A Student Primer on Intersectionality: Not Just A Buzzword
An Open Educational Resource

Table of Contents

Part III: Readings

Unit I: Marginalized Identities
"I Needed to See the Politic Being Lived":

Unit II: Class and Neoliberalism

Unit III: Queer Intersectionalities

Unit IV: Advocacy

A Student Primer on Intersectionality: Not Just A Buzzword
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PREFACE

This book

- lays out the objectives of WS 166, Gender, Race, and Class, taught in the Women's and Gender Studies Department, Pace University, New York City campus;
- provides a structure for any course addressing intersectionality, feminism, and oppression;
- describes the framework of intersectionality, which examines societal issues by analyzing the interlocking systems of oppression that shape people's lives;
- argues for a transnational application of intersectionality that also centers U.S. Black feminists' contributions to understanding oppression;
- includes journal articles, TED Talks, and class exercises that are generally accessible for most students or interested readers without previous exposure to these topics.

We designed this book to illustrate that intersectionality is a powerful tool for learning about and addressing injustice and inequity. When we analyze the world using an intersectionality framework, we learn about people's lives and experiences in ways that we may never have considered, or wanted to consider. And the mere act of examining multiple systems of oppression is not enough, either, as the point of understanding oppression is to end it in all forms. As you read, be thankful for the discomfort, anger, and compassion that may arise; learning about oppression is never easy, but it is a worthwhile and meaningful task.

Introduction
by
Meghana V. Nayak

My colleagues and I put together this reader for WS 166, Gender, Race, and Class, taught at Pace University, New York City campus. The course description notes that students will:

1) examine the complex intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, among other vectors of diversity in the United States, as well as globally;
2) offer interdisciplinary perspectives on social inequalities and -isms – such as sexism, racism, classism, or ableism--and relevant outcomes;
3) use interdisciplinary perspectives to chronicle the lived experiences of women and marginalized communities, including violence, exploitation, work, and social justice advocacy.

This textbook builds upon other excellent anthologies on gender, race, and class (Andersen and Collins 2019; Baca Zinn et. al. 2019; Rothenberg and Accomando 2019) but offers the advantage of using only open access material. Anthologies are expensive, and this book is free! We wanted to utilize open source materials precisely because of the importance of intersectionality, a framework that alerts us to the impact of certain social conditions, such as the financial difficulties many students may face when purchasing usually exorbitant textbooks on feminism. Yet, it was still a struggle to find open source material that would be fully representative of knowledge produced by marginalized scholars, scholars in the Global South, and scholars writing about alternative perspectives. Students should know that these groups of scholars, located in or working with marginalized communities, experience pressure to publish in journals that are *not* open access (also called "behind the paywall") in order to increase their credibility when they apply for jobs or seek promotions and job stability at universities.

Accordingly, this open source textbook is itself an entry point for understanding intersectionality by querying who has access to knowledge, what kind of knowledge, and for what purposes. Scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) note the difference between *dominant* knowledge and *subjugated* knowledge. For instance, imagine two books are written about one marginalized community. One is written by a university professor, published by an academic press. Her book becomes an authoritative source of knowledge about this community; other professors assign it, students read and write about it, academics cite it, and policymakers may even reference it when addressing the needs of this community. Her book is a "dominant" form of knowledge about that community, because she is an "expert," even though it might be expensive or may be written in a way that speaks more to professors and policymakers than to the directly impacted community members. Crucially, the dominant form of knowledge may reflect more about the professor's *perceptions* and *privileges* than about the issues and perceptions in the community.

On the other hand, imagine that the second text is a self-published book, zine, or community pamphlet by a woman from the same community about how to address the needs of the people around her. But who would consider her knowledge to be "dominant," as important and worthy of discussing in universities and think tanks? Yet, this second book is researched and written based on a wealth of experience and direct observations in the community and is easily accessible and affordable. It is a source of empowerment and resistance for community members because this "subjugated" knowledge *comes from* their context. This does not mean, as Collins points out, that subjugated knowledge flawlessly captures everything to be known about the community; rather, the point is that dominant knowledge may be used to reinforce dominant ideas, dominant groups, and dominant power structures and to minimize or dismiss subjugated knowledge. Further, this distinction is not strict; knowledge can be both dominant and subjugated, representing both powerful and marginalized lenses, information, and experiences.

This book demonstrates and showcases both dominant and subjugated knowledge. The three of us have educational access, by virtue of being a tenured professor/chair of a department and two part-time faculty. Being employed at a university enabled us to curate these readings, all of which are in English. The choices we made about what to include are shaped by our various privileges and structural disadvantages associated with gender, marriage, citizenship and legal residency status, class/caste, sexuality, disability, and more. All three of us identify as women; for further context: I am second-generation Indian-American; Elodie Silberstein is French-Cameroonian and migrated recently to the U.S. after receiving her PhD in Australia; Marisa Tramontano is Jewish-Italian American. Our social locations led us to pay attention to certain topics, but we likely and inevitably failed to see others.

To explicitly include more subjugated knowledge, we first included the work of emerging scholars, those who are not famous or well-known, or whose work may not be "mainstream" in Women's and Gender Studies classes. As Griselda Pollock (1999) demonstrates in her analysis of literature on fine art, if we mainly work in the narrow parameters of the canon, or the specific texts that are considered within a subject to be the most "important" and "valuable," we perpetuate an alienating and incomplete understanding of intersectionality and exclude the voices of marginalized communities. Second, we tried to include many different kinds of conversations with and representations of marginalized communities around the world. As such, we included essays with some errors or typos, because those authors had to write/translate into a dominant language, English, or perhaps did not have the same kind of copyediting resources or time that more privileged scholars may have.

Third, we aimed to prioritize essays that do not use a lot of jargon and complicated sentences. Some essays will certainly be rather difficult and challenging, and may even frustrate you. But plenty of what you will find here will be something you can share with friends or family. Fourth, if we could not find an essay on a particular topic that was relatively accessible, we turned to Ted Talks, all of which are open access. For example, U.S. Black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991; 2012) coined and popularized the framework of intersectionality; however, later when we define intersectionality, we ask students to start with a Ted Talk by Crenshaw that might be more suitable for beginners than her legal, academic articles.

Open access materials are important for creating equity. We happen to be curating this book during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented crisis has laid bare what feminist scholars have always known: that access to education is uneven. Some of our students do not have reliable access to WiFi, are sharing computers with others in their households, are taking care of sick or elderly family members, or are part of disproportionately impacted communities. We are also currently witnessing significant mobilization of communities within and outside of the U.S. to proclaim "Black Lives Matter." Given the urgency of the moment, we wanted to make this material accessible *now,* rather than waiting for the lengthy process of publishing through non-open access channels. An open access textbook allows students to always have access to the kind of work that speaks to your lives and to potential ways to create social justice.

Finally, we recommend that if students do want to own or purchase particular books about gender, race, and class, you should use independent bookstores, such as by visiting https://bookshop.org. Independent bookstores can help to ensure equity because they support authors, independent presses, and all the workers involved in the publishing industry. For example, Indian activist Urvashi Butalia created India's first feminist independent press so as to have a place for feminist knowledge to be shared and to inspire political change. Please read this interview with Butalia to recognize the politics of creating and disseminating knowledge (Arora and Sanos 2018).

In the following sections, I first explain in more detail intersectionality as a framework. The second section is devoted to an accessible list of helpful terminology and concepts. Third, I ground intersectionality as a transnational framework of critical importance, despite the minimizing of intersectionality as a trendy buzzword. Chapter Two examines concrete examples of systematic oppression through Ted Talks and a set of exercises for students. Chapter Three offers a set of readings to explore the connections between different types of oppressive experiences and resistance around the world.

I.   What is Intersectionality?

As noted above, we will study "complex intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, among other vectors of diversity." Before we examine intersectionality, we need to understand *what* precisely is intersecting. Gender, race, class, and other categories are social constructs. A social construct provides meaning we *collectively build* and assumes the meanings we assign to particular identities and categories are *not* natural, inherent, or inevitable. A social construction approach assumes there is not one objective reality, but rather multiple realities that depend on the standpoint, or perspective, of individuals, groups, and societies.

The meanings individuals hold about gender, race, class, and other identity categories come from shared dominant understandings of how people should be and act but that do not match how people may actually live their lives or want to live. For instance, there is no "natural" relationship between dresses and female anatomy. Moreover, many men around the world wear what could be described as dresses by some western viewers. There is nothing "natural" about the idea that men/male-identified people cannot or should not wear dresses, but we may act *as if* it is natural, even though that idea is socially constructed, an agreed upon idea that is endorsed by people, popular culture, schools, religious institutions, and more.

Boys or men who wear dresses are seen as so strange that they may even be bullied or attacked for doing so. So, a social construct is not just an abstract thought; it is treated as if it is real. It shapes our lives, and the way we act reinforces the "realness" of the construct.

Importantly, the meaning we give to any particular construct usually *ranks* one identity as better than others. For example, with the social construct of sexuality, heterosexuality is considered to be "better," because it is the norm, an aspiration, and there are no discriminatory consequences to being straight; however, to be anything but straight (gay, lesbian, bisexual, for example) is considered to be "less" than and can result in discrimination, oppression, and violence. Thus these hierarchies are *part* of how the social constructs have been *made.*

Does social construction mean that we should not be proud of being a woman, or of being Black, for example, because there is "no such thing"? Does social construction mean that we should not talk about disability rights because "ability" is just a social construct? The answers are "no." Rather, we are pointing out that lived experiences, things that happen with and to our bodies, the kinds of things we do in the world, are all shaped by and shape the meanings we attach to different parts of our lives. For example, our "socioeconomic class" is real in the sense that we may not have enough in our paycheck to pay off our student loans *and* pay the rent, or that we may be the first in our families to go to college. Belonging to the "working class" has real, material effects. But class is a "construct" because there is an idea that society *should* be stratified into classes that are ranked as better or worse, or more or less valuable.

Different labels are attached to being a member of the working class, most of them negative or pejorative, which is why Pace University focuses on "upward mobility," or the idea that an education at this university can be your ticket from a "lower" class to a more desirable "upper" class, where you can ostensibly do things like pay off your debts, take care of your family, buy things you want to purchase, and feel "secure" that you will not go hungry or end up without a home. To see class as a social construct makes us consider, how did it become this way? Why do we need to aim to go into a "higher" class; why isn't being a part of our working class families "enough" to keep us feeling safe, fed, and secure? Who or which systems are invested in the working class doing so much labor for such little pay? Why are certain things like decent health insurance or a college education out of reach for so many in the working class? If members of the working class understood their experiences as shaped by unfair societal stratification, could they organize a way to overthrow or transform the class system so as to eliminate discrimination based on class?

When we examine the intersection of social constructs, we need to understand how those constructs are experienced when they are *interlocking*. In addition, the *way* we examine the intersecting constructs can also shape what we know or understand about an issue. For example, Sylvanna Falcón (2016) studied a wide network of Afro-descendant Latin American women who attended the United Nations World Conference on Racism. She observed that when we start with gender, such as proclaiming that we care about women's rights, we tend to do a relatively poor job with understanding the intersection with other constructions such as race or sexuality. That is why women of color claim that mainstream white feminist movements consistently leave out race. At that point, it is almost too late. Attempts to "add" in race, class, or other constructs are lacking because the very understanding of gender was flawed because it was

examined in isolation. Gender, race, and other constructs must be examined *together* from the start. Falcón noted that when Afro-descendant women talked about oppression, their analysis was more comprehensive and relevant because they started their conversations with simultaneous examinations of the multiple forms of oppression.

So, what precisely is intersectionality? Please watch this Ted Talk in its entirety.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2016. "The Urgency of Intersectionality." Uploaded in October, 2016. Ted Talks TedWomen2016 video, 18:41 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality.

We can summarize the "urgency" of intersectionality as follows. First, this framework helps us see that various systems of oppression *cannot be separated and treated as additions or subtractions* to any other system of oppression. It is all tangled up in each other, because we are not simply checking off a list of identities. Rather, when we use an intersectional framework, we are explaining what creates and makes possible the oppressive experiences of people's lives. The way systems of oppression intersect actually change how oppression operates for different groups of people*.* For instance, a Black woman will experience sexism differently from a white woman and racism differently from a Black man, *and* a Black woman's experiences of marginalization will be less likely to be understood precisely because it interweaves gender *and* race. So one cannot simply say, for example, that a Black lesbian woman is more oppressed than a Black straight woman. It is more complicated than that. The ways that oppressions combine and compound must be understood in their contexts, at the micro/individual and macros/structural levels in tandem. Crenshaw powerfully makes this point in the video by noting that the names of Black men killed by police are more well known than the names of Black women killed by police; four years after this video, activists are still attempting to make sure Breonna Taylor's story is as well known as that of George Floyd. Other activists are drawing attention to incarcerated Black people killed by security personnel, or the overlap in the mistreatment of incarcerated Black people and immigrants (Black immigrants included).

Second, intersectionality shows us the difference between the "norm" and the "marginalized." Masculinity, whiteness, heterosexuality, and other dominant identities are most often treated as neutral, unmarked, or universal. That means if we read about a person in a book, study, or newspaper, in the U.S. context, that person is assumed to be white, male, middle or upper class, cisgender (not trans) and heterosexual, *unless otherwise noted*. Sometimes, aspects of people's identity are hypervisible, such as when police, job search committees, or store owners profile people based on skin color and make assumptions about those people.

Third, policy, law, media, various institutions, knowledge structures, and informal social discourse perpetuate the interlocking oppression of gender, race, class, and other constructs and identities. Each social institution creates, reinforces, and maintains meanings about gender, race, class, and other constructs. Media imagery paired with correlating law and policy, reinforced in academic analysis and reified in public discourse, create both formal and "common sense" ideas that marginalize some and benefit others. I turn next to an examination of the terminology used thus far.

II. Terminology

1) Social Constructs: Click on the links to read Kang, Lessard, and Heston (2017)'s definitions:
   a) <u>Gender</u> and <u>Sexualities</u>
   b) <u>Race and Ethnicity</u>
   c) <u>Class</u>

These terms are only as helpful as our understanding of their interconnections and implications. For additional information about masculinities, which is a concept integral to understanding gender and sexualities, please click <u>here</u>. For additional information about other social constructs and identities, including disability, indigeneity, and the concepts of the "Global North"/ "First World" and "Global South"/ "Third World" please click <u>here</u>. (Note: you can skip the section on transnationalism for now, as we discuss that below).

2) <u>-Isms, Phobias, and Systems of Oppression</u>

When various articles discuss an "ism" or "phobia," they are referencing discrimination or hatred/fear on the basis of some ability or identity of someone with *less* power. So, for example, classism does not mean discrimination against upper-class people who own economic wealth and are able to make decisions that impact others negatively; classism is discrimination based upon belonging to a class that is deemed to be "lower" or "less than."

Here is a running list of the types of isms, phobias, and systems of oppression that should become a part of the vocabulary of this course.

<u>Ableism</u>: discrimination on the basis of physical, cognitive, and other abilities.
<u>Anti-blackness</u>: racism and hatred directed specifically against Black people, including by non-Black people of color.
<u>Anti-semitism</u>: hostility, discrimination, and prejudice against Jewish people as religious or racial groups.
<u>Asexual erasure</u>: questioning or denying the existence, visibility, or legitimacy of asexuality, or different fluid choices/experiences around engaging or not in sexual desire and sexual connection.
<u>Ageism</u>: discrimination on the basis of age, against both the elderly and younger people.
<u>Aporophobia</u>: discrimination and hostility against people living in poverty; from the Spanish word *aporofobia,* coined by Adela Cortina, Spanish philosopher.
<u>Bi-erasure</u>: questioning or denying the existence, visibility, or legitimacy of bisexuality.
<u>Casteism</u>: discrimination on the basis of caste; caste is hereditary social stratification, so that one is allegedly born into a place in the social order that dictates rituals, occupation, where one can travel, whom one can marry, etc. For example, the stratification in India is as follows, starting from "high caste," perceived as the most "pure" to "least pure": Brahmin (priests/academics); Kshatriya (rulers/warriors/soldiers/administrators); Vaishya (merchants/farmers/artisans/agriculturalists); Sudras (laborers; service providers); "Untouchables"/out of caste (street sweepers; cleaners of human and animal waste; those who deal with dead bodies). Dalit/Bahujan/Adivasi are the terms used by people who are labeled as "untouchables," non-Brahmins, and/or "backwards" indigenous people as a rejection of the caste system. Other versions of caste hierarchy and casteism occur throughout South Asia.

Cisnormativity: the imposition of a gender binary on individuals and relationships outside the binary; include Deadnaming (referring to a transgender person by their birth name rather than their chosen name) and Misgendering (assuming or referencing to a person by pronouns that are not correct or chosen by that person).

Classism: discrimination on the basis of class.

Colonialism: occupation and setting up of settlements in countries/territories already inhabited and/or ruled by people living there for access to resources, labor, or territory.

Colorism: discrimination on the basis of skin color within people of the same non-white racial group, targeting people with darker skin colors as less than/less attractive/less worthy people with lighter skin colors.

Ethnonationalism: a commitment and loyalty to one's perceived community based on shared origins and ethnicity that on the face may seem like community pride but can be utilized to marginalize, displace, and ethnically cleanse a marginalized community within a territory, to justify violence in the name of nationalist pride, and to alienate people with hybrid and multiple ethnic backgrounds.

Fatphobia: discrimination on the basis of body size and hatred of fatness.

Heteronormativity: the assumption that heterosxuality is normal or preferred and the promotion of heterosexual norms, such as monogamy, marriage and children, home ownership, and patriarchal gender roles.

Heterosexism: discrimination on the basis of sexuality.

Homonormativity: the imposition of heterosexual norms, such as monogamy, marriage and children, home ownership, and patriarchal gender roles, on non-heteroseuxal individuals and relationships.

Homophobia: discrimination on the basis of sexuality and hatred/fear of people who are not straight/heterosexual.

Islamophobia: hostility, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims.

Imperialism: ideology of extending power, through force, intervention, domination, and political/economic rule over another country or territory in order to create an empire, which is an aggregate of several political entities over which the imperial country has control, domination, and influence.

Intersex discrimination: discrimination on the basis of a person's anatomical features that are perceived to be abnormal or ambiguous, often resulting in "corrective" surgery without consent of the person.

Misogyny: discrimination on the basis of sex and hatred of women.

Nativism: systems that unfairly benefit "native-born" citizens over immigrants.

Neoliberalism/Neoliberal Capitalism: economic policies that favor free markets and deregulation and social ideologies that foster individualism; promotion of the idea that strong and powerful countries, corporations, and other political players should be able to influence how less powerful countries are governed and what types of political and economic policies they can institute; neoliberalism results in reduction of public expenditures for social services that marginalized communities rely upon, and in privatization of public enterprises (like water, food, transportation) thus restricting equitable access.

Orientalism: as coined by Palestinian scholar Edward Said, a pattern originating during colonialism where western countries claimed to study colonized areas but put forward claims based not upon empirical knowledge but on stereotypes; examples include perceiving a group of people as lazy, backwards, barbaric toward women, exotic, weird, etc. The harmful depictions of the "East" (Middle East/South Asia/Africa/East Asia) are used to justify western power.

Patriarchy: the set of systems and institutions that perpetuate the concept of a gender binary, promote particular violent notions of "manhood" as the dominant way to be a "man," and promote ideas of "womanhood" as submissive, subjugated, and less important than men.

Privilege: the unearned benefits one gets from oppressive social systems.

Racism: discrimination on the basis of race.

Settler colonialism: a form of colonialism that seeks to replace the original population of the colonized territory with a new society of settlers.

Sexism: discrimination on the basis of "sex," presuming a gender binary that devalues women.

Totalitarianism: unlimited extension of state power to control and shape all aspects of people's lives, including public and private behaviors, financial power, and beliefs and speech.

Transphobia: discrimination on the basis of gender identity and the hatred/fear of transgender people.

Xenophobia: discrimination on the basis of citizenship status and hatred/fear of immigrants, inclusive of migrants with or without papers, and refugees. Refugees are those who have crossed borders due to fear of or experience of persecution based upon race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinion, or belonging to a social group, such as those with a marginalized sexuality; they may have received legal protection from a host country so that they are not deported to a country in which they would fear for their lives, or they may include anyone who has crossed borders to escape harmful situations such as war and conflict.

Western/white feminism: a reference to/label of feminisms that predominantly reflect only white western women's experiences and are meant to advance only white western feminists' interests; it thus ignores, sidelines, and silences other more representative and justice-oriented feminist movements, and it ignores white western feminist participation in racism, xenophobia, classism, and other -isms. It is also a reference to/label of simplistic popular/mainstreamed ideas *about* feminisms that align with structures of domination and oppression.

White supremacy: the system and institutions designed to ensure white people and whiteness are considered dominant and superior to all other races, as well as to ensure racial classification itself.

3) Institutions and Structures that Perpetuate -Isms, Phobias, and Systems of Oppression

As noted above, institutions and structures strengthen and perpetuate systems of oppression. See here for an explanation from Kang, Lessard, and Heston (2017) of how institutions and structures operate. In summary, structures and institutions are the context that make it possible for the individual acts and interpersonal interactions that are oppressive or discriminatory. That is why we challenge the "few bad apples" argument often offered when we talk about, for example, racism in the university. Also, the way we act as individuals can reinforce or transform these structures and institutions.

Examples of institutions include:

- Police
- Military
- Schools
- Religious and faith-based institutions
- Popular culture

- Media
- Social discourse
- Families and communities
- Medicine/health
- Government
- Law/Judiciary

4) Consequences of -Isms, Phobias, and Systems of Oppression

Throughout the Ted Talks and the readings, we urge you to consider the consequences and impact of oppression. Some examples include:
- Lack of fair access to housing, healthcare, education, water, food, careers, travel, and safety;
- Lack of self-determination or denial of agency;
- Violence and poverty;
- Generational transfer or accumulation of inequalities, such as the long-lasting negative effects of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, apartheid, occupation, and ethnic cleansing on the descendants of those who suffered from/continue to suffer from these events;
- Internalized, familial, community, and intergenerational trauma;
- Activism, resistance, and mobilization to address, dismantle, and create alternatives to systems of oppression.

Let us take an example of how we might apply the social constructs, the -isms, the structures, and the consequences. I think about the several headlines in recent years lamenting the high rates of maternal mortality in Black communities in the U.S. Maternal mortality means that a woman dies during childbirth or within one year of childbirth, for any reason related to the pregnancy. These deaths are the consequences of the intersection of racism and misogyny in the medical industry, because health professionals do not believe or will dismiss Black women's reports of symptoms and pain, and because Black women do not have access to sufficient prenatal care due to disparate health experiences and outcomes.

Now let us push the analysis further. The focus on Black women is crucial and necessary because the data is devastating; however, indigenous women in the U.S. have the second highest maternal mortality rates after Black women. So, an intersectional framework would not only investigate the cause of the death rates of Black women but also ask about why indigenous women's experiences are not even included as a category in public health comparative data analyses of rates for racial groups. An intersectional framework would trace how the legacies of slavery and genocide/forced sterilization shaped maternal mortality rates for generations of both Black and indigenous women, respectively (Smith 2015; Truschel and Novoa 2018; Owens and Fett 2019). What do these dual experiences of Black and indigenous people tell us about how U.S. state oppression operates, and how Black-indigenous solidarities have emerged out of the shared experience of brutalities (Tuck, Guess, and Sultan 2014)? What do these experiences have in common with the reproductive violence against migrants and people living on or near the U.S.-Mexico border (Hernández and Upton 2019)?

A second question would be to ask what is done with the knowledge about the consequences of intersectional oppression. In the following Facebook post, a Black woman living in the U.S., Zabrina Harris (2020), shares that her doctor used the *fact* of greater Black maternal mortality rates as a foregone conclusion and offered no attempts to support or help her. Harris is offering subjugated knowledge to challenge the dominant idea that Black women's experiences do not matter.

> When I was pregnant, I had to go on bed rest at month 5. My cervix was short and doctors didn't know the cause. Lil Z almost came so early that life-saving measures would not have been taken if she was born. As I lay on a bed waiting, the head of Labor and Delivery came in to offer his expert opinion. He simply told me that African-American women have a high rate of infant mortality. That's it. That was his explanation as a highly-trained medical professional in charge of an entire department and the lives of countless mothers and babies. I should just resolve myself to the fact that my baby might not make it because Black babies don't survive as often as white babies. He said it like it was some kind of diagnosis. And for many in the medical profession, Black is the end of the diagnosis. Their expectations for our survival and well-being are low because they have invested little to no time or resources into understanding how to help us. So, when a very smart man like Dr. Fauci who has given so many important insights into this COVID crisis stands up and says Black people are disproportionately dying because of our underlying medical conditions with little to no evidence to back it up, I think back to this doctor. And then I see so many taking his words as an opportunity to attack and blame Black people. Our health disparities are not our own creation. They are a product of racist practices that go back hundreds of years and prevail today.This is not an opportunity to chastise Black people for eating too much fried chicken. This is an opportunity to shine a light on the racism that is killing us in this crisis and every day in many ways in this country. I was a fit, active, healthy adult making the best possible diet and nutrition choices for my unborn child. A leading obstetrician thought it was scientifically sound to tell me that my child might not live simply because I'm Black. He didn't feel pressured to find an answer that would save her. And this is what we are being told now. The thinking is that being Black is sufficient diagnosis to explain and justify death. This country was never meant to help up thrive and so they are not surprised when we don't. It's up to us not to keep accepting the bad medicine they are prescribing.

So when we use an intersectionality framework, we are invested in finding out how to change and alter structures of oppression rather than simply point them out.

Finally, as you examine the vocabulary list above and the Ted Talks and readings below, you may notice that there is a "transnational" focus. "Transnational" means anything that crosses state or national borders, and can include ideas, people, goods, ways of doing things, and ways of setting up institutions that "travel" across borders. That "travel" may be literal, such as the shipment of coffee that farmers cultivated, or a family crossing a river because they are fleeing violence. It may be more of a network, such as various groups of feminists communicating, sharing ideas, and meeting at United Nations conferences around the world. Or an idea may travel and take hold as the right way for all countries to behave, such as when governments accept that nothing can be done to stop the transnational flow of capital, and they thus commit to neoliberalism, adopt austerity measures that disproportionately impact the most marginalized, and present those spending cuts as the only way to reduce deficits and to be healthy members of the global economy. The transnational dominant knowledge about what allegedly

needs to be done to create economic growth misses or marginalizes other ways of analyzing economics or the possibility of designing other economic systems. The "transnational" encompasses power hierarchies: some people help articulate and strengthen transnational dominant knowledge that neoliberalism is the way to go because they have more power than those who disagree; some people's voices may matter more than others in a United Nations meeting because of the privileges around who gets to travel versus who cannot travel; some countries/corporations/communities get to make and impose decisions on other countries/communities. The "transnational" includes communities connecting with each other to resist the status quo through ideas supported by subjugated knowledge; for example, people with disabilities connect across borders to push the global human rights movement to extend human rights protections to people with disabilities, because they have knowledge of the discrimination and oppression people with disabilities face. So, to have a transnational focus is not to simply compile a list of case studies from around the world; it is to explore cross-border interactions, how concepts, movements, and ideas move and mutate around the world and through time.

Kang, Lessard, and Heston (2017) provide explanations about transnational production and globalization here; gendered and sexualized labor in the global economy here; and, global inequalities, global stratification, and global wealth and poverty here.

III. Why is an Intersectionality Framework Useful?

There are plenty of reasons to be skeptical or suspicious of intersectionality, particularly because it is now a trendy buzzword. Too many scholars, advocates, and organizations use the word to simply mean a description of multiple identities without due attention to power relationships. Further, most current applications of the intersectionality framework remain limited to the Global North or the U.S. and thus fail to consider transnational, historical systems of oppression like colonialism or neoliberalism (Patil 2013). Countries and communities outside of the U.S. are often an afterthought in discussions about intersectionality.

Further, Jasbir Puar (2012) argues that using an intersectional approach can inadvertently keep the focus on white women when we talk about gender and feminism, as everyone else we may discuss through an intersectional lens are understood *because* of their differences *from* white women. Think about it: intersectionality is, in some ways, about saying you forgot about this person's experience or that group's marginalization, or their *difference* from the norm/status quo. And this "difference" might be treated as a foregone conclusion. So Puar uses the term "assemblage" to indicate that bodies and identities are not as stable as we think; we are always in the process of *becoming,* based upon various encounters, events, or things that we do, not just possessing or being a racial, sexual, or gender identity. We should not take identities for granted.

In other words, sometimes when we talk about intersectional oppression, we may talk about gender, race, and class, for example, as categories that never change and in ways that assume we know what gender, race, and class are. When we compare or analyze people's oppression and privileges based upon identities, we might indeed acknowledge and understand which people have been left out, marginalized, and violated due to the intersection of gender, race, and class, but we might very well fail to understand

the oppression that results from even organizing, categorizing, and thinking about our lives in terms of the constructs of gender, race, and class in the first place. Puar ultimately argues that we should think concurrently about both intersectionality and assemblages to figure out all the contours of oppression. Lucky for you, we do not need to struggle too much with these critiques of intersectionality in this book!

We acknowledge the problems and concerns with the term and mainly want students to know that the word intersectionality comes with a lot of "baggage." More advanced feminist courses usually include more complex and critical explorations of intersectionality (Mann 2018). For our purposes, of understanding multiple forms and effects of oppression and thinking about social justice, we find that the *framework* of intersectionality is still critical *if* we are careful with it. We cannot dismiss intersectionality given that doing so would erase the writing and activism of U.S. women of color, particularly Black women (Ortega 2006; Alexander-Floyd 2012). Crenshaw notes that she was able to identify intersectionality as a framework precisely because of the historic role of U.S. Black feminist scholars and advocates in explaining their experiences of Otherness and alienation within the U.S. (Adewunmi 2014). For example, before Crenshaw, the 1970s Black feminist Combahee River Collective articulated the interplay of racism, sexism, and multiple forms of oppression, paid tribute to generations of Black women for mobilizing around intersecting oppressions, and also shaped contemporary Black feminist activism (Taylor 2017). Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (1990; 2016) argued and continues to claim that Black feminist thought is "oppositional knowledge;" thus, rather than intersectionality inadvertently "centering" white women, Black feminist theorizing actively dismantles oppression *and* generates new knowledges that help create new ways of constructing our society.

We also contend that those *inside* the U.S. discussing intersectionality are not necessarily imposing a white, western term on those around the world unless they have coopted and distorted the framework. Crenshaw's work has always focused on transnational connections, as evidenced by her work in the Columbia Law Center's for Intersectional and and Social Policy Studies and the African American Policy Forum, both of which she co-founded, and her academic and advocacy work in Germany, Brazil, South Africa, and the United Nations. U.S. Black feminists have historically worked in solidarity with women's movements around the world (such as through the Third World Women's Alliance) and marginalized women of color within the U.S. precisely because women of color *within* U.S. experience alienation, as always-outsiders, subjected to U.S. violence, incarceration, and discrimination. That is why U.S. Black feminists have illustrated how the legacies of slavery and the Jim Crow era shape present-day intersecting systems of oppression. Chicana/Latina (Anzaldúa 1987), indigenous (LaDuke 1999), transgender (Feinberg 1993; Bornstein 1994) scholars and activists, Asian-American/Asians (Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin 2013), and several others also developed distinct voices regarding multiple axes of oppression experienced in their respective communities within the U.S. These communities have had parallel and often overlapping attempts to create social justice (Roth 2004) and continue to link their intersectional analysis beyond the U.S. (Baca Zinn and Zambrana 2019). Anzaldúa's (1981) writing was also particularly important in reclaiming the erased contributions of indigenous women in naming intersecting, western violences against indigenous bodies and lands (Clark 2016).

So, are Black, Chicana/Latina, indigenous, Asian-American, immigrants, and other marginalized groups in the U.S., "western" feminists? To answer, let us turn to Cherríe Moraga. As a lesbian scholar and

activist of white, indigenous, and mestiza Chicana ancestry, Moraga wanted to put together a feminist canon that she could not find during her graduate studies at San Francisco State University in the 1970s. While Black feminist writing influenced her, she realized that she could not find a similar body of published feminist work by Chicana, indigenous, or Asian-American women. So, she worked with Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldúa to curate and co-edit writings and art by and *for* underrepresented women in the landmark anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981). Several contributors in this book reference "Third World women" and signal that the term means women of color who are not meant to "belong" to the U.S., because they are Black women treated as subhuman, indigenous women stripped of their sovereignty and communities, immigrant/first-generation/second-generation women treated as foreigners, and/or Chicanas experiencing alienation in the land the U.S. conquered and annexed. Third World feminisms enable these different communities to build coalitions and to challenge their exclusions from white feminisms, male-dominated movements within their communities, and queer activism as well.

What do feminists in formerly colonized countries think of people located in western countries using the term "Third Word women"? Chandra Talpade Mohanty grew up in India and spent some time teaching in Nigeria before she entered academia in the U.S. She makes clear that she uses "the term 'Third World' to designate geographical location and sociohistorical moments and events. It thus incorporates so-called minority peoples or people of color in the United States" (2003: 44). She shows that Third World women not only fight their own struggles in their own contexts but also highlight inequalities within and created by the U.S. and western countries once these women become part of transnational labor forces, as domestic workers, or as workers in factories of multinational corporations (71). She thus envisions "Third World feminist" solidarities and alliances across these different borders, despite the presence of hierarchies and marginalization within and among oppressed communities (46). These Third World feminist connections are *political,* meaning that an explicit link is made between the intersectional struggles of marginalized people around the world that are not necessarily based on racial classification or location but rather on a political commitment to dismantle and transform how gender, race, class, nation, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism structure people's lives.

At the same time, we challenge the notion that women of color in western countries shaped feminist activism elsewhere; rather, women's movements within the U.S. and other western countries tapped into feminist activist movements there were *already* underway in the Global South, such as those that arose in the context of the military dictatorships in Latin America, the civil wars in Central America, and attempts at democracy and equity in formerly colonized countries and in countries in East Asia and Eastern Europe/Eurasia impacted by the Cold War. Feminist leaders from nonwestern countries/the Global South also *led* crucial discussions and sociopolitical changes through United Nations meetings, including World Conferences on Women and World Conferences Against Racism. Thus, while U.S.-based feminists have influenced and interacted with feminisms around the world, we cannot assume that social change or feminist ideas flow from the U.S. or the "west" to the rest of the world (Connell 2007). Indeed, Mohanty's collaborative scholarship (1991; 1997; 2003) has pushed western feminists to recognize that they look at nonwestern communities as an afterthought or as forever oppressed, but not as sites of resistance, advocacy, and theorizing. Further, the experiences and ideas of Eurasian feminists, during the Soviet Union's totalitarian rule and post-Cold War, are sidelined in transnational feminist conversations,

to the detriment of potential coalitions and understanding of unique Eurasian critiques of western imperialism (Suchland 2011).

Another crucial point is that "Third World feminisms" are no more monolithic than "Third World women." First, there has been disagreement about the term itself: "Global South" or "Southern Feminisms" is often preferred in more recent literature to "Third World," and there are growing attempts to ensure the inclusion of non-binary and transgender activists' subjugated knowledge. In addition, Third World/Global South feminists situated in multiple locations/contexts are not immune from engaging in oppressive acts. Intersectional, transnational work stemming from the west is not necessarily inclusive; indeed, it can subjugate or ignore the experiences of communities within the Global South (Rodríguez 2008). Canada-based indigenous (Unangax̂) scholar Eve Tuck and her co-author K. Wayne Yang (2012) argue that immigrants who have moved to countries like the U.S. and Canada, which were founded as white colonies that displaced and murdered indigenous communities, are complicit with "settler colonialism." As uncomfortable as it might be to contemplate, Tuck and Yang illustrate that migrants from the Global South, while facing racism and oppression themselves, may *benefit* from or seek to benefit from laws, rights and structures that inherently disallow indigenous self determination. Thus, networks of Third World/Global South feminists may very well marginalize indigenous feminists. Indeed, Third World feminisms, or any more contemporary nomenclature, such as Global South feminisms, or transnational feminisms, were and are fraught with tensions.

Yet another example is Nigerian feminist L. Amede Obiora (2003)'s work. Obiora reveals how western women of color can engage in harmful misrepresentation. She critiques Black U.S. feminist author Alice Walker and U.K.-based Indian filmmaker Pratibha Parmar for their work on "native African accounts" of female genital cutting for the documentary film, "Warrior Marks." Parmar "selectively solicited and compensated informants and volunteers" yet judged her informants' desire to earn money by playing certain roles, as oppressed African women, for western filmmakers (202-203). And, Walker is painfully oblivious when she encounters women who are less interested in viewing her film than in acquiring resources to facilitate their work as food vendors (213).

On the other hand, Valerio's (1981) contribution to *This Bridge Called My Back* examines how she, as a Native woman, felt alienated as she sat with other indigenous people and Asians at the 1979 Third World Gay Conference. Black U.S. feminist bell hooks (1990) calls out the anti-Black racism within the Global South and among immigrants in western countries. As another example, attempts at queer Black and Palestinian solidarity come in conflict with the activism of U.S. Black allies of Israel, and showcase the tension between Black and Arab communities as well as anti-Blackness among Israelis and Palestinians (Atshan and Moore 2014).

This discussion illustrates that an intersectional framework is useful in order to outline, trace, and understand these different struggles, coalitions, and tensions. When we use intersectionality in this book, we are not using a buzzword that is only relevant where we live, in the U.S. However, even though we will try, we *will* fail in decentering the U.S. as the arbiter of feminism; we are limited by our location and the privileges of U.S. academia. And, we recognize that a book on oppression and intersectionality would look very different written from South Africa, Brazil, Eurasia, Pakistan, Oceania, or elsewhere. At the

same time, given that this textbook is primarily for courses about intersectionality or "gender, race, and class" *in* the U.S., we have an urgent commitment to center Black feminist voices who pioneered the use of intersectional frameworks. So, we are sticking with intersectionality and emphasize its importance.

We highlight here one particular voice. Caribbean-American Black lesbian poet and scholar, Audre Lorde famously asserted: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (2007b, 138). She focused not only on gender and race but also class, sexuality, age, nationality, disability and other constructs. She carefully mined what intersecting oppressions looked like, examining for instance how Black lesbian love challenged the multiple violences and denigration of Black female bodies. In other work, she commented on the aftermath of surgeries and interventions for breast cancer and the meaning of "normal" bodies (Lorde 2006). Lorde's work showcased a persistent attempt to be in conversation with others who may have been impacted by different types of oppression, inclusive of totalitarianism, neoliberalism, and colonialism. Because she, like other U.S. Black feminists, knew that the transatlantic slave trade laid the foundation for her experiences in the U.S., Lorde used African woman-centric mythologies liberally. Given the critique of Alice Walker and Pratibha Parmar explained above, it is worth noting that Mohanty mentions Lorde's monolithic assumptions about "African women" (Mohanty 2003: 256, n. 7).

Yet, we add that Lorde's poetry and prose reveal that her claiming of African ancestral connections is relevant not only because of the realities of ancestral connections due to the transatlantic slave trade, but also because discussing African spiritualities enabled her to assert Black womanhood and confront anti-Blackness in the U.S. (**Sipingyu 2004**). After her mastectomy for breast cancer, she refused a breast prosthesis; as her close friend Jackie Kay notes, Lorde compared "wearing one long earring and one stud to being one-breasted. She wore her one breast like a Dahomey [African kingdom from 1600s-early 1900s] warrior queen" (Kay 2017). Kay's invocation of Dahomey may or may not represent Lorde's actual words or intent; however, her description does capture Lorde's explicit and *metaphorical* use of matriarchal African mythology to reject self-loathing of Black bodies, and to use "lessons of the Black [goddess] mother" to push Third World/Global South feminists to aim for liberation and solidarity rather than oppression of those more marginalized (Lorde and Rich 2007, 101; Keating 1992). Thus, Audre Lorde is a fascinating example of the precarious, contradictory, and shifting relationship between and within "Third World" feminisms.

A more contextualized transnational connection is evident in Lorde's reflections on Grenada, a country in the West Indies that suffered a U.S. invasion in 1983 (Lorde 2007a). Audre Lorde identified explicitly not only as a Black lesbian but also as the daughter of immigrants from Grenada (her mother) and Barbados (her father). On the heels of several humiliating experiences for the U.S. in the context of the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan ordered an invasion of this small island to raise U.S. military morale and U.S. prestige. The previous years saw the flawed and deadly U.S. involvement in Vietnam; the crisis of Iranian students taking U.S. civilians hostage to protest U.S. involvement in Iranian affairs; and, the ascendance of pro-Soviet Marxists in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Reagan saw his opportunity when over 200 U.S. Marines were killed in the U.S. military intervention in Lebanon's civil war, at around the same time when Grenadian socialist leftists (allegedly) executed leftist leader Maurice Bishop. He sent in U.S. troops and rounded up leftist Grenadians, arguing that Grenada was a dangerous, pro-Cuba country and

that American students living there were in danger. Emboldened by this "victory," the U.S. then turned to supporting pro-U.S. forces in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. The consequences were and have been devastating for Grenada.

Thus, Audre Lorde was well aware of U.S. military actions in less powerful countries, seeing the asymmetrical power imbalance between the U.S. and Grenada as connected to the kind of racism she dissected in her poetry and prose. And, to connect back to our earlier "Third World feminisms" discussion, we find compelling that Lorde opens her essay "Grenada Revisited: An Interim Report," with her comment that she first visited trying to find "home" and later notes that when she spoke with Grenadians, she recognized that "Grenada is their country. I am only a relative. I must listen long and hard and ponder the implications of what I have heard, or be guilty of the same quick arrogance of the U.S. government in believing there are external solutions to Grenada's future" (2007a, 189). She thus illustrated a keen awareness that while she was seeking "home," it was not hers to claim.

Please devote time to watching the following lectures by and interviews of Audre Lorde. They are close-captioned on youtube and no transcripts are available.

"There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions." Uploaded in January, 2018. Youtube video, 3:28 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CPAlSVaiL8

"Audre Lorde Interview (1982)." Uploaded in May 2018. YouTube video, 44:12 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4rDL-xZ8N0.

"Audre Lorde Interview on Grenada's 1983 Invasion." Uploaded in March, 2018. YouTube video, 56:31 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SbKW-qTO8c.

CHAPTER TWO
A Chronicle of Oppression and Inequalities: Case Studies

With this background, here are several concrete explorations of oppression and inequality, including exercises students can complete for the class or for their own intellectual journeys.

I.   **Autobiography Exercise**

First watch "Aaron Philip is a Trans Model Taking Fashion By Storm." Uploaded in Feb, 2019. NowThis Entertainment, 4:32 min.

What are the multiple stories that are about you, the students and readers of this book? In other words, you are the first case study!

"Who are you?" What is your social location? Your social location includes things like your race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, social class, religion, nationality/citizenship status, physical abilities, age, when and where you were born, health, what your family is like, etc. Understanding our own positioning is a crucial step in intersectional analysis. By understanding our own social location we are better able to understand our reactions to other people and their reactions to us. First, identify your own social location, paying careful attention to how your positions of privilege or of being in an oppressed group overlap and intersect. For example, you may belong to an oppressed group, but you may also belong to a privileged group, or you may be relatively privileged within the oppressed group (Hill Collins 1990). Another example is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who, despite delivering a Ted Talk about the importance of learning people's stories to end dangerous misrepresentations of others, has engaged in transphobia (e.g. Kean 2017). The Ted Talk transcript is in Part II to further analyze this example. So, remember that engaging in an intersectional autobiography does not magically shield you from engaging in oppressive or harmful practices. Second, looking at your social location, discuss how your positioning has affected who you are and your life. How has your social position hindered or accelerated your success? Does your social location affect people's perceptions of you? Does your social location affect how you perceive other people who have different social locations than you do? How did you become you?

II.   **Power Map Exercise**

"Who holds power in your life?" What is the social location of the various people that have had the most control over your life and life chances? Understanding the positioning of people in power is the next step in intersectional analysis. By understanding the social location of others we are better able to understand how social locations work together or against one another to enable or constrain our life chances and the life chances of others.
First, map the people who hold power in your life. Consider:
        o Family
        o Educational institutions, past and present
        o Political representation

o Law, Law Enforcement, Courts

o Doctors and medical institutions

o Religious institutions

o Media

o Friends, acquaintances, classmates, and strangers

o Work

Then, create a map of how the identities of those acknowledged above are interconnected and overlapping and/or conflicting and contradicting. You may use a visual, flow chart, etc or write in narrative form. Finally, write down the patterns you notice about the social locations of those who have power in your life. How do you think your life chances would be different if the social locations of those with power in your life were also different?

Here is an example:
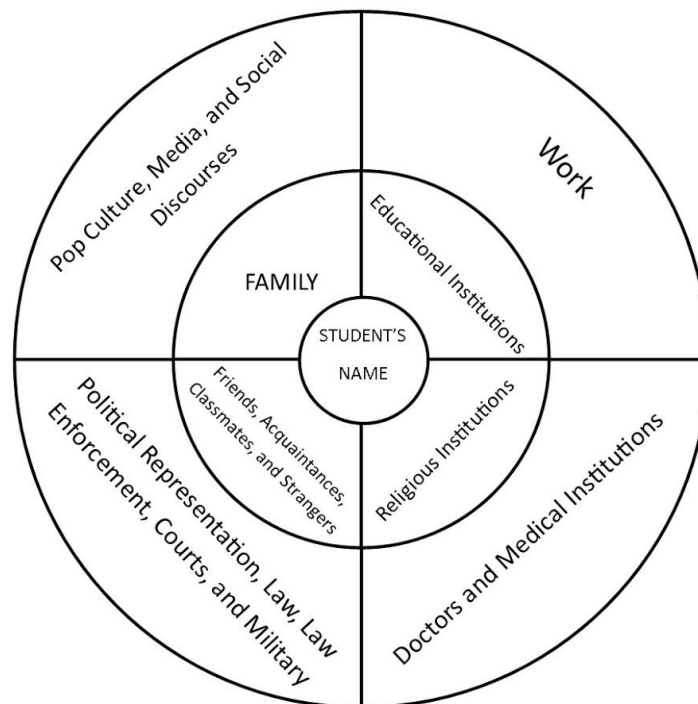
III.   Resistance Exercise

It is common when speaking about oppression to distance ourselves from the bad acts of others. We may tell ourselves that we are not like that, or that while we have some type of privilege, we have also suffered or had difficult lives. We may feel defensive, particularly when we read critiques of our identities (like of white feminists) or of where we live (the U.S.). We may come up with different narratives, like "my parents immigrated here legally, and we are grateful to live in the U.S., where we receive opportunities

and a high quality of life" or "Well, *I* haven't experienced racism!" We may get frustrated that everyone is being too "politically correct," and getting outraged by things that seem harmless to us.

For this exercise, write down any similar thoughts you have had while reading thus far or when thinking about these topics. Write down why you think/feel what you are expressing. During the semester, after learning about a new topic or completing a reading or discussion, write down if you have learned anything that challenges these first thoughts and feelings. In addition to resistance, do you think you can explore other reactions, such as curiosity, vulnerability, grief, or care?

IV.   Who or What is Missing?

You will watch a series of Ted Talks that will help you think more about intersectional oppression. Who is seen as different and less than? In each of these stories, you will not only trace the impact of the isms/phobias/biases but will also search for what is missing. For example, is the video addressing misogyny and sexism but failing to address class or race simultaneously?

After you watch the video or read the article, fill in this script:
In this video/article, the key "isms," phobias, and biases that the speaker/author discusses are _____. These isms result in consequences such as _____. The speaker discusses the intersection of _____ and _____[Or, the speaker should also discuss the intersection of _____ and _____]. The main institutions and social practices and discourses that perpetuate the "isms" and consequences discussed in this video are _____.

If you need help, check the list of isms, consequences, and institutions/structures described earlier.

Note: Please follow the links to find access to both the videos and reproduction of the transcripts. All Ted Talks are also closed captioning-enabled.

Abrams, Eve. 2017. *"The Human Stories Behind Mass Incarceration."* Uploaded in November, 2017. Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 13:31 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/eve_abrams_the_human_stories_behind_mass_incarceration#t-378231.

Babazadeh, Behnaz. 2016. "The Edible Burqa: Challenging Stereotypes With Candy." Uploaded on January 20, 2016. YouTube video, 8:25 min.
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0w-Br8KJRw.
Note: closed captions, no transcript

Batoor, Barat Ali. 2014. "My Desperate Journey with a Human Smuggler." Uploaded in April, 2014. Ted Talks TEDxSydney video, 10:29 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/barat_ali_batoor_my_desperate_journey_with_a_human_smuggler.

Chang, Jenni and Dazols, Lisa. 2015. "This is What LGBT Life is Like Around the World." Uploaded in May, 2015. Ted Talks TedWomen video, 11:43 min.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jenni_chang_and_lisa_dazols_this_is_what_lgbt_life_is_like_around_the_world.

Coyote, Ivan. 2015. "Why We Need Gender Neutral Bathrooms." Uploaded in November, 2015. Ted Talks TEDxVancouver video, 11:42 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan_coyote_why_we_need_gender_neutral_bathrooms.

Drinkwater, Kelli Jean. 2016. "Enough With the Fear of Fat." Uploaded May, 2016. Ted Talks TEDxSydney video, 12:12 min. .
https://www.ted.com/talks/kelli_jean_drinkwater_enough_with_the_fear_of_fat/transcript.

Floyd, Kings. 2019. "The Cost of Failing to Design Accessibly." Uploaded in November, 2019. Ted Talks TEDxDirigo video, 10:33 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kings_floyd_the_cost_of_failing_to_design_accessibly - closed captions, no transcript

Kolanyane-Kesupile, Katlego. 2017. "How I'm Bringing Queer Pride to My Rural Village." Uploaded in August, 2017. Ted Talks TEDGlobal video, 5:41 min.
.https://www.ted.com/talks/katlego_kolanyane_kesupile_how_i_m_bringing_queer_pride_to_my_rural_village

Houska, Tara. 2017. " The Standing Rock Resistance and Our Fight for Indigenous Rights." Uploaded in November, 2017. Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 10:56 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/tara_houska_the_standing_rock_resistance_and_our_fight_for_indigenous_rights.

Mokobe, Lee. 2015. "A Powerful Poem About What it Feels Like To Be Transgender." Uploaded in May, 2015. Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 4:13 mins.
https://www.ted.com/talks/lee_mokobe_a_powerful_poem_about_what_it_feels_like_to_be_transgender#t-762.

Okoro, Chika. 2016. "How Colorism Shapes Our Standards of Beauty." Uploaded in April, 2016. Ted Talks TEDxStanford video, 10:01 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chika_okoro_how_colorism_shapes_our_standards_of_beauty.

Satyarthi, Kailash. 2015. "How to Make Peace? Get Angry." Uploaded in March, 2015. Ted Talks TED2015 video, 18:22 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kailash_satyarthi_how_to_make_peace_get_angry/transcript.

Stevenson, Bryan. 2012. "We Need to Talk About an Injustice." Uploaded in March, 2012. Ted Talks TED2012 video, 23:26 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice#t-347138.

Van Buren, Deanna. 2017. "Deanna Van Buren: What A World Without Prisons Could Look Like."
Uploaded in November, 2017. Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 15:11 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/deanna_van_buren_what_a_world_without_prisons_could_look_like/transcript#t-27581.

Vulchi, Priya and Guo, Winona. 2017. "What It Takes to be Racially Literate." Uploaded in November, 2017. Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 12:14 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/priya_vulchi_and_winona_guo_what_it_takes_to_be_racially_literate.

Zayid, Maysoon. 2013. "I've Got 99 Problems...Palsy is Just One." Uploaded in December, 2013.
Ted Talks TEDWomen video, 14:01 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/maysoon_zayid_i_got_99_problems_palsy_is_just_one.

CHAPTER THREE
Connecting Intersectional Frameworks

We want students to go beyond simply accumulating examples from around the world, such as of oppression against indigenous women in this or that country, or of violence against transgender ethnic minorities in this or that country. Intersectionality does not necessarily mean that we find multiple systems of oppression overlapping and interlocking in one *group,* i.e. all Black lesbian women. Rather, we search for *connections* between root causes of and perpetuation of oppression of various people in various places. The legacies of colonialism, neoliberal economic policies, climate change, migration, war, global advocacy networks, and more are just some examples of a transnational circuitry of power that may operate differently in different places, impacting different communities in different ways. Or, there may be unexpected commonalities: the experiences of people with disabilities in one region may have something to do with the experiences of people with disabilities in another region, or with the experiences of people with disabilities living in poverty in yet another region. The very causes and consequences of oppression may interlock and reinforce each other transnationally. Or, there may be significant differences in how oppression is experienced, and investigating those distinctions will be instructive. The point we are making in this section is different from the one we made in the previous section. With the Ted Talk videos, we were hoping students would see the story, for example, of a young white woman with a disability and ask, what about the people of color who are elderly and disabled whose experiences of oppression operate differently because of the extra layers of oppression they face? In this section, we are asking, what do the experiences of people "here" have to do with the experiences of people "elsewhere," or vice versa?

We have organized the readings below into four broad units: marginalized identities; class and neoliberalism; queer intersectionalities; and advocacy. First, the unit on marginalized identities explores the under-theorized aspects of oppression, alerting readers to daily injustices people may navigate. We tend to think or talk more about some social constructs, like gender, race, class, and *some* sexualities, than others, like immigration status, dis/ability, colorism, intersexism, and ideas around deviant/normal bodies.

The second unit on class and neoliberalism responds to our students' past complaints that they found it hard to understand class analysis. So we include articles about mothering, work, and labor that lay out intersectional understandings of how class operates as it intersects with other social constructs, like immigration status, gender, and indigeneity. We also include an essay (Mirrlees 2018) that examines how far-right groups around the world use the term "cultural Marxism" as a catch-all shorthand to describe any individual, group, or movement that loosely believes in feminism, LGTBQ rights, Black power, anti-colonial liberation, environmentalism, and/or pacifism. We encourage students to be curious rather than intimidated when you see the names of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Marx. Marx urged people exploited by capitalism to recognize that others are similarly exploited, to join together to recognize that they are members of the working class, and to overthrow capitalism for the sake of economic justice (Tucker 1978). Antonio Gramsci (2010) was an Italian communist politician who opposed fascist Benito Mussolini; he urged Marxists, those who believe that the working class must overthrow capitalism, to gain "control of the organs of *culture*: churches, education, newspapers, magazines, the electronic media,

serious literature, music, the visual arts and so on" to do so (Thornton 1999). The final piece in that section examines how environmental conservation movements promote neoliberalism and class privilege at the cost of indigenous rights. These last two pieces help us understand class not just in terms of the experiences of people living in poverty, which are important of course, but also in terms of how political players utilize class and neoliberalism to actively oppress marginalized people.

The third unit on queer intersectionalites includes articles from one textbook, which balances nicely the different ways to think about "queerness." To have a queer identity is to reappropriate "queer," a derogatory slur for "sexual minorities," or those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, asexual, intersex, two-spirit, questioning, non-binary, and otherwise non-conforming to norms around gender and sexuality. So the articles explore the multiple axes of oppression experienced by queer people. In addition, to "queer," as a verb, is to challenge the false distinction between "normalcy" and "deviance." *Queering* a concept means to make it "weird," to reveal how sexualities, desires, and ideas of normalcy/deviance operate in ways we may not consider otherwise. For example, to "queer" mass incarceration, might mean we examine sexual behavior, how and why queer people are incarcerated, or labels certain behaviors or identities of incarcerated people, regardless of sexual identity, as bizarre, abnormal, or repulsive (Vitulli 2012).

Finally, the unit on advocacy explores how intersectional analysis is useful for articulating policy solutions and ways to transform oppressive structures. The examples in this section cover a vast array of successes and failures, and new coalitions and missed opportunities. We chose essays that illustrate how people navigate seemingly impossible obstacles.

We strategically chose articles that are rich with the possibility of finding connections between concepts, places, and communities. We recommend looking for as many of the terms defined previously as well as digging for "connecting" topics. In addition, we suggest looking for signals the author is sending about a larger transnational context and/or the importance of historical legacies of oppression. Words and phrases to look for include:

- Indigenous (connection to settler colonialism)
- Immigrants/migration (any kind of cross-border mobilities)
- Travel/tourism (indicating cross-border mobilities that operate differently from migration)
- Global industries (such as of skin bleaching products, indicating global markets)
- Democracies/welfare regimes (indicating a cross-country comparison of trends that certain countries may exhibit)
- Postcolonialism/post-apartheid (connection to the legacies of colonialism or apartheid)
- Human rights, international law, United Nations, transnational advocacy (indicating global attempts to define and uphold norms and shared standards of behavior by countries toward marginalized people)
- Capitalism/market economy/globalization/international financial institutions (indicating a connection to neoliberalism)
- Social and digital medias (indicating cross-border communications)

- Western (indicating a pattern of western or Global North countries/communities looking at/gazing/judging/governing non-western countries or non-western/indigenous/marginalized people within western countries)
- Terrorism (indicating the complicated mix of states declaring other states or non-state political entities to be terrorists, and of states participating in wars or militarized intervention in other countries)
- Climate change (indicating cross-border global phenomenon)
- Authors' social locations (where are the authors located and what are their positions/privileges/oppressions? Do they speak about traveling elsewhere or communicating across borders)

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AFTERWORD

At the end of the semester or when you finish all the readings and topics, we hope you join those of us who have been engaging in conversations/work on oppression. We would like this book to be a starting point in a meaningful intellectual and advocacy journey, or a reminder of why your interest in injustice and oppression is worthwhile. We thank Pace University, for an Open Access Educational Resource Grant to compensate part-time faculty for their labor, our colleagues, Drs. Emily Bent, Pamela Fuentes Peralta, Nancy Reagin, and Emily Welty, who supported this project and provided critical feedback, and all of our past and future students for inspiring and teaching us.

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Portrait of the Feminist as a Publisher: A Conversation with Urvashi Butalia

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INTERVIEW

Portrait of the Feminist as a Publisher:
A Conversation with Urvashi Butalia

Anupama Arora, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Sandrine Sanos, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi

In the South Asian subcontinent, Urvashi Butalia needs little introduction. Since she started the first feminist publishing house in India, Kali for Women, in 1984, she has become one of India's foremost feminists, and her tireless work—academic and activist—over the decades has shown a commitment to the unearthing and dissemination of women's voices and the rewriting of history. Her work is driven by the guiding principle that feminist knowledge production acts as a tool of political change.

Butalia's best-known work, *The Other Side of Silence* (1998), made an invaluable contribution to scholarship on the 1947 partition of India—the division of British India into India and Pakistan along religious lines—by reconstructing this cataclysmic historical event through testimonies and oral histories of women that were affected by the violence (whether as rape victims, victims of familial violence, or victims of the state's need to legitimate itself through recovering women "lost" across national borders during the chaos of the partition). In a larger sense, Butalia's gendered history of partition issued a clarion call for the importance of regarding gender as a central category for understanding Indian history (and history in general). In addition, this book reflects what has been the author's foremost concern throughout her career: women's implication in conflict, whether communal, military, ethnic, caste, or familial. Butalia has highlighted and examined women's relationship to violence in a nuanced manner, considering them both as victims and as agents or perpetrators. For instance, in the 2002 collection she edited, *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* (2002), Butalia seeks to fill a gap in knowledge regarding the effects, especially on women's lives, of living in the conflict-ridden northern Indian region of Kashmir. In *Women and Right-Wing Movements* (1995), Butalia and historian Tanika Sarkar offer a collection of essays that speak of the urgent need to understand and confront the phenomenon of women as willing participants in violence within the context of the rise of militant women within right-wing Hindu political formations. Her work interrogates the complicated and contingent relation between gender, the state, and violence.

In many ways, Butalia's career since the 1980s provides a capsule for the feminist movement in India and its evolving emphases and challenges—from protests over dowry, sati, and custodial rape to the rise of

women's involvement in the Hindu right and other ethnic nationalist movements, as well as new articulations of "the woman question" within the context of globalization in contemporary India. Collectively, Butalia's work provides a nuanced insight into the intricate and intimate relationship between women, nation, and community in India.

Currently, in her work as the founder and director of the publishing house Zubaan (founded in 2003 as a new offshoot of Kali for Women), Butalia remains committed to building and increasing the body of knowledge on a diverse range of gender and human rights issues in the global South. In 2006, she translated into English and published *A Life Less Ordinary*, the memoir of Baby Halder, a domestic worker in Delhi. Over the past decade, Zubaan has been building a formidable list of titles, including autobiographies and fiction by women writers, children's books, and academic studies. Zubaan also launched a project titled "Poster Women" to gather and document posters produced by women's groups over the decades, a database that offers a fascinating visual history of the Indian women's movement.

In the following interview, Butalia reflects on her feminist publishing work, the difficulties of recuperating and recording women's voices, and changes in the Indian women's movement, among other topics.

Anupama Arora and Sandrine Sanos: Throughout your career, you have worked (and continue to work) on a variety of issues and topics—the founding of India's first feminist publishing house, women's oral histories, violence and gender, women and religious fundamentalism. What would you say is the driving principle behind your involvement in all these endeavors? What does it mean to you to have been a "feminist" then and to be a feminist now?

Urvashi Butalia: Being a feminist to me means really living what you believe in, in every possible way. For me, there is no division between the way in which my feminism informs my personal life, or my public life, my workplace, my home, my relationships, my family, what I write, and of course, my activism. I've always said that to me feminism is a very simple philosophy: it means recognizing that every human being, no matter from what gender or class or region or location or religion, has a right to a life of dignity. Often when I say this, people respond by saying that this is just like humanism. In fact it is not, for humanism has by and large forgotten about women and feminism doesn't. So how does it inform my daily life? I try to run a feminist office, where everyone is valued, and feminist principles inform the ways in which I deal with my colleagues and our authors, and indeed our readers. At home, I try to work in ways that are fair and egalitarian. For example, in our office, we work on "flexi time" to allow my colleagues time to deal with their "other" lives, such as taking a child to school or having the water tank repaired. One of my colleagues is a single mother and two are single women. For my male colleagues, the flexi time helps them share in household tasks. We cook lunch in the office; we have a cook who gives us freshly cooked food every day. This saves my colleagues both money and time; people can bring their children to the office if they need to, and while the lines of responsibility are very clear, the office is an open and nonhierarchical space. At home, I have a young woman who comes in to help with domestic tasks, and she brings her little daughter with her. I have taught her to drive, and whenever she has a family event, she borrows my car. This ensures that her family also sees her differently. There are so many other such things. I have often thought one day I should write one of those "how to" books that should earn millions, except that it would be on how to run a feminist workplace, and I'm not sure there would be millions there! To me, feminism is as important, as vital, and as necessary as breathing. Without it, I don't think I would be "alive."

It's also difficult because being a feminist and being aware of your feminism means very often that you "see" the ways in which patriarchal power plays out, in simple acts, and you question these. But at the same time, you balance out when it is important to question things and when you let them be—that is sometimes the most difficult battle. For example, I am very much a "family person," and I am close to my siblings, and to my nieces and nephews, but that does not mean that I wholly support the family as an institution. And yet I try not to judge people who do, but give them the respect of their beliefs and engage in dialogue and discussion with them. I think my feminism has evolved over the years—inevitably, I guess. I'm no longer the angry young woman I used to be, and my responses are more measured and more thought out, but that does not mean my politics has in any way been diluted. If anything, my critique of patriarchy has become deeper and stronger.

Publishing

AA & SS: Your book on the state of feminist publishing, *Making a Difference: Feminist Publishing in the South* (1995), is an unusual publication—yet an important one in light of your work as a publisher. It poses the question of the production and dissemination of (feminist) knowledge and the concrete strategies needed for that work. Now you have shifted your publishing activities with the creation of Zubaan Books. How would you rewrite the epilogue to *Making a Difference* today? How has the political and practical task of publishing changed (or not)? What are the challenges and possibilities in this historical moment?

UB: In many ways things have changed a lot, but in other ways they have remained the same. We are looking at a radically transformed publishing environment, internationally and in India. The printed book is under threat, the electronic book has not yet caught on enough in our societies to give us hope. In India now, all important publishers, big or small, Indian language or English, publish women writers and books about and by women. In 1984, when we set out on our project of providing a space for feminist knowledge to emerge, to grow, to spread, we were the only ones in India. Today almost everyone is doing this. The question then, for us, is this: Is there a role for us anymore? Does our success mean our demise? Are we now redundant? And yet, even though we must pose this question, I don't think feminist publishing is redundant—there is so much more to do, so many different kinds of books. Last week, for example, I was in Kashmir, talking to a group of young women in their twenties who recently filed a public-interest litigation demanding the opening up of a case of mass rape that happened in Kashmir 22 years ago. They have collected a mass of material on this case, and we were talking about the possibility of their doing a joint book on the history of this landmark case. They loved the idea, but they lack the writing skills and the confidence, so we will now work with them in developing writing skills and then we'll publish the book. There are many such projects, and we can concentrate our energies—to me, this is what my being a feminist publisher is all about, not publishing only those books that one may call "traditional" feminist texts but going that extra mile, seeking out those voices that don't get heard and then ensuring they find a space.

The changeover from Kali to Zubaan has not meant any radical change in the content of what we publish—we are still the same people, with the same politics and the same priorities, but yes, we have tried to take account of changes in feminism itself, in the women's movement in India, and to reflect these. So over and above our academic books and our more general list, we now do books for young adults, we do a lot of translations, we do more fiction, we will take up books on feminism, feminist humor, we do collectively written or what one might, in today's parlance, call crowdsourced books, we do e-books, we use the social media to promote our books, and we do books that appeal to young people. I believe quite firmly that one must change with the times—we will never become slaves to the market and will always hold our politics

intact, but we will recognize change and publish for it. I guess this is how I would rewrite the epilogue to that book: women's books are no longer marginal, but what we have is by no means enough or adequate or reflective of the complexity of the experiences of all women, of women from different classes, castes, religions, and so on.

An Archive of Silence

AA & SS: Your work is devoted to excavating and creating an archive of those that are silenced and marginalized. In many ways, you are an archivist and historian, though you never say so explicitly. Indeed, in "A Question of Silence: Partition, Women, and the State," you point out how, despite our best efforts, it may be sometimes impossible to recover the testimonies of women who have been subject to the violence that accompanied the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent. How, and why, should we nonetheless create the space for this silence and the absence of these voices?

UB: The more I work with women, the more I realize how difficult it is for them to speak of some things—sexual violence being one, violence at the hands of their families being another. When I started my work on partition, I went into it with a very simple, and what now seems like a simplistic, assumption. History had been silent on the experiences of women; I would step in there and break that silence, recover women's voices, and somehow set right that absence, that gap. Of course the reality was nothing like this, and as I spoke to more and more women I realized that even though the experience of sexual violation was widespread and common, even though everyone knew about it, it could actually never be explicitly named by the women themselves, and it was almost impossible for women to speak about it, even to find the vocabulary to articulate it, to express what they had lived through. Often this was because they were now in families, in marriages, and people in their families either did not know or did not want to know about this particular experience, because it was a matter of shame. Or it was that they mostly spoke to you—the researcher—in family situations, with their men being present, and were therefore not able to speak of the body, of subjects that are considered taboo. Sometimes there were further complexities: many women actually married their rapists, had children with them, how could they now identify them as criminals—their lives were tied to them.

So the question before me was: Could I go on assuming that there was a straightforward equation between breaking silence and somehow liberating speech? Was there an absolute "truth" that I, as researcher, was bound to reveal? And yet, when doing this kind of research, towards whom did my responsibility lie? Towards some abstract notion of truth or to the people, in this case women, who would have to live with the consequences of any "revelation" I might make, any "truth" I might expose? And also, if they could not speak about it, perhaps I could. And so I took a decision and it is something I have stood by all these years: that my primary responsibility was to the women, dead or alive, and I would protect their identities, preserve their secrets, and not expose them.

Let me explain: in one of my research forays to a second-hand bookstore when I was working, I came across a book, a rare document, which is a district-by-district listing of Hindu and Sikh women who were abducted in Pakistan. For many years, people have urged me to put the list up on the net, saying, "Imagine how many stories you will uncover." And as a researcher, I am of course excited at this prospect, but I have not done so, because I believe I cannot expose those women to the scrutiny that will surely ensue; I cannot reveal to their families and those who knew them a history they may not have been aware of, and a history of which, if they find out, they will be ashamed. So to me this becomes one kind of silence, although even if I suppress this document, I can still speak about it... So in some ways you refrain from exposing certain forms

of knowledge but you do not necessarily silence them. You use your own voice—and this realization, that I was a character in my own research, that my voice too needed to be articulated, was for me very important, it freed me in a sense to address issues that the women themselves were unable or unwilling to do.

AA & SS: Historians of gender have long argued that including women in the historical record does not just add another dimension to history but challenges the very foundations upon which history is built. How do you see this being the case for Indian history?

UB: This is so true. Looking at women in history is not a matter of just adding women and stirring; it is a matter of radically transforming the very substance of history itself. I discovered this in the course of my research—the prism of feminism, the attempt to locate women's histories, allowed me to see how history is played out at the ground level. It was this that alerted me to so many things I might have otherwise missed: the histories of children, of Dalits and low-caste people, of poor people, of transgenders and eunuchs, those on the margins of society, of minorities. Somehow this perspective from below questioned the very foundations on which "traditional" history is built, it questioned its focus on the big players—on kings, rulers, political parties—and turned the mirror elsewhere, saying, "Look, these are also people who lived out the history you're talking about." The bit-part players. And it enabled me at least to turn to those aspects of history that are never discussed in conventional history—emotions, feeling, a sense of a moment in time, the experience of having lived through it. There was a time when Indian history was accused of being episodic and was seen as a lesser history because it did not have a linear record of kings and rulers, it did not have timelines that were easily divisible (e.g., ancient, medieval, modern). But actually, even if you focus only on kings and rulers, how in a country like ours—which lives out multiple histories at the same time—could you build a linear narrative? The other accusation was that myth, legend, and stories imposed on history and lent an inaccurate color to it. I find this laughable now. I'm not sure if you've read Eduardo Galeano's trilogy on Latin American history told through myth, *Memory of Fire* (1998). How much deeper that kind of writing allows us to go than a mere linear recounting of what are called "facts." So, in the course of my work, I became obsessed with the smaller stories and the bit-part actors, and to me this is what history came to mean. Had I not been a feminist, I would never have understood this. I believe this firmly, and I am truly grateful to feminism for alerting me to this. For me, history will never be the same again.

Violence and the State

AA & SS: Much of your recent work has been concerned with the relationship between gender and violence, the violence exercised on women, and the complicity of women in the exercise of violence. Why is such an enterprise crucial?

UB: It's crucial because we need to understand not only how and where this violence comes from but also how we enable it by being complicit in it. Many women who might protest at violence from men would possibly treat their domestic workers very badly—a notion of class that allows them to inflict both physical and mental violence on those whom they see as "servants." Many mothers will advise their daughters not to speak out if they are being abused. There is a way in which the family is the sacred cow that has to be preserved at all costs, and we do not ask, What is this family all about? Also, I think we need to recognize that we cannot essentialize women into "nonviolent" people. Look at the attraction that the political right holds for women, the power it gives them over others, the ways in which it encourages them to participate in violence, and the ways in which women respond. So I think that, while we need to understand how the state targets women and how women become the victims of violence, we need to also understand how women are complicit in so many of the structures that strengthen violence. Sometimes they are in this willingly, other times they are caught in it, but if we blind ourselves to their participation, we'll have only half the picture.

AA & SS: Should we understand the recent scandals regarding gang rapes in light of this longer history of violence on women? After all, as your work traces, the nation and the state are constantly legitimated through an appeal to gender—do you see this at work today as well?

UB: Yes, I think so, we have to. And the history of violence towards women—the emblematic moment for this is the moment of nation-making, the partition of India, which shows dramatically how central women are to the discourse of nation-making and how their bodies are the sites on which battles for honor and identity are waged—is also inextricably interwoven with other histories of oppression, for example through caste. Just as the nation-state sees women as some sort of inferior citizens, their rights always mediated through those of their men, so also it is convenient to marginalize minorities and others.

AA & SS: Yet you suggest the political and historical context has changed significantly. The December 26, 2012 op-ed in *The Hindu* that you wrote in the aftermath of the Delhi bus gang rape was a very nuanced piece: you wrote that the incidence of rape increases "as society goes through change, as women's roles begin to change, as economies slow down and the slice of the pie becomes smaller."[1] What might be the different challenges for the Indian women's movement today, especially regarding confrontation and negotiation with the state?

UB: Indian society has been changing rapidly. There is growth of migration, the increasing urbanization, the blurring of the borders between urban and rural, the ways in which the urban has seeped into the rural and the rural has come into the urban (this latter especially through migration in search of jobs or because of climate change). There is the visible—I say visible because it is visibility that marks it, not scale—entry of women, especially young women, into different kinds of jobs. (Twenty years ago, being a salesgirl in a pizza place would not have been a "respectable" profession for women; today it is.) Then there is the growth of malls and therefore spaces to socialize for young men and women. All these changes and more have led to a rapidly and sometimes radically transformed environment, at least in our cities and small towns. My sense is that this simultaneously makes women stronger and more vulnerable, confident and more at risk.

