

https://dspace.org/

The Queen Is Dead Black Twitters Global Response to Queen Elizabeths Death

Kealeboga Aiseng

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/47508
WOS

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

journalism and media

MDPI

Article

"The Queen Is Dead": Black Twitter's Global Response to Queen Elizabeth's Death

Kealeboga Aiseng

Department of Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2017, South Africa; kealeboga.aiseng@wits.ac.za

Abstract: On 8 September 2022, Queen Elizabeth II, the United Kingdom's longest-serving monarch, died at Balmoral, aged 96. She had reigned for 70 years. The death of Queen Elizabeth II was met with mixed reactions worldwide. On the one hand, some mourners wanted to pay their last respects to the longest-ruling monarch in the world. On the other hand, disgruntled people wanted to remember and narrate the Queen's legacy, including her role in British colonialism. The debates opened up conversations, questioning the British Royal Family's relevance in today's world, particularly in light of its largely unrevised colonial history. On X, debates were rife and played out much more fiercely. In this paper, the author undertakes a digital ethnography analysis of how Black Twitter worldwide received and responded to the death of Queen Elizabeth. The study found that Black Twitter reacted to the Queen's death by (1) resisting respectability politics; (2) resisting the erasure of Black history in Britain and beyond; (3) educating Black people about their history. The study argues that Black Twitter is an essential digital space for people worldwide to mobilize and form racial identity politics.

Keywords: Queen Elizabeth; black twitter; social media; Africa; black; X; digital ethnography

check for updates

Academic Editors: Anthea Garman and Carlos de las Heras-Pedrosa

Received: 11 February 2025
Revised: 10 April 2025
Accepted: 6 May 2025
Published: 13 May 2025

Citation: Aiseng, K. (2025). "The Queen Is Dead": Black Twitter's Global Response to Queen Elizabeth's Death. *Journalism and Media*, *6*(2), 71. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6020071

Copyright: © 2025 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

In the digital age, social media platforms have become arenas for rapid information dissemination and global conversation. Within these digital landscapes, distinct subcultures and communities have emerged, each presenting a unique perspective on events of global significance. Among these, Black Twitter is a dynamic and influential enclave within the larger community, known for its cohesive, expressive, and critical responses to significant world events.

This study aims to scrutinize the nuanced, diverse, and paradoxical responses within Black Twitter to the demise of Queen Elizabeth II. The study unfolds in the context of Black Twitter's role as a vibrant, diverse, and critical space for discourse (Brock, 2020). The study seeks to uncover the complexities of the platform's multifaceted expressions, encapsulating emotions ranging from grief and respect to critique. Moreover, it examines the global nature of these responses, considering the platform's transcultural reach and the amalgamation of voices from various geographical and cultural backgrounds.

On 8 September 2022, Queen Elizabeth II, the United Kingdom's longest-serving monarch, died at Balmoral, aged 96. She had reigned for 70 years. The Queen's death was the first time in history that a British monarch had died in the era of social media. Accordingly, the Queen's death was hugely unprecedented, especially in terms of social media. Many "analysts" worldwide came forward and analyzed the Queen's death using hashtags, tweets, and TikTok videos.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II was met with mixed reactions worldwide. On the one hand, some mourners wanted to pay their last respects to the longest-ruling monarch in the world. On the other hand, disgruntled people wanted to remember and narrate the Queen's legacy, including her role in British colonialism. The mixed response reflects a complex assessment of her impact, acknowledging her historical significance while prompting critical reflections on the colonial era. The dichotomy in reactions underscores the multifaceted nature of Queen Elizabeth II's legacy, where admiration and criticism coexist, reflecting diverse perspectives on monarchy and colonial history. In this paper, the author undertakes a digital ethnography analysis of how Black Twitter worldwide received and responded to the death of the Queen of the United Kingdom (UK).

Across the world, political, cultural, and religious leaders mourned the death of the Queen. World leaders released statements sending support and condolences to the British people and Royal Family. Leaders such as United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, United States President Joe Biden, Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the global leaders who sent condolences for the death of the Queen. African leaders such as the Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and Kenyan President William Ruto also paid tribute to the Queen's death.

However, social media platforms worldwide were divided on whether criticizing the monarchy at that time was in the world's best interests. But the debates opened up conversations, questioning the British Royal Family's relevance in today's world, particularly in light of its largely unrevised colonial history. On TikTok, people made videos, memes, and GIFs criticizing the monarchy's colonial history and videos and dances celebrating the Queen's death. On X, the debates were rife and played out much more fiercely. This is partly because X has long functioned as a central arena for political discourse and public commentary. Unlike platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, which prioritize entertainment and visual content, X has historically been home to official political accounts, real-time news commentary, and activist mobilization (Aiseng, 2024). As a result, it has become particularly associated with immediacy, virality, and debate-driven engagement—characteristics that amplify contentious discussions such as those surrounding colonial memory.

In the hours after the death of Queen Elizabeth II was announced, X (formerly Twitter) became a contentious space, with debates forming around the meaning of the death of the Queen in the world, especially for the former British colonies. While many expressed their condolences, others used the Queen's death to reflect on the history of colonization and the role of the British monarchy in this oppression. For instance, just hours after the announcement of the Queen's death, X feeds across India exploded with angry demands for the repatriation of the Kohinoor diamond, which has become a symbol of Britain's often bloody history of colonial conquest and rule (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Inevitably, the death of Queen Elizabeth II reopened the topic of colonialism across former British colonies and beyond, with many people highlighting their indifference, others resorting to comedy, and many pointing out the Queen's connection to colonialism across the Caribbean and Africa.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II certainly reignited a sensitive debate about the colonial past, especially in English-speaking Africa, particularly regarding the Queen's role as head of state during British rule. Brown (2022) highlighted that the legacy of Queen Elizabeth was complicated; it was just filled with enough ambiguity, action, and inaction that it might be easy to understand why people of color might view her differently from everyone else. The *Arab News* (2022) noted that the death of Queen Elizabeth II also raised calls for a re-examination of the death and deprivation inflicted by Britain's colonial rule in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Griffith (2022) states that the death of Queen Elizabeth revived

criticism of her legacy as a symbol of the British colonial empire. This institution enriched itself through violence, theft, and oppression.

In Ireland, they remember that about 3600 people were killed and more than 30,000 wounded from 1969 until 1998 in a fight against British rule in the northern province of Ireland (*Al Jazeera*, 2022). In Yemen, many people remember the British colonial rule as a time of oppression that entrenched some of the problems plaguing the country (*Arab News*, 2022).

Busari (2022) reported that many young Africans, instead of mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth II, shared images and stories of their elders, who endured a difficult period of British colonial history during the Queen's long reign. Kenyans remembered that the country suffered the worst atrocities under British rule with the Mau Mau uprising, which started in 1952—the year Queen Elizabeth took the throne (Busari, 2022). During these uprisings, the British colonial administration tortured, castrated, and raped in detainment camps as many as 150,000 Kenyans.

Indeed, Queen Elizabeth's legacy is complex, with a blend of action and inaction that create distinct perceptions, particularly among Black people. Her demise reignited discussions urging a re-examination of the ramifications of British colonial rule in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. The Queen's passing rekindled criticisms regarding her symbolic association with the exploitative and oppressive legacy of the British colonial empire.

Accordingly, these discussions beg the question of why Queen Elizabeth's death was treated differently from other deaths. While it is often assumed that death should bring about a sense of reverence, this is not a universal norm—particularly when the deceased are public figures with contentious legacies. Throughout history, the deaths of political leaders and celebrities have sparked polarized public responses. From the defacing of Jimmy Savile's commemorative plaque following his exposure as a serial abuser, to the graffiti on Charles Darwin's grave left by climate activists, and the protests surrounding the funerals of leaders like Margaret Thatcher or the outpouring of grief after Princess Diana's death, it is evident that death does not necessarily shield the deceased from critique. In such cases, mourning becomes a contested political act. Public figures are mourned, satirized, or rejected depending on the communities they impacted and how their legacies are understood. In this regard, Black Twitter's response to Queen Elizabeth II's death reflects broader global patterns of how public deaths generate both emotional and political reactions—especially when these deaths touch on unresolved historical wounds.

