

Roth, Feminism Otherwise

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Feminism Otherwise

Intersectionality beyond Occidentalism

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Based on the paradigm of Eurocentric hegemony and the respective cartographies of knowledge, feminist theorizing is conventionally perceived as being situated in the academy and in the so-called Global North. Feminism thus seems to be owned by Western European and North American academic (and mostly white) feminists, while other regions and epistemes serve as the objects of knowledge production. For example, the concept of intersectionality has by now entered the humanities and the social sciences, where its origins in Black American feminist and activist contexts has been erased. Moreover, Black feminists from peripheral spaces such as the Caribbean or Brazil had for a long time been claiming the need for an examination the interdependent inequalities they experienced. While these links are addressed in the concept of intersectionality, the terminology is usually different.

Using the concept of Occidentalism as an example of a way to address epistemic inequalities, this article elaborates on the persistent geopolitics of knowledge within and between different feminism(s) and between different feminisms in different regions of the world. Against the backdrop of the paths in which the feminist concept of intersectionality has travelled in order to address interdependent axes of stratification in the context of the mentioned geopolitics of knowledge, the article seeks to discuss possible forms of solidarity and theorizing across and beyond borders. The article argues for a critical Occidentalist and radical intersectional practice approach which is critical of hegemony and based on a relational understanding for imagining feminist practice and theorizing.

»The danger of the single story«: Occidentalism as epistemic violence

[D]ecolonizing feminism involves a careful critique of the ethics and politics of eurocentrism, and a corresponding analysis of the difficulties and joys of crossing cultural, national, racial, and class boundaries in the search for feminist communities anchored in justice and equality. (Mohanty 2003, 11)

Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie has recently referred to the violence of the Western interpretive dominance to define in her seminal TED talk as »The Danger of the Single Story«:

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. [...] The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. (Adichie 2009)

The respective »single story« of feminism is that feminist theorizing is conventionally perceived as being situated in the academy. This perception reduces feminism is thus reduced to the so-called Global North and in the humanities and the social sciences, whereas other regions and knowledge forms serve merely as objects of knowledge production and their visions tend to be absent or invisible in the academy. Sylvia Wynter respectively speaks of a subordination of »theory-givers/theory-takers« classified into »human populations/geographical spaces, cultures, and societal groups, i.e. ethnic, class, gender, sexual preference etc.« (Wynter 1990, 359). This trend of highly unequal geopolitics of knowledge in feminist theorizing is emphasized by the predominance of English-language journals, books, and conferences, most of which are mostly produced in the US and Europe.¹

1 The fact that a newly emerged German right-wing organization PEGIDA makes reference to the »Salvation of the Occident« in its very name, points to the timeliness of such thinking and the relevance of a critical Occidentalist frame in order to confront the related exclusion and violence.

The period of European colonial expansion was defined by spatial differentiations and an emerging process of racialization and en-gendering. Based on the thus established colonial hierarchies, the power to define and tell presumably universal stories has been the preserve of Occidental voices and knowledge forms. Cultural techniques such as travel writing and cartography helped to turn the cognitive landscapes related to territorial expansion and occidental truth claims into imperial landscapes. Accordingly, »imperial maps« (Coronil 1996, 52) were constructed around concepts of »race,« ethnicity, religious identity, and gender. Feminist postcolonial thinkers have elaborated the ways in which colonial and post-colonial structures of inequality have been marked by a racialized gender dimension (Wade 2009; Dietze 2013), while gender itself is embedded in colonial power relations (Lugones 2008; Wynter 1990). Anne McClintock has convincingly shown how gendered and sexualized fantasies have marked colonial mappings, often depicting the presumably newly »discovered« or »conquered« lands in terms of »virginity« and the landscape in terms related to metaphors of the female body features. McClintock has identified Columbus' depiction of the earth as a woman's breast as a genre of »porno- tropics,« evoking »a long tradition of male travel as an erotic of ravishment« (McClintock 1995, 22). Respectively, McClintock speaks of the colonial »porno-tropics,« and refers to Christopher Columbus' depictions in his logbook as »Columbus' breast fantasies« (McClintock 1995, 22).