And also, the state seems to be so indifferent to its poor, those who are on the margins. For instance, look at what is happening to the Muzaffarnagar violence victims now.[2] No one is really bothered about them because they are Muslim and poor, and because they lead violent and brutalized lives. All of this adds to an already volatile situation in which women become the targets of violence because, of course, violence towards women is so deeply naturalized in Indian society. By this I mean many things. In a society that still has a large population of the poor, people who have to struggle to make ends meet and who are so brutalized that violence becomes a way of life almost, men often turn against those who are most vulnerable, the women. India is a country where religion means a lot to people, and all our religions are discriminatory towards women; this helps in giving violent behavior a kind of religious and social sanction. Then there is the belief in the "superiority" of men. In marriage vows, women are asked to look upon men as their gods and there is this deep preference for sons despite so much evidence that shows it is daughters who look after parents in old age. All of this leads to a kind of acceptability for patriarchal violence, making it seem natural, both on the part of perpetrators and on the part of the victims.

I'd be very interested to see whether the increase in reported incidents of sexual violence in India in any way matches the increase in violence for other crimes. We don't know enough about this. Is it that the new lifestyles, the increasing differences between rich and poor, are leading to more violence, of which sexual violence against women (for we have to recognize there is sexual violence towards men as well, which is hardly ever talked about) is a part, or is there something different about sexual violence that we need to know?

Contemporary Feminist Politics

AA & SS: It is an axiom for many feminists that "the personal is political." You wrote a very eloquent and powerful piece recently—"Childless, Naturally"—that reflects on the different meanings of motherhood. It seems that some aspects of women's lives are still moored in assumptions about women's "nature," and that motherhood continues to define women's sense of their lives. How and why did you feel the need to write this piece, especially at this particular historical moment?

 UB: I was actually asked to write a piece on being childless and being happy. This is such a natural and normal state of affairs for me that I had actually never consciously thought about it in a systematic way, although the thoughts might have been in my head. At Zubaan, we decided to do a book on motherhood; we wanted to call it *The Other Mother* or something similar. And when the book began to actually come about, the editor, Jaishree Misra, asked me to write such a piece. Of course I didn't, as I was battling tight time schedules but also a very strong feeling that I should not be writing for books that are published by us, and time kept running out. Then, in the end, the pressure became the reverse—if I didn't write it, I felt I would be letting Jaishree down. So I got down to it. I tried to write a somewhat more academic piece, but it didn't seem to work. In the end, I just thought that I would write it as I felt it, keeping in mind something one of my tutors told me in college when she made me write a paper ten times over, and finally, when I wept and wrote it for the tenth time, she read it and said, It's a gem, never forget that you must write what you feel! And so I did, and what surprised me about that piece was how widely it resonated. I was quite taken aback when *Mint* newspaper told me that it got so many hits that their website crashed.[3] It's flattering, but it also makes me realize how taboo some aspects of motherhood and the discourse around it are. We just never talk of them, and even as feminists we are unable to address the subject fully. There were so many young women who responded to the piece as well, saying that it reflected what they had been thinking about and grappling with.

 Personally, I was very struck by two other pieces in that book, one by a woman who adopted two girls who were older and sisters, and who dealt with the business of learning to love adult children, and another piece on violent mothers.[4] The one on violent mothers was very disturbing. My own mother was someone who battled against this business of being a "good" mother, and I so appreciated her resolute determination to stay out of the kitchen. And, in my work with Mona, the *hijra*, the question of motherhood came up again and again. In my piece on motherhood, I talk about how Mona—a man till the age of 18 and then a hijra and later physically a woman—had one overwhelming desire, to become a mother, and so she adopted a child and actually "learned" motherhood, and that made me ask how natural was this thing really.[5] I've been thinking about it on and off, and writing this piece gave me the opportunity to at least try and put some of those thoughts down.

 AA & SS: Feminists have long argued for "global feminist sisterhood," while also highlighting limitations of this concept, especially in the face of asymmetrical power relations and the long tradition of the West imagining the non-West as the site of women's oppression through the lens of Orientalist and civilizational discourse. How might we imagine global/transnational feminist solidarities in the world that we inhabit today?

 UB: I think solidarities are really important, but I am also constantly taken aback by how little has changed in the global feminist discourse. Western feminists refuse to recognize, or are willfully unaware of, the rich and fascinating history of feminism in our parts of the world, and continue to see us as merely sites of oppression, completely ignoring the existence of a dynamic and rich women's movement here. This has become so clear in the last year, in the wake of the protests about the rape of a medical student on December

16, 2012. The eye of the international media was, as you know, firmly trained upon India and particularly Delhi, and Delhi was being called "the rape capital of the world." Western feminists too, immediately and unproblematically, internalized this discourse without ever looking at simple things like figures of rape in their own countries. So for example, if you just take the year 2011 and look at rape statistics across the world, you'll find the US occupies quite a prominent place on that list. Of course, this is not a race in which one is ahead and the other behind, and even one rape is one rape too many. But it's important to get a perspective on things. I cannot tell you how many journalists, men and women, feminists and non-feminists, I spoke to during that time who reiterated what a terrible place India was for women and who asked, in tones of surprise, How do you manage to live there? Yet, as you know, this terrible reality is not the only reality of women's lives here. Also, with feminists, there was another piece of arrogance and ignorance: one woman journalist from France asked me, Now that India has television and Internet, and Indian women can learn about feminism in the West, don't you think things will improve for you? Another, a German woman politician, supposedly very progressive, said she was so sorry for her Indian sisters and wanted to help them. I wanted to say, Thank you very much, but we are quite capable of helping ourselves. Similarly, in the wake of the protests last year, a group of women academics from Harvard put together a project to work in India and to help Indian women and the Indian government learn how to implement the Verma Committee Report.[6] How arrogant is that? And then you get into a conversation with an American feminist, say, or someone from Europe, and you'll often find that the Indian woman can talk to you about the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Rosa Luxemburg, Christa Wolf, and others. But which American feminist will even know about Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai, let alone have read them? And a further question: When was the last time you heard of women's groups in the US demonstrating against rape? At least here we don't hide the violence, and we don't let it go off the public agenda.

I'm sorry if this sounds like a rant. I don't usually rant, but this willful ignorance and the somewhat patronizing condescension really disturbs me. Particularly because I think the feminist movement across the world has been one of the movements that have gained so much from internationalization; there have been so many valuable connections across the world that we should find a way of preserving those and find a way of learning not to see feminism as some kind of hierarchy or race where some people are ahead and others behind, and all have the same goal. There is no one-size-fits-all here; yes, there are many things that are common non-negotiables, such as no violence against women, but there are also differences, and that is what makes our many movements so rich. Is it so difficult to recognize this?

Is it so difficult to recognize the ways in which power has played out historically in the world, and to see it doing so today? I think one of our tragedies is that as feminists we have not been able to see—or perhaps we refuse to see—how we are implicated in the geopolitics of our nation-states. Why, for example, were there no statements by American, British or French feminists about the ways in which the US intervened in Afghanistan and Iraq—citing the status of women as one reason for implementing "regime change"? Both countries have had strong women; and Afghanistan has had such a strong women's movement. Why was there no reference to that, and no solidarity with the women who were fighting there?

AA & SS: What kind of feminism do you see evolving in India today and what specific possibilities and challenges do you see for its future?

UB: This question is really difficult to answer. One thing I can say is that the events of the last year have shown several things: first, that feminism has come a long way in India in being able to be nuanced, complex, and to take account of difference. This was clear in feminist responses to the December 16 incident, but also the ways in which feminists led the protests, understood the political strains and different needs

within (for instance, those of young people, men, women, families), argued against the death penalty, tried to get political parties across the spectrum to come together on the rights of women, negotiated with the Verma Committee to be allowed to speak, systematically prepared their submissions, worked with the state on the law, appreciated the gains the law had made, critiqued its lacks, but did not refuse to work with the state. Twenty years ago, we would have rejected the halfway house the new law is, and would have refused to negotiate with the state. Not so today. While feminists retain their critique of the state, they also are willing to work with it. Or perhaps I should say that they are willing to work with it in limited ways. With the rape law, for example, while feminists are opposed to the death penalty and will continue to work to get rid of it, they nonetheless have the knowledge and expertise in other areas, such as dealing with the issue of medical evidence (after doing extensive research in hospitals), or other similar areas, and they are willing to collaborate with state agencies in using this knowledge to bring about a better environment in which sexual violence can be addressed without violating the rights of the victim. Recently, feminist groups have worked with the Ministry of Health in putting together a set of guidelines on how the medical establishment can deal sensitively with victims of sexual violence, and these are now going to be implemented in hospitals on a wide scale. It is this kind of collaboration that feminists are willing to take on. Also, I see a considerable amount of self-questioning and reflection—such as, did we do right to ask for this kind of change, how does it play out in people's lives, and so on. There is a sort of maturity. Perhaps it's because many of us have aged!

Notes

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1. "Let's Ask How We Contribute to Rape," *The Hindu*, December 26, 2012. http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/lets-ask-how-we-contribute-to-rape/article4235902.ece.

2. In August 2013, riots broke out between Hindu and Muslim communities in the Muzaffarnagar district in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. According to some estimates, around 9,000 families were affected by these riots and are still living in relief camps in pitiful conditions.

3. "Childless, Naturally" was originally published in *Mint* on March 25, 2013. http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/jEGOb5320WMOVI1boGOfGN/Urvashi-Butalia--Childless-naturally.html.

4. See Jaishree Mitra, ed. *Of Mothers and Others: Stories, Essays, Poems*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books/Save the Children Fund, 2013.

5. Butalia is currently at work on a book on the story of Mona, a *hijra*, or someone who belongs to the "third gender" or the community of transgendered people in India. She has written about Mona in *Granta*; see http://www.granta.com/New-Writing/Monas-Story.

6. The Verma Committee Report refers to the report submitted by the three-member commission, headed by former Chief Justice of India J.S. Verma, that was assigned to review laws for sexual crimes. In the aftermath of the gang rape

and murder of a young woman in New Delhi on December 16, 2012, the Harvard College Women's Center set up a Harvard Policy Task Force, which "invite[d] members of the Harvard community to contribute to a Policy Task Force titled 'Beyond Gender Equality,' convened to offer recommendations to India and other South Asian countries in the wake of the New Delhi gang rape and murder." In response to this, Butalia, along with a group of Indian feminists, wrote an open letter criticizing this move. See http://hcwc.wordpress.com/2013/02/15/a-history-of-violence/ and http://kafila.org/2013/02/20/dear-sisters-and-brothers-at-harvard/.

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Excerpts from Urvashi Butalia's Work

From "A Question of Silence: Partition, Women and the State," in *Gender and Catastrophe*, edited by Ronit Lentin (Zed Books, 1997).

Why did the woman's body become so important at this time, both to the community (and the family) as well as the state? The question is important, for both the Indian and Pakistani states at this time were preoccupied with problems of unexpected magnitude. Millions of refugees needed to be housed, compensated and [had to be] found jobs. The violence that accompanied and followed Partition needed somehow to be contained; rail and other transport services restored; international credibility gained; assets and liabilities divided and fought over ... the list is endless. Why did *women,* marginalized at the best of times, assume such importance at this time of catastrophe?

There is little doubt that the Indian state needed to regain some measure of legitimacy. Consider some of the problems it was facing: many more people flowed into India than had left from there. This created an imbalance in the amount of property that was available to be distributed to refugees in India, and the amount those refugees had left behind. Almost everyone had to be content with less than they had had. Many of those who poured into the country had been involved in somewhat "higher" professions (moneylenders, teachers, doctors, farmers, shopkeepers) than those who left (barbers, tailors, shoemakers, ironsmiths and so on). There was little room to accommodate refugees in the same professions they had left behind, and

many had to learn to declass themselves in order to be able to earn some sort of a livelihood. Thousands of women had been widowed—they had to be provided with housing and jobs. Orphaned children posed another problem. And then, there was a machinery to be set up so that people could come away safely, and, if necessary, return to their homes to settle their affairs. Much of this task was left to the army, considered a neutral institution. But, at this time, the army itself was communalized and divided, with soldiers and officers being asked to choose which country they wished to belong to. And so on.

These were not problems that had easy or quick solutions. And all of them needed to be judged on tangible results: if a certain number of refugees had been adequately housed, for example, the state could claim this operation a success. With women, however, the situation was different. The moment the rescue operation was mounted, the state assumed a moral legitimacy, for it took on itself the role of parent, and began the search for its "daughters." It is true that there was considerable criticism, both in the media and within the Legislative Assembly, in the debates that took place on the subject, of what was seen as the poor performance of the government in not having rescued adequate numbers of women. Nonetheless, the fact that the operation had been mounted at all was of importance. The women became crucial to the legitimacy of the state: if they could be recovered, and indeed if they could be "purified" and reabsorbed into the fold of the community, the state would have legitimized itself.

Communities and families too needed similar legitimacy. At its most crass, their actions in killing women and children, or exhorting the women to take their own lives, can be read as attempts to rid themselves of inconvenient encumbrances so that they could get away. For many of them, their getting away was equated in their minds with the preservation of the "religion"—for once in India, they could marry again, procreate, and create a new line of pure believers. Once again, this burden had to be carried by women: their bodies became the pure terrain of religion, which could, of course, be guarded only through death. I do not wish to suggest here that the women were mere instruments in the hands of men, and that they had no feeling either for what one might call the homeland, or for religion. There must have been many cases where women took their own lives. Equally, there were many abducted women who wanted to return to India, just as there were others who did not. But we shall, in all likelihood, never know how these women felt. Those who are still alive have no wish to recount these histories again. And the only accounts we have of their experiences are those that have been written, largely by male historians (which in itself is not necessarily something one should dismiss) and largely based on so-called facts and documents. These tell only one kind of story.

But while there was a similarity in how the state and the family/community saw women as carrying the honour of both, there were also differences in how both approached the question of women. For the community it was the woman's sexual purity that became important, as well as her community and/or religious identity. For the state, because the women it was rescuing were already sexually "impure," having often lived with their captors, this problem had to be approached differently by making the religious identity paramount, and emphasizing how some states of impurity were less impure than others because the women had lived in these states involuntarily. It was this also that made it necessary to continue to emphasize abduction. Hence Gandhi's exhortations to families to take their sisters and daughters back. Gandhi's and Nehru's were not the only exhortations: the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation is said to have issued a pamphlet which quoted Manu to establish that a woman who had had sexual congress with someone other than her husband became purified after three menstrual cycles, and hence her family could accept her back. Similarly, we were told in one of our interviews that stories were published which openly accepted that Sita had had sexual congress with Ravana, despite which she remained pure.

The initial impetus to recover those family members who had been lost, most of whom happened to be

women, was a natural reaction. Families had been torn apart and many wanted to be whole again. But the sheer practical difficulties made it impossible for individuals to mount recovery efforts, so they then turned to the state. Other things underlay this: for men, who had justified the killing of women as "protection," the fact that many of "their" women, or indeed women belonging to their religion, had been abducted (no matter that some women may have chosen to go, they had to be seen as being forcibly abducted), meant a kind of collapse, almost an emasculation of their own agency. Unequal to this task, they now had to hand it over to the state, the new patriarch, the new national family. As the central patriarch, the state now provided coercive backing for restoring and reinforcing patriarchy within the family.

For the post-colonial, deeply contested, fragile and vulnerable state, this was an exercise in restoring its legitimacy which, I would suggest, depended very much on recovering what had been lost: a part of itself, a piece, if you like, of its body, and with it, prestige, honour and property. The recovery of women became the recovery of all these, and symbolically of legitimacy and honour which rested on the backs of, and in the bodies of women. Thus the state acted on its own behalf and on behalf of those communities who invested it with agency on their behalf; and for its self-legitimation, the question of gender became crucial.

The state's rescue operation could be said to have been premised on the fact that the state had no obligation towards its subject citizens to whose plight it could not remain indifferent. But, being women, these subject citizens were treated unequally, and therefore could not be given a choice in where they could stay. So deep was the ambivalence between seeing the woman as a person and a citizen that an ordinary police officer had the right to decide whether a woman had been abducted or not and which was her proper homeland; he had the right to force her to go there, and to pull her out of a situation in which she may well have wanted to stay.

Within parliament, some members objected strongly to this denial of rights to women. One member, Mahavir Tyagi, pointed to the crux of the problem when (speaking of Muslim women recovered from India) he said that: "these women are citizens of India ... they were born in India itself. In taking them to Pakistan without their consent ... shall we not contravene the fundamental rights sanctioned by the Constitution?... The fact that their husbands have gone to Pakistan does not deprive the adult wife of her rights of citizenship. They have their own choice to make." Nonetheless, this choice was denied to women.

It is against this backdrop that we need to look at the women who resisted. For, although there were many who did resettle back into their families, there were others who did not want to be uprooted and dislocated again, who did resist and who refused to come back. It was towards these women that the rescue effort was especially directed: these were the women who had, by marrying, consorting with, and having children by, the "other," transgressed the bounds set for them. There is no doubt that resistance, of whatever kind, and however small, was an act of courage, especially when the dice were so heavily loaded against them. But not everyone was able to resist, and many stories that survive provide evidence of this.

I would like to end this account with the story of a young Muslim woman who was sold to a Sikh from Amritsar district. Buta Singh and Zainab fell in love and married, and had two children, both girls. For several years after her disappearance, the girl's relatives, who lived on lands contiguous to the family's, made attempts to trace her. Finally, six years after her "abduction" she was traced to Amritsar where she was now married and living with Buta Singh. Zainab refused to return, but the family was also adamant, as they wished to marry her into the family in order to keep the land which would otherwise be taken over by the state. She was taken away by force, but was allowed to bring her younger child with her. Buta Singh made desperate attempts to get to Pakistan, and all the while the two kept in touch by correspondence. Finally he converted to Islam and found his way to Zainab's village. There, Zainab had already been married

off to her cousin. The case came up before the tribunal and Buta Singh was confident that Zainab would choose to come back to him, but so strong was the family pressure on her that in court she rejected Buta Singh and returned their child to him. The bereft man then committed suicide and the case was talked about widely in the media. If, in spite of everything, Zainab could submit to family pressure in such a way, one wonders how many women would actually have the courage to speak up before the tribunal.

The silence that has surrounded these issues is part of the general silence on the pain and trauma of Partition. At the same time the silence about women's experiences specifically suggests something different: for what are at stake here are not only questions of state, but also questions of identity, of agency, of religion and of sexuality. As far as the Indian state was concerned, women were defined in terms of their religious identities (an unusual stance for a supposedly secular state to take)—they were either Hindu or Muslim. And the children of mixed unions, apart from being visible reminders of these, did not fit easily into either category.

Whatever accounts I have also suggest that there was considerable difference in the attitude of the two countries to the question of abduction. While both signed the treaty, Pakistan did not bring in legislation as India did; also, it seems as if on the whole Muslim families were more willing to take Muslim women back than Hindu families were, perhaps because Islam does not have the same codes of purity and pollution that Hinduism does. Some expressed reluctance, but it seems they were few in number. The Indian state's identification of women as primarily belonging to their religion did not go without question among women social workers. There are many accounts of how people like Damyanti Sahgal, Kamlaben Patel and others helped women in their camps to go back to their abductors, often putting their own jobs at risk. Anis Kidwai questioned how much meaning religion had for Muslim and Hindu women:

> And what does she know of religion anyway? At least men have the opportunity to go to the mosque, and pray,
> but the women, Muslims have never allowed them to stand up. The moment they see young women their
> eyes become full of blood: run away, they tell them, go off. What are you doing here... the culprit is within
> themselves, but it is the women they make run away—if they come into the *masjid* the whole *namaz* is ruined.
> If they try to listen to the last call of the month of *ramzan,* everyone's attention is distracted ... if they go into a
> *quawali*, the sufis will turn their attention from god to the world....

It is difficult to begin to understand the experiences of these women for there is almost no way in which we can recover their voices—nor, if we can, is it really desirable to do so. They will, therefore, perforce have to remain silent. What happened with abducted women during Partition is in many ways similar to what we see today—that during communal strife and violence, it is often women who are the most talked about, but once such violence is over, a silence also seems to descend about women. The story of these women is by no means over. Today, more than ever, it is becoming important for us to examine how women are inscribed into communal situations, how they locate themselves there, what their relationship with religion is; also how the state constructs women, and indeed the kinds of responses that we need to direct at the state. For this it is as important to explore our history as it is to do some introspection into our present—informed, hopefully, and educated, by the perspective of the past.

From "Childless, Naturally: Reflections on Not Being a Mother," in *Of Mothers and Others: Stories, Essays, Poems*, edited by Jaishree Misra (Zubaan Books/Save the Children Fund, 2013).

It has been two years since the man I nearly married and I decided to part. On a balmy evening, the leaves stirring gently behind us, we sit in a restaurant talking. The heartbreak is over, the friendship intact. We talk about what we shared, why we decided to go our separate ways and then, he surprises me by saying: "You know the one thing I do regret is that we would have had such lovely children, and you, you'd have made a fantastic mother, you're such a natural." A natural? Me? What has he based this judgment on, I wonder, and what does it mean? It's true that I love children—I did then and I do now, indeed I only have to see one on the road walking with or being carried by a parent and I "naturally" veer that way. But does that mean I had what it took to be a good mother? I'm not at all sure.

Thirty years later. I am still single, I still love children. I've become familiar with the question: Why have you never married? Don't you feel you need a relationship? Are you not lonely? Don't you want children? I'm not entirely sure I follow all the connections but the questions insert themselves into my head and I ask myself: Do I want children? Am I missing something by not being a mother? Most friends I talked to actively want this, she wants to feel life growing within her, she wants to "give" birth, she wants to be pregnant, to hold the child within her, to be able to give love unconditionally, to have someone to look after her (and her partner) in the future, to experience the joy of motherhood. I feel none of these things. Does that mean I am a cold fish? That I have no feelings? Am I fooling myself when I say I feel no active desire to have children—am I saying this because, in truth, I want them, but I do not want to seem lacking in any way so I imagine I don't? It's difficult to say. I'm constantly suspicious of myself though and worry: am I really the contented person I think I am or am I just pretending?

My friend's statement stays with me. It comes back to haunt me time and again. Am I such a natural? Then why is the desire for motherhood not growing inside me actively?

I think back to my friends who talk about being able to love unconditionally. I think, well, this is not something I am unfamiliar with—why do people assume such feelings then are only meant for children? My friends have children, talk of sleepless nights, of irresponsible husbands, unhelpful siblings, of school admissions, of careers given up, of grades and universities: I hear this all the time. And I hear the throwaway remark: "Well, how would you know? You've never been a mother."

I've just got my first job. It's in a publishing house: my father goes to the general manager, a genial Bengali, and tells him that he had better look after his daughter. The general manager tells me this is the first time they have employed a woman in an executive position: normally they do not like to do this because women go off and get married and have children. He makes it sound like a crime. I promise him I will not do this. I keep my promise. Long after I leave my job. No marriage, no children.

My mother and I are talking. I worry for you, she tells me, what will you do when you grow old? Everyone needs someone. If you don't want to marry, why don't you just adopt a child? But is that a good reason for adopting a child, I ask her, to have someone around when you grow old? And what's the guarantee anyway? No, no, she quickly switches tack. That's not why I think you should adopt. But just think what wonderful grandparents this potential child is missing out on! Good enough reason for adopting, don't you think? I take her seriously. Perhaps she knows more than I do, I tell myself, and I start to search out adoption possibilities. For a while, I am quite excited by the change in my life that this promises, but in the end, I do not have the courage, or the motivation. I give up.

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I've set up my own publishing house, publishing books by and about women. I am fiercely passionate about this, it's what gives me joy, it's what involves me, I know this is what I want to do all my life. I want somehow to make a dent in the way the world sees women, to be part of that change. Is this madness, this obsession? Why didn't I feel this way about children? Or am I just deflecting an unfulfilled desire? I'm told motherhood is a woman's destiny, it's what completes her. So what's all this about publishing? But I don't feel incomplete, or that I have missed my destiny. Is there something wrong with me?

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My friend Judith has been trying to have a child for many years. She's deeply depressed, the relationship with her husband is becoming more and more tense. She's gone through many miscarriages, they're both desperate for children, but they can't seem to have them. She and I talk one day, standing in the dark near a lamp post in a cold European town. Why don't you adopt, I ask her? How can I, she says, I'm not at all sure how I will feel towards the child if she is not mine. But she will be yours, I assure her. She may not be born of your body but she will be yours. We talk. I am passionate about the joys of adoption, the importance of it, the fact that "naturalness" means nothing in motherhood. Once home in India, I write her a long letter, persuasive, eloquent. She tells me that went a long way in making her decide. Today she has two lovely daughters, sisters, adopted from the same country, and she's a bestselling author of a book on motherhood. Why was I so persuasive? I don't really know.

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I'm with my friend Mona Ahmed, a hijra, at her home in Delhi's Mehendiyan, an area with two mosques, a madrassa, two graveyards, a dhobi ghat and many houses. A man till the age of eighteen, and then castrated and now a woman after a sex-change operation, Mona tells me that she has always, always wanted to be a mother. I wanted to hold a child in my arms, to feel life against me, to learn motherhood, to bring the child up, she says. In her early seventies now, Mona fulfilled the desire to adopt a little over twenty years ago when a neighbour died in childbirth and her husband had no use for the daughter she had given birth to. Mona "created" a family, herself as abbu, father, her hijra friend Neelam as ammi, mother, her guru Chaman as dadi, grandmother. The assigned roles though were a bit more mixed up. It was Mona who was the real mother; she was the one who nurtured Ayesha, gave her a name, a birth date, an identity. I chose the 26th of January as her birth date, she said, for I wanted that she be free like India. And I learnt how to be a mother, she adds, I went every day to the doctor, the pediatrician, and asked her to teach me how to

feed the child, how to burp her, how to bathe, change, what to watch out for, how to develop antennae about when to wake up, and so on. Can motherhood then be learnt? Is this what there is to it? What about the "naturalness" of it to women? What about someone like Mona—abbu, father, but actually mother.

Mona's daughter, Ayesha, comes to visit me. We talk about her life, a young girl, brought up in a hijra household, the father (Mona) actually her mother, the grandmother (Chaman) referred to as "he" by everyone but Dadi, grandmother, to Ayesha. Can you imagine what it was like? she asks me. They gave me so much love, but a young girl growing up, she needs some things, she has questions to ask about her self, her body, who was I to ask? There was no other female, only these men/women, these people of indeterminate sexuality. I was so alone. Perhaps motherhood can't be learnt after all.

On a Thursday morning Bina, the daughter of the presswallah across the road, runs away. No one suspects anything till it's afternoon. She'd gone to school to sit for an examination, perhaps she's gone out with friends afterwards. But Bina is a "good" girl, she does not go off without informing her parents, so as afternoon turns to evening they start to worry. Back at home in their community, they wonder whether to go to the police. They are afraid of scandal—suppose it is something innocent, the girl's just gone off somewhere and fallen asleep, why make her disappearance public? But in the evening, they learn that a young boy, the son of a neighbour, is also missing. Suspicion begins to solidify into certainty. In the end, a report is filed. Two, three days later, both are discovered in a neighbouring town, and brought back home. They swear that they wandered away innocently—went for a walk to the zoo, then a film, then, frightened that the parents would be angry, they boarded a bus and went off to a relative's house. Did you sleep with each other, the anxious parents ask in euphemisms, there is no straight way to ask youngsters if they have had sex, no real vocabulary. No, no is the vehement denial. The parents are relieved: they don't stop to ask how the youngsters so quickly understand what it is they are asking.

A month later Bina is pregnant. Her mother and I take her to a nearby clinic. We try to tell the doctor that it was an accident, but Bina is quicker than us. No, she says, it wasn't my first time with this man. We're silent. Clearly she lied to her mother and to me. Her mother is devastated: I did so much for her, and this is how she pays me back? I understand her grief, but I wonder too—all that stuff about unconditional love, where did this notion of payback enter the picture? How do children pay back? Bina has her abortion, and remains persona non grata. The young man disappears from her life, and soon after marries someone else. Men's peccadillos are easily tolerated.

Two years later, she runs away again. This time with a married man. His wife is unable to give him children, so he marries Bina, brings her into the household. She gives him two children, he is delirious. She's now married, and a mother. Her parents are relieved and happy. Everything is settled. She's a mother. No one will say anything now—besides her husband also has money. Legitimacy and wealth—a powerful combination. Later, she will finance her young brother to buy a car and begin a taxi service.

My friend from overseas is visiting. We're talking over dinner. It's her son's birthday, she does not know whether to call him or not, their relationship is difficult, tense. She's no longer with his father, he resents

her because he feels she does not give him enough time or attention, she worries that he has not yet found a job. She calls him. Happy birthday son, she says. They talk, with affection, and then, suddenly, without warning, there is anger, resentment, almost a kind of hatred. I knew it, he says, you always do this, you always want to make me feel small. She tries to explain, he will not listen, she's devastated, but struggles to keep the conversation open. It ends badly. Am I a bad mother? she asks me. Is it wrong of me to want a career? I have done what I could for him, I love him, but surely it is time he took his life in his hands? What do you think I should do? I have no answer.

I'm at home. My mother, ninety years old, is unwell. She's becoming weaker by the day, she's unable to eat, she has to be helped to the bathroom. One day, as I take her to the bathroom and help to clean her up, she asks me, how will I ever repay you for this? And I ask myself, and her, why should she even think this way? She's spent the better part of her life being a mother not to one but four children, surely we owe her something? That old payback thing again. As she gets weaker, I find myself structuring my life around her needs: leaving the office to come home for lunch so she is not alone, putting her to bed in the evenings, staying with her, her hand in mine, till she is peacefully asleep, bathing her, cleaning her, feeding her, taking her for a walk, spending time with her… in other words, being a mother to her. One of my friends comments on this, you've become the mother. My women friends and I discuss this, we find that all of us are in similar situations, mothers to our mothers, becoming our mothers. Was this what was meant by it being natural?

We're trying to fix a meeting for an NGO that I am on the board of. There are six of us who need to meet and we're juggling dates. One of us, a man, says a weekend is better for him as his young son is getting married and he will not be free earlier. The other one announces that she is about to become a grandmother, and suddenly people start trading stories about being mothers and grandmothers, offering each other stories of how wonderful it all is. I pitch in saying I don't know about any of this, and am told, don't worry, we'll make you an honorary grandma, no worries if you don't have children. How true, I think, I have no worries of that kind. I will never have to worry about which school to send my child to, or be forced to think of her percentages when it comes to entering college. Or deal with the deeper anxieties that all mothers must have to deal with.

But relief isn't all. There's also concern. I've just seen a friend totally devastated at losing her young son. Barely twenty, he died in a freak accident, she is inconsolable, she feels a part of her has been torn away, wrenched out of her body almost. This too is part of motherhood, this deep, intense attachment, this terrible, devastating despair when you lose a child. Could I have coped with this had it happened to me? Useless to speculate, but a sort of fear settles around my heart for all the mothers who lose children—surely, I think, there can be no loss worse than this. There's relief too, perhaps a selfish sort of relief, at being childless.

But there's also concern, a question. For years I have identified myself as a single woman. It's important to me this definition: singleness is, for me, a positive state, one that is not defined by a lack, by something

missing, by a negative—as for example the word "unmarried" is. But with this children business, we don't even have the language to define a positive state. I mean, there is childlessness and there is childlessness. How often have we heard that a couple is childless, that a woman who cannot bear a child is defined as barren. Why should this be? I did not make a choice not to have children, but that's how my life panned out. I don't feel a sense of loss at this, my life has been fulfilling in so many other ways. Why should I have to define it in terms of a lack? Am I a barren woman? I can't square this with what I know of myself.

I recall one of the authors we've published, a domestic worker called Baby Halder. She had her first child when she was barely thirteen. A child herself, she became a mother before she had time to even think. At some point, Baby, reflecting on her childhood, commented on how ephemeral, how brief it was. One afternoon, exhausted from playing host to her sister's suitors, Baby slumped against the wall of her home and reflected on her life. So brief was her childhood that she saw the entire history pass before her in a few moments. I licked every moment, she said, as her cow licks her calf, treasuring it. For so many of our young girls, despite laws that forbid it, motherhood comes even before they have stopped being children. Is this right? Why is this thing so valorized?

Nothing is simple though. The newspapers have been full of the story of a Bengali couple in Norway—the Norwegian authorities have taken their two children away from them. If reports are to be believed, one of the children has something called "attachment disorder"—he starts banging his head against the wall when he sees his mother. The papers speak of a tense, conflicted, sometimes violent relationship between the mother and the child. Finally, the mother is deemed unfit to look after the children, and they are handed over to their uncle. Back at home in India, the whole thing acquires other dimensions altogether—politics and nationalism enter the picture. The issue seems to be how Norway can decide on what is right and what is not for our children. In Bengal, the Child Rights Committee decides to give custody back to the mother. None of the reports in the papers says anything about whether the mother is competent to look after the children or not, or indeed how the children are being affected by this constant backing and forthing.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this case, what concerns me is a different thing. On a membership-based email network called feministsindia, there is a general sense of relief that custody has been awarded to the mother. There seems to be an assumption that the mother is the "natural" (back to that natural stuff again) guardian, the best person to look after the children. It's not the rights and wrongs of this particular case that worry me—my knowledge of them is, after all, only based on newspaper reports.

What concerns me is this: as feminists, we've questioned everything about the "naturalness" of motherhood but here we are, in a way almost unquestioningly accepting that naturalness, not even entertaining the notion that mothers can be violent, that they can be incapable of looking after their children, or even unwilling to do so. I wonder what is going on here—was the response of the Norwegian authorities a culturally insensitive one? Or was it that they believed, as often happens, only the father's version? Were all media reports of the mother's supposed violence towards her children then totally wrong? Or are we, as feminists, reaffirming the motherhood myth? Where does the truth lie? Is the relationship between a mother and a child always a wonderful one? I have no answer to these questions.

So what do we have in the end? The "naturalness" of motherhood? The "curse" of childlessness? The dread of barrenness? A life filled with lack, with loss of what might have been? Or just another way of living? A choice, happenstance, circumstance, call it what you like, but for me, it's a happy, contented, fulfilled life, despite—or perhaps because of—being what is called "childless." For those of you who've doubted yourself about this, let me assure you, it's a good place to be.

Return To Intro

The Urgency of Intersectionality
Kimberle Crenshaw
TED Women 2016

00:12
I'd like to try something new. Those of you who are able, please stand up. OK, so I'm going to name some names. When you hear a name that you don't recognize, you can't tell me anything about them, I'd like you to take a seat and stay seated. The last person standing, we're going to see what they know. OK?

00:35
(Laughter)

00:37
All right. Eric Garner. Mike Brown. Tamir Rice. Freddie Gray.

00:56
So those of you who are still standing, I'd like you to turn around and take a look. I'd say half to most of the people are still standing. So let's continue.

01:07
Michelle Cusseaux. Tanisha Anderson. Aura Rosser. Meagan Hockaday.

01:30
So if we look around again, there are about four people still standing, and actually I'm not going to put you on the spot. I just say that to encourage transparency, so you can be seated.

01:41
(Laughter)

01:44
So those of you who recognized the first group of names know that these were African-Americans who have been killed by the police over the last two and a half years. What you may not know is that the other list is also African-Americans who have been killed within the last two years. Only one thing distinguishes the names that you know from the names that you don't know: gender.

02:16
So let me first let you know that there's nothing at all distinct about this audience that explains the pattern of recognition that we've just seen. I've done this exercise dozens of times around the country. I've done it to women's rights organizations. I've done it with civil rights groups. I've done it with professors. I've done it with students. I've done it with psychologists. I've done it with sociologists. I've done it even with progressive members of Congress. And everywhere, the awareness of the level of police violence that black women experience is exceedingly low.

02:57
Now, it is surprising, isn't it, that this would be the case. I mean, there are two issues involved here. There's police violence against African-Americans, and there's violence against women, two issues that have been talked about a lot lately. But when we think about who is implicated by these problems, when we think about who is victimized by these problems, the names of these black women never come to mind.

03:25

Now, communications experts tell us that when facts do not fit with the available frames, people have a difficult time incorporating new facts into their way of thinking about a problem. These women's names have slipped through our consciousness because there are no frames for us to see them, no frames for us to remember them, no frames for us to hold them. As a consequence, reporters don't lead with them, policymakers don't think about them, and politicians aren't encouraged or demanded that they speak to them.

04:07

Now, you might ask, why does a frame matter? I mean, after all, an issue that affects black people and an issue that affects women, wouldn't that necessarily include black people who are women and women who are black people? Well, the simple answer is that this is a trickle-down approach to social justice, and many times it just doesn't work. Without frames that allow us to see how social problems impact all the members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of our movements, left to suffer in virtual isolation. But it doesn't have to be this way.

04:54

Many years ago, I began to use the term "intersectionality" to deal with the fact that many of our social justice problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice.

05:13

Now, the experience that gave rise to intersectionality was my chance encounter with a woman named Emma DeGraffenreid. Emma DeGraffenreid was an African-American woman, a working wife and a mother. I actually read about Emma's story from the pages of a legal opinion written by a judge who had dismissed Emma's claim of race and gender discrimination against a local car manufacturing plant. Emma, like so many African-American women, sought better employment for her family and for others. She wanted to create a better life for her children and for her family. But she applied for a job, and she was not hired, and she believed that she was not hired because she was a black woman.

06:07

Now, the judge in question dismissed Emma's suit, and the argument for dismissing the suit was that the employer did hire African-Americans and the employer hired women. The real problem, though, that the judge was not willing to acknowledge was what Emma was actually trying to say, that the African-Americans that were hired, usually for industrial jobs, maintenance jobs, were all men. And the women that were hired, usually for secretarial or front-office work, were all white. Only if the court was able to see how these policies came together would he be able to see the double discrimination that Emma DeGraffenreid was facing. But the court refused to allow Emma to put two causes of action together to tell her story because he believed that, by allowing her to do that, she would be able to have preferential treatment. She would have an advantage by having two swings at the bat, when African-American men and white women only had one swing at the bat. But of course, neither African-American men or white women needed to combine a race and gender discrimination claim to tell the story of the discrimination they were experiencing. Why wasn't the real unfairness law's refusal to protect African-American women simply because their experiences weren't exactly the same as white women and African-American men? Rather than broadening the frame to include African-American women, the court simply tossed their case completely out of court.

08:06

Now, as a student of antidiscrimination law, as a feminist, as an antiracist, I was struck by this case. It felt to me like injustice squared. So first of all, black women weren't allowed to work at the plant. Second of all, the court doubled down on this exclusion by making it legally inconsequential. And to boot, there was no name for this problem. And we all know that, where there's no name for a problem, you can't see a problem, and when you can't see a problem, you pretty much can't solve it.

08:50

Many years later, I had come to recognize that the problem that Emma was facing was a framing problem. The frame that the court was using to see gender discrimination or to see race discrimination was partial, and it was distorting. For me, the challenge that I faced was trying to figure out whether there was an alternative narrative, a prism that would allow us to see Emma's dilemma, a prism that would allow us to rescue her from the cracks in the law, that would allow judges to see her story.

09:33

So it occurred to me, maybe a simple analogy to an intersection might allow judges to better see Emma's dilemma. So if we think about this intersection, the roads to the intersection would be the way that the workforce was structured by race and by gender. And then the traffic in those roads would be the hiring policies and the other practices that ran through those roads. Now, because Emma was both black and female, she was positioned precisely where those roads overlapped, experiencing the simultaneous impact of the company's gender and race traffic. The law -- the law is like that ambulance that shows up and is ready to treat Emma only if it can be shown that she was harmed on the race road or on the gender road but not where those roads intersected.

10:43

So what do you call being impacted by multiple forces and then abandoned to fend for yourself? Intersectionality seemed to do it for me.

10:58

I would go on to learn that African-American women, like other women of color, like other socially marginalized people all over the world, were facing all kinds of dilemmas and challenges as a consequence of intersectionality, intersections of race and gender, of heterosexism, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, all of these social dynamics come together and create challenges that are sometimes quite unique. But in the same way that intersectionality raised our awareness to the way that black women live their lives, it also exposes the tragic circumstances under which African-American women die.

11:54

Police violence against black women is very real. The level of violence that black women face is such that it's not surprising that some of them do not survive their encounters with police. Black girls as young as seven, great grandmothers as old as 95 have been killed by the police. They've been killed in their living rooms, in their bedrooms. They've been killed in their cars. They've been killed on the street. They've been killed in front of their parents and they've been killed in front of their children. They have been shot to death. They have been stomped to death. They have been suffocated to death. They have been manhandled to death. They have been tasered to death. They've been killed when they've called for help. They've been killed

when they were alone, and they've been killed when they were with others. They've been killed shopping while black, driving while black, having a mental disability while black, having a domestic disturbance while black. They've even been killed being homeless while black. They've been killed talking on the cell phone, laughing with friends, sitting in a car reported as stolen and making a U-turn in front of the White House with an infant strapped in the backseat of the car. Why don't we know these stories? Why is it that their lost lives don't generate the same amount of media attention and communal outcry as the lost lives of their fallen brothers? It's time for a change.

14:03

So what can we do? In 2014, the African-American Policy Forum began to demand that we "say her name" at rallies, at protests, at conferences, at meetings, anywhere and everywhere that state violence against black bodies is being discussed. But saying her name is not enough. We have to be willing to do more. We have to be willing to bear witness, to bear witness to the often painful realities that we would just rather not confront, the everyday violence and humiliation that many black women have had to face, black women across color, age, gender expression, sexuality and ability.

15:01

So we have the opportunity right now -- bearing in mind that some of the images that I'm about to share with you may be triggering for some -- to collectively bear witness to some of this violence. We're going to hear the voice of the phenomenal Abby Dobson. And as we sit with these women, some who have experienced violence and some who have not survived them, we have an opportunity to reverse what happened at the beginning of this talk, when we could not stand for these women because we did not know their names.

15:45

So at the end of this clip, there's going to be a roll call. Several black women's names will come up. I'd like those of you who are able to join us in saying these names as loud as you can, randomly, disorderly. Let's create a cacophony of sound to represent our intention to hold these women up, to sit with them, to bear witness to them, to bring them into the light.

16:28

(Singing) Abby Dobson: Say, say her name.

16:42

Say, say her name.

16:54

(Audience) Shelly!

16:56

(Audience) Kayla!

16:57

AD: Oh, say her name.

17:11

(Audience shouting names)

17:14

Say, say, say her name.

17:29

Say her name.

17:34
For all the names I'll never know,
17:44
say her name.
17:47
KC: Aiyanna Stanley Jones, Janisha Fonville, Kathryn Johnston, Kayla Moore, Michelle Cusseaux, Rekia Boyd, Shelly Frey, Tarika, Yvette Smith.
18:00
AD: Say her name.
18:11
KC: So I said at the beginning, if we can't see a problem, we can't fix a problem. Together, we've come together to bear witness to these women's lost lives. But the time now is to move from mourning and grief to action and transformation. This is something that we can do. It's up to us.
18:42
Thank you for joining us. Thank you.
18:46
(Applause)

Return To Intro

The Sex/Gender/Sexuality System

The phrase "**sex/gender system,**" or "**sex/gender/sexuality system**" was coined by Gayle Rubin (1984) to describe, "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity." That is, Rubin proposed that the links between biological sex, social gender, and sexual attraction are products of culture. Gender is, in this case, "the social product" that we attach to notions of biological sex. In our **heteronormative** culture, everyone is assumed to be heterosexual (attracted to men if you are a woman; attracted to women if you are a man) until stated otherwise. People make assumptions about how others should act in social life, and to whom they should be attracted, based on their perceptions of outward bodily appearance, which is assumed to represent biological sex characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics and genitalia). Rubin questioned the biological determinist argument that suggested all people assigned female at birth will identify as women and be attracted to men. According to a biological determinist view, where "biology is destiny," this is the way nature intended. However, this view fails to account for human intervention. As human beings, we have an impact on the social arrangements of society. Social constructionists believe that many things we typically leave unquestioned as conventional ways of life actually reflect historically- and culturally-rooted power relationships between groups of people, which are reproduced in part through **socialization** processes, where we learn conventional ways of thinking and behaving from our families and communities. Just because female-assigned people bear children does not necessarily mean that they are always by definition the best caretakers of those children or that they have "natural instincts" that male-assigned people lack.

"Kid Girl Doll Child Expression Cute Face Baby" by Max Pixel is in the Public Domain, CC0

For instance, the arrangement of women caring for children has a historical legacy (which we will discuss more in the section on gendered labor markets). We see not only mothers but other women too caring for children: daycare workers, nannies, elementary school teachers, and babysitters. What these jobs have in common is that they are all very female-dominated occupations AND that this work is economically undervalued. These people do not get paid very well. One study found that, in New York City, parking lot attendants, on average, make more money than childcare workers (Clawson and Gerstel, 2002). Because "mothering" is not seen as work, but as a woman's "natural" behavior, she is not compensated in a way that reflects how difficult the work is. If you have ever babysat for a full day, go ahead and multiply that by eighteen years and then try to make the argument that it is not work. Men can do this work just as well as women, but there are no similar cultural dictates that say they should. On top of that, some suggest that if paid caretakers were mostly men, then they would make much more money.   In fact, men working in female-dominated occupations actually earn more and gain promotions faster than women. This phenomenon is referred to as the **glass escalator.** This example illustrates how, as social constructionist Abby Ferber (2009) argues, social systems produce differences between men and women, and not the reverse.

Return To Intro

Sexualities

As discussed in the section on social construction, heterosexuality is no more and no less natural than gay sexuality or bisexuality, for instance. As was shown, people—particularly sexologists and medical doctors—defined heterosexuality and its boundaries. This definition of the parameters of heterosexuality is an expression of power that constructs what types of sexuality are considered "normal" and which types of sexuality are considered "deviant." Situated, cultural norms define what is considered "natural." Defining sexual desire and relations between women and men as acceptable and normal means defining all sexual desire and expression outside that parameter as deviant. However, even within sexual relations between men and women, gendered cultural norms associated with heterosexuality dictate what is "normal" or "deviant." As a quick thought exercise, think of some words for women who have many sexual partners and then, do the same for men who have many sexual partners; the results will be quite different. So, within the field of sexuality we can see power in relations along lines of gender and sexual orientation (and race, class, age, and ability as well).

Adrienne Rich (1980) called heterosexuality "compulsory," meaning that in our culture all people are assumed to be heterosexual and society is full of both formal and informal enforcements that encourage heterosexuality and penalize sexual variation. Compulsory heterosexuality plays an important role in reproducing inequality in the lives of sexual minorities. Just look at laws; in a few states, such as Indiana, joint adoptions are illegal for gay men and lesbians (Lambda Legal). Gay men and lesbians have lost custody battles over children due to **homophobia**—the fear, hatred, or prejudice against gay people (Pershing, 1994). Media depictions of gay men and lesbians are few and often negatively stereotyped. There are few "out" gay athletes in the top three men's professional sports—basketball, baseball, and football—despite the fact that, statistically, there are very likely to be many (Zirin, 2010). Many religious groups openly exclude and discriminate against gay men and lesbians. Additionally, **heteronormativity** structures the everyday, taken-for-granted ways in which heterosexuality is privileged and normalized. For instance, sociologist Karen Martin studied what parents say to their children about sexuality and reproduction, and found that with children as young as three and five years old, parents routinely assumed their children were heterosexual, told them they would get (heterosexually) married, and interpreted cross-gender interactions between children as "signs" of heterosexuality (Martin 2009). In this kind of socialization is an additional element of normative sexuality—the idea of **compulsory monogamy**, where exclusive romantic and sexual relationships and marriage are expected and valued over other kinds of relationships (Willey 2016). Therefore, heteronormativity surrounds us at a very young age, teaching us that there are only two genders and that we are or should desire and partner with one person of the opposite gender, who we will marry.

Just like gender, sexuality is neither binary nor fixed. There are straight people and gay people, but people are also bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, queer, and heteroflexible, to name a few additional sexual identities. Also, sexual attraction, sexual relations and relationships, and sexual identity can shift

over a person's lifetime. As there are more than two genders,,there are more than two kinds of people to be attracted to and individuals can be attracted to and can relate sexually to multiple people of different genders at once!

Another common misconception is that not all transgender people are sexually queer. This belief may stem from the "LGBT" acronym that lists transgender people along with lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. A trans man who previously identified as a lesbian may still be attracted to women and may identify as straight, or may identify as queer. Another trans man may be attracted to other men and identify as gay or queer. This multiplicity suggests that the culturally dominant binary model fails to accurately encapsulate the wide variety of sexual and gender lived experiences.

Return To Intro

Race

"Concepts of race did not exist prior to racism. Instead, it is inequality and oppression that have produced the idea of essential racial differences" (Ferber, 2009: 176).

In the context of the United States, there is a binary understanding of race as either Black_{Here, we capitalize Black and not white in recognition of Black as a reclaimed, and empowering, identity.} or white. This is not to say that only two races are recognized, just to say that these are the constructed "oppositional poles" of race. What do we mean by **race**? What does Abby Ferber in the quote above mean by race? More than just descriptive of skin color or physical attributes, in biologized constructions of race, race determines intelligence, sexuality, strength, motivation, and "culture." These ideas are not only held by self-proclaimed racists, but are woven into the fabric of American society in social institutions. For instance, prior to the 20th Century, people were considered to be legally "Black" if they had any African ancestors. This was known as the **one-drop rule**, which held that if you had even one drop of African "blood," you would have been considered Black. The same did not apply to white "blood"—rather, whiteness was defined by its purity. Even today, these ideas continue to exist. People with one Black and one white parent (for instance, President Barack Obama) are considered Black, and someone with one Asian parent and one white parent is usually considered Asian.

Many cultural ideas of racial difference were justified by the use of science. White scientists of the early 19th Century set out to "prove" Black racial inferiority by studying biological difference. Most notable were studies that suggested African American skulls had a smaller cranial capacity, contained smaller brains, and, thus, less intelligence. Later studies revealed both biased methodological practices by scientists and findings that brain size did not actually predict intelligence. The practice of using science in an attempt to support ideas of racial superiority and inferiority is known as **scientific racism**.
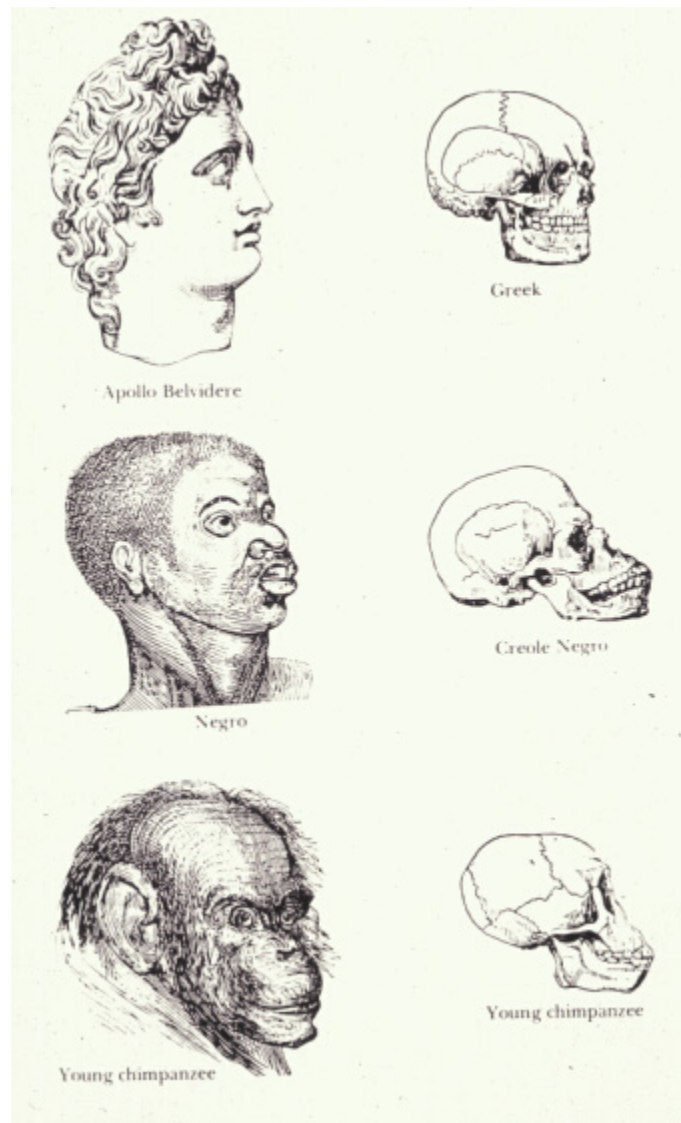
"Indigenous Races of the Earth (1857)" *by Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon is in the Public Domain, CC0*

Traces of scientific racism are evident in more recent "studies" of Black Americans. These studies and their applications often are often shaped by ideas about African Americans from the era of chattel slavery in the Americas. For instance, the Moynihan Report, also known as "The Negro Family: A Case for National Action" (1965) was an infamous document that claimed the non-nuclear family structure found among poor and working-class African American populations, characterized by an absent father and matriarchal mother, would hinder the entire race's economic and social progress. While the actual argument was much more nuanced, politicians picked up on this report to propose an essentialist argument about race and the "culture of poverty." They played upon stereotypes from the era of African-American slavery that justified treating Black Americans as less than human. One of these stereotypes is the assumption that Black men and women are hypersexual; these images have been best analyzed by Patricia Hill Collins (2004) in her work on "controlling images" of African Americans— images such as the "Jezebel" image of Black women and the "Buck" image of Black men discussed earlier. Slave owners were financially invested in the reproduction of slave children since children born

of mothers in bondage would also become the property of owners, so much so that they did not wait for women to get pregnant of their own accord but institutionalized practices of rape against slave women to get them pregnant (Collins, 2004). It was not a crime to rape a slave—and this kind of rape was not seen as rape—since slaves were seen as property. But, since many people recognized African American slaves as human beings, they had to be framed as fundamentally different in other ways to justify enslavement. The notion that Black people are "naturally" more sexual and that Black women were therefore "unrapable" (Collins 2004) served this purpose. Black men were framed as hypersexual "Bucks" uninterested in monogamy and family; this idea justified splitting up slave families and using Black men to impregnate Black women. The underlying perspectives in the Moynihan Report—that Black families are composed of overbearing (in both senses of the word: over-birthing and over-controlling) mothers and disinterested fathers and that if only they could form more stable nuclear families and mirror the white middle-class they would be lifted from poverty—reflect assumptions of natural difference found in the ideology supporting American slavery. The structural causes of racialized economic inequality— particularly, the undue impoverishment of Blacks and the undue enrichment of whites during slavery and decades of unequal laws and blocked access to employment opportunities (Feagin 2006)—are ignored in this line of argument in order to claim fundamental biological differences in the realms of gender, sexuality and family or racial "culture." Furthermore, this line of thinking disparages alternative family forms as dysfunctional rather than recognizing them as adaptations that enabled survival in difficult and even intolerable conditions.

Of course, there are other racial groups recognized within the United States, but the Black/white binary is the predominant racial binary system at play in the American context. We can see that this Black/white binary exists and is socially constructed if we consider the case of the 19th Century Irish immigrant. When they first arrived, Irish immigrants were "blackened" in the popular press and the white, Anglo-Saxon imagination (Roediger 1991). Cartoon depictions of Irish immigrants gave them dark skin and exaggerated facial features like big lips and pronounced brows. They were depicted and thought to be lazy, ignorant, and alcoholic nonwhite "others" for decades.
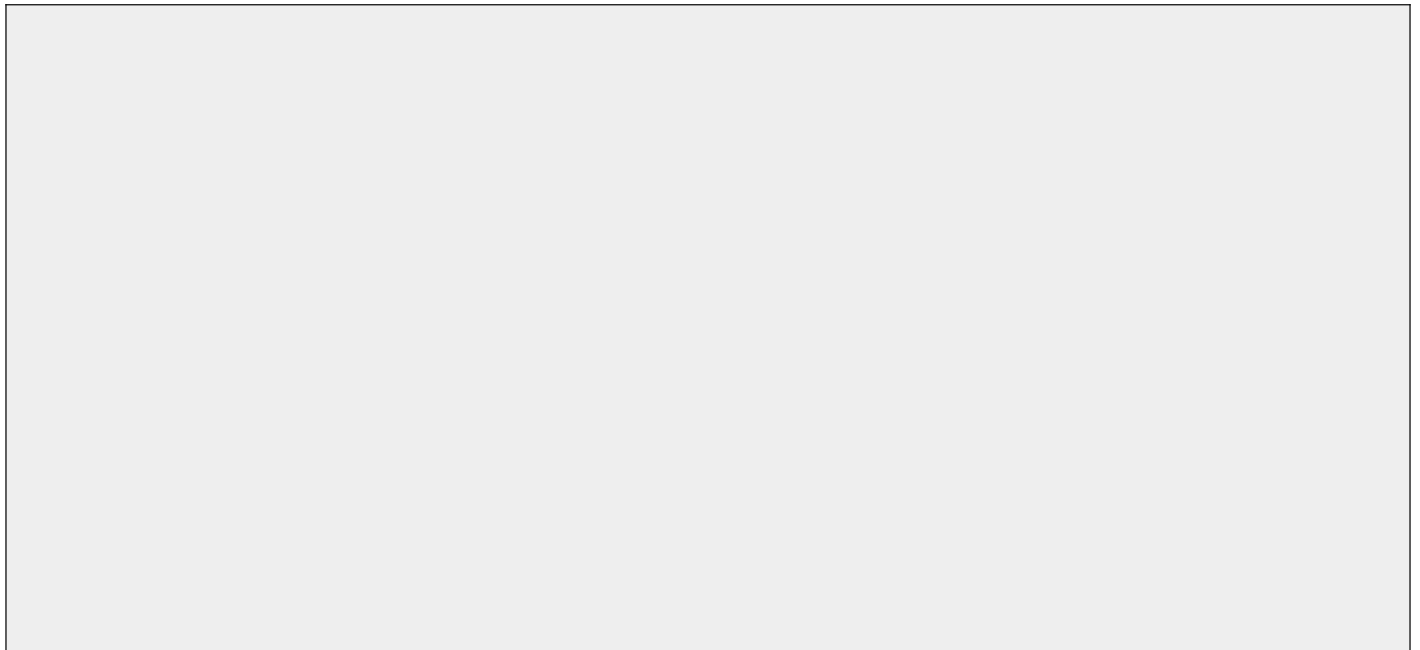
IRISH IBERIAN.   ANGLO–TEUTONIC.   NEGRO.

The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

"Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View (1899)" by H. Strickland Constable is in the Public Domain, CC0

An illustration from the H. Strickland Constable's *Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View* shows an alleged similarity between "Irish Iberian" and "Negro" features in contrast to the higher "Anglo-Teutonic." The accompanying caption reads:

"The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low prognathous type. They came to Ireland and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races."

Over time, Irish immigrants and their children and grandchildren assimilated into the category of "white" by strategically distancing themselves from Black Americans and other non-whites in labor disputes and participating in white supremacist racial practices and ideologies. In this way, the Irish in America *became* white. A similar process took place for Italian-Americans, and, later, Jewish American immigrants from multiple European countries after the Second World War. Similar to Irish Americans, both groups *became* white after first being seen as non-white. These cases show how socially constructed race is and how this labeling process still operates today. For instance, are Asian-Americans, considered the "model minority," the next group to be integrated into the white category, or will they continue to be regarded as foreign threats? Only time will tell.

Return To Intro

Class

Socio-economic class differences are particularly hidden in the US context. Part of this can be explained by the ideology of the American Dream. According to a popular belief in **meritocracy**, anyone who works hard enough will succeed, and those who do not succeed must not have worked hard enough. There is a logical error in this form of reasoning, which does not explain the following two scenarios: What about people who do not work very hard at all and still succeed? What about those who work exceptionally hard and never succeed? Part of this, of course, is about how we define success. Succeeding at the American Dream means something akin to having a great job, making a lot of money, and owning a car, a house, and all the most-recent gadgets. These are markers of material, that is, economic, wealth. Wealth is not only captured in personal income, but other assets as well (house, car, stocks, inheritances), not all of which are necessarily earned by hard work alone, but can come from inheritance, marriage, or luck.

Though rich/poor may be the binary associated with class, most people in the US context (no matter how much wealth they have) consider themselves "middle-class." (Pew Research Center, 2010). The label "middle-class" represents more than what people have in their bank accounts—it reflects a political ideology. When politicians run for election or argue over legislation they often employ the term "middle-class" to stand in for "average," "tax-paying," "morally upstanding" constituents and argue for their collective voice and prosperity. Rhetorically, the "middle class" is not compared to the super rich (since, in the US, you can never be too rich or too thin), but rather the poor. So, when people talk about the middle class they are also often implying that they are NOT those "deviant," "tax-swindling," "immoral," poor people. This may seem harsh, but this is truly how the poor are represented in news media (Mantsios, 2007). If this still seems far-fetched, just replace with phrase "the poor" with "welfare recipients." Welfare recipients are often faceless but framed as undeserving of assistance since they are assumed to be cheating the system, addicted to alcohol or drugs, and have only themselves to blame for their poverty (Mantsios, 2007). Welfare recipients are the implied counterparts to the middle-class everymen that populate political speeches and radio rants. Thus, in the United States, socioeconomic class has been constructed as a binary between the middle-class and the poor.

Furthermore, these class-based categories also carry racial and sexual meanings, as the "welfare queen" stereotype conjures images of poor, black, sexually-promiscuous women, contrary to the fact that white women as a group are the largest recipients of welfare. Fred Block and colleagues (2006) discuss how these stereotypes about the poor are written into American poverty policies. For instance, in 1996, President Bill Clinton passed the Personal Responsibility/Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which fundamentally rewrote prior US welfare policy. This act limits lifetime receipt of welfare to a maximum of 60 months, or 5 years, and requires that able-bodied recipients work or job-train for low-skill jobs while receiving checks. Under PRWORA, recent immigrants cannot receive welfare for their first five years of legal residence, and undocumented immigrants can never receive

welfare benefits (Block et al. 2006). These restrictions are based on the assumption that welfare recipients are ultimately cheating the American taxpayer and looking for a free ride. In spite of these changes, most people still believe that being on government assistance means a lifetime of free money. Media contempt for welfare recipients is accomplished by not humanizing the experience of poverty. People experiencing poverty can face tough choices; for instance, working more hours or getting a slightly better paying job can cause one to fail the "means test" (an income level above which people are ineligible for welfare benefits) for food stamps or Medicaid. The poor are increasingly forced to decide between paying for rent versus food and other bills, as the cost of living has risen dramatically in the past few decades while working-class wages have not risen comparably.

> The SPENT game captures and humanizes this process of making tough decisions on a tight budget. Try it out and see how you fare: http://playspent.org/.

However, class issues are not only about income differences. **Cultural capital** is a term coined by the late sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) to address non-monetary class differences such as tastes in food and music or knowledge of high culture.   Bourdieu explained that even when a formerly poor individual experiences economic mobility and becomes middle-class, there are still markers of her former status in the way she carries herself and the things she knows. We see many examples of this in popular films. When someone goes from rags to riches, they often use the wrong utensils at a dinner party, call something by the wrong name, cannot tell the difference between a Chardonnay and a Merlot (wines), or spend their money in a showy way. Thus, someone can have high cultural capital and not be wealthy, or have low cultural capital and be a millionaire. For instance, in the popular (and very campy) movie *Showgirls* (Verhoeven, 1995), the main character, Nomi Malone, goes from homeless and unemployed to a well paid Las Vegas showgirl at record speed. Along the way, she buys an expensive Versace dress and brags about it. Unfortunately, she reveals her lack of cultural capital, and thus her former status as poor, by mispronouncing the brand (saying 'Verse-ACE' instead of 'Vers-a-Chee') and is humiliated by some rather mean bystanders. In sum, the concept of cultural capital highlights the ways in which social class is not just about wealth and income, but that social classes develop class cultures.

"Pouring wine into a decanter" by Agne27 is licensed under *CC BY 2.0*

Return To Intro

Masculinities

Another concept that troubles the gender binary is the idea of **multiple masculinities** (Connell, 2005). Connell suggests that there is more than one kind of masculinity and what is considered "masculine" differs by race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. For example, being knowledgeable about computers might be understood as masculine because it can help a person accumulate income and wealth, and we consider wealth to be masculine. However, computer knowledge only translates into "masculinity" for certain men. While an Asian-American, middle-class man might get a boost in "masculinity points" (as it were) for his high-paying job with computers, the same might not be true for a working-class white man whose white-collar desk job may be seen as a weakness to his masculinity by other working-class men. Expectations for masculinity differ by age; what it means to be a man at 19 is very different than what it means to be a man at 70. Therefore, masculinity intersects with other identities and expectations change accordingly.

Judith (Jack) Halberstam used the concept of **female masculinity** to describe the ways female-assigned people may accomplish masculinity (2005). Halberstam defines masculinity as the connection between maleness and power, which female-assigned people access through drag-king performances, butch identity (where female-assigned people appear and act masculine and may or may not identify as women), or trans identity. Separating masculinity from male-assigned bodies illustrates how performative it is, such that masculinity is accomplished in interactions and not ordained by nature.

Return To Intro

Identity Terms

Language is political, hotly contested, always evolving, and deeply personal to each person who chooses the terms with which to identify themselves. To demonstrate respect and awareness of these complexities, it is important to be attentive to language and to honor and use individuals' self-referential terms (Farinas and Farinas 2015). Below are some common identity terms and their meanings. This discussion is not meant to be definitive or prescriptive but rather aims to highlight the stakes of language and the debates and context surrounding these terms, and to assist in understanding terms that frequently come up in classroom discussions. While there are no strict rules about "correct" or "incorrect" language, these terms reflect much more than personal preferences. They reflect individual and collective histories, ongoing scholarly debates, and current politics.

"People of color" vs. "Colored people"

People of color is a contemporary term used mainly in the United States to refer to all individuals who are non-white (Safire 1988). It is a political, coalitional term, as it encompasses common experiences of racism. People of color is abbreviated as **POC**. **Black** or **African American** are commonly the preferred terms for most individuals of African descent today. These are widely used terms, though sometimes they obscure the specificity of individuals' histories. Other preferred terms are African diasporic or African descent, to refer, for example, to people who trace their lineage to Africa but migrated through Latin America and the Caribbean. **Colored people** is an antiquated term used before the civil rights movement in the United States and the United Kingdom to refer pejoratively to individuals of African descent. The term is now taken as a slur, as it represents a time when many forms of institutional racism during the Jim Crow era were legal.

"Disabled people" vs. "People with disabilities"

Some people prefer person-first phrasing, while others prefer identity-first phrasing. **People-first language** linguistically puts the person before their impairment (physical, sensory or mental difference). Example: "a *woman with* a vision impairment." This terminology encourages **nondisabled** people to think of those with disabilities as people (Logsdon 2016). The acronym PWD stands for "people with disabilities." Although it aims to humanize, people-first language has been critiqued for

aiming to create distance from the impairment, which can be understood as devaluing the impairment. Those who prefer **identity-first language** often emphasize embracing their impairment as an integral, important, valued aspect of themselves, which they do not want to distance themselves from. Example: "a *disabled person*." Using this language points to how society disables individuals (Liebowitz 2015). Many terms in common use have ableist meanings, such as evaluative expressions like "lame," "retarded," "crippled," and "crazy." It is important to avoid using these terms. Although in the case of disability, both people-first and disability-first phrasing are currently in use, as mentioned above, this is not the case when it comes to race.

"Transgender," vs. "Transgendered," "Trans," "Trans*," "Non-binary," "Genderqueer," "Genderfluid," "Agender," "Transsexual," "Cisgender," "Cis"

Transgender generally refers to individuals who identify as a gender not assigned to them at birth. The term is used as an adjective (i.e., "a transgender woman," not "a transgender"), however some individuals describe themselves by using transgender as a noun. The term **transgendered** is not preferred because it emphasizes ascription and undermines self-definition. **Trans** is an abbreviated term and individuals appear to use it self-referentially these days more often than **transgender**. **Transition** is both internal and social. Some individuals who transition do not experience a change in their gender identity since they have always identified in the way that they do. **Trans***is an all-inclusive umbrella term which encompasses all nonnormative gender identities (Tompkins 2014). **Non-binary** and **genderqueer** refer to gender identities beyond binary identifications of man or woman. The term genderqueer became popularized within queer and trans communities in the 1990s and 2000s, and the term non-binary became popularized in the 2010s (Roxie 2011). **Agender,** meaning "without gender," can describe people who do not have a gender identity, while others identify as non-binary or gender neutral, have an undefinable identity, or feel indifferent about gender (Brooks 2014). **Genderfluid** people experience shifts between gender identities. The term **transsexual** is a medicalized term, and indicates a binary understanding of gender and an individual's identification with the "opposite" gender from the gender assigned to them at birth. **Cisgender** or **cis** refers to individuals who identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Some people prefer the term **non-trans.** Additional gender identity terms exist; these are just a few basic and commonly used terms. Again, the emphasis of these terms is on viewing individuals as they view themselves and using their self-designated names and pronouns.

"Queer," "Bisexual," "Pansexual," "Polyamorous," "Asexual,"

Queer as an identity term refers to a non-categorical sexual identity; it is also used as a catch-all term

for all **LGBTQ** (**lesbian**, **gay**, **bisexual**, **transgender**, **queer**) individuals. The term was historically used in a derogatory way, but was reclaimed as a self-referential term in the 1990s United States. Although many individuals identify as queer today, some still feel personally insulted by it and disapprove of its use. **Bisexual** is typically defined as a sexual orientation marked by attraction to either men or women. This has been problematized as a binary approach to sexuality, which excludes individuals who do not identify as men or women. **Pansexual** is a sexual identity marked by sexual attraction to people of any gender or sexuality. **Polyamorous** (**poly**, for short) or **non-monogamous** relationships are open or non-exclusive; individuals may have multiple consensual and individually-negotiated sexual and/or romantic relationships at once (Klesse 2006). **Asexual** is an identity marked by a lack of or rare sexual attraction, or low or absent interest in sexual activity, abbreviated to "**ace**" (Decker 2014). Asexuals distinguish between sexual and **romantic attraction**, delineating various sub-identities included under an **ace umbrella.** In several later sections of this book, we discuss the terms **heteronormativity, homonormativity,** and **homonationalism**; these terms are not self-referential identity descriptors but are used to describe how sexuality is constructed in society and the politics around such constructions.

"Latino," "Latin American," "Latina," "Latino/a," "Latin@," "Latinx," "Chicano," "Xicano," "Chicana," "Chicano/a," "Chican@," "Chicanx," "Mexican American," "Hispanic"

Latino is a term used to describe people of Latin American origin or descent in the United States, while **Latin American** describes people in Latin America. **Latino** can refer specifically to a man of Latin American origin or descent; **Latina** refers specifically to a woman of Latin American origin or descent. The terms **Latino/a** and **Latin@** include both the –o and –a endings to avoid the sexist use of "Latino" to refer to all individuals. **Chicano, Chicano/a,** and **Chican@** similarly describe people of Mexican origin or descent in the United States, and may be used interchangeably with **Mexican American**, **Xicano** or **Xicano/a**. However, as **Chicano** has the connotation of being politically active in working to end oppression of Mexican Americans, and is associated with the Chicano literary and civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, people may prefer the use of either **Chicano** or **Mexican American**, depending on their political orientation. **Xicano** is a shortened form of Mexicano, from the Nahuatl name for the indigenous Mexica Aztec Empire. Some individuals prefer the **Xicano** spelling to emphasize their indigenous ancestry (Revilla 2004). **Latinx** and **Chicanx** avoid either the –a or the –o gendered endings to explicitly include individuals of all genders (Ramirez and Blay 2017). **Hispanic** refers to the people and nations with a historical link to Spain and to people of country heritage who speak the Spanish language. Although many people can be considered both Latinx and Hispanic, Brazilians, for example, are Latin American but neither Hispanic nor Latino, while Spaniards are Hispanic but not Latino. Preferred terms vary regionally and politically; these terms came into use in the context of the Anglophone-dominated United States.

"Indigenous," "First Nations," "Indian," "Native," "Native American," "American Indian," "Aboriginal"

Indigenous refers to descendants of the original inhabitants of an area, in contrast to those that have settled, occupied or colonized the area (Turner 2006). Terms vary by specificity; for example, in Australia, individuals are **Aboriginal**, while those in Canada are **First Nations**. "**Aboriginal**" is sometimes used in the Canadian context, too, though more commonly in settler-government documents, not so much as a term of self-definition. In the United States, individuals may refer to themselves as **Indian**, **American Indian**, **Native**, or **Native American**, or, perhaps more commonly, they may refer to their specific tribes or nations. Because of the history of the term, "**Indian**," like other reclaimed terms, outsiders should be very careful in using it.