Queen Elizabeth II's passing received extensive global media coverage and public mourning. While individuals with criminal backgrounds may receive discreet burials, the Queen's demise was a public event, sparking variant sentiments. The divergence from the norm about how death is treated arises from her role as a symbol of continuity in British history and the monarchy's enduring prestige. This divergence also emphasizes the unique dynamics surrounding the death of a long-reigning monarch, intertwining historical reverence, institutional significance, and public fascination with the British Royal Family.

In exploring Black Twitter's response to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, this article sheds light on the complicated interaction of digital culture, global events, and the diversity of human agency, ultimately unveiling a rich tapestry of reactions amidst a significant historical moment.

2. Black Twitter

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized the complexity and influence of Black Twitter as a site of digital resistance, counterpublic formation, and cultural production (S. J. Jackson et al., 2020; Brock, 2020; Steele, 2021; Aiseng, 2024). Building on early insights from Florini (2014) and Everett (2007), newer work explores how Black users construct and contest racial identities through networked practices, often deploying humor, critique,

and embodied language to challenge systemic inequalities (Childs, 2022; Z. Taylor, 2022; Aiseng, 2024; Z. A. Taylor & Abidin, 2024).

This paper situates itself within this growing body of digital Black studies while contributing a distinctive global perspective. Much of the existing Black Twitter literature focuses on U.S. contexts—particularly around movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #OscarsSoWhite—whereas this study examines transnational responses to the British monarchy from Black users and their diasporas, expanding the geographic and thematic scope of Black digital engagement.

These arguments reveal a scholarly need to study Black people's active and positive participation in online spaces. In recent years, there has been an increase in Black people actively participating in online spaces, including social media platforms, online forums, and blogs (Kvasny & Hales, 2010; Daniels, 2013; Toure-Tillery et al., 2022). The rise of social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter has also highlighted the significance of amplifying the voices of Black people and creating spaces where they can share their experiences, perspectives, and ideas. This imperative arises from historical marginalization and systematic inequalities, emphasizing the significance of fostering inclusive spaces that empower Black individuals. Through such amplification, social movements (Akpojivi, 2023), such as Black Lives Matter, challenge entrenched biases, contribute to dismantling systematic racism, and cultivate a richer societal dialogue that encompasses the diverse narratives and insights of the Black community. The current study pays attention to these issues by focusing on Black Twitter.

The concept of Black Twitter denotes the politics of race in a virtual space, X. Black Twitter describes a specific online community of Black users on the social media platform X. It is a virtual space where people of African descent can express themselves, share their experiences, and discuss issues relevant to the Black community. Florini (2014) states that Black Twitter's trending topics feature issues in which Black users are the majority and directly associate with Black cultures. This is a networking site where Black people connect and engage with others with similar concerns, experiences, tastes, and cultural practices (Florini, 2014).

The idea of "Black" in Black Twitter is political and historical. Gray (2005, p. 143) argues that "Blackness [is] a cultural sign that still carries the significant political and historical meaning". Nakamura (2008) and Florini (2014) corroborate this and explain that, in a social media context, performing race constitutes an essential mode of resistance to marginalization and erasure. By performing race on social media, individuals can challenge dominant narratives and create a space for their voices to be heard (Ryan et al., 2019). Therefore, the active participation of Black people on Black Twitter is a performative act for Black people to be heard and seen; it is an act of resistance to the marginalization and erasure of their race due to imperial oppression and colonialism. Being Black in Black Twitter is a signifying practice against imperialism. Black Twitter functions as a marker for Black racial identity.

Black Twitter gained prominence in the early 2010s, particularly after the shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2012 (Wheeler, 2019). Black Twitter users used the platform to organize protests, raise awareness about social issues affecting the Black community, and hold public figures and institutions accountable for their actions. Then, the idea of Black Twitter became a virtual community of X users engaged in real-time discourses primarily related to Black American culture and politics (Hill, 2018). Hill (2018) argues that people have used Black Twitter as a digital counterpublic that enabled critical pedagogy, political organizing, and symbolic and material resistance to anti-Black state violence within the United States. They have also used it to reorganize relations of surveillance, reject rigid respectability politics, and contest the erasure of marginalized groups within the Black community.

Brock (2012, p. 533) acknowledged that "Black Twitter does not represent the entirety of Black online presence". The platform affords "an opportunity to interrogate Blacktags as racialized digital objects about the technocultural assemblages they are produced in" (Sharma, 2013, p. 48). Therefore, Black Twitter aims to build a sense of group solidarity; it offers a space in which Black users can articulate and negotiate the meanings of Blackness, particularly through the expressive practices and cultural references embedded in their posts.

While Black Twitter originated as a predominantly African American digital formation, it has evolved into a more complex and transnational space. Scholars such as Sharma (2013) and Brock (2020) highlight that the term initially referred to a virtual community of users engaging in real-time discourse around Black American culture and politics. However, in the years since, the concept has expanded—both in the academic literature and in popular understanding—to encompass the broader network of Black users on X across diasporic and national contexts. In this paper, I use the term Black Twitter as a heuristic to trace discursive patterns and cultural production by Black users globally, while acknowledging that this broader usage risks conflating geographically and culturally distinct publics. To address this, I distinguish between Black Twitter as an established African American digital counterpublic and a broader global Black digital public made up of regionally specific users engaging with shared themes of race, empire, and resistance. This framing allows me to examine how users from the UK, South Africa, and elsewhere engage in similar rhetorical and aesthetic practices while contributing to contextually unique conversations around Queen Elizabeth II's death and colonial memory.

Black Twitter should be understood within the digital counterpublic literature. It embodies the form and function of a digital counterpublic. Graham and Smith (2016) corroborate this, and argue that Black Twitter has the role of a digital counterpublic as a training ground for agitational activities. Papacharissi (2009) argues that the growth of the internet has catalyzed a new round of discussions about public participation. The internet—especially through the emergence of dialogue-oriented social media platforms such as X—has enabled more interactive, immediate, and horizontal forms of communication, which in turn support more deliberative democracy (Benkler, 2007; Aiseng, 2024).

While Black Twitter functions as a paradigmatic digital counterpublic, it does not exist in isolation. The circulation of the #BlackTwitter hashtag by users outside the Black community—including Irish and South Asian users—suggests the presence of overlapping or adjacent counterpublics that engage with similar logics of resistance, irreverence, and anti-respectability (Pena et al., 2025). These users mobilize the hashtag not to appropriate identity, but to align themselves with its discursive ethos: subverting dominant narratives around mourning, imperial legacy, and public decorum. As Fraser (1990) notes, counterpublics do not necessarily operate in isolation but can interact, overlap, and amplify one another. In this case, the deployment of the #BlackTwitter hashtag becomes a node through which multiple counterpublics converge, especially as Irish and Scottish users' critiques of the monarchy (evident in football chants and digital posts alike) parallel Black users' digital satire and mourning refusal. This layered convergence foregrounds the global nature of imperial critique and highlights how counterpublics can become solidaristic spaces of shared resistance, even across racial or national boundaries.

It is important to note that this study analyzes Black Twitter prior to the October 2022 acquisition of X by Elon Musk. This event, which led to widespread restructuring, content moderation changes, and the platform's rebranding to "X", has had profound implications for Black Twitter as a counterpublic. Many scholars and journalists have noted a decline in Black engagement on the platform following the takeover, raising questions about the sustainability of the digital counterpublics once fostered there (Farzan, 2022; Walcott, 2024).