Such »universal histories« and global designs were related to a claim of objective, universal truth and the power to define and implement these representations. Starting with the colonization of the Americas and European Enlightenment ideas and ideologies, the West European powers thus constructed their position as the center of civilization and knowledge. Since the—very local—knowledge produced in Europe was constructed as universal, this powerful but small space implicitly considered itself authorized to judge other regions according to its own parameters and to export its economic, belief and knowledge systems to the colonized regions.

In this context, Edward Said's (1978) study examines the West's patronizing cultural representations of »the Orient« as profoundly tied to the power and politics of the imperialist societies that produce these images. Said's

book and concept of *Orientalism* has become a paradigmatic text in postcolonial studies.² From a postcolonial feminist perspective, such stereotypical hierarchical images and representations can be revealed as constructions based on colonial mindsets and power hierarchies and criticized for their claim to universality.

Seen more structurally, on the epistemic level, Occidentalism addresses not the construction of Otherness, but an earlier production of hegemony. The concept thus provides a valid frame for problematizing the described asymmetries concerning feminist knowledge production, evaluation, and circulation. For example, focusing on Occidentalism as the precondition of Orientalist projections shows how the Othering of e.g. Islamic women and men serves to construct or reassure presumed Occidental more progressive and emancipated gender relations. This works though situating sexism, homophobia and patriarchal rule outside of the own society by ascribing it to Islamic Others, as we can currently see in countless media images and claims by rightwing activist and politicians, including the current US president and his travel ban for a selection of Muslim countries.

Occidentalism—Producing the Western self through the non-Western Other

The concept of Occidentalism refers to the respective construction of a superior, more civilized »Occidental« self against the backdrop of which projections of »Oriental,« exotic, less civilized, inferior Others could be invented. Occidentalism refers to a discursive construction of »Occidentalism« as superior which includes, for example, the United States and »Occidentalized« spaces within the regions or places labeled as »peripheral.«

2 Said's much lesser known follow-up book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) traces the connection between imperialism and culture in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries to describe a more general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan west and its overseas territories. In this book, Said defines »imperialism« as »the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.« His definition of »culture« is more complex, but he strongly suggests that we ought not to forget imperialism when discussing it.

Unlike wider received understandings of Occidentalism as »the West in the Eyes of its Enemies« (see Buruma 2004, see also Carrier 1995), the term and concept of Occidentalism as understood here was coined by Fernando Coronil, (1996), who belonged to a group of critical post-colonial critics now often referred to as decolonial thinkers or critics. Established postcolonial theory stems from the fields of literary and cultural studies and predominantly focuses predominantly on European colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and on the former British colonies, where most of the canonized authors have roots.³ The Latin American Subaltern Group⁴ formed around the turn to the twenty-first century by academics (sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, semiologists, cultural studies scholars) with predominantly Latin American background—but many of whom now hold professorship in the US (e.g., Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Catherine Walsh, Augustín Lao-Montes, and María Lugones) who based their findings on postcolonial and anti-colonial thinkers,⁵ world-systems theory, dependency theory, liberation theology, and Chicana feminism (see Escobar 2007; Moraña, Dussel, and Jáuregi 2008). Decolonial critics seek to expand postcolonial thought to other regions, particularly the Americas, and to include the developments prior to the peak of colonial expansion. From a respective Latin American perspective, colonialism began with the arrival of the European conquerors in what they perceived as the »New World« in (at latest) 1492. Colonialism is closely tied to capitalist expansion, while *coloniality* refers to the structural worldwide division of power resulting in global inequalities that persist and is continuously revived up to the present day, for example in the form of migration, racial and gender regimes. Moreover, decolonial thinkers Aníbal Quijano and later Walter D. Mignolo introduced

3 Most evidently canonized authors include the postcolonial »Holy Trinity« of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak.

