, unsure of what to call the “global negro community”(The Coup Magazine 2007), because there is the lack of a standard measuring rod for authenticity. How should blackness be measured? Will the standard be appearance, history, a shared past of oppression, or a bond geared towards a better future? Is it tight curls and locks or a style of dress? “Or do we just Make sure our Melanin Quotient (MQ) stays in the high 90s (The Coup Magazine 2007).” Black culture (blackness) has been distorted and misrepresented as part of a commodification process (Randall 2008). The target to strive towards for true authenticity continually morphs from one idea to another, making it some worth liminal. The fact is, ‘black’ has never been just there either. It has always been an unstable identity, physically, culturally and politically. It too, is a narrative, story and a history. Something constructed, told spoken not simply found. Black is an identity which had to be learnt and could only be learnt in a certain moment (Hall 1993: 136), the moment of cross-racial encounter. “Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact…we should think, instead of identity as a ‘production,’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within (not outside) representation (Hall 1996: 210).”