While this article focuses on Black Twitter as it operated at the time of Queen Elizabeth II's death in September 2022, it acknowledges that the platform has since undergone significant transformations that warrant further research.

3. Social Media and Digital Counterpublics

The advent of internet-based interactive platforms, such as X, Facebook, and YouTube, has fundamentally transformed global communication dynamics. Enabling the swift, widespread dissemination of information, these platforms empower individuals to engage in political discourse and catalyze protests and movements with unprecedented speed and effectiveness. The democratization of communication through these mediums fosters a participatory global dialogue, challenging traditional power structures.

Digital counterpublics are rooted in Fraser's (1990) conception of the "subaltern counterpublic". Frazer drew her work from Habermas's (1962) idea of the "public sphere", which mainly focused on public spaces such as coffee houses or literary societies. Habermas (1962) argued that citizens would gather in these spaces to discuss issues that concerned them publicly. However, Fraser (1990) argued that Habermas' idea of a public sphere excluded various groups that have been historically marginalized (women, the working class, and Black people). These people hardly had a voice in matters concerning the country.

In response to Habermas, scholars have focused on the ways that marginalized groups have always formed their subaltern counterpublics (Hill, 2018) to "develop oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p. 123). These spaces allow for free speech among Black barbershops and churches in order to express critical racial and political discourses outside the gaze of the white mainstream (Harris-Lacewell, 2004). S. Jackson and Welles (2015) postulate that these spaces challenge existing power structures; they are involved in the production of 'counterpower' (Castells, 2012; S. Jackson & Welles, 2015).

These spaces also allowed cassette tape technology in Egypt to disseminate moral and political narratives through the sermon genre, enabling the teachings of an Islamic counterpublic that challenged modernist understandings of politics and religion (Hirschkind, 2009). Hill (2011) also observed that Black bookstores operate as literary counterpublics that enable community participants to reimagine the role, purpose, and function of education, schooling, and literary practice. Hill (2018) explains that these spaces spotlight the complex and sometimes contradictory political and ideological projects produced within particular counterpublic areas.

The notion of counterpublics unearths biases in mainstream publics due to social inequalities or power struggles and the countering of these alternative discursive practices that critique and challenge dominant public discourses and sociocultural norms (Downey & Fenton, 2003). The key proponents of counterpublics include civil society, non-government organizations (NGOs), social movements, opposition parties, and individuals. These characters are considered essential in public discourses because of their distance from formal decision-making (Ferree et al., 2002) and their potential to bring the marginalized groups and viewpoints to the attention of the wider public and influence dominant perspectives (Downey & Fenton, 2003).

Counterpublic discourses aim to deconstruct dominant or mainstream discourses and strengthen collective identity among participants (Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015). And there is a plethora of research that assesses the potential of various communication platforms for the deliberative or democratic functions of counterpublics, such as participatory online journalism (Kaiser, 2017; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015), social media (Choi & Cho, 2017; Piela, 2017), user-generated video platforms (Milliken et al., 2008), and alternative blogospheres (Riegert & Ramsay, 2013).

Many subaltern counterpublics have transformed into virtual, online, and other digitally networked spaces, forming digital counterpublics. These rapid changes are due to the ongoing expansion of digital technologies. They are also linked to growing levels of access to smartphones (Hill, 2018). Pew (cited in Hill, 2018) explains that the growing access to and use of smartphones has strongly impacted Black people, for whom smartphones are disproportionately the only means of home internet access. But these transformations to digital counterpublics are also a result of expedited and expanded processes of globalization (Hill, 2018), which have enabled the distribution of technologies around the world (Appadurai, 1990). The transformations are also due to the overdetermining impact of neoliberal capitalism (Hill, 2018). Because of neoliberal policies that lead to deregulations, privatizations, and free-trade markets, old counterpublic spaces such as bookstores, restaurants, and coffee houses are being radically reconstituted. They are being replaced by big box retailers like Walmart and online sites like Amazon.com (Hill, 2018). These transformations have led to radical shifts in how ideas of community and publicity are constructed within our collective imaginations. They have created indispensable and unavoidable sites of 21st-century community. Hill (2018) further argues that, within these spaces, we are forced to reimagine the roles of spatiality and materiality in the constitution of the community, reassess the possible sites for subaltern politics, and reconsider the position of digital epistemologies in everyday discourse and public pedagogy.

Wonneberger et al. (2021) explain that social media tools provide opportunities for online activism and the emergence of digital counterpublics. There are narrative strategies aiming at deconstructing dominant discourses on social media platforms. Accordingly, "hashtag activism" has been used to describe the networks of social media messages that use a common hashtagged term with a social claim (Yang, 2016). Using hashtags, for minorities or activist groups, is a strategy for creating and propagating counterpublics or alternative public spheres (Wonneberger et al., 2021).

Choi and Cho (2017) and Piela (2017) assert that scholarly attention has been paid to the issue of how digital counterpublics emerge and how they are positioned as distinct communicative spaces within the broader structures of the public sphere or as separate from dominant media discourse. Because digital counterpublics are often created by marginalized groups or individuals excluded from or not represented by mainstream public discourse, they become alternative online spaces that emerge in response to dominant public discourse and power structures. They are spaces for marginalized voices to express themselves and connect with others who share their experiences and perspectives. And they often challenge dominant narratives and provide a platform for resistance, critique, and activism.

A crucial potential of social media is its ability to engage the larger public, connect diverse elite and non-elite actor groups, and coordinate action (Bennett cited in Wonneberger et al., 2021). Central to this is its openness—reflected by the wealth of information, diversity of viewpoints, and accessibility—due to the absence of gate-keeping mechanisms and the potential empowerment of peripheral groups (Schafer, 2015).

These digital platforms, therefore, provide a space for resistance, solidarity and community-building. Understanding them as digital counterpublics is key to grasping how the voices and narratives I analyze later in the paper challenge dominant media representations and reimagine collective identity and political agency. This framing informs my reading of the strategies used by content creators and audiences to negotiate visibility, power, and belonging in the digital media landscape.

4. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How did Black Twitter users respond to the news of Queen Elizabeth's death, and what were the most common themes and sentiments expressed?
2. What role did Black Twitter play in shaping the public discourse around Queen Elizabeth's legacy?
3. To what extent did the global reach of Black Twitter contribute to a broader conversation about the role of the British monarchy in contemporary society, and what implications might this have for future discussions of race, power, and representation?

5. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative digital ethnographic approach to investigate the cultural politics of Black Twitter following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Specifically, I focused on the discursive practices, hashtags, memes, and affective responses that circulated during this period, with an emphasis on how Black users navigated and reinterpreted dominant historical narratives.

Data were collected over a four-week period from 8 September to 8 October 2022, immediately following Queen Elizabeth II's death and just prior to Elon Musk's acquisition and rebranding of X in late October 2022. The temporal proximity to this platform shift is significant, as the analysis captures Black Twitter's dynamics before the substantial cultural and structural changes that have since affected the platform's role as a counterpublic. This context is acknowledged while interpreting the findings.

To examine responses from Black Twitter, I used X's advanced search feature and the Twint scraping tool to collect approximately 2500 tweets that included hashtags such as #QueenElizabeth, #BlackTwitter, #LondonBridgeIsDown, #IrishTwitter, and references to colonial figures or events (e.g., Pakistan and British colonialism) posted in the days immediately following Queen Elizabeth II's death. This initial dataset was collected using keyword and hashtag queries across a four-week period. Due to the high volume of tweets, I employed a purposive sampling approach to narrow the dataset to 200 tweets. These tweets were selected based on their explicit engagement with themes of empire, colonial memory, race, and resistance—core concerns of Black Twitter discourse. I prioritized tweets that had high engagement (likes, retweets, and comments) and that articulated distinct critical or humorous framings that resonated with the literature on digital counterpublics.