4 See Wikipedia, s.v. »Subaltern Studies,« last modified December 29, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subaltern_Studies.

5 Such as, José Martí, José Carlos Mariátegui, Aimé Césaire, and Frantz Fanon.

the coloniality/modernity paradigm according to which European (and Eurocentric) modernity is inseparably linked to and dialectically entangled with coloniality and colonialism. Coloniality as a power hierarchy and an epistemic system is understood not as the outcome and opposite to modernity, but as Eurocentric modernity's other side, or underside (see, e.g., Castro-Gómez 2007; Coronil 1996, [2008] 2013; Grosfoguel 2006; Lugones 2007, 2009, 2010; Maldonado-Torres 2004, 2007; Quijano 2000a, 2000b). Colonized spaces such as the Americas served as a »Laboratory for Modernity.« Regions like the Caribbean which constituted the hub of the plantation slavery system have been constitutive and formative for modernity. Seen in this way, the concept of Occidentalism—as Occidental/formerly Western superiority—represents not the result of but the condition of possibility for the creation of an inferior Other as »Oriental.« Occidentalism serves to capture exactly the epistemic dimension of the hierarchical and unequal ordering of knowledge that started with the colonial endeavor and persisting until today. In his 1996 essay »Beyond Occidentalism: Towards Non-imperial Geo-historical Categories« Fernando Coronil describes Occidentalism as follows:

the ensemble of representational practices that participate in the production of conceptions of the world, which 1) separate the world's components into bounded units; 2) disaggregate their relational histories; 3) turn difference into hierarchy; 4) naturalize these representations; and thus 5) intervene, however unwittingly, in the reproduction of existing asymmetrical power relations (Coronil 1996, 57).

Occidentalism according to Coronil mobilizes stereotypical representations about non-Western societies for what he calls the »ethnocentric hierarchization of cultural difference« (ibid., 57). Furthermore, and importantly, as a system of classification that expresses forms of cultural and economic difference in the modern world, Occidentalism is inseparably tied to the constitution of international asymmetries embedded in global capitalism. Occidentalism is thus specifically modern, tied to capitalism, Western dominance, and it establishes the West as source and locus of modernity, as well as possessor of the power to define. By establishing Occidental

knowledge as superior und universal, Occidentalism creates a knowledge hierarchy according to which other forms of knowledge are not considered relevant. Underscoring the relational character of such asymmetries, and elaborating on earlier works on »multiple modernities« by Shmuel Eisenstadt (2000) and Göran Therborn (1999), Shalini Randeria (2006) has referred to this epistemic hierarchy as »entangled histories of uneven modernities.« To describe the destruction of non-Western ways of perceiving the world and the resulting dominance of Western perceptions, Gayatri Spivak (1989) has employed Michel Foucault's term of »epistemic violence.« Spivak has claimed that the »epistemic violence« resulting from Occidentalism specifically relates to women whereby the »Subaltern [woman] must always be caught in translation, never [allowed to be] truly expressing herself« (Spivak 1989, 76), because the colonial power's destruction and marginalization of her culture pushed her non-Western ways of perceiving, understanding, and knowing the world to the social margins.

An Occidental viewpoint can also be observed in Western feminisms whose protagonists, claiming to be authorized to speak for women everywhere, continually engage in the endeavor Gayatri Spivak has famously described as »White women saving brown women from brown men« (Spivak 1989, 93), claiming to be authorized to speak for women everywhere. Following Ella Shohat (2002), this power hierarchy is also reflected in the separation between »gender studies« and »area studies,« whereby »gender studies« refers to gender relations in the West, while in all other contexts, the situation of »women« is analyzed as unrelated from the—thus constructed—Western center. Alicia Trotz speaks of »notions of the global that underlie the imperial divide between area studies and women/gender studies« in the academy as »practices of exclusion via Eurocentric renderings of global sisterhood based on a putatively universal notion of ›woman,‹ and efforts to ›go global‹ that reduce areas, and people from those areas, to gendered types« (Trotz 2007, 2). Ella Shohat bemoans a tendency she observes in »multicultural feminist and queer cartographies of knowledge« in which »the diverse regions are often presumed in isolation from the ›center‹ and from each