"Global South," "Global North," "Third world," "First world," "Developing country," "Developed country"

Global South and **Global North** refer to socioeconomic and political divides. Areas of the **Global South**, which are typically socioeconomically and politically disadvantaged are Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia, and the Middle East. Generally, **Global North** areas, including the United States, Canada, Western Europe and parts of East Asia, are typically socioeconomically and politically advantaged. Terms like **Third world, First world, Developing country**, and **Developed country** have been problematized for their hierarchical meanings, where areas with more resources and political power are valued over those with less resources and less power (Silver 2015). Although the terms **Global South** and **Global North** carry the same problematic connotations, these tend to be the preferred terms today. In addition, although the term **Third world** has been problematized, some people do not see **Third world** as a negative term and use it self-referentially. Also, **Third world** was historically used as an oppositional and coalitional term for nations and groups who were non-aligned with either the capitalist **First world** and communist **Second world** especially during the Cold War. For example, those who participated in the **Third World Liberation Strike** at San Francisco State University from 1968 to 1969 used the term to express solidarity and to establish Black Studies and the Ethnic Studies College (Springer 2008). We use certain terms, like **Global North/South,** throughout the book, with the understanding that there are problematic aspects of these usages.

"Transnational," "Diasporic," "Global," "Globalization"

Transnational has been variously defined. Transnational describes migration and the transcendence of borders, signals the diminishing relevance of the nation-state in the current iteration of globalization, is used interchangeably with **diasporic** (any reference to materials from a region outside its current location), designates a form of neocolonialism (e.g., transnational capital) and signals the NGOization of social movements. For Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (2001), the terms "transnational women's movements" or "global women's movements" are used to refer to U.N. conferences on women, global feminism as a policy and activist arena, and human rights initiatives that enact new forms of governmentality. Chandra Mohanty (2003) has argued that transnational feminist scholarship and social movements critique and mobilize against globalization, capitalism, neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and non-national institutions like the World Trade Organization. In this sense, transnational refers to "cross-national solidarity" in feminist organizing. Grewal and Caplan (2001) have observed that transnational feminist inquiry also examines how these movements have been tied to colonial processes and imperialism, as national and international histories shape transnational social movements. In feminist politics and studies, the term transnational is used much more than "international," which has been critiqued because it centers the nation-state. Whereas transnational can also take seriously the role of the state it does not assume that the state is the most relevant actor in global processes. Although all of these are technically global processes, the term "global" is oftentimes seen as abstract. It appeals to the notion of "global sisterhood," which is often suspect because of the assumption of commonalities among women that often times do not exist.

Return To Intro

Introduction: Institutions, Cultures, and Structures

Thus far, we have been concerned with feminist theories and perspectives that seek to understand how difference is constructed through structures of power, how inequalities are produced and reproduced through socially constructed binaries, and how the categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality intersect. At this juncture, we can ask: where do these processes occur? How do they not only get produced, but how are they *re-produced* through daily activities in institutions? In the following section, we identify, historicize, and analyze several of the key institutions that structure our lives, including the family, media, medicine, law and the prison system. We use the struggle to end violence against women as a case to show how multiple institutions intersect and overlap in ways that both limit and enable action. First, we provide a theoretical overview of institutions, culture, and structures.

To answer these questions we need to look at the institutions within which we spend a large part of our lives interacting with others. An **institution** is a "social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property…and [owes] [its] survival to relatively self-activating social processes" (Jepperson 1991: 145). In other words, institutions are enduring, historical facets of social life that shape our behavior. Examples of institutions include the family, marriage, media, medicine, law, education, the state, and work. These institutions can be said to structure thought and behavior, in that they prescribe rules for interaction and inclusion/exclusion and norms for behavior, parcel out resources between groups, and often times rely on formal regulations (including laws, policies, and contracts). In almost every facet of our day-to-day experience we operate within institutions—often within multiple institutions at once—without noticing their influence on our lives. As a result, we can conceive of institutions—primarily the family, schools, religious institutions, media, and peer groups—as primary agents of socialization (Kimmel 2007). These are primary agents of socialization in that we are born into them, shaped by their expectations, norms, and rules, and as we grow older we often operate in the same institutions and teach these expectations, norms, and rules to younger generations.

Institutions are primary sites for the reproduction of gendered, classed, racialized, ableized, and sexualized inequalities. Everyone does not have access to the same institutions—the same schools, the same hospitals, marriage, etc.,—because often times these institutions differentiate between and differentially reward people based on categories of gender, class, race, ability, and sexuality. For example, think of the city or town you grew up in. There may have been different schools located in different areas of the city, in neighborhoods that differed in the class and race composition of the people living in those neighborhoods. Perhaps there was a school located in a predominantly white, middle-class neighborhood and another school located in a neighborhood of predominantly working-class people of color. Perhaps there were also private schools that required high tuition rates. Due to the fact that schools in most states are funded based on the tax base of the school district they are in, schools located in different neighborhoods will have different amounts of resources—books, computers, the ability to pay teachers and staff, etc. Those students who live in the middle-class school district will benefit from a well-funded public school, while students who live in the working-class school district will be disadvantaged from the lower amount of funding of their school district. Meanwhile, students who attend the prestigious private school will most likely already be economically privileged and will further benefit from a well-funded school that surrounds them with students with similar class backgrounds

and expectations. These students will most likely benefit from a curriculum of college preparatory classes, while students in public schools are less likely to be enrolled in college prep classes—limiting their ability to get into college. Therefore, the same race and class inequalities that limited access to the middle-class, predominantly white neighborhood school will give those privileged students greater chances to enter college and maintain their privileged status. In this way, race and class privileges (and disadvantages) get reproduced through institutions.

"Ontonagon School in Ontonagon, Michigan." by Bobak Ha'Eri *is licensed under* CC BY-SA 3.0

Institutions shape, and are shaped by, culture. **Culture** is a system of symbols, values, practices, and interests of a group of people.In this definition we are combining Kirk and Okazawa-Rey's (2004) definition of culture with Sewell's (1992) definition of culture. Culture is shot through with **ideology**, which can be understood to be the ideas, attitudes, and values of the **dominant culture**. It is important to note that "dominant culture" does not describe the most numerous group within society. "Dominant culture" typically describes a relatively small social group that has a disproportionate amount of power. An example of a dominant culture would be the numerically small white minority in South Africa during apartheid. More recently, the Occupy Movement has critiqued the ways in which the "1%" exerts a disproportionate amount of control and power as the dominant culture in the United States.

"Day 3 Occupy Wall Street 2011 Shankbone 5" by David Shankbone is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Mainstream institutions often privilege and reward the dominant culture. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) argues that institutions value certain types of culture and reward people who have those types of culture. As we discussed in the previous chapter, different social classes have different types of cultural capital—assets that are not necessarily economic, but promote social mobility. For example, students who attend public schools in middle-class districts or private schools often have access to more language courses, arts courses, and extracurricular activities—skills, knowledge, and experiences that colleges value greatly in their admission decisions. Schools in less economically privileged districts often have fewer of these options.

In this way, culture is not an even playing field, and not everyone has equal access to defining what

types of symbols, meanings, values, and practices are valued by institutions. Those groups of people with greater access to mainstream institutions—those who have been born into wealth, white, men, able-bodied, heterosexual—have a greater ability to define what types of culture will be valued by institutions, and often have access to the cultural capital that mainstream institutions value.

The interaction between culture and institutions creates social structures**. Social structures** are composed of 1) socially constructed ideas, principles, and categories and 2) institutions that distribute material resources to stratified groups based on socially constructed ideas, principles, and categories. Additionally, 3) they shape—or structure—experience, identity, and practice. Social structures are relational, in that they function to stratify groups based on the categories that underlie those groups—allocating both symbolic and material benefits and resources unequally among those groups. "Symbolic resources" are the nonmaterial rewards that accrue to privileged groups. An example would be the way in which employers often assume that employees who are fathers are more responsible, mature, and hardworking, and deserve more pay as opposed to their childless peers or to working mothers (Hodges and Budig 2010). In this example, the sex/gender/sexuality system is a structure through which employers—as gatekeepers of advancement through institutions of work—privilege heterosexual fatherhood. The effect of this is the reproduction of the symbolic privileging of heterosexual masculinity, and the unequal allocation of material resources (salary and wage raises, advancement opportunities) to married men with children. Unmarried men without children do not receive the same symbolic and material rewards nor do married women with children. In this sense, structures limit access to opportunities: educational opportunities, employment opportunities, and opportunities to move up in social class standing.

While there may be a tendency to think of "structures" as unchangeable and monolithic entities, our definition of structure does not make such an assumption. In our definition, social structures are made possible by their reliance on socially constructed categories—that is, categories that change through time and place. Furthermore, while social structures can be said to structure experience and identity, people are not passive observers or dupes—as the history of labor struggles, struggles for self-determination in former colonies, the civil rights movement, and feminist movements have shown, people fight back against the institutions and dominant cultural ideas and categories that have been used to oppress them. Even though socially constructed categories have typically been used to stratify groups of people, those same groups of people may base an activist struggle out of that identity, transforming the very meanings of that identity in the process. For instance, the phrases "Black power" and "gay power" were created by Black and gay liberationists in the late 1960s to claim and re-frame identities that had been disparaged by the dominant culture and various mainstream institutions. This history of resistance within the crux of overarching structures of power shows that people have agency to make choices and take action. In other words, while structures limit opportunities and reproduce inequalities, groups of people who have been systemically denied access to mainstream institutions can and have exerted their will to change those institutions. Therefore, structure and agency should not be viewed as two diametrically opposed forces, but as two constantly interacting forces that shape each other.

"Civil rights march on Washington, D.C" by Warren K. Leffler, *Library of Congress* is in the *Public Domain, CC0*

Return To Intro

Transnational Production and Globalization

Globalization is an oft-cited term that can usefully serve as shorthand. However, this shorthand runs the risk of lumping together a broad range of complex economic, political, and cultural phenomena. Globalization describes both the benefits and costs of living in a globally connected world. The Internet was once heralded as the great equalizer in global communications. Certainly, we are now accustomed to getting news from across the globe from a variety of perspectives. Activists in other countries, like Egypt and Iran, have famously used social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter to report what is happening from the ground, in the absence of formal news sources. Egyptian activists also utilized these social networking websites to coordinate demonstrations and marches, leading to the Egyptian government to shut down the Internet for several days during the "Arab Spring" uprisings in early 2011. Globalization makes it possible for social change activists in different countries to communicate with each other, and for people, information, and products to cross borders, with benefits for some and costs to others. It allows for Massachusetts residents to have fresh fruit in winter, but lowers the wages of agricultural workers who gather the fruit in tropical countries, supports repressive government policies in those countries, and increases the carbon footprint of producing and distributing food. Globalized contexts can lead social movements and state, development and conservation agencies to influence each other. For example, Colombian activists' use of neoliberal development discourses both legitimized the presence of state, development and conservation agencies and influenced these agencies' visions and plans (Asher 2009). As such, globalization is not uniformly good or bad, but has costs and benefits that are experienced differently depending on one's social location.

Nations of the world are linked in trade relationships. The US depends on resources and capabilities of other nations to the extent that our economy relies on imports (e.g., oil, cars, food, manufactured goods). So, how is it that the US economy is still largely profitable? Factories in the US producing manufactured goods did not simply close down in the face of competition; **multinational corporations**—corporations that exist across several political borders—made concerted efforts to increase their profits (Kirk & Okizawa-Rey 2007). One way to massively increase profits is to pay workers less in wages and benefits. In the US, labor laws and union contracts protect workers from working extensive hours at a single job, guarantee safe working environments, and set a minimum wage. Thus, American workers are expensive to corporations. This is why companies based in the US outsource production to the nations of the Global South where workers' rights are less protected and workers make less money for their labor. One consequence of outsourcing is the development of **sweatshops** (known as *maquiladoras* when based in Mexico in particular) in which workers work long hours for little pay and are restricted from eating or using the restroom while at work (Kirk & Okizawa-Rey 2007). These workers seldom purchase the goods they assist in producing, often because they could

not afford them, and because the global factories in which they work ship goods to be sold in wealthier countries of the Global North. These factories predominantly employ young, unmarried women workers in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean because they are considered the most docile and obedient groups of workers; that is, corporations consider them less likely to make demands of employers or to unionize (Kirk & Okizawa-Rey 2007).

"Lindintracuay" by marissaorton is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Rather than a nation's workers producing goods, selling those goods back to its people, and keeping profits within the nation's borders, multinational corporations participate in **global commodity chains.** As Cynthia Enloe's (2008) article "The Globetrotting Sneaker" makes clear, globalization makes it possible for a shoe corporation based in Country A to extract resources from Country B, produce goods in Country C, sell those goods in Countries D, E, and F, and deposit waste in the landfills of Country G. Meanwhile, the profits from this production and sales of goods return largely to the corporation, while little goes into the economies of the participating nations (Enloe 2008). Companies like Nike, Adidas, and Reebok were initially attracted by military regimes in South Korea in the 1980s that quashed labor unions. Once the workers in South Korea organized successfully, factories moved to Indonesia (Enloe 2008). This process of moving to remaining areas of cheap labor before workers organize is known as the **race to the bottom** logic of global factory production.

With the increasing globalization of the economy international institutions have been created. The purpose of these international institutions is, ostensibly, to monitor abuses and assist in the development of less developed nations through loans from more developed nations. The World Bank provides monetary support for large, capital-intensive projects such as the construction of roads and dams. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides loans and facilitates international trade relationships particularly through structural adjustment programs (SAP). Essentially, in a SAP, a country of the Global North lends money to another country in the Global South in exchange for resources. For instance, the US may lend money to Chile to assist with the growth and harvesting of grapes and production of wine. In exchange, the US would acquire grapes and wine from Chile at a discounted rate, and have control in how Chile spends the money, while Chile repays the initial loan.

The problem with this is that, in many cases, the lending process is circular such that the country accepting the loan remains constantly indebted to the initial lending nation. For example, a nation may produce most of its crop to export elsewhere and be unable to feed its own people and therefore require additional loans. Consequences of SAPs are devalued currency, privatized industries, cut social programs and government subsidies, and increasing taxes to fund the development of infrastructure.

Free trade describes a set of institutions, policies, and ideologies, in which the governmental restrictions and regulations are minimal, allowing corporate bodies to engage in cross-border enterprises to maximize profit. One institution that was created to foster free trade is the World Trade Organization (WTO), an international unelected body whose mission is to challenge restraints on free trade. Some countries limit pollution levels in industry; the WTO considers any limits on production as barriers to free trade. They operate on the theory that unfettered, free market capitalism is the best way to generate profits. It may be more profitable to pay people minimally and circumvent environmental regulations, but proponents of free trade do not factor in the human costs to health, safety, and happiness—costs that cannot be put into dollars and cents. One such free trade agreement is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994. NAFTA is an agreement between Canada, the US, and Mexico to promote the unregulated movement of jobs and products. The biggest result of this legislation is the mass relocation of factories from the US to Mexico in the form of *maquiladoras* that supply goods at low prices back to US consumers, resulting in a loss of around 500,000 union jobs in North America (Zinn 2003). The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) of 2002 expands NAFTA to include the entire Western hemisphere—except Cuba, due to trade sanctions against its communist government. At the time of this writing, the impact of these free trade agreements is a hotly contested political issue. Some people have argued that it resulted in unionized, higher paying jobs, while others have argued that even with many negative impacts, overall access to jobs, products, and resources has yielded many improvements. In the face of moves to promote free trade, **fair trade** movements that support safe working conditions and sustainable wages have also cropped up, especially in the coffee and chocolate industries.

The current global economic system is guided by an ideology of neoliberalism. In the contemporary U.S. context, the term "liberal" is identified with the American Democratic Party, but in terms of political theory, the term **liberalism** refers to restrictions on state power to prevent government infringement on individual rights (Grewal and Kaplan 1994), which transcend party affiliations. **Economic liberalism,** the belief that markets work best without any governmental regulation or interference, describes the free trade economic policies we discussed above, and should not be confused with the liberalism associated with the Democratic Party. **Neoliberalism** is a market-driven approach to economic and social policy, where capitalism's profit motive is applied to social policies and programs (like welfare and taxation), cutting them to increase profits. A crucial project of neoliberalism is the downsizing of the public sphere and social welfare programs that unions and racial justice activists have fought for since the early 20th Century. Feminist historian Lisa Duggan (2003) argues that neoliberalism is more than just the privatization of the economy, but is an ideology that holds that once marginalized groups (LGBTQ people, people of color, the working-class) have access to mainstream

institutions (like marriage and service in the military) and consumption in the free market, they have reached equality with their privileged peers (straight people, white people, the middle- and upper-classes). Neoliberal ideology therefore assumes that our society has reached a post-civil rights period where social movements that seek to fundamentally alter mainstream institutions and build up social welfare programs are obsolete. However, as this textbook has shown, mainstream institutions and structures of power often reproduce inequalities.

Return To Intro

Racialized, Gendered, and Sexualized Labor in the Global Economy

The structure of the global economy affects people differently not only by the economic situations of the nations in which they live, but also by gender and race. Predatory trade relationships between countries roughly reproduce the political situation of colonization in many nations of the Global South. This has led many to characterize neoliberal economic policies as a form of **neocolonialism**, or modern day colonization characterized by exploitation of a nation's resources and people. Colonialism and neocolonialism are concepts that draw attention to the racialized global inequalities between white, affluent people of the Global North—historical colonizers—and people of color of the Global South—the historically colonized. **Postcolonial theory** emerged out of critiques of colonialism, empire, enslavement, and neocolonial racist-economic oppression more generally, which were advanced by scholars in the Asian and Middle Eastern diasporas. Postcolonial scholars primarily unpack and critique colonial discourses, depictions of colonized Others, and European scholars' biased representations of those they colonized, which they figure as knowledge (for example, see Said 1995 and Spivak 1988). **Decoloniality** theoretical approaches, emerging chiefly in Latin America, illuminated how colonization invented the concepts of "the colonized," "modernity" and "coloniality," and disrupted the social arrangements, lives, gender relations, and understandings it invaded, imposing on the colonized European racialized conceptualizations of male and female (Quijano 2007; Lugones 2007).

Women of color of the Global South are disproportionately impacted by global economic policies. Not only are women in Asian and Latin American countries much more likely to work in low-wage factory jobs than men, women are also much more mobile in terms of immigration (Pessar 2005). Women have more labor-based mobility for low-income factory work in other countries as well as in domestic and sex work markets. When women immigrate to other nations they often sacrifice care of and contact with their own children in order to earn money caring for wealthier people's children as domestic workers; this situation is known as **transnational motherhood (**Parreñas 2001). Domestic work and sex work are two sectors of the service economy in which women immigrants participate. Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, have few options in terms of earning money, and economic circumstances are such that undocumented immigrants can make more money within illegal and unregulated markets in nations of the Global North, rather than regulated markets of the formal economy. Thus, it is not uncommon for women immigrants to participate in informal economies such as domestic work or sex work that employers and clients do not report in their taxes.

Women immigrants also participate in other parts of the service economy of the Global North. Miliann Kang (2010) has studied immigrant women who participate in beauty service work, particularly nail salons. This type of work does not require high amounts of skill or experience and can support women for whom English is a second language or those who may be undocumented. Like any service job, work

in nail salons involves emotional labor. While clients may see the technician in the beauty salon as their confidant (like Queen Latifa's character in *Beauty Shop*), their relationship is primarily an unequal labor relationship in which one party is paid not only for the service they perform but also for their friendly personalities and listening skills. Kang (2010) refers to this type of labor involving both emotional and physical labor as **body labor**. To engage in both emotional and physical labor at work is exhausting. In addition, workers in nail and hair salons work with harsh chemicals that are ultimately toxic to their health and make them more susceptible to cancer than the general population.

Not only do gendered, racialized, and sexualized differences exist in the US domestic labor market, leading to differences in work and pay, these differences also characterize the globalized labor market. Trade relationships between countries and the ideology of neoliberalism that governs them have profound effects on the quality of life of people all over the world. Women bear the brunt of changes to the global marketplace as factory workers in some countries and domestic, sex, and beauty service workers in others. Fortunately, fair trade and anti-sweatshop movements as well as indigenous, decolonial, feminist and labor movements are fighting to change these conditions for the better in the face of well-funded and powerful multinational corporations and global trade organizations.

Return To Intro

10 Global Inequality

Figure 10.1 Contemporary economic development often follows a similar pattern around the world, best described as a growing gap between the have and have-nots. (Photo courtesy of Alicia Nijdam/Wikimedia Commons)

Learning Objectives

10.1. Global Stratification and Classification
- Describe global stratification
- Understand how different classification systems have developed
- Use terminology from Wallerstein's world systems approach
- Explain the World Bank's classification of economies

10.2. Global Wealth and Poverty
- Understand the differences between relative, absolute, and subjective poverty
- Describe the economic situation of some of the world's most impoverished areas
- Explain the cyclical impact of the consequences of poverty

10.3. Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification
- Describe the modernization and dependency theory perspectives on global stratification

Introduction to Global Inequality

The April 24, 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh that killed over 1,100 people, was the deadliest garment factory accident in history, and it was preventable (International Labour Organization, Department of Communication 2014).

In addition to garment factories employing about 5,000 people, the building contained a bank, apartments, childcare facilities, and a variety of shops. Many of these closed the day before the collapse when cracks were discovered in the building walls. When some of the garment workers refused to enter the building, they were threatened with the loss of a month's pay. Most were young women, aged twenty or younger. They typically worked over thirteen hours a day, with two days off each month. For this work, they took home between twelve and twenty-two cents an hour, or $10.56 to $12.48 a week. Without that pay, most would have been unable to feed their children. In contrast, the U.S. federal minimum wage is $7.25 an hour, and workers receive wages at time-and-a-half rates for work in excess of forty hours a week.

Did you buy clothes from Walmart in 2012? What about at The Children's Place? Did you ever think about where those clothes came from? Of the outsourced garments made in the garment factories, thirty-two were intended for U.S, Canadian, and European stores. In the aftermath of the collapse, it was revealed that Walmart jeans were made in the Ether Tex garment factory on the fifth floor of the Rana Plaza building, while 120,000 pounds of clothing for The Children's Place were produced in the New Wave Style Factory, also located in the building. Afterward, Walmart and The Children's Place pledged $1 million and $450,000 (respectively) to the Rana Plaza Trust Fund, but fifteen other companies with clothing made in the building have contributed nothing, including U.S. companies Cato and J.C. Penney (Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights 2014).

While you read this chapter, think about the global system that allows U.S. companies to outsource their manufacturing to peripheral nations, where many women and children work in conditions that some characterize as slave labor. Do people in the United States have a responsibility to foreign workers? Should U.S. corporations be held accountable for what happens to garment factory workers who make their clothing? What can you do as a consumer to help such workers?

10.1 Global Stratification and Classification

Just as the United States' wealth is increasingly concentrated among its richest citizens while the middle class slowly disappears, **global inequality** is concentrating resources in certain nations and is significantly affecting the opportunities of individuals in poorer and less powerful countries. In fact, a recent Oxfam (2014) report that suggested the richest eighty-five people in the world are worth more than the poorest 3.5 billion combined. The **GINI coefficient** measures income inequality between countries using a 100-point scale on which 1 represents complete equality and 100 represents the highest possible inequality. In 2007, the global GINI coefficient that measured the wealth gap between the core nations in the northern part of the world and the mostly peripheral nations in the southern part of the world was 75.5 percent (Korseniewicz and Moran 2009). But before we delve into the complexities of global inequality, let's consider how the three major sociological perspectives might contribute to our understanding of it.

The functionalist perspective is a macroanalytical view that focuses on the way that all aspects of society are integral to the continued health and viability of the whole. A functionalist might focus on why we have global inequality and what social purposes it serves. This view might assert, for example, that we have global inequality because some nations are better than others at adapting to new technologies and profiting from a globalized economy, and that when core nation companies locate in peripheral nations, they expand the local economy and benefit the workers.

Conflict theory focuses on the creation and reproduction of inequality. A conflict theorist would likely address the systematic inequality created when core nations exploit the resources of peripheral nations. For example, how many U.S. companies take advantage of overseas workers who lack the constitutional protection and guaranteed minimum wages that exist in the United States? Doing so allows them to maximize profits, but at what cost?

The symbolic interaction perspective studies the day-to-day impact of global inequality, the meanings individuals attach to global stratification, and the subjective nature of poverty. Someone applying this view to global inequality would probably focus on understanding the difference between what someone living in a core nation defines as poverty (relative poverty, defined as being unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in your country) and what someone living in a peripheral nation defines as poverty (absolute poverty, defined as being barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities, such as food).

Global Stratification

While stratification in the United States refers to the unequal distribution of resources among individuals, **global stratification** refers to this unequal distribution among nations. There are two dimensions to this stratification: gaps between nations and gaps within nations. When it comes to global inequality, both economic inequality and social inequality may concentrate the burden of poverty among certain segments of the earth's population (Myrdal 1970). As the chart below illustrates, people's life expectancy depends heavily on where they happen to be born.

Table 10.1 Statistics such as infant mortality rates and life expectancy vary greatly by country of origin. (Central Intelligence Agency 2011)

Country	Infant Mortality Rate	Life Expectancy
Norway	2.48 deaths per 1000 live births	81 years
The United States	6.17 deaths per 1000 live births	79 years
North Korea	24.50 deaths per 1000 live births	70 years
Afghanistan	117.3 deaths per 1000 live births	50 years

Most of us are accustomed to thinking of global stratification as economic inequality. For example, we can compare the United States' average worker's wage to America's average wage. Social inequality, however, is just as harmful as economic discrepancies. Prejudice and discrimination—whether against a certain race, ethnicity, religion, or the like—can create and aggravate conditions of economic equality, both within and between nations. Think about the inequity that existed for decades within the nation of South Africa. Apartheid, one of the most extreme cases of institutionalized and legal racism, created a social inequality that earned it the world's condemnation.

Gender inequity is another global concern. Consider the controversy surrounding female genital mutilation. Nations that practice this female circumcision procedure defend it as a longstanding cultural tradition in certain tribes and argue that the West shouldn't interfere. Western nations, however, decry the practice and are working to stop it.

Inequalities based on sexual orientation and gender identity exist around the globe. According to Amnesty International, a number of crimes are committed against individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles or sexual orientations (however those are culturally defined). From culturally sanctioned rape to state-sanctioned executions, the abuses are serious. These legalized and culturally accepted forms of prejudice and discrimination exist everywhere—from the United States to Somalia to Tibet—restricting the freedom of individuals and often putting their lives at risk (Amnesty International 2012).

Global Classification

A major concern when discussing global inequality is how to avoid an ethnocentric bias implying that less-developed nations want to be like those who've attained post-industrial global power. Terms such as developing (nonindustrialized) and developed (industrialized) imply that unindustrialized countries are somehow inferior, and must improve to participate successfully in the global economy, a label indicating that all aspects of the economy cross national borders. We must take care how we delineate different countries. Over time, terminology has shifted to make way for a more inclusive view of the world.

Cold War Terminology

Cold War terminology was developed during the Cold War era (1945–1980). Familiar and still used by many, it classifies countries into first world, second world, and third world nations based on their respective economic development and standards of living. When this nomenclature was developed, capitalistic democracies such as the United States and Japan were considered part of the **first world**. The poorest, most undeveloped countries were referred to as the **third world** and included most of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The **second world** was the in-between category: nations not as limited in development as the third world, but not as well off as the first world, having moderate economies and standard of living, such as China or Cuba. Later, sociologist Manual Castells (1998) added the term **fourth world** to refer to stigmatized minority groups that were denied a political voice all over the globe (indigenous minority populations, prisoners, and the homeless, for example).

Also during the Cold War, global inequality was described in terms of economic development. Along with developing and developed nations, the terms less-developed nation and underdeveloped nation were used. This was the era when the idea of *noblesse oblige* (first-world responsibility) took root, suggesting that the so-termed developed nations should provide foreign aid to the less-developed and underdeveloped nations in order to raise their standard of living.

Immanuel Wallerstein: World Systems Approach

Immanuel Wallerstein's (1979) world systems approach uses an economic basis to understand global inequality. Wallerstein conceived of the global economy as a complex system that supports an economic hierarchy that placed some nations in positions of power with numerous resources and other nations in a state of economic subordination. Those that were in a state of subordination faced significant obstacles to mobilization.

Core nations are dominant capitalist countries, highly industrialized, technological, and urbanized. For example, Wallerstein contends that the United States is an economic powerhouse that can support or deny support to important economic legislation with far-reaching implications, thus exerting control over every aspect of the global economy and exploiting both semi-peripheral and peripheral nations. We can look at free trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as an example of how a core nation is able to leverage its power to gain the most advantageous position in the matter of global trade.

Peripheral nations have very little industrialization; what they do have often represents the outdated castoffs of core nations or the factories and means of production owned by core nations. They typically have unstable governments, inadequate social programs, and are economically dependent on core nations for jobs and aid. There are abundant examples of countries in this category, such as Vietnam and Cuba. We can be sure the workers in a Cuban cigar factory, for example, which are owned or leased by global core nation companies, are not enjoying the same privileges and rights as U.S. workers.

Semi-peripheral nations are in-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy but nevertheless acting as a major source for raw material and an expanding middle-class marketplace for core nations, while also exploiting peripheral nations. Mexico is an example, providing abundant cheap agricultural labor to the U.S., and supplying goods to the United States market at a rate dictated by the U.S. without the constitutional protections offered to United States workers.

World Bank Economic Classification by Income

While the World Bank is often criticized, both for its policies and its method of calculating data, it is still a common source for global economic data. Along with tracking the economy, the World Bank tracks demographics and environmental health to provide a complete picture of whether a nation is high income, middle income, or low income.
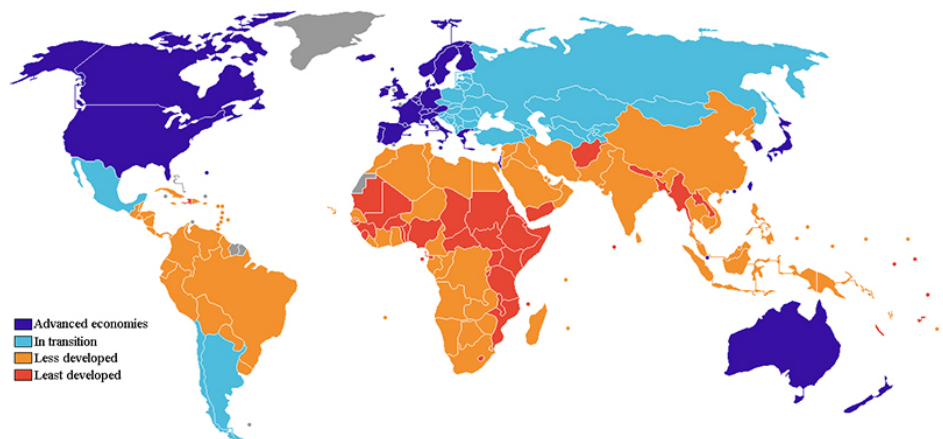
Figure 10.2 This world map shows advanced, transitioning, less, and least developed countries. (Map courtesy of Sbw01f, data obtained from the CIA World Factbook/Wikimedia Commons)

High-Income Nations

The World Bank defines high-income nations as having a gross national income of at least $12,746 per capita. The OECD (Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development) countries make up a group of thirty-four nations whose governments work together to promote economic growth and sustainability. According to the World Bank (2014b), in 2013, the average **gross national income (GNI) per capita**, or the mean income of the people in a nation, found by dividing total GNI by the total population, of a high-income nation belonging to the OECD was $43,903 per capita and the total population was over one billion (1.045 billion); on average, 81 percent of the population in these nations was urban. Some of these countries include the United States, Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom (World Bank 2014b).

High-income countries face two major issues: capital flight and deindustrialization. **Capital flight** refers to the movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, as when General Motors automotive company closed U.S. factories in Michigan and opened factories in Mexico. **Deindustrialization**, a related issue, occurs as a consequence of capital flight, as no new companies open to replace jobs lost to foreign nations. As expected, global companies move their industrial processes to the places where they can get the most production with the least cost, including the building of infrastructure, training of workers, shipping of goods, and, of course, paying employee wages. This means that as emerging economies create their own industrial zones, global companies see the opportunity for existing infrastructure and much lower costs. Those opportunities lead to businesses closing the factories that provide jobs to the middle class within core nations and moving their industrial production to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations.

Making Connections: the Big Picture

Capital Flight, Outsourcing, and Jobs in the United States

Figure 10.3 This dilapidated auto supply store in Detroit is a victim of auto industry outsourcing. (Photo courtesy of Bob Jagendorf/flickr)

Capital flight describes jobs and infrastructure moving from one nation to another. Look at the U.S. automobile industry. In the early twentieth century, the cars driven in the United States were made here, employing thousands of workers in Detroit and in the companies that produced everything that made building cars possible. However, once the fuel crisis of the 1970s hit and people in the United States increasingly looked to imported cars with better gas mileage, U.S. auto manufacturing began to decline. During the 2007–2009 recession, the U.S. government bailed out the three main auto companies, underscoring their vulnerability. At the same time, Japanese-owned Toyota and Honda and South Korean Kia maintained stable sales levels.

Capital flight also occurs when services (as opposed to manufacturing) are relocated. Chances are if you have called the tech support line for your cell phone or Internet provider, you've spoken to someone halfway across the globe. This professional might tell you her name is Susan or Joan, but her accent makes it clear that her real name might be Parvati or Indira. It might be the middle of the night in that country, yet these service providers pick up the line saying, "Good morning," as though they are in the next town over. They know everything about your phone or your modem, often using a remote server to log in to your home computer to accomplish what is needed. These are the workers of the twenty-first century. They are not on factory floors or in traditional sweatshops; they are educated, speak at least two languages, and usually have significant technology skills. They are skilled workers, but they are paid a fraction of what similar workers are paid in the United States. For U.S. and multinational companies, the equation makes sense. India and other semi-peripheral countries have emerging infrastructures and education systems to fill their needs, without core nation costs.

As services are relocated, so are jobs. In the United States, unemployment is high. Many college-educated people are unable to find work, and those with only a high school diploma are in even worse shape. We have, as a country, outsourced ourselves out of jobs, and not just menial jobs, but white-collar work as well. But before we complain too bitterly, we must look at the culture of consumerism that we embrace. A flat screen television that might have cost $1,000 a few years ago is now $350. That cost savings has to come from somewhere. When consumers seek the lowest possible price, shop at big box stores for the biggest discount they can get, and generally ignore other factors in exchange for low cost, they are building the market for outsourcing. And as the demand is built, the market will ensure it is met, even at the expense of the people who wanted it in the first place.

Figure 10.4 Is this international call center the wave of the future? (Photo courtesy of Vilma.com/flickr)

Middle-Income Nations

The World Bank defines middle-income economies areas those with a GNI per capita of more than $1,045 but less than $12,746. According to the World Bank (2014), in 2013, the average GNI per capita of an upper middle income nation was $7,594 per capita with a total population of 2.049 billion, of which 62 percent was urban. Thailand, China, and Namibia are examples of middle-income nations (World Bank 2014a).

Perhaps the most pressing issue for middle-income nations is the problem of debt accumulation. As the name suggests, **debt accumulation** is the buildup of external debt, wherein countries borrow money from other nations to fund their expansion or growth goals. As the uncertainties of the global economy make repaying these debts, or even paying the interest on them, more challenging, nations can find themselves in trouble. Once global markets have reduced the value of a country's goods, it can be very difficult to ever manage the debt burden. Such issues have plagued middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as East Asian and Pacific nations (Dogruel and Dogruel 2007). By way of example, even in the European Union, which is composed of more core nations than semi-peripheral nations, the semi-peripheral nations of Italy and Greece face increasing debt burdens. The economic downturns in both Greece and Italy still threaten the economy of the entire European Union.

Low-Income Nations

The World Bank defines low-income countries as nations whose per capita GNI was $1,045 per capita or less in 2013. According to the World Bank (2014a), in 2013, the average per capita GNI of a low-income nation was $528 per capita and the total population was 796,261,360, with 28 percent located in urban areas. For example, Myanmar, Ethiopia, and Somalia are considered low-income countries. Low-income economies are primarily found in Asia and Africa (World Bank 2014a), where most of the world's population lives. There are two major challenges that these countries face: women are disproportionately affected by poverty (in a trend toward a global feminization of poverty) and much of the population lives in absolute poverty.

10.2 Global Wealth and Poverty

Figure 10.5 How poor is poor for these beggar children in Vietnam? (Photo courtesy of Augapfel/flickr)

What does it mean to be poor? Does it mean being a single mother with two kids in New York City, waiting for the next paycheck in order to buy groceries? Does it mean living with almost no furniture in your apartment because your income doesn't allow for extras like beds or chairs? Or does it mean having to live with the distended bellies of the chronically malnourished throughout the peripheral nations of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia? Poverty has a thousand faces and a thousand gradations; there is no single definition that pulls together every part of the spectrum. You might feel you are poor if you can't afford cable television or buy your own car. Every time you see a fellow student with a new laptop and smartphone you might feel that you, with your ten-year-old desktop computer, are barely keeping up. However, someone else might look at the clothes you wear and the calories you consume and consider you rich.

Types of Poverty

Social scientists define global poverty in different ways and take into account the complexities and the issues of relativism described above. **Relative poverty** is a state of living where people can afford necessities but are unable to meet their society's average standard of living. People often disparage "keeping up with the Joneses"—the idea that you must keep up with the neighbors' standard of living to not feel deprived. But it is true that you might feel "poor" if you are living without a car to drive to and from work, without any money for a safety net should a family member fall ill, and without any "extras" beyond just making ends meet.

Contrary to relative poverty, people who live in **absolute poverty** lack even the basic necessities, which typically include adequate food, clean water, safe housing, and access to healthcare. Absolute poverty is defined by the World Bank (2014a) as when someone lives on less than $1.25 a day. According to the most recent estimates, in 2011, about 17 percent of people in the developing world lived at or below $1.25 a day, a decrease of 26 percent compared to ten years ago, and an overall decrease of 35 percent compared to twenty years ago. A shocking number of people—88 million—live in absolute poverty, and close to 3 billion people live on less than $2.50 a day (Shah 2011). If you were forced to live on $2.50 a day, how would you do it? What would you deem worthy of spending money on, and what could you do without? How would you manage the necessities—and how would you make up the gap between what you need to live and what you can afford?

Figure 10.6 Slums in India illustrate absolute poverty all too well. (Photo courtesy of Emmanuelle Dyan/flickr)

Subjective poverty describes poverty that is composed of many dimensions; it is subjectively present when your actual income does not meet your expectations and perceptions. With the concept of subjective poverty, the poor themselves have a greater say in recognizing when it is present. In short, subjective poverty has more to do with how a person or a family defines themselves. This means that a family subsisting on a few dollars a day in Nepal might think of themselves as doing well, within their perception of normal. However, a westerner traveling to Nepal might visit the same family and see extreme need.

Making Connections: the **Big Picture**

The Underground Economy Around the World

What do the driver of an unlicensed hack cab in New York, a piecework seamstress working from her home in Mumbai, and a street tortilla vendor in Mexico City have in common? They are all members of the **underground economy**, a loosely defined unregulated market unhindered by taxes, government permits, or human protections. Official statistics before the worldwide recession posit that the underground economy accounted for over 50 percent of nonagricultural work in Latin America; the figure went as high as 80 percent in parts of Asia and Africa (Chen 2001). A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* discusses the challenges, parameters, and surprising benefits of this informal marketplace. The wages earned in most underground economy jobs, especially in peripheral nations, are a pittance—a few rupees for a handmade bracelet at a market, or maybe 250 rupees ($5 U.S.) for a day's worth of fruit and vegetable sales (Barta 2009). But these tiny sums mark the difference between survival and extinction for the world's poor.

The underground economy has never been viewed very positively by global economists. After all, its members don't pay taxes, don't take out loans to grow their businesses, and rarely earn enough to put money back into the economy in the form of consumer spending. But according to the International Labor Organization (an agency of the United Nations), some 52 million people worldwide will lose their jobs due to the ongoing worldwide recession. And while those in core nations know that high unemployment rates and limited government safety nets can be frightening, their situation is nothing compared to the loss of a job for those barely eking out an existence. Once that job disappears, the chance of staying afloat is very slim.

Within the context of this recession, some see the underground economy as a key player in keeping people alive. Indeed, an economist at the World Bank credits jobs created by the informal economy as a primary reason why peripheral nations are not in worse shape during this recession. Women in particular benefit from the informal sector. The majority of economically active women in peripheral nations are engaged in the informal sector, which is somewhat buffered from the economic downturn. The flip side, of course, is that it is equally buffered from the possibility of economic growth.

Even in the United States, the informal economy exists, although not on the same scale as in peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. It might include under-the-table nannies, gardeners, and housecleaners, as well as unlicensed street vendors and taxi drivers. There are also those who run informal businesses, like daycares or salons, from their houses. Analysts estimate that this type of labor may make up 10 percent of the overall U.S. economy, a number that will likely grow as companies reduce head counts, leaving more workers to seek other options. In the end, the article

suggests that, whether selling medicinal wines in Thailand or woven bracelets in India, the workers of the underground economy at least have what most people want most of all: a chance to stay afloat (Barta 2009).

Who Are the Impoverished?

Who are the impoverished? Who is living in absolute poverty? The truth that most of us would guess that the richest countries are often those with the least people. Compare the United States, which possesses a relatively small slice of the population pie and owns by far the largest slice of the wealth pie, with India. These disparities have the expected consequence. The poorest people in the world are women and those in peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. For women, the rate of poverty is particularly worsened by the pressure on their time. In general, time is one of the few luxuries the very poor have, but study after study has shown that women in poverty, who are responsible for all family comforts as well as any earnings they can make, have less of it. The result is that while men and women may have the same rate of economic poverty, women are suffering more in terms of overall wellbeing (Buvinic 1997). It is harder for females to get credit to expand businesses, to take the time to learn a new skill, or to spend extra hours improving their craft so as to be able to earn at a higher rate.

Global Feminization of Poverty

In some ways, the phrase "global feminization of poverty" says it all: around the world, women are bearing a disproportionate percentage of the burden of poverty. This means more women live in poor conditions, receive inadequate healthcare, bear the brunt of malnutrition and inadequate drinking water, and so on. Throughout the 1990s, data indicated that while overall poverty rates were rising, especially in peripheral nations, the rates of impoverishment increased for women nearly 20 percent more than for men (Mogadham 2005).

Why is this happening? While myriad variables affect women's poverty, research specializing in this issue identifies three causes (Mogadham 2005):

1. The expansion in the number of female-headed households

2. The persistence and consequences of intra-household inequalities and biases against women

3. The implementation of neoliberal economic policies around the world

While women are living longer and healthier lives today compared to ten years ago, around the world many women are denied basic rights, particularly in the workplace. In peripheral nations, they accumulate fewer assets, farm less land, make less money, and face restricted civil rights and liberties. Women can stimulate the economic growth of peripheral nations, but they are often undereducated and lack access to credit needed to start small businesses.

In 2013, the United Nations assessed its progress toward achieving its Millennium Development Goals. Goal 3 was to promote gender equality and empower women, and there were encouraging advances in this area. While women's employment outside the agricultural sector remains under 20 percent in Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Southern Asia, worldwide it increased from 35–40 percent over the twenty-year period ending in 2010 (United Nations 2013).

Africa

The majority of the poorest countries in the world are in Africa. That is not to say there is not diversity within the countries of that continent; countries like South Africa and Egypt have much lower rates of poverty than Angola and Ethiopia, for instance. Overall, African income levels have been dropping relative to the rest of the world, meaning that Africa as a whole is getting relatively poorer. Making the problem worse, 2014 saw an outbreak of the *Ebola* virus in western Africa, leading to a public health crisis and an economic downturn due to loss of workers and tourist dollars.

Why is Africa in such dire straits? Much of the continent's poverty can be traced to the availability of land, especially arable land (land that can be farmed). Centuries of struggle over land ownership have meant that much useable land has been ruined or left unfarmed, while many countries with inadequate rainfall have never set up an infrastructure to irrigate. Many of Africa's natural resources were long ago taken by colonial forces, leaving little agricultural and mineral wealth on the continent.

Further, African poverty is worsened by civil wars and inadequate governance that are the result of a continent re-imagined with artificial colonial borders and leaders. Consider the example of Rwanda. There, two ethnic groups cohabitated with their own system of hierarchy and management until Belgians took control of the country in 1915 and rigidly confined members of the population into two unequal ethnic groups. While, historically, members of the Tutsi group held positions of power, the involvement of Belgians led to the Hutu's seizing power during a 1960s revolt. This ultimately led to a repressive government and genocide against Tutsis that left hundreds of thousands of Rwandans dead or

living in diaspora (U.S. Department of State 2011c). The painful rebirth of a self-ruled Africa has meant many countries bear ongoing scars as they try to see their way towards the future (World Poverty 2012a).

Asia

While the majority of the world's poorest countries are in Africa, the majority of the world's poorest people are in Asia. As in Africa, Asia finds itself with disparity in the distribution of poverty, with Japan and South Korea holding much more wealth than India and Cambodia. In fact, most poverty is concentrated in South Asia. One of the most pressing causes of poverty in Asia is simply the pressure that the size of the population puts on its resources. In fact, many believe that China's success in recent times has much to do with its draconian population control rules. According to the U.S. State department, China's market-oriented reforms have contributed to its significant reduction of poverty and the speed at which it has experienced an increase in income levels (U.S. Department of State 2011b). However, every part of Asia is feeling the current global recession, from the poorest countries whose aid packages will be hit, to the more industrialized ones whose own industries are slowing down. These factors make the poverty on the ground unlikely to improve any time soon (World Poverty 2012b).

MENA

The Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) includes oil-rich countries in the Gulf, such as Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, but also countries that are relatively resource-poor in relationship to their populations, such as Morocco and Yemen. These countries are predominately Islamic. For the last quarter-century, economic growth was slower in MENA than in other developing economies, and almost a quarter of the 300 million people who make up the population live on less than $2.00 a day (World Bank 2013).

The International Labour Organization tracks the way income inequality influences social unrest. The two regions with the highest risk of social unrest are Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East-North Africa region (International Labour Organization 2012). Increasing unemployment and high socioeconomic inequality in MENA were major factors in the Arab Spring, which—beginning in 2010—toppled dictatorships throughout the Middle East in favor of democratically elected government; unemployment and income inequalities are still being blamed on immigrants, foreign nationals, and ethnic/religious minorities.

Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

Sweatshops and Student Protests: Who's Making Your Team Spirit?

Figure 10.7 This protester seeks to bring attention to the issue of sweatshops. (Photo courtesy of Ohio AFL-CIO Labor 2008/flickr)

Most of us don't pay too much attention to where our favorite products are made. And certainly when you're shopping for a college sweatshirt or ball cap to wear to a school football game, you probably don't turn over the label, check who produced the item, and then research whether or not the company has fair labor practices. But for the members of USAS—United Students Against Sweatshops—that's exactly what they do. The organization, which was

founded in 1997, has waged countless battles against both apparel makers and other multinational corporations that do not meet what USAS considers fair working conditions and wages (USAS 2009).

Sometimes their demonstrations take on a sensationalist tone, as in 2006 when twenty Penn State students protested while naked or nearly naked, in order to draw attention to the issue of sweatshop labor. The school is actually already a member of an independent monitoring organization called Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) that monitors working conditions and works to assist colleges and universities with maintaining compliance with their labor code. But the students were protesting in order to have the same code of conduct applied to the factories that provide materials for the goods, not just where the final product is assembled (Chronicle of Higher Education 2006).

The USAS organization has chapters on over 250 campuses in the United States and Canada and has waged countless campaigns against companies like Nike and Forever 21 apparel, Taco Bell restaurants, and Sodexo food service. In 2000, members of USAS helped to create the WRC. Schools that affiliate with WRC pay annual fees that help offset the organization's costs. Over 180 schools are affiliated with the organization. Yet, USAS still sees signs of inequality everywhere. And its members feel that, as current and future workers, they are responsible for ensuring that workers of the world are treated fairly. For them, at least, the global inequality we see everywhere should not be ignored for a team spirit sweatshirt.

Consequences of Poverty

Figure 10.8 For this child at a refugee camp in Ethiopia, poverty and malnutrition are a way of life. (Photo courtesy of DFID - UK Department for International Development/flickr)

Not surprisingly, the consequences of poverty are often also causes. The poor often experience inadequate healthcare, limited education, and the inaccessibility of birth control. But those born into these conditions are incredibly challenged in their efforts to break out since these consequences of poverty are also causes of poverty, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage.

According to sociologists Neckerman and Torche (2007) in their analysis of global inequality studies, the consequences of poverty are many. Neckerman and Torche have divided them into three areas. The first, termed "the sedimentation of global inequality," relates to the fact that once poverty becomes entrenched in an area, it is typically very difficult to reverse. As mentioned above, poverty exists in a cycle where the consequences and causes are intertwined. The second consequence of poverty is its effect on physical and mental health. Poor people face physical health challenges, including malnutrition and high infant mortality rates. Mental health is also detrimentally affected by the emotional stresses of poverty, with relative deprivation carrying the most robust effect. Again, as with the ongoing inequality, the effects of poverty on mental and physical health become more entrenched as time goes on. Neckerman and Torche's third consequence of poverty is the prevalence of crime. Cross-nationally, crime rates are higher, particularly for violent crime, in countries with higher levels of income inequality (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 2002).

Slavery

While most of us are accustomed to thinking of slavery in terms of the antebellum South, modern day slavery goes hand-in-hand with global inequality. In short, slavery refers to any situation in which people are sold, treated as property, or forced to work for little or no pay. Just as in the pre-Civil War United States, these humans are at the mercy of their employers. **Chattel slavery**, the form of slavery once practiced in the American South, occurs when one person owns another as property. Child slavery, which may include child prostitution, is a form of chattel slavery. In **debt bondage**, or

bonded labor, the poor pledge themselves as servants in exchange for the cost of basic necessities like transportation, room, and board. In this scenario, people are paid less than they are charged for room and board. When travel is required, they can arrive in debt for their travel expenses and be unable to work their way free, since their wages do not allow them to ever get ahead.

The global watchdog group Anti-Slavery International recognizes other forms of slavery: human trafficking (in which people are moved away from their communities and forced to work against their will), child domestic work and child labor, and certain forms of servile marriage, in which women are little more than chattel slaves (Anti-Slavery International 2012).

10.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

As with any social issue, global or otherwise, scholars have developed a variety of theories to study global stratification. The two most widely applied perspectives are modernization theory and dependency theory.

Modernization Theory

According to **modernization theory**, low-income countries are affected by their lack of industrialization and can improve their global economic standing through (Armer and Katsillis 2010):

1. an adjustment of cultural values and attitudes to work

2. industrialization and other forms of economic growth

Critics point out the inherent ethnocentric bias of this theory. It supposes all countries have the same resources and are capable of following the same path. In addition, it assumes that the goal of all countries is to be as "developed" as possible. There is no room within this theory for the possibility that industrialization and technology are not the best goals.

There is, of course, some basis for this assumption. Data show that core nations tend to have lower maternal and child mortality rates, longer life spans, and less absolute poverty. It is also true that in the poorest countries, millions of people die from the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, which are benefits most of us take for granted. At the same time, the issue is more complex than the numbers might suggest. Cultural equality, history, community, and local traditions are all at risk as modernization pushes into peripheral countries. The challenge, then, is to allow the benefits of modernization while maintaining a cultural sensitivity to what already exists.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory was created in part as a response to the Western-centric mindset of modernization theory. It states that global inequality is primarily caused by core nations (or high-income nations) exploiting semi-peripheral and peripheral nations (or middle-income and low-income nations), which creates a cycle of dependence (Hendricks 2010). As long as peripheral nations are dependent on core nations for economic stimulus and access to a larger piece of the global economy, they will never achieve stable and consistent economic growth. Further, the theory states that since core nations, as well as the World Bank, choose which countries to make loans to, and for what they will loan funds, they are creating highly segmented labor markets that are built to benefit the dominant market countries.

At first glance, it seems this theory ignores the formerly low-income nations that are now considered middle-income nations and are on their way to becoming high-income nations and major players in the global economy, such as China. But some dependency theorists would state that it is in the best interests of core nations to ensure the long-term usefulness of their peripheral and semi-peripheral partners. Following that theory, sociologists have found that entities are more likely to outsource a significant portion of a company's work if they are the dominant player in the equation; in other words, companies want to see their partner countries healthy enough to provide work, but not so healthy as to establish a threat (Caniels and Roeleveld 2009).

Making Connections: Sociological Research

Factory Girls

We've examined functionalist and conflict theorist perspectives on global inequality, as well as modernization and dependency theories. How might a symbolic interactionist approach this topic?

The book *Factory Girls: From Village to City in Changing China*, by Leslie T. Chang, provides this opportunity. Chang follows two young women (Min and Chunming) employed at a handbag plant. They help manufacture coveted purses and bags for the global market. As part of the growing population of young people who are leaving behind the homesteads and farms of rural China, these female factory workers are ready to enter the urban fray and pursue an ambitious income.

Although Chang's study is based in a town many have never heard of (Dongguan), this city produces one-third of all shoes on the planet (Nike and Reebok are major manufacturers here) and 30 percent of the world's computer disk drives, in addition to an abundance of apparel (Chang 2008).

But Chang's focus is centered less on this global phenomenon on a large scale, than on how it affects these two women. As a symbolic interactionist would do, Chang examines the daily lives and interactions of Min and Chunming—their workplace friendships, family relationships, gadgets and goods—in this evolving global space where young women can leave tradition behind and fashion their own futures. Their story is one that all people, not just scholars, can learn from as we contemplate sociological issues like global economies, cultural traditions and innovations, and opportunities for women in the workforce.

Chapter Review

Key Terms

absolute poverty: the state where one is barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities

capital flight: the movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, via jobs and resources

chattel slavery: a form of slavery in which one person owns another

core nations: dominant capitalist countries

debt accumulation: the buildup of external debt, wherein countries borrow money from other nations to fund their expansion or growth goals

debt bondage: the act of people pledging themselves as servants in exchange for money for passage, and are subsequently paid too little to regain their freedom

deindustrialization: the loss of industrial production, usually to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations where the costs are lower

dependency theory: a theory which states that global inequity is due to the exploitation of peripheral and semi-peripheral nations by core nations

first world: a term from the Cold War era that is used to describe industrialized capitalist democracies

fourth world: a term that describes stigmatized minority groups who have no voice or representation on the world stage

GINI coefficient: a measure of income inequality between countries using a 100-point scale, in which 1 represents complete equality and 100 represents the highest possible inequality

global feminization of poverty: a pattern that occurs when women bear a disproportionate percentage of the burden of poverty

global inequality: the concentration of resources in core nations and in the hands of a wealthy minority

global stratification: the unequal distribution of resources between countries

gross national income (GNI): the income of a nation calculated based on goods and services produced, plus income earned by citizens and corporations headquartered in that country

modernization theory: a theory that low-income countries can improve their global economic standing by industrialization of infrastructure and a shift in cultural attitudes towards work

peripheral nations: nations on the fringes of the global economy, dominated by core nations, with very little industrialization

relative poverty: the state of poverty where one is unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in the country

second world: a term from the Cold War era that describes nations with moderate economies and standards of living

semi-peripheral nations: in-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy but acting as a major source of raw materials and an expanding middle class marketplace

subjective poverty: a state of poverty composed of many dimensions, subjectively present when one's actual income does not meet one's expectations

third world: a term from the Cold War era that refers to poor, unindustrialized countries

underground economy: an unregulated economy of labor and goods that operates outside of governance, regulatory systems, or human protections

Section Summary

10.1 Global Stratification and Classification

Stratification refers to the gaps in resources both between nations and within nations. While economic equality is of great concern, so is social equality, like the discrimination stemming from race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation. While global inequality is nothing new, several factors make it more relevant than ever, like the global marketplace and the pace of information sharing. Researchers try to understand global inequality by classifying it according to factors such as how industrialized a nation is, whether a country serves as a means of production or as an owner, and what income a nation produces.

10.2 Global Wealth and Poverty

When looking at the world's poor, we first have to define the difference between relative poverty, absolute poverty, and subjective poverty. While those in relative poverty might not have enough to live at their country's standard of living, those in absolute poverty do not have, or barely have, basic necessities such as food. Subjective poverty has more to do with one's perception of one's situation. North America and Europe are home to fewer of the world's poor than Africa, which has most poor countries, or Asia, which has the most people living in poverty. Poverty has numerous negative consequences, from increased crime rates to a detrimental impact on physical and mental health.

10.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

Modernization theory and dependency theory are two of the most common lenses sociologists use when looking at the issues of global inequality. Modernization theory posits that countries go through evolutionary stages and that industrialization and improved technology are the keys to forward movement. Dependency theory, on the other hand, sees modernization theory as Eurocentric and patronizing. With this theory, global inequality is the result of core nations creating a cycle of dependence by exploiting resources and labor in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries.

Section Quiz

10.1 Global Stratification and Classification

1. A sociologist who focuses on the way that multinational corporations headquartered in core nations exploit the local workers in their peripheral nation factories is using a _____ perspective to understand the global economy.
    a. functional
    b. conflict theory
    c. feminist
    d. symbolic interactionist

2. A _____ perspective theorist might find it particularly noteworthy that wealthy corporations improve the quality of life in peripheral nations by providing workers with jobs, pumping money into the local economy, and improving transportation infrastructure.
   a.   functional
   b.   conflict
   c.   feminist
   d.   symbolic interactionist

3. A sociologist working from a symbolic interaction perspective would:
   a.   study how inequality is created and reproduced
   b.   study how corporations can improve the lives of their low-income workers
   c.   try to understand how companies provide an advantage to high-income nations compared to low-income nations
   d.   want to interview women working in factories to understand how they manage the expectations of their supervisors, make ends meet, and support their households on a day-to-day basis

4. France might be classified as which kind of nation?
   a.   Global
   b.   Core
   c.   Semi-peripheral
   d.   Peripheral

5. In the past, the United States manufactured clothes. Many clothing corporations have shut down their U.S. factories and relocated to China. This is an example of:
   a.   conflict theory
   b.   OECD
   c.   global inequality
   d.   capital flight

10.2 Global Wealth and Poverty

6. Slavery in the pre-Civil War U.S. South most closely resembled
   a.   chattel slavery
   b.   debt bondage
   c.   relative poverty
   d.   peonage

7. Maya is a twelve-year-old girl living in Thailand. She is homeless, and often does not know where she will sleep or when she will eat. We might say that Maya lives in _____ poverty.
   a.   subjective
   b.   absolute
   c.   relative
   d.   global

8. Mike, a college student, rents a studio apartment. He cannot afford a television and lives on cheap groceries like dried beans and ramen noodles. Since he does not have a regular job, he does not own a car. Mike is living in:
   a.   global poverty
   b.   absolute poverty
   c.   subjective poverty
   d.   relative poverty

9. Faith has a full-time job and two children. She has enough money for the basics and can pay her rent each month, but she feels that, with her education and experience, her income should be enough for her family to live much better than they do. Faith is experiencing:
   a.   global poverty
   b.   subjective poverty
   c.   absolute poverty
   d.   relative poverty

10. In a U.S. town, a mining company owns all the stores and most of the houses. It sells goods to the workers at inflated prices, offers house rentals for twice what a mortgage would be, and makes sure to always pay the workers less than needed to cover food and rent. Once the workers are in debt, they have no choice but to continue working for the company, since their skills will not transfer to a new position. This situation most closely resembles:
   a.   child slavery

b. chattel slavery
c. debt slavery
d. servile marriage

10.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

11. One flaw in dependency theory is the unwillingness to recognize _____.
a. that previously low-income nations such as China have successfully developed their economies and can no longer be classified as dependent on core nations
b. that previously high-income nations such as China have been economically overpowered by low-income nations entering the global marketplace
c. that countries such as China are growing more dependent on core nations
d. that countries such as China do not necessarily want to be more like core nations

12. One flaw in modernization theory is the unwillingness to recognize _____.
a. that semi-peripheral nations are incapable of industrializing
b. that peripheral nations prevent semi-peripheral nations from entering the global market
c. its inherent ethnocentric bias
d. the importance of semi-peripheral nations industrializing

13. If a sociologist says that nations evolve toward more advanced technology and more complex industry as their citizens learn cultural values that celebrate hard work and success, she is using _____ theory to study the global economy.
a. modernization theory
b. dependency theory
c. modern dependency theory
d. evolutionary dependency theory

14. If a sociologist points out that core nations dominate the global economy, in part by creating global interest rates and international tariffs that will inevitably favor high-income nations over low-income nations, he is a:
a. functionalist
b. dependency theorist
c. modernization theorist
d. symbolic interactionist

15. Dependency theorists explain global inequality and global stratification by focusing on the way that:
a. core nations and peripheral nations exploit semi-peripheral nations
b. semi-peripheral nations exploit core nations
c. peripheral nations exploit core nations
d. core nations exploit peripheral nations

Short Answer

10.1 Global Stratification and Classification

1. Consider the matter of rock-bottom prices at Walmart. What would a functionalist think of Walmart's model of squeezing vendors to get the absolute lowest prices so it can pass them along to core nation consumers?

2. Why do you think some scholars find Cold War terminology ("first world" and so on) objectionable?

3. Give an example of the feminization of poverty in core nations. How is it the same or different in peripheral nations?

4. Pretend you are a sociologist studying global inequality by looking at child labor manufacturing Barbie dolls in China. What do you focus on? How will you find this information? What theoretical perspective might you use?

10.2 Global Wealth and Poverty

5. Consider the concept of subjective poverty. Does it make sense that poverty is in the eye of the beholder? When you see a homeless person, is your reaction different if he or she is seemingly content versus begging? Why?

6. Think of people among your family, your friends, or your classmates who are relatively unequal in terms of wealth. What is their relationship like? What factors come into play?

7. Go to your campus bookstore or visit its web site. Find out who manufactures apparel and novelty items with your school's insignias. In what countries are these produced? Conduct some research to determine how well your school adheres to the principles advocated by USAS.

10.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

8. There is much criticism that modernization theory is Eurocentric. Do you think dependency theory is also biased? Why, or why not?

9. Compare and contrast modernization theory and dependency theory. Which do you think is more useful for explaining global inequality? Explain, using examples.

Further Research

10.1 Global Stratification and Classification

To learn more about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, look here: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/UN_development_goals (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/UN_development_goals)

To learn more about the existence and impact of global poverty, peruse the data here: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/poverty_data (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/poverty_data)

10.2 Global Wealth and Poverty

Students often think that the United States is immune to the atrocity of human trafficking. Check out the following link to learn more about trafficking in the United States: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/human_trafficking_in_US (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/human_trafficking_in_US)

For more information about the ongoing practices of slavery in the modern world click here: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/anti-slavery (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/anti-slavery)

10.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

For more information about economic modernization, check out the Hudson Institute at http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Hudson_Institute (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Hudson_Institute)

Learn more about economic dependency at the University of Texas Inequality Project: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Texas_inequality_project (http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Texas_inequality_project)

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Return To Intro

Audre Lorde: Black Feminist Visionary and "Mytho-poet"

Audre Lorde : Féministe visionnaire noire et « mytho-poète »

Njeng Eric Sipyinyu

Audre Lorde :
Féministe visionnaire noire et « mytho-poète »

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Abstract

Les études dans le domaine de la littérature noire aux États-Unis révèlent des problèmes aigus de race et de genre, mettant à jour les pressions existant sur l'esprit et la confiance en soi des Noirs. Si tout cela n'est pas verbalisé, ces pressions peuvent mener à l'émergence d'un complexe d'infériorité et à des dépressions. Audre Lorde, poétesse et visionnaire noire, fait un pas de géant en traitant de ces questions et en faisant resurgir tout un panthéon de symboles mythologiques dans sa poésie. Pour elle, le culte et la connaissance du mythe permettront d'une part une meilleure connaissance de l'histoire, et d'autre part, la naissance de nouvelles valeurs.

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Audre Lorde:
Black Feminist Visionary and "Mytho-poet"

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Studies in black literature in the United States reveal acute problems of race and gender, showing how these pressures bear on the black mind, black consciousness and black self-esteem. These problems if left unsolved may lead to feelings of self-loathing, inferiority complex and in acute cases of mental breakdown. Recognizing these pressures and addressing them becomes a matter of urgency to black writers. Audre Lorde, as a black visionary and "mytho-poet", makes a gigantic attempt towards explaining these phenomena by invoking a pantheon of mythological symbols. Mythical elements are for Lorde a vital part of black culture, they are models for ritual and cultural behavior. For her, an understanding of Myth as a dominant form of black ancestral worship might allow blacks to achieve a better understanding of history on the one hand, and on the other, create new values and meaning from its rich reservoirs.

Lorde therefore assumes the position of a high priestess, interceding between the goddesses of Africa and her audience. Invoking and worshipping the matriarchal deities of Western African ancient Kingdoms like Ghana, Mali, Songhay and Nigeria, she evokes the rich cultures of Africa. Black people in the Diaspora carried memories of the ancestors and the power of naming spirits across the Atlantic. Despite the cruel abuse and dehumanizing effects of slavery, blacks succeeded in constructing forms of communal expression—spirituals, the blues, the jazz music, inter alia-keep alive their archetypal consciousness. In her works Lorde maintains this creativity, drawing from African mythology.

As a black visionary, Lorde traveled to Africa where she renewed her ties with the goddesses of Africa. Dissatisfied with "conventional" religion, Lorde sought to re-create one that would reflect black people. Rochelle Gatlin states in *American Women Writers Since 1945* that:

> Feminist radicals consider themselves as an exodus community outside the established religions, and their practices are based on pagan traditions and their own imaginations. Instead of churches, radicals form covers or affinity groups[1].

Radical feminists look outside Christianity for religious inspiration, as for them, Christianity is as oppressive as any other institution constructed by patriarchy. Lorde identifies with these radicals. As feminist radicals, they research into ancient cultures which provide plentiful evidence of goddess worship and a possible correlation between female deities and matriarchy. Although many radical feminists do not insist on the actual existence of a Golden Age of Matriarchy, they use any evidence of female power to create new potent symbols. In most cases the goddess serves not as an object of worship, but rather as an affirmation of feminine power, being an incarnation of the female body and of the concept of women's solidarity. Lorde's "From the House of Yemanja" alludes to Yemanja, the mother of all other gods in Yoruba mythology. She invokes her to come to the rescue of women: "Mother I need your blackness now/ as the August earth needs rain"[2].

Apart from feminists, black critics also saw the need for black visionary poets. They needed black writers who could write a literature characteristic of Africa and of the black experience. The assertion of blackness in America was needed to reinforce militancy and the black audience famished for poets who could challenge the existing oppression, and construct a new and genuine black literature. These new writers would be saviors, martyrs to the black cause. Audre Lorde emerged as a voice that could illustrate this black desire.

Lorde's status as a visionary

Lorde's rebellion against racism and sexism was present in her poetic mythology. Her whole career as a writer was actually governed by rebellion and self-assertion: she rebelled against white supremacy, against patriarchy and then against racism. As an African visionary poet living in America she tried to free all Blacks from the fractures of white misogyny and xenophobia, and then promoted blackness, femininity and homosexuality. Blacks can reclaim their ancestry and culture and thus

[1] Rochelle Gatlin, *American Women Writers Since 1945*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987, 61.

[2] Audre Lorde, *The Black Unicorn* Toronto: George T. MC Lead Ltd., 1978, 6.

threaten the white race into being more tolerant. For her, the feminists' role was to present lesbianism as a political option that would threaten the male establishment into recognizing the place of the woman. African mythology was the answer that could nurture this search for a more welcoming and accommodating society.

Born into a family and a society wrought with tensions, she soon realized that "difference" was the main cause of conflict. She first learned that she was black and as such could not have an equal place with Whites. Afterwards she discovered that as a female she could not have the same opportunities as males. As an independent and vocal woman, Lorde would not be accepted in the American society without fighting for her rights. Rebelling against the injustices that plague Blacks, women and lesbians, she craved for a peaceful place to live, for the company of people who would accept her true nature. American white society disowned her because she was black; the black male community downgraded her because she was a female, and the black community rebuffed her as a lesbian. Her search for a community that would accept her, became for Lorde, an urgent and mandatory requirement for survival. In her desperate search, she discovered West African mythology. The myths and legends of West African culture offered her a community she could live in, be useful in without having to change her personality. This new-found Zion, this new link to the roots would give her the voice to educate her black community, and more particularly her black sisters living in America, and to tell them how to develop self-esteem and self-reliance. It would remind these women that they used to be warriors, heroines, priestesses in African cultural history. As such, it would give women a renewed strength to fight against oppression.

For Lorde, the mother-bond is fundamental for survival. Human beings must pay allegiance to motherhood because maternity is the oldest form of family. Wilfred L. Guerin states in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* that:

> Lorde asks us to seek the Black mother in each of us, that is, to rely on intuition rather than analysis, to place private needs over others, and to see African culture's emphasis upon the mother-bond as an alternative way of thinking in a white patriarchal culture[3].

Guerin goes on to state that feminist myth critics center their discussions on the Great Mother and other female images and goddesses, viewing these figures as radical "others" who can offer a way to struggle against patriarchal oppression. Major feminist critics define myth as the key literary and critical form for African-American women to assert

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[3] Wilfred L. Guerin, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 3rd ed. New York: The Free Press, 1992, 207.

themselves. They blame male myth critics for leaving women out of their classification. Guerin cites Annis Pratt and Adrienne Rich as prominent myth critics who insist that patriarchy downgrades and oppresses women because men fear the terrible and wonderful powers of the woman. Annis Pratt's "Overview" on myths in *The Oxford Companion To Women's Writing in the United States*, upholds this view. She states:

> Although the Christian church and the European ruling classes tried to destroy people's access to myths and legends that celebrate nature, the human body, and the sexual, medical, and military prowess of women, traces of European pagan culture remained in folklore, literature, and the arts. After hundreds of years of religious repression and suppression of indigenous cultures by imported classicism, many Europeans and Euro-Americans are unaware of their mythological and their religious heritage[4].

Audre Lorde then, in invoking the goddesses and spirits of her original continent, is stressing the primary role of the woman. Mary Jane Sherfey's article "The Theory of Female Sexuality" in *Sisterhood is Powerful*, emphasizes woman's primary role and sexual power. She states that primitive women enjoyed a strong and adventurous sexuality, and often had to cope alone with their parental role. With the development of agriculture, however, men saw the need for a settled community and made laws that restricted woman's sexuality[5]. Although her article points to the fact that it was mandatory for woman's sex drive to be controlled, feminists argue that the restrictions were intimidating and inhuman. A woman has a right to her body, they argue.

Myth therefore can teach women how to empower themselves thereby helping minorities to reorganize and reorientate themselves within the dominant culture they live in. Annis Pratt echoes this point, when she says:

> Stories about mythic goddesses and legendary women magicians, adventurers, and warriors empower woman by suggesting apatriarchal psychological possibilities for women's lives. They invoke women's inner strengths in response to patterns of behavior that are radically different from the gender norms of twentieth century American patriarchy[6].

Pratt acknowledges Audre Lorde's endeavor at myth transmission, "Audre Lorde seeks community and self-empowerment by celebrating

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[4] Catty N. Davidson et al (eds*.), The Oxford Anthology of Women's Writing in the United States* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 600.

[5] Robin Morgan ed., *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writing From the Women's Liberation Movement* New York: Random House, 1970.

[6] Davidson, *op. cit.*, 599.

the gods and goddesses of her Yoruba heritage" [7] . West African mythology like that of the Native American Indian, points to the fact that feminine typologies brought about Creation. However, patriarchy has systematically replaced this old matriarchal mythology with male figures. The case of the Akan in Ghana is a glaring example. Lorde evokes figures like Mawulisa, Orisha, Seboulisa, Yemanja and all goddesses, indicating that femininity was at the center of creation, rather than the predominantly male god of the white supremacist culture. Why do women then feel belittled and downgraded when they have these great spiritual figures to admire and worship? Linking up with these ancestral spirits would benefit black women and enlighten their male sons through their transmission of an oral heritage valorizing women.

Wilfred L. Guerin states that, "myths are by nature collective and communal, they bind a tribe or a nation together in common psychological and spiritual activities"[8]. In analyzing Lorde as a "mytho-poet", we shall try to see how the typologies that she employs are those that can bind blacks together "in common psychological and spiritual activities". By invoking these typologies and implanting them in America, Lorde is not just experimenting. Many of these mythical symbols had been carried by her forefathers and many still persist in the United States and the Caribbean. By bringing this pattern to her people, she is merely trying to trigger that link between African mythology and the collective archetypal consciousness of the black people. Blacks have latent archetypal typologies that can be re-awakened, and this is the task Lorde sets herself.

Lorde's mythical and legendary poems cover a wide range of themes: the portrait of a void of that ancestral link with the spiritual powers in poem "Solstice", the celebration of blackness, likening it to the earth and the mother goddess Yemanja, in the poem "From the House of Yemanja", woman's solidarity as in the poem "Dahomey". In her presentation of each of these themes, there is the underlying message that a re-connection with African culture is beneficial to the black Diaspora.

In "Solstice", Lorde portrays the suffering of the black people and blames them for neglecting their ancestral spirits who, starved and angry, have left them. We can read:

> Our skins are empty
> They have been vacated by the spirits
> Who are angered by our reluctance

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[7] Davidson, *op. cit.*, 601.

[8] Guerin, *op. cit*, 149.

To feed them[9].

The speaker is determined, however, to shed her shame and the alien imposters and to embrace her roots. She says:

> I will eat the last sign of my weakness remove the
> scars of old childhood wars and dare to enter the forest
> whistling like a snake that has fed the chameleon for
> changes. I shall be forever[10].