While it is not always possible to verify the users' racial identity with certainty, many users self-identified as Black or used language, humor, and cultural cues aligned with African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Black British cultural references, or other diasporic Black speech patterns. In cases where the identity of the poster was unclear, the focus remained on the cultural discourse rather than demographic certainty. Tweets from Irish and Pakistani users were not coded as part of Black Twitter but were considered adjacent, intersecting commentaries that contributed to the broader postcolonial critique.

While this study centered on textual material, it was grounded in the principles of digital ethnography as defined by contemporary scholars such as Pink et al. (2016) and Murthy (2008), who conceptualize it as an immersive and interpretive methodology suited to studying the social life of digital platforms. In this sense, digital ethnography is not simply the collection of media texts, but a mode of observing, interpreting, and contextualizing online interactions within broader cultural frameworks. As Castor (2022) asserts, digital ethnography rejects the binary between the virtual and the physical, treating them as interconnected sites of engagement. Thus, the method used here was more than content or discourse analysis; it involved participant observational sensibilities, interpretive contextualization, and longitudinal immersion in Black Twitter's discursive space.

I drew on Kaur-Gill and Dutta's (2017) framing of digital ethnography as an approach that engages with digital publics as social and cultural sites. Though my engagement did

not involve direct interaction with users, I immersed myself in the discursive rhythms and cultural codes of Black Twitter—what Florini (2014) describes as a "cultural logic" that shapes how identity, humor, and critique operate online.

This study adhered to emerging debates around the ethics of online research. While social media platforms like X are public by design, ethical concerns persist around consent and visibility. Following Mpofu (2019) and Henderson et al. (2013), I acknowledge the ambiguity surrounding whether publicly available tweets constitute 'human subject data.' However, given that the platform's terms of service inform users that their content is publicly accessible and searchable, I proceeded with the understanding that the tweets observed were part of a public discourse.

Nonetheless, I implemented ethical safeguards by concealing user identities in the data excerpts, omitting usernames and any direct references that could enable back-tracing, even though, as Mpofu (2019) cautions, anonymization does not fully eliminate identifiability when quoting verbatim. No private messages, locked accounts, or deleted content were accessed.

This methodological framework allowed for a nuanced interpretation of how Black Twitter functioned as a dynamic site of protest, satire, and historical memory in the wake of the Queen's death while respecting both the epistemological integrity of digital ethnography and the ethical imperatives of online research.

6. Findings

Three themes emerged from the collected data: a theme of resisting respectability politics, a theme of resisting the erasure of Black history, and a theme of educating Black people about their history. The first theme shows that Black people used Black Twitter to resist and reject conforming to paying respect to Queen Elizabeth. In the second theme, Black Twitter was used as a tool to resist the mainstream discourses that pushed forth the narrative that the death of Queen Elizabeth was not the right time to speak about British colonialism. In the third theme, it became noticeable that Black Twitter became an educational and learning platform where Black people shared educational material about their history vis-à-vis British colonialism.

6.1. Resisting Respectability Politics

Respectability politics refers to a political strategy that some members of marginalized communities use to gain social acceptance and respect from the majority culture. It involves abandoning controversial aspects of their cultural–political identity to assimilate and achieve social mobility. Harris (2003) states that a continuum of behaviors and attitudes reproduces dominant norms and strategies for producing a counter-narrative to negative stereotypes placed upon subordinated groups. The term was coined by Higginbotham (1993) to describe how early 20th-century Black women presented themselves as polite, sexually pure, and thrifty to reject stereotypes of them as immoral, childlike, and unworthy of rejection and protection. Harris (2003) explains that respectability politics meant that Black people had to be respectable. This created a set of beliefs and behaviors adopted by members of marginalized groups to gain acceptance and validation from those in power.

The notion behind respectability politics is that marginalized groups can gain acceptance and respect from the dominant group by demonstrating that they are just as "respectable" as those in power. Studying respectability politics is essential to understanding the structures of domination upon marginalized groups, with an eye on the elites and other disciplinary systems enforcing what is acceptable in society (Dazey, 2021). Accordingly, it sheds light on the efforts of marginalized groups to counter dominant discourse

and seek social acceptance. It also directs attention to how marginalized groups' members negotiate the normalizing influences of the dominant society (Dazey, 2021).

Understanding respectability politics also helps us understand resistant mechanisms against it. This means challenging the idea that marginalized individuals and groups must conform to mainstream cultural norms and expectations to gain acceptance and respect. Resisting respectability politics involves embracing and celebrating one's cultural identity and traditions and fighting against discrimination and oppression based on those identities. Figure 1 demonstrates efforts by Black Twitter to reject the silencing of Black people about colonialism and slavery. For a very long time, Black people have been denied the freedom to speak about colonialism and slavery and how it affected them (Miles, 2019; Bhatia & Priya, 2021). They have always had to do that while shielding the feelings of colonizers. But Figure 1 shows that Black Twitter rejects the gatekeeping of Black people's feelings.

The second tweet in Figure 1 raises the issue that people can criticize Hitler for mass murder without being told to respect the dead. But when they criticize the Queen for slavery and colonization, they are reminded to respect the dead. The third tweet was probably sent just before the death of Queen Elizabeth, and it is a message that shows that the tweep (a common word for a person who uses X) is celebrating the imminent death of the Queen. The fifth tweet shows a meme of a man waking up from the coffin, and the text accompanying the tweet suggests that this is how the Queen will react during her funeral if Meghan Markle makes a speech at her funeral; the tweet comments on the contentious relationship that existed between the Queen and Meghan. The last tweet shows what seems like the British army in front of captivated Black people in a concentration camp, and the text wishes the Queen to "rot in hell" (rather than to rest in peace). This is in response to the British concentration camps established in some of the British colonies in Africa.