other.« (Shohat 2003, 68). The path taken by the concept of intersectionality provides an example of how theory and knowledge travels and changes meaning along lines unequal distribution of power, thus supporting a persistent geopolitics of knowledge within and between feminism(s) in different regions of the world. Manuela Boatcă (2015) and Claudia Brunner (2007) have elaborated on Occidentalism from a feminist and decolonial perspective as structurally en-gendered along colonial lines, a notion which shall also frame my discussion of the concept of intersectionality.

In order to avoid continuing hierarchizations, Othering strategies, and exclusions, the combination of a hegemony critical Occidentalist perspective and a »radical intersectionality« (Xiang 2017, n.p.)⁶ as a practice is urgently required.

Intersectionality from activist practice to theory

For a long time, feminist activists have long been pointing out the importance of taking into account interlocking axes of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, or homophobia in order to give consideration to the experiences of women (and men) situated at different socio-cultural and geopolitical locations. The concept of intersectionality aims at capturing the interlocking character and the simultaneous articulation of different axes of stratification. That is, gender is always also and always already articulated through the respective class, race/ethnic, sexual and geopolitical dimension. Intersectionality has become a crucial concept in feminist research, and increasingly also in the social sciences in general.

Black feminists from spaces such as the Caribbean have long been claiming the need for examining the interdependent inequalities they experience as addressed in the concept, however usually not using the same terminology.⁷ Trotz respectively claims the Caribbean as »a space

6 Comment by Zairong Xiang at the conference »Race, Power, and Privilege in Academia,« Panel »Queer of Color Critique« July 27–28, 2017 at Humboldt University Berlin. Notes taken by the author.

7 For the history of women's resistance to slavery in the Caribbean, see Shepherd 2008 and 2011.

that produces knowledge with important lessons for a remapping of women/gender studies« (Trotz 2007, 2).

As early as so-called first-wave US feminism in the 19th century—coinciding with and partly stemming from the movement for the abolition of slavery—African American women have addressed the multiple and intertwined oppressions they were opposed to as enslaved or formerly enslaved women without human or civil rights, subject to unpaid or low-paid labor, sexual abuse and the denial of the institutions of marriage and motherhood. Sojourner Truth's famous intervention at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851 provides a fitting illustration:

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women at the North all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! [...] I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Truth 1851)⁸

By referencing her experience as a black and formerly enslaved woman, Truth scrutinized the universal claim of the (predominantly white bourgeois) feminist movement. Also Socialist and working class feminists have also long challenged the classical Marxist notion of class as the primary contradiction, while gender and other forms of oppression are seen as »secondary« contradictions. During the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and '70s, Black and Chicana (as well as LGBT) feminists

8 Available online at: »Sojourner Truth: »Ain't I a Woman?« December 1851,« Modern History Sourcebook, Fordham University, accessed January 21, 2018, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp>.

voiced their concern about the neglect of their experiences and about exclusions related to the universalization of »womanhood« or »sisterhood.« It was also during these politically turbulent times, that ideas of the interdependencies of different axes of stratification emerged—first and foremost in activist circles. For instance, the black lesbian feminist collective »The Combahee River Collective« published a statement in 1979 in which they claim they are

actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face. (Combahee River Collective 1979, 210)

In a similar manner, during the 1975 Congresso das Mulheres Negras Brasileiras (Congress of Black Brazilian Women), black feminists in Brazil presented the »Manifesto das Mulheres Negras« (Manifesto of Black Women) and demonstrated how practices of racial domination have shaped gender relations in Brazil (see Caldwell 2007).