Wishing to forget the scars of trying to be white and conform to the dominant culture, she wishes now to go back to her roots and original culture. The spiritual void in the Blacks must be filled for them to be free.

Celebrating blackness is one of the themes Lorde handles well in "From the House of Yemanja". Beginning from her own family in which her mother's forlorn desire for whiteness and her father's blackness was an issue of constant anxiety, Lorde says that she was black and therefore not her mother's favorite. Her mother, "[…] hid out a perfect daughter/who was not me"[10]. Lorde then beseeches the goddess Yemanja, mother of all other gods and goddesses, to give her the glory and pride of being black. She cries out:

> Mother I need
> Mother I need
> Mother I need your blackness now
> As the august earth needs rain[11].

Because she has a spiritual likeness with the goddess Yemanja, she can be proud of her heritage and not dream of whiteness as her mother did.

In another poem, "Dahomey", Lorde portrays the theme of female solidarity. She begs Seboulisa—the goddess of Abomey—to give them strength. Together, working with other women, they mock Eshu's symbol, a huge erect phallus.

> In the dooryard of the brass workers
> four women joined together dying cloth
> mock Eshu's iron quiver
> standing erect and flamingly familiar
> in their dooryard mute as a porcupine in a forest of lead […][12].

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[9] Lorde, *op. cit.*, 177.

[10] *Idem*.

[11] Lorde, *op. cit.*, 6.

[12] *Idem*.

Tacit in this mockery of Eshu's huge erect penis which women as priests of Eshu wear attached to their waists, is a sign that they can contain, master and even overcome male aggressiveness. As women, they can cope without men. In a similar light, she again portrays female solidarity and power in the poem "125th street and Abomey". In this poem, she offers libations to Seboulisa, and beseeches her to give her the power of the Amazon women. The Amazon women were warriors who guarded and fought under the protection of the panther kings of ancient Dahomey. In their culture, women were not enjoined from shedding blood. The speaker opens the poem by stressing Seboulisa's link with consciousness by comparing it with the Akai coiffure.

> Head bent, walking through snow
> I see you Seboulisa
> Printed inside the back of my head
> like marks of the newly wrapped Akai
> That kept my sleep fruitful in Dahomey[13].

Seboulisa is engraved on her archetypal consciousness, and she re-awakens this vital part of herself. Seboulisa will give her power to:

> Take my fear of being alone
> Like my warrior sisters
> Who rode in defense of your queendom
> Disguised and apart
> Give me the woman strength
> Of tongue in this cold season[14].

Seboulisa then, can come to the rescue of all Blacks who woo her, empowering them as she empowered the Amazon warriors. In another poem on the same theme "The Women of Dan Dance with Swords in Their Hands", she invokes these legendary figures—the Amazon Warriors—to give her strength.

Pain and suffering because of the course of the black liberation is one of those themes for which Lorde invokes legendary typologies. In "For Assata"—New Brunswick Prison, 1977—the speaker stares at Assata's picture and discovers a degeneration of her physical features because of the torture undergone in prison. She dreams of Assata's freedom as a victory for all black people, Assata being a black militant. Assata is a warrior sister because she fights against injustices too. The speaker alludes to great women heroines, Joan of Arc and Yaa Asantewa:

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[13] Lorde, *op. cit.*, 10.

[14] *Ibid*, 12.

Joan of Arc led many successful battles against the English just as Yaa Asantewa, an Ashanti Queenmother, led several successful battles against British invasion. These great heroines are behind Assata; they will give her the spiritual strength to bear pain and suffering, and in the end, achieve freedom.

Internal division within the black community is for Lorde, a great cause for dismay. Pure blacks look at the colored as hybrids and as sell-outs. Men look down on women. Some black men believe that any white man can have access to any black woman just by asking. As such, they view black women as cheap and as a group who ally with the oppressor. In the poem "Between Ourselves", Lorde x-rays this concern. The speaker is wondering who to turn to when her black brethren seek to destroy her because of her difference. She calls the god-Orishala—the god who gives form to humans before they are born—and asks why blacks like her mother cannot be satisfied with Orishala's work. Is Orishala wrong in making them black? (Notice that albinos are white and are under the special attention of Orishala). The speaker goes on to say that although her ancestors sold her into slavery, she will not curse them, by whistling their names besides the shrine. The speaker forgives her ancestors. She calls on Blacks to forgive and accommodate difference. They should not write her name before Shapona's shrine because they all are Eshu's children. In conclusion, the speaker warns her black community that it is suicide for Blacks to fight Blacks. She warns that self-hatred will put them in the hands of Eshidale's priests, who will bury them by jumping off the ground and landing on their heads. That is to say that they will be buried like those who commit suicide.

By employing mythical and legendary typologies to inform a wide range of themes, Lorde brings her audience into full participation with their ancestry. She portrays the spiritual emptiness of black people as in "Solstice". Blacks feel empty because they attempt to embrace the religion of people who are antagonistic to them, and who had used that same religion as a tool of enslavement against them. Embracing a set of beliefs that are antithetical to what the Blacks really are, wastes and plunders the Blacks, leaves them with a sense of "wan witlessness". Re-connecting with this pantheon of deities will awaken the black man's real spiritual ties. This lack and search for the African's spiritual belonging is an issue of great urgency to most black writers. Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* x-rays a black spiritual advocate's quest to rescue a true black religious script from the hands of white defilers.

Celebrating blackness in poems like "Coal" and "From the House of Yemanja", Lorde contributes to instilling self-esteem. By re-creating a society in which blackness is normal and natural, in which gods and goddesses can be invoked to give strength and essence to Blacks, African-Americans can attain self-reliance. By showing imprisonment, pain and

suffering as virtues that raise militants to martyrdom as in "For Assata", Blacks can be ready to face the challenges of asserting themselves, even at the risk of death.

As for women, presenting them with a catalogue of goddesses and heroines, can enable them to regain confidence in themselves. West African myths and sagas present the woman as primary to Creation. Many West African societies had been governed by matriarchy. Figures like Mawulisa, Orisha, Yemanja, who are at the center of creation and life, validate the primacy of women. Legendary typologies like the Amazon warriors, and Yaa Asantenwa, female heroines who fought in the defense of their countries, dispel western myths about women's powerlessness. As such, Lorde as a "mytho-poet", instills self-esteem and self-reliance in her own race.

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Because of the value of this article as testimony, the editor has decided to publish it with only minor modifications of style and language.

The danger of a single story
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
TEDGlobal 2009

00:12
I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

00:39
I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples,

01:04
(Laughter)

01:06
and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

01:10
(Laughter)

01:12
Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

01:26
My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was.

01:36
(Laughter)

01:37
And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

01:44
What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

02:15
But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of

chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

02:36

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

02:59

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

03:43

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.

04:13

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.

04:42

(Laughter)

04:45

She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

04:49

What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.

05:21

I must say that before I went to the U.S., I didn't consciously identify as African. But in the U.S., whenever Africa came up, people turned to me. Never mind that I knew nothing about places like Namibia. But I did come to embrace this new identity, and in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable when Africa is referred to as a country, the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which

there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

05:55

(Laughter)

05:56

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

06:35

This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Lok, who sailed to west Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

07:05

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

07:32

And so, I began to realize that my American roommate must have throughout her life seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

08:21

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

08:54

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject

immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

09:26

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

09:37

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

10:12

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

10:52

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" --

11:08

(Laughter)

11:10

-- and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.

11:15

(Laughter)

11:19

(Applause)

11:25

Now, obviously I said this in a fit of mild irritation.

11:28

(Laughter)

11:30

But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. This is not because I am a better person than that student, but because of America's cultural and economic power, I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and Gaitskill. I did not have a single story of America.

11:55

When I learned, some years ago, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me.

12:08

(Laughter)

12:10

But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

12:17

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our fire trucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

12:57

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

13:25

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes: There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo and depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

13:45

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and 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.

14:09

So what if before my Mexican trip, I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

14:33

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Muhtar Bakare, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

14:56

Shortly after he published my first novel, I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview, and a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen ..."

15:11

(Laughter)

15:14

And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel. I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

15:33

Now, what if my roommate knew about my friend Funmi Iyanda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music, talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers.

16:06

What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood, full of innovative people making films despite great technical odds, films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce? What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

16:47

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government, but also by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer, and it is amazing to me how many people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

17:14

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust, and we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing libraries that already exist and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories.

17:36

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

17:56

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left

behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

18:17

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

18:30

Thank you.

18:31

(Applause)

The human stories behind mass incarceration
Eve Abrams
TEDWomen 2017

00:12
I have never been arrested, never spent a night in jail, never had a loved one thrown into the back of a squad car or behind bars, or be at the mercy of a scary, confusing system that at best sees them with indifference, and at worst as monstrous. The United States of America locks up more people than any other nation on the planet, and Louisiana is our biggest incarcerator. Most of you are probably like me -- lucky. The closest we get to crime and punishment is likely what we see on TV. While making "Unprisoned," I met a woman who used to be like us -- Sheila Phipps.

00:55
(Recording) Sheila Phipps: Before my son went to jail, I used to see people be on television, fighting, saying, "Oh, this person didn't do it and this person is innocent." And you know, you snub them or you dismiss them, and like, "Yeah, whatever." Don't get me wrong, there's a lot of people who deserve to be in prison. There's a lot of criminals out here. But there are a lot of innocent people that's in jail.

01:18
EA: Sheila's son, McKinley, is one of those innocent people. He served 17 years of a 30-year sentence on a manslaughter charge. He had no previous convictions, there was no forensic evidence in the case. He was convicted solely on the basis of eyewitness testimony, and decades of research have shown that eyewitness testimony isn't as reliable as we once believed it to be. Scientists say that memory isn't precise. It's less like playing back a video, and more like putting together a puzzle. Since 1989, when DNA testing was first used to free innocent people, over 70 percent of overturned convictions were based on eyewitness testimony. Last year, the district attorney whose office prosecuted McKinley's case was convicted of unrelated corruption charges. When this district attorney of 30 years stepped down, the eyewitnesses from McKinley's case came forward and said that they had been pressured into testifying by the district attorneys, pressure which included the threat of jail time. Despite this, McKinley is still in prison.

02:31
(Recording) SP: Before this happened, I never would've thought it. And well, I guess it's hard for me to imagine that these things is going on, you know, until this happened to my son. It really opened my eyes. It really, really opened my eyes. I ain't gonna lie to you.

02:50
EA: Estimates of how many innocent people are locked up range between one and four percent, which maybe doesn't sound like a lot, except that it amounts to around 87,000 people: mothers, fathers, sons locked up, often for decades, for crimes they did not commit. And that's not even counting the roughly half a million people who have been convicted of nothing -- those presumed innocent, but who are too poor to bail out of jail and therefore sit behind bars for weeks upon months, waiting for their case to come to trial -- or much more likely, waiting to take a plea just to get out. All of those people have family on the outside.

03:35

(Recording) Kortney Williams: My brother missed my high school graduation because the night before, he went to jail. My brother missed my birthday dinner because that day, actually, he went to jail. My brother missed his own birthday dinner because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

03:52

(Recording) EA: So all these times when he ended up going to jail, were charges pressed or did he just get taken to jail?

03:58

KW: The charges would be pressed and it would have a bond posted, then the charges will get dropped ... because there was no evidence.

04:07

EA: I met Kortney Williams when I went to her college classroom to talk about "Unprisoned." She ended up interviewing her aunt, Troylynn Robertson, for an episode.

04:17

(Recording) KW: With everything that you went through with your children, what is any advice that you would give me if I had any kids?

04:25

(Recording) Troylynn Roberston: I would tell you when you have them, you know the first thing that will initially come to mind is love and protection, but I would tell you, even much with the protection to raise them with knowledge of the judicial system -- you know, we always tell our kids about the boogeyman, the bad people, who to watch out for, but we don't teach them how to watch out for the judicial system.

04:54

EA: Because of the way our criminal legal system disproportionately targets people of color, it's not uncommon for young people like Kortney to know about it. When I started going into high schools to talk to students about "Unprisoned," I found that roughly one-third of the young people I spoke with had a loved one behind bars.

05:13

(Recording) Girl: The hardest part is like finding out where he's at, or like, when his court date is.

05:18

Girl: Yeah, he went to jail on my first birthday.

05:22

Girl: My dad works as a guard. He saw my uncle in jail. He's in there for life.

05:28

EA: According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the number of young people with a father incarcerated rose 500 percent between 1980 and 2000. Over five million of today's children will see a parent incarcerated at some point in their childhoods. But this number disproportionately affects African American children. By the time they reach the age of 14, one in four black children will see their dad go off to prison. That's compared to a rate of one in 30 for white children. One key factor determining the future success of both inmates and their children is whether they can maintain ties during the parent's incarceration, but prisoners' phone calls

home can cost 20 to 30 times more than regular phone calls, so many families keep in touch through letters.

06:23

(Recording: Letter being unfolded)

06:25

Anissa Christmas: Dear big brother, I'm making that big 16 this year, LOL. Guess I'm not a baby anymore. You still taking me to prom? I really miss you. You're the only guy that kept it real with me. I wish you were here so I can vent to you. So much has happened since the last time I seen you. (Voice breaking up) I have some good news. I won first place in the science fair. I'm a geek. We're going to regionals, can't you believe it? High school is going by super fast. In less than two years, I hope you'll be able to see me walk across the stage. I thought to write to you because I know it's boring in there. I want to put a smile on your face.

07:05

Anissa wrote these letters to her brother when she was a sophomore in high school. She keeps the letters he writes to her tucked into the frame of her bedroom mirror, and reads them over and over again. I'd like to think that there's a good reason why Anissa's brother is locked up. We all want the wheels of justice to properly turn, but we're coming to understand that the lofty ideals we learned in school look really different in our nation's prisons and jails and courtrooms.

07:34

(Recording) Danny Engelberg: You walk into that courtroom and you're just -- I've been doing this for a quite a while, and it still catches your breath. You're like, "There are so many people of color here," and yet I know that the city is not made up of 90 percent African Americans, so why is it that 90 percent of the people who are in orange are African American?

07:54

(Recording) EA: Public defender Danny Engelberg isn't the only one noticing how many black people are in municipal court -- or in any court. It's hard to miss.

08:02

Who's sitting in court waiting to see the judge? What do they look like?

08:06

(Recording) Man: Mostly African-Americans, like me.

08:08

Man: It's mostly, I could say, 85 percent black. That's all you see in the orange, in the box back there, who locked up. Man: Who's waiting? Mostly black. I mean, there was a couple of white people in there.

08:19

Woman: I think it was about 85 percent African-American that was sitting there.

08:23

EA: How does a young black person growing up in America today come to understand justice? Another "Unprisoned" story was about a troupe of dancers who choreographed a piece called "Hoods Up," which they performed in front of city council. Dawonta White was in the seventh grade for that performance.

08:42

(Recording) Dawonta White: We was wearing black with hoodies because Trayvon Martin, when he was wearing his hoodie, he was killed. So we looked upon that, and we said we're going to wear hoodies like Trayvon Martin.
08:53
(Recording) EA: Who came up with that idea?
08:55
DW: The group. We all agreed on it. I was a little nervous, but I had stick through it though, but I felt like it was a good thing so they could notice what we do.
09:04
(Recording) EA: Shraivell Brown was another choreographer and dancer in "Hoods Up." He says the police criticize people who look like him. He feels judged based on things other black people may have done. How would you want the police to look at you, and what would you want them to think?
09:19
SB: That I'm not no threat.
09:20
EA: Why would they think you're threatening? What did you say, you're 14?
09:23
SB: Yes, I'm 14, but because he said a lot of black males are thugs or gangsters and all that, but I don't want them thinking that about me.
09:35
EA: For folks who look like me, the easiest and most comfortable thing to do is to not pay attention -- to assume our criminal legal system is working. But if it's not our responsibility to question those assumptions, whose responsibility is it? There's a synagogue here that's taken on learning about mass incarceration, and many congregants have concluded that because mass incarceration throws so many lives into chaos, it actually creates more crime -- makes people less safe. Congregant Teri Hunter says the first step towards action has to be understanding. She says it's crucial for all of us to understand our connection to this issue even if it's not immediately obvious.
10:23
(Recording) Teri Hunter: It's on our shoulders to make sure that we're not just closing that door and saying, "Well, it's not us." And I think as Jews, you know, we've lived that history: "It's not us." And so if a society closes their back on one section, we've seen what happens. And so it is our responsibility as Jews and as members of this community to educate our community -- at least our congregation -- to the extent that we're able.
10:59
EA: I've been using the pronouns "us" and "we" because this is our criminal legal system and our children. We elect the district attorneys, the judges and the legislators who operate these systems for we the people. As a society, we are more willing to risk locking up innocent people than we are to let guilty people go free. We elect politicians who fear being labeled "soft on crime," encouraging them to pass harsh legislation and allocate enormous resources toward locking people up. When a crime is committed, our hunger for swift retribution has fed a police culture bent on finding culprits fast, often without adequate resources to conduct thorough investigations or strict scrutiny of those investigations.

11:52

We don't put checks on prosecutors. Across the country, over the last couple of decades, as property and violent crimes have both fell, the number of prosecutors employed and cases they have filed has risen. Prosecutors decide whether or not to take legal action against the people police arrest and they decide what charges to file, directly impacting how much time a defendant potentially faces behind bars. One check we do have on prosecutors is defense. Imagine Lady Liberty: the blindfolded woman holding the scale meant to symbolize the balance in our judicial system. Unfortunately, that scale is tipped. The majority of defendants in our country are represented by government-appointed attorneys. These public defenders receive around 30 percent less funding than district attorneys do, and they often have caseloads far outnumbering what the American Bar Association recommends.

12:57

As Sheila Phipps said, there are people who belong in prison, but it's hard to tell the guilty from the innocent when everyone's outcomes are so similar.

13:09

We all want justice. But with the process weighed so heavily against defendants, justice is hard to come by. Our criminal legal system operates for we the people. If we don't like what's going on, it is up to us to change it.

13:28

Thank you very much.

13:29

(Applause)

My desperate journey with a human smuggler
Barat Ali Batoor
TEDxSydney 2014

00:12
I am a Hazara, and the homeland of my people is Afghanistan. Like hundreds of thousands of other Hazara kids, I was born in exile. The ongoing persecution and operation against the Hazaras forced my parents to leave Afghanistan.
00:33
This persecution has had a long history going back to the late 1800s, and the rule of King Abdur Rahman. He killed 63 percent of the Hazara population. He built minarets with their heads. Many Hazaras were sold into slavery, and many others fled the country for neighboring Iran and Pakistan. My parents also fled to Pakistan, and settled in Quetta, where I was born.
01:03
After the September 11 attack on the Twin Towers, I got a chance to go to Afghanistan for the first time, with foreign journalists. I was only 18, and I got a job working as an interpreter. After four years, I felt it was safe enough to move to Afghanistan permanently, and I was working there as a documentary photographer, and I worked on many stories.
01:30
One of the most important stories that I did was the dancing boys of Afghanistan. It is a tragic story about an appalling tradition. It involves young kids dancing for warlords and powerful men in the society. These boys are often abducted or bought from their poor parents, and they are put to work as sex slaves. This is Shukur. He was kidnapped from Kabul by a warlord. He was taken to another province, where he was forced to work as a sex slave for the warlord and his friends.
02:08
When this story was published in the Washington Post, I started receiving death threats, and I was forced to leave Afghanistan, as my parents were. Along with my family, I returned back to Quetta. The situation in Quetta had changed dramatically since I left in 2005. Once a peaceful haven for the Hazaras, it had now turned into the most dangerous city in Pakistan. Hazaras are confined into two small areas, and they are marginalized socially, educationally, and financially. This is Nadir. I had known him since my childhood. He was injured when his van was ambushed by terrorists in Quetta. He later died of his injuries. Around 1,600 Hazara members had been killed in various attacks, and around 3,000 of them were injured, and many of them permanently disabled. The attacks on the Hazara community would only get worse, so it was not surprising that many wanted to flee.
03:16
After Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Australia is home to the fourth largest population of Hazaras in the world. When it came time to leave Pakistan, Australia seemed the obvious choice. Financially, only one of us could leave, and it was decided that I would go, in the hope that if I arrived at my destination safely, I could work to get the rest of my family to join me later.
03:45

We all knew about the risks, and how terrifying the journey is, and I met many people who lost loved ones at sea. It was a desperate decision to take, to leave everything behind, and no one makes this decision easily. If I had been able to simply fly to Australia, it would have taken me less than 24 hours. But getting a visa was impossible. My journey was much longer, much more complicated, and certainly more dangerous, traveling to Thailand by air, and then by road and boat to Malaysia and into Indonesia, paying people and smugglers all the way and spending a lot of time hiding and a lot of time in fear of being caught.

04:34

In Indonesia, I joined a group of seven asylum seekers. We all shared a bedroom in a town outside of Jakarta called Bogor. After spending a week in Bogor, three of my roommates left for the perilous journey, and we got the news two days later that a distressed boat sank in the sea en route to Christmas Island. We found out that our three roommates -- Nawroz, Jaffar and Shabbir -- were also among those. Only Jaffar was rescued. Shabbir and Nawroz were never seen again. It made me think, am I doing the right thing? I concluded I really had no other choice but to go on.

05:19

A few weeks later, we got the call from the people smuggler to alert us that the boat is ready for us to commence our sea journey. Taken in the night towards the main vessel on a motorboat, we boarded an old fishing boat that was already overloaded. There were 93 of us, and we were all below deck. No one was allowed up on the top. We all paid 6,000 dollars each for this part of the trip. The first night and day went smoothly, but by the second night, the weather turned.

05:54

Waves tossed the boat around, and the timbers groaned. People below deck were crying, praying, recalling their loved ones. They were screaming. It was a terrible moment. It was like a scene from doomsday, or maybe like one of those scenes from those Hollywood movies that shows that everything is breaking apart and the world is just ending. It was happening to us for real. We didn't have any hope. Our boat was floating like a matchbox on the water without any control. The waves were much higher than our boat, and the water poured in faster than the motor pumps could take it out. We all lost hope. We thought, this is the end. We were watching our deaths, and I was documenting it.

06:54

The captain told us that we are not going to make it, we have to turn back the boat. We went on the deck and turned our torches on and off to attract the attention of any passing boat. We kept trying to attract their attention by waving our life jackets and whistling.

07:18

Eventually, we made it to a small island. Our boat crashing onto the rocks, I slipped into the water and destroyed my camera, whatever I had documented. But luckily, the memory card survived.

07:36

It was a thick forest. We all split up into many groups as we argued over what to do next. We were all scared and confused. Then, after spending the night on the beach, we found a jetty and coconuts. We hailed a boat from a nearby resort, and then were quickly handed over to Indonesian water police.

08:00
At Serang Detention Center, an immigration officer came and furtively strip-searched us. He took our mobile, my $300 cash, our shoes that we should not be able to escape, but we kept watching the guards, checking their movements, and around 4 a.m. when they sat around a fire, we removed two glass layers from an outside facing window and slipped through. We climbed a tree next to an outer wall that was topped with the shards of glass. We put the pillow on that and wrapped our forearms with bedsheets and climbed the wall, and we ran away with bare feet.

08:47
I was free, with an uncertain future, no money. The only thing I had was the memory card with the pictures and footage. When my documentary was aired on SBS Dateline, many of my friends came to know about my situation, and they tried to help me. They did not allow me to take any other boat to risk my life. I also decided to stay in Indonesia and process my case through UNHCR, but I was really afraid that I would end up in Indonesia for many years doing nothing and unable to work, like every other asylum seeker.

09:27
But it had happened to be a little bit different with me. I was lucky. My contacts worked to expedite my case through UNHCR, and I got resettled in Australia in May 2013.

09:45
Not every asylum seeker is lucky like me. It is really difficult to live a life with an uncertain fate, in limbo.

09:56
The issue of asylum seekers in Australia has been so extremely politicized that it has lost its human face. The asylum seekers have been demonized and then presented to the people. I hope my story and the story of other Hazaras could shed some light to show the people how these people are suffering in their countries of origin, and how they suffer, why they risk their lives to seek asylum.

10:32
Thank you.

10:34
(Applause)

This is what LGBT life looks like around the world
Jenni Chang and Lisa Dozols
TEDWomen 2015

00:12
Jenni Chang: When I told my parents I was gay, the first thing they said to me was, "We're bringing you back to Taiwan."
00:19
(Laughter)
00:22
In their minds, my sexual orientation was America's fault. The West had corrupted me with divergent ideas, and if only my parents had never left Taiwan, this would not have happened to their only daughter. In truth, I wondered if they were right.
00:38
Of course, there are gay people in Asia, just as there are gay people in every part of the world. But is the idea of living an "out" life, in the "I'm gay, this is my spouse, and we're proud of our lives together" kind of way just a Western idea?
00:55
If I had grown up in Taiwan, or any place outside of the West, would I have found models of happy, thriving LGBT people?
01:03
Lisa Dazols: I had similar notions. As an HIV social worker in San Francisco, I had met many gay immigrants. They told me their stories of persecution in their home countries, just for being gay, and the reasons why they escaped to the US. I saw how this had beaten them down. After 10 years of doing this kind of work, I needed better stories for myself. I knew the world was far from perfect, but surely not every gay story was tragic.
01:29
JC: So as a couple, we both had a need to find stories of hope. So we set off on a mission to travel the world and look for the people we finally termed as the "Supergays."
01:39
(Laughter)
01:43
These would be the LGBT individuals who were doing something extraordinary in the world. They would be courageous, resilient, and most of all, proud of who they were. They would be the kind of person that I aspire to be. Our plan was to share their stories to the world through film.
02:02
LD: There was just one problem. We had zero reporting and zero filmmaking experience.
02:07
(Laughter)
02:08
We didn't even know where to find the Supergays, so we just had to trust that we'd figure it all out along the way. So we picked 15 countries in Asia, Africa and South America, countries

outside the West that varied in terms of LGBT rights. We bought a camcorder, ordered a book on how to make a documentary --

02:24

(Laughter)

02:26

you can learn a lot these days -- and set off on an around-the-world trip.

02:32

JC: One of the first countries that we traveled to was Nepal. Despite widespread poverty, a decade-long civil war, and now recently, a devastating earthquake, Nepal has made significant strides in the fight for equality. One of the key figures in the movement is Bhumika Shrestha. A beautiful, vibrant transgendered woman, Bhumika has had to overcome being expelled from school and getting incarcerated because of her gender presentation. But, in 2007, Bhumika and Nepal's LGBT rights organization successfully petitioned the Nepali Supreme Court to protect against LGBT discrimination.

03:13

Here's Bhumika:

03:15

(Video) BS: What I'm most proud of? I'm a transgendered person. I'm so proud of my life. On December 21, 2007, the supreme court gave the decision for the Nepal government to give transgender identity cards and same-sex marriage.

03:32

LD: I can appreciate Bhumika's confidence on a daily basis. Something as simple as using a public restroom can be a huge challenge when you don't fit in to people's strict gender expectations. Traveling throughout Asia, I tended to freak out women in public restrooms. They weren't used to seeing someone like me. I had to come up with a strategy, so that I could just pee in peace.

03:54

(Laughter)

03:55

So anytime I would enter a restroom, I would thrust out my chest to show my womanly parts, and try to be as non-threatening as possible. Putting out my hands and saying, "Hello", just so that people could hear my feminine voice. This all gets pretty exhausting, but it's just who I am. I can't be anything else.

04:13

JC: After Nepal, we traveled to India. On one hand, India is a Hindu society, without a tradition of homophobia. On the other hand, it is also a society with a deeply patriarchal system, which rejects anything that threatens the male-female order. When we spoke to activists, they told us that empowerment begins with ensuring proper gender equality, where the women's status is established in society. And in that way, the status of LGBT people can be affirmed as well.

04:46

LD: There we met Prince Manvendra. He's the world's first openly gay prince. Prince Manvendra came out on the "Oprah Winfrey Show," very internationally. His parents disowned him and accused him of bringing great shame to the royal family. We sat down with Prince Manvendra and talked to him about why he decided to come out so very publicly.

05:06

Here he is:

05:07

(Video) Prince Manvendra: I felt there was a lot of need to break this stigma and discrimination which is existing in our society. And that instigated me to come out openly and talk about myself. Whether we are gay, we are lesbian, we are transgender, bisexual or whatever sexual minority we come from, we have to all unite and fight for our rights. Gay rights cannot be won in the court rooms, but in the hearts and the minds of the people.

05:35

JC: While getting my hair cut, the woman cutting my hair asked me, "Do you have a husband?" Now, this was a dreaded question that I got asked a lot by locals while traveling. When I explained to her that I was with a woman instead of a man, she was incredulous, and she asked me a lot of questions about my parents' reactions and whether I was sad that I'd never be able to have children. I told her that there are no limitations to my life and that Lisa and I do plan to have a family some day. Now, this woman was ready to write me off as yet another crazy Westerner. She couldn't imagine that such a phenomenon could happen in her own country. That is, until I showed her the photos of the Supergays that we interviewed in India. She recognized Prince Manvendra from television and soon I had an audience of other hairdressers interested in meeting me.

06:27

(Laughter)

06:29

And in that ordinary afternoon, I had the chance to introduce an entire beauty salon to the social changes that were happening in their own country.

06:39

LD: From India, we traveled to East Africa, a region known for intolerance towards LGBT people. In Kenya, 89 percent of people who come out to their families are disowned. Homosexual acts are a crime and can lead to incarceration. In Kenya, we met the soft-spoken David Kuria. David had a huge mission of wanting to work for the poor and improve his own government. So he decided to run for senate. He became Kenya's first openly gay political candidate. David wanted to run his campaign without denying the reality of who he was. But we were worried for his safety because he started to receive death threats.

07:18

(Video) David Kuria: At that point, I was really scared because they were actually asking for me to be killed. And, yeah, there are some people out there who do it and they feel that they are doing a religious obligation.

07:33

JC: David wasn't ashamed of who he was. Even in the face of threats, he stayed authentic.

07:40

LD: At the opposite end of the spectrum is Argentina. Argentina's a country where 92 percent of the population identifies as Catholic. Yet, Argentina has LGBT laws that are even more progressive than here in the US. In 2010, Argentina became the first country in Latin America and the 10th in the world to adopt marriage equality.

08:02

There, we met María Rachid. María was a driving force behind that movement.
08:07
María Rachid (Spanish): I always say that, in reality, the effects of marriage equality are not only for those couples that get married. They are for a lot of people that, even though they may never get married, will be perceived differently by their coworkers, their families and neighbors, from the national state's message of equality. I feel very proud of Argentina because Argentina today is a model of equality. And hopefully soon, the whole world will have the same rights.
08:39
JC: When we made the visit to my ancestral lands, I wish I could have shown my parents what we found there. Because here is who we met:
08:47
(Video) One, two, three. Welcome gays to Shanghai!
08:52
(Laughter)
08:58
A whole community of young, beautiful Chinese LGBT people. Sure, they had their struggles. But they were fighting it out. In Shanghai, I had the chance to speak to a local lesbian group and tell them our story in my broken Mandarin Chinese. In Taipei, each time we got onto the metro, we saw yet another lesbian couple holding hands. And we learned that Asia's largest LGBT pride event happens just blocks away from where my grandparents live. If only my parents knew.
09:33
LD: By the time we finished our not-so-straight journey around the world,
09:36
(Laughter)
09:38
we had traveled 50,000 miles and logged 120 hours of video footage. We traveled to 15 countries and interviewed 50 Supergays. Turns out, it wasn't hard to find them at all.
09:49
JC: Yes, there are still tragedies that happen on the bumpy road to equality. And let's not forget that 75 countries still criminalize homosexuality today. But there are also stories of hope and courage in every corner of the world. What we ultimately took away from our journey is, equality is not a Western invention.
10:14
LD: One of the key factors in this equality movement is momentum, momentum as more and more people embrace their full selves and use whatever opportunities they have to change their part of the world, and momentum as more and more countries find models of equality in one another. When Nepal protected against LGBT discrimination, India pushed harder. When Argentina embraced marriage equality, Uruguay and Brazil followed. When Ireland said yes to equality,
10:45
(Applause)
10:49

the world stopped to notice. When the US Supreme Court makes a statement to the world that we can all be proud of.

10:55

(Applause)

11:02

JC: As we reviewed our footage, what we realized is that we were watching a love story. It wasn't a love story that was expected of me, but it is one filled with more freedom, adventure and love than I could have ever possibly imagined. One year after returning home from our trip, marriage equality came to California. And in the end, we believe, love will win out.

11:30

(Video) By the power vested in me, by the state of California and by God Almighty, I now pronounce you spouses for life. You may kiss.

11:42

(Applause)

Why we need gender neutral bathrooms
Ivan Coyote
TEDxVancouver 2015

00:12
There are a few things that all of us need. We all need air to breathe. We need clean water to drink. We need food to eat. We need shelter and love. You know. Love is great, too. And we all need a safe place to pee.

00:33
(Laughter) Yeah?

00:35
As a trans person who doesn't fit neatly into the gender binary, if I could change the world tomorrow to make it easier for me to navigate, the very first thing I would do is blink and create single stall, gender-neutral bathrooms in all public places.

00:54
(Applause) Trans people and trans issues, they've been getting a lot of mainstream media attention lately. And this is a great and necessary thing, but most of that attention has been focused on a very few individuals, most of whom are kinda rich and pretty famous, and probably don't have to worry that much anymore about where they're going to pee in between classes at their community college, or where they're going to get changed into their gym strip at their public high school. Fame and money insulates these television star trans people from most of the everyday challenges that the rest of us have to tackle on a daily basis.

01:46
Public bathrooms. They've been a problem for me since as far back as I can remember, first when I was just a little baby tomboy and then later as a masculine-appearing, predominantly estrogen-based organism.

02:03
(Laughter)

02:04
Now, today as a trans person, public bathrooms and change rooms are where I am most likely to be questioned or harassed. I've often been verbally attacked behind their doors. I've been hauled out by security guards with my pants still halfway pulled up. I've been stared at, screamed at, whispered about, and one time I got smacked in the face by a little old lady's purse that from the looks of the shiner I took home that day I am pretty certain contained at least 70 dollars of rolled up small change and a large hard candy collection.

02:37
(Laughter)

02:40
And I know what some of you are thinking, and you're mostly right. I can and do just use the men's room most of the time these days. But that doesn't solve my change room dilemmas, does it? And I shouldn't have to use the men's room because I'm not a man. I'm a trans person.

03:08
And now we've got these fearmongering politicians that keep trying to pass these bathroom bills. Have you heard about these? They try to legislate to try and force people like myself to

use the bathroom that they deem most appropriate according to the gender I was assigned at birth. And if these politicians ever get their way, in Arizona or California or Florida or just last week in Houston, Texas, or Ottawa, well then, using the men's room will not be a legal option for me either.

03:43

And every time one of these politicians brings one of these bills to the table, I can't help but wonder, you know, just who will and exactly how would we go about enforcing laws like these. Right? Panty checks? Really. Genital inspections outside of bath change rooms at public pools? There's no legal or ethical or plausible way to enforce laws like these anyway. They exist only to foster fear and promote transphobia. They don't make anyone safer. But they do for sure make the world more dangerous for some of us.

04:28

And meanwhile, our trans children suffer. They drop out of school, or they opt out of life altogether. Trans people, especially trans and gender-nonconforming youth face additional challenges when accessing pools and gyms, but also universities, hospitals, libraries. Don't even get me started on how they treat us in airports.

04:57

If we don't move now to make sure that these places are truly open and accessible to everyone, then we just need to get honest and quit calling them public places. We need to just admit that they are really only open for people who fit neatly into one of two gender boxes, which I do not. I never have. And this starts very early.

05:35

I know a little girl. She's the daughter of a friend of mine. She's a self-identified tomboy. I'm talking about cowboy boots and Caterpillar yellow toy trucks and bug jars, the whole nine yards. One time I asked her what her favorite color was. She told me, "Camouflage."

05:54

(Laughter)

05:57

So that awesome little kid, she came home from school last October from her half day of preschool with soggy pants on because the other kids at school were harassing her when she tried to use the girls' bathroom. And the teacher had already instructed her to stay out of the boys' bathroom. And she had drank two glasses of that red juice at the Halloween party, and I mean, who can resist that red juice, right? It's so good. And she couldn't hold her pee any longer.

06:31

Her and her classmates were four years old. They already felt empowered enough to police her use of the so-called public bathrooms. She was four years old. She had already been taught the brutal lesson that there was no bathroom door at preschool with a sign on it that welcomed people like her. She'd already learned that bathrooms were going to be a problem, and that problem started with her and was hers alone. So my friend asked me to talk to her little daughter, and I did. I wanted to tell her that me and her mom were going to march on down and talk to that school, and the problem was going to go away, but I knew that wasn't true. I wanted to tell her that it was all going to get better when she got older, but I couldn't. So I asked her to tell me the story of what had happened, asked her to tell me how it made her

feel. "Mad and sad," she told me. So I told her that she wasn't alone and that it wasn't right what had happened to her, and then she asked me if I had ever peed in my pants before. I said yes, I had, but not for a really long time.

08:03

(Laughter)

08:04

Which of course was a lie, because you know how you hit, like, 42 or 43, and sometimes you just, I don't know, you pee a little bit when you cough or sneeze, when you're running upstairs, or you're stretching. Don't lie. It happens. Right? She doesn't need to know that, I figure.

08:22

(Laughter)

08:25

I told her, when you get older, your bladder is going to grow bigger, too. When you get old like me, you're going to be able to hold your pee for way longer, I promised her.

08:39

"Until you can get home?" she asked me.

08:44

I said, "Yes, until you can get home." She seemed to take some comfort in that.

08:58

So let's just build some single stall, gender-neutral bathrooms with a little bench for getting changed into your gym clothes. We can't change the world overnight for our children, but we can give them a safe and private place to escape that world, if only for just a minute. This we can do. So let's just do it.

09:27

And if you are one of those people who is sitting out there right now already coming up with a list of reasons in your head why this is not a priority, or it's too expensive, or telling yourself that giving a trans person a safe place to pee or get changed in supports a lifestyle choice that you feel offends your morality, or your masculinity, or your religious beliefs, then let me just appeal to the part of your heart that probably, hopefully, does care about the rest of the population. If you can't bring yourself to care enough about people like me, then what about women and girls with body image issues? What about anyone with body image stuff going on? What about that boy at school who is a foot shorter than his classmates, whose voice still hasn't dropped yet? Hey? Oh, grade eight, what a cruel master you can be. Right? What about people with anxiety issues? What about people with disabilities or who need assistance in there? What about folks with bodies who, for whatever reason, don't fit into the mainstream idea of what a body should look like? How many of us still feel shy or afraid to disrobe in front of our peers, and how many of us allow that fear to keep us from something as important as physical exercise? Would all those people not benefit from these single stall facilities?

11:17

We can't change transphobic minds overnight, but we can give everybody a place to get changed in so that we can all get to work making the world safer for all of us.

11:39

Thank you for listening.

11:40

(Applause)

11:43

Thank you.

11:44

(Applause)

Enough with the fear of fat
Kelli Jean Drinkwater
TEDxSydney

00:12
I'm here today to talk to you about a very powerful little word, one that people will do almost anything to avoid becoming. Billion-dollar industries thrive because of the fear of it, and those of us who undeniably are it are left to navigate a relentless storm surrounding it.

00:34
I'm not sure if any of you have noticed, but I'm fat. Not the lowercase, muttered-behind-my-back kind, or the seemingly harmless chubby or cuddly. I'm not even the more sophisticated voluptuous or curvaceous kind.

00:51
Let's not sugarcoat it. I am the capital F-A-T kind of fat. I am the elephant in the room. When I walked out on stage, some of you may have been thinking, "Aww, this is going to be hilarious, because everybody knows that fat people are funny."

01:10
(Laughter)

01:12
Or you may have been thinking, "Where does she get her confidence from?" Because a confident fat woman is almost unthinkable. The fashion-conscious members of the audience may have been thinking how fabulous I look in this Beth Ditto dress --

01:27
(Cheers)

01:28
thank you very much. Whereas some of you might have thought, "Hmm, black would have been so much more slimming."

01:35
(Laughter)

01:36
You may have wondered, consciously or not, if I have diabetes, or a partner, or if I eat carbs after 7pm.

01:44
(Laughter)

01:45
You may have worried that you ate carbs after 7pm last night, and that you really should renew your gym membership.

01:53
These judgments are insidious. They can be directed at individuals and groups, and they can also be directed at ourselves. And this way of thinking is known as fatphobia.

02:05
Like any form of systematic oppression, fatphobia is deeply rooted in complex structures like capitalism, patriarchy and racism, and that can make it really difficult to see, let alone challenge. We live in a culture where being fat is seen as being a bad person -- lazy, greedy,

unhealthy, irresponsible and morally suspect. And we tend to see thinness as being universally good -- responsible, successful, and in control of our appetites, bodies and lives. We see these ideas again and again in the media, in public health policy, doctors' offices, in everyday conversations and in our own attitudes. We may even blame fat people themselves for the discrimination they face because, after all, if we don't like it, we should just lose weight. Easy. This antifat bias has become so integral, so ingrained to how we value ourselves and each other that we rarely question why we have such contempt for people of size and where that disdain comes from.

03:22

But we must question it, because the enormous value we place on how we look affects every one of us. And do we really want to live in a society where people are denied their basic humanity if they don't subscribe to some arbitrary form of acceptable?

03:42

So when I was six years old, my sister used to teach ballet to a bunch of little girls in our garage. I was about a foot taller and a foot wider than most of the group. When it came to doing our first performance, I was so excited about wearing a pretty pink tutu. I was going to sparkle. As the other girls slipped easily into their Lycra and tulle creations, not one of the tutus was big enough to fit me. I was determined not to be excluded from the performance, so I turned to my mother and loud enough for everyone to hear said, "Mom, I don't need a tutu. I need a fourfour."

04:26

(Laughter)

04:29

Thanks, Mom.

04:31

(Applause)

04:34

And although I didn't recognize it at the time, claiming space for myself in that glorious fourfour was the first step towards becoming a radical fat activist.

04:46

Now, I'm not saying that this whole body-love thing has been an easy skip along a glittering path of self-acceptance since that day in class. Far from it. I soon learned that living outside what the mainstream considers normal can be a frustrating and isolating place. I've spent the last 20 years unpacking and deprogramming these messages, and it's been quite the roller coaster. I've been openly laughed at, abused from passing cars and been told that I'm delusional. I also receive smiles from strangers who recognize what it takes to walk down the street with a spring in your step and your head held high.

05:27

(Cheer)

05:28

Thanks. And through it all, that fierce little six-year-old has stayed with me, and she has helped me stand before you today as an unapologetic fat person, a person that simply refuses to subscribe to the dominant narrative about how I should move through the world in this body of mine.

05:48
(Applause)
05:56
And I'm not alone. I am part of an international community of people who choose to, rather than passively accepting that our bodies are and probably always will be big, we actively choose to flourish in these bodies as they are today. People who honor our strength and work with, not against, our perceived limitations, people who value health as something much more holistic than a number on an outdated BMI chart. Instead, we value mental health, self-worth and how we feel in our bodies as vital aspects to our overall well-being. People who refuse to believe that living in these fat bodies is a barrier to anything, really.

06:45
There are doctors, academics and bloggers who have written countless volumes on the many facets of this complex subject. There are fatshionistas who reclaim their bodies and their beauty by wearing fatkinis and crop tops, exposing the flesh that we're all taught to hide. There are fat athletes who run marathons, teach yoga or do kickboxing, all done with a middle finger firmly held up to the status quo. And these people have taught me that radical body politics is the antidote to our body-shaming culture.

07:25
But to be clear, I'm not saying that people shouldn't change their bodies if that's what they want to do. Reclaiming yourself can be one of the most gorgeous acts of self-love and can look like a million different things, from hairstyles to tattoos to body contouring to hormones to surgery and yes, even weight loss. It's simple: it's your body, and you decide what's best to do with it.

07:52
My way of engaging in activism is by doing all the things that we fatties aren't supposed to do, and there's a lot of them, inviting other people to join me and then making art about it. The common thread through most of this work has been reclaiming spaces that are often prohibitive to bigger bodies, from the catwalk to club shows, from public swimming pools to prominent dance stages. And reclaiming spaces en masse is not only a powerful artistic statement but a radical community-building approach. This was so true of "AQUAPORKO!" --

08:31
(Laughter)
08:33
the fat fem synchronized swim team I started with a group of friends in Sydney. The impact of seeing a bunch of defiant fat women in flowery swimming caps and bathers throwing their legs in the air without a care should not be underestimated.

08:53
(Laughter)
08:56
Throughout my career, I have learned that fat bodies are inherently political, and unapologetic fat bodies can blow people's minds. When director Kate Champion, of acclaimed dance theater company Force Majeure, asked me to be the artistic associate on a work featuring all fat dancers, I literally jumped at the opportunity. And I mean literally. "Nothing to Lose" is a work

made in collaboration with performers of size who drew from their lived experiences to create a work as varied and authentic as we all are. And it was as far from ballet as you could imagine.

09:42

The very idea of a fat dance work by such a prestigious company was, to put it mildly, controversial, because nothing like it had ever been done on mainstream dance stages before anywhere in the world.

09:59

People were skeptical. "What do you mean, 'fat dancers?' Like, size 10, size 12 kind of fat? Where did they do their dance training? Are they going to have the stamina for a full-length production?"

10:18

But despite the skepticism, "Nothing to Lose" became a sellout hit of Sydney Festival. We received rave reviews, toured, won awards and were written about in over 27 languages. These incredible images of our cast were seen worldwide. I've lost count of how many times people of all sizes have told me that the show has changed their lives, how it helped them shift their relationship to their own and other people's bodies, and how it made them confront their own bias.

10:53

But of course, work that pushes people's buttons is not without its detractors. I have been told that I'm glorifying obesity. I have received violent death threats and abuse for daring to make work that centers fat people's bodies and lives and treats us as worthwhile human beings with valuable stories to tell. I've even been called "the ISIS of the obesity epidemic" --

11:22

(Laughter)

11:24

a comment so absurd that it is funny. But it also speaks to the panic, the literal terror, that the fear of fat can evoke. It is this fear that's feeding the diet industry, which is keeping so many of us from making peace with our own bodies, for waiting to be the after-photo before we truly start to live our lives. Because the real elephant in the room here is fatphobia. Fat activism refuses to indulge this fear. By advocating for self-determination and respect for all of us, we can shift society's reluctance to embrace diversity and start to celebrate the myriad ways there are to have a body.

12:12

Thank you.

12:13

(Applause)

How I'm bringing queer pride to my rural village
Katlego Kolanyane-Kesupile
TEDGlobal 2017

00:12
"You don't belong here" almost always means, "We can't find a function or a role for you." "You don't belong here" sometimes means, "You're too queer to handle." "You don't belong here" very rarely means, "There's no way for you to exist and be happy here."

00:33
I went to university in Johannesburg, South Africa, and I remember the first time a white friend of mine heard me speaking Setswana, the national language of Botswana. I was on the phone with my mother and the intrigue which painted itself across her face was absolutely priceless. As soon as I hung up, she comes to me and says, "I didn't know you could do that. After all these years of knowing you, how did I not know you could do that?"

00:59
What she was referring to was the fact that I could switch off the twang and slip into a native tongue, and so I chose to let her in on a few other things which locate me as a Motswana, not just by virtue of the fact that I speak a language or I have family there, but that a rural child lives within this shiny visage of fabulosity.

01:19
(Laughter)

01:22
(Applause)

01:26
I invited the Motswana public into the story, my story, as a transgender person years ago, in English of course, because Setswana is a gender-neutral language and the closest we get is an approximation of "transgender." And an important part of my history got left out of that story, by association rather than out of any act of shame. "Kat" was an international superstar, a fashion and lifestyle writer, a musician, theater producer and performer -- all the things that qualify me to be a mainstream, whitewashed, new age digestible queer. Kat. Kat had a degree from one of the best universities in Africa, oh no, the world. By association, what Kat wasn't was just like the little brown-skinned children frolicking through the streets of some incidental railway settlement like Tati Siding, or an off-the-grid village like Kgagodi, legs clad in dust stockings whose knees had blackened from years of kneeling and wax-polishing floors, whose shins were marked with lessons from climbing trees, who played until dusk, went in for supper by a paraffin lamp and returned to play hide-and-seek amongst centipedes and owls until finally someone's mother would call the whole thing to an end. That got lost both in translation and in transition, and when I realized this, I decided it was time for me to start building bridges between myselves. For me and for others to access me, I had to start indigenizing my queerness. What I mean by indigenizing is stripping away the city life film that stops you from seeing the villager within. In a time where being brown, queer, African and seen as worthy of space means being everything but rural, I fear that we're erasing the very struggles that got us to where we are now. The very first time I queered being out in a village, I was in my early 20s, and I wore a kaftan. I was ridiculed by some of my family and by strangers

for wearing a dress. My defense against their comments was the default that we who don't belong, the ones who are better than, get taught, we shrug them off and say, "They just don't know enough." And of course I was wrong, because my idea of wealth of knowledge was based in removing yourself from Third World thinking and living. But it took time for me to realize that my acts of pride weren't most alive in the global cities I traipsed through, but in the villages where I speak the languages and play the games and feel most at home and I can say, "I have seen the world, and I know that people like me aren't alone here, we are everywhere." And so I used these village homes for self-reflection and to give hope to the others who don't belong. Indigenizing my queerness means bridging the many exceptional parts of myself. It means honoring the fact that my tongue can contort itself to speak the romance languages without denying or exoticizing the fact that when I am moved, it can do this:

04:35

(Ululating)

04:41

It means --

04:42

(Cheers)

04:44

(Applause)

04:48

It means branding cattle with my mother or chopping firewood with my cousins doesn't make me any less fabulous or queer, even though I'm now accustomed to rooftop shindigs, wine-paired menus and VIP lounges.

05:00

(Laughter)

05:02

It means wearing my pride through my grandmother's tongue, my mother's food, my grandfather's song, my skin etched with stories of falling off donkeys and years and years and years of sleeping under a blanket of stars. If there's any place I don't belong, it's in a mind where the story of me starts with the branch of me being queer and not with my rural roots. Indigenizing my queerness means understanding that the rural is a part of me, and I am an indelible part of it.

05:37

Thank you.

05:38

(Applause)

The Standing Rock resistance and our fight for indigenous rights
Tara Houska
TEDWomen 2017

00:13
[Ojibwe: Hello. My English name is Tara; my Native name is Zhaabowekwe. I am of Couchiching First Nation; my clan is bear. I was born under the Maple Sapping Moon.]
00:23
My name is Tara Houska, I'm bear clan from Couchiching First Nation, I was born under the Maple Sapping Moon in International Falls, Minnesota, and I'm happy to be here with all of you.
00:33
(Applause)
00:39
Trauma of indigenous peoples has trickled through the generations. Centuries of oppression, of isolation, of invisibility, have led to a muddled understanding of who we are today. In 2017, we face this mixture of Indians in headdresses going across the plains but also the drunk sitting on a porch somewhere you never heard of, living off government handouts and casino money.
01:06
(Sighs)
01:07
It's really, really hard. It's very, very difficult to be in these shoes, to stand here as a product of genocide survival, of genocide. We face this constant barrage of unteaching the accepted narrative. 87 percent of references in textbooks, children's textbooks, to Native Americans are pre-1900s. Only half of the US states mention more than a single tribe, and just four states mention the boarding-school era, the era that was responsible for my grandmother and her brothers and sisters having their language and culture beaten out of them. When you aren't viewed as real people, it's a lot easier to run over your rights.
01:52
Four years ago, I moved to Washington, DC. I had finished school and I was there to be a tribal attorney and represent tribes across the nation, representing on the Hill, and I saw immediately why racist imagery matters. I moved there during football season, of all times. And so it was the daily slew of Indian heads and this "redskin" slur everywhere, while my job was going up on the Hill and trying to lobby for hospitals, for funding for schools, for basic government services, and being told again and again that Indian people were incapable of managing our own affairs. When you aren't viewed as real people, it's a lot easier to run over your rights.
02:36
And last August, I went out to Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. I saw resistance happening. We were standing up. There were youth that had run 2,000 miles from Cannonball, North Dakota all the way out to Washington, DC, with a message for President Obama: "Please intervene. Please do something. Help us." And I went out, and I heard the call, and so did thousands of people around the world.
03:04

Why did this resonate with so many people? Indigenous peoples are impacted first and worst by climate change. We are impacted first and worst by the fossil-fuel industry. Here in Louisiana, the first US climate change refugees exist. They are Native people being pushed off their homelands from rising sea levels. That's our reality, that's what we live. And with these projects comes a slew of human costs that people don't think about: thousands of workers influxing to build these pipelines, to build and extract from the earth, bringing crime and sex trafficking and violence with them. Missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada has become so significant it's spawned a movement and a national inquiry. Thousands of Native women who have disappeared, who have been murdered. And here in the US, we don't even track that. We are instead left with an understanding that our Supreme Court, the United States Supreme Court, stripped us, in 1978, of the right to prosecute at the same rate as anywhere else in the United States. So as a non-Native person you can walk onto a reservation and rape someone and that tribe is without the same level of prosecutorial ability as everywhere else, and the Federal Government declines these cases 40 percent of the time. It used to be 76 percent of the time. One in three Native women are raped in her lifetime. One in three.

04:35

But in Standing Rock, you could feel the energy in the air. You could feel the resistance happening. People were standing and saying, "No more. Enough is enough. We will put our bodies in front of the machines to stop this project from happening. Our lives matter. Our children's lives matter." And thousands of allies came to stand with us from around the world. It was incredible, it was incredible to stand together, united as one.

05:08

(Applause)

05:16

In my time there, I saw Natives being chased on horseback by police officers shooting at them, history playing out in front of my eyes. I myself was put into a dog kennel when I was arrested. But funny story, actually, of being put into a dog kennel. So we're in this big wire kennel with all these people, and the police officers are there and we're there, and we start howling like dogs. You're going to treat us like dogs? We're going to act like dogs. But that's the resilience we have. All these horrific images playing out in front of us, being an indigenous person pushed off of Native lands again in 2017. But there was such beauty. On one of the days that we faced a line of hundreds of police officers pushing us back, pushing us off indigenous lands, there were those teenagers out on horseback across the plains. They were herding hundreds of buffalo towards us, and we were crying out, calling, "Please turn, please turn." And we watched the buffalo come towards us, and for a moment, everything stopped. The police stopped, we stopped, and we just saw this beautiful, amazing moment of remembrance.

06:31

And we were empowered. We were so empowered. I interviewed a woman who had, on one day -- September 2nd, the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation had told the courts -- there's an ongoing lawsuit right now -- they told the courts, "Here is a sacred site that's in the direct path of the pipeline." On September 3rd, the following day, Dakota Access, LLC skipped 25 miles ahead in its construction, to destroy that site. And when that happened, the people in camp rushed up to stop this, and they were met with attack dogs, people, private security officers, wielding attack dogs in [2016].

07:11

But I interviewed one of the women, who had been bitten on the breast by one of these dogs, and the ferocity and strength of her was incredible, and she's out right now in another resistance camp, the same resistance camp I'm part of, fighting Line 3, another pipeline project in my people's homelands, wanting 900,000 barrels of tar sands per day through the headwaters of the Mississippi to the shore of Lake Superior and through all the Treaty territories along the way. But this woman's out there and we're all out there standing together, because we are resilient, we are fierce, and we are teaching people how to reconnect to the earth, remembering where we come from. So much of society has forgotten this.

07:52

(Applause)

07:57

That food you eat comes from somewhere. The tap water you drink comes from somewhere. We're trying to remember, teach, because we know, we still remember. It's in our plants, in our medicines, in our lives, every single day.

08:12

I brought this out to show.

08:14

(Rattling)

08:15

This is cultural survival. This is from a time that it was illegal to practice indigenous cultures in the United States. This was cultural survival hidden in plain sight. This was a baby's rattle. That's what they told the Indian agents when they came in. It was a baby's rattle.

08:36

But it's incredible what you can do when you stand together. It's incredible, the power that we have when we stand together, human resistance, people having this power, some of the most oppressed people you can possibly imagine costing this company hundreds of millions of dollars, and now our divestment efforts, focusing on the banks behind these projects, costing them billions of dollars. Five billion dollars we've cost them so far, hanging out with banks.

09:02

(Applause)

09:07

So what can you do? How can you help? How can you change the conversation for extremely oppressed and forgotten people?

09:15

Education is foundational. Education shapes our children. It shapes the way we teach. It shapes the way we learn. In Washington State, they've made the teaching of treaties and modern Native people mandatory in school curriculum. That is systems change.

09:33

(Applause)

09:36

When your elected officials are appropriating their budgets, ask them: Are you fulfilling treaty obligations? Treaties have been broken since the day they were signed. Are you meeting those requirements? That would change our lives, if treaties were actually upheld. Those documents

were signed. Somehow, we live in this world where, in 2017, the US Constitution is held up as the supreme law of the land, right? But when I talk about treaty rights, I'm crazy. That's crazy. Treaties are the supreme law of the land, and that would change so much, if you actually asked your representative officials to appropriate those budgets.

10:15

And take your money out of the banks. That's huge. It makes a huge difference. Stand with us, empathize, learn, grow, change the conversation. Forty percent of Native people are under the age of 24. We are the fastest-growing demographic in the United States. We are doctors, we are lawyers, we are teachers, we are scientists, we are engineers. We are medicine men, we are medicine women, we are sun dancers, we are pipe carriers, we are traditional language speakers. And we are still here.

10:56

Miigwech.

10:57

(Applause)

A powerful poem about what it feels like to be transgender
Lee Mokobe
TEDWomen 2015

00:12
The first time I uttered a prayer was in a glass-stained cathedral.
00:18
I was kneeling long after the congregation was on its feet,
00:21
dip both hands into holy water,
00:23
trace the trinity across my chest,
00:25
my tiny body drooping like a question mark
00:28
all over the wooden pew.
00:30
I asked Jesus to fix me,
00:33
and when he did not answer
00:35
I befriended silence in the hopes that my sin would burn
00:38
and salve my mouth would dissolve like sugar on tongue,
00:41
but shame lingered as an aftertaste.
00:43
And in an attempt to reintroduce me to sanctity,
00:46
my mother told me of the miracle I was,
00:49
said I could grow up to be anything I want.
00:52
I decided to be a boy.
00:56
It was cute.
00:57
I had snapback, toothless grin,
00:59
used skinned knees as street cred,
01:00
played hide and seek with what was left of my goal.
01:03
I was it.

01:04
The winner to a game the other kids couldn't play,
01:06
I was the mystery of an anatomy,
01:08
a question asked but not answered,
01:10
tightroping between awkward boy and apologetic girl,
01:14
and when I turned 12, the boy phase wasn't deemed cute anymore.
01:19
It was met with nostalgic aunts who missed seeing my knees in the shadow of skirts,
01:25
who reminded me that my kind of attitude would never bring a husband home,
01:29
that I exist for heterosexual marriage and child-bearing.
01:33
And I swallowed their insults along with their slurs.
01:37
Naturally, I did not come out of the closet.
01:39
The kids at my school opened it without my permission.
01:42
Called me by a name I did not recognize,
01:44
said "lesbian,"
01:46
but I was more boy than girl, more Ken than Barbie.
01:48
It had nothing to do with hating my body,
01:50
I just love it enough to let it go,
01:53
I treat it like a house,
01:54
and when your house is falling apart,
01:56
you do not evacuate,
01:57
you make it comfortable enough to house all your insides,
02:01
you make it pretty enough to invite guests over,
02:03
you make the floorboards strong enough to stand on.

02:07
My mother fears I have named myself after fading things.
02:12
As she counts the echoes left behind by Mya Hall, Leelah Alcorn, Blake Brockington.
02:18
She fears that I'll die without a whisper,
02:20
that I'll turn into "what a shame" conversations at the bus stop.
02:23
She claims I have turned myself into a mausoleum,
02:26
that I am a walking casket,
02:28
news headlines have turned my identity into a spectacle,
02:31
Bruce Jenner on everyone's lips while the brutality of living in this body
02:34
becomes an asterisk at the bottom of equality pages.
02:38
No one ever thinks of us as human
02:41
because we are more ghost than flesh,
02:43
because people fear that my gender expression is a trick,
02:46
that it exists to be perverse,
02:48
that it ensnares them without their consent,
02:50
that my body is a feast for their eyes and hands
02:53
and once they have fed off my queer,
02:55
they'll regurgitate all the parts they did not like.
02:58
They'll put me back into the closet, hang me with all the other skeletons.
03:02
I will be the best attraction.
03:05
Can you see how easy it is to talk people into coffins,
03:08
to misspell their names on gravestones.
03:10
And people still wonder why there are boys rotting,

03:13
they go away in high school hallways
03:15
they are afraid of becoming another hashtag in a second
03:18
afraid of classroom discussions becoming like judgment day
03:22
and now oncoming traffic is embracing more transgender children than parents.
03:29
I wonder how long it will be
03:30
before the trans suicide notes start to feel redundant,
03:34
before we realize that our bodies become lessons about sin
03:38
way before we learn how to love them.
03:40
Like God didn't save all this breath and mercy,
03:44
like my blood is not the wine that washed over Jesus' feet.
03:47
My prayers are now getting stuck in my throat.
03:52
Maybe I am finally fixed,
03:55
maybe I just don't care,
03:57
maybe God finally listened to my prayers.
04:02
Thank you. (Applause)

How colorism shapes our standards of beauty
Chika Okoro
TEDxStanford

0:00
The movie "Straight Outta Compton" comes out. I'm so excited. I'm from LA, so this movie is particularly close to my heart. I saw it in theaters three times. So I'm cruising the Internet devouring everything I can about this movie. I come across the casting call. This movie has already come out and I'm no actress, so I wouldn't actually audition, but I just wondered, hypothetically, if I did, what role would I get? I look at the casting call, I'm going down the categories, and I start at the top: the A girls. The casting call reads: "These are the hottest of the hottest, models, must have real hair, no extensions." Well, since I have 20 inches of Brazilian hair extensions on my head, doesn't quite apply to me. But that's fine. I go to the next category: the B girls. The casting call reads: "These are fine girls, long natural hair, must have light skin, Beyoncé's the prototype hit here." Light skin? Also not me. And might I add: not even Beyoncé made the cut to be an A girl. But that's fine. (Laughter) I go to the next category: the C girls. The casting call reads: "These are African American girls, can have extensions, must be medium to light skin toned." Now, maybe back when I lived in Boston, in the middle of the winter can I get away with being "medium skin toned," but since I've come back to sunny California where I spend all my free time baking in the sun, not so much. So I scroll all the way down to the last category: the D girls. The casting call reads: "These are African American girls, poor, not in good shape, must have a darker skin tone." A darker skin tone. Well, I guess that's me: a D girl. When I first read this, I felt betrayed. Any given year, there are just a handful of movies starring black actors and actresses, just a handful of opportunities when people can see actresses that look like me, on the big screen, and see that we are fierce and beautiful and desirable. So I felt betrayed. Not even in these small circles I'm allowed to feel beautiful? I felt shoved aside for those of more "favorable" features: light skin, light eyes, long, soft real hair. But the more I thought about it, the more the feeling of betrayal slipped away for the more familiar feeling of "that's just the way it is" because in my world, this phenomenon is all too familiar. Something just as sinister and subtle as racism: Colorism, the discrimination of those with a darker skin tone, typically among individuals within the same racial or ethnic group. The story of colorism in the US begins with slavery. The mass rape of African slave females by white male slave masters gave birth to a cohort of mixed-race slave children. These mixed-race slaves are related to the slave masters and had more Anglo features, and were given preferential treatment and allowed to work inside the house, doing less strenuous work, as opposed to the darker skinned slaves that had to work out in the fields, doing more laborious work. Even after slavery was abolished, whites still gave more preferential treatment to blacks that had more Anglo-type features, giving them better access to jobs, housing and education. The thing is, though, even within the black community, black people used skin tone and facial features to discriminate against each other. They would only allow entrance into sororities, fraternities or elite social clubs to blacks that were able to display Anglo-type features. They'd go through a series of tests to see if you fit the bill. One well-known test was the "brown paper bag" test. Where if you were lighter than a brown paper bag, you're in! But if you were darker than a brown paper

bag, you're out. Another well-known test was the pencil test, where they would take a pencil and run it through your hair to make sure that it's straight enough so the pencil wouldn't get stuck. The last test was called the shadow test, where they would take a flashlight and shine it against your profile and look at the shadow that your profile made against the wall. And if it matched that of a white person's profile, you're fine. But if it didn't, you're out. Now, though these practices are no longer in effect today, the effects of them are still very much so present. I remember a common "compliment" I would often get in middle and high school, often told to me by other black males; it went to the effect of: "Oh! You're so pretty for a dark skinned girl." And it doesn't help that the media continues to place a premium on lighter skin by retouching and photoshopping the skin of actresses of color before putting them on the cover of magazines, as can be seen here, here, here and even here. Now, colorism is not just isolated to the US, its effects are global, as best illustrated by the skin-lightening and skin-bleaching creams all over the world. In India and Asia alone, skin lightening and skin bleaching is a multi-billion dollar business. Despite the harmful toxins that are present in these products, people are still willing to take the risk and use them in order to achieve what they are led to believe is beautiful. And beauty products have flocked on this insight. One known brand, "Vaseline," even partnered with Facebook to come up with an app that would lighten the skin of you profile picture in order to promote their skin-lightening cream. And you can't travel throughout Asia without being inundated by advertising and commercials that promise happiness and success if you could just be a little bit lighter. (Laughter) Studies have shown that these messages that we see at a young age have a profound effect on us. In 2010, CNN did a study where they interviewed young children, just five, six, seven years old, and asked them to place values and attributes to people based on their skin tone. Here's a clip from that study. (Video starts) Interviewer: And why is she the smart child? Girl: Because she is white. Interviewer: OK. Show me the dumb child. And why is she the dumb child? Girl: Because she's black. Interviewer: Well, show me the ugly child. And why is she the ugly child? Girl: Because she's black. Interviewer: Show me the good-looking child. And why is she the good-looking child? Girl: Because she's light-skinned. Chika Okoro: These messages that we see at such a young age and these messages that we internalize, they stay with us. They stayed with me. And though I denied it and blocked it out and I say I'm strong, I'm smart, I'm accomplished, I'm beautiful, I'm here at Stanford and I'm not a D girl, this stuff, these messages, they stayed with me. And they manifest in this voice that makes me question, makes me doubt and makes me think: "But wait ..." "Am I a D girl?" It stays with me. And so now, whenever someone gives me compliment or says, "Oh! You look nice, you look pretty," the voice fills in the rest of the sentence with: "for a dark skinned girl." It stays with me. And it makes me question my intentions because even though I say that I have these extensions just for fun and that I like them, that voice says "No!" "You got them because you're trying to reach a beauty standard you can actually never obtain." It stays with me. Even as I go to send a simple text message, that voice in my head tells me that I should be embarrassed or ashamed when I scroll all the way to the end, to the last, darkest emoji. It stays with me. But I don't want it to stay with me. And the good thing is it doesn't have to. Because these beauty preferences that we have, they're not something we are born with, they're learned. And if they're learned, they can be unlearned. Among us are CEOs and co-founders, directors of marketing, you all are the arbiters of what society considers beautiful by deciding who you chose to put in your

advertising or who you chose to be the face of you brand. So you have the opportunity to make the unconventional choice. And those of us that consume these messages, we play our role too. Because the first step to change is awareness. And now everyone in this room is a little more aware and will see the world just a little bit differently. And you don't have to passively accept what society tells us to think is beautiful. We can question it, and we can challenge the status quo. Because when we do, we get one step closer to broadening the standard of beauty and creating a society where the world can see that D girls are beautiful too. Thank you. (Applause) (Cheers)

How to make peace? Get angry.
Kailash Satyarthi
TED2015

00:13
Today, I am going to talk about anger. When I was 11, seeing some of my friends leaving the school because their parents could not afford textbooks made me angry. When I was 27, hearing the plight of a desperate slave father whose daughter was about to be sold to a brothel made me angry. At the age of 50, lying on the street, in a pool of blood, along with my own son, made me angry.

01:07
Dear friends, for centuries we were taught anger is bad. Our parents, teachers, priests -- everyone taught us how to control and suppress our anger. But I ask why? Why can't we convert our anger for the larger good of society? Why can't we use our anger to challenge and change the evils of the world? That I tried to do.

01:46
Friends, most of the brightest ideas came to my mind out of anger. Like when I was 35 and sat in a locked-up, tiny prison. The whole night, I was angry. But it has given birth to a new idea. But I will come to that later on. Let me begin with the story of how I got a name for myself.

02:25
I had been a big admirer of Mahatma Gandhi since my childhood. Gandhi fought and lead India's freedom movement. But more importantly, he taught us how to treat the most vulnerable sections, the most deprived people, with dignity and respect. And so, when India was celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's birth centenary in 1969 -- at that time I was 15 -- an idea came to my mind. Why can't we celebrate it differently? I knew, as perhaps many of you might know, that in India, a large number of people are born in the lowest segment of caste. And they are treated as untouchables. These are the people -- forget about allowing them to go to the temples, they cannot even go into the houses and shops of high-caste people.

03:40
So I was very impressed with the leaders of my town who were speaking very highly against the caste system and untouchability and talking of Gandhian ideals. So inspired by that, I thought, let us set an example by inviting these people to eat food cooked and served by the untouchable community. I went to some low-caste, so-called untouchable, people, tried to convince them, but it was unthinkable for them. They told me, "No, no. It's not possible. It never happened." I said, "Look at these leaders, they are so great, they are against untouchability. They will come. If nobody comes, we can set an example." These people thought that I was too naive. Finally, they were convinced.

04:42
My friends and I took our bicycles and invited political leaders. And I was so thrilled, rather, empowered to see that each one of them agreed to come. I thought, "Great idea. We can set an example. We can bring about change in the society."

05:07

The day has come. All these untouchables, three women and two men, they agreed to come. I could recall that they had used the best of their clothes. They brought new utensils. They had taken baths hundreds of times because it was unthinkable for them to do. It was the moment of change. They gathered. Food was cooked. It was 7 o'clock. By 8 o'clock, we kept on waiting, because it's not very uncommon that the leaders become late, for an hour or so.

05:55

So after 8 o'clock, we took our bicycles and went to these leaders' homes, just to remind them. One of the leader's wives told me, "Sorry, he is having some headache, perhaps he cannot come." I went to another leader and his wife told me, "Okay, you go, he will definitely join." So I thought that the dinner will take place, though not at that large a scale.

06:33

I went back to the venue, which was a newly built Mahatma Gandhi Park. It was 10 o'clock. None of the leaders showed up. That made me angry. I was standing, leaning against Mahatma Gandhi's statue. I was emotionally drained, rather exhausted. Then I sat down where the food was lying. I kept my emotions on hold. But then, when I took the first bite, I broke down in tears. And suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder. And it was the healing, motherly touch of an untouchable woman. And she told me, "Kailash, why are you crying? You have done your bit. You have eaten the food cooked by untouchables, which has never happened in our memory." She said, "You won today." And my friends, she was right.

08:04

I came back home, a little after midnight, shocked to see that several high-caste elderly people were sitting in my courtyard. I saw my mother and elderly women were crying and they were pleading to these elderly people because they had threatened to outcaste my whole family. And you know, outcasting the family is the biggest social punishment one can think of. Somehow they agreed to punish only me, and the punishment was purification. That means I had to go 600 miles away from my hometown to the River Ganges to take a holy dip. And after that, I should organize a feast for priests, 101 priests, wash their feet and drink that water.

08:58

It was total nonsense, and I refused to accept that punishment. How did they punish me? I was barred from entering into my own kitchen and my own dining room, my utensils were separated. But the night when I was angry, they wanted to outcaste me. But I decided to outcaste the entire caste system. (Applause)

09:32

And that was possible because the beginning would have been to change the family name, or surname, because in India, most of the family names are caste names. So I decided to drop my name. And then, later on, I gave a new name to myself: Satyarthi, that means, "seeker of truth." (Applause) And that was the beginning of my transformative anger.

10:06

Friends, maybe one of you can tell me, what was I doing before becoming a children's rights activist? Does anybody know? No. I was an engineer, an electrical engineer. And then I learned how the energy of burning fire, coal, the nuclear blast inside the chambers, raging river currents, fierce winds, could be converted into the light and lives of millions. I also learned how the most uncontrollable form of energy could be harnessed for good and making society better.