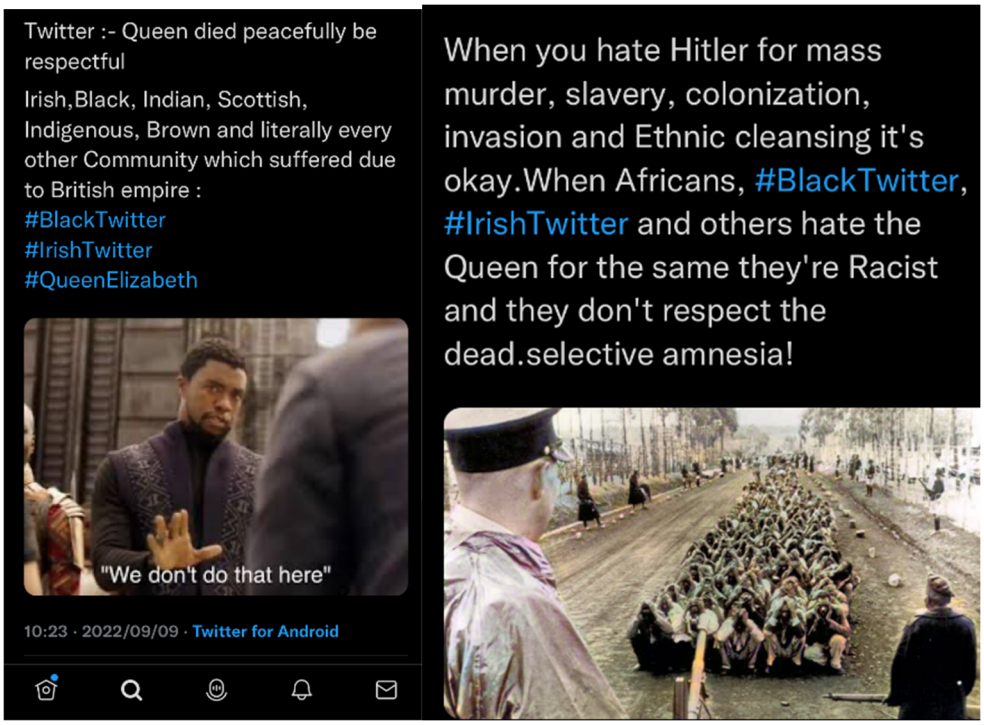


Figure 1. *Cont.*

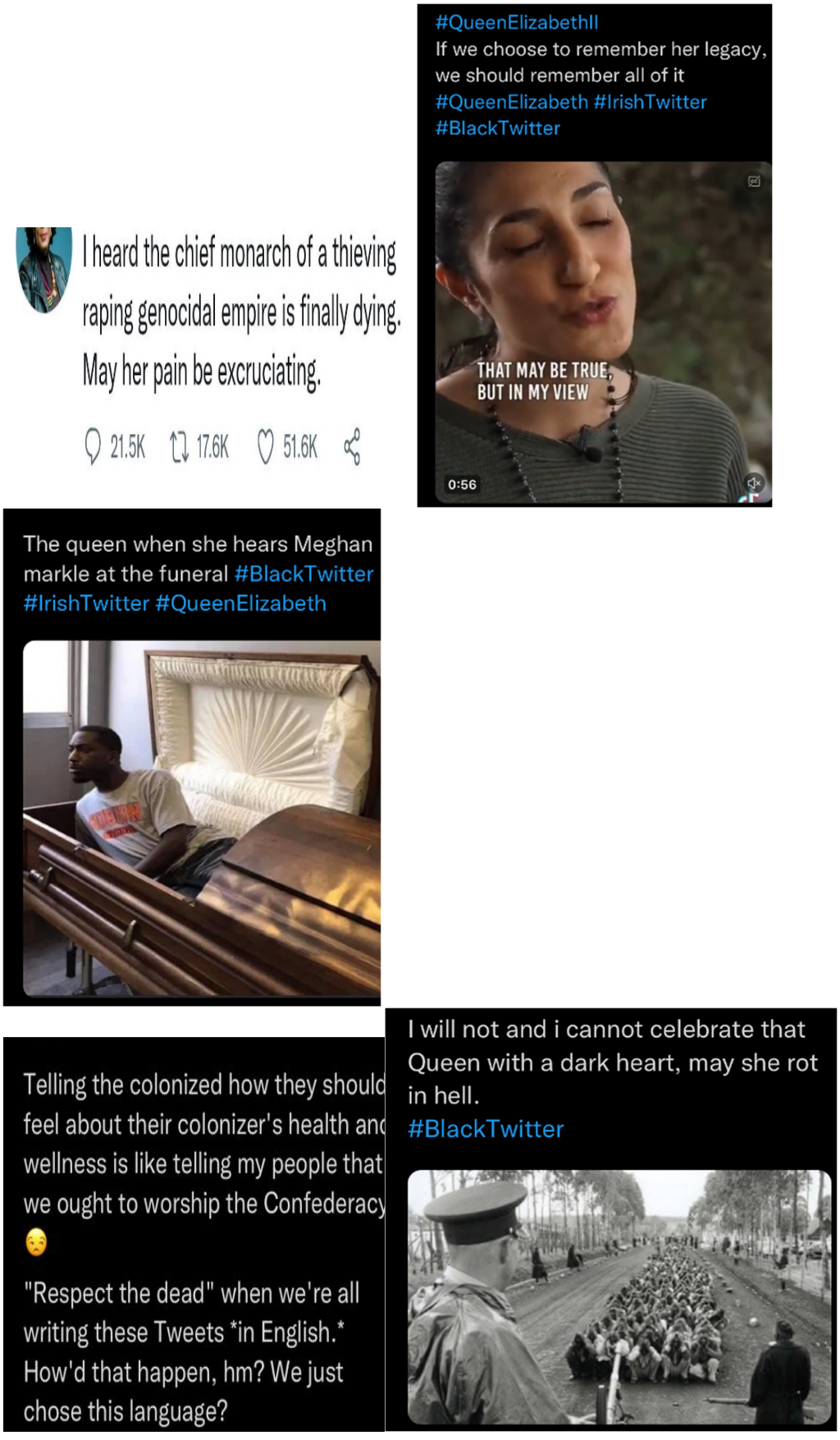


Figure 1. Resisting Respectability Politics: Black Twitter's Rejection of Silencing Colonial Critiques.

These tweets indicate Black Twitter's role in rebelling against the silencing of Black people from expressing their feelings about British colonial history. Carlson and Frazer (2020) explain that social media has had significant implications for indigenous peoples and communities. It offers them opportunities to resist and reject the violence of colonization and its ideological counterparts of domination and racial superiority and work toward imagining and realizing alternative futures. In the digital realm, Black Twitter is a powerful platform where Black people can express their thoughts, share experiences, and critique historical narratives. When it came to the death of Queen Elizabeth, Black Twitter became a collective space for reclaiming narratives, exposing historical injustices, and highlighting the enduring impact of colonization on Black communities.

According to Markovich (2022, p. 10), Queen Elizabeth "was the last universally acknowledged symbol of unity, perseverance, and grandeur"; hence, responses to her death displayed national and international unity. *The Learning Network* (2022, p. 1) reported that Queen Elizabeth's "reign of almost seven decades survived tectonic shifts in Britain's post-imperial society, inspired broad affection for her among her subjects, and weathered successive challenges posed by the romantic choices, missteps and imbroglios of her descendants". Gullace et al. (2023) note that part of the Queen's legacy was that she favored a South African boycott in defiance of Apartheid.

However, the tweets in Figure 1 show that Black Twitter could not respect that legacy. The users of this platform chose a radical and alternative posture. They focused on the Queen's role in the British monarchy in colonial exploitation and oppression, and the lasting impact of this on Black communities globally. Black Twitter rejected the idea of Queen Elizabeth as a "hero" and expressed dissenting views about her, critiqued colonial symbols, and demanded a re-evaluation of historical histories.

The findings of Figure 1 also demonstrate that Black people worldwide used Black Twitter to reject the conception of "respecting the dead". This resistance must be understood in contrast to how Black communities often approach the deaths of their own elders and ancestors—with reverence, celebration, and deep cultural rituals of remembrance. Online, this is evident in the ways Black Twitter commemorates figures like Cicely Tyson, Chadwick Boseman, or Archbishop Desmond Tutu, where respect for the dead is closely linked to communal grief, historical reflection, and honor. In this context, the rejection of deference in mourning Queen Elizabeth II signals not a disregard for death per se, but rather a refusal to uncritically honor a figure tied to histories of colonial oppression.

Respect for the dead is an essential aspect of many cultures worldwide. Ngubane (2004) opines that dying is like going home where you belong; this implies that when one dies, one rejoins old relatives and friends who had gone before. Hence, when one dies, one needs respect, dignity, and burial. However, from the above tweets, it is clear that respecting the dead depends on who died and what they did. Black Twitter opted to recall and remind the world of the active participation of the Queen in British colonialization. Black Twitter opted to bring back the colonial memories of those forgotten. Black Twitter chose not to be mournful.

The rejection of the silencing of Black people from expressing their feelings about British colonial history, the rejection of respecting the death of Queen Elizabeth, and the rejection of respecting the sentiments of those who were mourning the death of the Queen demonstrate that there was a strong rejection of respectability politics within Black Twitter. This was evidenced by the frequent usage of the #BlackTwitter hashtag in Black Twitter discussions about the death of the Queen. The hashtag leads to higher user engagement, which evokes anti-respectability politics within the Black Twitter community. As Florini (2014) asserts, for racial identity to function in social media spaces, racialized identities

must make those identities visible online. Figure 1 demonstrates that Black Twitter used racial politics to reject respectability politics during the death of the Queen.