In her seminal book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Chicana author, activist and theorist Gloría Anzaldúa (1987) emphasized the experience of being »in-between« cultures, languages, national borders and international border regimes, sexual identities, social classes etc. as a relevant site or location of knowledge and epistemic production.

Opposite to the theory of the pure Aryan, and to the policy of racial purity that white America practices, this is a theory of inclusivity. [...] From this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization, an »alien« consciousness is currently in the making—a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands.

[...]

Because I, a *mestiza*,
 continually walk out of one culture
 and into another,
 because I am at all cultures at the same time,
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.
Estoy noretada por todas las voces que me hablan simultáneamente.
 (Anzaldúa 1987, 99)

The *mestiza* consciousness she promotes in this book thereby scrutinized hegemonic notions of purity (of cultures, identities, sexualities). In the US, the Caribbean and throughout Latin America afro-descendant,⁹ indigenous and other marginalized feminists (for example Angela Davis in her seminal work *Woman, Race and Class* (1981), as well as Toni Morrison, bell hooks, Audre Lorde and many others claimed a multidimensional perspective on the simultaneous articulation of inequalities. Black feminists have also emphasized the crucial role of Whiteness for racist structures and the necessity of a critical reflection of this privileged and hegemonic position as unmarked norm, including a critique of epistemology (see Morrison 1992; Hill Collins 1990; Frankenberg 1993; more recently, Wekker 2016). So-called standpoint feminists, who have emphasized the situatedness and locatedness (or standpoint) of all knowledge production (see, e.g., Haraway 1988; Harding 2006, 2008), and so-called Third World feminists have put special emphasis on the Eurocentrism of hegemonic feminisms (e.g., Anzaldúa and Moraga 1981; Anzaldúa and Keating 2002; Mendoza 2010; Mohanty 1984, 1991, 2003a, 2003b; Suárez Návaz and Hernández 2008). The multi-level exclusion of Black women is most illustratively expressed in the title of the 1982 volume *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of US Are Brave* (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982), while the authors of »Challenging Imperial Feminism« (Amos and Parmar 1984) render the (post)colonial geopolitics of feminist knowledge production and circulation problematic.

9 In Latin America, the political term most used is »mujeres afrodescendientes.«

In her 1989 essay »Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,« the scholar of Law Kimberlé Crenshaw finally coined the term of intersectionality—for a lawsuit against General Motors (GM)—in order to underline the juridical invisibility of the multiple dimensions of oppression experienced by African-American female workers at the US-American car company. Crenshaw aimed to create concrete juridical categories to address discriminations at multiple and varying levels. GM had hired no black women until 1964. In turn, the black women hired after 1970 lost their jobs, after the court had rejected the plaintiff's sex discrimination claim (GM did hire women, but all of them were white) as well as the plaintiff's race discrimination claim (GM did hire blacks, but all of them were male). Based on this observation, Crenshaw claimed that:

Black women's experiences are much broader than the general categories that discrimination discourse provides. Yet the continued insistence that black women's demands and needs be filtered through categorical analyses that completely obscure their experiences guarantees that their needs will seldom be addressed (Crenshaw [1989] 2011, 30).

The sociologists Patricia Hill Collins, Leslie McCall, and others have elaborated on the concept, and by now, intersectionality has become a central term of feminist theory.¹⁰

Current Eurocentric discourses on intersectionality mostly ignore that the »interlocking systems of oppressions« they theoretically seek to render problematic, have been the lived experiences and the object of struggle and resistance by feminists of Color for more than a century. Academics speaking from non-hegemonic positions have elaborated on the concept of intersectionality and worked towards adopting, appropriating, utilizing or owning it for their needs (see, e.g., Wade 2008; Wade, Urrea Giraldo,