11:04

So I'll come back to the story of when I was caught in the prison: I was very happy freeing a dozen children from slavery, handing them over to their parents. I cannot explain my joy when I free a child. I was so happy. But when I was waiting for my train to come back to my hometown, Delhi, I saw that dozens of children were arriving; they were being trafficked by someone. I stopped them, those people. I complained to the police. So the policemen, instead of helping me, they threw me in this small, tiny shell, like an animal. And that was the night of anger when one of the brightest and biggest ideas was born. I thought that if I keep on freeing 10 children, and 50 more will join, that's not done. And I believed in the power of consumers, and let me tell you that this was the first time when a campaign was launched by me or anywhere in the world, to educate and sensitize the consumers to create a demand for child-labor-free rugs. In Europe and America, we have been successful. And it has resulted in a fall in child labor in South Asian countries by 80 percent. (Applause)

12:44

Not only that, but this first-ever consumer's power, or consumer's campaign has grown in other countries and other industries, maybe chocolate, maybe apparel, maybe shoes -- it has gone beyond. My anger at the age of 11, when I realized how important education is for every child, I got an idea to collect used books and help the poorest children. I created a book bank at the age of 11. But I did not stop. Later on, I cofounded the world's single largest civil society campaign for education that is the Global Campaign for Education. That has helped in changing the whole thinking towards education from the charity mode to the human rights mode, and that has concretely helped the reduction of out-of-school children by half in the last 15 years. (Applause)

13:55

My anger at the age of 27, to free that girl who was about to be sold to a brothel, has given me an idea to go for a new strategy of raid and rescue, freeing children from slavery. And I am so lucky and proud to say that it is not one or 10 or 20, but my colleagues and I have been able to physically liberate 83,000 child slaves and hand them over back to their families and mothers. (Applause)

14:37

I knew that we needed global policies. We organized the worldwide marches against child labor and that has also resulted in a new international convention to protect the children who are in the worst forms. And the concrete result was that the number of child laborers globally has gone down by one third in the last 15 years. (Applause)

15:08

So, in each case, it began from anger, turned into an idea, and action. So anger, what next? Idea, and -- Audience: Action Kailash Satyarthi: Anger, idea, action. Which I tried to do.

15:34

Anger is a power, anger is an energy, and the law of nature is that energy can never be created and never be vanished, can never be destroyed. So why can't the energy of anger be translated and harnessed to create a better and beautiful world, a more just and equitable world?

15:56

Anger is within each one of you, and I will share a secret for a few seconds: that if we are confined in the narrow shells of egos, and the circles of selfishness, then the anger will turn out

to be hatred, violence, revenge, destruction. But if we are able to break the circles, then the same anger could turn into a great power. We can break the circles by using our inherent compassion and connect with the world through compassion to make this world better. That same anger could be transformed into it.

16:46

So dear friends, sisters and brothers, again, as a Nobel Laureate, I am urging you to become angry. I am urging you to become angry. And the angriest among us is the one who can transform his anger into idea and action.

17:12

Thank you so much.

17:14

(Applause)

17:27

Chris Anderson: For many years, you've been an inspiration to others. Who or what inspires you and why?

17:34

KS: Good question. Chris, let me tell you, and that is the truth, each time when I free a child, the child who has lost all his hope that he will ever come back to his mother, the first smile of freedom, and the mother who has lost all hope that the son or daughter can ever come back and sit in her lap, they become so emotional and the first tear of joy rolls down on her cheek, I see the glimpse of God in it -- this is my biggest inspiration. And I am so lucky that not once, as I said before, but thousands of times, I have been able to witness my God in the faces of those children and they are my biggest inspirations. Thank you.

18:25

(Applause)

We need to talk about an injustice
Bryan Stevenson
TED2012

00:12
Well this is a really extraordinary honor for me. I spend most of my time in jails, in prisons, on death row. I spend most of my time in very low-income communities in the projects and places where there's a great deal of hopelessness. And being here at TED and seeing the stimulation, hearing it, has been very, very energizing to me. And one of the things that's emerged in my short time here is that TED has an identity. And you can actually say things here that have impacts around the world. And sometimes when it comes through TED, it has meaning and power that it doesn't have when it doesn't.

00:49
And I mention that because I think identity is really important. And we've had some fantastic presentations. And I think what we've learned is that, if you're a teacher your words can be meaningful, but if you're a compassionate teacher, they can be especially meaningful. If you're a doctor you can do some good things, but if you're a caring doctor you can do some other things. And so I want to talk about the power of identity. And I didn't learn about this actually practicing law and doing the work that I do. I actually learned about this from my grandmother.

01:18
I grew up in a house that was the traditional African-American home that was dominated by a matriarch, and that matriarch was my grandmother. She was tough, she was strong, she was powerful. She was the end of every argument in our family. She was the beginning of a lot of arguments in our family. She was the daughter of people who were actually enslaved. Her parents were born in slavery in Virginia in the 1840's. She was born in the 1880's and the experience of slavery very much shaped the way she saw the world.

01:50
And my grandmother was tough, but she was also loving. When I would see her as a little boy, she'd come up to me and she'd give me these hugs. And she'd squeeze me so tight I could barely breathe and then she'd let me go. And an hour or two later, if I saw her, she'd come over to me and she'd say, "Bryan, do you still feel me hugging you?" And if I said, "No," she'd assault me again, and if I said, "Yes," she'd leave me alone. And she just had this quality that you always wanted to be near her. And the only challenge was that she had 10 children. My mom was the youngest of her 10 kids. And sometimes when I would go and spend time with her, it would be difficult to get her time and attention. My cousins would be running around everywhere.

02:24
And I remember, when I was about eight or nine years old, waking up one morning, going into the living room, and all of my cousins were running around. And my grandmother was sitting across the room staring at me. And at first I thought we were playing a game. And I would look at her and I'd smile, but she was very serious. And after about 15 or 20 minutes of this, she got up and she came across the room and she took me by the hand and she said, "Come on, Bryan.

You and I are going to have a talk." And I remember this just like it happened yesterday. I never will forget it.

02:56

She took me out back and she said, "Bryan, I'm going to tell you something, but you don't tell anybody what I tell you." I said, "Okay, Mama." She said, "Now you make sure you don't do that." I said, "Sure." Then she sat me down and she looked at me and she said, "I want you to know I've been watching you." And she said, "I think you're special." She said, "I think you can do anything you want to do." I will never forget it.

03:23

And then she said, "I just need you to promise me three things, Bryan." I said, "Okay, Mama." She said, "The first thing I want you to promise me is that you'll always love your mom." She said, "That's my baby girl, and you have to promise me now you'll always take care of her." Well I adored my mom, so I said, "Yes, Mama. I'll do that." Then she said, "The second thing I want you to promise me is that you'll always do the right thing even when the right thing is the hard thing." And I thought about it and I said, "Yes, Mama. I'll do that." Then finally she said, "The third thing I want you to promise me is that you'll never drink alcohol." (Laughter) Well I was nine years old, so I said, "Yes, Mama. I'll do that."

04:00

I grew up in the country in the rural South, and I have a brother a year older than me and a sister a year younger. When I was about 14 or 15, one day my brother came home and he had this six-pack of beer -- I don't know where he got it -- and he grabbed me and my sister and we went out in the woods. And we were kind of just out there doing the stuff we crazily did. And he had a sip of this beer and he gave some to my sister and she had some, and they offered it to me. I said, "No, no, no. That's okay. You all go ahead. I'm not going to have any beer." My brother said, "Come on. We're doing this today; you always do what we do. I had some, your sister had some. Have some beer." I said, "No, I don't feel right about that. Y'all go ahead. Y'all go ahead." And then my brother started staring at me. He said, "What's wrong with you? Have some beer." Then he looked at me real hard and he said, "Oh, I hope you're not still hung up on that conversation Mama had with you." (Laughter) I said, "Well, what are you talking about?" He said, "Oh, Mama tells all the grandkids that they're special." (Laughter) I was devastated.

04:54

(Laughter)

04:56

And I'm going to admit something to you. I'm going to tell you something I probably shouldn't. I know this might be broadcast broadly. But I'm 52 years old, and I'm going to admit to you that I've never had a drop of alcohol. (Applause) I don't say that because I think that's virtuous; I say that because there is power in identity. When we create the right kind of identity, we can say things to the world around us that they don't actually believe makes sense. We can get them to do things that they don't think they can do. When I thought about my grandmother, of course she would think all her grandkids were special. My grandfather was in prison during prohibition. My male uncles died of alcohol-related diseases. And these were the things she thought we needed to commit to.

05:40

Well I've been trying to say something about our criminal justice system. This country is very different today than it was 40 years ago. In 1972, there were 300,000 people in jails and prisons. Today, there are 2.3 million. The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. We have seven million people on probation and parole. And mass incarceration, in my judgment, has fundamentally changed our world. In poor communities, in communities of color there is this despair, there is this hopelessness, that is being shaped by these outcomes. One out of three black men between the ages of 18 and 30 is in jail, in prison, on probation or parole. In urban communities across this country -- Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington -- 50 to 60 percent of all young men of color are in jail or prison or on probation or parole.

06:35

Our system isn't just being shaped in these ways that seem to be distorting around race, they're also distorted by poverty. We have a system of justice in this country that treats you much better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent. Wealth, not culpability, shapes outcomes. And yet, we seem to be very comfortable. The politics of fear and anger have made us believe that these are problems that are not our problems. We've been disconnected.

07:06

It's interesting to me. We're looking at some very interesting developments in our work. My state of Alabama, like a number of states, actually permanently disenfranchises you if you have a criminal conviction. Right now in Alabama 34 percent of the black male population has permanently lost the right to vote. We're actually projecting in another 10 years the level of disenfranchisement will be as high as it's been since prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And there is this stunning silence.

07:34

I represent children. A lot of my clients are very young. The United States is the only country in the world where we sentence 13-year-old children to die in prison. We have life imprisonment without parole for kids in this country. And we're actually doing some litigation. The only country in the world.

07:51

I represent people on death row. It's interesting, this question of the death penalty. In many ways, we've been taught to think that the real question is, do people deserve to die for the crimes they've committed? And that's a very sensible question. But there's another way of thinking about where we are in our identity. The other way of thinking about it is not, do people deserve to die for the crimes they commit, but do we deserve to kill? I mean, it's fascinating.

08:16

Death penalty in America is defined by error. For every nine people who have been executed, we've actually identified one innocent person who's been exonerated and released from death row. A kind of astonishing error rate -- one out of nine people innocent. I mean, it's fascinating. In aviation, we would never let people fly on airplanes if for every nine planes that took off one would crash. But somehow we can insulate ourselves from this problem. It's not our problem. It's not our burden. It's not our struggle.

08:50

I talk a lot about these issues. I talk about race and this question of whether we deserve to kill. And it's interesting, when I teach my students about African-American history, I tell them about slavery. I tell them about terrorism, the era that began at the end of reconstruction that went on to World War II. We don't really know very much about it. But for African-Americans in this country, that was an era defined by terror. In many communities, people had to worry about being lynched. They had to worry about being bombed. It was the threat of terror that shaped their lives. And these older people come up to me now and they say, "Mr. Stevenson, you give talks, you make speeches, you tell people to stop saying we're dealing with terrorism for the first time in our nation's history after 9/11." They tell me to say, "No, tell them that we grew up with that." And that era of terrorism, of course, was followed by segregation and decades of racial subordination and apartheid.

09:41

And yet, we have in this country this dynamic where we really don't like to talk about our problems. We don't like to talk about our history. And because of that, we really haven't understood what it's meant to do the things we've done historically. We're constantly running into each other. We're constantly creating tensions and conflicts. We have a hard time talking about race, and I believe it's because we are unwilling to commit ourselves to a process of truth and reconciliation. In South Africa, people understood that we couldn't overcome apartheid without a commitment to truth and reconciliation. In Rwanda, even after the genocide, there was this commitment, but in this country we haven't done that.

10:20

I was giving some lectures in Germany about the death penalty. It was fascinating because one of the scholars stood up after the presentation and said, "Well you know it's deeply troubling to hear what you're talking about." He said, "We don't have the death penalty in Germany. And of course, we can never have the death penalty in Germany." And the room got very quiet, and this woman said, "There's no way, with our history, we could ever engage in the systematic killing of human beings. It would be unconscionable for us to, in an intentional and deliberate way, set about executing people." And I thought about that. What would it feel like to be living in a world where the nation state of Germany was executing people, especially if they were disproportionately Jewish? I couldn't bear it. It would be unconscionable.

11:13

And yet, in this country, in the states of the Old South, we execute people -- where you're 11 times more likely to get the death penalty if the victim is white than if the victim is black, 22 times more likely to get it if the defendant is black and the victim is white -- in the very states where there are buried in the ground the bodies of people who were lynched. And yet, there is this disconnect.

11:35

Well I believe that our identity is at risk. That when we actually don't care about these difficult things, the positive and wonderful things are nonetheless implicated. We love innovation. We love technology. We love creativity. We love entertainment. But ultimately, those realities are shadowed by suffering, abuse, degradation, marginalization. And for me, it becomes necessary to integrate the two. Because ultimately we are talking about a need to be more hopeful, more committed, more dedicated to the basic challenges of living in a complex world. And for me that means spending time thinking and talking about the poor, the

disadvantaged, those who will never get to TED. But thinking about them in a way that is integrated in our own lives.

12:36

You know ultimately, we all have to believe things we haven't seen. We do. As rational as we are, as committed to intellect as we are. Innovation, creativity, development comes not from the ideas in our mind alone. They come from the ideas in our mind that are also fueled by some conviction in our heart. And it's that mind-heart connection that I believe compels us to not just be attentive to all the bright and dazzly things, but also the dark and difficult things. Vaclav Havel, the great Czech leader, talked about this. He said, "When we were in Eastern Europe and dealing with oppression, we wanted all kinds of things, but mostly what we needed was hope, an orientation of the spirit, a willingness to sometimes be in hopeless places and be a witness."

13:25

Well that orientation of the spirit is very much at the core of what I believe even TED communities have to be engaged in. There is no disconnect around technology and design that will allow us to be fully human until we pay attention to suffering, to poverty, to exclusion, to unfairness, to injustice. Now I will warn you that this kind of identity is a much more challenging identity than ones that don't pay attention to this. It will get to you.

13:58

I had the great privilege, when I was a young lawyer, of meeting Rosa Parks. And Ms. Parks used to come back to Montgomery every now and then, and she would get together with two of her dearest friends, these older women, Johnnie Carr who was the organizer of the Montgomery bus boycott -- amazing African-American woman -- and Virginia Durr, a white woman, whose husband, Clifford Durr, represented Dr. King. And these women would get together and just talk.

14:21

And every now and then Ms. Carr would call me, and she'd say, "Bryan, Ms. Parks is coming to town. We're going to get together and talk. Do you want to come over and listen?" And I'd say, "Yes, Ma'am, I do." And she'd say, "Well what are you going to do when you get here?" I said, "I'm going to listen." And I'd go over there and I would, I would just listen. It would be so energizing and so empowering.

14:38

And one time I was over there listening to these women talk, and after a couple of hours Ms. Parks turned to me and she said, "Now Bryan, tell me what the Equal Justice Initiative is. Tell me what you're trying to do." And I began giving her my rap. I said, "Well we're trying to challenge injustice. We're trying to help people who have been wrongly convicted. We're trying to confront bias and discrimination in the administration of criminal justice. We're trying to end life without parole sentences for children. We're trying to do something about the death penalty. We're trying to reduce the prison population. We're trying to end mass incarceration."

15:07

I gave her my whole rap, and when I finished she looked at me and she said, "Mmm mmm mmm." She said, "That's going to make you tired, tired, tired." (Laughter) And that's when Ms. Carr leaned forward, she put her finger in my face, she said, "That's why you've got to be brave, brave, brave."

15:25
And I actually believe that the TED community needs to be more courageous. We need to find ways to embrace these challenges, these problems, the suffering. Because ultimately, our humanity depends on everyone's humanity. I've learned very simple things doing the work that I do. It's just taught me very simple things. I've come to understand and to believe that each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done. I believe that for every person on the planet. I think if somebody tells a lie, they're not just a liar. I think if somebody takes something that doesn't belong to them, they're not just a thief. I think even if you kill someone, you're not just a killer. And because of that there's this basic human dignity that must be respected by law. I also believe that in many parts of this country, and certainly in many parts of this globe, that the opposite of poverty is not wealth. I don't believe that. I actually think, in too many places, the opposite of poverty is justice.

16:28
And finally, I believe that, despite the fact that it is so dramatic and so beautiful and so inspiring and so stimulating, we will ultimately not be judged by our technology, we won't be judged by our design, we won't be judged by our intellect and reason. Ultimately, you judge the character of a society, not by how they treat their rich and the powerful and the privileged, but by how they treat the poor, the condemned, the incarcerated. Because it's in that nexus that we actually begin to understand truly profound things about who we are.

17:06
I sometimes get out of balance. I'll end with this story. I sometimes push too hard. I do get tired, as we all do. Sometimes those ideas get ahead of our thinking in ways that are important. And I've been representing these kids who have been sentenced to do these very harsh sentences. And I go to the jail and I see my client who's 13 and 14, and he's been certified to stand trial as an adult. I start thinking, well, how did that happen? How can a judge turn you into something that you're not? And the judge has certified him as an adult, but I see this kid.

17:36
And I was up too late one night and I starting thinking, well gosh, if the judge can turn you into something that you're not, the judge must have magic power. Yeah, Bryan, the judge has some magic power. You should ask for some of that. And because I was up too late, wasn't thinking real straight, I started working on a motion. And I had a client who was 14 years old, a young, poor black kid. And I started working on this motion, and the head of the motion was: "Motion to try my poor, 14-year-old black male client like a privileged, white 75-year-old corporate executive."

18:04
(Applause)

18:09
And I put in my motion that there was prosecutorial misconduct and police misconduct and judicial misconduct. There was a crazy line in there about how there's no conduct in this county, it's all misconduct. And the next morning, I woke up and I thought, now did I dream that crazy motion, or did I actually write it? And to my horror, not only had I written it, but I had sent it to court.

18:27
(Applause)

18:30

A couple months went by, and I had just forgotten all about it. And I finally decided, oh gosh, I've got to go to the court and do this crazy case. And I got into my car and I was feeling really overwhelmed -- overwhelmed. And I got in my car and I went to this courthouse. And I was thinking, this is going to be so difficult, so painful. And I finally got out of the car and I started walking up to the courthouse.

18:51

And as I was walking up the steps of this courthouse, there was an older black man who was the janitor in this courthouse. When this man saw me, he came over to me and he said, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm a lawyer." He said, "You're a lawyer?" I said, "Yes, sir." And this man came over to me and he hugged me. And he whispered in my ear. He said, "I'm so proud of you." And I have to tell you, it was energizing. It connected deeply with something in me about identity, about the capacity of every person to contribute to a community, to a perspective that is hopeful.

19:24

Well I went into the courtroom. And as soon as I walked inside, the judge saw me coming in. He said, "Mr. Stevenson, did you write this crazy motion?" I said, "Yes, sir. I did." And we started arguing. And people started coming in because they were just outraged. I had written these crazy things. And police officers were coming in and assistant prosecutors and clerk workers. And before I knew it, the courtroom was filled with people angry that we were talking about race, that we were talking about poverty, that we were talking about inequality.

19:49

And out of the corner of my eye, I could see this janitor pacing back and forth. And he kept looking through the window, and he could hear all of this holler. He kept pacing back and forth. And finally, this older black man with this very worried look on his face came into the courtroom and sat down behind me, almost at counsel table. About 10 minutes later the judge said we would take a break. And during the break there was a deputy sheriff who was offended that the janitor had come into court. And this deputy jumped up and he ran over to this older black man. He said, "Jimmy, what are you doing in this courtroom?" And this older black man stood up and he looked at that deputy and he looked at me and he said, "I came into this courtroom to tell this young man, keep your eyes on the prize, hold on."

20:28

I've come to TED because I believe that many of you understand that the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice. That we cannot be full evolved human beings until we care about human rights and basic dignity. That all of our survival is tied to the survival of everyone. That our visions of technology and design and entertainment and creativity have to be married with visions of humanity, compassion and justice. And more than anything, for those of you who share that, I've simply come to tell you to keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

21:03

Thank you very much.

21:05

(Applause)

21:26

Chris Anderson: So you heard and saw an obvious desire by this audience, this community, to help you on your way and to do something on this issue. Other than writing a check, what could we do?

21:39

BS: Well there are opportunities all around us. If you live in the state of California, for example, there's a referendum coming up this spring where actually there's going to be an effort to redirect some of the money we spend on the politics of punishment. For example, here in California we're going to spend one billion dollars on the death penalty in the next five years -- one billion dollars. And yet, 46 percent of all homicide cases don't result in arrest. 56 percent of all rape cases don't result. So there's an opportunity to change that. And this referendum would propose having those dollars go to law enforcement and safety. And I think that opportunity exists all around us.

22:14

CA: There's been this huge decline in crime in America over the last three decades. And part of the narrative of that is sometimes that it's about increased incarceration rates. What would you say to someone who believed that?

22:27

BS: Well actually the violent crime rate has remained relatively stable. The great increase in mass incarceration in this country wasn't really in violent crime categories. It was this misguided war on drugs. That's where the dramatic increases have come in our prison population. And we got carried away with the rhetoric of punishment. And so we have three strikes laws that put people in prison forever for stealing a bicycle, for low-level property crimes, rather than making them give those resources back to the people who they victimized. I believe we need to do more to help people who are victimized by crime, not do less. And I think our current punishment philosophy does nothing for no one. And I think that's the orientation that we have to change.

23:07

(Applause)

23:09

CA: Bryan, you've struck a massive chord here. You're an inspiring person. Thank you so much for coming to TED. Thank you.

23:16

(Applause)

What a world without prisons could look like
Deanna Van Buren
TEDWomen 2017

00:12
A lot of people call me a "justice architect." But I don't design prisons. I don't design jails. I don't design detention centers, and I don't even design courthouses. All the same, I get a call every week, saying, "OK, but you design better prisons, right? You know, like those pretty ones they're building in Europe." And I always pause. And I invite them, and I invite you today, to imagine a world without prisons. What does that justice feel and look like? What do we need to build to get there? I'd like to show you some ideas today of things that we're building. And I'm going to start with an early prototype.

01:06
This I built when I was five. I call it "the healing hut." And I built it after I got sent home from school for punching this kid in the face because he called me the N-word. OK, he deserved it. It happened a lot, though, because my family had desegregated a white community in rural Virginia. And I was really scared. I was afraid. I was angry. And so I would run into the forest, and I would build these little huts. They were made out of twigs and leaves and blankets I had taken from my mom. And as the light would stream into my refuge, I would feel at peace. Despite my efforts to comfort myself, I still left my community as soon as I could, and I went to architecture school and then into a professional career designing shopping centers, homes for the wealthy and office buildings, until I stepped into a prison for the first time.

02:10
It was the Chester State Correctional Institution in Pennsylvania. And my friend, she invited me there to work with some of her incarcerated students and teach them about the positive power of design. The irony is so obvious, right? As I approached this concrete building, these tiny little windows, barbed wire, high walls, observation towers, and on the inside, these cold, hard spaces, little light or air, the guards are screaming, the doors are clanking, there's a wall of cells filled with so many black and brown bodies. And I realized that what I was seeing was the end result of our racist policies that had caused mass incarceration. But as an architect, what I was seeing was how a prison is the worst building type we could have created to address the harm that we're doing to one another. I thought, "Well, could I design an alternative to this, other than building a prettier prison?" It didn't feel good to me; it still doesn't feel good. But back then, I just didn't know what to do. What do we build instead of this?

03:20
And then I heard about restorative justice. I felt at peace again, because here was an alternative system that says when a crime is committed, it is a breach of relationship, that the needs of those who have been harmed must be addressed first; that those who have committed the offense have an obligation to make amends. And what they are are really intense dialogues, where all stakeholders come together to find a way to repair the breach. Early data shows that restorative justice builds empathy; that it reduces violent reoffending by up to 75 percent; that it eases PTSD in survivors of the most severe violence. And because of these reasons, we see prosecutors and judges and district attorneys starting to divert cases out of

court and into restorative justice so that some people never touch the system altogether. And so I thought, "Well, damn -- why aren't we designing for this system?"
04:22
(Applause)
04:24
Instead of building prisons, we should be building spaces to amplify restorative justice. And so I started in schools, because suspensions and expulsions have been fueling the pathway to prison for decades. And many school districts -- probably some of your own -- are turning to restorative justice as an alternative. So, my first project -- I just turned this dirty little storage room into a peacemaking room for a program in a high school in my hometown of Oakland. And after we were done, the director said that the circles she was holding in this space were more powerful in bringing the community together after fighting at school and gun violence in the community, and that students and teachers started to come here just because they saw it as a space of refuge. So what was happening is that the space was amplifying the effects of the process.
05:24
OK, then I did something that architects always do, y'all. I was like, I'm going to build something massive now, right? I'm going to build the world's first restorative justice center all by myself. And it's going to be a beautiful figure on the skyline, like a beacon in the night. Thousands of people will come here instead of going to court. I will single-handedly end mass incarceration and win lots of design awards.
05:51
(Laughter)
05:54
And then I checked myself --
05:56
(Laughter)
05:57
because here's the deal: we are incarcerating more of our citizens per capita than any country in the world. And the fastest-growing population there are black women. Ninety-five percent of all these folks are coming home. And most of them are survivors of severe sexual, physical and emotional abuse. They have literally been on both sides of the harm. So I thought, uh, maybe I should ask them what we should build instead of prisons.
06:29
So I returned with a restorative justice expert, and we started to run the country's first design studios with incarcerated men and women around the intersection of restorative justice and design. And it was transformative for me. I saw all these people behind walls in a totally different way. These were souls deeply committed to their personal transformation and being accountable. They were creative, they were visionary.
06:58
Danny is one of those souls. He's been incarcerated at San Quentin for 27 years for taking a life at the age of 21. From the very beginning, he's been focused on being accountable for that act and doing his best to make amends from behind bars. He brought that work into a design for a community center for reconciliation and wellness. It was a beautiful design, right? So it's

this green campus filled with these circular structures for victim and offender dialogue. And when he presented the project to me, he started crying. He said, "After being in the brutality of San Quentin for so long, we don't think reconciliation will happen. This design is for a place that fulfills the promise of restorative justice. And it feels closer now."

07:58

I know for a fact that just the visualization of spaces for restorative justice and healing are transformative. I've seen it in our workshops over and over again. But I think we know that just visualizing these spaces is not enough. We have to build them. And so I started to look for justice innovators. They are not easy to find. But I found one.

08:24

I found the Center for Court Innovation. They were bringing Native American peacemaking practices into a non-Native community for the very first time in the United States. And I approached them, and I said, "OK, well, as you set up your process, could I work with the community to design a peacemaking center?" And they said yes. Thank God, because I had no backup to these guys. And so, in the Near Westside of Syracuse, New York, we started to run design workshops with the community to both locate and reenvision an old drug house to be a peacemaking center. The Near Westside Peacemaking Project is complete. And they are already running over 80 circles a year, with a very interesting outcome, and that it is the space itself that's convincing people to engage in peacemaking for the very first time in their lives.

09:19

Isabel and her daughter are some of those community members. And they had been referred to peacemaking to heal their relationship after a history of family abuse, sexual abuse and other issues that they'd been having in their own family and the community. And, you know, Isabel didn't want to do peacemaking. She was like, "This is just like going to court. What is this peacemaking stuff?" But when she showed up, she was stressed, she was anxious. But when she got in, she kind of looked around, and she settled in. And she turned to the coordinator and said, "I feel comfortable here -- at ease. It's homey." Isabel and her daughter made a decision that day to engage and complete the peacemaking process. And today, their relationship is transformed; they're doing really well and they're healing.

10:12

So after this project, I didn't go into a thing where I'm going to make a huge peacemaking center. I did want to have peacemaking centers in every community. But then a new idea emerged. I was doing a workshop in Santa Rita Jail in California, and one of our incarcerated designers, Doug, said, "Yeah, you know, repairing the harm, getting back on my feet, healing -- really important. But the reality is, Deanna, when I get home, I don't have anywhere to go. I have no job -- who's going to hire me? I'm just going to end up back here."

10:47

And you know what, he's right, because 60 to 75 percent of those returning to their communities will be unemployed a year after their release. We also know, if you can't meet your basic economic needs, you're going to commit crime -- any of us would do that. So instead of building prisons, what we could build are spaces for job training and entrepreneurship. These are spaces for what we call "restorative economics." Located in East Oakland, California, "Restore Oakland" will be the country's first center for restorative justice and restorative economics.

11:25

(Applause)

11:31

So here's what we're going to do. We're going to gut this building and turn it into three things. First, a restaurant called "Colors," that will break the racial divide in the restaurant industry by training low-wage restaurant workers to get living-wage jobs in fine dining. It does not matter if you have a criminal record or not. On the second floor, we have bright, open, airy spaces to support a constellation of activist organizations to amplify their cry of "Healthcare Not Handcuffs," and "Housing as a human right." And third, the county's first dedicated space for restorative justice, filled with nature, color, texture and spaces of refuge to support the dialogues here. This project breaks ground in just two months. And we have plans to replicate it in Washington D.C., Detroit, New York and New Orleans.

12:20

(Applause)

12:30

So you've seen two things we can build instead of prisons. And look, the price point is better. For one jail, we can build 30 restorative justice centers.

12:40

(Applause)

12:42

That is a better use of your tax dollars.

12:45

So I want to build all of these. But building buildings is a really heavy lift. It takes time. And what was happening in the communities that I was serving is we were losing people every week to gun violence and mass incarceration. We needed to serve more people and faster and keep them out of the system. And a new idea emerged from the community, one that was a lot lighter on its feet. Instead of building prisons, we could build villages on wheels. It's called the Pop-Up Resource Village, and it brings an entire constellation of resources to isolated communities in the greater San Francisco area, including mobile medical, social services and pop-up shops. And so what we're doing now is we're building this whole village with the community, starting with transforming municipal buses into classrooms on wheels that bring GED and high school education across turf lines.

13:45

(Applause)

13:46

We will serve thousands of more students with this. We're creating mobile spaces of refuge for women released from jail in the middle of the night, at their most vulnerable. Next summer, the village will launch, and it pops up every single week, expanding to more and more communities as it goes. So look out for it.

14:05

(Applause)

14:10

So what do we build instead of prisons? We've looked at three things: peacemaking centers, centers for restorative justice and restorative economics and pop-up villages. But I'm

telling you, I have a list a mile long. This is customized housing for youth transitioning out of foster care. These are reentry centers for women to reunite with their children. These are spaces for survivors of violence. These are spaces that address the root causes of mass incarceration. And not a single one of them is a jail or a prison. Activist, philosopher, writer Cornel West says that "Justice is what love looks like in public."

14:56

So with this in mind, I ask you one more time to imagine a world without prisons, and join me in creating all the things that we could build instead.

15:09

Thank you.

15:10

(Applause)

What it takes to be racially literate
Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo
TEDWomen 2017

00:12
Priya Vulchi: Four years ago, we really thought we understood racism. Just like many of you here today, we had experienced and heard stories about race, about prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping and we were like, "We get it, racism, we got it, we got it." But we weren't even close.

00:32
Winona Guo: So we decided that we had to listen and learn more. We talked to as many random people as we could and collected hundreds of personal stories about race, stories that revealed how racial injustice is a nationwide epidemic that we ourselves spread and now can't seem to recognize or get rid of.

00:50
PV: We're not there yet. Today, we are here to raise our standards of racial literacy, to redefine what it means to be racially literate.

01:00
WG: We want everywhere across the United States for our youngest and future generations to grow up equipped with the tools to understand, navigate and improve a world structured by racial division. We want us all to imagine the community as a place where we not only feel proud of our own backgrounds, but can also invest in others' experiences as if they were our own.

01:23
PV: We just graduated from high school this past June.

01:27
WG: And you'd think --

01:28
(Applause)

01:31
And you'd think after 12 years somebody in or out of the classroom would have helped us understand --

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PV: At a basic level at least --

01:39
WG: The society we live in.

01:41
PV: The truth for almost all our classmates is that they don't.

01:45
WG: In communities around our country, so many of which are racially divided,

01:50
PV: If you don't go searching for an education about race, for racial literacy --

01:54
WG: You won't get it. It won't just come to you.

01:57

PV: Even when we did have conversations about race, our understanding was always superficial. We realized that there are two big gaps in our racial literacy.

02:08

WG: First, the heart gap: an inability to understand each of our experiences, to fiercely and unapologetically be compassionate beyond lip service.

02:22

PV: And second, the mind gap: an inability to understand the larger, systemic ways in which racism operates.

02:32

WG: First, the heart gap. To be fair, race did pop up a few times in school, growing up. We all defend our social justice education because we learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks. But even in all of those conversations, race always felt outdated, like, "Yes, slavery, that happened once upon a time, but why does it really matter now?" As a result, we didn't really care. But what if our teacher introduced a story from the present day, for example, how Treniya told us in Pittsburgh that --

03:10

PV: "My sister was scrolling through Facebook and typed in our last name. This white guy popped up, and we found out that his great-great-grandfather owned slaves and my great-great- great-grandmother was one of them. My last name -- it's not who I am. We've been living under a white man's name. If slavery didn't happen, who would I even be?"

03:32

WG: Now it feels relevant, immediate, because the connection to slavery's lasting legacy today is made clear, right? Or what would happen is our teacher would throw out these cold statistics. You've probably seen this one before in news headlines.

03:46

PV: African-Americans are incarcerated more than five times the rate of white people.

03:51

WG: Now consider Ronnie, in Seattle.

03:55

PV: "My father means everything to me. He's all I've got, I don't know my mother. My father's currently being wrongly incarcerated for 12 years. I've got a daughter, and I try to be that same fatherly figure for her: always involved in everything she does, it might even be annoying at some points. But I'm afraid I'll go missing in her life just like my father did in mine."

04:20

WG: Throwing out just the statistic, just the facts alone, disconnected from real humans, can lead to dangerously incomplete understanding of those facts. It fails to recognize that for many people who don't understand racism the problem is not a lack of knowledge to talk about the pain of white supremacy and oppression, it's that they don't recognize that that pain exists at all. They don't recognize the human beings that are being affected, and they don't feel enough to care.

04:49

PV: Second, the mind gap. We can't ignore the stats, either. We can't truly grasp Ronnie's situation without understanding how things like unjust laws and biased policing systematic

racism has created the disproportionate incarceration rates over time. Or like how in Honolulu, the large prison population of native Hawaiians like Kimmy is heavily influenced by the island's long history with US colonialization, its impact passing down through generations to today. For us, sometimes we would talk about people's personal, unique experiences in the classroom. Stuff like, how Justin once told us --

05:30

WG: "I've been working on psychologically reclaiming my place in this city. Because for me, my Chicago isn't the nice architecture downtown, it's not the North Side. My Chicago is the orange line, the pink line, the working immigrant class going on the train."

05:47

PV: And while we might have acknowledged his personal experience, we wouldn't have talked about how redlining and the legalized segregation of our past created the racially divided neighborhoods we live in today. We wouldn't have completely understood how racism is embedded in the framework of everything around us, because we would stay narrowly focused on people's isolated experiences. Another example, Sandra in DC once told us:

06:14

WG: "When I'm with my Korean family, I know how to move with them. I know what to do in order to have them feel like I care about them. And making and sharing food is one of the most fundamental ways of showing love. When I'm with my partner who's not Korean, however, we've had to grapple with the fact that I'm very food-centric and he's just not. One time he said that he didn't want to be expected to make food for me, and I got really upset."

06:40

PV: That might seem like a weird reaction, but only if we don't recognize how it's emblematic of something larger, something deeper. Intragenerational trauma. How in Sandra's family, widespread hunger and poverty existed as recently as Sandra's parents' generation and therefore impacts Sandra today. She experiences someone saying --

07:01

WG: "I don't want to feed you."

07:03

PV: As --

07:04

WG: "I don't want to hug you."

07:06

PV: And without her and her partner having that nuanced understanding of her reaction and the historical context behind it, it could easily lead to unnecessary fighting. That's why it's so important that we proactively --

07:18

(Both speaking): Co-create --

07:19

PV: A shared American culture that identifies and embraces the different values and norms within our diverse communities.

07:28

WG: To be racially literate --

07:30

PV: To understand who we are so that we can heal together --
07:33
WG: We cannot neglect the heart --
07:35
PV: Or the mind. So, with our hundreds of stories, we decided to publish a racial literacy textbook to bridge that gap between our hearts and minds.
07:45
WG: Our last book, "The Classroom Index," shares deeply personal stories.
07:49
PV: And pairs those personal stories to the brilliant research of statisticians and scholars.
07:54
WG: Every day, we are still blown away by people's experiences, by the complexity of our collective racial reality.
08:02
PV: So today, we ask you --
08:05
WG: Are you racially literate? Are you there yet?
08:08
PV: Do you really understand the people around you, their stories, stories like these? It's not just knowing that Louise from Seattle survived Japanese American internment camps. It's knowing that, meanwhile, her husband was one of an estimated 33,000 Japanese Americans who fought for our country during the war, a country that was simultaneously interning their families. For most of us, those Japanese Americans both in camps and in service, now see their bravery, their resilience, their history forgotten. They've become only victims.
08:45
PV: It's not just knowing that interracial marriages like Shermaine and Paul in DC exist, it's acknowledging that our society has been programmed for them to fail. That on their very first date someone shouted, "Why are you with that black whore?" That according to a Columbia study on cis straight relationships black is often equated with masculinity and Asian with femininity, leading more men to not value black women and to fetishize Asian women. Among black-white marriages in the year 2000, 73 percent had a black husband and a white wife. Paul and Shermaine defy that statistic. Black is beautiful, but it takes a lot to believe so once society says otherwise.
09:29
WG: It's not just knowing that white people like Lisa in Chicago have white privilege, it's reflecting consciously on the term whiteness and its history, knowing that whiteness can't be equated with American. It's knowing that Lisa can't forget her own personal family's history of Jewish oppression. That she can't forget how, growing up, she was called a dirty Jew with horns and tails. But Lisa knows she can pass as white so she benefits from huge systemic and interpersonal privileges, and so she spends every day grappling with ways that she can leverage that white privilege for social justice. For example, starting conversations with other people of privilege about race. Or shifting the power in her classroom to her students by learning to listen to their experiences of racism and poverty.

10:19

PV: It's not just knowing that native languages are dying. It's appreciating how fluency in the Cherokee language, which really only less than 12,000 people speak today, is an act of survival, of preservation of culture and history. It's knowing how the nongendered Cherokee language enabled Ahyoka's acceptance as a trans woman in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Her grandmother told her firmly a saying in Cherokee, "I don't tell me who you are, you tell me who you are. And that is who you are."

10:52

WG: These are just parts of a few stories. There are approximately 323 million people in the United States.

10:59

PV: And 7.4 billion people on the planet.

11:02

WG: So we have a lot to listen to.

11:03

PV: And a lot to learn.

11:05

WG: We need to raise the bar.

11:06

PV: Elevate our standards for racial literacy. Because without investing in an education that values --

11:12

WG: Both the stories -- PV: And statistics --

11:14

WG: The people -- PV: And the numbers --

11:16

WG: The interpersonal -- PV: And the systemic --

11:18

WG: There will always be a piece missing.

11:20

PV: Today, so few of us understand each other.

11:24

WG: We don't know how to communicate --

11:26

PV: Live together -- WG: Love one another. We need to all work together to create a new national community.

11:31

PV: A new shared culture of mutual suffering and celebration.

11:35

WG: We need to each begin by learning in our own local communities, bridging the gaps between our own hearts and minds to become racially literate.

11:43

PV: Once we all do, we will be that much closer to living in spaces and systems that fight and care equally for all of us.

11:52

WG: Then, none of us will be able to remain distant.

11:56

PV: We couldn't -- sorry, mom and dad, college can wait.

11:59

WG: We're on a gap year before college, traveling to all 50 states collecting stories for our next book.

12:04

PV: And we still have 23 states left to interview in.

12:07

(Both) Let's all get to work.

12:09

Thank you.

12:10

(Applause)

Maysoon Zayid
I've Got 99 Problems...Palsy is Just One
TEDWomen 2013

00:04
Hello, TEDWomen, what's up.
00:06
(Cheering)
00:07
Not good enough. Hello, TEDWomen, what is up?
00:11
(Loud cheering)
00:13
My name is Maysoon Zayid, and I am not drunk, but the doctor who delivered me was. He cut my mom six different times in six different directions, suffocating poor little me in the process. As a result, I have cerebral palsy, which means I shake all the time. Look. It's exhausting. I'm like Shakira, Shakira meets Muhammad Ali.
00:42
(Laughter)
00:45
CP is not genetic. It's not a birth defect. You can't catch it. No one put a curse on my mother's uterus, and I didn't get it because my parents are first cousins, which they are.
00:58
(Laughter)
01:03
It only happens from accidents, like what happened to me on my birth day.
01:07
Now, I must warn you, I'm not inspirational.
01:11
(Laughter)
01:13
And I don't want anyone in this room to feel bad for me, because at some point in your life, you have dreamt of being disabled. Come on a journey with me. It's Christmas Eve, you're at the mall, you're driving around in circles looking for parking, and what do you see? Sixteen empty handicapped spaces.
01:35
(Laughter)
01:38
And you're like, "God, can't I just be a little disabled?"
01:41
(Laughter)
01:46
Also, I've got to tell you, I've got 99 problems, and palsy is just one.
01:52

(Laughter)
01:53
If there was an Oppression Olympics, I would win the gold medal. I'm Palestinian, Muslim, I'm female, I'm disabled, and I live in New Jersey.
02:05
(Laughter)
02:07
(Applause)
02:11
If you don't feel better about yourself, maybe you should.
02:14
(Laughter)
02:15
Cliffside Park, New Jersey is my hometown. I have always loved the fact that my hood and my affliction share the same initials. I also love the fact that if I wanted to walk from my house to New York City, I could.
02:29
A lot of people with CP don't walk, but my parents didn't believe in "can't." My father's mantra was, "You can do it, yes you can can."
02:40
(Laughter) So, if my three older sisters were mopping, I was mopping. If my three older sisters went to public school, my parents would sue the school system and guarantee that I went too, and if we didn't all get A's, we all got my mother's slipper.
02:58
(Laughter)
03:01
My father taught me how to walk when I was five years old by placing my heels on his feet and just walking. Another tactic that he used is he would dangle a dollar bill in front of me and have me chase it.
03:15
(Laughter)
03:17
My inner stripper was very strong.
03:20
(Laughter)
03:21
Yeah. No, by the first day of kindergarten, I was walking like a champ who had been punched one too many times.
03:28
(Laughter)
03:30
Growing up, there were only six Arabs in my town, and they were all my family.
03:35
(Laughter)

03:36
Now there are 20 Arabs in town, and they are still all my family.
03:40
(Laughter)
03:41
I don't think anyone even noticed we weren't Italian.
03:44
(Laughter)
03:48
(Applause)
03:51
This was before 9/11 and before politicians thought it was appropriate to use "I hate Muslims" as a campaign slogan. The people that I grew up with had no problem with my faith. They did, however, seem very concerned that I would starve to death during Ramadan. I would explain to them that I have enough fat to live off of for three whole months, so fasting from sunrise to sunset is a piece of cake.
04:16
(Laughter)
04:17
I have tap-danced on Broadway. Yeah, on Broadway. It's crazy.
04:23
(Applause)
04:24
My parents couldn't afford physical therapy, so they sent me to dancing school. I learned how to dance in heels, which means I can walk in heels. And I'm from Jersey, and we are really concerned with being chic, so if my friends wore heels, so did I.
04:40
And when my friends went and spent their summer vacations on the Jersey Shore, I did not. I spent my summers in a war zone, because my parents were afraid that if we didn't go back to Palestine every single summer, we'd grow up to be Madonna.
04:56
(Laughter)
05:01
Summer vacations often consisted of my father trying to heal me, so I drank deer's milk, I had hot cups on my back, I was dunked in the Dead Sea, and I remember the water burning my eyes and thinking, "It's working! It's working!"
05:17
(Laughter)
05:20
But one miracle cure we did find was yoga. I have to tell you, it's very boring, but before I did yoga, I was a stand-up comedian who can't stand up. And now I can stand on my head. My parents reinforced this notion that I could do anything, that no dream was impossible, and my dream was to be on the daytime soap opera "General Hospital."
05:49

(Laughter)
05:50
I went to college during affirmative action and got a sweet scholarship to ASU, Arizona State University, because I fit every single quota.
05:59
(Laughter)
06:00
I was like the pet lemur of the theater department. Everybody loved me. I did all the less-than-intelligent kids' homework, I got A's in all of my classes, A's in all of their classes.
06:13
(Laughter)
06:14
Every time I did a scene from "The Glass Menagerie," my professors would weep. But I never got cast. Finally, my senior year, ASU decided to do a show called "They Dance Real Slow in Jackson." It's a play about a girl with CP. I was a girl with CP. So I start shouting from the rooftops, "I'm finally going to get a part! I have cerebral palsy! Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, I'm free at last!" I didn't get the part.
06:46
(Laughter)
06:48
Sherry Brown got the part. I went racing to the head of the theater department crying hysterically, like someone shot my cat, to ask her why, and she said it was because they didn't think I could do the stunts. I said, "Excuse me, if I can't do the stunts, neither can the character."
07:06
(Laughter)
07:10
(Applause)
07:14
This was a part that I was literally born to play they gave it to a non-palsy actress. College was imitating life. Hollywood has a sordid history of casting able-bodied actors to play disabled onscreen.
07:33
Upon graduating, I moved back home, and my first acting gig was as an extra on a daytime soap opera. My dream was coming true. And I knew that I would be promoted from "Diner Diner" to "Wacky Best Friend" in no time.
07:48
(Laughter)
07:49
But instead, I remained a glorified piece of furniture that you could only recognize from the back of my head, and it became clear to me that casting directors didn't hire fluffy, ethnic, disabled actors. They only hired perfect people. But there were exceptions to the rule. I grew up watching Whoopi Goldberg, Roseanne Barr, Ellen, and all of these women had one thing in common: they were comedians. So I became a comic.

08:17

(Laughter)

08:20

(Applause)

08:23

My first gig was driving famous comics from New York City to shows in New Jersey, and I'll never forget the face of the first comic I ever drove when he realized that he was speeding down the New Jersey Turnpike with a chick with CP driving him.

08:39

(Laughter)

08:40

I've performed in clubs all over America, and I've also performed in Arabic in the Middle East, uncensored and uncovered.

08:48

(Laughter)

08:50

Some people say I'm the first stand-up comic in the Arab world. I never like to claim first, but I do know that they never heard that nasty little rumor that women aren't funny, and they find us hysterical.

09:03

(Laughter)

09:07

In 2003, my brother from another mother and father Dean Obeidallah and I started the New York Arab-American Comedy Festival, now in its 10th year. Our goal was to change the negative image of Arab-Americans in media, while also reminding casting directors that South Asian and Arab are not synonymous.

09:28

(Laughter)

09:31

Mainstreaming Arabs was much, much easier than conquering the challenge against the stigma against disability.

09:42

My big break came in 2010. I was invited to be a guest on the cable news show "Countdown with Keith Olbermann." I walked in looking like I was going to the prom, and they shuffle me into a studio and seat me on a spinning, rolling chair.

09:59

(Laughter)

10:00

So I looked at the stage manager and I'm like, "Excuse me, can I have another chair?" And she looked at me and she went, "Five, four, three, two ..." And we were live, right? So I had to grip onto the anchor's desk so that I wouldn't roll off the screen during the segment, and when the interview was over, I was livid. I had finally gotten my chance and I blew it, and I knew I would never get invited back. But not only did Mr. Olbermann invite me back, he made me a full-time contributor, and he taped down my chair.

10:34

(Laughter)

10:37

(Applause)

10:40

One fun fact I learned while on the air with Keith Olbermann was that humans on the Internet are scumbags.

10:48

(Laughter) People say children are cruel, but I was never made fun of as a child or an adult. Suddenly, my disability on the world wide web is fair game. I would look at clips online and see comments like, "Yo, why's she tweakin'?" "Yo, is she retarded?" And my favorite, "Poor Gumby-mouth terrorist. What does she suffer from? We should really pray for her." One commenter even suggested that I add my disability to my credits: screenwriter, comedian, palsy.

11:24

Disability is as visual as race. If a wheelchair user can't play Beyoncé, then Beyoncé can't play a wheelchair user. The disabled are the largest — Yeah, clap for that, man. Come on.

11:38

(Applause)

11:43

People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world, and we are the most underrepresented in entertainment.

11:50

The doctors said that I wouldn't walk, but I am here in front of you. However, if I grew up with social media, I don't think I would be. I hope that together, we can create more positive images of disability in the media and in everyday life. Perhaps if there were more positive images, it would foster less hate on the Internet. Or maybe not. Maybe it still takes a village to teach our children well.

12:19

My crooked journey has taken me to some very spectacular places. I got to walk the red carpet flanked by soap diva Susan Lucci and the iconic Loreen Arbus. I got to act in a movie with Adam Sandler and work with my idol, the amazing Dave Matthews. I toured the world as a headliner on Arabs Gone Wild. I was a delegate representing the great state of New Jersey at the 2008 DNC. And I founded Maysoon's Kids, a charity that hopes to give Palestinian refugee children a sliver of the chance my parents gave me. But the one moment that stands out the most was when I got -- before this moment --

13:04

(Laughter)

13:08

(Applause)

13:11

But the one moment that stands out the most was when I got to perform for the man who floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee, has Parkinson's and shakes just like me, Muhammad Ali.

13:26
(Applause)
13:33
(Applause ends)
13:35
It was the only time that my father ever saw me perform live, and I dedicate this talk to his memory.
13:42
(Arabic) Allah yerhamak yaba.
13:45
(English) My name is Maysoon Zayid, and if I can can, you can can.
13:50
(Cheering)
13:52
(Applause)

"I Needed to See the Politic Being Lived": Virgie Tovar on Fat Activism and Digital Platforms

Virgie Tovar is an author and activist who speaks and writes on the topics of fat discrimination and its intersection with gender, race, and sexuality. She is the editor of the anthology *Hot & Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love & Fashion* (Seal Press, 2012), the organizer of Babecamp, and publishes extensively with online forums, including *Ravishly*, *BuzzFeed*, the *New York Times*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

Hannah McGregor (interviewer) is an Assistant Professor of Publishing at Simon Fraser University, where her research and teaching focus on the histories and futures of print and digital media in Canada. She is the co-creator of *Witch, Please*, a feminist podcast on the Harry Potter world, and the creator of the podcast *Secret Feminist Agenda*.

Could you start off by explaining to the reader what you do? How would you define your work?

I primarily identify as a public intellectual working around issues of fat politics and fat liberation. I'm a fat activist, but my primary contribution to the movement is theoretically unpacking fatphobia. I use the academic training that I have in order to deconstruct and intersectionally approach issues like fatphobia and fat-shaming. Surprisingly, I've ended up professionalizing my activism, and now I lecture at universities, as well as teach a four-week online class that offers a crash course in fat positive feminism [Babecamp].

And what led you to this surprising career path?

I grew up a fat kid, I come from a fat family, and there was pretty much no way I wasn't going to be fat, with the exception of really extreme intervention of some kind. That means, in this modern age, that I grew up being taught to feel ashamed of my body and to feel a sense of worthlessness. I deeply internalized that education that I think a lot of fat women, and even not so fat women, receive, and for years and years I played out that internalization through self harm, through extreme dieting and exercise.

Through a series of happy coincidences, I ended up getting taken off that path. One of the very first interventions in my education in fatphobia was actually dating men. It wasn't a particularly radical act, to date straight dudes, but they were able to disrupt this narrative that I'd been taught: that I was completely undesirable, that no one would ever want to date me or sleep with me. Then I was introduced to feminism at university, and ultimately went to grad school, where I researched fat women. That became the final intervention, when I was introduced through the research to a community of fat activists—fat-positive queer people in the Bay area. Being introduced to that community became the coup-de-grâce; I needed to see the politic being lived, and that was what this group of activists gave to me.

I wouldn't have come to the research without these really personal, touchstone moments, but through the research I was able to meet all of these people. And it became really clear that I wanted to write a book about them that introduced them to the world. Before I went to grad school, I had pitched a single-authored manifesto called *Fatties of the World, Unite*. At the time—this was 2008 or 2009—there was no market for that kind of work at all. You know, there had not been an anthology published on the topic since *Shadow on a Tightrope* [a 1995 collection of essays edited by Lisa Schoenfielder and Barb Wieser]. Even though the editor really liked the work, really liked my voice, the marketing team ultimately decided that it was not ready for the market—or the market was not ready for it.

As I was completing my Master's degree, I started to hear and see the rumblings of fat activism, and I was like "oh my god, this thing is about to explode." And so I reached out to the editor again and said 'hey, this thing is about to blow up; I don't know if you're seeing what I'm seeing, but y'all need to get on this train now if you want to publish this book, because it's a ground-breaking book and the world needs to meet these women who are doing this fucking incredible work.' The idea of the anthology had really emerged alongside some of my own maturity around writing. The problem with a single authored work is that it's so easy for somebody to read it and think 'this person is special, this person just has some strange thing about her that makes her able to stop dieting forever, but I can't. I felt that, with the anthology, you can have thirty people who are telling you a story. Thirty people is a lot of people! That makes the work they're doing feel more tenable, when there's a lot of people talking about it. So anyway, the anthology emerged [*Hot & Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love & Fashion* (2012)], and even before the book was published, I was getting invited to speak at universities on the topic. It was through the anthology that my work became organically professionalized.

You stepped into the public as somebody who could talk about this thing that people wanted to talk about.

And who could talk about it in an intersectional and a "non-intimidating" way, that wasn't academic in nature. That's why I'm so bad a being an academic. I have the training, but the aesthetic is so deeply repugnant to most people, including myself.

Inside and outside the academy, it seems like we all hate it!

Yes. And I was always unwilling to do the work of showing that every single thought I have has a genealogy that begins with white masculinity. I refuse to do that. And there's just no way to succeed in the academy if you're not willing to do that. So I decided we're not compatible.

So let's talk intersectionality. The keywords of this special issue are *feminism*, *publics*, and the *digital*. Let's start with feminism. I wanted to begin by asking if you define your work as feminist, but you already have. So now I'm wondering if you could define the feminism of your praxis. What does feminism mean to you?

That's such a good question, gosh. I actually see feminism as almost an aesthetic more so than an ideology, if that makes any sense. Of course, I'm certainly familiar with traditional definitions of feminism, but when we talk about things like closing the wage gap, we leave out some very important parts of the conversation. There's kind of a silent understanding that we just need to make edits to the system as it exists now, that it's largely a good system. And I don't know that I'm willing to concede that. I was recently asked to do a talk at a historically all-dude college, and the students there were talking about the limitations of the feminism they saw on campus. They were like, 'we only ever talk about the wage gap,' and I was like, 'yeah, I guess the problem with that is it completely obscures the fact that capitalism and misogyny are BFF's!' You cannot interrogate gender inequality without looking at all these systems upon which those inequalities pivot. I think of feminism as an aesthetic because there are types of feminism that are emerging now, that will emerge, that cannot be encapsulated by a definition. And that's what's exciting to me about it.

I think that my feminism manifests in my work in myriad ways. Let's work this from top to bottom. To begin, I have taken my academic training and refused to accept the privilege of being entrenched in the academy. I'm sharing this information and making it accessible to the public on the Internet. I think of that as feminism. The Internet, which at one point in its inception was about nerds and people at the periphery getting together and mobilizing, has become a commoditizable space.

But I still think that even the use of cyber feminism, the use of the Internet as a tool to convey ideas and to demand justice, is a feminist act.

I also think about things like my outfits as feminism. I think of fashion as a deeply feminist battleground. Even something like my nails—my choice of how long to keep them, what colour. What am I conveying with my fashion? Who am I speaking to when I'm wearing certain outfits? To me, that's feminism.

And then, politically, the work itself is ultimately about feminism, it's ultimately about women's liberation, because fat is a women's issue. Yes, absolutely, all genders experience fatphobia, but we're really talking about the second-class citizenship of femininity. Discussing this work in the way that I do is so deeply tied to the liberation of women. Almost all my professional work is with women; specifically, a lot of my work is in conversation with women of colour and queers because my work comes from a queer tradition. I'm a straight lady who was like, hey guess what, queers know everything. Queers are creating some of the best theory in the world, and so let's listen to them. I'm a social justice oriented person, but if I weren't, I think that just based on an objective assessment I would come to the same conclusion: that queer people and people of colour are creating some of the best theory in existence. So I think that conversing with that work, insisting on centring that work, is also deeply feminist.

Those are a lot of things.

And that's wonderful, because feminism is messy like that. But I love your definition of feminism as an aesthetic. I'd like to return to that point when we speak later about Instagram. But first, I want to ask you about your self-identification as a public intellectual. I'm interested in hearing more about how you define your public. When we speak publicly, we generally have an addressee, or an audience, in mind. We know who we *think* we're talking to—and who we think we're *not* talking to, right? You've already framed your public as being non-academic (which immediately means a much larger public). So how else would you define your public? Who are you talking to?

I'm talking to women. You know, this is a bit personal, but I grew up in a dysfunctional home, where I was the hero child, the golden child, and it was my job to save everyone. And I feel like I bring in this deep sense of needing to protect people into my work. I was also raised by Mexican immigrants who I watched getting humiliated every day; I watched them and I felt it, even before I understood the language of what was happening. So in a lot of ways the people who I'm talking to are the people like me; I'm talking to women, I'm talking to people of colour, I'm talking to fat people. I'm trying to encourage the people who feel they have to apologize.

One of my own critiques of my work is that sometimes the people I want to be speaking to don't actually need to hear what I have to say. They may not be benefiting from it in the same way that people who are less well versed in all of these issues might. In my mind, I'm speaking to the group of people who are the victims of the things that I'm talking about, like sexism and racism and fatphobia and xenophobia. I understand that other people see my work, but I'm not necessarily talking to them. You can sit at the table, you can listen, but you're not my primary audience, I'm not as invested in discussion with you. Last night, for example, I gave a lecture [as part of the Berkeley Public Library's 2016 Fat Positive Summer Festival] to a room full of women and queer people and people of colour. In those moments, when the room is exactly what you want the room to look like, I think, I did something right in advertising this. I don't know what I did that was special, but this is exactly the room that I wanted.

It's like your community has heard you.

Yeah! Totally! There are so many cultural forces that seek to gaslight marginalized people into believing that we're overstating things or that we're being paranoid or that we're just not understanding reality as it actually exists. For me to be able to get up there and, I think quite articulately and succinctly, convey that there's evidence to back up people's experiences – that means a lot to me. In that way, the work is deeply therapeutic for me and also, I hope, for others.

This is an aside, but have you by any chance listened to the most recent episode of *This American Life*? [589: Tell Me I'm Fat]

Yeah, I just wrote an article about the whole thing! [http://www.ravishly.com/2016/06/23/take-cake-american-life-really-bad-talking-about-fat]

Did you? I found it really moving, and I'm trying to figure out how to send it to my parents because I think it will help them to understand me better. But what struck me was the lack of space that they gave to gaslighting. It seemed to be justifying of the experiences of living in a fat body, to be saying, 'you're not imagining it, it is happening.'

Well, I'm biased against the episode because I feel like *This American Life* has wasted a lot of my time. I literally got an email from Sarai Walker [author of *Dietland*] just a few minutes ago, and she was like 'they wasted my time too!' They just keep pre-interviewing a few people. And for me, those are billable hours. You got two interviews, NPR, you're never getting another one for free. But I think my issue—and this is what I say in the article—is that I was troubled by the position of Elna Baker's story as the central narrative. Of course, I understand that it's NPR and the personal story was always going to be the central narrative. But they end up repeating this framework that I find deeply sexist in which the marginalized person—the woman—is the one on trial; they're the one whose privacy is always presumed as non-existent. The result—and this is a big problem I have with NPR in general—is this kind of white male voyeurism, this idea that there's an invisible listener who's not actually being indicted even though it's their complicity that's primarily responsible for the suffering being described. My boyfriend is an NPR-listener, and I often ask him: what is it about this violence and poverty porn that you enjoy so much? Because there's no call to action. It's just you, listening to marginalized people talk about their lives so you can discuss it over dinner. This is sociopathic to me!

And of course then you feel good about yourself for listening. It's the catharsis of the middlebrow reading experience.

Yeah! So to expect, or even encourage, this woman who I think is a producer of the show [Baker], in the name of truth or in the name of justice, to humiliate herself—that's horrifying to me. I know about political strategy, how people will choose these really moving narratives of victimization because they're affecting, but NPR doesn't intend to act on this in any way! It's not like there's going to be legislation now, or a demand for human rights! That's not what's happening!

The listeners just get to move on. I keep thinking of a Roxane Gay quote: "the only thing women are allowed to be experts on is themselves." Women's voices are framed as only ever speaking autobiographically. And yet! NPR produces texts that I can send to my middle-class white parents!

Yes!

Alright, sorry, we got off script. But this topic of gaslighting brings me to my next question. The Internet is both an amazing space that allows us to do things we wouldn't be able to do otherwise, and a garbage pile. Let's start with the garbage. I'm interested in hearing you speak about the kinds of resistance that you might have encountered to your activism, specifically in online spaces.

In general, I would say I don't have to deal with a lot of it online. I do have a dedicated Reddit hate-page, which I never really thought I'd have! I have a theory that being a woman of colour, a cyberfeminist of colour, is actually a protective factor. I find that most of the people who are extremely awful online are actually white men, and there's kind of this idea that women of colour don't matter. The culture already understands women of colour as always already marginal and disinteresting and dehumanized. White men are particularly invested in policing and engaging with white femininity. So honestly, I was shocked that I got on the Reddit radar, because I assumed I was like a proto-human, even lower than a white woman to them.

As an analytical person who always brings a scholarly lens to things, I find the mechanism they're activating on Reddit really interesting. They got really mad at me for a blog post I wrote about deciding to block an old friend of mine. I'd met him when I was living in New York when I was very young, like 22, and it was clear that we were interested in each other, but also that he was holding back. And then, a decade later, he ended up with this thin, white, upper middle-class woman who does marathons and has made him thinner and all these kinds of things. And I thought: I've sensed you since I was 22 and now I get to see you! So I wrote about the decision to bet on my intuition about what the fuck happened instead of betting on the possibility that this was a nice guy and I was interpreting it incorrectly; I decided to act on my intuition rather than gaslighting myself. So I wrote about the decision to block

this guy for what I called stealth bigotry. And that was what broke the camel's back for Reddit.

The mechanism they used to attack me wasn't based on my looks; they actually attacked me based on my interpretation of reality. They tried to collectively gaslight me. It wasn't comments about whether or not they found me attractive, whether or not they felt like they could fuck me, or whatever the typical male method of policing women is, which when you're a fat woman is usually about you being ugly or disgusting. This was more sophisticated. It was literally the desire to undermine my interpretation of facts; they used words like 'delusional.' My moniker on Reddit is 'The Queen of Delusion.' From a linguistic standpoint, I found that super interesting, to be honest. But of course Reddit is a space that's for bratty white boys with privilege, so I don't think it's any coincidence that they activate this particular kind of sexist tactic. It's a tactic that men of influence, white men of influence, have often used. The psychological has long been the battleground that white masculinity has fought against the feminine.

It's reminiscent of accusations of hysteria.

Yes, exactly. So, that's one example of the garbage online. In general, I haven't dealt with a whole lot of stuff. In part, that's just because my platform isn't as big as other people's. I think that, if I was dealing with a volume of 100,000 people versus my 10,000, that would be different. And also, as I mentioned, I think being a woman of colour on some level grants me this kind of stealth status because white dudes aren't as invested in policing women of colour's femininity, I think. Anyway, I've deeply internalized the idea, at this point in my life, that other people's bigotry is their problem.

For example, recently Fox News did a story on me in which they claimed that I'd said something that I didn't in fact say. I was doing a telecommuted lecture with another person for a university—she had a medical background, and was an academic, and was like a white, thin, straight woman. And Fox News said that I talked about thin privilege. I actually didn't even use the phrase 'thin privilege,' it was the other woman who did, and they didn't even mention her. I'm not that invested in discussing thin privilege. I don't discuss thin people in my work, it's not of interest to me. But I think for her, as a thin person, she was able to discuss this in a way that was very personal to her. So they used her words

and said that I said them, and this created this incredible deluge of intense misogyny and hatred on Twitter. It was fascinating because I was just like, whoa, you look really foolish, sirs! That was my reaction—all I can do is sit back and be amused and horrified. I don't need to substantiate or deny anything you have to say because you're clearly a sociopath, and I don't have to do the labour of exposing you as one because you've already done it.

I feel like that's generally my attitude: just sit back and watch the crazy theatre, because there's nothing else to be done. What's hard is that a lot of fat activists, a lot of fat people are encouraged to deeply internalize the idea that we're inferior, and we behave sometimes out of that sense of inferiority rather than just being like 'you're a bigot, and that's your problem, and I'm sorry that you exist, I'm sorry that you're a bigot.' You know, there's nothing to be done about it.

The last thing I'm going to say is that, because I'm on more 'feminine' platforms—Instagram is probably my favourite platform—and these men are such misogynists, they wouldn't dare post anything because it would threaten their sexuality or something. They wouldn't post something on Instagram because it's a feminized platform. I actually don't like Twitter because I have to be terse, and that's totally not a feminine thing! I am a highly superlatively ridiculously feminine person, so I have no interest in a platform that seeks to limit my ability to speak to 140 characters. I see Twitter as a coded masculine space. I know a lot of feminists are on Twitter, and I'm not trying to belittle their work. But for me, I interpret the medium or the platform as very masculine, and the idea that you have to convey thoughts in a short, quippy way is a very masculine thing to me. It smacks of utility and all that fucking masculinist bullshit that I don't care for. And the fact that I don't like Twitter is a protective factor because these men are such homophobes, they're unwilling to actually come to me, in my house.

So tell me more about the platforms that you *do* like to engage on. What platforms do you use a lot?

I use Instagram and Facebook almost exclusively, but I'm starting to feel a little bit out of fashion! Like everybody is on Snapchat now, but I'm kind of slow to change platforms.

And what has drawn you to those platforms?

Well, Instagram is visual, and I love to tell stories with photographs. I'm very image driven. It's also a platform that, perhaps because it's visually driven and not verbally driven, has become less of a forum for opposing opinions. I feel like I can more easily find the community that I'm interested in creating and watching. Facebook, on the other hand, I treat like a microblogging platform. Most of the time at this point, I can't afford to microblog because in general I have so many writing deadlines that, if I have an idea, I need to turn it into a 500-word essay. But I like that I can have this not-all-the-way half-baked analysis, or instead of having an argument driven or nuanced discussion, I can just vent in all caps. For example, I was just venting about the Brock Turner case in all caps. Especially considering the specificity of the work I do, and what people have come to expect of me writing-wise, I'm not gonna write a piece on Brock Turner, because I'm not in the best position to do it. There are plenty of other feminists who should be writing about it and who could do it better than I do. And yet, I would like to discuss it, I would like to discuss how it endangers me, and the specific ways in which it does so. So Facebook has become a platform where I can experiment with ideas that have not been fully developed; I use it as a sounding board in general. If I need advice, I go to Facebook and I ask people what they think I should do. It's also great as a dissemination tool. I would say like almost every person who's taken Babecamp found out about it through Facebook.

I find your comments on Instagram really intriguing, because I've noticed something similar about it. There seems to be a greater possibility for creating communities on there. Even though, logically, it should work in a way very similar to Twitter, it really doesn't. I would like to talk a little bit about your interest in visual platforms. When we look at the history of the Internet, we see that it wasn't always a visual medium, and it wasn't inevitable that it turned out to be so driven by images. I'm wondering if that aspect of the way that the Internet looks in 2016 might account, in part, for the acceleration of body positive activism online. Is there a link between the visual and this particular kind of activism? How has Instagram as a platform been connected to the rise of a more mainstream fat activism?

This goes back to something I mentioned at the beginning of this interview. For me, the coup-de-grâce of getting involved in fat activism was meeting people who were doing the thing I was interested in doing that had only been theoretical before that point. It's the embodiment element, it's the witnessing element. When someone has a body that is like yours, or close enough to yours, and you see it doing things that you've been told you cannot do, that bodies like that *do not do*, it becomes part of a body of evidence. The embodiment itself is so important: seeing people in amazing outfits, seeing how people use jewellery or use makeup, those kinds of things, are extremely important. As somebody who has watched this newest, Internet-focused iteration of fat politics emerge from nearly the inception to now—and again, fat politics isn't new at all—what's so neat is that, when it first started, there were a lot of women who didn't know any single human being, as a friend or in their community, who did that kind of activism. But when we go to the Internet and we see women, they become part of our community. I can be emboldened through their behaviour because I know that somebody else is doing it, and if I forget that, I can go back to the Internet and look, and see, and remind myself. That lone person who didn't know a single other fat girl who wore short shorts or whatever, I think that that is changing. I think that a lot of it is because people can look to somebody else and get inspiration. And to return to the feminism conversation, I think it's this deep act of intimacy between women, often, or between feminine people, that you can get inspiration from what they're doing or wearing, and make meaning for yourself.

There has also been some critique levelled against the fat activist communities on Instagram. Of course, there have been critiques from outside the community that I'm not interested in, but there have been critiques from within the community, particularly from queer women and people of colour, saying that the form that body positivity takes on Instagram is overly focused on consumerism and normative gender presentations. Many fat celebrities, as public figures, still play into a lot of traditional notions of gender performance. Do you agree that that is a face that body positivity has taken on Instagram? Or do you take issue with that critique?

I see the validity of the critique. I have problems with the consumerism argument because I don't think that consumerism and the deployment of fashion as a political tool are the same thing. Certainly, queers of colour know this. Queers of colour know that fashion has long been deployed as a political tool, especially within queer communities. In some ways, though not exclusively, queers are one of the communities that have most proactively and through necessity created codes and gestures through fashion.

I'm actually about to write about this for a journal, so this is like the preview of it: I did a very small content analysis looking at fat dyke literature in the late 1980s and the 90s and comparing it to some of the representation of largely straight white cisgender women in the fat movement now, and fascinatingly enough, these women are deploying the some kinds of aesthetics as fat dykes from the 80s and 90s. They're deploying this unapologetic use of food as a way of conveying anti-assimilation, the insistence upon sex positivity, an open sexuality, and the use of clothing—short clothing, loud clothing—except that they've de-queered it. It's funny to me, but when I look at some of the visible fat straight white women online, I see a look that is wholesale coopted from queer high femininity, and I think that a lot of people are doing it without any understanding of the political lineage of the look. This is all part of the history of straight people misinterpreting queer gestures. We know the history of that, that's a thing. And I don't think that it's done with malice; it's done with complete ignorance of the gesture.

But I thought you were gonna ask me about the homogeneity of the size of the people who have become the face of the fat movement. I have some things to say about that: it's fucked up, and it's cyclical.

Yes, it's like the body positive movement has sort of expanded acceptable bodies by one or two steps only; you can be fat, but you can be _this_ fat and no fatter. It reminds me of what you were saying earlier on about the wage gap, as in, if we continue with the system of 'some bodies are okay and some bodies are not' and just slightly expand the circle of what bodies are okay, we haven't actually done anything to the system.

Right! And I think that's what's so hard—there's almost a depoliticization of fat politics that's happening. When something that had been deeply political becomes

unseated from that politic, becomes something you can take on or take off like a garment, that's when things become really scary. What I've noticed getting a lot of traction specifically within fat visibility is a focus on beauty. For example, I was tracking different hashtags and I was fascinated to find that #effyourbeautystandards has over a million tags on Instagram. It's interesting to linguistically break down the phrase "eff your beauty standards," like the choice of the infantilized "eff" rather than "fuck," which is kind of this weird nod to respectability, and then "your"—it's talking to somebody outside the movement, I guess. And then this invocation of beauty. If you're trying to get justice and your vehicle is beauty, then that's not going to work out for you.

On the one hand, I'm _not_ surprised that the beauty thing is happening. On the other hand, I sort of see this as part of an ideological progression. I think there are some people who will always be obsessed with the beauty thing, and they're not going to move past that. And they're always going to be the ones who get the most traction, because they're activating a tenet of our current society that's very powerful. But the people who really resonate with that beauty message for a few years might become the people who ultimately identify more as open feminists later on.

I just wanted to tease open, at least to some degree, the fact that even within the community of body positivity on a platform like Instagram, there are still forms of conflict and resistance. There are politicized debates within the community about what it means to be fat positive or what it means to be fat or what it means to fuck with beauty standards. So, my last question is: is there anything that you think is pertinent to this topic that I haven't brought up?

One of the things that I found really cool, when I really looked at what fat activism was doing online: from the most assimilationist gestures to the most radical, they all had one thing in common, which is that they demanded the fat body is permanent. And I found that really surprising! I was kind of amazed. It's arguable that they're saying that but they're conveying a different thing visually. I could buy into that argument or be convinced. But largely, it's a big deal that all the way from the top to the bottom, they're all saying that fatness is a thing that's not going away. That's a thing that just kind of struck me. I think we've hit a pivotal tipping

point in fat politics now; where there had been maybe a few traceable ideologies I think there's going to become even more and I'm a little excited and a little scared to see what's next.

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A Muslim Student's Letter

Rabia Mir is a graduate student in Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia.

My Dear Professors:

I write to you today from the traditional, ancestral, unceded lands of the Musqueam people. You have taught me to reflect on this land acknowledgement. I am now aware of the coloniality (Quijano 1999) within my own education, the erasure of histories, the omission of narratives, and the dismissal of experiences. It has humbled me, as I now understand that I profit from a settler community. I am an insignificant and unwilling cog in colonial machinery—machinery that I do not know how to halt on my own.