6.2. Resisting the Erasure of Black History in Britain and Beyond

There are attempts worldwide to distort colonial history. According to Parashar and Schulz (2021), some arguments imply that colonialism inspired societal developments that embraced its modernity project, enlightened governance, and efficient administration. These are attempts to erase Black history and render it invisible. Allahar (2005, p. 125) defines erasure as "neglecting, looking past, minimizing, ignoring, or rendering an invisible other". Lobo (2021) argues that there is a need for Black communities to combat institutionalized modes of erasure.

While some tweets emerged after the death of the Queen, celebrating her legacy, Black Twitter countered those narratives and viewed them as an attempt to erase Black history. Some world leaders and global celebrities mourned the death of the Queen and brought back the good deeds that the Queen did in her lifetime for the world. On the other hand, Black Twitter used the death of the Queen to remind people across the world about the history of British colonialism under the leadership of the Queen. Tweets in Figure 2 show the study's findings that demonstrate the role of Black Twitter in resisting the erasure of Black history in Britain and beyond.



Figure 2. Countering Historical Erasure: Black Twitter's Reminders of Colonial Atrocities.

The first tweet in Figure 2 retweets the statements released by one of the opposition parties in South Africa, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), about the death of the Queen. The EFF's statement states that "we do not mourn the death of Elizabeth, because to us

her death is a reminder of a very tragic period in this country and Africa's history." The statement states that the death of the Queen brings back tragic memories. Hence, the party cannot ignore that and mourn and celebrate the Queen's death. The second tweet in Figure 2 states that the Queen leaves behind a bitter history in this world and that the British monarchy should be buried with her. In sharing these sentiments, the third tweet in Figure 2 states that the Queen presided over the Mau Mau atrocities. The fifth tweet asks how they can mourn the death of the Queen when she killed, robbed, and raped their grandparents.

The role of Twitter in resisting erasure is well-documented. Gutierrez (2022) explains that Latinx Twitter is well known for challenging the erasure and marginalization of Latin people, identity, and history in American media. According to Gutierrez (2022), Latinx Twitter relies on discourses of visibility, a critique of Black hypervisibility in media activism, and the idea of a white-and-black racial binary that marginalizes the struggles and needs of the Latinx community for inclusion in Hollywood.

Erasure occurs when certain groups or individuals are excluded from the dominant narratives that shape our understanding of the world and when their perspectives are not represented in the media or other public forums. Therefore, Black Twitter became a powerful weapon for Black people to resist the erasure of their Black history after the death of the Queen. Black Twitter became a powerful platform for raising awareness about the Queen and her British colonialism.

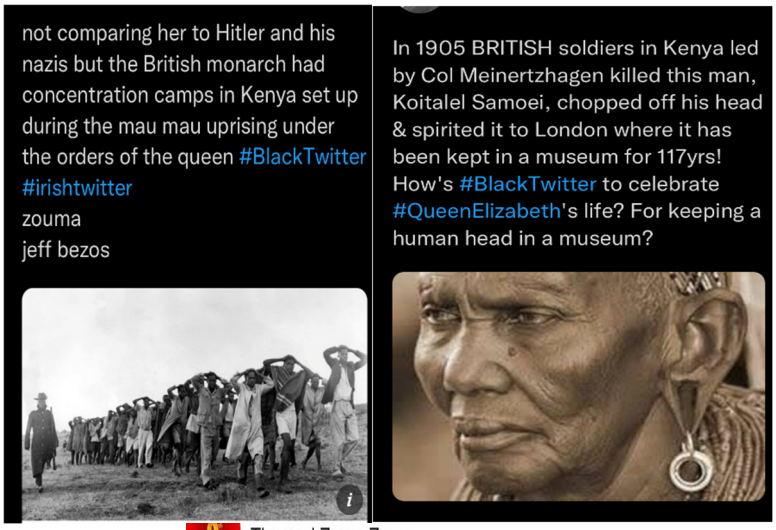
Immediately after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Black Twitter community produced tweets that raised critical questions about the history of British colonialism, especially for Black people worldwide. The tweets in Figure 2 demonstrate that Black Twitter was unwilling to allow the Queen's death to perpetuate Black history's erasure. The tweets show that Black Twitter directly linked Queen Elizabeth with some historical atrocities Black people experienced due to British colonialism.

Because resisting erasure is embedded within existing power structures, Abdalla (2023) asserts that some acts must resist historical erasure, silence, and silencing. The tweets in Figure 2 show that Black people's colonial experiences were at the center of resisting attempts to erase Black history. The marginalized were driving the discourses about the past and the role of Queen Elizabeth in their marginalization.

6.3. Educating Black People About Their History

King (2017) argues that the mainstream social studies curriculum has largely ignored Black history or misrepresented the subject. Consequently, the voices and experiences of Black people have often been silenced in favor of dominant Eurocentric history (King, 2017). Therefore, when talking about Black history and people, the knowledge of the subject matter comes from the perspectives of white people, not Black people (King, 2020).

Another dominant theme that emerged during data analysis is that Black Twitter played a significant role in educating people about their history, especially British colonialism and Queen Elizabeth. The tweets in Figure 2 show that Black Twitter did not only criticize Queen Elizabeth for her role in British colonialism, but it used her death as an opportunity to reflect on the history of Black people and teach Black people about their history, especially considering that there is a lot that Black people do not learn about their history in schools.


not comparing her to Hitler and his nazis but the British monarch had concentration camps in Kenya set up during the mau mau uprising under the orders of the queen #BlackTwitter #irishtwitter
zouma
jeff bezos
In 1905 BRITISH soldiers in Kenya led by Col Meinertzhagen killed this man, Koitalel Samoei, chopped off his head & spirited it to London where it has been kept in a museum for 117yrs! How's #BlackTwitter to celebrate #QueenElizabeth's life? For keeping a human head in a museum?


The real Zama Zama...


What sort of a Queen commits crimes against humanity and gets away with it? She did this not only in Africa & the Caribbeans but India, Yemen and Pakistan as part of her "duties", are we gonna be silent about that?
#BlackTwitter #IrishTwitter #QueenElizabeth #QueenElizabethII
The British royal family and other European monarchs work to destroy African royal family. so now the Queen Elizabeth is dead. do not forget the great African queens that ruled African empires.#QueenElizabethII .#AfricaQueens .#PanAfrican.#BlackTwitter .
Queen nefertari
Queen makeda
Empress Zawditu
Queen nandi



Figure 2. Educating Through Hashtags: Black Twitter as a Platform for Historical Reckoning.

The second tweet in Figure 2 shows a picture of one of the Mau Mau victims that the British government in Kenya brutally killed. The tweet questions how Black Twitter is expected to celebrate the life of Queen Elizabeth when she and the British government have kept the man's head in a museum for 117 years. The third tweet in Figure 2 is a picture of Queen Elizabeth with her crown jewels. The tweet has a text saying, "the real *Zama Zama*" (*Zama Zama* is an informal word for someone who works illegally in abandoned mineshafts in South Africa). The tweet calling the Queen a real *Zama Zama* references her crown jewels, some South African diamonds that made their way abroad during British colonialism. The fifth tweet brings up a different subject and shows that Africa has always had its Queens; it is not like Britain is the only region with a Queen. The tweet suggests that African Queens should also be celebrated.

Nakagawa and Arzubiaga (2014) explain that social media serves as an essential context in which to learn about, challenge, and address issues of race. Through social media, Black history can be shared with a broader audience, reaching people who may not have had access to this information through traditional educational challenges. Social media also provides a space for dialogue and discussion around Black history. By sharing lesser-known stories and highlighting the historical struggles of Black people, social media can help counteract the systemic biases and discrimination that have excluded Black people from historical accounts.