¹⁰ For a critical approach to intersectionality discussing the pitfalls and shortcomings, but also the potential of the concept, see, e.g.: Knapp (2005); Klinger (2007); Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al. (2008); Haschemi Yekani et al. (2008); Lorey (2008). For intersectionality and/in postcolonial/global contexts (and Latin America in particular), see Roth (2013, 2014).

and Viveros Vigoya 2009; Junco 2011; Viveros Vigoya 2013; Zapata Galindo, García Peter, and Chan de Ávial 2013; and the MISEAL project) and thus contributed to shifting the map of Occidental geopolitics of knowledge as expressed in hegemonic notions of intersectionality. Caribbean feminist interventions such as the volumes *Daughters of Caliban* (1997) and *Afrocubanas* (2011) are valuable contributions for an intersectional feminist perspectivation. By contrasting hegemonic feminist narratives with their situated experiences and combining a postcolonial/decolonial perspective with a broad and multi-axis understanding of gender inequalities—as deeply entangled with colonial, geopolitical, patriarchal hierarchies—and calling hegemonic feminists to reflect their privileged positions and their blind spots, Caribbean feminist thinkers of African descent offer a radical notion of intersectionality and claim a critical Occidentalism. In her introduction to the volume *Daughters of Caliban*—which already in its title hints at their colonially structured and engendered position as embodied by Shakespeare’s famous Caliban character of *The Tempest* and the notion of an afrodescendent Black Atlantic (as proposed by Paul Gilroy 1992)—Consuelo López Springfield describes the interdisciplinary book as bearing witness to »the multiplicity of Caribbean women’s roles [...]: interregional immigrant female labor, the interplay of race and gender in the construction of national cultures, the impact of developmentalist policies and colonialist legal practices on women’s lives, and women’s creative roles in providing cultural continuity in exile communities.« (Gilroy 1992, xi) The contribution by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert focuses on »decolonizing feminism« (ibid., 3–5), and Suzanne LaFont and Deborah Pruitt trace the »colonial legacies« of gendered law in Jamaica (ibid., 215–17). Gender hierarchies are this always also and always already entangled and articulated simultaneously as colonial and racialized hierarchies.

Moreover, the strict separation within feminist discourse between what Silvia Wynter (1990) has termed »theory givers« in the West and in the academy and »theory takers« in activism, art and non-Western contexts in feminist discourses has also led afro-descendant and »Third World« feminists to denounce »theory itself as inherently Western, and as an

impediment to activism« (Shohat 2002, 71). Shohat therefore suggests, despite this indispensable critique, claiming a broader and less exclusive understanding of what counts as feminist and intersectional theorizing:

(1) the importance of looking critically at activist practices, and of theorizing them as part of feminist agendas; (2) that every practice is undergirded by some kind of theory, philosophy, worldview, or discursive grid—even when the practitioners claim not to have a theory; (3) that theorizing and theories are not a Western monopoly, a view that would inscribe in reverse a colonialist vision of the West as theoretical mind and the non-West as unreflecting body; and (4) that Third World women and women of color have themselves contributed to theorizing not only by writing theory per se, but also by their own multiaxis thinking and activism, which has challenged multiple hegemonic discourses. In this sense, activism itself can be seen as a form of theorizing, a practical testing of ideas. Ironically, I think that many activists have underestimated their own historical contribution to the West's questioning of totalizing narratives. (Shohat 2002, 71)

In light of the need for more transnational and relational approaches to intersectional inequalities, Floya Anthias (2006) considers intersectionality to be tied to what she calls »translocational positionality« that is, the way, positions and relations change, vary, and reconfigure from location to location. »Translocational positionality« refers to a social process (rather than group identities) and to related practices and arrangements that create positionalities. She thus argues that the focus should be shifted from groups toward forms of violence and exclusion and should incorporate the notion of hierarchy. This would also mean including the parameters of unequal power relations that create positionalities within and between cultures that create positionalities and taking the local into consideration in connection with the transnational/global.¹¹ According to her notion of translocational positionalities, differences and inequalities should be considered as a dynamic and changeable process. A radical

11 For an ethnographical example, see Santos' article in this volume.

intersectionality understood in this way can provide a productive and necessary corrective for Occidentalism.