I write to you today out of choice, out of an eagerness to learn, and out of hope that I will find ways of making my anger intelligible. Allow me to display the identity symbols I wear. I am a racialized Muslim mother. My citizenship is not from a North American or European country. I am Pakistani, and while I have lived, studied, and worked in the global North for over fifteen years, I remain Pakistani. This is important for you to remember because you are oblivious to the criminality my citizenship awards me. I am a security threat until proven otherwise. I had assumed that the privilege of a Harvard undergraduate education would grant me the right to not be treated like a security threat, but it does not.

When applying to undertake graduate education in Canada, I had to go through a medical exam for my study permit to prove that I did not carry "third-world" diseases to your country. I sat like cattle in forty-degree heat, in an outdoor compound of the International Organisation of Migration with my one-year-old daughter, waiting to go through our medical exams. It was Ramadan and I was fasting but

the heat did not deter me from proving that I am physically worthy of entering your territory. People were waiting outside in the heat, were yelled at and were asked to provide multiple urine samples and x-rays, in order to prove their fitness. That was humiliation at its best. If I had any doubt in my mind of being human enough, the visa process guaranteed to break that illusion.

I was asked to submit police certificates or intelligence agency clearance from all countries that I had lived in since the age of eighteen. This is a practice usually reserved for those applying for permanent residency within Canada. However, as I said earlier, my citizenship alone merits criminality unless proven otherwise. When the Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) denied my study permit the first time (due to a clerical error), I applied again because my eagerness to learn outweighed my unwillingness to bear humiliation. I applied again to prove my worth. I have applied for visas to visit, work, or study more than thirty-two times in approximately twenty countries. My loss of dignity when obtaining a Canadian study permit, however, was most distinct. University administrations seek international students through disingenuous advertising in the hopes of improving finances. What kind of inclusivity can an educational institute promise international students?

I have worked for corporations that were willing to provide resources for me to obtain the proper work permit, thus minimising any humiliation on my part. I have not seen the same from universities. Please do not tell me you understand the bureaucracy of the visa system because you had to apply for that one Chinese or Indian visa to conduct research overseas. You do not acknowledge the privilege of your citizenship.

Now that I am here in Canada, allow me to do the work I came to do. Please do not tell me to stand in solidarity with those affected by the US travel ban (initially proposed in February 2017 and upheld by the US Supreme Court in June 2018) by not going to academic conferences in the US. My mobility to travel has come at a huge cost. The travel ban by the Trump administration was the best thing that has happened to me in that regard. It shows why it is difficult for people who do not have the right passport to attend workshops and conferences in North America and Western Europe. The problem has always existed; you seem to be outraged only now.

Please do not just "acknowledge" your privilege, truly recognize it. Embed that recognition in all your actions as a teacher. When you choose the syllabus, do not gravitate only towards white men for theory; understand that "modernity" and "enlightenment" are not concepts to aspire to but reasons nations were colonized around the world. If students do not connect to the work of those theorists, it is because their lived experiences are not accounted for. That "research," as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) said, "will always sound like a dirty word to many"; not just to those indigenous to Turtle Island, or to what we know as New Zealand or Australia, but to many marginalized communities who were "empirically" deemed to be less human. Orientalism (Said 1978) and eurocentrism are alive and thriving in the syllabi I come across today. I do not need white guilt. I need white conscientiousness or, as Friere (1983) said, "critical conscientiousness."

You have students who have burned every bridge to get to your classroom. They truly have nowhere to go because they have risked finances, family, and more to learn from you. Recognize that when you schedule classes outside working hours you make it harder for single parents as they have to make tough decisions. Should they go to the class, even though it is outside regular hours, and pay tuition fees, daycare fees, and additional childcare fees? Should they sacrifice seeing their child for the whole day? Or should they just not go to the class? Sometimes the latter is not even an option because the class is mandatory. Do you really know how much you disadvantage students who must choose among tuition, groceries, and childcare costs to attend your class?

When I hear about the struggles of my indigenous colleagues, I wonder why do we not better support each other. There is a false sense of "post" coloniality among those from or living in ex-European colonies around the world. The fact that many nations have an "Independence Day" does not mean that decolonization has occurred. Coloniality in this context is reduced to the presence of colonial administrators (Grosfoguel 2007). Just as Bonilla-Silva (2010) makes a case for racism without racists, the ex-colonies need to introspect and address coloniality without the colonial bodies. In the context of higher education, the views of Thomas Macaulay, Head of the Committee of Public Instruction for the Indian Subcontinent in 1835, are still valid today:

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

Our curriculum, language preference, university rankings, bureaucracy, legal codes, ideals of knowledge, standards of beauty—all of these uphold coloniality and ensure continued epistemicide (Santos 2013). We, as scholars, are to blame for that. Am I, as Macaulay stated in 1835, still "Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect"? Especially in intellect? As universities throughout Canada commit themselves to the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, how do you as teachers commit to decolonizing knowledge? How do you partake in the practice of "epistemic disobedience" that breaks the illusion of neutral education (Mignolo 2009)?

I never know which resistance to support. Maybe Black Lives Matter because I can relate to the violence of the police state and because I want to challenge the racism towards black Muslims within diverse Muslim communities? Or can I relate most to the struggles of undocumented workers and immigrants whose worth is measured by how much they contribute to the economy? Or maybe I should support the women's march? But then again, I do not like white celebrities speaking for my experiences when they continuously perpetuate the harmful stereotypes they seem so outraged by. Or maybe I should support those working against anti-Muslim racism? You might know this as Islamophobia but I do not like that word. The violence against Muslim bodies happens because they are deemed criminal—not human. It is not caused by fear. It is caused by hate. This accompanies a conviction of superiority amongst those who are not Muslim. While Muslims are not a race, it is the systemic nature of racism that I think is applicable (Müller-Uri and Opratko 2016). What is race, if not an ever-arbitrary and shifting concept in our imaginations?

To my professors who teach Islam (theologically, socially, anthropologically, and legally), I do not feel part of the *ummah* but I do feel that you carry the conflicting burden of trying to be a critical voice in the discourse of Islam while spending most of your energies addressing the harmful stereotypes. You are far fewer on campus than I would have hoped. Sometimes, you are on campuses in parts of North America or Western Europe where I am too afraid to study. I am afraid because I feel my daughter will be bullied at school or will have to explain a religion before she even understands what religion is. That she will have to pay for crimes she does not yet comprehend. How do I learn from you, my professors of Islam? How do we engage Muslim communities in an introspective, critical struggle to address the systems of oppression within us? How do we decolonise our own consciousness? Is the concept of an *ummah* an unrealisable dream? Will the *ajmi* and

ar'bi ever have the same rights? Why is there a stronger outcry for what is happening to American-Muslims but relative silence over Rohingya-Muslims or Uyghurs-Muslims or South-Asian working-class Muslims in Arab gulf states? And please let the women speak. I do not need validation from Muslim men to make my argument worthwhile. Oh yes, and if you stick me at the back of a room or in a corner and have *khutbahs* that only speak from your perspective or from the illusion of a Muslim *ummah*, I am not likely to show up for Friday prayers. Why do we talk about our experiences in Western Europe and North America but not about *riya* or *taqlid* or the hatred within our own communities? Trust me, I do not wish to undermine those experiences, but I also have no wish to undermine the experience of religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries. We should be just as outraged about that.

To those who hear me at academic conferences, please ask me questions or offer critique about my work. But do not ask me about Afghanistan because you consulted for the US State Department. Do not assume that I study radicalisation because I study *madaris*. Look at methodological and peer-review failures in the academic research on *madaris*, failures which equate all *madaris* to militant training camps without ever providing evidence for this generalisation. Do not sympathise with me afterwards because you think this all started because Donald Trump was elected President and Prime Minister Trudeau is the epitome of Canadian exceptionalism. Do not avoid eye contact as if you are afraid of offending me by looking at me. Please do not ask me how bad it is at airports, to relive stories of discrimination as you sympathise with phrases of "Oh no!" and "Oh dear!" and then run off to your next session. My misery is not for your intellectual entertainment.

People sometimes walk up to me and ask where I teach. When I say I am a master's student, the response is: "You're not even PhD?" I guess the value of my work is measured by my job title or my program and not by the merit of my work. Inside

universities, graduate students exchange looks when we hear professors refer to us as "cheap labour." You know we can hear you, right? How is this different from the corporate cultures you deplore? One of my fellow students commented, "It's like they have two ears, one to listen to us and others for their esteemed colleagues." All of this gives me some appreciation for the transparency of alt-right discourse. Its hate and superiority are out in the open. I can adjust my expectations of an author after reading their alt-right discourse, whereas in academia I walk away disoriented and disenchanted.

I would like to conduct my research but instead of pursuing my interests, I work to satisfy curiosity and address misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. When will the emotional and intellectual labour of anti-oppressive work shift to those who are privileged by the systemic discrimination in our societies? I have received feedback on papers by professors who are unable to differentiate between Islam and Islamism or Islamic and Islamist. You are surprised that there are 1.8 billion Muslims in the world who embody all markers of diversity and struggle with multiple systems of oppression. You ask me, kindly, if I speak to my daughter in Arabic. I used to be confused but now I understand: because I am Muslim, I must speak Arabic. I do not. Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria's Muslim populations contribute most to the 1.8 billion. Please reflect on that.

Professors, you, more so than the alt-right you are so eager to bash, are crippling me. You make me so physically and emotionally drained after class that I feel my head is filled with lead. I expect you to recognise, analyse, dissect, critique, deconstruct, and cite what you are doing wrong. Yet you do not.

I am here, present in body, mind, and soul. Ready to learn and contribute. Do you want to teach me?

Sincerely,

Rabia Mir

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Disability, Neurodiversity, and Feminism

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SPECIAL FORUM

Disability, Neurodiversity, and Feminism

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Keywords: disability, neurodiversity, feminism, graduate, early career, activism

There is a mutually invigorating line connecting feminist thinking with disability and neurodiversity theory, scholarship, and activism. Both fields interrogate established bodily hierarchies, particularly the normalization of certain bodies and minds and the pathologizing of others. Tightly bound margins around the perceived "correctly functioning" body –that of the white, able-bodied male – mean that the female, the queer, and the disabled body have all been branded as deficient or even "deviant" across history, and labelled as requiring disciplinary control or medical intervention. The recent case of Mokgadi Caster Semenya's ban from female track events on the basis of her naturally high testosterone levels offers one troubling example of the on going regulation of both the "natural female" body and of the "medically normal" body today.

Disability and neurodiversity are gendered concerns. Women with autism, for example, are more likely to be diagnosed later in life than men, and thus do not receive appropriate support mechanisms, since the diagnostic criteria for autism are biased toward stereotypically male behavior (Bargiela, Steward, and Mandy 2016). This imbalance is replicated in medical practice more broadly, since the white male body is typically used as the "neutral average" when developing and testing medical models of treatment (Mogil and Chanda 2005; Yoon et al. 2014). Disability and neurodiversity experience and reproductive rights also typically exist in close contingency. For example, in the run-up to the Eighth Amendment referendum on abortion rights in Ireland in 2018, the Catholic Church heavily publicized the reported statistic that 90% of babies diagnosed with Down's Syndrome in Britain are aborted as a central component of their pro-life campaign.[1] Counterbalancing this seeming prioritization of disability rights over women's reproductive rights is the historical (and continuing) practice that has seen many women with mental or physical disabilities deemed "unfit" to bear or raise children, or even to explore their own sexual desires. Indeed, for those of us committed to fostering a feminist classroom, it's worth noting that our female and transgender students are more likely to suffer from anxiety and mood disorders than their male and cisgender counterparts respectively (Cyranowski et al. 2000; Oswalt and Lederer 2016; Remes et al. 2017).

The intersection between feminist and disability concerns, then, offers rich ground for feminist scholars and activists – and indeed, it also affords a particularly broad-spectrum point of solidarity, for how many of us exist in a state of "perfect" bodily and mental health throughout our lives? We exist in an increasingly pressurized neoliberal university system, which often values its workers, and particularly its precarious graduate and early-career workers, almost entirely on the basis of our productivity, presuming a constantly and perfectly functioning body and mind that will tolerate any demanded workload, any degree of mental or physical stress. The graduate student might take comfort in the recognition of alternative models of "correct" bodily functioning, which offer the understanding that our bodies and minds do not always function – *should* not necessarily always function – according to institutional or free-market frameworks of expectation.

Nevertheless, disability recognition and representation are too often pushed to the margins of feminist activity. Indeed, certain ableist elements of feminist ideology – engrained ideas of

empowerment, autonomy, and self-reliance as mainstays of the feminist agenda – can run directly counter to intersectional disability/neurodiversity concerns. Following a stroke that left her quadriplegic, feminist filmmaker Bonnie Klein reported feeling "as if my colleagues are ashamed of me because I am no longer the image of strength, competence, and independence that feminists, including myself, are so eager to project" (Klein 2001, 73). Immersed, often unconsciously, in an ableist ideology that still idealizes bodily health and strength as a mark of worth, feminist scholarship and activism has repeatedly dismissed individuals who, by dint of their alternatively functioning bodies and minds, we reject as exemplars of "successful feminism." If we're tempted to think of the liberal academy as a bastion of social progressiveness, it's important to remember that, since multiple social and institutional obstacles still stand between individuals with disabilities and higher education, disability representation in both graduate programs and university faculties tends to sit well below the corresponding population average (Madriaga 2001, 902-03; Evans et al. 2017, 198-99). Many faculty buildings lack well-functioning or sometimes even basic access accommodations; conferences tend to lack audio-loop technology, sign language interpreters, or even printed access copies, and rarely operate according to inclusive "relaxed performance" standards; and demands that early-career scholars be geographically mobile does not allow for domestic or outpatient care requirements. As much as feminist practice stands to benefit from engagement with disability/neurodiversity scholarship and lived experience, we are doing little to enable that engagement.

The increasing popularity of easily abstracted terms like "intersectionality" obscures the stark reality that diversity is *hard work*. Within a graduate-school system already beset by competing claims on our emotional labor, such work can feel like an unfair additional burden. Enabling access and inclusion at all levels of our feminist practice entails questioning our own learned preconceptions and regulating our own rhetoric and responsive behaviour – and many of us may be more accustomed to demanding such labor from other people, rather than from ourselves. (Even those of us who identify as disabled or neurodivergent cannot rest easy, given the broad range of lived experience within the catch-all term "disability;" there is no such thing as the singular "disabled experience," any more than there is a singular "female experience.") It can be easy to dismiss complaints regarding access needs or ableist rhetoric when we perceive ourselves to be "on the right side" of the work in question: our protest march criticized for its wheelchair inaccessibility, the complaint that our hard-won gender theory seminar uses computer technology not adapted for a student with a visual impairment. But if there's one thing that will hinder feminism's progress in today's world, and in today's graduate schools, it is complacency – and that includes complacency about our own work as professedly intersectional feminists.

Notes

1. The "Love Both" campaign in Ireland cited this 90% figure to the "Parliamentary Inquiry into Abortion on the Grounds of Disability" (2013, 15). The exact percentage is contested across medical literature, but even conservative estimates record that more foetuses diagnosed with Down's Syndrome *in utero* are aborted than are carried to term.

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The Problem of Protection: Rethinking Rhetoric of Normalizing Surgeries

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Abstract: This essay focuses on the rhetoric of protection that emerges around infants who face the prospect of normalizing surgeries. Frequently, decisions to proceed with normalizing surgeries are made by doctors and parents with "protection" of the infant as a motivating force. "Protection," in such contexts, typically refers to protection of the infant from the inhospitable world that lies in wait for an individual whose body does not conform to social, morphological, and biological norms. While this concern may be valid and important, this essay argues that there are alternative narratives or notions of protection that must also be acknowledged and validated.

Keywords: protection, safety, intersex, disability, normativity, gender, legibility

> It is strange that her desire to protect me from harm had the unintentional consequence … of actually causing me harm.
> —Cassandra Aspinall, "Do I Make You Uncomfortable?"

> [B]odily-being is shaped not only by the surgeon's knife but also by the discourses that justify and contest the use of such instruments.
> —Nikki Sullivan, "The Somatechnics of Intersexuality"

> I question some of the assumptions leading well-intentioned people to believe that surgery for children with atypical bodies is a good solution to the difficulties children may face because of their atypicality.
> —Adrienne Asch, "Disability, Bioethics, and Human Rights"

> It is significant that today the lives of conjoined twins are considered tragic if the operation to separate them is not feasible. This does not always accord with the feelings of the conjoined twins themselves.
> —Elizabeth Grosz, "Intolerable Ambiguity"

When Cassandra Aspinall, herself born with a cleft palate, gave birth to her third son—who, like Cassandra, was born with a cleft palate—the issues she struggled with as both a child and an adult reemerged in new, extremely complicated ways. In her own life, Cassandra's parents had decided that she undergo surgery at a young age. Cassandra continued surgeries into her seventeenth year, and then chose against later procedures that would have made scarring much less evident. Aspinall recounts her own experience as a constant challenge to negotiate between what others thought about her and her appearance, and her own perceptions of herself. She does not share her story in order to warn against early appearance-normalizing surgery; instead, she urges parents to consider the motivations behind early surgical change: "Acknowledging the incredible complexity of relationships, the intensity of social pressures, and how difficult it is for children to express their opinions means that time must be taken to do the right thing. The possibility of coercion

cannot be ignored" (Aspinall 2006, 27).[1] Like almost all other narratives about early surgery, Aspinall's story evokes the term around which so many questions revolve: protection. Similarly, Aspinall directly addresses the prospect of coercion that—whether implicitly or explicitly—underlies the complexities of decision making in regard to early appearance-normalizing surgeries.

As feminist and gender studies, medical studies, and disability studies have all grown more aware of the complicated questions of surgeries aimed at normalizing the appearance of infants born with physical anomalies and/or genitalia considered ambiguous, so too has the problem of what exactly constitutes protection been more frequently called into question. Much of the research clearly reveals that protection and coercion are terms that require significant dissection and are of the greatest significance when one is born "abnormal." As Aspinall points out, "I acknowledge that there will be (and have been) instances where my interpretation is the one that matters and leads me to step in to protect my children, even though they would prefer that I didn't. But it is important to remember that there are many ways to interpret the same set of circumstances. Your version may not be the most important one worth acting on" (Aspinall 2006, 27). Although many stories that express such complexities and ambivalence—told by parents and children in response to personal experience with appearance-normalizing surgeries—have surfaced, the dominant understanding of "protection" in such circumstances has remained the same.

Aspinall points out that the *possibility* of coercion cannot be ignored. In this essay I contend that it is this very possibility that often goes unacknowledged, or is erased, through the rhetorical creation of doctors and parents that are saving one from an impending and inevitable life of tragedy. Although normalizing surgeries tend to be chosen for the sake of the child's protection, the meaning of protection in this context is predominantly understood as protection from a social world that is hostile towards physical difference. While this understanding of protection certainly warrants consideration in making a decision about surgical intervention, its dominance also elides other narratives of what protection might constitute in such circumstances. Thus, this essay works not to disavow the protection that is understood as an effort to keep a child safe from the inhospitable social environments the child would surely encounter; rather, it proposes that we heed the multifarious voices that pose a challenge to thinking of protection as *only* protection of the child from the social world. Utilizing both a fictional narrative—the 2007 film *XXY*—and the nonfictional stories of parents and children who have been directly involved in early normalizing surgeries, this essay seeks to present alternative narratives of protection.

Often the dominant narrative of protection is affirmed through the rhetorical creation of a savior. Again, I do not wish to suggest that a child whose bodily contours do not fit social norms of morphology or biological sex faces no threat in society. However, this threat often becomes emphasized to the point at which the life of an individual (the infant or child) is prematurely and authoritatively pronounced to be inescapably tragic. The centralization of this "tragic" figure, then, rhetorically generates a savior out of those who work to alleviate the tragedy. When this centralization occurs, it is often precisely *the possibility of coercion* that can be left ignored. I propose that the multiplication of other, non-dominant, narratives of protection might be heard, in order to transform the discourses in which anomalous bodies are understood and approached not only by the medical industry and parents, but in the public imagination. I also suggest here that in affirming other definitions of "protection," we might consider as well that norms themselves are being protected from the threat to social order and coherency posed by the persistence of ambiguity and/or anomaly.

"Show Them … Mercy": The Making of Saviors and Tragic Bodies

Olympia, the albino, hunchbacked, and bald narrator of Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love*, the 1983 novel about a carnival couple who breed their own freak show, does not view her life of "deformity" as the tragedy that most of the world sees in or on her body. As an adult, accompanied by her friend Miss Lick, she narrates the feeling of eyes upon her at the swimming pool. The passage is worth quoting at length, as it exemplifies both the discourses of "tragedy" and the role of the "savior" in dominant narratives of protection:

> With my eyes closed I can feel the children looking at me. They have stopped their games for a moment in the shallow end where they can watch me. I too am at the shallow end, sitting on the steps in water up to my nipples. Miss Lick is plowing up and down the pool in her ponderous and dutiful laps. The children's eyes are crawling on me. If I opened my eyes they would smile at me and wave. They are just old enough to be embarrassed at their normality in front of me.
>
> Because I am Olympia Binewski and am accustomed to the feel of eyes moving on me, I turn slightly on my submerged seat and reach down as though examining my toes under water. This angle will allow the children a clear profile view of my hump….
>
> But Miss Lick is standing in the shallow end, glowering down at the children. I can hear her harshness. "Are you swimming laps or fooling around?" And four little creatures do not speak but kick off from the wall and chase each other down the far lane of the pool to escape.
>
> The light is pale green and moves on Miss Lick's enormous shoulders and chest. She turns and nods at me—a quick twitch of tension at her mouth that stands for a smile. She is telling me that she has saved me from the stares of idiots and that I am safe with her to guard me. (Dunn 1989, 325-26)

Although Olympia realizes that these childrens' eyes are upon her body, she does not express shame. Rather, she angles her body so that the children may see it more fully; aware of their gaze, she chooses how to be seen. Olympia does not feel that her body is a tragedy, but Miss Lick demands that Olympia's body signify this tragedy in her adopting the role of savior. She silences the desire of Olympia—who shifts her body to be seen more fully—in that her response deems this desire impossible. When Olympia acknowledges that Miss Lick is playing the role of savior, it becomes clear that Miss Lick both misunderstands and misinterprets how Olympia feels about her body (that it is not a tragedy) or what Olympia desires, which is "abnormal." It is both the tragedy and the savior in this excerpt that become very useful to interrogate. Miss Lick exercises a choice in the name of saving Olympia from her own tragic body, but Olympia neither considers her body tragic nor believes she needs saving. There is a violence exerted in this silencing and "saving." Although fictional, this instance serves as a reminder that we must be cautious in assuming that one *desires* protection from abnormality itself. It warns against the possibly erroneous and paternalistic assumption that life in an anomalous body is inevitably undesirable and tragic.

Because of the discourses of tragedy that so vehemently persist around the subjects of both disability and infants born intersexed, and because these two subjects deal directly with dominant conceptions of wholeness and normality in relationship to morphology, this essay approaches these "abnormal" bodies in conjunction with one another.[2] This is not to conflate "deformities" and intersexed bodies, but rather to address the similar ways in which these bodies are constructed and represented through dominant ideological rhetoric. As Nikki Sullivan states, "We are surrounded by, and have embodied, the idea that while the vast majority of bodies may not be ill, they are nevertheless 'wrong' in one way or another: they have too few (or too many) limbs or digits; they (or parts of them) are the wrong size, the wrong age, the wrong color; they are 'sexually ambiguous'" (Sullivan 2009, 313). Surgical interventions in infants, Sullivan contends, are implemented to "restore order" to bodies. Both intersexed infants and those born with other

physical anomalies are predominantly viewed as wrong and in instant, urgent need of correction by medical doctors and surgeons.

Anne Fausto-Sterling suggests that few "ambiguous" infants would make it into adulthood in "sexually diverse form." She argues that, while the medical industry seeks to make legible sexes, the decision for surgery from parents or guardians is often made out of a "genuinely humanitarian concern":

> Almost at once such infants are entered into a program of hormonal and surgical management so that they can slip quietly into society as "normal" heterosexual males or females. I emphasize that the motive is in no way conspiratorial. The aims of the policy are *genuinely humanitarian*, reflecting the wish that people be able to "fit in" both physically and psychologically. (Fausto-Sterling 1993, 22; emphasis mine)

Through the rhetoric of tragedy—concerns about locker rooms and men's or women's restrooms, distrust of the terrible and terrifying world of judges that await in classrooms—the choice for early surgery is often made through the rhetoric of saving, or protecting. Saviors are created rhetorically, in the name of giving a good life or saving a body from the possibility of a life of shunning and teasing, or, further, saving one from the impossibility of a "productive" and "normal" life. And while these aims may be "genuinely humanitarian," demonstrating a desire for a "good" and "normal" life, they also potentially elide what some (including many who underwent surgery as an infant in the past) might call acts of coercion or violence upon an uninformed and unconsenting person. Such rhetoric also might foster "protection" of an inhospitable world for atypical bodies. Continuing to assert that humanitarianism lies in the child's transformation, rather than the transformation of social norms and the social world, elides the humanity of the child whose life and body are at stake—and may also erase the *possibility of coercion or violation* that troubles that humanitarian motive.

Disability studies theorist Adrienne Asch calls attention to the means by which bodies born with physical impairments are often construed as being unfortunate, in need of pity. Asch critiques this assumption and argues for a cessation of marking disabled infants as defective—to cease seeing these bodies as less than human and assuming that a life in such a body is a tragedy. Asch notes that there is a "gap in understanding that persists between people with and without disabilities regarding the potential for life with disability to be acceptable, rewarding, or as rewarding as the lives of people who do not report impairments" (Asch 2001, 301). This gap persists, Asch suggests, in that people who report impairments do not consider their lives defective, less whole, less fulfilling, while the dominant notion about impairments is precisely that they always already inscribe an "unremitting tragedy" (300):

> When people with disabilities report unhappiness or dissatisfaction (a minority in every study), the sources resemble sources of unhappiness in the lives of nondisabled people—inadequacies in financial security, work, or social and personal relationships … sometimes impairment-related factors, such as pain and fatigue, contribute to unsatisfying relationships or to the difficulty of holding a job, but the frustrations come from difficulty in incorporating the impairment into existing interpersonal and institutional life. (Asch 2001, 301)

Asch reiterates that life with disability is not the tragedy that dominant ideologies and medical institutions claim it to be. And when one does "report" feelings of unhappiness with one's life, they are either similar to those unhappinesses which are reported by those who do not possess physical impairments, or otherwise suggest a discontent that pertains not to their own biology or morphology but to the shapes of society and institutions that do not accommodate the contours of that body. This is similar to the "tragedy" continually assumed on the body of an intersexed infant.[3]

Martin S. Pernick describes the debates that waged in the US following the public disclosure of Dr. Harry

J. Haiselden's decision, in 1915, to let "Baby Bollinger" die because of the infant's multiple impairments. Pernick suggests that "Haiselden's crusade did not combine logically incompatible goals, but it did appeal to fundamentally irreconcilable emotions: His supporters were motivated by a jarring combination of compassion and hatred" (Pernick 1996, 94). The language of love and compassion came to permeate the discourses that surrounded the deaths of what Pernick refers to as "defectives," a term that worked in conjunction with the discourses of eugenics he both exposes and critiques.[4] Argumentative constructions—which still permeate how bodies are imagined (as whole and integrated) and how discourses frame those bodies—relied on the rhetorical eclipse and erasure of *even the possibility* of coercion or violation through the language of compassion and mercy, through the alleviation of a tragedy:

> Without a word of transition, Helen Keller [who lived a life with impairments until the age of 88] described the Bollinger baby as "the hopeless being spared from a life of misery. No one cares about that pitiful, useless lump of flesh." Clarence Darrow's comments revealingly captured the full ambiguity of this appeal. "Chloroform unfit children. Show them the same mercy that is shown beasts that are no longer fit to live." (Pernick 1996, 96)

In Helen Keller's first sentence, the letting die of an impaired infant is an act of mercy, the act of a savior, protecting the infant from a tragic life in a tragic body and from the path of persecution that lies in wait. Her second sentence contradicts the first and explicitly articulates the eclipse that occurs in the creation of a savior in this rhetorical construction. The first sentence presumes a position of caretaker, relieving the infant of the "life of misery" out of love or compassion. The second sentence contradicts that claim to protection, in that it states outright that "no one cares." In calling the infant's body a "useless lump of flesh," Keller suggests that this body is a failure, a failure to fall into the norms of permissible bodily shapes. The body fails to meet normative (which here means explicitly able-bodied) molds in its designation as a "lump": it does not map, conform, and take shape within normative constructions of what bodies are, should be, or can possibly be. Thus it also fails to fulfill its capacity as a productive body in the capitalist system that devalues the body it cannot utilize for its own ends—it becomes "useless."[5] What constitutes a "useful" life is shaped by the economic, social, and normative mappings of how bodies, and lives, should be shaped, and how bodies can be made useful or lead "fulfilling" lives. Clarence Darrow's command to chloroform unfit children, in order to show them mercy, proclaims that a life in "unfit" embodiment is less preferable (or merciful) than death itself. While the social pressures that surround atypical bodies cannot be dismissed or minimized, this presumes not only that life cannot be—in the words of Judith Butler—an "occasion for flourishing" but that it can be none other than wholly tragic. As Butler writes,

> Resistance to coercive surgery moreover calls for an understanding that infants with intersexed conditions are part of the continuum of human morphology and ought to be treated with the presumption that their lives are and will be not only livable, but also occasions for flourishing. The norms that govern idealized human anatomy thus work to produce a differential sense of who is human and who is not, which lives are livable, and which are not. This differential works for a wide range of disabilities as well. (Butler 2004, 4)

As I have argued, "saving" the infant from a socially unlivable life rhetorically becomes an act of compassion, and the space for considering the *possibility*, the *potential* for coercion or violation seems to vanish. Butler argues that infants with anomalous or atypical bodies should not be treated as tragic—as persons whose lives will be inevitably so. Rather, such lives should be approached not just as survivable, but as "occasions for flourishing." What would it mean to treat these lives in such a manner? How might the term "protection" be differently approached or understood if one were to affirm the livability and possibility of one's life, rather than to foreclose that opportunity by preemptively deciding it must be tragic?

"Occasions for Flourishing": Narratives of Protection and *XXY*

Fausto-Sterling asks her readers to consider "the psychological consequences of … raising children as unabashed intersexuals," while noting that "on the surface that track seems fraught with peril" (Fausto-Sterling 1993, 24). She suggests that such a track encompasses encounters with many normatively charted spaces of bathrooms and schoolyards and entails entering a society that awaits without a provision of welcoming or habitable spaces. Yet what would be the consequences of embracing this perilous track? According to Sara Ahmed, "we walk on the path as it is before us, but it is only before us as an effect of being walked upon. A paradox of the footprint emerges. Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created. The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative" (Ahmed 2006, 16). As she suggests, norms are reiterated and perform certain lines of life, of ideology, and of embodiment. To embrace the dangerous path of "raising children as unabashed intersexuals," then, would mean to make new lines, new tracks that could be followed; it would mean to make more habitable spaces. As Ahmed states, "Deviation leaves its own marks on the ground, which can even help generate alternative lines, which cross the ground in unexpected ways. Such lines are indeed traces of desire; where people have taken different routes to get to this point or that point" (20). Released in 2007, *XXY* is an Argentine film that, I would argue, presents such alternative routes or lines, along with alternative notions of protection.[6] In so doing, the narrative also refuses to make its main character, Alex, into a figure of tragedy in need of saving.

XXY is set in the aftermath of a family's departure from Buenos Aires to a secluded house on the shores of Uruguay. The family—comprised of father Kraken (Ricardo Darín), mother Suli (Valeria Bertuccelli), and their child Alex (Inés Efron)—has been mostly isolated from urban contact or community; Kraken works as a biologist on the Uruguayan shore. Despite the seclusion of the family, the film opens with the arrival of visitors, and we soon know the reason for their arrival. The family that stays with Kraken, Suli, and Alex is also comprised of three: father Ramiro (Germán Palacios), mother Erika (Carolina Peleritti), and their son Álvaro (Martín Piroyansky). It is quickly revealed that Ramiro's profession has to do with his visit; Ramiro, a plastic surgeon, has come to stay with the family by request of Alex's mother. Suli is interested in his services because Alex, who is fifteen years old, was born intersexed, and Suli believes it in the best interest of her child to have surgery performed to mold Alex into a woman. Suli has grown increasingly concerned because Alex has stopped taking hir hormone pills.[7] Alex's case and the story we follow in *XXY* are not unique because cases of intersexed infants are all that rare, but for the reason suggested by the film's director Lucía Puenzo: "In Argentina and Italy, and other countries where the film has already been released, it created a debate on what seems almost impossible in our societies: an intersex body that has not been mutilated, and not only survives but demands the opportunity to be desired" (Tehrani 2008). What we are presented with in *XXY* is, instead of a narrative of tragedy or a narrative of normative desires, a story of a livable life, and an "occasion for flourishing."

But Alex is not without hir enemies. Not even in the quite rural community where Alex lives is ze exempt from a very real threat of violence and persecution. After ze reveals the secret of hir "ambiguous" genitalia to hir best male friend Vando (Luciano Nobile), he shares this information with three other male classmates at school. In the latter half of the film, the results of this "betrayal" (as Alex calls it) come to fruition when the three schoolmates Vando has informed assault Alex, pulling down hir pants and demanding to see hir genitalia. Though Alex is not raped, the violent attack on hir body bespeaks of the endangerment of those who do not conform to the constructed binary of male or female.

The varying responses to Alex's body conveyed by the characters in *XXY* reveal differing and shifting

understandings of "protection" and "safety." Alex's mother Suli, for example, initially is the force seeking out Ramiro—and plastic surgery—for her child's well-being. Yet Suli's role gradually shifts over the course of the film. At the beginning, she articulates the "generally humanitarian" concerns that a parent might have for a child facing an antagonistic social world. She desires the good and normal life for Alex. At this juncture, Suli sees the problem as, and in, Alex's body, rather than the social spaces in which hir body exists. She expresses growing concern over Alex's recent refusal to continue taking hormones and worries that "her body will change … she will stop developing as a woman."[8] Suli expresses a fear of Alex's being infringed upon by "the other" that threatens to overtake hir body. The transitional moment for Suli's character takes place after the attack on Alex by the aforementioned three schoolboys. In response to this attack, it is implicit that Suli begins to understand that the problem is not in Alex's body but in the social body. Rather than suggesting that an attack of this nature warrants or justifies the surgery she initially desires for Alex, she lies curled in bed next to Alex and Alex's female friend. The visitors' stay following the attack is not lengthy, and Suli does not again articulate a desire for her teenage child either to have surgery or to continue taking hormones.

While Suli's conflicted and shifting responses to Alex suggest a notion of safety and protection that is undergoing revision, the somewhat juxtaposed figures of Kraken and Ramiro also reflect conflicting (and for Kraken, developing) notions of protection. Ramiro, the plastic surgeon, is constructed somewhat antithetically to Kraken, Alex's father. This is emphasized in the moment when the two families (all except Alex) convene around the dinner table and, after Ramiro attempts to force his son to drink wine, Kraken states, "I can't stand bullying." Ramiro's dominant and coercive stance is aligned in relative opposition to Kraken's defense of the "bullied." While Ramiro believes Alex has a condition that needs fixing, Kraken believes that Alex was "perfect" from the moment of hir birth. In articulating this, a very different narrative of wholeness or integrity emerges. Rather than desiring Alex's body to conform to dominant fictions of wholeness, or reading hir body as a tragedy, Kraken immediately (and continually) believes hir to be "perfect" —an "occasion for flourishing." Since Alex has been treated for the past fifteen years as a female, the contrast between Ramiro and Kraken may initially seem to be the result of Kraken's view of Alex as a daughter in need of fatherly protection. Yet, Kraken refers to Alex as *both* his daughter *and* his son throughout the course of the film, suggesting that he does not see Alex as "female."

In conversation with Álvaro, Alex refers to Ramiro's occupation of cosmetic surgeon as that of a "butcher." Defending his father's line of work, Álvaro contends that he "doesn't butcher people. He fixes them." According to Álvaro, Ramiro works mostly on the correction of what Álvaro refers to as "deformities," and this concentration suggests the pertinence of his expertise to Alex's presumed "deformity" that needs proper "fixing." While Alex alludes to the possible violence involved in the cutting of the body to alleviate "deformity," Álvaro elides the prospect of "butchery" by creating a savior who both heals and fixes the supposedly sick. Ramiro's occupation, which involves the "fixing" of the "wrong" body, also overlaps with his desire to form his son Álvaro into a "proper" heterosexual man.

The consistently evident concern over the masculinity and heterosexuality of the surgeon's son emerges specifically in a moment towards the close of the film, as Ramiro and Álvaro sit beside one another after dark at the beach. After admitting to his son that he doesn't particularly like him or believe that Álvaro will have his father's "talent" (Álvaro's artistic drawings are diminished and feminized by Ramiro earlier in the film), Ramiro discovers that Álvaro has feelings for Alex: "Finally, good news," he says in response to this revelation, "I was afraid you were a fag."

While Ramiro's character does not explicitly convey the "humanitarian" concerns that have been

addressed in this essay, the language that converges around both his occupation and his relationship with his son suggests that Ramiro *does* believe that his surgical work *and* his anxiety over his son's masculinity and heterosexuality are both driven by "humanitarian" instincts. Ramiro presumes that someone who does not fit morphological or sexual norms is less capable of operating in the social world—and accordingly, it is individual bodily or sexual shapes that must be altered. Ramiro never expresses concerns over the social environment that deems these shapes the only possible or permissible ones, but rather seems to simply accept the very strictly demarcating lines that separate biological sex and sexuality itself.

When Ramiro finds out, for example, that his son has feelings for Alex, he is contented to know that his son is not the "fag" he worried he might be. In Ramiro's mind, then, Alex (quite simply) *is* a female whose present illegibility simply needs the restorative powers offered by the medical industry (which heals by purportedly making that unreadability readable). There is nothing queer (to Ramiro) about Álvaro's desire for Alex, and nothing possibly queer that might occur in that multidirectional and complex desire—a complexity that becomes evident to the viewer in the sexual encounter that reveals Alex anally penetrating Álvaro. Thus, Ramiro's desire for healing or restoring a body to its supposed coherency of biological sex (or his "fixing" of "deformities") reveals that he believes himself to be acting in the best interest—eliding the space between normative and surgical coercion—of his patients (or, in Alex's case, potential patient).

As I have mentioned, Ramiro sees his work as the healing of the sick, as an act of mercy that allows a body to persist more operably within the norms that make life livable. Where Ramiro does not evidence any consideration of the possibility of a life of flourishing and operability in the social world outside of the prospect of "fixing," Kraken—while still caught in a tormented anxiety in regard to the social world that poses a real threat to Alex—makes room for both imagining the possibility of a life of flourishing and for understanding *protection* and *safety* in alternative ways. Ramiro does not question the language of protection as singularly indicative of shielding the child from social hostility and violence; Kraken, however, comes to interrogate protection, even while he experiences anguish over Alex's "condition." Early in the film, Kraken and Alex discuss the recent revelation to Vando, and Alex asks hir father, "If I'm so special, why can't I talk about it?" While Kraken and Suli opted against normativizing surgeries when Alex was an infant, numerous references in the film suggest that other measures have been taken to protect hir from the social world. Not only has Alex not been permitted to "talk about it," but the family repeatedly asserts that they moved from Buenos Aires to a remote part of Uruguay in order to avoid the possibility of increased confrontations within a more populated and urban region. While the circumstances suggest that Kraken and Suli have repressed or hidden Alex's body, this assumption makes a turn when Kraken articulates that these measures have been taken merely to protect Alex until an age (which, for Alex, seems to be fifteen) that permits hir to make a decision for hirself about hir body.

In one of the last scenes of *XXY*, Kraken and Alex discuss choice as it pertains to two separate, but related, circumstances. Kraken asks Alex whether or not ze would like him to go to the police in order to report hir attackers. Preceding the conversation, viewers watch Kraken pull up to the police station, sit in his car, and decide to leave. Because of his reaction, and the conversation with Alex that follows, it is implicit that Kraken feels this is a decision Alex, and not he, should make, since, as he tells Alex in this scene, "everybody'll find out." Alex replies to this concern by saying, "Let them." In the course of this conversation, Kraken—before asking about the police—also tells Alex that he is "looking after [her] until [she] can choose." "What?" Alex asks. "Whatever you want," he responds. "What if there isn't a decision to make?" Alex replies, and hir father simply nods. Kraken can be seen in opposition to the parental figure of Ramiro, who consistently appears as domineering, attempting to pressure his son into a credible and

sanctioned version of masculinity. Kraken, on the other hand, allows his child to take shape; rather than forcing hir into the binarized and clean-cut delineations between male and female, he allows hir to choose, even if this means ambiguity. And in Alex's determination not to make a decision—which, of course, is very much a decision—and in hir decision to let "them" (the community) "find out" (about hir "condition"), Alex provides a representation of a different way of living, a possibility of flourishing. As Ahmed suggests, "Inhabiting a body that is not extended by the skin of the social means the world acquires a new shape and makes new impressions" (Ahmed 2006, 20). Alex's attackers evidence the lack of extended social skin to provide a habitable space, yet Alex's world acquires a new shape in both hir decision to "let them" know and hir decision to "not decide."

Importantly, in one scene during which Kraken tries to sort through his own complicated emotions, he seeks out Juan (Guillermo Angelelli)—a local man who underwent normalizing surgery as an infant himself—in order to ask his advice and opinion about Alex's situation. Kraken questions his and Suli's decision against surgical intervention when Alex was young: "What if I got it all wrong?" Juan responds, "By letting her choose?" Juan proceeds to present Kraken with an alternative narrative about what protection means to him, as an adult who was operated on as a child. He reveals to Kraken: "Do you know what my earliest memories are? Medical examinations. I thought I was so horrible when I was born that I had to have five operations before my first birthday. That's what they call 'normalization.' It's not surgery. It's castration. Making her afraid of her own body is the worst thing you can do to your child." Fortunately, Kraken finds validation for his narrative of protection in an adult who refuses the idea that his early surgeries "normalized" or protected him. His assertion that it is not surgery but castration indicates that Juan's perspective on the surgery is that it was harmful, not protective. Likewise, the nonfictional stories of parents and children involved in early surgeries have later voiced their own reinterpretations of the term "protection." Although it is productive that fictional narratives such as *XXY* promote complicated, contradictory, and alternative understandings of protection, it is of utmost importance that we seriously consider the accounts of those who have actually lived with and in the challenges presented by anomalous bodies.

"Raped": Parents, Children, and Their Challenges to "Protection"

Again, although *XXY* presents an alternative fictional narrative about the parental place in making surgical decisions on infants born intersexed—and that fiction is promising for imagining other ways of understanding "protection"—the narratives of those parents and children who have been involved in early surgical decisions on atypical genitalia are essential to complicating and critiquing notions of protection. The emergence of the ISNA (Intersex Society of North America) and other intersex activist and support groups, over the course of the 1990s and into the present, has produced one of the centers of dispute and recognition in challenging the typical response of immediate surgical intervention in infants. These groups have functioned as among the most vocal and influential forces in contesting the concept that surgical intervention works as a mechanism of "protection" rather than harm, as many adults have come forward in anger, frustration, and resistance regarding the surgeries imposed upon them as infants. In addition, some parents have also come to regret the decision they made in the past about their children's bodies and lives. This is not only, though, about a lack of consent or an inability to participate in the decision-making process. Children often not only undergo multiple surgeries as an infant but also continue to have surgeries throughout their entire childhood, making them feel ashamed, ostracized, or humiliated rather than protected.[9] Additionally, children often feel dehumanized and violated, as the genital region becomes

the constant "object" of medical scrutiny and doctors' gazes.[10] Further, early normalizing surgeries often leave lasting and devastating effects on the person who undergoes surgery. Most times, infants who were born with the ability to reproduce, and who undergo surgery, are left without that capacity intact. Likewise, infants often lose any physical sensation in the genital area that might produce sexual pleasure.[11]

Ellen K. Feder introduces a number of parents' stories in her essay, "In Their Best Interests: Parents' Experience of Atypical Genitalia." She relays the story of Ruby, who had two daughters born with CAH (Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia). Although Ruby's first child had medical complications that put her health at risk, which resulted in surgical intervention for her child, the second daughter faced no explicit physiological risk; yet, Ruby chose to go forward with normalizing surgery for her second child as well. Ruby, like many other parents, has come to regret her decision in retrospect: "My younger daughter is angry with me as an adult. She felt that she was raped, medically raped. And she's right" (Feder 2006, 194). The accusation made by Ruby's daughter—and affirmed by Ruby herself—is a claim that the surgery was not protection, but rather an extreme form of violation and coercion. As Feder suggests, "The tragic paradox of Ruby's situation is precisely this: her caring and concerned attempts to fulfill her responsibility to her daughters' well-being led her to consent to actions that resulted in harm to her daughters" (197). Feder points, then, to the contradiction—the paradox—that efforts to protect may cause harm. Through Ruby's story, we might gain an insight into the very complex nature of the term "protection." While this, again, does not disavow the potency of hostile social environments from which a parent might seek to protect their child, it does present us with an alternative story about protection—one that challenges us to reconsider the prospect of coercion or violation that may be masked by narratives suggesting that life with atypical genitalia or physical anomalies (or even physical impairments) must be unavoidably tragic and that, to avoid the unavoidable, one must "rescue" the child through surgical intervention.

Likewise, Katrina Karkazis, writing about interviews she has conducted with patients, families, and doctors involved in intersex births, describes two parents she interviewed about the choice they made for surgical intervention:

> Ramona Diaz whose daughter has PAIS [Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome] and who wishes she had not chosen genital surgery for her daughter has found another way to deal with her disappointment and sadness: she has become an advocate for delaying surgery until the child is old enough to decide: "I feel very bad. I hurt because she hurts. I just want to spare people everything that she's been through. I feel the same way that a lot of intersexed people do now: Let that person make the decision when they are ready. If they are ever ready to say, 'Yes, I want to do this,' or, 'No, I don't want to do this.' Let them have the say in the matter. Not the medical profession. Not the parents." And for Rebecca Davis, whose two daughters have CAH, the stresses associated with their reaching puberty resulted in a broken marriage. A psychiatrist explained to her that having a chronic illness in a family creates an enormous amount of pressure, but she says, "I didn't have a great marriage to start with, but even those with really good marriages, most of them didn't make it." She is still struggling to cope with the anger of one of her daughters: "I can't make it right. Part of what she's so upset about is that she feels raped, and in a way she really was, and I couldn't help it. She can't see that I couldn't help it, all she can see is that I let it happen and ask, why didn't I protect her? Oh, God, that hurts." (Karkazis 2008, 209-10)

Both of these parents advocate delaying surgery until a decision can be made by or with the child, allowing the prospective surgical patient to have a say in a choice that has ultimately irreversible effects on their own body and life. Although parents may be less familiar with the "condition" of intersex, and may also be alienated by the overt jargon utilized in describing both the "condition" and the possible routes of "solution," they nonetheless often believe that (as previously mentioned) they are making a choice to

surgically intervene in order to "protect" the child. Parent Rebecca Davis, whose response Karkazis notes above, thus issues a poignant challenge to those beliefs. Davis, who regrets her decision to let surgeons intervene in her infant child's body, seems most pained by the use of that very term: *protect*. Her daughter's question—why didn't you *protect* me?—forces Davis to confront the oppositional understanding that the once-infant expresses in regard to the decision made for, and on, her body. Protection, according to her daughter, would have been to protect her body from surgical intervention, and from the "rape" of her body and her will that took place when she was an infant. Davis, who implies that she believed her decision *was* made in order to do *precisely* that (protect her), must confront the voice of her daughter that speaks back and argues for a new understanding of what "protection" really means through issuing a question: Why didn't you protect me? In addition, then, to the proliferation of other fictional narratives of protection, the voices of those most intimately affected by intersex surgeries must also be heard, so that practitioners, families, and parents might consider the contradictory and complicated claims to protection evoked in the name of the child.

Protecting the Norm: The "Menace" of Difference

In addition to the challenges presented in these alternative notions of protection, we might consider the possibility that the norm itself is also (although never explicitly) being protected in decisions made to perform appearance-normalizing surgeries on infants. Earlier in this essay, I discussed the controversies over the case of "Baby Bollinger" in the early twentieth century, when Dr. Haiselden, the baby's doctor, advised parents that the infant (among other infants) should be allowed to "let die." Martin Pernick goes on to discuss Haiselden's autobiography, which reveals an underlying fear of the threat that anomaly or ambiguity pose to norms themselves.[12] Of Haiselden, Pernick writes: "In a particularly striking passage in his autobiography, he recalled that he first became aware of the retarded when, at the age of eight, he joined the gang of boys who regularly assaulted 'Crazy Mary,' the village idiot.… Even a child [Haiselden wrote] 'instinctively sees the menace in these wretched beings and adopts this means of fighting against it'" (Pernick 1996, 97). Thus the beatings that Pernick suggests were part of Haiselden's regimen of "defense" against "Crazy Mary," are justified, in his rhetorical construction, in the name of "fighting against" a "menace" that poses a threat.

Judith Butler asks us to consider what provokes violence toward intersexed or transgendered individuals, and her question resonates with the argument constructed by Haiselden—in mentioning both the "menace" that might be posed and the violent response that proceeds in the name of "protection": "The violent response is the one that does not ask, and does not seek to know. It wants to shore up what it knows, to expunge what threatens it with not-knowing, what forces it to reconsider the presuppositions of its world, their contingency, their malleability" (Butler 2004, 34-35).

Thus, what is being protected when infants are surgically altered to look "normal" might also be the norm itself, and the appearance of that norm as both natural and immobile. Perhaps this may help us to understand what "menace" Dr. Haiselden records feeling in response to difference. In "the violent response," division between self and other is enforced in the name of protecting the body of the self from the menacing infringement of "the other." But what threat, precisely, does "Crazy Mary" pose? The "menace" of this body resides in its potential to remind one that all bodies—individual, as well as the "body" of norms themselves—are ever-fluctuating and incoherent. Surgical interventions that are meant to make one's body look more "normal" also continue repeating, reiterating a binary of biological sex that keeps the binary of biology "safe" from infringement—safe from variation and ambiguity. What is in jeopardy with the presence

of bodies considered "ambiguous" or "shapeless"—"lumps of flesh," as Helen Keller called them—is that they threaten to suggest the ambiguity of all embodiments, their tenuousness, their intershapings, their collapsible edges. The work of Margrit Shildrick, in the context of critical disability theory, suggests that, "In failing to reproduce the ideal image of corporeal invulnerability, disabled bodies are not positioned as *dis*empowered; on the contrary, they signal threat and danger insofar as they undermine any belief in the stability and consistency of bodies in general" (Shildrik 2009, 20). Using the work of Julia Kristeva, Shildrick argues that anything which disturbs our notion of whole, integrated, invulnerable bodies forces us to question our own sense of self as invulnerable. Likewise, it calls into question the equally holistic dominant notion of biological sex as definable and dividable, neatly and clearly bordered.

When surgeries are performed to alleviate ambiguity, there is an effort made to *visually distinguish* (to create a distinction between "one" and "the other") and to *visually extinguish* the evidence of that ambiguity. I would argue that often, in the rhetorical creation of a tragic body in need of saving, notions of protection can *erase the work* involved in *extinguishing in order to distinguish*. This labor is continually exercised in the name of maintaining "coherent" sexes and norms. In order to give form to a mass of pluralities, infants born intersexed are, much more often than not, surgically altered to fit the format of the norm.[13] The incoherence of both embodiment and norms themselves is effaced, through labor, to produce "smooth," distinguishable surfaces.

Because of the "power and danger" held in margins, there is a threat to the readability and dominance of norms themselves posed by ambiguity and anomaly (Douglas [1966] 2002, 117, 150). Ellen K. Feder suggests that there is a "grave threat that the revelation of intersex poses to the existing social order" (Feder 2006, 206). If parents, Feder argues, "were to work to identify with their children as intersexed individuals, if doctors were to use their considerable authority to promote acceptance of genital variation instead of erasure, the prevailing *habitus* would undergo genuine transformation. Not only would such a positive identification lead to improved relationships between parents and children, it would also work against the conservative principles of *habitus* to effect social change" (206). The "habitus" in which we currently exist promotes the medical and parental response of immediate surgical intervention when a body does not appear "normal." The socio-medical response, Feder suggests, is to erase signs of human variation in favor of clearly legible lines between male and female. According to Feder, "habitus" is a term that describes the unquestioned "normative order" that implicitly and redundantly regulates, "conformity with a prevailing social order" (191). Feder argues that a parental willingness to identify with a child—and his or her potential (future) concerns, desires, physical and sexual sensations—along with the willingness of medical practitioners to reconsider their own response might open an entirely transformative understanding of difference and the human body, which would fundamentally alter the social landscape of our existence. If we acknowledge *variation as a norm of human existence*, we might also be forced to reconsider the constructed nature of so many binary oppositions that shape who we are, who we can be, and how we understand—and respond to—physical difference.

Notes

1. By "appearance-normalizing," I mean that the surgeries that will be the focus of this essay are those that are meant to make one appear more "normal." In the introduction to *Surgically Shaping Children*, Erik Parens differentiates between surgeries meant to improve physiological functioning and those meant to improve psychosocial functioning.

Parens describes the story of LilyClaire, the daughter of Lisa Abelow Hedley who relays a narrative in the chapter titled "The Seduction of the Surgical Fix" in Parens's collection. LilyClaire is a seven-year-old with achondroplasia (a form of dwarfism) whose mother contemplates whether or not to have her daughter's legs lengthened during a medical procedure to fix the bowing of her legs. Here Parens describes the difference between fixing the bowing and lengthening LilyClaire's legs: "The goal of preventing cartilage degeneration is straightforwardly medical; it aims to promote what we might call *physiological* functioning. The goal of adding height, on the other hand, is primarily *psychosocial*. Of course, for anyone who rejects dualist conceptions of the relationship between the physical and the psychical (the body and the mind), the distinction between the physiological and the psychosocial aims is fuzzy. Improved physiological functioning usually has positive psychosocial effects, and improved psychosocial functioning can have positive physiological effects" (2006, xix). Thus, my essay focuses on those surgeries performed for explicitly psychosocial purposes.

2. See Stryker and Sullivan 2009 and Loeb 2008. Loeb states that her "readings of 'bodily integrity' find fantasizing a fully agentive, masculated, triumphant subject that acts out onto the world, inviolable and unviolated by feminized or queered forms of penetration" (2008, 50) and that it is not possible to "separate our lived ideas of what constitutes a 'whole' body of a 'normal' man from our lived experience of patriarchy, white supremacy, violent colonialism, and capitalist exploitation" (55).

3. I do not want to conflate atypical genitalia, physical impairment, and physical anomaly. However, the three do come together in the way in which they are predominantly understood to be tragic.

4. One might argue that to "let die" would be the equivalent of "letting be"—that is, to let the baby die without medical intervention is no different than the "letting be" of an infant whose genitalia are "ambiguous." However, we might consider the difference between Haiselden's "letting be" and the "letting be" of an infant born intersexed. Haiselden's "letting be" is the denial of medical intervention on a body that might otherwise survive. The "letting be" of an infant born intersexed would not equate, because in most instances (and these are the instances under discussion in this essay), infants receive surgical intervention not because of a physiological need to survive, but for the purposes of normalizing appearance. Thus, the situations are not parallel.

5. Elizabeth Loeb's observation, quoted in note 2, is again pertinent here.

6. The film, directed by Lucía Puenzo, is based on the short story titled "Cinismo" by Argentine writer Sergio Bizzo.

7. I have chosen to use gender-neutral pronouns for Alex because, although some others in the film may view hir as a young woman, Alex hirself does not necessarily identify as either or solely male or female.

8. All quotations from *XXY* are derived from the English subtitles of the film, which is spoken in Spanish.

9. Katrina Karkazis's *Fixing Sex* (2008) is a great resource for information regarding this issue.

10. Again, see Karkazis. Also, the 2002 novel *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides gives readers a very rich (though fictional) account of a child with atypical genitalia who is repeatedly dehumanized and treated as a medical specimen by doctors: "I lay back. Without having to be told, I lifted my legs and fit my heels in the gynecological stirrups. The room had gone ominously silent. The three doctors came forward, staring down. Their heads formed a trinity above me. Luce pulled the curtain across the table. They bent over me, studying my parts, while Luce led a guided tour. I didn't know what most of the words meant but after the third or fourth time I could recite the list by heart. 'Muscular habitus… no gynecomastia… hypospadias… urogenital sinus… blind vaginal pouch…' These were my claim to fame. I didn't feel famous, however. In fact, behind the curtain, I no longer felt as if I were in the room" (2002, 420).

11. Again, see Karkazis 2008.

12. See Grosz 1996 for a further discussion about the "intolerability" of identities that are in between or challenge our notions of selfhood, individuation, and categorization.

13. As Elizabeth Loeb notes, "the medical and legal assignation of sex according only to the binary options of 'male' and 'female' constitutes something of an accident for each of us, an assignation of status that belies and homogenizes our unique physicalities into enforced norms" (2008, 46).

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Fifty shades of African lightness: a bio-psychosocial review of the global phenomenon of skin lightening practices

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Abstract

Skin-lightening is an aesthetic practice of global concern. By adopting a biopsycho-social approach, we consider the interplay between the biological, psychological and social factors that underpin the circulation and consumption of skin lighteners in South Africa. This paper reflects on biological aspects of skin lightening, interpersonal relationships, individual beliefs and expectations about the maintenance of health and well being that informs cosmetic practices. The paper seeks to examine claims made by historians (Thomas) and political philosophers and activists (Biko) that colonialism and apartheid in South Africa historically reinforced the use of skin lightening products in the country. The paper also investigates the role of media in staking out the boundaries of beauty. We argue that men and women practice skin-lightening not only as a complex result of the internalization of global standards of beauty, but meshed with a national politics of race and colorism. Banning skin lightening products without understanding the biological effects but also the social forces that underlie their increased popularity will prove futile. Moreover, we must consider the immeasurable pleasures associated with lightening, and the feelings with achieving visibility in South Africa, a country that continues to wrestle with blackness.

Introduction

Medical experts consider skin-lightening and skin-bleaching practices as 'one of the most common forms of harmful body modification practices …' (Charles 2003, p. 711).[1] Melanie De Souza argues that the desire for even-toned, blemish-free skin spans human populations.[2] Skin-lightening is just one of the multiple options for augmenting the skin's surface appearance, including but not limited to tanning, scarification, makeup, tattooing, face lifts, nose jobs, botox, lip extensions, and piercings.[3] The desire to change skin colour from darker to lighter or from lighter to darker share an *enhanced* effect for the consumer,[2] which has subjective and objective characteristics. This *enhanced effect* is directed to the way products are marketed that is to achieve a desirable skin colour or to improve an undesirable one.[4] Ironically, such an *enhanced* effect is overdetermined by inherent health risks, including skin cancers, steroid-induced acne, atrophy and telangiectasia.[5] This practice can be traced back to colonialism, a period of institutionalised exploitation by colonists of indigenous populations. During colonisation privileged lighter skin with socioeconomic privilege. This paper traces historical events in South Africa which may have aided or influenced the uptake and use of skin lightening creams.

History of skin lighteners

While globally, skin lighteners have been used for centuries, the earliest records of their use in South Africa among black women suggest that it began in the 1950s alongside the Coloured Labour preference Act of 1955.

This racially divisive legislation provided a distinct advantage to coloured individuals over black Africans in relation to employment, accumulation of material wealth and property, and ease of movement, amongst other things.[6] Black women in the Western Cape Province in particular, were more likely to find employment as domestic workers and cooks if they appeared to have a lighter complexion.[7] In addition to the racial hierarchy of the apartheid state, colonial histories were dominated by subjective interpretations and morally-coded indictments of race and beauty.[8] KenyaSue Smart argues that colonial vestiges cast European characteristics of Whiteness with beauty and purity, while Africans were characterised as demonic, ugly savages political,[8] social and economic ideology premised on racial inferiority The legacy of apartheid in South Africa coupled with westernised ideals of beauty underpins the desire to lighten as a means to overcome institutional forms of discrimination including colour stigma.[9]

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki once referred to Apartheid law (1948-1994) as *Poverty and the rule of race.*[10] Apartheid was a system of governance premised on the oppression of dark-skinned populations by light populations. Racial segregation occurred in almost every domain of public and private life; wherein the minority white population received privileges and rights not available to the majority black population.

Simultaneously, the global media industry fuelled the notion that fair-skinned people were beautiful and thus, a standard was set for beauty.[11,12] These factors together with trauma of colonization, slavery, discrimination, mistreatment, and colour rating in social class against dark skin continued to be further embedded in the psyche of those with more pigmented skin. In his book, *Black skin, white masks,*[13] Franz Fanon draws on his own experiences as a black person in a white dominated world. In his own struggles with stereotypes and prejudices Fanon only wanted to be 'oneself with all the multiplicities, systems and contradictions of one's own ways of being, doing and knowing' (1952: pg. VI).[13] His work which can also be applied to the life of the American popular star Michael Jackson, describes the psychology of blackness and how notions of whiteness are internalized by colonizers as well as the manifestation thereof in the collective black psyche (Supplementary Figure S1). This manifests currently in the marketing of skin lightening products using terms such as *bright*, *radiance*, *light* and *clear* on the packaging because South African legislation prohibits the advertising of skin lightening products to *bleach*, *lighten* or *whiten*.[14] All these factors continue to uphold white supremacy leading to a South African *pigmen-*

tocratic society.[15]

Paradoxically, the use of skin lightening creams increased after South Africa achieved democracy in 1994. As a result of liberation from apartheid-era legislation and racial classificatory schemes, new spaces for the expression of identity opened up. Lightening in this way might be seen not in terms of black people aspiring to be white, but rather, free from the *planters*, where planters in this instance refers to the oppressors that rooted people to racial classificatory systems.[16] Global aesthetic regimes continue to place emphasis on, and preference for, lighter shades of brown. Lighter shades of skin continue to inform beauty practices even in the context of black empowerment and Afropolitan movements that continually seek to rupture colonial and western domination. Consumer choice now fashions lightening as a form of human agency, where the surface of the skin can be manipulated to conform to, or resist global and local beauty standards. Capitalism is thus implicated in the process of commodification identity politics.

Today, these socio-political influences are evident by a shared view,[17] Nahomie Julien that a lighter shade of brown (also referred to as *yellow-bone*) is the most attractive skin colour.[17] For example the magazine industry bears this out, with only one woman of colour appearing as one of the top 100 sexiest women in the global men's magazine, *For Him Magazine* (FHM).The cosmetic industry unscrupulously advertises lightness to market products, which have the potential to endanger life.[18] A conservative estimate proposes that 35% of South African women use skin lightening creams.[19] In a more recent study, by Ncoza Dlova, which focused on the perception of possible benefits and risks associated with the use of skin lightening creams among Africans and Indians in Durban, 32.2% of the population admitted to using skin lightening creams.[12] The use of creams is prevalent across rural and urban demographics as well as across income and class stratification.[11] The phenomenon of skin-lightening is decidedly global in scope. Studies located in Asia, USA, U.K., India, China and the Caribbean indicate the prevalence of a thriving skin lightening cream industry.[19] In three different African countries, the statistics demonstrate that 25% of women in Bamako, Mali a further 52% in Dakar, Senegal, and 77% in Lagos, Nigeria use skin lighteners.[19] The underlying motivations to lighten skin in in South Africa, as within an African context, drive our enquiry here.

Why do people use skin lighteners?

Some people use skin lighteners to treat dermatological conditions such as hyperpigmentary melasma, age-induced darkening and acne. Other skin disorders such as vitiligo require the supervision of a dermatologist. These treatments involve the use of hydroquinone (HQ)-containing products such as imiquimod but are under the strict guidelines of clinical use. Some consumers use skin lightening products to lighten skin colour, enhance luminescence or radiance, even out skin tone, improve the texture of the skin, to satisfy peers, to satisfy ones partner and/or to attract partners and to enhance/increase employment opportunities.[11] Some others continue to lightening their skin by addiction to bleaching products.[20] Some studies have shown the impact of black celebrity endorsements for skin lightening products on consumer markets.[18] For example, music celebrities like Beyonce, Rhianna and Nicky Minaj, give the impression that lighter skin is beautiful skin.[8,18] Even though none of these celebrities acknowledge the use of lightening products, there has been gradual lightening of their skin as can be observed in the media. While these celebrities can afford the most expensive product lines, average consumers tend to purchase creams at local suppliers, which do not comply with health regulations.[5] Some consumers make their own formulations from household products combined with skin lightening products, this in an attempt to enhance the whitening effect. This dangerous mixing may result in deleterious side effects like ochronosis.[5,8] This condition is characterised by localized, blue-black hyperpigmentation in the epidermis, dermis and subcutaneous layers of the skin. It is notifiable by progressive darkening in the area wherein the hydroquinone containing cream is applied.[18]

Dangers of skin lightening products

The efficacy of the majority of well-researched, marketed skin lighteners on sale at brand stores are effective when used correctly work well.[18] The skin lighteners available in mainstream retailers are highly efficacious, but are marketed as skin toners or moisturisers. These formulations contain regulated amounts of HQ and other ingredients such as retinoids and corticosteroids. According to current South African legislation, hydroquinone in skin lightening preparations are allowed up to 2%.[5] It is crucial to note that the regulated formulations are sold with a product insert providing the necessary ingredient list and the correct usage, which *should* translate into the appropriate daily application. Unfortunately, products like these exceed the level of affordability for the average African consumer. Lack

of affordability may be one of the most significant drivers of the *black market* in South Africa and Africa where unregulated - and more affordable - products flood the market. Due to the lack of product knowledge and absence of a product description, consumers rely on the reputation of the cream reinforced through positive word of mouth and consumer feedback.[5] After the initial stages of application and resultant visible changes in complexion, consumers may apply more product than advised in a bid to make the product work *faster and better*. The consequence however results in irreversible damage to the skin, a condition known as exogenous ochronosis (Supplementary Figure S1). A more systemic, sustainable intervention is therefore needed at both the local and national governmental level before the colorism pandemic reaches exorbitant proportions. Part of the solution would be an increased awareness through scientific and social engagement as well as harnessing the influential power of the media.

Influence of the media

The media's role in contributing to the positive outcome in the war against unregulated use of skin lighteners cannot be overstated. The media plays an influential role in the purchase and use of skin lightening products.[21] Fairness can be portrayed as a sign of what is idealised and as a standard for beauty and competency. Products are advertised to promote health and beauty. Billboard advertising in Africa for over 50 years portrayed white-skinned individuals as icons of beauty, as did the print and electronic media industries. Today, in an even greater way, the media plays an influential role in how people live and how they perceive themselves. Television, magazines, newspapers schoolbooks and the likes of social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, (Supplementary Figure S2) further emphasise the importance of image and beauty and how integral they are to achieving success.[11,18,22]

These platforms encourage the use of products as it presents visual stimuli where individuals with a light skin tone are portrayed as being more attractive and more likely to be successful in life. This ideology bolsters the perception that a fairer complexion is equated to material and social success (Supplementary Figure S3). Advertisements promote the idea of fairness with slogans such as *Successful people*, *Making your dreams come true, add sparkle to your life* and *lighter and lovelier*. Women claim that the way the television advertises skin lightening products, compels them to prefer lighter skin tones.[11,21]

Commercials and advertisements for skin lightening products offer the promise of

lighter, whiter skin. To tout the skin lightening products, advertisements are usually expensively produced, featuring ultra-light celebrities or super models, *and presenting (and mixing) both traditional and westernized visual signifiers to evoke atmospheres of purity, cleanliness and sophistication* (Leong, 2006: pg. 169).[4]

These forms of tele-marketing suggest black women are unhappy, ignored by men and they suffer from low self-esteem.[23] Ultimately, advertisements suggest, the lighter your skin, the more likely you are to find your dream occupation or even a suitable partner. When women are exposed to, or confronted with visual stimuli from the media, it creates a sense of anxiety and insecurity which results in them engaging in harmful forms of body beautification such as skin-lightening practices.[17] Well-known South African celebrities Nomasonto Mshoza Maswanganyi (Supplementary Figure S4), a South African artist, bleached her skin because she was *tired of being ugly* (DRUM, 17 November 2011).[24] Other celebrities such as Kelly Khumalo, Khanyi Mbau and Surisha Naidoo have also been associated with lightening their skin. Moving up towards upper Africa the artist Dencia has developed her own skin lightening product called Whitenious where rumours also arise that she herself is using the product. In contrast to these celebrities encouraging skin lightening use, Lupita Nyongong, in her acceptance speech after winning an Oscar embraced her blackness and spoke openly of her own insecurities over her dark skin and how she learned to love her skin. Celebrities carry credibility and prestige, and their use of skin lighteners are perceived as being *acceptable*, even encouraged.[18] Individuals will go to extreme measures to change the colour of their skin. Consequently, consumers become obsessed with this practise because of the results obtained by its use and positive feelings associated with it. This can be attributed to the extent to which these products are marketed that is to *improve appearance*.[21]

Biopsychosocial aspects of skin bleaching

The biopsychosocial theoretical model has been developed by the psychiatrist Engels, in 1977. This model tries to show that many variables, biological, psychological and social, interact to better understand and explain the reality of health and disease.[25] Adopting the biopsychosocial approach to or making a biopsychological review of the phenomenon of skin lightning means to underline or taking into consideration the interaction that exist between the three factors in all the process of

skin bleaching: the motivation of doing it, the different practices and the effects of this practice, and even in the prevention and treatment (support) processes.

The human being would not exist without the body. The existence of human being is therefore first of all biological. This biological body is constructed on socio-cultural and psychological events of the individual. The skin is also a strong metaphor in the social sciences and embodies the realms of the aesthetic, political and economic, the social and cultural, and the genetic and phenotypic, as well as psychological worlds [26]

From an Anthropological perspective, the skin has a physical reality as well as a social reality. The physical communicates shapes, sizes status which are then differentiated by culture. Clothing on skin acts as protection even though some body parts are exposed. These shape, size and surface do have a social function which then applies to extreme forms of body mutilations such as tattooing, and piercings (also known as cultural skins). These cultural skins also constitute them as being part of a group or some culture where they find a sense of belonging. Helman also refers to people as social animals in the sense that they are organised into groups that regulate and perpetuate themselves.[27] He argues that the persons experience as member of society that shapes his/her life of the world. In doing so it is believed that it is through one's culture that they organise and legitimizes their society. He describes culture as how humans organise themselves and the way they view the world which they inhabit. Therefore in order to understand humans we need to study their society and their culture. [27]

Additionally the skin can also be seen as the social surface of the self. Terence Turner's concept of 'social skin' resonates in this case, wherein skin itself acts as an interface for political, cultural and social identity. The proliferation of skin-lightening creams emphasizes the *importance* of classification through skin-colour, stigma and preferences for lighter skin in an increasingly globalized world. He emphasizes that on a macro-social level, the *conventionalized modifications of skin that comprise the social skin define, not individuals, but categories or classes of individuals* thus claiming that the *social skin* becomes the *boundary between social classes* (Turner, 2012:503).[28] That means that the skin is an element of belonging, of classification, recognition, distinction and pride. In essence the skin is a marker of our identity.

Skin bleaching is the use of cosmetics lightening products on the skin to look lighter. This practice sometime has negative effects as we said, and this effects side can have an impact on our body image and our self image

The practice of skin-lightening may be

deeply rooted in an individual's overall emotional and cognitive evaluation of his/her own worth (self-esteem), their collections of belief about themselves and forces that influence thoughts, behaviour and personality.[11] The desire to lighten one's skin is related to some aspects of self-hate (extreme dislike or hatred against oneself) and low self-esteem.[11] Even though colonialism and apartheid has the transgenerational psychological scars still persist and have been internalized by many.[11] Many women still regard lighter skin as beautiful and associated dark skin with negative connotations such as evil, disease, dirt ugliness etc.[13] The hierarchy of women in terms of lightness of skin also known as pigmentocracy employs hegemonic ideals of beauty, influenced by the privileges of white supremacy established historically. Many individual mimic the behaviour and attitudes of others with the hope of being *like them*.[3] For example many women compare themselves with celebrities and turn to skin lighteners because they are dissatisfied with their appearance and are under the impression that they could be just as successful as the celebrities engaging in skin-lightening practices.[5] In that sense skin-lightening practices can be perceived as an external (social) factor which dictates standards of beauty because having a light skin complexion is associated with elegance, beauty, attractiveness especially towards the opposite sex. Lightness and darkness have moral connotations for example; whiteness or lightness can be associated with youth, innocence, purity, virginity, spirituality and vulnerability, whereas darkness can refer to threat, aggression, danger, virility. Individuals who are insecure, suffering from low self-esteem are more likely to engage in skin-lightening practices than those individuals who are more confident in their skin.[13] Skin lightening is a global phenomenon but has there been any attempt to reduce the practice of skin lightning?