These views are evident in Figure 2. These tweets teach people about what happened with some diamonds exported from South Africa to Britain. The tweets also teach people about the atrocities committed against the Mau Mau soldiers. Other tweets also teach people about how the Queen and the British's atrocities did not only happen among Black people but also affected people in the Caribbean, India, Yemen, and Bangladesh. This is essential information that was shared through Black Twitter.

Figure 2 shows that Black Twitter used the death of Queen Elizabeth for discussions and debates around Black history, allowing users to engage with each other and deepen their understanding of the topic. Black Twitter users used the platform to share information and resources about Black history and culture. In essence, Black Twitter amplified the voices of Black people to share their knowledge and experience of Black history regarding Queen Elizabeth and British colonialism.

7. Conclusions

This paper was conceptualized to study Black Twitter's response to Queen Elizabeth's death through a virtual ethnography of selected tweets under the banner of Black Twitter; the study's findings indicate that Black Twitter responded to the death of Queen Elizabeth by resisting respectability politics and the erasure of Black history, and educating Black

people about their history. However, this does not mean that the content of the studied tweets was all factual. The current study did not focus on the factuality of the tweets. This remains a weakness of the present study and a possible focus for further inquiry. The paper only sought to enquire about the response of Black Twitter to the Queen's death.

The study's findings demonstrate the decisive role of Black Twitter's hashtag activism. The term hashtag activism refers to movements that aim to raise awareness of social issues and encourage debates via hashtags on social media (Xiong et al., 2019). The study shows that Black Twitter used the death of Queen Elizabeth to enable resistance and, most fundamentally, the survival of Black people in the virtual community.

While many people use Twitter to troll and bully others, many use it for entertainment, and many use it for accessing news and education, others use it in ways that closely seek to elevate the status of Black people in the world. Florini (2014) submits that aspects such as verbal performance, linguistic resources, and modes of interaction are critical ways that Black users perform their racial identities on X. The current study demonstrated that Black Twitter allows Black users to individually and collectively perform their identities. The findings also show that users of Black Twitter thrive on cultural knowledge, the knowledge of Black history, and politics to form a collective identity and group solidarity in resisting respectability politics, resisting the erasure of Black history, and educating Black people about their history.

To conclude, this study has shown how Black Twitter relied on racial identities of marginalization, erasure, and invisibility to react against the death of Queen Elizabeth. By exploring how Black Twitter reacted to Queen Elizabeth's death, the study established that Black Twitter ensured diverse global responses to the death of Queen Elizabeth. The study explored how Black people used Black Twitter to position themselves vis-à-vis their colonial history and how they position themselves about one another. The position of this study is that the active participation demonstrated by Black Twitter after the death of Queen Elizabeth produces tense, confrontational interactions that have the potential to shift the discursive underpinning that critiques anti-Blackness, whiteness, and existing colonial structures, institutions, and discourses.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Abdalla, M. I. (2023). "My Islam be Black": Resisting erasure, silence, and marginality at the intersection of race and religion. *Communication, Culture, and Critique*, *16*, 9–16. [CrossRef]

Aggarwal, M., Abbasi, H., Arkin, D., & Siemaszko, C. (2022). *The queen was not a gentle figurehead in Britain's former colonies*. Available online: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/queen-elizabeth-dies-colonies-empire-britain-uk-india-kenya-rcna47250 (accessed on 9 November 2023).

Aiseng, K. (2024). Black Twitter and digital countepublics in South Africa. *Studies in Media and Communication*, *12*(2), 302–320. [CrossRef]

Akpojivi, U. (2023). *Social movements and digital activism in Africa*. Springer. [CrossRef]

Al Jazeera. (2022). *Queen Elizabeth remembered in Ireland for historic reconciliation*. Available online: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/9/queen-elizabeth-remembered-in-ireland-for-historic-reconciliation (accessed on 15 March 2023).

Allahar, A. (2005). Review of *Identity and erasure: Finding the Elusive Caribbean*, by Sandra Pouchet Paquet, Gert Oostindie, Inge Klinkers, Ian I. Smart, and Kimani S. K. Nehusi. *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe/European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, (79), 125–134. [CrossRef]

Appadurai, A. (1990). Disjuncture and difference in th global cultural economy. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, *7*(2–3), 295–310. [CrossRef]
Arab News. (2022). *In Yemen: Queen's death recalls memories of colonial past*. Available online: https://www.arabnews.com/node/2164546/middle-east (accessed on 15 March 2023).
Benkler, Y. (2007). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. Yale University Press.
Bhatia, S., & Priya, K. R. (2021). Coloniality and psychology: From silencing to re-centering marginalized voices in postcolonial times. *Review of General Psychology*, *25*(4), 422–436. [CrossRef]
Brock, A. (2012). From the blackhand side: Twitter as a cultural conversation. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *56*(4), 529–549. [CrossRef]
Brock, A. (2020). *Distributed blackness: African American cybercultures*. New York University Press. [CrossRef]
Brown, S. M. (2022). *Queen Elizabeth's legacy through the lens of colonialism and black lives*. Available online: https://www.washingtoninformer.com/queen-elizabeths-legacy-through-the-lens-of-colonialism-and-black-lives/ (accessed on 15 March 2023).
Busari, S. (2022). *Cloud of colonialism hangs over Queen Elizabeth's legacy in Africa*. Available online: https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/10/africa/colonialism-africa-queen-elizabeth-intl/index.html (accessed on 15 March 2023).
Carlson, B., & Frazer, R. (2020). "They got filters": Indigenous social media, the settler gaze, and a politics of hope. *Social Media and Society*, *6*(2), 1–11. [CrossRef]
Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope*. Polity Press.
Castor, N. F. (2022). Ifa/Orisha digital counterpublics. *The Black Scholar*, *52*(3), 17–29. [CrossRef]
Childs, K. M. (2022). 'The shade of it all': How Black women use Instagram and YouTube to contest colorism in the beauty industry. *Social Media + Society*, *8*(2), 1–15. [CrossRef]
Choi, S. Y., & Cho, Y. (2017). Generating counter-public spheres through social media: Two social movements in neoliberalised South Korea. *Javnost*, *24*(1), 15–33. [CrossRef]
Daniels, J. (2013). Race and racism in Internet Studies: A review and critique. *New Media and Society*, *15*(5), 695–717. [CrossRef]
Dazey, M. (2021). Rethinking respectability politics. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *72*(3), 580–593. [CrossRef]
Downey, J., & Fenton, N. (2003). New media, counter publicity, and the public sphere. *New Media and Society*, *5*(2), 185–202. [CrossRef]
Everett, A. (Ed.). (2007). Introduction. In *Learning race and ethnicity: Youth and digital media* (pp. 1–14). MIT Press.
Farzan, Y. (2022). *What will happen next for Black Twitter?* Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/30/future-black-twitter-elon-musk-takeover (accessed on 9 April 2025).
Ferree, M. M., Gamson, W. A., Garhardsm, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society*, *31*, 289–324. [CrossRef]
Florini, S. (2014). Tweets, tweeps, and signifying': Communication and cultural performance on "Black Twitter". *Television and New Media*, *15*(3), 223–237. [CrossRef]
Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, *25*(26), 56–80. [CrossRef]
Graham, R., & Smith, S. (2016). The content of our #characters: Black Twitter as counterpublic. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *2*(4), 433–449. [CrossRef]
Gray, H. (2005). *Cultural moves: African Americans and the politics of representation*. The University of California Press.
Griffith, J. (2022). *Queen Elizabeth's death revives criticism of Britain's legacy of colonialism*. Available online: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/queen-elizabeths-death-revives-criticism-britains-legacy-colonialism-rcna46942 (accessed on 15 March 2023).
Gullace, N. F., Chernock, A., Natarajan, R., & Beers, L. (2023). Forum: The death of Queen Elizabeth II: Meaning and Media. *Journal of British Studies*, *62*(2023), 476–501. [CrossRef]
Gutierrez, A. (2022). Situating representation as a form of erasure: #OscarsSoWhite, Black Twitter, and Latinx Twitter. *Television and New Media*, *23*(1), 100–118. [CrossRef]
Habermas, J. (1962). *The structural formation of the public sphere*. MIT Press.
Harris, P. (2003). Gatekeeping and remaking: The politics of respectability in African women's history and black feminism. *Journal of Women's History*, *15*(1), 212–220. [CrossRef]
Harris-Lacewell, M. V. (2004). *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday talk and black political thought*. Princeton University Press.
Henderson, M., Johnson, N., & Auld, G. (2013). Silences of ethical practice: Dilemmas for researchers using social media. *Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal of Theory and Practice*, *19*(6), 546–560. [CrossRef]
Higginbotham, E. B. (1993). *Righteous discontent: The women's movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Harvard University Press.
Hill, M. L. (2011). A different world: Black bookstores as literary counterpublics. In V. Kinlock (Ed.), *Urban literacies: Critical perspectives on language, learning, and community* (pp. 38–54). Teachers College Press.
Hill, M. L. (2018). "Thank you Black Twitter": State violence, digital counterpublics, and pedagogies of resistance. *Urban Education*, *53*(2), 286–302. [CrossRef]
Hirschkind, C. (2009). *The Ethical soundscape: Cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics*. Columbia University Press.

