

Power Dynamics

Black Authors, White Authors

- *When Black authors critique “whiteness” or “white culture,” it is often framed as social analysis or anti-racism work.*
- *When White authors critique “Black culture,” it is often treated as punching down, racially insensitive, or suspect.*

Why?

*A common explanation is **power dynamics**. In many academic and activist frameworks, criticism aimed at a historically dominant group is considered “speaking up,” while criticism aimed at a historically marginalized group is considered “speaking down.”*

But this raises an important question:

*Who holds power in the specific conversation taking place?
Institutional power? **Cultural power? Social power? Moral authority?***

Power is not always static, and it is not always one-directional.

*If dialogue is truly the goal, then moral asymmetry becomes conversational **inequality**.
And inequality undermines mutual trust.*

Emotional Core

All conversations are either:

A healthy partnership — or they are not.

Cowdrey Writes Her Truth:

- *I do not want to be reduced to a category.*
- *I do not want to be “tackled” as a representative of a group.*
- *I do not want to be lectured. I appreciate dialogue, not scolding.*
 - ***I want equal conversational rules.***

Accountability does not require shaming or “calling out” others.

Communication does not require humiliation, abuse, or cruelty.

Dialogue never requires hostility, hatred, or racial targeting.

We can:

- *Invite accountability without abusive entitlement, hate, or humiliation.*
 - *Apply conversational standards evenly.*

- *Replace collective scolding with shared responsibility.*
- *Recognize that racism is not the same as self-safety or self-protection.*
 - *Recognize that we are all self-protective.*
- *Understand that healing means learning how to communicate without harming others.*

“Who has the power and privilege in this case?” — the honest answer is:

It was free, but it wasn't felt.