Review on measures to reduce skin lightening

Despite the bans and existing health campaigns, the practice of skin lightening continues to grow. There is a need for greater government bans as well as control on the availability of skin lighteners, the marketing and sale thereof and well as the active ingredients found in these products.[2,29] Not only should government be involved, there should also be more awareness on the dangers associated with using skin lightening products.[30] This can be done through educational public messages, health workers and the media.[2]

In addition social marketing in combating self-esteem issues has been proposed to

reduce the risk that it may pose health risks, as they relate to skin alterations. Social marketing is described as a *tool that uses the concepts of commercial marketing to create positive social change. It is founded on the idea that media can shape popular perception and, thus promotes positive behaviour change by marketing ideas of product*s. Therefore by promoting ideas around positive self-esteem, *public health interventions can better address skin toning alterations.*[31]

Conclusions

In summary, we reviewed the effects of skin lightening cream. The history of skin- lightening practices were discussed by reviewing colonialism and apartheid as mediating factors in skin lightening use age. We also shed light on the reasons for skin lightening use and the dangers behind inappropriate application thereof. The media portray light skin desirable and beautiful and advertise skin lightening products as a means to solve problem skin. In their marketing strategies they use models, celebrities and high profile individuals to convey messages of lightness, beauty, wealth etc. The psychosocial effects on the consumer revealed that as a result of internalising the effects of colonialism and apartheid many individuals use skin lightening creams as a means to fit in the still much dominated white supremacy. Lastly there is a great need for stricter government control and policy development in the marketing and distribution of products together with educational programmes to create awareness on the health risk posed by skin lightening products.

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"It's Just More Acceptable To Be White or Mixed Race and Gay Than Black and Gay": The Perceptions and Experiences of Homophobia in St. Lucia

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Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals come from diverse cultural groups with differing ethnic and racial identities. However, most research on LGB people uses white western samples and studies of Afro-Caribbean diaspora often use Jamaican samples. Thus, the complexity of Afro-Caribbean LGB peoples' experiences of homophobia is largely unknown. The authors' analyses explore experiences of homophobia among LGB people in St. Lucia. Findings indicate issues of skin-shade orientated tolerance, regionalized disparities in levels of tolerance toward LGB people and regionalized *passing* (regionalized sexual identity shifting). Finally, the authors' findings indicate that skin shade identities and regional location influence the psychological health outcomes of homophobia experienced by LGB people in St. Lucia.

Keywords: Caribbean, skin color, colorism, homosexuality, homophobia

INTRODUCTION

Former British Caribbean colonies including Jamaica, Barbados and the Bahamas (Gaskins, 2013) have been the focus of psychological research on sexual orientation and homophobia in the Caribbean region (e.g., Kempadoo, 2004, 2009; Sharpe and Pinto, 2006). However, Caribbean culture is diverse (Hickling et al., 2009) and we know less about the perceptions and experiences of LGB individuals living in the French Antilles and former Dutch and Spanish colonies despite their distinct cultural identities and attitudes to sexual orientation (Kempadoo, 2004, 2009; Sharpe and Pinto, 2006; Gaskins, 2013). This qualitative study focuses on this gap in the literature by exploring the perceptions and experiences of homophobia among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals living in St Lucia, an Eastern Caribbean Island with a British and French creolized, or *Kwéyòl*, colonial history, culture and language. Homophobia is fear or intolerance toward people who are attracted to others of the same-sex (Remafedi, 2002; Consolacion et al., 2004). This study focuses on the intolerance aspect of homophobia, and considers the meaning of skin complexion and location for the intolerance experienced by St. Lucian LGB people.

BACKGROUND

The 28 territories of the Caribbean have a population of over 35 million people (Baldacchino, 2015; International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2016) and estimates suggest that 20% of

the population identify themselves as non-heterosexual (McDonald, 2012). However, across the Caribbean region many Islands criminalize homosexual behavior (Human Rights Watch, 2004; Hickling et al., 2009). All homosexual acts are illegal in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados; and male homosexuality including sodomy and public displays of affection are illegal in Guyana and Jamaica but female homosexuality is not (Human Rights Watch, 2004; Sheller, 2012). Some law enforcement agencies in the region fail to protect LGB individuals from homophobic hate crime; and some law enforcement officers themselves have been involved in harassment and attacks on men and women perceived to be homosexual (Human Rights Watch, 2004; Becker, 2013; Cloonan, 2013; Stanislas, 2013a,b). The impunity of individuals who commit hate crimes against LGB individuals is likely to legitimize stigma, hatred, abuse, and discrimination against LGB individuals in various Caribbean societies (Smith, 2011; Sheller, 2012; Stanislas, 2013a,b). Consequently, many of the region's LGB residents conceal and suppress their sexual identity to prevent social exclusion or criminalization (Stern, 2003; Hickling et al., 2009). Thus, LGB people in the Caribbean have long struggled for social, cultural, and legal acceptance and tolerance (Coates, 2010; Smith, 2011).

The prevalence of homophobia and homophobic abuse in Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands has been linked to high rates of family disownment, homelessness and loneliness within local LGB communities (Bourne et al., 2012). Homophobia has also contributed to some of the mental health issues experienced by LGB individuals in the region including their greater rates of depression, anxiety and substance misuse disorders compared to heterosexuals (King et al., 2006; Addis et al., 2009; White et al., 2010; Milne, 2011; Bourne et al., 2012). A study of stigma and discrimination experienced by homosexual men in Jamaica found that the majority of participants reported family disownment and being "shamed" into dropping out of school (Bourne et al., 2012). Stigma, discrimination, and homophobic violence led many to believe that their lives were less productive and that consequently their psychological health. This included feelings of depression, suicidality, and chronic sadness that they associated with suppressing and concealing their sexuality (Bourne et al., 2012). White et al. (2010) studied the mental health needs of LGB people in Jamaica and found 45% of their sample reported symptoms associated with major depression. Additionally, 69% met the criteria on the SCID-I/NP (Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV-TR Axis I Disorders Non-Patient Edition) for ever having experienced one or more Axis I disorders (DSM-IV-TR) in their lifetime. White et al. (2010) attributed these mental health issues to the "high" incidence of homophobic abuse reported by their sample. Over 50% in their study reported experiencing homophobic abuse, such as name-calling, discrimination, violence, threats of violence, and harassment on more than three occasions each month. However, only a quarter reported incidents to the local authorities, and only 10% received counseling for the depression and trauma they perceived these events to cause. Thus, openness about sexual orientation strongly associated with increased incidences of sexuality-related abuse, violence, and harassment leading White et al. (2010)

to link sexuality related openness with poorer psychological health.

Beyond Jamaica there is little published peer reviewed academic or other research on Caribbean LGB communities, making it difficult to understand the experiences of LGB individuals outside this Anglophone Island (Brown, 1997; Sharpe and Pinto, 2006; Kempadoo, 2009; Nelson and Melles, 2010). Therefore, many Caribbean nations including St. Lucia lack evidence that could inform policy and practice designed to support the needs of their LGB communities (Gaskins, 2013). A small body of gray literature, particularly on tourism, the law and politics suggests Caribbean nations differ in their acceptance and tolerance toward LGB people. Homophobia is not entirely absent from Caribbean cultures. However, literature indicates that the French and Spanish Speaking Islands are more tolerant of homosexuality than English speaking Islands (e.g., Chevannes and Gayle, 2000; Chevannes, 2001; Reding, 2003; Zimmerman, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2004; Gorry and Miller, 2005; Kempadoo, 2009; Coates, 2010; Nelson and Melles, 2010; Porter and Prince, 2011; Smith, 2011; Careaga, 2011; Stanislas, 2013a,b; Sáez, 2015). Evidence suggests historical characteristics of nations could underpin differences in homophobia across the Caribbean. Specifically, those that have a relatively stable Anglo-phone colonial history—Islands that remained predominantly under British colonial rule (e.g., Barbados)—appear more homophobic compared to those that remained predominantly under French and Spanish colonial rule (e.g., Guadeloupe and Cuba). Careaga (2011) explains how Islands that remained predominantly under British colonial rule seem "unable to shake off the influence of Victorian morality" (p. 1). This pattern suggests differences in ideological handovers from the regions colonial past have led to differences in homophobia across the Caribbean (Sharpe and Pinto, 2006; Kempadoo, 2009). Moreover, some Caribbean Islands such as St Lucia have a relatively complex colonial past. St. Lucia has a British and French colonial history that has developed into a creolized (mixed) culture and language known locally as *Kwéyòl* (Baker and Jones, 2000; McWhorter, 2000; Paul, 2007; St-Hilaire, 2011). Unlike other Islands, such as Barbados that remained predominantly British during colonial times, St. Lucian culture represents a unique hybrid of its ideological heritage from the region's colonial past and it retains strong French socio-cultural ideologies, customs, and practices (Strazny, 2011). However, as a culture created from a fusion of what seems to be two opposing ideological extremities (French = tolerant of LGB people vs. English = intolerant of LGB people) it is unclear where the St. Lucian *Kwéyòl* culture is positioned in relation to tolerance and acceptance of LGB people.

Given it's deeply complex cultural heritage, St. Lucia presents a sufficiently different cultural context from that considered in previous research in the region. Therefore, considering St. Lucia can be instructive for how we view and understand homophobia in the Caribbean and the psychological impact of homophobia on LGB people. However, two issues complicate this further: the racialization and coloration of homosexuality and homophobia, and the "developed north" vs. the "underdeveloped south."

The Racialization and Coloration of Homosexuality and Homophobia

Skin-color stratification is the differentiation of people by lightness and darkness of skin-shade and it continues to be a salient feature and socio-psychological issue in Caribbean societies and cultures (St-Hilaire, 2011). Pigmentocracy or socio-cultural hierarchy based on skin-color that systematically provides privilege based on lightness of skin, is central to St Lucian society (Crowley, 1956; Lowenthal, 1972; Potter, 2003; Hickling et al., 2009; St-Hilaire, 2011; Malcolm, 2012; Shirk and Edmond-Poli, 2012). Within a pigmentocractic society colorism, prejudice and discrimination against dark-skinned individuals are found to be at their peak (Gabriel, 2007; Coates, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2011; Jablonski, 2012). Thus, pigmentocracy is a major cause of racial prejudice and separatism in St. Lucia (St-Hilaire, 2011). In St. Lucia, and in many Caribbean societies, pigmentocracy has instigated the creation of multiple skin-color identities (Gamman, 1994; Grugel, 1995; Cox, 2002; Charles, 2008; St-Hilaire, 2011). These identities are ascribed different levels of privilege and define behavioral expectations for members of the community (Bouson, 2000; Reddock, 2004; Kruijt, 2005; Rosario, 2011; St-Hilaire, 2011; Cooper, 2012; Flynn, 2012; Shirk and Edmond-Poli, 2012; Breland-Noble et al., 2016).

Within various Black-American and Black-Caribbean communities there is a racialized understanding of "(ab)normal" and "acceptable" sexual behavior for black persons (Fuss, 1995; Napier, 2000; Carbado, 2001; Alexander, 2004; Kornegay, 2004; Hunter, 2005; Silverman, 2005; Ford, 2006, 2008, 2013; Thomas, 2007; Grosch, 2008; Wahab and Plaza, 2009; Das Nair and Thomas, 2012). Numerous communities perceive homosexuality as "something that white people do" and "blacks should not do" (Carbado, 2001, p. 250). Consequently, identifying as LGB clashes with what it means to be *black* within many of these communities (King, 2004). Since the 1960s rap and dancehall music and culture have reified this philosophy and reinforced the belief that homosexuality is an attribute of white ethnicity and western culture (Carbado, 2001). For this reason some scholars describe dancehall and rap music as ideological weaponry that reinforce Caribbean socio-cultural anxieties in the form of colorism and homophobia (Dawe, 2004; Nelson and Melles, 2010; McGinley and Cooper, 2012).

However, we know relatively little about how skin-color intersects with sexuality in St Lucia and elsewhere in the Caribbean and whether it influences levels of tolerance and acceptance toward LGB individuals. Within a culture where homosexuality is perceived as belonging exclusively to white people and western cultures, it is possible that in St. Lucia skin-shade could impact on the level of sexuality related tolerance and hatred experienced by dark and light-skinned LGB individuals. Ford's (2008, 2013) work on the perceptions and experiences of gender roles in African-American communities informs this interpretation and they state that "lighter skinned or 'pretty' men are often implicitly connected with metro/homosexuality" (Ford, 2013, p. 31).

The idea that skin-shade could influence levels of tolerance and hatred toward LGB people in St. Lucia fits the pigmentocractic structure of St. Lucian society. It ascribes social identity, status, and privilege by lightness of skin-shade. This could mean that greater tolerance toward light-skinned LGB people is coherent with the ongoing privileges of lighter-skinned individuals and communities. Within this social context dark-skinned (known in *Kwéyòl* as: *Neg*) LGB people could experience greater levels of homophobic discrimination and hatred than their white (known in *Kwéyòl* as: *Bétjé*—white person) and light-skinned (known in *Kwéyòl* as: *Chaben*— brown-skinned female, *Chabin*—brown-skinned male) peers. Consequently, dark-skinned LGB people could also experience poorer psychological health than their lighter-skinned peers do. This interpretation is consistent with the work of Espejo (2008) who explored the experiences of colorism among male homosexual sex-workers in Thailand. Dark-skinned males were found to experience greater levels of discrimination than their lighter-skinned peers and as a result, their dark-skinned participants reported lower levels of self-esteem and self-worth (Espejo, 2008). Disconcertingly, there is little research on the role of skin-shade in experiences of homophobia and associated psychological health and well-being within and across black populations (Harley et al., 2002, 2012). Thus, by exploring how skin-shade impacts on sexuality-related tolerance and thus the well-being of LGB people in St. Lucia, this study will be one of the first of its kind on Black populations.

There are studies about the dual stigma of homophobia and racism in Black-American populations that might inform the possible psychological health and well-being implications of skin-color oriented tolerance in St. Lucia. For example, Szymanski and Gupta's (2009) study of African-American LGB people suggests they internalize their experiences of homophobia and racism leading to depression and depressive distress (also see (Gupta, 2008)). This suggests that the stigma of "skin-color oriented tolerance" that combines homophobia, racism and colorism into one may similarly be internalized and induce feelings of depression and depressive distress in some dark-skinned LGB people. This is also consistent with studies of intersectionality that explore how people experience and deal with overlapping and conflicting identities (Das Nair and Thomas, 2012). In a socio-cultural environment where it is unacceptable for dark-skinned persons to engage in sexual and romantic relationships with individuals of the same-sex, dark-skinned LGB people may experience conflict between identities of being dark-skinned and LGB. Consequently, some dark-skinned LGB people might be found to experience a cognitive dissonance between the openness and self-acceptance of their sexuality (Darry, 1989; Eliason and Beemyn, 1996; Moji et al., 2009). For instance, studies exploring experiences of homophobia in African-American communities have found that many LGB people report accepting their LGB identity but suppressing and concealing their sexual orientation in order to sustain a positive relationship with their family and community (Battle and Crum, 2007). Similarly, some dark-skinned LGB people might prioritize their dark-skinned identity, and suppress or conceal their LGB identity to sustain positive social relationships. This evidences what might be a cognitive dissonance between the awareness, acceptance, and

openness of their sexuality. However, by denying and concealing sexual identity LGB people risk experiencing psychological health problems such as depression that are secondary to the suppression of their *true* self, sexual identity, feelings, and desires (Kanel and Horn-Mallers, 2015). Sexual orientation concealment is also associated with chronic stress and anxiety, more day-to-day worry about others discovering one's true sexual orientation, and having to maintain deceptions used to conceal one's sexuality (Meyer, 2003; Smith and Ingram, 2004).

The "Developed North" vs. the "Underdeveloped South"

Over the past two decades, scholars have reported the existence of cultural and economic disparities between the Northern and Southern region of St. Lucia. Southern communities are perceived as more poverty-stricken, traditional in their values and less educated than are communities in the North (Antoine, 1998; Walcott, 1999; St-Hilaire, 2011; St. Lucia News Online, 2016). Socially and in academia the South is regarded as functioning using an outdated way of life and mind-set reflective of ideologies and values originating from British colonial rule (Antoine, 1998; Walcott, 1999; St-Hilaire, 2011). Although, Southern communities increasingly aspire to become more educated and modernized, there is still a lack of social integration between the North and South of the Island and a lack of capital investment in the Southern districts that might impede the Souths ability to achieve reform (Dabydeen, 1988; Gamman, 1994; Walcott, 1999; St-Hilaire, 2011). In February 2016, Dr. Kenny Anthony, while Prime Minister of St. Lucia, directly acknowledged the educational and economic neglect of the South and vowed to create an equal capital investment initiative to ensure fair treatment of people in St. Lucia wherever they might be. Dr. Kenny Anthony, in a press release through St. Lucia News Online (2016), said:

> "it's a message that I have drummed into the National Insurance Corporation; emphasized time and time again that all financial investments should not be located in the North, in the Castries basin; that all workers of this country wherever they are located contribute to the resources of the National Insurance Corporation and they too must be part of the investment initiatives of the corporation." (p. 1).

Nevertheless, how the North vs. South cultural divide has an impact on perceptions and experiences of homophobia is less clear. For example, if Southern communities are operating with an outdated mind-set reflective of ideologies and practices instilled during British colonial rule, they might have a more "victorianized" understanding of sexuality (Careaga, 2011). If so, they may be less culturally tolerant and more hateful toward LGB people (Zane, 1992; Robinson, 2010; Maritz, 2013). Additionally, the lack of education in Southern communities could foster negative attitudes toward LGB people. Studies from Jamaica show that educated people have more positive attitudes toward homosexuals than their lesser educated peers (Boxill, 2012). Studies have linked the intensity of homophobia in Jamaica to what is thought to be a "victorianized" understanding of sexuality

instilled during times of British colonial rule (Careaga, 2011). Consequently, education may be an effective tool for moving "out" of the victorianized understanding of sexuality "to" a more accepting ideology. This is consistent with the well-documented associated between a lack of understanding of sexual and gender minorities and intolerance (Klesse, 2016).

Tourism infrastructure is a determinant of regional development that may also play a crucial role in reinforcing differing levels of tolerance and hatred toward LGB people between Northern and Southern regions. The St. Lucian economy depends primarily on tourism and it accounts for ~89.1% of the GDP (National Accounts, 2016). However, tourism investment and development is much greater in the North than in the South (Novelli, 2006; Velde, 2008). Furthermore, the promotion of travel for pleasure between countries contributes not only to economic growth but also to the interchange of knowledge between citizens that helps promote greater mutual understanding and co-operation (Mings, 1988). Thus, given this lack of economic investment, Southern communities do not experience the educational benefit of knowledge exchange between diverse communities. This may further increase differences in levels of tolerance toward LGB people between the regions. For example, unlike Southern communities the social environment in the North could encourage greater knowledge and understanding of persons from different cultures with different lifestyles. Increasing knowledge and understanding of sexual and gender minorities may encourage greater tolerance toward LGB tourists, and this might foster greater tolerance toward LGB people from the local community. This interpretation is consistent with contact theory. Contact theory holds that social prejudice can be reduced by introducing a member of one group to another group in certain circumstances, such as when they have a common goal. In the case of tourism the common goal is to have a successful tourist industry that is satisfying for holiday makers and likely build and sustain the local economy. Moreover, perceptions and attitudes of residents toward the impact of tourism are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for the successful development, marketing and operation of tourism programs (Ap, 1992; Reisinger and Turner, 2011). The acceptance and tolerance of tourists by Northern residents, where much of the tourism industry is based, has been acknowledged as vital for the success of the tourism industry in St. Lucia (Thyne et al., 2007). This suggests that the Northern communities could have grown more tolerant of people whose behaviors and identities deviate from traditional St. Lucian values and norms. Consequently, research is needed to better understand how cultural differences between the Northern and Southern communities might impact St. Lucian LGB people's experiences of intolerance. This is consistent with studies of homophobia in other former British colonies, with homophobia greater in rural regions of Zambia, Australia, and Nigeria for example. Researcher have attributed this geographical patterning to the lack of modernization and educational resources available within rural outer-district communities (Robinson, 2010; Marini, 2011). Rates of depression are also higher within those areas compared to the modernized cities (Morgan, 2008; Marshall,

2012). Therefore, if levels of intolerance are much greater in the South of St. Lucia, Southern LGB people might also experience poorer psychological health than their Northern peers.

Goldberg (2016), for instance, explains that *passing*—purposely suppressing and concealing an LGB identity and performing actions that make others believe that they are heterosexual—is commonplace when LGB people move between social environments that are high and low in their tolerance of non-heterosexuality. It is possible that if there is a Northern vs. Southern difference in levels of tolerance LGB individuals might also experience and report regionalized *passing* in the district that is most intolerant. Goffman (2009) explains that *passing* might have an adaptive function for LGB people in that it helps them avoid homophobic hatred and intolerance. However, there is evidence that it comes with a high social and psychological cost. Goldberg (2016) suggests that the dual identity prevents the person from fully embracing their true authentic self that can induce stress, despondency and dejection. Guss and Drescher (2005) and Remafedi (1987a,b) explain that the anxiety and stress associated with *passing* as heterosexual can often transform into anger that presents as violence, as well as verbal, physical and other negative reactions to friends and family with the strongest negative reaction reserved for parents. The interplay of isolation, fear and anger can also lead some to experience depression, chronic stress, and helplessness (Guss and Drescher, 2005). Therefore, if LGB people are found to practice *passing* between the North and South, it may have some negative impact on their psychological health and well-being. In particular, this could be the case for those living permanently in the South who may feel totally restricted in the expression of their LGB identity.

Identifying the Impact of Homophobia on the Psychological Health and Well-being of LGB People in St. Lucia

Studies show that culture must be taken into account when studying the experiences and perceptions of psychological health and well-being of non-white non-western communities (Liamputtong, 2008, 2013). Culture as an organized set of customs, rituals, beliefs, and institutions that shapes peoples cognitions and behaviors to fit its patterns (Müller, 2010) is a quality of all societies. Since the 1980s research has shown that culture can construct peoples understanding of health and well-being, their presentation and perception of symptoms and their understanding and adjustment to treatments (Shaikh, 1985; Chahin, 2009; Fernando, 2014; Roger and Pilgrim, 2014). Consequently, the identification and treatment of psychological illnesses can be complex for people from minority ethnic groups living in nations with a white majority population (Shaikh, 1985; Fernando, 2014; Roger and Pilgrim, 2014). However, there is a paucity of literature about how St. Lucian culture has constructed local peoples understanding and perception of psychological health and well-being. This is problematic for this study given as the cultural concepts and language used to describe conditions such as depression and stress differ from those found in the United States and United Kingdom. For example, Afro-Cubans are more likely to somatize psychological disorders and express

the disorder(s) through such cultural idioms as *ataques de nevios*—*Eng: attack of* nerves. For many Afro-Cubans, *nevios* is an acceptable way of expressing psychological disorders but it is not considered in most standardized diagnostic manuals as its symptoms can be present in a range of psychological disorders (Chahin, 2009). Additionally, when African-American men experience depression they can present symptoms that are different to those presented by other ethnic groups; and particularly irritability and anger can be expressed instead of sadness that it is usually associated with in White-American communities (Alvidrez et al., 2008; Angel and Williams, 2011; Lawman, 2012; Shefer et al., 2012). Therefore, given limited knowledge about health and well-being in St. Lucian culture this study will allow participants to describe the impact of homophobia on their psychological health and well-being using their own local terminology and concepts. The use of Western psychological health tools and measures in this study would also be inappropriate and unethical because they might be antagonistic to the unique beliefs, conceptions, and antecedents of health and well-being in St. Lucia (Shaikh, 1985; Liamputtong, 2008, 2013; Fernando, 2014; Roger and Pilgrim, 2014).

The Present Study

Existing literature alludes to the Caribbean as the "most homophobic region of the world" (Padgett, 2006; Rowley, 2011), and past research demonstrates that homophobia in the region has had a profoundly negative impact on the psychological health and well-being of the regions Afro-Caribbean LGB populace (e.g., White et al., 2010). However, few empirical psychological studies have explored (1) sexuality and homophobia related experiences in creolized Caribbean cultures, and (2) possible factors that may make certain Black youth more or less vulnerable to homophobia in St. Lucia and across the wider Caribbean. This study sought to explore these issues by examining perceptions and experiences of homophobia in St Lucia, and how geographical patterning between the North and South of the island might be linked to skin-shade intolerance. Given this, the present study included the perspective of LGB people from the North and South of the Island, and people who ranged in skin shade identity. Additionally, including LGB people who markedly differed in age, socio-economic, and education status served two aims. First, this strategy facilitated the investigation of whether tensions of homophobia were similarly and differently experienced across Black St. Lucians. Second, it facilitated further exploration and theorizing regarding the shared perceptions and experiences of homophobia in St. Lucia. Consequently, thematic analysis was employed to investigate the following question: How do skin color and regional disparities in culture impact experiences of homophobia in St. Lucia?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A purposive sample of nine participants (male $n = 5$ and female $n = 4$) who identified as St. Lucian and as Lesbian ($n = 2$), Gay ($n = 5$), and Bisexual ($n = 2$) participated in the study. The participants were aged 18 to 46 years ($M = 28$, $SD = 9.8$) and

identified as both St. Lucian citizens and as individuals who had lived in St. Lucia for more than 10 years. The study employed homogenous purposive sampling, a technique used to recruit and study the experiences and perceptions of persons with similar traits or characteristics (Nicholas, 2008). The researchers are cognizant that LGB individuals and communities are not *totally* homogenous. However, in the specific context of this study, the interviewees were considered homogenous as they identified as non-heterosexuals who live in St. Lucia, and thus had relevant knowledge and experience of homophobia or the dislike and hatred of persons attracted to others of the same-sex. In light of the nature of our target population (hidden and hard to track) the lead researcher (JC), as a gay male of St. Lucian background with an existing rapport with the target population, used contacts and networking to recruit participants.

The participants identified as members of the Afro-Caribbean and specifically Black St. Lucian, community. However, in respect of the pigmentocractic structure of St. Lucian society and the nature of this research, participants also provided information about their skin-shade identity. There are over 110 skin-shade identities in St. Lucia that can be categorized broadly into three overarching identifies: white-skinned, light-skinned, and dark-skinned (Gamman, 1994; Chivallon, 2011, Cox, 2002; Malcolm, 2012). Four participants identified as light-skinned, known in *Kwéyòl* as *Chaben* (brown-skinned female) and *Chabin* (brown-skinned male), and five as dark-skinned. Five participants resided in the North of the Island and three in the South, and one participant did not wish to disclose information about their district of residence. The majority of participants also identified as Catholic ($n = 5$) and the remaining four as Rastafarian ($n = 2$), 7 Day Adventist ($n = 1$), and agnostic ($n = 1$).

Procedure

Following University ethical approval, adverts were placed in LGB media, handouts, and posters to recruit participants. The participants underwent an initial screening with the lead researcher (JC) prior to their participation in the research. If they were suitable for the study they were sent further information to ensure they were aware of all the specificities of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. There was no element of deception within this study and the information sheet provided the participants with all the information necessary for them to make an informed decision about whether to participate. Inclusion criteria required participants to be 18 years of age or older, and to self-identify as LGB and St. Lucian.

On the day of the interview, the participants were required to sign a consent form. The data was collected through face-to-face one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted in a quiet conference suite of a local business and at a local library, and participants were compensated for their travel. The lead researcher (JC) conducted the interviews in English. To protect the identity of the participants, the research team ascribed pseudonyms to each of the interviewees.

A conversational approach was used throughout, allowing interviewees to contribute toward the direction of the discussion. Broad open questions with prompts (available on request) were used to allow for the emergence of related but unexpected issues.

The interview questions were developed following a review of existing literature and were as follows:

- How do would you describe your sexuality and sexual identity?
- Would you consider your sexuality and sexual identity to be an important element of what defines you as a person? And would you be comfortable with the researcher addressing and describing you as lesbian/gay/bisexual in this research?
- Would you begin by describing your experiences as a lesbian/gay/bisexual persons in the St. Lucia? Can you provide some examples?
- Whereabouts do you live on the island? And do you also work in the district in which you reside?
- Have you ever had the experience of working outside the area where you live? If so, what were your experiences?
- If not, what is your perception of working in the different districts?
- What are your thoughts and experiences of homophobia in the North and the South?
- How do you feel about the skin shade and race issues in St. Lucia?
- What are your thoughts on skin shade and sexuality? Has it ever affected your experiences?

All psychological health and well-being related questions were flexible depending on each interviewee's responses. The general protocol for using the follow-up questions was as follows:

- I spotted on question .... you said "........." would you mind explaining a little more about this?
- Could you explain what you mean when you said "............"?
- How did that experience make you feel and did it have any impact on you?
- Can you tell me a bit about whether the experience had any impact on your health and well-being?

Each interview lasted ~50 min, and was audio recorded and transcribed. All of the transcripts were checked for wording and grammatical errors, and all personal identifiers were removed. Once complete, the transcripts were then sent to the interviewees for member checking (allowing the interviewees the check the accuracy of transcripts) and the interviewees were given 3 weeks to review the transcripts and report any discrepancies or concerns. All of the interviewees returned the transcripts confirming satisfaction with their accuracy. Although, there was no element of deception within the study, participants were still given a full debrief to ensure that they understood fully the nature of the study and check that they did not want to withdraw their data.

Analytical Strategy

A critical realist thematic analysis was conducted on the interview data, and extracts were used illustratively (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This method was used to illustrate underlying themes within the discourse, and to enrich the understanding of the experiential perspective of homophobia in St. Lucia. "Critical realist thematic analysis" is conceptualized as research that uses thematic analysis from a critical realist stance. This perspective recognizes the centrality of culture and society in constructing

the nature of knowledge and perceptions of reality, and theorizes that language characterizes and shapes the meaning of social and interpersonal "worlds." Thus, critical realist thematic analysis is situated between what Braun and Clarke (2013) describe as the constructionist and essentialist perspective of thematic analysis. This approach helped ground the analysis within the experiences and perceptions of homophobia the participants described whilst producing a critical and contextualized analysis.

In conducting the analysis, we read the data and identified the themes that tended to occur across participant accounts. All three authors (JC, BM, and DW) performed an initial deductive thematic analysis on the interview data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This method was used to illustrate focused themes within the available texts. In order to achieve this, JC, BM, and DW familiarized themselves with the data by reading and rereading the texts, coding the data, and identifying candidate themes. After revisiting the data again the themes which were identified across participant accounts we clarified, defined, and named. The analysis was undertaken on a latent level, and thus within each theme we paid particular attention to the meaning of participants' accounts, as well as the socio-cultural and relational context in which their perceptions and experiences were situated. However, unlike other forms of latent thematic analysis, the latent aspect of this study is located in the discussion section. This foregrounded interviewee's voices of the interviewees and distinguished these from our interpretations of the meanings behind their perceptions and experiences. The critical realist approach used was also perceived to provide an ethical position that upholds the personified reality of experiencing homophobia whilst recognizing that participant accounts are socio-culturally constructed (Willig, 2010).

Reflexivity and Rigor

The credibility of this study was assessed and validated by immersion and member checking (Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Polit and Beck, 2014). The researchers assigned to undertake the analysis (JC and BM) were immersed in the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts and listening to the audio-recordings. After each data collection session and upon completion of analysis, the lead researcher (JC) performed member checking, and all participants responded favorably. Member checking is a process of gaining feedback from participants on the accuracy on transcripts and research findings. It enables respondents to validate the accuracy of a transcript and enhances credibility, validity, and transferability (Willig, 2010). Dependability (the openness and accountability of the research process) was assessed and supported by collecting records, including minutes from meetings, written analysis, and correspondence between the research team (e.g., email).

Dependability and credibility were also assessed and supported through the process of reflection. The lead researcher was cognizant of his relationship with the other members of the research team and the participants, and how his behavior, during interview sessions, may impact upon the responses of interviewees. The research team spent substantial time reflecting on their own positions in the research and data collection experience. It must be acknowledged that JC, the lead researcher

is multiracial (White, Native-Caribbean, and Black Caribbean) and of Caribbean background, whereas DW identifies as white and BM as mixed race (white and black African). Thus, JC has empathy for St. Lucian LGB people and the challenges that they face. To safeguard against bias, JC kept a reflective diary that logged his emotional responses after analyzing transcripts. In doing so, JC also debriefed with the rest of the research team after analyzing emotionally provoking stories. Currently there are no strict guidelines on the measures and checks needed when interpreting data in critical realist epistemology. However, by having three researchers from different ethnic backgrounds involved in the analysis, we were able to enhance the confirmability and credibility of our interpretations through building consensuses we each other (Creswell and Miller, 2000). We did this by discussing the themes, codes and quotes; and when disagreements arose revisions were made until a consensus was reached.

RESULTS

Two master themes emerged from the analysis: skin-color oriented tolerance, comprised of three sub themes (*light-skin supremacy, acceptance through education, and health consequences*); and North vs. South divide, comprised of two sub-themes (*tolerance and safety and regionalized passing*; see **Table 1**). Themes and illustrative quotes are presented below.

Skin-Color Oriented Tolerance

The participants reported experiencing and observing greater levels of tolerance toward lighter skinned LGB people than their darker skinned peers. As such, dark skinned LGB people reported experiencing greater levels of homophobia and psychological distress and anxiety than their lighter-skinned peers.

Subtheme: Light-Skin Supremacy

Most interviewees had experienced and witnessed how the shade of LGB individuals' skin-color shaped others tolerance of their LGB sexual orientation. They described how greater tolerance

TABLE 1 | Summary table of findings.

Master themes	Sub themes	Concept
Skin-color orientated tolerance**	Light-skin supremacy** Acceptance through education* Health consequences*	Greater levels of socio-cultural tolerance toward lighter-skinned LGB people. Homophobic abuse and hatred targeted towards dark skinned LGB people.
North vs. South divide**	Tolerance and Safety** Regionalized *Passing**	Greater levels of tolerance toward LGB people in the North. Exposure to homophobic violence and abuse in the South, but not the North.

**All nine participants endorsed the theme.
*Fewer than nine participants endorsed the theme. Specific Sub-Themes: Health Consequences (n = 7), Acceptance through Education (n = 4), and Regionalized Passing (n = 8).

was shown toward lighter-skinned LGB individuals compared to their darker skinned peers. This is exemplified by Jamal, who self-identified as "dark-skinned gay male," when describing his experience of "coming out" to his friends, family, and local community:

> "As a darker-skinned person, people did not accept me but people seemed to be okay with some of the gay men of high complexion, it certainly felt as though being lighter-skinned meant that it was okay."

Interviewees who self-identified as light-skinned also reported experiencing greater levels of tolerance toward their sexuality including when they exhibited gender non-normative behavior. For instance, Jahmal, who self-identifies as a "light-skinned gay male," explained that his colleagues and friends tolerate his sexuality even when he exhibits feminine behaviors:

> "they ... tolerate me more even though I am femme (eng: feminine) the darker gay guys are not treated as well"

As product of skin color oriented tolerance, the participants explained that it is not acceptable to simultaneously have and embrace the identities of being "dark-skinned" and "LGB." This signifies what might be skin color oriented identity intersectional issues for some LGB people in St. Lucia. John, a male who self-identified as gay and "dark-skinned," said:

> "It's just more acceptable to be white or mixed race and gay than black and gay"

As part of this skin-color oriented tolerance interviewees reported experiencing and witnessing darker skinned LGBs undergoing homophobic bullying, violence, and discrimination that was worse than that experienced by their lighter skinned peers. When asked to explain experiences of this cultural phenomenon, Leyroy, who self-identified as a "dark-skinned gay male," compared his experiences to those of his lighter skinned LGB friends:

> "lighter skinned friends get no trouble at all, people know they are gay and they get treated with respect. From the way I feel and the experiences I have had, I do sometimes feel that they do no not experience as much suffering."

Marionette, 46-year-old self-identified light-skinned Bisexual, also explained that:

> "if I was darker, I think I would have faced a lot more discrimination because of my sexuality"

As a result of their experiences, the interviewees reported perceiving St. Lucian society and culture as being unaccepting and intolerant of dark-skinned persons engaging in sexual and romantic relationships with same-sex individuals. Rochelle, who self-identified as a "light-skinned Lesbian" described this as follows:

> "I'm a light brown color, whereas, if someone is much darker than me I don't think they will get accepted as a gay person, I just think they stand out a lot more and it is not really seen as acceptable to see them with the same sex"

The interviewees attributed their experiences of this tolerance to the superior power and socio-occupational privilege held by lighter-skinned persons as the societal elite. Martin, a self-identified light-skinned gay male, summarized this in the following way:

> "I mean light-people we are power, and sometime I feel that people allow me as a gay because my dad's white ...... I am gay but they allow me because lighter statuses is seen as more beautiful and rich."

Similarly, Zanthe, a self-identified "light-skinned bisexual," also said that:

> "In this society I live in lighter people like us are still given many advantages even with my sexuality..."

Many interviewees also described that the social privileges attached to being light-skinned had consequences for how LGB individuals' expressed their sexuality. Some experienced and witnessed dark-skinned LGB individuals undergoing greater socio-cultural pressure to conform to heterosexuality. Marionette, explained that:

> "Society places a lot more pressure on darker people to follow our traditional cultural values, where we were traditionally against homosexuality in all honesty there are a lot of dark-skinned gay people here in St. Lucia, but from what I see they don't get treated as well as lighter gay people like me."

A number of interviewees spoke about concealing their sexuality to avoid the racially targeted homophobic tension, discrimination and hostility toward dark-skinned LGB people. This is exemplified by Nathan, who said that:

> "I would say my experiences have been negative as I cannot be myself I have to pretend I am straight to avoid tension."

Sub-Theme: Acceptance through Education

Interviewees reported interpreting differences in the levels of tolerance toward dark-skinned LGB people based on their education level and occupation. For example, before Jamal became a Physician he worked in a retail store and between these occupations he interpreted differences in the way others reacted toward him as a "dark-skinned gay male":

> "before I was a physician, I worked in clothes stores and it was in those kind of settings that my skin-shade really influenced the way people treated me I find that as a darker skinned people did not accept me but people seemed to be okay with some of the gay men of high complexion."

Similar accounts were also recorded by three other interviewees. For example, Priscilla, who self-identified as "dark-skinned Lesbian," explained that obtaining higher education is a means of climbing what she described as the color caste system. Through education she explained that she was afforded privileges (including others increased acceptance of her non-heterosexuality) which would have otherwise only been available to her light skinned peers. Priscilla said:

> "You can't escape this (intolerance towards dark-skinned LGB persons), education is the only way out, it gives us folks (dark-skinned LGB persons) a chance it improves our social status, it was the only way out for me, people have the highest respect for educated people doctors lawyers black white gay or straight ...."

Sub-Theme: Health Consequences

The interviewees interpreted the psychological health outcomes of homophobia in St. Lucia as largely dependent on the skin-shade of the LGB individual, with darker skinned LGB individuals appearing to experience poorer psychological health. One of the most noticeable issues was the depression experienced by dark-skinned LGB people. For example, when asked how their experiences impact on their life, Priscilla explained:

> "my experiences have affected me emotionally it has made me so depressed"

Others described feeling chronic anxiety and stress, secondary to the day-to-day worries and fears associated with racially targeted homophobic intolerance and hatred of dark-skinned LGB person. Maria, a 32-year-old self-identified dark-skinned Lesbian, described that:

> "This has made me such a nervous person; I worry about every little thing it has made me a social recluse"

As a result of their experiences and their psychological impact, some self-identified dark-skinned interviewees reported seeking the help of medical professionals. John reported experiencing depression and anxiety as a result of the abuse and discrimination he experienced and explained that:

> "my doctor has actually placed me on anti-depressants."

NORTH SOUTH DIVIDE

The participants reported a cultural disparity in levels of tolerance toward LGB people between the Northern and Southern region of the Island, with greater levels of tolerance in the North than the South.

Sub-Theme: Tolerance and Safety

The interviewees experienced what they interpreted as cultural differences in levels of tolerance toward LGB people between the Northern and Southern region of St. Lucia. They described experiencing and witnessing greater levels of socio-cultural tolerance in the North and less in the South. Zanthe, a female who

lives in the South but commutes to the North for work purposes, explained that:

> "In the South they are much more outdated, so it is not a great place for gay people, I just find that in the North they are a lot more open minded people are a lot more tolerant up North."

Interviewees also reported experiencing and witnessing greater levels of homophobic violence and discrimination in the South compared to the North. For instance, Jamal described his experiences:

> "last year we sent a male nurse on a home visit to Laborie, he was attacked by the sons of the elderly male patient" for the reason of homosexual suspicion, the "fact that he is Male and a Nurse made the guys suspect that he was Gay," even though he is married heterosexual.

The interviewees described the North as a popular destination for tourists and as the center of St. Lucian tourism. They interpreted tourism as contributing positively toward the greater level of tolerance they experienced within the Northern region. They explained that Northerners are raised in an environment of greater diversity than their Southern peers allowing them to interact socially with those of different religions, sexualities, and ethnicities. Consequently, many interviewees explained that this led those in the North to have "better" understanding and tolerance of differences in sexuality. When asked to elaborate on her experiences between the North and South, Priscilla explained that:

> "there are a lot of tourists in the North, so people in those areas are taught to be tolerant because if they discriminate it can destroy our tourism industry which we thrive on here in St. Lucia"

The issue of tourism was further exemplified by Marionette:

> "They are more modern and there are a lot of tourists when I am in that environment there are a lot of different people so locals are naturally more tolerant"

Through interacting with LGB people, the interviewees explained that Northerners bettered their intellectual understanding of sexuality that improved their levels of tolerance. Jamal, a gay male who spent his childhood growing up in the South but now lives in the North, explained that:

> "We have a lot of holiday makers (persons of vacation) in the area, so most of my co-workers have learnt to be tolerant of all people who are different..."

Interviewees also reported experiencing what they interpreted as differences in individuals' understanding of same-sex relationships between the North and the South. They described Southern communities as perceiving same-sex relationships and homosexuality as life choices that individuals can control. When asked to explain why living in the North makes him happier, Leyroy explained:

"People are educated up here, most of the people around me are intelligent people, these are people that know I can't change the way I am…"

The interviewees also linked Southern intolerance toward LGB people with the lack of educational resources available in Southern communities. Some interviewees perceived a lack of education as leading to specific lay theories of sexuality that encouraged Southern intolerance:

"they are poor they can't afford to be educated, and they think being Gay is an illness or a curse." (Maria, a resident of North of the Island)

"Most country people are not educated, that's why I think I had such bad experiences" (Marionette, a resident of North of the Island)

Stress, anxiety, and safety were issues also vocalized by the participants. In light of experiencing and witnessing greater levels of intolerance in the South, interviewees reported feeling safer in Northern towns and villages on the Island, and feeling stressed, scared, and anxious when in Southern towns. Martin who works in the North, but commutes to the South for work purposes, explained that:

"I feel much safer in the North, people treat gay people with respect here, they are much more acceptant of everyone who is different, it is the only place on the island where I feel safe to work without having to look over my shoulder all the time"

The issue of personal safety is further exemplified by John:

"Because I felt safer up North commuting meant that I was heading out of my comfort zone, working in the North I feel happier and safer here people are more acceptant"

Sub-Theme: Regionalized Passing

Interviewees described altering how they presented their sexual identity when commuting between the Northern and Southern districts. When in the South interviewees reported presenting their sexual identity to others as heterosexual. When asked about his experiences of traveling between the North and the South, one participant explained:

"When your cross Castries into those area, it is like you going back in time so that is where I have to jump between who I am and who they want me to be, It's kind of odd." When asked what he meant by "who I am and who they want me to be" he replied "I have to act like a straight man for my own safety."

Interviewees also described how they decided to alter how they presented their sexuality when commuting from the Southern to the Northern region, shifting from a heterosexual identity back to their "true" LGB identity in both social and occupational settings. In the psychology of human sexuality, this type of identity shifting is known as *passing*. When asked "why" they regionally shift their sexual identity, interviewees explained that they felt safer in the Northern region and thus able express their

true sexual orientation more openly in the North of the Island. One participant explained:

"I feel safest in Gros Islet and Rodney Bay, only because they are more modern and there are a lot of tourists, when I am in that environment there are a lot of different people so locals are naturally more tolerant."

Thus, for the interviewees, shifting their public sexual identity was a protective strategy against anticipated homophobia, discrimination and abuse. Maria, who lives in the North and commutes to the South, explained:

"I used to act I had a husband as I know what people are like around there,"

When asked what she means by "what people are like around there," she explained that

"its even more risky to be gay in the South than it is up North, as the people are just far too behind I just know they would beat me."

Although, interviewees openly expressed their LGB identity in the North, all interviewees revealed that they also conceal their sexual orientation when at work to prevent what they perceived as job based discrimination based on her sexuality. Zanthe, said:

"Well in front of my co-workers it depends on who I am with, that may make me sound fake but I don't want my sexuality to cost me my job"

All of the interviewees reported feeling anxious and distress every time they had to conceal their "true" sexual identity in the South. For many interviewees shifting of sexual identity meant that they could not be their true inner self and that this concealment induced feelings of depression. The participants explained that their experiences of anxiety stemmed from day-to-day worry about losing their job or relationship with friends and family in the South. This was worsened by being worried that their deception of concealing their sexuality would be discovered:

"I have to pretend I am something I am not, It makes me feel miserable when I cannot be myself."—says Nathan.

"I endlessly worry that people will find out my sexuality and think bad of me, so I tend to do a lot of things to prevent people finding out"—says Martin.

DISCUSSION

This is one of the first qualitative studies exploring perceptions and experiences of homophobia amongst LGB individuals in St. Lucia, West Indies. The interviewees raised a number of serious concerns related to social and health issues. Their accounts suggest sexuality related stigma affects negatively the lives of LGB people in St. Lucia. One of the most noticeable similarities across participants' accounts is how the shade of LGB individuals' skin-color shapes others' tolerance of their sexual

orientation. Participants described their experiences of skin-color oriented tolerance as fueled by the power of superiority held by light-skinned persons as the societal-elite. These experiences illustrate what might be the existence of a skin-color oriented hierarchy of tolerance toward LGB people. This could exist coherently alongside, and be reinforced by, the pigmentocractic structure of St. Lucian society (Gabriel, 2007; Glenn, 2009). Additionally, given the pigmentocracy is widespread across the Caribbean (Tate, 2015, 2016) this variation in perceptions and experiences of homophobia may not be unique to St. Lucia. Therefore, it is important to address this issue in research on other societies in the region.

Two possible conclusions that can be drawn from our findings: anyone who is lighter-skinned is treated better in St. Lucian Society regardless of sexuality, or being lighter-skinned is equated with being white and possessing cognitions and behaviors culturally associated with and ascribed to *white people.* Therefore, could being LGB be seen as expected for white and light skinned people? Other studies have shown that within many Afro-Caribbean and African-American communities, homosexuality is perceived as something belonging to the white race and unnatural for black persons (e.g., Ford, 2008). Consequently, it is likely that being LGB in St. Lucia is perceived as natural for white and light-skinned persons but unexpected for darker-skinned persons. This could fuel intolerance toward darker-skinned LGB people and greater tolerance may be another privilege of being "light-skinned" in St. Lucia.

Issues of intersectionality (Rodarte-Luna, 2008) are evident in interviewee's accounts. Given the colonial history and pigmentocractic structure of St. Lucian society, racial identities in St. Lucia extend beyond broad rigid categories of Black, White, and Asian (etc.) to skin-shade identities (Gamman, 1994; Wilton, 2005; Hall, 2008; Carter, 2013) and in St. Lucia these are white-skinned, light-skinned and dark-skinned (Gamman, 1994; Cox, 2002; Chivallon, 2011; Malcolm, 2012). Participants' accounts suggest that being "dark-skinned" and "lesbian, gay, or bisexual" is unacceptable in St Lucian culture. These findings support existing literature that skin-shade identity is largely perceived as *superior* to most other identities, and a primary identity from which all other identities and behavioral expectations are structured (e.g., Kruijt, 2005; Ford, 2008, 2013; Rosario, 2011; St-Hilaire, 2011; Shirk and Edmond-Poli, 2012; Flynn, 2012). This sexuality and race nexus might challenge some dark-skinned LGB people to demonstrate the authenticity of their ethno-racial identity because of their non-heterosexuality. Research demonstrates that in most instances Afro-Caribbean heterosexuals perceive Afro-Caribbean LGB persons as "selling out" to what is often referred to as the "white disease" (homosexuality). Thus, Afro-Caribbean LGB individuals often report experiencing being labeled as an "*Oreo*" and/or "*Coconut*" (Das Nair and Thomas, 2012. p. 97)—black on the outside, but "white" on the inside—to shame them for not prioritizing their racial identity and its associated behaviors (Das Nair and Thomas, 2012). For many Afro-Caribbean LGB people this form of shaming indicates that their community is not accepting of people who attempt to embrace both identities simultaneously

(McKeown et al., 2010). For instance, in a study by McKeown et al. (2010), an interviewee stated:

> "I have a Black female friend who... complained that I was focusing too much on being gay and not enough on being black. It is assumed by her that the black identity is superior and not complementary, and the implication in her voice and manner suggested that I was 'letting the side down'. She and other associated seem to struggle with the idea that you can be both simultaneously." (p. 5).

Therefore, what does this mean for the development of healthy skin shade and sexual identities and experiences of psychological well-being in St. Lucia? Given the limited literature, it is reasonable to suggest that some dark-skinned LGB persons may experience a cognitive dissonance between the two identities of being dark-skinned and LGB. Opposing meanings and behavioral expectations ascribed to these two different identities (e.g., dark skinned = not homosexual) could elicit social, cultural, and psychological struggles when individuals attempt to fuse and embrace these two identities as was apparent in experiences of some of the interviewees in this study. This interpretation is also consistent with the work of Bhugra (1997) who documented the importance of racial identity in South Asian minorities in the UK and its impact on sexual identification and expression. He found also found a cognitive dissonance between individual's ethno-racial and sexual identity. Many South Asian ethno-racial identities emphasize the importance of family and religion, and many of the LGB people in his study perceived this as clashing with their LGB identity. Due to this cognitive dissonance, many South Asian LGB people adopted a *false* heterosexual identity around members of their ethno-cultural group and shifted to an LGB identity around other LGB people and members of more tolerant ethno-cultural groups. Additionally, some went beyond adopting a false identity to consciously adopting a double life: *heterosexual* around members of their own ethno-racial group (e.g., getting married to a member of the opposite-sex and having a family), *and LGB* that is hidden from their ethno-racial group. Similarly, participants in our sample made associations between intolerance toward dark-skinned LGB people and concealment of their sexual identity to protect against both suspicion of being homosexual and from being the victim of homophobic violence and abuse from their community. Disconcertingly, over the past decade research has found that prolonged concealment and shifting of a person's *true* identify can often induce chronic stress and mild depression, secondary to the suppression of the *true self* (Nance, 2008).

In that case, are some dark-skinned LGB people more likely to develop unhealthy racial and sexual identities? The literature on the impact of skin color oriented tolerance on experiences of racial and sexual identity in St. Lucian society and culture is limited and requires further research. Nevertheless, it is possible that some dark-skinned LGB persons may develop healthy racial and LGB identities and psychological health in spite of skin color oriented tolerance when protective factors such as resilience and coping behavior are considered. For example, LGB individuals could vary in their use of prescribed western-centric labels of sexuality as a coping behavior. In a society where there is stigma

toward dark-skinned persons who identify as LGB, some dark-skinned individuals attracted to the same-sex may dissociate their sexual practice from an identity they perceive socially stigmatized along with the Caribbean's growing *gay scene* (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2004). Such a dissociation does not always mean that a person, whether dark or light skinned, has an unhealthy identity (e.g., Wellings et al., 2012). In western society it is largely thought that to obtain a healthy sexual and romantic subject-hood people need to subscribe to prescribed labels of sexuality e.g., lesbian and gay (Das Nair and Thomas, 2012). However, according to the work of Asthana and Oostvogels (2001) the use of rigid labels such as Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual is not common in the non-western societies, except among educated urban persons exposed to the western LGB scene. Even in societies where attitudes toward LGB persons have grown to be more positive, not all persons with sexual and romantic feelings toward the same-sex will identify as LGB (Wellings et al., 2012).

Previous literature highlights a range of cultural, educational and political disparities between the Northern and Southern region of St. Lucia; and some previously unexplored sexualities-related disparities were evident in our findings and in particular greater tolerance toward LGB people in the North than in the South. Previous studies have shown that rates of depression, stress, and suicidality are higher amongst LGB people who reside in communities where levels of homophobia are greater (Morgan, 2008; Marshall, 2012). Given the lack of tolerance in the South, it is likely that Southern LGB people may experience poorer psychological health than their Northern peers but this remains relatively unexplored.

Given the greater level of intolerance toward LGB people in the South, *passing* in the South was prevalent in the accounts of participants. *Passing* appears to be a means of protection against sexuality-related discrimination, attacks and hatred in the South. While occasional *passing* might not be harmful, studies have shown that the frequent and prolonged *passing* can have a negative influence on the psychological health and well-being of LGB people (Risdon, 2003; Harris, 2008; Nadal, 2011). For instance, some studies suggest it can induce psychological distress and depression that is secondary to the affects resulting from suppression of the *true self* (Shelly-Sireci, 2012). Therefore, even as a protective mechanism, *passing* might have a range of adverse consequences that negatively distort the cultural and psychological well-being of St. Lucian LGB people. This was also apparent in experiences of the participants, many whom reported feeling unhappy, saddened, distressed, and depressed when having to conceal their true sexual identity. Additionally, for those LGB people who live and work in the South, rates of depression might be significantly higher as unlike their Northern peers, Southern LGB people may be more restricted in their ability express their *true* sexual identity, desires and feelings.

Further research could focus on the psychological health implications of skin color oriented tolerance. Specifically, we recommend more research on the consequences of self-loathing amongst dark-skinned LGB people. Beyond racial self-identification in St. Lucia, light-skinned people have more education and higher occupational status and privilege than darker-skinned do. Thus, unlike their dark-skinned heterosexual

peers, dark-skinned LGB people in St. Lucia might be faced with the dual challenges and stigmas of skin-color targeted homophobia and general skin-color oriented socio-occupational disadvantage and discrimination. Very few other people in society have to endure such stigmas simultaneously and to such an extent. Within such a societal framework, dark-skinned LGB people may experience issues of color self-loathing. We use the term "color self-loathing" to describe individuals who are happy and satisfied with their own broader racial-identity (e.g., Black or Asian etc.) but who have negative feelings toward their own skin-shade and skin-shade identity within their racial-group. This term is not to be confused with "racial self-loathing" or negative feelings toward oneself because of belonging to a specific racial group (Hall, 2008). Color self-loathing is an especially well-known and much discussed issue in Jamaica, a place suffering from an epidemic of skin bleaching (Kovaleski, 1999; Charles, 2003; Pierre, 2013). Clinical studies found a link between dark-skinned disadvantage, skin bleaching and the high rates of depression and substance misuse amongst the region's darker-skinned community (Hall, 2010, 2008; David, 2013a,b). However, given the lack of research on LGB people in the Caribbean region, the issue of color self-loathing within the LGB community still remains relatively unexplored.

The findings also point to a need for additional research on the role of education on sexuality and homophobia in St. Lucia. Other studies have suggested that educational strategies, including schooling reform and educational campaigns, are important in reducing homophobia (e.g., Herek, 1984; Eichstedt, 1996; Black et al., 1999). While there is a lack of research investigating the effectiveness of these interventions in St. Lucia, psychologists have long presented findings in support of this proposition (e.g., Serdahely and Ziemba, 1984; Ben-Ari, 1998; Black et al., 1999). These studies suggest that increases in tolerance toward dark-skinned LGB people and LGB people in the South is possible. However, more research on education and sexuality in St. Lucia could improve our understanding of these issues, and inform culturally appropriate schooling reforms and educational campaigns specifically for St. Lucian society. Schooling differs between societies and cognitive styles differ between cultural groups (e.g., the way people receive, process, and make meaning of social and environmental information). Therefore, educational intervention strategies need to be culturally specific to change cultural attitudes (Ford et al., 1996; Faiola and Matei, 2005; Western, 2005).

LIMITATIONS

Although, the findings of this study provide insights into the concepts of what it means to be "dark skinned" vs. "light skinned," it has limitations. The interviews were retrospective and memory played a critical role in the accounts shared by the interviewees. Although what interviewees remember is important to the meaning they attribute to events they experienced, the researchers cannot be certain of the veracity of these accounts. The gender and racial identity of the lead researcher who conducted the interviews could have influenced the findings. The lead researcher (JC) is a light-skinned male

who resides in the North of St. Lucia and participants may have disclosed different information if they were interviewed by a person of the same gender and skin shade identity as themselves or by a person who lived in the same district (see Liamputtong, 2008, 2013). Thus, replications of this study using participant and researcher gender and skin-shade identity matching during the interview process are encouraged. These replications could provide further evidence of the reliability of the findings and information about the role of skin-shade and gender identity in researcher and participant interactions in St. Lucian culture. Furthermore, the lead researcher used their social contacts within the St. Lucian LGB communities to recruit the sample that could bias the findings (e.g., the sample being more homogeneous than the larger target population, and the lead researcher being middle class and university educated). However, in reality it is difficult to recruit a large and diverse sample of St. Lucian LGB people. Therefore, replications of this study using different sampling methods are encouraged to provide more evidence for the degree of generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, given the ethno-cultural diversity of the research group we were able to draw on a variety of different perspectives to produce a more nuanced account and understanding of the life circumstances of St. Lucian LGB people. Finally, although the study is exploratory and its conclusions tentative they are consistent with previous research that links negative social experiences to stress, depression and other forms of psychological distress.

CONCLUSION

Historically, researchers have neglected the lives of non-white LGB people (Anderson, 2009, 2011; Fisher, 2012) and very few researchers have examined specifically the experiences of Afro-Caribbean sexual minority persons based on their race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The current study aimed to increase our knowledge of these issues by exploring the experiences of homophobia in St. Lucia. Our study revealed important issues experienced by St. Lucia LGB people: the shade of LGB individuals' skin-color shaped others' tolerance of their sexual orientation, and regionalized disparities exist in the level of tolerance toward LGB people. However, further studies should expand on the LGB people who were not represented in our study, including white LGB people (and LGB people from other racial backgrounds). Additionally, other non-heterosexual individuals who have experienced homophobia unreported in this study, such as those with a pansexual and asexual identity, might provide further insight into the socio-psychological experiences of homophobia in St. Lucia.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The Institute of Health and Society reviewed and approved the procedures for this study. Participants read an information sheet and provided their full consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JC developed the study concept and method. JC performed the data collection and analysis and all authors discussed the results. JC wrote the first draft of the manuscript and BM and DW provided comments and revised the manuscript.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Combining transnational and intersectional approaches to immigrants' social protection: The case of Andean families' access to health

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Abstract

Immigrants and family members in the home and host societies experience inequalities in access to social protection. Focusing on healthcare, we demonstrate that immigrant families today respond to healthcare needs of family members here and there through four cross-border strategies. We show that immigrants select and articulate these different strategies to assemble transnational health care arrangements. Using an intersectional approach, we argue that heterogeneity markers such as gender, race, class, and levels of transnational engagement determine the choice between different types of arrangements. We support our argument with ethnographic data collected with 48 members of 10 Andean transnational family members during fieldwork in Belgium, Colombia, and Peru.

Keywords: Gender, Transnationalism, Social protection, Health, Peru, Colombia

Introduction

The nexus between migration, healthcare, and social protection has received significant scholarly attention over the past decades. Some public health scholars, for instance, have looked for a long time at the role of health as a driver for migration and, conversely, at the impact of migration and the condition of being an immigrant on health and access to formal care (Lindert, Schouler-Ocak, Heinz, & Priebe, 2008; Bollini & Siem, 1995). Migration scholars, on the other hand, have had an interest in immigrants as care providers in destination countries and its impact both on family ties across borders (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) and on the availability of care in the Global South (Isaksen, Devi, & Hochschild, 2008). Overall, because these academic conversations have developed separately, scholars have for the most part neglected the fact that the immigrant families organize their own access to health across borders.

However, recent literature on transnational social protection has instead partly helped to bridge the gap between these different bodies of literature. In particular, they found that transnational families access social protection through formal schemes in sending and receiving countries as well as through informal provisions based on social networks located in multiple geographical locations (Sabates-Wheeler & Feldman, 2011; Faist, Bilecen, Barglowski, & Sienkiewicz, 2015). In this article, we first build on

the above-mentioned bodies of literature but also on social policy, development and diaspora studies in order to identify four strategies by which immigrants ensure their family's and their own access to formal healthcare. Adopting a transnational-intersectional lens (Anthias, 2008; Mahler, Mayurakshi, & Vrushali, 2015), we argue —in the second part of the paper— that these avenues are not equally open to all immigrants as their availability is determined by various heterogeneity markers such as gender, race, class, and levels of transnational engagement.

We put to use an intersectional approach first developed by self-described "U.S third-world feminist" (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983) to analyze the multiple axes of inequalities beyond gender that create mechanisms of inequality in contemporary societies. Following pioneer work by Crenshaw (1991) and its increasing use in Europe since the 1990's (Anthias, 2008), intersectionality has undoubtedly been transformed into a popular heuristic device in contemporary social sciences. However, as argued by migration scholars such Mahler et al. (2015), it has not reached its full analytical potential given that most scholars apply it to understand power relations inside one particular nation-state. In spite of the fact that an increasing number of individuals are living lives that span across the borders of nation-states, a certain form of methodological nationalism remains (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). In recent years, sociologists like Purkayastha (2010, p. 40) advocated an intersectional approach that could reveal how exclusion and inclusion work in different national contexts. Indeed, because markers of heterogeneity such as gender, class, and ethnicity produce different effects whether they are looked from the standpoint of the immigrant's sending or receiving country, we need to go beyond what some have called "domestic" intersectional studies (Patil, 2013). As we show with our case study, because the immigrant position in term of class, gender and races produces different effects in the sending and receiving country, immigrant families may actively design their social protection strategies to counterbalance the less advantageous position they have in one space with a more privileged position they have in the other. This understanding of simultaneous experiences of multiple standpoints might help us to understand inequalities in a transnational context characterized by the geographical separation of immigrant family members and their simultaneous social, economic and political involvement in different nation states.

We thus build on Purkayastha's work (2010) to study transnational healthcare arrangements used by Andean transnational family networks. Such arrangements are made of various strategies by which access to formal healthcare is negotiated by immigrant families across the borders of several nation-states. Beyond the classic "gender, race and class trilogy" adopted in intersectional studies, we argue that a thorough understanding of transnational health care arrangements by immigrant families need to also take in consideration additional heterogeneity markers such as religiosity, generation and their level of transnational engagement. Following the work of Frenoza-Flot and Shinozaki (2017, p. 8), we analyzed generation not as a biological category but as the historical location of an individual within his/her family network, which might change meanings in different national or social contexts.

Andean migrants have traditionally been considered as a homogeneous group of migrants with low access to social protection. Yet, the analysis of our empirical data reveals that these families are heterogeneous units who select specific strategies and assemble them in two types of transnational health care arrangements

—sequential and sporadic arrangements— according to different heterogeneity markers. By conducting such analysis we go beyond the work of transnational feminist scholars who have used an intersectional lens in a global set of relations particularly applied to identity formations or to the mapping of how ideas and capital get transferred across borders through different power lines but rarely to study the distribution of social rights (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

A typology of immigrants' transnational health strategies

How do immigrants organize their own access to healthcare and that of relatives living with them or in the home country? For over two decades, transnational migration scholars have studied the interconnectedness between immigrant well-being and that of relatives from whom they are physically separated. With concepts such as transnational care (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) and care chains (Hochschild, 2000), in particular, they have shown how the mobility of migrants driven by labor shortages in the care sectors of industrialized countries itself triggers new needs for care in the societies of origin (Yeates, 2009). These works expanded the meaning of care to embrace various forms of cross-border material and moral support that circulate across transnational family networks and are governed by family and kinship ties that are not gender-neutral (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). By extending the meaning of care to informal practices, these scholars have however neglected the new avenues to access formal health care that have recently developed. For this reason, while we recognize that formal strategies often intertwine with informal ones, this article focuses on access to formal care. To this end, we use the narrower concept of immigrants' transnational health strategies, which are the rights, schemes, and practices available to immigrants to provide both themselves and relatives in the host, and home societies with access to medical treatment from qualified health professionals.

Access to formal healthcare and welfare, in general, has been historically gender- biased. In the classic male breadwinner model common to many Western states, women were traditionally in charge of households' reproductive needs while the family's access to state-sponsored welfare depended on male workers (Sainsbury, 1999). Next to gender biases, migration regimes also historically created distinctions between categories of immigrants with guaranteed access to health (e.g. mobile EU citizens, refugees…) and others —such as undocumented migrants— with limited rights to welfare (Sainsbury, 2006). Scholars have noted, however, that in Europe in particular these lines are now blurred by the increasing use of health policies as migration control instruments (Gsir, Lafleur, & Stanek, 2015). Bearing these limitations in mind, we identify four transnational health strategies below before discussing, with the case study of Andean transnational families, how immigrants select them to create what we call their own transnational health care arrangements (see Table 1).

Workers' health insurance for immigrants and dependents abroad

Public or private health insurance purchased in countries of residence is a favored avenue for immigrants wishing to address their family's health needs here and there. While these insurances typically focus on the needs of residents, medical expenditures of relatives in the homeland can sometimes be covered. Social security agreements —whenever they are signed between sending and receiving country authorities— are key instruments in this

Table 1 A Typology of immigrant transnational health strategies

1. Worker's Insurance	2. Mobility
Public or private health insurance covering immigrants in situation of employment with (possible) extension of benefits to relatives residing in the home country	Cross-border movement of immigrant towards homeland or third country to receive care and cross-border movement of immigrant relatives to receive care in immigrant country of residence
3. Individual and Collective Remittances	4. Diasporic Health Policies
Cash transfer from immigrants to non-migrant relatives to purchase access to healthcare in the home country and community-based forms of solidarity by which immigrants and/or relatives in the homeland are provided with means to access healthcare	Ad hoc policy responses by home country authorities to address specific healthcare needs of nationals with limited or no access to healthcare abroad with (possible) extension of benefits to non-migrant relatives residing in the home country

respect as they allow immigrant workers to extend health insurance benefits in their country of residence to family members abroad (Sabates-Wheeler & Koettl, 2010). Because of the high level of coordination between social security institutions of Member States, EU citizens are among the most privileged immigrants when it comes to extending health care coverage to relatives in the homeland. With Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009, the state where migrants are employed reimburses the state where the family is residing for costs incurred (Holzman, Koettl, & Chernetsky, 2005). The European model is however exceptional as most immigrants have limited ability to export social security coverage to relatives residing abroad because of their legal status or the absence of such social security agreements (Holzman et al., 2005).

Next to public health insurance, numerous health insurance companies offer costly "expatriate insurances" on the private market that cover socio-economically privileged immigrants residing abroad and their family members located in multiple geographical spaces. In California, experiments have also been conducted to allow US employers to subscribe to cheaper private insurance plans for documented immigrant workers and family members in Mexico. This plan gives migrants healthcare in Mexican border cities at lower cost (Vargas-Bustamante, Laugesen, Caban, & Rosenau, 2012). Overall, the migration status, as well as bureaucratic and financial barriers often hampers immigrants' ability to extend public or private health coverage to family members abroad. Additionally, such provisions rely on western-based family conceptions limiting themselves to spouse, children and parents even though migrants' kinship obligation may extend beyond the nuclear family.

Mobility

Immigrants who have limited coverage of private or public health insurances often engage in mobility strategies to take care of both their healthcare needs as well as those of non-migrant family members. Transnational family scholars have analyzed how family members residing in different countries organize healthcare across borders. As demonstrated by Merla and Baldassar (2011), gendered and generational markers of difference matter in this distribution, which entails for instance, that women or younger siblings may be granted different responsibilities when it comes to the family's health.

Mobility as a transnational health strategy also materializes differently for migrant and non-migrant family members. First, immigrants in need of healthcare may return temporarily or permanently to their home country or a third country in which they

lived previously or where medical care can be accessed for lower prices (Bilecen & Tezcan-Guntekin, 2014). Sending countries such as Poland, Croatia or Morocco who grant preferential access to their public health system to permanent or temporary return migrants facilitates this strategy. Second, immigrants could organize their relatives' temporary or permanent relocation to their new country of residence where their health insurance policy allows for the coverage of relatives living in the same household. As noted by Godin (2013) mobility of sick relatives can be facilitated through medical visas and family reunification. Indeed, relatives that visit family members in sending countries on tourist visas in destination countries may also receive medical treatment abroad. In this case, however, treatment is usually paid in full to practitioners without any social security intervention. Overall, as most industrialized nations are concerned with the protection of their borders and welfare systems, getting a visa is often a time- consuming and uncertain process. They, thus often represent an unsatisfactory response to situations when recurrent, urgent or serious care is needed.

Individual and collective remittances

In sending societies, remittances play a key role in the ability of the immigrant family member to access health care. Indeed, in countries where public health systems are weak, incomes generated by migration are often used to purchase medical treatment directly with providers or to purchase a private health insurance (Kabki, 2007). As the interest in the impact of remittances on sending societies has grown tremendously in the past decade, we now have evidence that remittances improve family members access to formal healthcare and facilitate the purchase of treatments (Lopez-Cevallos & Chi, 2012).

Alongside the research on individual remittances, migration and development scholars have also noted that collective remittances can improve relatives' access to healthcare in the home country. Numerous examples exist of immigrant groups pulling resources together to respond to individual or collective needs in the home country by financing finance health or educational infrastructures in their hometowns (Goldring, 2004; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2009). It is noteworthy that remittance sending is not a gender-neutral practice either. Scholars have noted that sending remittances can transform women in breadwinners from afar, therefore questioning traditional role within families (Pribilsky, 2004). This, however, sometimes occurs at the expense of immigrant women's own access to healthcare (Soresen, 2004).

Next, to financial remittances, non-material systems of transnational exchanges also exist. Levitt called social remittances the ideas, norms, and behaviors that circulate between sending and receiving societies through migration (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In the case of health, 'social remittance' is a useful concept to capture the informal practices that immigrants perform to help their relatives abroad access healthcare. Such practices do not involve financial transactions (or not immediately) but improve relatives' access to formal health care. This is the case of immigrants who identify and pay practitioners in the homeland from abroad to facilitate relatives' access to medical treatments (see, e.g., Boulanger, 2014) on Malian migrants in France). Immigrants' exposure to foreign healthcare systems may increase their expectations about public health systems and enable them to identify good practitioners in the home country and build trust with them. Social remittances, however, do not de facto positively impact relatives' health as harmful behaviors and practices

can also be transmitted across borders (see, e.g., Flórez, Dubowitz, Saito, Borges, & Joshua, 2012 on obesity).

At the cross-road between financial and social remittances, different migrant communities have also taken steps to create their own insurance schemes to cover health needs of relatives abroad. This is, for instance, the case of Solidarco, insurance fund created by Congolese migrants in Belgium in cooperation with a Belgian insurance company and a network of Congolese health practitioners. Doing so, no only do they respond to health care needs abroad, they also limit their own remittance spending (see, e.g. Lafleur & Lizin, 2015).

Overall, as noted by Mazzucato (2011), the act of sending family remittances pertain to wide support networks. In such systems of reciprocal obligations, relatives in the homeland who receive money may also send "reverse remittances" (mainly in the form of services) to help migrants in need. Therefore, financing relatives' access to medical services is often a form of investment for migrants. As we will discuss in the case of Andean transnational family networks, those who receive remittances today may also be those who facilitate aging immigrants' access to healthcare tomorrow. In this sense, we postulate that adopting an intersectional approach and looking at the generation, gender, race and transnational engagement of both senders and recipients of remittances is an indicator of long-term strategies to access health care.

Diasporic health policies

In the more recent literature on diaspora and transnationalism, scholars have noted that immigrants' countries of origin are increasingly willing to engage with citizens abroad and address some of their needs (Ragazzi, 2014). Among the variety of "diasporic policies" (Smith, 2003), there exist a series of health-related initiatives following sending countries' governments concern with their expatriates' access to healthcare. Several Latin American consulates, for instance, actively campaign to improve immigrants' access to formal healthcare schemes in the US and sometimes even provide access to medical services on their premises (Délano, 2014).

Diasporic health policies —because there are focused on responding to immigrants' needs here and there— can also comprise of specific health coverage schemes that cover both immigrants and relatives in the homeland. The Philippines and Sri Lanka, for instance, have set up welfare funds that cover disabilities and diseases incurred by immigrants while working abroad and, in certain cases, extend medical coverage to family members of immigrants who stay in the home country (Mackenzie, 2005). Other states like Mexico have taken specific provisions to include immigrants and non-migrant family members in existing social security schemes. With its universal health coverage scheme called Seguro Popular not only can immigrants prepare for their own access to Mexican public health upon return, they can start registering non-migrant relatives from abroad (Vargas-Bustamante et al., 2012).

In spite of the growing interest of sending states for citizens abroad, gender-specific policies remain few with the exception of sending state's protection against specific health hazard (e.g. exposure of domestic workers to abuse from employers). For the most part, diasporic policies do not take into consideration the specific needs and gender obligations of male and female migrants when it comes to organizing health within transnational families.