Jackson, S. J., Bailey, M., & Welles, B. F. (2020). *#HashtagActivism: Networks of race and gender justice*. MIT Press.

Jackson, S., & Welles, B. F. (2015). Hijacking #mynypd: Social media dissent and networked counterpublics. *The Journal of Communication*, *65*(6), 932–952. [CrossRef]

Kaiser, J. (2017). Public spheres on skepticism: Climate skeptics' online comments in the German networked public sphere. *International Journal of Communication*, *11*, 1661–1682.

Kaur-Gill, S., & Dutta, M. (2017). Digital ethnography. In J. Matthes (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

King, L. J. (2017). The status of Black History in U.S. schools and society. *Social Education*, *81*(1), 14–18.

King, L. J. (2020). Black history is not American history: Toward a framework of Black historical consciousness. *Social Education*, *84*(6), 335–341.

Kvasny, L., & Hales, K. D. (2010). The internet, black identity and the evolving discourse of the digital divide. In E. Ferro, Y. K. Dwivedi, R. Gil-Garcia, & M. D. Williams (Eds.), *Handbook of research on overcoming digital divides: Constructing an equitable and competitive information society* (pp. 260–276). IGI Global.

Lobo, R. (2021). Resisting erasure: Photographic archives and Black history in Canada. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, *58*, 7–36. [CrossRef]

Markovich, S. G. (2022). Legacy of Queen Elizabeth II: The symbolism of the British monarchy and the challenges it faces. *Politicki Zivot*, *2022*(23), 7–17. [CrossRef]

Miles, J. (2019). Historical silences and the enduring power of counter storytelling. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *49*(3), 253–259. [CrossRef]

Milliken, M., Gibson, K., & O'Donnell, S. (2008). User-generated video and the online public sphere: Will YouTube facilitate digital freedom of expression in Atlantic Canada? *American Communication Journal*, *10*(3), 1–14.

Mpofu, S. (2019). Jesus comes to South Africa: Black Twitter as citizen journalism in South African politics. *African Journalism Studies*, *40*(1), 67–90. [CrossRef]

Murthy, D. (2008). Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology*, *42*(5), 837–855. [CrossRef]

Nakagawa, K., & Arzubiaga, A. E. (2014). The use of social media in teaching race. *Adult Learning*, *25*(3), 103–110. [CrossRef]

Nakamura, L. (2008). *Digitizing race. Visual cultures of the internet*. The University of Minnesota Press.

Ngubane, S. (2004). Traditional practices on burial systems with special reference to the Zulu people of South Africa. *Indilinga—African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, *3*(2), 171–177. [CrossRef]

Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual sphere 2.0. The internet, the public sphere, and beyond. In A. Chadwick, & N. H. Phillip (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of internet politics* (1st ed., pp. 320–345). Routledge.

Parashar, S., & Schulz, M. (2021). Colonial legacies, postcolonial 'selfhood' and the (un)doing of Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, *42*(5), 867–881. [CrossRef]

Pena, C. B., MacCarron, P., & O'Sullivan, D. J. P. (2025). Finding polarized communities and tracking information diffusion on Twitter: A network approach on the Irish abortion referendum. *Royal Society Open Sciene*, *12*(1), 1–28. [CrossRef]

Piela, A. (2017). How do Muslim women who wear the niqab interact with others online? A case study of a profile on a photo-sharing website. *New Media and Society*, *19*(1), 67–80. [CrossRef]

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Riegert, K., & Ramsay, G. (2013). Activists, individualists, and comics: The counter-publicness of Lebanese blogs. *Television and New Media*, *14*(4), 286–303. [CrossRef]

Ryan, A. M., Tocci, C., Moon, S., & Hines, M. (2019). Who is excluded? Who is empowered? Marginalization and resistance in the curriculum. In A. M. Ryan, C. Tocci, & S. Moon (Eds.), *The Curriculum foundations reader* (pp. 33–54). Palgrave Macmillan.

Schafer, M. S. (2015). Digital public sphere. In G. Mazzoleni (Ed.), *The International encyclopedia of political communication* (pp. 322–328). Blackwell.

Sharma, S. (2013). Black Twitter? Racial hashtags, networks, and contagion. *Few Formations*, *78*, 46–64. [CrossRef]

Steele, C. K. (2021). *Digital black feminism*. New York University Press.

Taylor, Z. (2022). '(It) shouldn't be funny but you can't help but laugh': Black Twitter, #TweetLikeThe1600s, and Black humor online. *Social Media + Society*, *8*(2), 1–9. [CrossRef]

Taylor, Z. A., & Abidin, C. (2024). Where are all the Black girls on TikTok? Exploring in-group community and (in)visibility through #BlackGirlTikTok. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1–20. [CrossRef]

The Learning Network. (2022). *Lesson plan: The life and legacy of Queen Elizabeth II*. Available online: https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-plan-the-life-and-legacy-of-queen-elizabeth-ii.html (accessed on 13 November 2023).

Toepfl, F., & Piwoni, E. (2015). Public spheres in interaction: Comment sections of news websites as counterpublic spaces. *Journal of Communication*, *63*(3), 465–488. [CrossRef]

Toure-Tillery, M., Steinmetz, J., & DiCosola, B. (2022). Feeling judged? How the presence of outgroup members promotes healthier food choices. *Psychology and Marketing*, *29*(8), 1504–1510. [CrossRef]

Walcott, R. (2024). *#RIP Twitter: The conditions of black social media platform migration*. Just Tech. Social Science Research Council. Available online: https://just-tech.ssrc.org/field-reviews/rip-twitter-the-conditions-of-black-social-media-platform-migration/ (accessed on 9 April 2025).

Wheeler, A. (2019). *Then years of Black Twitter: A merciless watchdog for problematic behaviour*. Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/dec/23/ten-years-black-twitter-watchdog (accessed on 11 November 2023).

Wonneberger, A., Hellsten, I. R., & Jacobs, S. H. J. (2021). Hashtag activism and the configuration of counterpublics: Dutch animal welfare debates on Twitter. *Information, Communication, and Society*, *24*(12), 1694–1711. [CrossRef]

Xiong, Y., Cho, M., & Boatwright, B. (2019). Hashtag activism and message frames from among social movement organizations: Semantic network analysis and thematic analysis of Twitter during the #MeToo movement. *Public Relations Review*, *45*(1), 10–23. [CrossRef]

Yang, G. (2016). Narrative agency in hashtag activism: The case of #BlackLivesMatter. *Media and Communication*, *4*(4), 13–17. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.