**De-centering (single) story tellers, diversifying stories,
decolonizing feminism**

The starting point of this article was the observation that the access to and the evaluation of what counts as relevant feminist theorizing is marked by power structures that render academic knowledge produced in the centers of the Occident universal and marginalize other forms. In order to analyze and address this asymmetry in its structural and global dimension, the article has proposed the concept of Occidentalism as a set of representational practices that turn difference into hierarchy privileging the Occident and rendering interrelations invisible. The (critical) focus on Occidentalism in the tradition of critical whiteness Studies/approaches is interested in analyzing and critiquing the self-construction and self-critique of Western hegemony. In a gesture to translate a critical whiteness approach to other (German) contexts, Gabriele Dietze (2010) suggests a »critical Occidentalism.« As a paradigmatic and epistemic starting point for thinking beyond hierarchies and refocusing on relationalities, critical Occidentalism requires a self-critical stance towards the own privilege and all hegemony (including one's own). Such approaches require the critical reflection of the own privileged location, and the consideration of global inequalities and respective manifold positionalities.

As we have seen, the critical endeavor of feminists speaking from the academy and the (self-proclaimed) centers, the radical contextualization and relational historicization of our terms and narratives/genealogies is an urgent and necessary task. Feminist approaches interested in not only describing, but also overcoming colonial and ethnic/racial hierarchies, include perspectives from non-hegemonic positions and forms of knowledge. Considering the unequal geopolitics of (feminist) knowledge (about intersectionality) intersectional approaches need to take the geopolitics of knowledge underlying the own location into account, as well as critically reflect on their own privileged location/position, as a

critical Occidental perspective requires. For example, gender gains a new meaning for women travelling to poorer countries. As, for example, the Austrian film *Paradies: Liebe* (Ulrich Seidl 2013) illustratively shows, »disadvantages« of age and class in the Austrian home society can turn into privileged positions based on racial, economic, and citizenship capital in the context of encounters of so-called romance tourism with men in poorer countries like Kenya (see Roth 2013; Boatcă and Roth 2016). The implicitly power-sensitive and hegemony critical dimension of the concept of Occidentalism is helpful for a respective approach to feminism aware of the described hierarchies.

Shohat claims a relational understanding of feminism, »beyond a mere description of the many cultures from which feminisms emerge [...] transcends an additive approach [...] where each ethnically marked feminist speaks in her turn, dressed in national costume.« (Shohat 2003, 68). Such an approach framed by a critical Occidental lens should consider global inequalities (and colonial legacies) and reflect the way, positions and relations change, vary, and reconfigure from location to location. Intersectionality understood as and expanded to mean »translocational positionality« (Anthias 2006) provides a frame and an epistemic sensibilization in order to bring such interrelations into view, going beyond binary paradigms.¹² Thereby, spaces like the Caribbean turn from margins to centers of relevant knowledge and theorizing. Feminists from such spaces have long been practicing a politics of alliances and solidarity, linking interlocking axes of oppression with one another and to structural inequalities such as colonial legacies and geopolitical location. Including their knowledges and approaches can help to reconnect feminism with its political and activist roots, revealing

12 Which categories and locations are relevant cannot be fixed a priori, but must be developed in context from the concrete material at hand. A respective »multichronotopic« (Shohat) awareness to thinking new forms of conviviality and connectedness and the inclusion of »Other« than Occidental knowledges of »interseccionalidad« provides an analytical framework of new spaces beyond traditional boundaries and new analytical categories beyond national or cultural paradigm alone.

notions of purity, hierarchy, and separation as fictions. Ideally, different feminisms could become one another's reference points as coeval and horizontal positions, decentering received existing hegemonies organized around the interlocking axes of oppression the concept of intersectionality addresses. A critical Occidental framing helps avoid the re-inscription or reproduction of hierarchies and asymmetries.

Outlook—Towards a critical Occidental radical intersectional practice

While I terminate writing these lines, a broad movement to oppose the racist, sexist and anti-immigrant, and white supremacist politics of the newly elected Trump administration is taking shape in the United States and elsewhere under the banner of the »Women's March.« This movement connects a critical Occidental perspective with radical intersectional practice with a new quality. Whereas the term »women« had been met by harsh criticism during the second wave feminisms for generalizing and universalizing the concerns of *certain* (white Western) women, it is now being strategically applied in order to mobilize solidarity across and beyond differences. The planning process of the marches was accompanied by harsh controversies among feminists from differing positions. However, the organizers seemingly succeeded in uniting not only the different feminist movements, but also a broad coalition of other emancipatory groups (see Hess 2017). Departing from the minimal communality of being objectified by and politically opposed to the politics of the administration, the protests united afro-descendant, Chicana, Latina, Native American/indigenous, white, activist, academic, undocumented, migrant, refugee, and LGBTIQ women and men from all social strata. This is also expressed on the March's homepage, where the event is described as one uniting »people of all backgrounds—women and men and gender nonconforming people, young and old, of diverse faiths, differently abled, immigrants and indigenous [...] answering a call to show up and be counted as those who believe in a world that is equitable, tolerant, just and safe for all, one in which the human rights and dignity of each person is protected and our planet is safe from

destruction.«¹³ Notably, from the outset of the first protest marches, a number of signs claiming an intersectional feminism were prominently omnipresent, while others united claims for women's rights and against sexism with claims against racism and for the protection of immigrants' laws.¹⁴ Similar marches took place also in cities around the world to say no to racist, sexist and anti-immigration politics and to white supremacy (the homepage lists 673 »sister marches« around the world, mobilizing 4956,422 protesters).¹⁵ In her speech held during the march in Washington, D.C. on January 21, 2017, Latina actress America Ferrera referred to her own position as a woman immigrant to the US in order to then call for solidarity and a united, intersectional, struggle:

As a woman and as a proud first-generation American born to Honduran immigrants, it's been a heartbreaking time to be both a woman and an immigrant in this country. Our dignity, our character, our rights have all been under attack. [...]

We are gathered here and across the country and around the world today to say, Mr. Trump, we refuse. We reject the demonization of our Muslim brothers and sisters. We condemn the systemic murder and incarceration of our black brothers and sisters. We will not ask our LGBT families to go backwards. We will not go from being a nation of immigrants to a nation of ignorance. We won't build walls and we won't see the worst in each other.¹⁶

By strategically uniting and addressing the relational character of different forms of exclusion, oppression, and inequalities faced by women, immigrants,

13 See »The March,« website of the Women's March, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.womensmarch.com/march>.

14 For video recording of the march, see »Women's March on Washington,« live stream, *New York Times*, January 21, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2jScbh8>.

15 See <https://www.womensmarch.com/march>.

16 See Jaimie Primeau, »America Ferrera's Women's March Speech Spreads Powerful Message About Immigrants,« *Bustle*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.bustle.com/p/america-ferreras-womens-march-spe.ch-spreads-a-powerful-message-about-immigrants-32061>.

Muslims, LGBT people, etc., Ferrera on the one hand scrutinized the notion of differences as hierarchies, and on the other hand of cultures and nations (and genders, »races,« and sexualities, respectively) as separate, pure entities. The multiple origins, identities, and politics the claimed by the protesters as making up »America« implicitly scrutinized Occidentalism superiority, patriarchy, and white supremacy. The protests might be a starting point for future and more forceful efforts of de-linking intersectionality from its entanglements with Occidentalism. By taking to the streets and including arts and activism, the protesters have begun to tie the concept back to its radical activist roots and simultaneously elaborate on the theorizing of the concept for concrete social contexts, struggles, new forms of alliances and visions of conviviality.

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