Situating Andean family network's transnational healthcare arrangements

Early waves of Andean migration during the twentieth century were strongly connected to homeland conflicts but this situation evolved dramatically in the 1990s. By then, Andean migrants arriving mostly in Spain and Italy were no longer political refugees but increasingly women who took on a migratory project to provide for the economic and social welfare of their families. Their move was mostly triggered by continuous political and economic crises in their countries of origin (Martinez-Franzoni, 2008) as well as by growing needs for domestic and care workers in Western countries, and particularly in Southern Europe (Escrivá & Díaz-Gorfinkiel, 2011).

In recent years, these gendered-migratory flows have diversified in terms of destination countries within Europe as restrictive migration policies and the economic crisis have forced Andean transnational families to opt for alternative destinations. In countries like Belgium they also found employment in the care and domestic work sector (Freitas & Godin, 2013; Camargo, 2015)[1] and their access to formal social protection like in other destination countries is strongly determined by their legal status and work status. For this reason, Andean female migrants who are undocumented or work in the informal care economy are de facto excluded from most public healthcare programs except emergency care. In addition, recent budget cuts in welfare programs, increased stigmatization of immigrants as "welfare abusers", restrictions in access to family reunification, medical visas, and Belgian nationality have considerably reduced the avenues by which immigrants can bring sick relatives to Belgium (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017).

Looking at our networks' countries of origin, it is to be noted that Peru and Colombia, are "familialist welfare states" which entails that families in those countries have traditionally had to rely on the unpaid reproductive labor of female family members for informal healthcare, as well on other private options (Martinez-Franzoni, 2008). In addition to recent innovations in terms of universal healthcare policies, Colombia, however recently created the online platform "Colombia Nos Une" (Colombia Unites Us) with the specific purpose of assisting emigrants in their access to social protection abroad (Ministerio de Protección Social-Colombia, 2010; Velazquez, Suarez, & Nepo-Linares, 2016; Colombia-Nos-Une, 2014). Through this platform, Colombian authorities organize health campaigns by which Colombian nationals in Europe, North America, and Latin America can access medical, psychological and dental check-ups (Colombia-Nos-Une, 2016).

Overall, recent changes in sending and receiving states migration and welfare policies clearly affect immigrants' options when it comes to addressing health challenges. However, as transnational health strategies are being reconfigured, we argue that not all Andean immigrants have equal opportunities to opt for one strategy or another. Using the concept of transnational social protection arrangement, we intend to show that heterogeneity markers determine the selection of health strategies. The concept of transnational social protection arrangement builds on earlier work on "assemblages" that considered that access to social protection through informal support resources embedded in interpersonal relations and social policy regulations reproduce and produce new intersecting inequalities globally (Faist et al., 2015). With the concept of arrangement, we want to stress that these are "fluid processes" embedded in welfare, work and care regimes of various states. These arrangements allow family members to access social protection and change according to the availability of resources at particular moments of the life-course. Arrangements —unlike assemblages described earlier by Amelina, Bilecen, Barglowski, and

Faist ([2012](#))— stress the individuals' agency in adopting certain strategies over others. Transnational social protection arrangements are thus intertwined strategies determined by markers of difference such as age, gender, class, religiosity or transnational engagement by which transnational families negotiate their access to formal healthcare in the home and/or host societies.

Methods and research design

Sample profile

Our analysis builds on transnational healthcare arrangements used by 10 Andean transnational family networks. Author B collected this data during her Ph.D. thesis under the close supervision of author A. The participants were initially selected through a snowball technique in various points of entry in Brussels such as churches of different denominations and cultural events. These multiples points of entry ensured appropriate diversity in terms of intersectional markers of difference mentioned above. Female migrants —who tend to be the majority of Peruvians and Colombians in Brussels— were contacted first. This population usually spent extensive periods abroad and, as they are aging, they find themselves worrying equally about their families' as well as their own access to social protection.

Data collection strategy and methods

To collect the data, author B adopted "a mutated witness" approach by which she discretely observed and learned from the participants as she built a testimony of their strategies (Haraway, [1997](#)). In other words, during her 20-month long multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, she let the participants guide her through fieldwork and tell her about their transnational healthcare arrangements. In line with our ethnographic approach, life-stories quickly appeared as an appropriate instrument to collect the data as they allow participants to situate their strategies within their life-course (Bruner, [1987](#)). Building on their life-stories, Brussels-based informants identified actors in their family networks whom they considered key in their negotiations to access social protection (Widmer, Aeby, & Sapin, [2013](#)). Author B accordingly conducted 31 additional life-story interviews with male and female family members in the immigrants' home communities in Colombia (Bogota and Medellin and Peru (Lima and Chimbote). Similarly, participants also identified other community and civil servant actors both in Brussels and in their country of origin with whom we conducted 17 semi-structured interviews (Hopf, [2004](#)). In addition to life-stories and semi-structured interviews, author B conducted extended stays in the informants' homes in Brussels as well as with relatives in Colombia and Peru. All the participants' names cited in this articles have been changed in order to guarantee anonymity.

Results

During our fieldwork, our participants were invited to discuss their transnational healthcare strategies. Through this process, we were able to co-construct the process that led to the negotiation of specific transnational social protection arrangements. More precisely, we identified two types of social protection arrangements —sequential and sporadic arrangements— that reflect the different opportunities available to immigrants and family members within immigrant groups such as Andean migrant domestic workers (hereafter referred to as MDW) that could appear as relatively homogenous at first sight.

"Today for you tomorrow for me": Sequential arrangements

Existing scholarship has shown that, within Andean transnational family networks, the first step towards international mobility is usually the departure of a pioneer female migrant moving internally from rural areas of Peru or Colombia to larger urban centers (Escrivá & Díaz-Gorfinkiel, 2011). In the city, female migrants can typically find employment as domestic workers. Our informants are no exception in this respect as their first internal move as a family was often followed by international migration of a younger member of the family. In those internal and international migratory paths, health plays a key role both as a trigger for mobility but also as an opportunity to access care that is not available in the home communities.

Mobility to access healthcare can occur in different directions depending on the location of a family member in need of such care. First and foremost, immigrants seek to bring over sick relatives to destination countries where the immigrants themselves can organize their access to care. This is the case of one of our informant named Mariana —the mother of a Peruvian migrant domestic worker residing in Belgium— who has move repeated both internally and internationally to receive healthcare. During her interview, she recalls how mobility for health reasons is repeated generation after generation within the family:

> (…) My mother migrated from the mountains [to the city]. She had no healthcare, no insurance, no nothing (...). [Later,] I helped my own daughters to migrate (...). Now, they take me to Belgium to be taken care of… That's how they found out I have an awful bacteria that could kill me (…). My daughter also took [my granddaughter] Clarita to Belgium. She had cancer and got cured. (Mariana, 70, mother of MDW2, residing in Lima).

Using mobility to address immediate healthcare needs of relatives is however strongly determined by the immigrant's employment and migratory status. Undocumented migrants but also documented MDWs working under specific regulations for diplomatic staff often see their mobility options limited: family members living in the homeland cannot come to them to receive healthcare and they themselves cannot return temporarily to the country of origin to assist family members. The story of Solimar, a MDW who could not bring her sick mother over to receive care illustrates this difficulty:

> "God knows for how long she had been suffering! It was impossible to bring her here [to Belgium]! Maybe she would have been better cared for but I couldn't tell the Ambassador: "my mother is sick". Also, she didn't have insurance here. She had insurance through her job [there] but it was worthless. We sent money but it's our brothers who were in charge. They were careless. I took 3 weeks of my annual vacation last year to arrange the operation, find the best doctors [there] and make sure she was following the treatment. I sent money and call to make sure they did things right but it was too late (...)." (Solimar, 50, MDW, residing in Brussels).

Mobility strategies intersect with class status. The limited social capital of most Andean MDWs does not facilitate interactions with civil servants and social workers that could act as brokers to access social protection (Granovetter, 1983). In our fieldwork, informants who

belong to ethnic minority groups in the homeland and worked for White employers abroad often experienced discrimination that limited their access to social protection in the receiving country. Lack of capital and adverse legal status can; however, be compensated under specific circumstances by a favorable relationship with the employer. Indeed, employers may also use their own social capital to the benefit of immigrants in order to help them or family members access healthcare. Marta –one of our informants— described such paternalistic practice in these terms:

> "When my daughter was sick the Madame3 saw I wasn't doing well. I didn't know what to do or where to start up procedures to bring her. I don't know who they got in touch with but 2 weeks later my daughter was here, getting treatment at the hospital [in Brussels] with the best specialist. She got cured" (Marta, 51, MDW, residing in Brussels)

Similarly, ethnic solidarity expressed through Catholic churches may compensate for the immigrants' lack of access to formal care and weak family ties. Florencio for instance —a Colombian man who also held Spanish nationality—lacked health coverage in Belgium but church-goers organized a fund-raising to help him. Such practices are common amongst people who share the same hometown origin or belong to churches organized along ethnic lines.

A second way by which mobility is used to respond to healthcare needs within transnational families is when the immigrants' themselves move temporarily or permanently to access formal healthcare coverage in the homeland. In this case, strategies of mobility and access to work-related health insurance are jointly used to respond to healthcare needs. Return migrants find that their return is facilitated by the possibility to benefit from another family member's health insurance in the homeland. Immigrants and returnees however often perceive that the public health system in the homeland may not be of equal quality to that of their country of residence. In our fieldwork, this was particularly true for migrants of indigenous ethnic background who had experienced discrimination in the homeland's health system. One of our informants named Valeria describes her ability to travel back to Colombia to receive care in these terms:

> [My daughter] Lara's work insurance [in Medellin] covers me. I mean like checkups and so on. But imagine I got cancer or something serious I would be forced to leave [Colombia again]. The co-pay is too high for me to pay [in Colombia]. [Also,] I would have to find out if my insurance covers dependents because I see Eduardo my husband is showing signs of Alzheimer (Valeria, 55, former MDW, residing in Medellin).

When mobility is impossible or perceived as too cumbersome to face a specific healthcare need, remittances are used as an alternative or a supplementary strategy to respond not only to the need of relatives but also to the long-term care needs of the immigrants themselves. As frequently noted in the literature, remittance may vary according to the gender of the sender and receivers (Levitt, 2001; Mazzucato, 2011). Because they fear that remittances sent to men will be diverted towards other priorities than the family's well-being, Andean MDWs frequently select remittance-recipient in the homeland according to a gender and generational order. Trust is however not the sole criteria that guide aging migrant domestic workers to select younger female members of the family as remittance-recipient.

Expectations about future care responsibilities towards aging migrants upon return are much more relevant. The relationship between Catalina —an aging MDW living in Belgium who suffers from serious hipbones issues— and her daughter-in-law Melinda who lives in Peru is telling in this respect:

> Mrs. Catalina [her mother-in-law] is so nice! When baby Armandito is sick, she sends money to pay for the best doctors, because the [Peruvian] insurance we get through her son isn't great. I know I would be there [for her] when she gets back. Helping her with the administration and so on. (Melinda, 24, daughter in law of MDW, residing in Lima)

After a brief visit in Peru to prepare her permanent repatriation in the homeland, Catalina felt relieved that her decision to trust Melinda with remittances would guarantee her access to care when she retires in Peru later on:

> " (…) [Melinda] is a really nice girl. When I got back she was there asking me: Mamita Catalina are you O.K? Do you need something? I don't send the money to the boys directly because boys are boys at the end of the story we [women] take care of each other."(Catalina, 50, MDW, residing in Brussels).

In this section, we have described the articulation between mobility, insurance, and remittances that form what we call sequential transnational social protection arrangements. Female MDWs who use these arrangements usually combine less privileged positions in racial and class terms. Their residence abroad and their family obligations in the homeland often add-up negatively and restrict their family's and their own access to formal healthcare. This situation stimulates the use of remittances and community solidarity to access healthcare here and there. With sequential arrangements, it is primarily female members of the family who exchange items of equivalent value but at different points in time. As these families have restricted access to formal healthcare in sending and receiving societies, women have taken up the moral obligation to protect each other. It requires trust and bilateral balancing between particular actors here and there. Lastly, in sequential arrangements, social remittances play a key role as representations on the home and host country medical systems and past experiences with both systems push immigrants to opt preferably for European treatments whenever they are accessible.

"Helping each other, sometimes": Sporadic arrangements

Not all Andean MDWs in Belgium combine unfavorable ethnic and class positioning. In our fieldwork, we encountered numerous MDWs who belong to their homeland's middle class and had achieved a high level of education prior to migrating. They left their country of origin during periods of economic and political hardship in search of professional opportunities. Those MDWs also tend to be regarded as White by other immigrants of the same national origin who belong to indigenous ethnic minorities. Their educational level, class, and ethnic positions provide them with a critical advantage when it comes to negotiating their family's and their own access to health. This is visible at three levels. First, they deal more easily with the receiving country's legal system which gives them not only greater chances of accessing a permanent legal status

but also a better ability to exercise their rights to health. In addition to being less exposed to racial discrimination and better equipped to deal with bureaucratic challenges, they also benefit from personal networks of friends and relatives with a higher educational level that can act as a broker to access social protection. Natalia, for instance, is a Peruvian MDW who was a lawyer in her home country before she left for Spain 20 years ago. She left Spain following the 2008 economic crisis but had managed to secure citizenship before leaving. In Belgium, she is socializing primarily with highly-educated EU migrants. During an informal conversation, Natalia revealed how having grown up as upper-middle-class woman in Latin America helped her to access healthcare in Belgium:

> "Charlie, a [Belgian] engineer I met in my French classes, told me all about the system here, how it works and how I could get my pneumonia taken care of; even as a Spanish citizen. He also took me to the best doctors. Thank God, I still kept some of my ability to move in the world and knew who to talk to". (Natalia, 50, MDW, residing in Brussels).

Second, unlike immigrants involved in sequential arrangements, this second group of Andean MDWs can also extend more easily the benefit of their own social protection status to other family members in the homeland. Karla —who was looking for ways to grant her mother access to formal healthcare— gives an example of this privileged position within the underprivileged category of MDWs in Belgium:

> My friends have always taken me to the right lawyers. I first brought [my mother] to Brussels with a (…)[temporary visa] and then I filed the procedure for a medical status residence. I met my friends through my ex-husband who was a political personality known in Colombia and abroad… They have always helped… (Karla, 51, MDW, residing in Brussels).

Third, because they belong to the middle and upper-middle class in the homeland, this second group of Andean MDWs can often count on a more substantial financial contribution of relatives in the homeland when designing their transnational health arrangements. This can even include the purchase of expensive insurances on the private market in view of future health needs in the family. The experience of Amelia, for instance, reveals how immigrants combine public and market-based resources upon designing their long-term transnational social protection strategies:

> My mother has her pension in Lima; my father paid for it. When she was in Brussels, my husband and I paid for all her medical treatment. I mean she had access to insurance because I managed to regularize her [migratory] status when it was still possible. But here in Lima, Laureano my brother pays for her private health insurance, to have her cover when she returns. (Amelia, 45, daughter of former MDW, residing in Lima).

Because these migrants have more options in negotiating access to health for relatives and themselves, remittances are less frequent and do not play such a critical role to

ensure reciprocal care as observed in the previous section. However, this second group of MDWs still uses remittances to respond to emergencies such as diseases, accidents or deaths of family members. Also, in spite of it's favorable ethnic and class position, gender plays an equally strong role in the distribution of care responsibilities within this second group of MDWs. In other words, these families' transnational social protection strategies still primarily work through direct interactions of female family members. Karla —a former teacher who left Colombia because of political persecution— described her infrequent use of remittances as follow:

> I don't help my other family members there [Colombia]. I guess this is because we came here for other reasons [than providing for our family]. My sister works and has a health insurance. We only send money for punctual emergencies. It's mostly for the girls in Bogota. My niece had a car accident and we sent money to pay for her recovery treatment. But I mean these things we do more to be present since we can't be physically there. (Karla, 51, MDW, residing in Brussels).

Because of their privileged access to social protection in destination countries and their lower use of remittances to address relatives' health needs in the homeland, we qualify the healthcare negotiations of this second group as sporadic transnational healthcare arrangements. With sporadic arrangements, equivalence is less precise and the sequence of events is less narrowly bounded. In this case, the more favorable class, ethnic and educational positions of female migrants support a different system of reciprocity with relatives in the homeland. This particular standpoint also helps them counter-balance the effects of their underprivileged position as migrant domestic workers in Europe. Sporadic arrangements articulate favorable access to mobility for migrants and non-migrant relatives, recourse to market-based health solutions in the homeland and a more limited use of remittances. Within these arrangements, female migrants continue to play a critical role as organizers of the family's access to health but —because of their more favorable class status in the homeland— support of other family members in the homeland (including men) is also more frequent. Unlike immigrants involved in sequential arrangements, this second group has fewer contacts with co-nationals and other Andean migrants through Church and tends to be active in migrant organizations that are not country-specific or in political organizations lobbying for immigrant rights in general.

Conclusion: Combining intersectional and transnational approaches to study immigrant social protection

This article started by introducing a genuine typology of immigrant responses to their family's and their own health care need in an era of increased transnational exchanges. In this sense, it has bridged the conceptual gap between rather static understandings of social protection as developed by social policy scholars and the unspecified strategies to access formal care discussed in previous work on transnational migration. Building on the concept of transnational social protection arrangement, we then discussed how immigrants articulate these different strategies according to different heterogeneity markers that operate in the various national

contexts where transnational family networks are active. For our particular case study of Andean MDW, these markers were gendered responsibilities within the family, class, and ethnicity as experienced in the sending and receiving context but also religiosity, generational positioning within families and level of transnational engagement.

As we conclude this article, we maintain that combining the intersectional approach to social phenomena with the transnational approach to migration is a compelling conceptual tool to study immigrants' inequalities in access to social protection. Indeed, existing studies have focused for too long on differentiated access to social protection within the boundary of a single nation-state basing themselves separately on heterogeneity markers that are gender, class or ethnic. Doing so, scholars have neglected that fact that—as noted by Faist et al. (2015)— new inequalities in access to social protection may be arising as immigrant families maintain cross-border connections. In this article, we have used an intersectional perspective to demonstrate how such transnational inequalities operate in the case of health. Examining multiple markers of difference, we noted that a privileged position in the homeland —such as belonging to the White middle class in Latin America prior to migration— can transform into an asset when it comes to ensuring immigrants and family members' access to social protection here and there. As our data revealed, former professionals in Latin America now working as MDW in Europe are unsurprisingly in a better position to arrange access to social protection for themselves and for relatives than other MDW of the same national origin who have an indigenous ethnic background.

Yet, our data also showed that specific standpoints in one space may help compensate for socio-economic downward mobility experienced in another space. Indeed, Andean MDW with lower levels of education and belonging to ethnic minority groups were, in some circumstances, able to compensate for their disadvantaged position. Ethnic and religious organizations, as well as remittances, are critical resources in this respect as they serve as investments to ensure reciprocal care in case of necessity; therefore ensuring long-term access to social protection.

Overall, the case of Andean transnational families' access to formal healthcare provided an illustration of the added value of our analytical approach. Beyond the study of access to healthcare in a context of South-North migration, combining transnational and intersectional approaches seem equally relevant for other types of migratory regimes (e.g. high-skilled migration and EU mobility) and for different areas of social protection than health (e.g. pensions and education). This contribution, therefore, contributed to consolidate transnational studies as an actual theory of society rather than just a mere description of networks that cross multiple nation states (Glick-Schiller, 2005, p. 439). At the same time, it also modestly contributed to increasing the explanatory power of intersectionality in a world of increasing human mobility (Mahler et al., 2015, Freznoza-Flot & Shinozaki, 2017, Anthias, 2008, Purkayastha, 2010). However, we are also firmly convinced that further research combining intersectional and transnational analytical lenses is needed to refine our understanding of immigrants' access to social protection and, more generally, identify new types of inequalities that affect migrants and non-migrants alike.

Endnote

[1]In Belgium, for instance, there are officially 21.084 Latin American registered. 60% of them are women. Colombians (around 5000) and Peruvians (around 2000) are among

the most numerous groups and are also characterized by an over-representation of women (DGSIE, 2010), 2- MDW is the acronym for Migrant Domestic Worker; 3-The French word "Madame" used during the interview conducted in Spanish refers to her employer.

Abbreviation
MDW: Migrant domestic worker

Availability of data and materials
The data used in this article cannot be shared or stored by anyone other than the authors to protect the participants in this study.

Authors' contributions
Both authors contributed equally to the research and the drafting of this article. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Devaluing Mothering at Home:
Welfare Restructuring and "Motherwork"

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the challenges lone mothers face when attempting to exit from "welfare." Public discourse claims that children "need their moms" but welfare policies often devalue mothering at home by focusing on paid employment. Interviews from New Zealand suggest that these policies can raise stress levels and contribute to existing health problems.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article discute des défis auxquels les mère seules font face lorsqu'elles tentent de sortir du " bien- être social". Les discours publics affirment que les enfants "ont besoin de leurs mères", mais les politiques du bien-être social dévalorisent souvent les soins prodigués par les mères à la maison en se concentrant sur le travail rémunéré. Des entrevues faites en Nouvelle-Zélande suggèrent que ces politiques peuvent hausser les niveaux de stress et contribuer aux problèmes de santé existants.

INTRODUCTION

Political discourse about parenting has been inconsistent. Children have been viewed as a "future resource" and most politicians agree that children need their parents to provide authoritative supervision and typically give respect to mothers who are at home full time. However, social conservatives also view "welfare mothers" as a drain on the public purse and insist that most welfare recipients prepare for paid employment and become self-sufficient regardless of family responsibilities. The contradictions create tensions for women who require welfare in order to be at home full time, demeaning them and undermining their capacities to parent as effectively as they would like.

This paper discusses the challenges of caring for children, managing a household, and making ends meet in circumstances of poverty, as perceived by mothers in that situation. It is based on qualitative interviews with lone mothers receiving social assistance in New Zealand. This paper illustrates the ways that the unpaid caring work of lone mothers influences their employment prospects, mental and physical health, and maternal identity. The comments or "stories" of these lone mothers are organised around three issues: time poverty, stressful work, and lack of social support.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Canada, Britain, United States, Australia and New Zealand have all been classified as "liberal" welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990), using the argument that they base many social benefits on "need," target them to low-income families, and ensure that benefits are lower than minimum wages to enforce work incentives. In fact, many researchers have pointed out considerable cross-national variation in the funding and delivery of social security in these countries (Baker & Tippin 1999; Bashevkin 2002b; O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999). Not all governments in the English-speaking countries have accepted the view that mothers with preschool or even school-aged children should be pressured into finding employment. Current "welfare" policies in many jurisdictions of Canada and the United States encourage mothers on social assistance to become "employable" and accept paid work before their youngest child reaches school age (Freiler and Cerny 1998). However, both Australia and New Zealand created income support programs in 1973 to enable lone parents to care for their children full time at home. Since the 1990s, eligibility has been eroded but these programs continue to provide greater support for mothering at home than do similar social assistance programs in Canadian provinces or American states (Baker and Tippin 1999; Bashevkin 2002a; Mink 1998).

In 1991, the value of the New Zealand benefit for parenting at home, called the "Domestic Purposes Benefit" (DPB), was reduced by the conservative National Government and the age of eligibility was raised to 18 years. However, DPB mothers could receive the benefit without earning money until their youngest child was sixteen years old. In 1995, the same government reduced the eligibility age of the youngest child to fourteen years and created new employment expectations. In 1997, they enforced "work tests" for DPB recipients with school-age children (Wilson 2000). For the first time in New Zealand the importance of mothering full time at home was downplayed. The National Government also emphasized parents' responsibility for their children's (mis)behaviour, and parents were expected to provide greater supervision with no new public resources or services. The Labour government, elected in 1999, announced modest improvements to child-care subsidies for low-income families but retained the work test. In April 2003, however, they removed the mandatory requirement but continued to encourage beneficiary mothers with children over six years old to seek part-time work or employment training. From 1997 until April 2003, DPB mothers with preschool children were required only to attend an annual interview about future job prospects. When the youngest child reached school age, DPB mothers were asked to find part-time work, retrain or engage in organized community work for at least 15 hours a week. When their youngest child reached fourteen years, these mothers were expected to find full-time employment (DWI 2000). By the early 2000s, DPB mothers were encouraged to enter paid work if at all possible.

In comparison, most Canadian provinces encourage or require mothers to find employment when their youngest child is under three years old (Freiler and Cerny 1998) although there is considerable variation by province. The United States is even more punitive, with a two-year limit for lone mothers receiving social assistance or five years over a lifetime (Mink 1998 and 2002). However, as the interviews show, even New Zealand's apparently more supportive policies fail to provide women with adequate support, leaving them vulnerable to long term poverty, poor health, and high levels of stress.

LONE MOTHERS AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND POOR HEALTH

Lone mothers are likely to have low incomes as a result of a complex interaction of many factors. Few women earn enough money to support themselves and children. Women's wages are most likely to decline relative to men's after they become mothers, as mothers are more likely than fathers to disrupt paid work to tend to family responsibilities (Baker 2001b; O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999). The probability of earning low wages and living in poverty is further augmented if women are members of certain cultural groups or lack job experience; for example, Sarfati and Scott (2001) found that New Zealand lone mothers were more likely to be Maori, to have lower family incomes, lower educational qualifications, and to live in more deprived areas. In contrast, studies in the United States indicate that "welfare mothers" who have more than twelve years of schooling, previous employment experience, and fewer than three children, are most likely to remain employed and less likely to return to social benefits once they move into paid work (Cancian et al. 1999; Harris 1996).

Living on a low income sets in play dynamics that erode women's health and well-being and undermines their potential for future labour market success. It also permeates all aspects of childrearing. Wealthier parents can purchase childcare, after-school lessons or recreational activities, counselling, and preventive health care for their children. Studies concerning the long-term implications of living in poverty suggest that children from low-income families experience poorer health and more behaviour problems than children from higher-income families (Hobcraft and Kiernan 2001; Roberts 1997; Ross, Scott and Kelly 1996). Low-income parents cannot afford to visit the doctor if they must pay for each consultation (as New Zealanders do) or to fill prescriptions, even when subsidized. Without savings, parents cannot prepare for emergencies.

Research from several countries suggests that lone mothers tend to suffer from anxiety and depression related to previous relationships (especially where domestic violence was involved), the heavy responsibility of childcare alone, and despair about the future (Curtis 2001; Sarfati and

Scott 2001; Whitehead et al. 2000). They also experience emotional problems from continuing disputes with their children's father, and children's behavioural problems. Dorsett and Marsh (1998) reported that British lone mothers experience high rates of cigarette smoking, augmenting financial problems and poor health. Family stresses, domestic violence, physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, inappropriate work behaviours and employer discrimination all interfere with women's ability to find and keep paid work (Mink 2002; Pryor and Rodgers 2001; Vosko 2002). Lone mothers typically have lower levels of education and job skills than both partnered mothers or fathers, and consequently they find mainly low paid jobs without flexible work hours, paid sick leave, or extended health benefits (Edin and Lein 1997; Millar and Rowlingson 2001; Vosko 2000). Few have worked long enough with the same employer to be entitled to sick leave. Neither caring for children on a state benefit nor working for pay allows many low-income mothers to escape from poverty (Baker and Tippin 1999; Doherty, Friendly and Oloman 1998). Understandably, some lone mothers view the opportunity to receive "welfare" while caring for their children at home full time as more viable than struggling on low wages with piecemeal childcare arrangements. However, lone mothers are encouraged into employment by the need to increase their income, and the desire to become a "role model" for their children and to develop new social contacts. In addition, the stigma attached to being a "welfare mom," the constant scrutiny by case managers and neighbours, and low benefit levels motivate many mothers to retrain and find employment. However, part-time work is often more manageable than full-time work because it enables mothers to improve their incomes while allowing more time for caring responsibilities than full-time employment permits.

Whitehead et al. (2000) concluded that the Swedish social security system is more effective than the British system in keeping lone mothers healthy and out of poverty but lone mothers still report poorer health than partnered mothers in both countries. They hypothesized that lone mothers suffer more from "time poverty," which elevates stress and leads to illness. The kinds of work they do may be more stressful and dangerous. And finally, they may suffer from lower social support. These

factors, which I use in this paper, may help explain the poorer health of lone mothers than partnered mothers even in countries such as Sweden, where poverty levels are low, housing standards high, and social services more generous.

INTERVIEWS WITH NEW ZEALAND LONE MOTHERS ON SOCIAL BENEFITS
Methodology

This paper derives from a larger project funded by the New Zealand Health Research Council including questionnaires to lone mothers, interviews/focus groups with case managers from the welfare department (Work and Income), and qualitative interviews with DPB mothers. The study was done in 2001 when mandatory work requirements for beneficiaries were still in place. Questionnaires and interviews came from DPB recipients in three regions of the North Island, representing different socio-economic and ethnic areas: Auckland's prosperous North Shore (mainly *Pakeha* or European-New Zealanders), low-income South Auckland (Pacific immigrants) and low-income Northland (largely Maori). We "over-sampled" indigenous Maori and immigrant Pacific Island women because they are more likely than *Pakeha* to be on the DPB and tend to have larger families and lower incomes.

Mailed questionnaires were sent to DPB lone mothers in these regions, if their youngest child was older than six years and they were not exempted from the "work test" for health reasons. This survey, discussed elsewhere (Baker 2002a & b), focused on health status and use of health services. Generally, these mothers reported much poorer mental and physical health than women of comparable age, and socio-economic status was more important than ethnicity or where they lived in influencing their health status. Focus groups with case managers working for Work and Income examined the role of health in case management practices and welfare policy. The results of this portion of the project are also reported elsewhere (Tippin and Baker 2002; Baker and Tippin 2003).

The qualitative interviews, the subject of this paper, were intended to gather more in-depth understandings about how (poor) health affected the transition to paid work. The Work and Income department sent our letter to all relevant mothers in

the three regions, inviting them to contact us by mail or a toll-free line if they wished to be interviewed. To encourage participation, we offered a draw for six food hampers. Those who volunteered for the study were not necessarily representative of all beneficiaries and may have over-represented those with concerns about health or welfare rules, or those who needed food.

From September to December 2001, 120 lone mothers were interviewed individually in their homes for about one hour each by five trained interviewers from various ethnic backgrounds. Although we intended to ask the same questions in the same order to everyone, many women felt the need to delve into their life histories and provide additional details about their circumstances, partner abuse, children's problems, and their experiences with Work and Income. Several women cried during the interviews and many told us that they were grateful for the opportunity to disclose their concerns. We did not statistically analyse the interviews because we had a voluntary sample and were looking for insights and policy solutions rather than incidence of certain comments. However, all the women we interviewed were lone mothers, had children over the age of six years old (usually one or two), and were considered by the government to be ready for employment or training. Most were in their 30s or 40s, and had school-aged children. Maori and women from various Pacific Islands were over-represented compared to the New Zealand (NZ) population and these women tended to have larger families.

These women had been on the DPB for varying lengths of time, sometimes intermittently as their circumstances changed, but many were familiar with the low-wage labour market. Some were currently employed part-time and most had previous work experience, often in a variety of jobs that were chosen to coincide with family circumstances and childcare arrangements. A few possessed tertiary and professional qualifications but could not find work that enabled them to fulfil their perceived family obligations. Some accepted lower positions to reduce stress or accommodate childcare arrangements. Others were confronted with unmanageable working hours, factory closures, higher than expected work-related expenses, and unreliable or unaffordable childcare (Baker and Tippin 2002). The rest of this paper discusses how

these women articulated their identities as mothers and the pressures they face caring for their children alone on a low income. I use the three organizing themes of time poverty, stressful work and lack of social support.

Time Poverty

The mothers we interviewed emphasized the time pressures of combining "mother work" with studying or employment. For example, a British immigrant was taking a nursing course to become more employable but the demands of her two children, domestic duties, classes and assignments often proved exhausting. She noted that time pressures in the previous semester elevated her stress level and led to illness:

> By the time I finished (my nursing course) and I got home, the children would be home from school and then it's making dinner and doing homework and housework and washing and shopping. And then by the time they go to bed at 8:30, that was my time to study so quite often I'd sit up till 3 o'clock in the morning. And I'd get up at 7:00 in the morning because the traffic's better then ... I'm one of those people that doesn't eat under stress. I don't think about my health. I should do, but I don't.

She continued that this stress led to minor illness and periodic emotional breakdowns: "I'll just completely break down I'll just be crying and sobbing, nobody loves me and I'm never gonna get anywhere and what am I doing and how am I going to cope." She told the interviewer that when this happened, her 12-year-old daughter comforted her.

A mother of two, from an abusive marriage, also spoke of how time poverty led to illness. She told us that during a bout of pneumonia, the nurses and doctor said:

> "Now go home and go to bed" (laughter). You know you can't go home and go to bed. You've got kids to cook for and you've got clothes to get clean and you've got all that stuff to do. And so that's just a luxury that is not available. And so you

just have to plough through it which means it takes longer to recover, much longer than it should.

Other women experienced time poverty because they regularly cared for the children of relatives and neighbours. One Maori mother of three from Northland "gifted" one of her children to her childless sister, and now has two daughters at home. She recently started a paid job teaching parenting skills at the local college. She said:

> From Friday to Sunday it's pretty much mayhem here. I can have anything up to thirteen kids. Nieces, nephews, the *mokos* (grandchildren), the neighbours. Last weekend I had their baby, a 15-month-old baby from next door. Because they were having a big party and they were out of babysitters and I said, well just chuck her over the fence and we'll be right and she can sleep here the night so you can ... pick her up in the morning. So they did that. My niece had to go to a funeral and she's got a three-week-old baby and she popped her over to me with a little bottle of breast milk as well. So I had those two babies and my son had his friend over for the night I had another little girl 'cause her mother was there too and I don't really know them.

This woman also cared for an ill mother for several years, but reported that since her parents died, her family obligations have increased.

For employed mothers, getting to work on time while ensuring that the children are adequately supervised before school was a major problem. They were reluctant to leave their children unsupervised outside the playground each morning but also worried about being late for work if they didn't drop them off early. Lone mothers often cited lack of time for child supervision as a central reason for being outside the labour force, stating that they could not possibly juggle paid work with housework and childcare.

Most mothers we interviewed saw child rearing as their primary job even though the welfare department expected them to work for pay. They talked at length about their children's behaviour and

health, and the challenges of running a household on a low income. Many mothers said their children were more important to them than any paid job: "When you're a solo mum...your children are paramount" and "My children come first. I'm not accountable to any government. I'm accountable to my children." This strong sense of responsibility was accompanied by a fear of being accused - as one woman said - of "abandoning my babies." Many mothers were conscious that the law requires children under fourteen years to be supervised, and some worried that child welfare officials would take away their children if they appeared to be "neglected."

We should be aware that average family size in New Zealand is larger than in Canada, especially among Maori and Pacific Islands peoples, who often live in extended families and have cultural obligations to relatives. In 1997, the total fertility rate was 2.0 children per woman in New Zealand compared to 1.6 in Canada (Baker 2001b, 19). This suggests that these mothers might have more time-consuming domestic responsibilities than Canadian mothers with smaller families. Also, the level of household technology seems to be lower and fewer New Zealand homes appear to have labour-saving devices.

Stressful Work:
Paid and Unpaid

In our interviews, lone mothers reported that raising children is already a challenging job but the requirement to find employment raised their stress levels. They felt that lone mothers were disadvantaged in the competitive job market and some disguised their welfare and marital status during job interviews and pretended they had no childcare problems.

A Maori mother of four, living in Northland, previously worked as a used furniture dealer but she "stopped stripping (furniture) because of the fumes and what it was doing to me." She now has cancer. A Pacific Islands mother from (low income) South Auckland told us about the difficult work-related experiences that encouraged her to return to social benefits:

> I was working full time. I did that for 4 years but [had] to go back on the DPB. I

started being harassed. [My supervisor] would give me all the dirty jobs and my life became a misery working there in the end. I started getting sick because I started stressing out. They [social welfare] have offered me a cleaning job and I don't want to go back to cleaning because I have done it for years. They offered me work...where you get pooled on a casual basis. You might be working on the roads and I don't want to do that. I have done all that hard labour.

Childcare problems provided considerable work-related stress for many mothers. A North Shore *Pakeha* mother with one son was on the DPB for most of seven years, with one year of working full time. She focused on her experiences during that one year:

It was really stressful working full time. Childcare was horrific...just a joke. (My son) was in childcare after school. It was $50 a week and (the welfare department) paid $10. My job used to keep me behind so at one of the childcare places I used, I was charged $10 each time I was late because I had to pick him up by a certain time. It was school holidays which was the crippler. I have no family in Auckland so school holidays were $120 a week for childcare and (the welfare department) paid maximum $20 and I paid $100. They only look after them until 3 pm so I would have to leave work, pick him up and take him back to work.

Other women felt that they would be no richer if they worked for pay rather than accepting social assistance, and leaving their children unsupervised would be too risky. A North Shore mother with three children has been on the DPB on and off for ten years but is currently on an exemption for sickness. She commented: "I think the policy of trying to get you out working when your children are teenagers is absolutely ridiculous because your children are left to their own devices.

They have friends over, parties, and drugs because they haven't got any supervision."

There is a sense among these mothers that they needed to be vigilant and watchful, and that their children required their supervision at all ages to prevent them from "getting into trouble." Some were concerned that "strangers" or "bad people" in their communities were a threat to their children before and after school. Many lived in high-crime areas and their views might have been justifiable, but these concerns make any attempt to combine paid and unpaid work more complex and stressful.

Lower Social Support

Sole responsibility for the daily care of their children presented a burden for the mothers in our study. Some explicitly stated that no one was as qualified as they were to care for their child. A *Pakeha* mother of two, living on the North Shore, told the interviewer: "Trying to get the babysitters was the hardest because I didn't want my mum to mind them all the time and I was very 'funny' about who minds them. To me, it is my job to do that so that puts the working until later."

Others simply noted that there was no one else to rely on. Another mother of three from the North Shore, who worked three days a week, said: "Being a full-time parent and totally career orientated is fine if you have a supportive partner to help out. When you have to do everything full time, I don't think I will consider (working full time) until they are all at college, if I can get by."

A lone mother who was at university and raising three children talked about the stress involved without a partner to share the load: "When you don't have an ex-husband helping you out and you don't have a family around, it's just about impossible really to do it and do it well, you know, being able to cope without stress."

Lack of formal social support was also a problem. As in Canada, New Zealand focuses childcare support on low-income families but subsidies are granted to parents rather than providers, pay a fraction of the cost, and at the time of the study covered only part-time work. Unlike Canada, no tax deductions for childcare are available for employed middle-income parents (Baker 2001a). The comparative study by Bradshaw et al (1996) found that childcare costs in New

Zealand and Britain were among the highest of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Many of the mothers in our study could not afford to pay for childcare. Some reluctantly left their children unsupervised before and after school, but were concerned about accusations of child neglect. Others relied on care by their mothers, sisters or neighbours but these arrangements usually depended on reciprocity. A Maori mother in rural Northland talked about the problems of relying on relatives for childcare. She was working part time, without telling the welfare office. Her sister-in-law and brother helped care for her son but she was concerned about her inability to pay them:

> It's hard to be working when ... and having someone look after him after school and wanting to give the people something out of your piddly wage, you know what I mean? It's sort of like you have to give them something because they enable you to work, sort of thing, eh, you know? ... During the winter, I had my sister-in-law and brother but that was a strain on them to have an extra child in the house every day, you know, all screaming and carrying on. Yeah.

Some women also mentioned that their case managers encouraged them to enrol in employment-related courses but reliable childcare was unavailable while they were studying. One *Pakeha* woman with two children expressed it like this: "I don't have any child care support at all and because we live out here [in a rural-urban fringe area], then I have no school holiday childcare or after school care. I feel it would be difficult for me to work"

Child health problems also posed a large problem for mothers expected to hold a job. Another *Pakeha* woman explained her dilemmas in finding work when her child had chronic health problems:

> I hadn't worked since just before [my son] was born. I wasn't able to work afterwards because he was sick [with asthma, allergies, a heart problem and now behavioural problems]. The main reason I can't get back into the workforce now is I

have a child who, when he is sick, I have to stay home. During the school holidays I have to stay home, as there is nobody to look after him. He has nobody but me.

Some mothers felt that it would be irresponsible to leave their children with a "stranger." A Northland Maori mother, on the DPB for only eighteen months, commented about childcare for her 7-year-old son:

> He was in full-time daycare from seven weeks old when we were living in Auckland. I hated it. I loved work but I hated that my boy, you know, had to go and stay with strangers. It would have been so much nicer if, you know, you had family - you feel safer....Up here (in Northland) it's different because it's a smaller community and you've got a chance to know the people you're leaving them with.

Care by relatives was preferred but this was not always available, especially among immigrants or those without family nearby. A North Shore mother with one son, who has been on the DPB for seven years, said: "To me, my number one job is a mother and I don't care what anyone says. If I legally don't have to work until he is 14, then I won't He doesn't have a dad or grandparents, and it's only me and him."

Particularly those previously experiencing sexual abuse were wary of babysitters, as one mother with four children said: "Could you leave a child at five with people you...you hardly know and you don't know what's going to happen? Yeah, not with my background. I'm really iffy where I leave my children. You know, very careful, very...very, very careful."

Another Maori mother from Northland, who had been on the DPB for ten years, said that mothers should be allowed to care for their children at home. She felt that the welfare office should be going after fathers for support:

> ...go and find those fathers and those brothers and whatever, and get them out to work. We women should be at home for our children unless you've got a nice

working Dad - I mean a nice "home Dad" that can do it - fine. But otherwise don't send us off to work too early. I mean they say, okay go and get a job when your child's seven. Okay, fair enough, part-time, but there's no way in hell I'm going for full-time until I know my kids are settled.

CONCLUSION

Many jurisdictions expect lone mothers to work for pay when their children are young but considerable research suggests that the transition to paid work is difficult for those with poor job skills and inadequate childcare. Justifiably, lone mothers are unwilling to leave their children with unreliable caregivers or even with neighbours or relatives unless they can reciprocate. In addition, many of these women have recently separated from fractious relationships and some continue to deal with emotional stress, children's behavioural problems, and ongoing disputes with former partners. Furthermore, about one third reported health problems, either for themselves or their children, which interfered with finding and holding a job.

Not surprisingly, some of the women we interviewed thought that mothering at home full time was far more important than any paid job, and claimed to have insufficient time, energy and social support to move from welfare to work. Those already employed or studying often felt pressed for time and very stressed, which encouraged physical illness and emotional breakdowns. Others had started work but quit because they could not fulfill their maternal responsibilities as they saw them. Their jobs seldom offered paid sick leave and they had insufficient money to visit doctors, fill prescriptions, or use preventive health care. Consequently, they accrued debts to pharmacists or doctors, postponed medical treatment, and relied more than they should on emergency services.

Lone mothers clearly need institutional supports to make a successful transition from mothering at home to self-sufficiency through paid employment. These supports, including job training and further education, affordable childcare, paid sick leave, family leave, and affordable health and counselling services, might help relieve the stress they report from their heavy responsibilities of trying to earn money while caring for their children alone.

Parenting on a meagre income is clearly challenging, especially without a partner or affordable childcare. The lone mothers in our study typically felt that being a "good mother" required constant supervision of their children. They believed that paid work brought poor financial returns and left them with a myriad of household problems and childcare dilemmas, especially during school holidays or when the children were sick. All three factors of time poverty, stressful work, and lack of social support seem to impede ineffective coping mechanisms and encourage poor health. Admittedly, our sample was non-random, over-represented Maori and Pacific women, and focused only on the North Island of New Zealand. Nevertheless, the concerns of these lone mothers were not atypical compared to the findings of Canadian, British, Australian, and American studies.

When policy makers reform social assistance programs, they need to reconsider the interaction among lone parenthood, poor health, childcare problems, and the ability to find and retain a job. Caring for children on a very low budget with little assistance demands emotional strength, parenting skills, and considerable time. Furthermore, living in low-income and dangerous neighbourhoods augments parental concerns about child safety. Expecting lone mothers to become wage earners as well as care providers under these conditions often increases their stress and promotes poor family health.

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Seven Kinds of Work - Only One Paid:
Raced, Gendered and Restructured Work in Social Services

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the literature as well as themes emerging from interview data collected as part of a multi-year, three-province (Alberta, Nova Scotia and British Columbia), qualitative study (eighty-three semi-structured interviews) of the restructured social services sector in Canada, this article explores discernible types of caring work delineating seven kinds, only one of which is paid. The social service workers' description of their changing worlds show not only extremely heavy workloads but also that their paid, volunteer, community, and union activist work involve many of the same skills, tasks and mind sets, thus blurring the lines between professional and non-professional identities as well as the lines between work and leisure. Moreover, this work was highly gendered and significantly racialized.

RÉSUMÉ

En se basant sur la littérature ainsi que sur les termes qui émergent des données recueillies d'entrevues, en tant qu'une partie d'une étude qualitative étalée sur plusieurs années, trois provinces (l'Alberta, la Nouvelle- Écosse, et la Colombie-britannique), quatre-vingt-trois entrevues semi- structurées du secteur des services sociaux restructurés au Canada, cet article explore les différents types perceptibles, de travail de soins qui délignent sept types, dont seulement un d'entre eux est rémunéré. La description de leur monde en changement que décrivent les travailleuses en services sociaux, démontre non seulement leur charge de travail extrêmement lourde mais aussi que leur travail rémunéré, bénévole, communautaire, et leur travail d'activisme syndical, demande le même genre de façon de penser, ce qui brouille les lignes entre l'identité professionnelle et non professionnelle, ainsi que les lignes entre le travail et les loisirs. De plus ce travail a été hautement divisé entre les sexes et les races.

INTRODUCTION

For at least the past fifteen years government monies have diminished in the social services sector concomitant to ongoing and often contradictory reorganization projects known as welfare state restructuring (Aronson and Sammon 2001; Clark and Newman 1997; Dominelli and Hoogvelt 1996; Fabricant and Burghardt 1992; Leonard 1997; Stephenson 2000). These projects include amalgamations, decentralizations, downsizing and funding cuts, as well as privatization and contracting out - in short, a general hollowing out of the state (Jessop 1990) and the contraction of public provision (Cohen 1997; Leonard 1997; Stanford 1998; Stephenson 2000; Teeple 1995). While feminist writers have asserted that it is women who have taken on the servicing and caregiving tasks previously provided by their paid counterparts within the human services (Armstrong 1984; Bakker 1998; Meyer and Storbakken 2000; Neysmith 2000; Swift and

Birmingham 2000), little is known about the changing kinds and conditions of paid and unpaid work performed in the social services sector. In addition to the off-loading of services through funding cuts and closures, new forms of organization within private, public and non-profit social services agencies have facilitated an increased use of unpaid labour within social service agencies and the wider community (Baines, accepted). Drawing on the literature as well as themes emerging from a larger pool of interview data collected as part of a multi-year, three-province qualitative study of restructuring in the social services, this article explores discernible types of caring work delineating seven kinds, only one of which is paid. Following a short discussion of the study's methodology, the seven kinds of caring work will be explored. Drawing on the intentionally diverse sample, the article also provides insights about the racialized character of this work which has long been seen as highly gendered and classed (Carniol 2000; Fook 1993; Mullaly 1997).[1, 2] The

article concludes with theoretical and policy implications. Findings were necessarily generalized across the three provinces studied although significant differences are presented as such.

THE STUDY

Exploring the experience of those working in the front-lines of the restructured social services sector, this study sought to provide knowledge for social service workers as well as about them (Smith 1990). The data analysed for this article included eighty-three semi-structured, audio taped interviews conducted in Alberta (26), British Columbia (29) and Nova Scotia (26). The research participants worked for an average of 8.5 years in positions including: social worker, community development worker, case assistant, therapist, counsellor, community worker, community organizer and case manager in union and non-union positions in the public or non-profit services sector. Their places of work included: hospitals (medical and mental health), child welfare, welfare, vocational rehabilitation, schools, community service centres, seniors programmes, grassroots groups, feminist services, lobby groups, policy analysis and research institutes. The sample was roughly 80% female and approximately half the sample had professional credentials. Using a purposive sample (Lincoln and Guba 1985), a small number of managers, supervisors, executive directors, policy analysts and advocates were also interviewed. Utilising open-ended questions, interviewees were asked to comment broadly on the changes they may have experienced in their paid and unpaid work in the last five years. The analysis in this article is part of a larger study exploring the many facets of restructuring within the social services. While anecdotal information confirms that most of these trends are also present in the for-profit social services sector, for the purposes of this study, only the non-profit and public sector were studied.

SEVEN KINDS OF WORK: ONLY ONE PAID

The findings in this study indicate that paid and unpaid work within the changing worlds of the public sector and non-profit social services worker have expanded significantly and include paid employment, volunteer assignments, community work, union activism, informal care for relatives and neighbours, as well as service and policy development. Most of this work involved many of the same skills, tasks and mind sets thus blurring the lines between professional and non-professional identities and between work and leisure. All but one of these kinds of work were unpaid. Most workers in the study reported performing at least three kinds of unpaid work including familial work, unpaid overtime and at least one type of formal, informal or unpaid union work. This calls into question depictions of women's work as a double day - it is at least a triple or, in some cases, a septuple day.

There were two small groups of front-line workers in this study who performed notably smaller amounts of unpaid labour. The first were multiple job holders, many of whom were workers of colour or young workers. These workers were employed simultaneously in as many as four or five part-time jobs. Travel time between jobs was high, work schedules started early and ended late, and work often involved all-night shifts. In short, the normal paid work week expanded to the point that multiple job holders had very little "free time." This free time tended to be devoted to their children and domestic responsibilities. A second group of mostly older workers claimed that they could not "take it anymore," they were experiencing "burn-out" and hence consciously avoided involvement in volunteer work (Interview A-18, B-12).

Paid Social Service Work

Practices and themes of caring shape a variety of female professions, para-professions, volunteer endeavours, community involvement and the home sphere (Aronson and Neysmith 1996; Baines, Evans and Neysmith 1998; Leira 1994; Meyer and Storbakken 2000; Prentice and Ferguson 2000). Social services work is one of these caring professions. Although increasingly located in the private market, most social services workers continue to be nestled within the public and non-profit sectors. Social services work operates from within a set of contradictory assumptions and practices about social caring including whether caring should be largely provided by the rich through charities, by all citizens though the government or by politicized and equity-directed

citizens seeking social justice through a complete restructuring of society (Hick 2002).

In his 1974 classic, Harry Braverman argued that under capitalism, all work, by which he meant paid work, is subject to degradation (deskilling, fragmentation, intensification, loss of worker control and satisfaction). Although Braverman has been criticized for ignoring gender, race, resistance and other forces that shape the labour process (Armstrong and Armstrong 1990; Beechey 1982; Heron and Storey 1986), the concept of the degradation of work illuminates many of the processes occurring within the restructured social services. Paid employment in the social services has been leaned out so that fewer workers do more work with fewer resources. This is facilitated by a process in which work is broken down into small component pieces and standardized so that wasted movement and activities can be eliminated and work processes can be completed quickly with little deviation or error.

Across all agencies in the social services sector, an increase in paperwork has increased work load and standardized the way that workers can assess, act on, and ultimately, think about social problems and the clients impacted by these problems. Rather than participating in a longer term, interactive set of assessing and planning discussions, many social service workers are now required to complete standardized check box forms for intake meetings, assessments, case planning and case termination. Even where spaces still exist in which workers are not immediately required to complete standardized documentation, the content and understanding of work tasks and content has been so influenced by standardization that workers report a general narrowing of their work and the removal of their professional discretion. Across the sector, workers reported that standardization has removed the worker's capacity to make judgements concerning the types of tasks to be completed, the order and pace of task completion and the use of alternative or politicized services and intervention plans. Standardized work was often compared to assembly line work by the interviewees who disliked their loss of discretionary power and control:

> There's no latitude to do anything creative or new. None. We just do what the form says. I've been in this job a long time. I know what would be really helpful to the client but we're not allowed to do it. We just follow the form and the clients don't get help and we might as well all just work in a widget factory specializing in how to make society worse. It really stinks.
> (Interview C- 4)

Staff cuts coupled with standardization produced a work speed-up and placed restrictions on the types of skills, tasks and relationships that workers could form with clients and supervisors (Aronson and Sammon 2001; Gilroy 2000). Lean staffing meant that the volume and pace of the work increased to the point where workers did not have time to get to know or relate to clients beyond standardized formats. Many workers observed that "minus a helping relationship" (Interview B-23), the services they provided seemed to do very little to enact meaningful change in the lives of clients and increased their sense of alienation. In many agencies, case load sizes have escalated as cases have become more intense in content. Workers noted that years of cuts to social service funding has produced an overall intensification of social services work in which every case demands immediate and aggressive interventions.

Paid social services work was significantly racialized as workers of colour had only recently gained access to the better jobs (Bernard, Lucas-White and Moore 1993). Ironically, downsizing has diminished the number of workers of colour in many of these hard-won jobs while standardization has decreased the satisfaction once gained from this type of employment. As one worker of colour noted, "We got access to these jobs just in time for the jobs to turn ugly and lay us off" (Interview A-11).

Unpaid Overtime Work

Most workers, including multiple job holders, reported a number of unpaid overtime activities including: working through lunch hours, coffee breaks, into the evening and on weekends; making work-related phone calls from cars; and finishing case notes at night. Some even felt compelled to call or come in on their holidays to check on clients or difficult situations. For most

social service workers, their unpaid overtime social services work was entirely unreported, unauthorized, unrecognized and unpaid. Participants in this study were motivated to take on unpaid overtime out of a sense of moral outrage, "It's people's right to have this service even if the government seems to have forgotten that" (Interview A-13). Many felt compelled to stretch an uncaring system in order to ease suffering, "People are desperate and need that cheque. They can't wait until tomorrow or the end of the weekend" (Interview A-22). Other workers compared their privilege to the suffering of their clients and found that they had to take action, "I can't sit in my comfortable home if I know that all hell is breaking loose on one of my cases. I have to at least patch it up to last until the office opens" (Interview B-23). In each of these quotes there is a sense of social responsibility and caring about people that was stronger than the workers' needs to take a lunch break or time off on the weekend. It was largely this sense of moral outrage and social caring that differentiates the overtime work undertaken by social service workers from that performed by private sector professionals. While private sector professionals often perform large amounts of overtime, it generally occurs within the context of generous salaries and benefits, as well as a desire to further their careers and expand their personal financial picture.[3] In the case of social services, despite the overtime, workers remain low status, poorly paid professionals who attempt, through their unpaid overtime, to add "some decency" (Interview A-22) to an inflexible and restrictive service system.

Part-time and multiple job holders, many of whom were workers of colour, were especially vulnerable to the culture of unpaid overtime. One woman of colour, who received pay for twenty hours per week, reported working at least forty hours per week with management's explicit support (Interview C-19). In this case, the agency received full-time work from someone that they paid only part-time, which is in some ways a wage cut of 50%. As the social services system continues to be downsized and full-time jobs are restructured into part-time and temporary employment, the extraction of large quantities of unpaid labour from precarious workers is likely to increase.

A survey undertaken by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE1999) revealed that only 34% of social services workers receive pay or time off for overtime, leaving 66% with no provision for recognition of or reimbursement for unpaid overtime. The same CUPE study (1999), found that 70% of the social service work force have major responsibilities for child- and elder-care resulting in major difficulties balancing work and home demands. The time crunch in the lives of social service workers meant that the decision to perform unpaid overtime was compelled by forces that were stronger than the love bonds and demands of home life. While unpaid overtime can certainly be a form of social caring, it is also a way that workers are participating in their own exploitation. The participants in this study subsidized the social services system by performing unpaid overtime within their own workplaces.

The motivation to perform unpaid overtime did not come exclusively from workers' desires to extend an uncaring social system. The managers interviewed for this study confirmed that they knew that workers performed unpaid overtime. They viewed it as necessary given the heavy case loads. Moreover, they were aware that the agency would be in serious difficulty if the workers refused to keep up with case loads that some managers and the majority of workers regarded as "impossible to stay on top of" (Interview C-12). While some of the managers displayed concern over the heavy workloads carried by their staff, none of the managers proposed that this excess work be paid, decreased, or formally recognized. In most social service workplaces, management had no process for documenting or providing compensation for this labour. The undocumented nature of this work meant that while this unpaid work was critical to the ongoing operation of the "leaned" out social services system, it was structured by management to remain unpaid as well as "officially" invisible.

Formal Volunteer Work

Reflecting the racialized and gendered character of unpaid social services work, the workers of colour who participated in this study tended to have more volunteer jobs (up to nine), while white women had fewer (two to four), and men had one or none. Women of colour worked mainly within ethno-racial organizations or within ethno-racial committees housed in larger service

bureaucracies, while white women worked at agencies thought to be racially-neutral which mostly served clients. All the female interviewees lamented that they "really should do more" (exact wording in Interview B-24, B-3, A-11, A-24, C-2, C-5, C-28).

The use of volunteers in social service agencies was prolific in Alberta, where funding cuts have been the deepest (Stanford 1998) and integration of neoliberal, public sector management strategies is quite advanced (Baines 2004). One supervisor noted that her entire department was composed of volunteers and a second claimed that for every paid worker in her agency there were two to three volunteers (Interview C-18, C-23). Social service workers interviewed for this study claimed that many or most of the volunteers working in their agencies were social service workers from their own or other agencies. In other words the volunteers are colleagues who are qualified to perform the work in a paid capacity, although they work for free. This was confirmed by a supervisor who speculated that at least 50% of her volunteers were social service workers (Interview C-19). These volunteers were not merely enhancing the work of the agency as was the norm in the past. In some cases, volunteers were replacing paid social service workers as providers of core, professional services. A startling number of workers volunteered in the agencies in which they were employed, in the jobs they did for pay. This offered obvious benefits for management in terms of a highly skilled, dependable, accessible, volunteer work force who could be subject to workplace discipline processes should volunteer work go awry.

Policy and Service Building Work

Women of colour were highly involved in lobbying for and writing new racial/ethnic-sensitive policies for agencies and institutions, as well as service building such as starting new services or expanding existing ones. This type of unpaid work shared some similarities with unpaid, informal community care (Type 5) and formal social services volunteer work (Type 3), as it was usually informal, that is, not housed within a formal social service agency or institution, used professional social service skills for a short term project, and was entered into reluctantly by overextended women. In large part because of its uniquely racialized character, unpaid policy and service building work

is discussed as a separate kind of unpaid work.

It was the impression of the women of colour who were interviewed for this study that downsizing and leaning out within the social services had generated greater need within racialized communities and made unpaid policy and service building work much more time consuming and intense. Before the cuts, when monies were more available in the public and non-profit sector, corporations and agencies often spent tens of thousands of dollars on consultants for the kind of multicultural/anti-racist organizational change work these women were doing for free.

Mid- or senior-career women of colour reported that they were sometimes able to parlay their unpaid policy development work into their paid work. That is, they could convince their employer that the voluntary work they were doing was consistent with the goals of the employer and that the employer was likely to derive benefit from the worker's volunteer involvement. By agreeing that projects initiated in the voluntary sector could be integrated into paid workloads, employers were formally recognizing the importance of unpaid social services work as well as the extreme permeability of paid and unpaid work in this sector. However, shifting unpaid work to paid work did not reduce the volume of work because employers simply added the new assignment to existing workloads, rather than replacing one assignment with another.

Informal, Unpaid Social Service Work

Workers reported participation in a relatively new area of work, namely the provision of unpaid, informal social service care to neighbours, members of extended families, and even far-flung and little known contacts. Informal, unpaid social service work generally started when the participants in this study would be made aware of a neighbour or relative who needed someone "to check in on them" (Interview B-5). Generally somewhat reluctantly, the interviewees reported that they would make an initial visit to this person and "before you know it" (Interview B-5) they would be working on the situation in much the same way as if it had been a case assignment at their place of employment. After conducting an initial assessment they would agree to make a referral or two to help the person out and

promise to "check back soon" (Interview A-3). When services were not forthcoming or proved inadequate, workers would become involved in advocacy, locating new services, negotiating bureaucracies and building support networks around the individual in need. They would also counsel, advise and intervene in crisis situations as well as educate individuals and families about their rights, their options and ways to resist oppressive conditions and situations. In short, the workers often made use of many of the skills and values they felt they had lost within their paid social service work.

In addition, workers reported that they were called upon to provide professional-like services within their formal volunteer roles, even when those roles had no direct connection to social service care. For example, one Girl Guide leader was called upon more than once to "just talk with" an unhappy child who ended up requiring major familial and personal care as well as follow-up with a public system that was very difficult to access (Interview C-8). Hence, even where their volunteer assignments were not located within the social services, by virtue of their skill and sense of professional and community responsibility, some workers found themselves using their social work skills to find and retain appropriate assistance for people in need. Interviewees commented that this type of work felt good to them but they wondered whether they were "helping the system stay afloat" when they should be "helping to bring it down" (Interview B-5).

Ironically, standardization and loss of control were not present in unpaid, policy and service development work, or unpaid, informal, community work as these sectors were less integrated into new models of public administration and lean work organization, and thus beyond their alienating structures and the much despised "assembly line approach" (Interview C-4). Indeed, unpaid, informal community care and unpaid policy and service development work utilized more of the workers' professional, interactive caring skills than did their increasingly standardized paid work.

Union Activist Work

As though replicating their invisibility within most scholarly work on the welfare state, the research participants did not speak about either domestic labour or union involvement as work unless directly prompted. Somehow, the topics of domestic labour and union involvement were too personal, or too political, and in the case of unions, too self- rather than other-directed to be raised in the context of a discussion about funding cuts, desperate clients, crumbling communities and overworked care providers. Taking on pivotal roles such as union president or picket captain, most of the women in British Columbia, and significantly less in Alberta and Nova Scotia, were or had been intensely involved in their unions. Wages were not the exclusive issue in union struggles with employers. Instead, struggles were about keeping client-worker ratio low or how to maintain work quality and relationships.

Many women saw union work as a way to "take better care of everyone" in the sector - clients, communities and workers (Interview B-7) (Baines 1999). However, they were very aware of public discourses that position unions as "greedy," self-interested and "bullying" (Interview B-10). Within the context of the interview, most workers seemed unsure how to meld the female spheres of caregiving and professionalism with the more male spheres of union activism. They downplayed the work they performed for their unions. In some cases, after the tape recorder was turned off the tone of the storytelling changed to what I call the more typical "boy-talk," pissing-contest of union storytelling and bragging. It was as if we moved from a female space of caring to a more male space of exaggeration and absolute certainty. We became tomboys in a male space and could fight the bosses as well as the next guy (gal) and if caring had something to do with it, well, that was something one should shrug off modestly rather than contemplate carefully as we had during most of the interview. As occurred with all other types of unpaid labour, the interviewees reported that they "really should do more (sigh)..." (Interview B-7).

Unpaid Work in the Family

While unpaid work was a major question in the study, most interviewees spoke extensively about the forms of unpaid social services work discussed above, and not about unpaid work in the home. Only with prompting would they expand on unpaid family caregiving. It was as if the private realm of family was separate in their minds from

forms of unpaid social services work that more closely resembled their paid work. Family work, in contrast, was naturalized as "just something us mothers have to do" (Interview A-9) rather than understood as a form of work that has been impacted by restructuring (Luxton 1997). Careful probing and follow-up questions showed that the research participants were experiencing an increase in the amount and intensity of unpaid, hands-on caring in the family ranging from child-care to elder-care to care of distant relatives. Luxton (1997 & 1980) has noted that an intensification of domestic work occurs during economic down swings as women attempt to subsidize and extend family budgets through the use of their unpaid labour. Intensification of child-care work among the research participants reflected cuts to services for children as well as a growing shift of responsibility from schools to parents in relation to responsibility for educating and engaging children. Many workers responded to these changes by taking on shift work so that either they or their co-parent could be available to care for children around the clock.

While a small number of the participants lived with and cared for elderly relatives, many more of those interviewed for this study provided concrete support to elders living independently, including: dressing changes, bathing, cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, yard work and a myriad of other tasks focussed on emotional well-being or "lifting their spirits" (Interview C-5). Research participants spoke of the expansion of unpaid family caregiving in terms of emotional rather than moral compulsion. They reported that they could not bear to have their loved ones suffer or that their children needed them and "so, what can you do?" (Interview B-20). In other words, this work was as freely chosen as is any other aspect of the highly emotionally, ideologically and socially charged realm of parental and familial relations.

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The absolute volume of paid and unpaid caring work performed by the women in this study is stunning. As exemplified in the stories of workers who are burnt out and no longer participate in volunteer work, it is questionable how long this level of unpaid social services work can be provided by an overworked and discouraged work force. The vast amounts of unpaid work shaped and limited the amount of time and energy they had for other forms of resistance, political action or leisure. The term resistance is used deliberately here to emphasize the dailies and incrementalism of the resistance displayed by these women within the distinctly gendered terrain of the social services, community and home (Aptheker 1989). Bettina Aptheker notes that for many women resistance pivots from the conditions and spaces available to them and that their political contributions must be judged from within the context of women's lives and work as caregivers and sustainers of life (180 & 173). The resistance strategies used by the women in this study were contradictory. While some of their unpaid work certainly subsidized and legitimized an under-resourced system, it simultaneously provided a sense of social solidarity and resistance to the callousness of an atomized, uncaring, neoliberal social system.

Theoretical conceptualizations of the private versus public, market versus home, or work versus leisure fail to capture the non-market, caring relations and logics operating in the still largely non-profit and public sector of the Canadian social services. The seven kinds of work performed by social service workers highlight the ways that social service work is a series of blended tasks and processes operating in a number of realms, rather than distinctively separate activities operating in distinctively separate spheres. Given this continuum, a concept such as work lives which stresses the continuity and unendingness of caregiving as well as the similarity of instrumental and affective task more accurately reflects the realities of the predominantly female realm of caring work in all its forms than do the dichotomous categories listed above.

The data discussed above reveals the unevenness, arbitrariness and classed nature of many forms of unpaid social service work. It is middle-class, white people who are more likely to have neighbours and community members who are trained social service workers. This means middle-class, white people have greater access to informal care and advocacy, and therefore increased access to services within the formal system. Individuals who are poorer and less well-connected must negotiate an under-resourced and uncaring

system alone, or simply fall through the cracks. The distinctly anti-racist content and larger workload of unpaid work performed by workers of colour also shows the racialization of social services work while the predominance of women and themes of caring reveals its gendered character.

Stories such as those told by the workers in this study need to be brought into the public realm and counted within national and international valuation schemes as such as those articulated by Bakker (1998), Waring (1999) and Drescher (1999). A full economic valuation of this work will reveal the gross underestimation of the economic costs of caring, as well as the need for policy development and funding levels that reflect the enormous care deficit. Waring (1999) notes that justice and democracy are necessary in order to realize positive outcomes from a full evaluation of women's work. Otherwise, counting schemes can inadvertently bring women's unpaid work into the market and under the control of profit-driven market relations. It is quite possible that some of the unpaid work discussed above could be marketized, with private brokers hiring themselves out to those who can afford to pay for someone to negotiate the social services system for them. Hence, any struggle for the economic valuation of women's unpaid work must go hand-in-hand with a larger struggle for democracy and social justice in which the reasons for women's daily resistance can be redressed concomitant with a reduction in their larger-than-life, everyday workload of care.

ENDNOTES

1. Racialized and gendered are used in this article not as a categories but as sets of social relations or processes in which various groups of people are differentiated and continually remade as subordinate - marginalized, denigrated and exploited - or as dominant - valorized, culturally affirmed and better positioned *vis-à-vis* labour markets and production of wealth (Ng 2000). The racial and gender segmentation of labour markets, unequal and oppressive human services and education systems, degrading media representation and so forth are examples of these processes of subordination and domination.

2. Researchers were hired from racialized communities in each province to modify the interview guide as deemed appropriate, build the snowball sample, conduct the interviews, distribute a two-page summary and solicit feedback. The interview guide was changed only once although probes, adjunct questions and follow-ups differed greatly across the interviews. White researchers or myself, a white woman, undertook the interviews with white people. In each province, the sample was roughly one-half white and one-half drawn from subordinated cultures (Aboriginal, African Canadian, Chinese, Indo-Asian and Latina in British Columbia; Aboriginal, African Nova Scotians in Nova Scotia; and whites and Aboriginal, Indo-Asian, and Chinese in Alberta). This methodology provided very robust data as intersubjectivity, the goal of qualitative interviewing (Rineharz 1992), is much more likely to occur with members of the same oppressed and resisting communities than in interviews conducted by members of the dominant culture.

3. In their study of homemakers, Aronson and Neysmith (1996) noted that the workers felt morally compelled to perform unpaid overtime or were in too weak a position to refuse clients and families. The data in this study also suggests that workers felt a strong moral compulsion which stemmed, in part, from their professional ethics which assert that social justice is the bedrock upon which professional practice is built. Unlike the para-professional homemakers in Aronson and Neysmith's study, the workers in this study were much more powerfully positioned than most of their clients. None cited client or family requests as the reason why they took on unpaid overtime.

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"An Unlikely Collection of Union Militants": Portuguese Immigrant Cleaning Women Become Political Subjects in Postwar Toronto

Susana Miranda, York University, conducts research on the experiences of Portuguese immigrant women in Toronto's cleaning industry, including building, hotel, and domestic cleaning, in the post-World War Two period.

Abstract
This paper examines the ways in which Portuguese immigrant women office cleaners gained a public presence during a six-week strike in 1984, both on the picket lines and in Toronto's newspapers. Their ethnic, gender, and class identities were central in their transformation into public, political, and militant subjects.

Résumé
Cet article étudie les façons dont les immigrantes portugaises nettoyeuses de bureaux ont gagné une présence publique durant la grève de six semaines en 1984, à la fois sur les lignes de piquetage et dans les journaux de Toronto. Leurs identités soit ethnique, leur sexe ou leur classe étaient centrales dans leur transformation en sujets public, politique et militant.

On June 27, 1984, with reporters on the scene, striking cleaners at First Canadian Place, an office tower in Toronto were repeatedly warned that they would be arrested unless they left the lobby of the building. Almost all of them were Portuguese women, and they had been on strike since June 4th. They insisted on meeting with the workers, mainly young students, who had been hired to replace them during the strike. The female cleaners who earned $5.83 an hour and male cleaners who earned $6.97 an hour wanted a wage increase of $.50 an hour each year for two years. Their employer, Federated Building Maintenance (FBM), which was contracted to clean First Canadian Place by the company that owned the building, Olympia and York Development (O&Y), refused to pay this increase. According to the Toronto Star, Ron Bond, a representative of O&Y pleaded with the strikers to picket outside the building, stating that they were embarrassing the building's (upper middle-class) tenants. The women refused to leave. When police were brought in, the women shouted in Portuguese and others cried as they saw those arrested being led to the police van. When surrounded by police, one woman screamed: "I'm stayed. I'm stayed," as she defiantly threw her megaphone to the ground. Another woman shouted to a police officer, "I am poor, I am poor. Will you feed my family?" At one point it took six uniformed police offers to get one screaming woman, Lucia Ferreira, a cleaner and union representative, into the police van (Harper 1984a).

This episode, like others that transpired on the picket line during the strike, received public attention in part because reporters for the Toronto English-language press considered it remarkable that a group of marginal, foreign-speaking women took to the streets to protest their exploitation in the city's wealthy financial district. This paper examines what one journalist called "an unlikely collection of union militants" (Harper 1984b), a group of Portuguese immigrant women office cleaners who, to most everyone's astonishment, led and sustained a six-week strike in 1984 against the owners of and the company contracted to clean two large financial towers in downtown Toronto. More specifically, it highlights the ways in which the women gained a public presence during the strike both on the picket lines and in the city's newspapers. I draw primarily on newspaper accounts of the strike, though, where necessary, I also make use of archival and other sources. In addition to contributing to the still-sparse literature on the Portuguese in Canada,[1] this essay raises broader questions about immigrant women's still-understudied role in the expanding service sector and in the labour activism of post-World War Two Canada. It also applies some of the recent key insights and criticisms that feminist labour historians, particularly of immigrant, ethnic, and racialized workers, have raised in response to the largely Anglo historians in Canada and the United States whose concepts and understandings of working-class femininity, female respectability, family, and militancy have been largely derived from studies of dominant majority women. Indeed, my paper reflects one of the central aims of the Labouring Feminism conference recently held in Toronto, which, as Franca Iacovetta has put it elsewhere, was "to more effectively de-centre the WASP woman worker" in Canadian and North American labour history (Iacovetta 2004). One concrete way of doing so is to continue to recover and write the history of marginal ethnic female militants, whether they belonged to a specific racial-ethnic group

or a multi-racial workforce and community. As recent publications and the Labouring Feminist conference have demonstrated, alongside the critical debates and paradigm shifts in the field, many feminist labour historians continue to recognize the importance of centring the history of such supposedly "unlikely militants" as Italian garment workers, African-American laundry workers, Latina maids, Puerto Rican tobacco workers, South Asian call centre workers, and Portuguese "cleaning ladies."[2] The Portuguese women who took on big capital in 1980s Toronto had lived under a dictatorship in their homeland and had no prior experience with unions, let alone organizing union drives.[3] They openly identified themselves as immigrants who nevertheless had a right to decent wages and basic security and respect in a country that had long declared itself to be an enlightened, liberal immigrant-receiving nation.

Large scale migration from Portugal to Canada occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, and by 1982, approximately 137,000 Portuguese had immigrated to Canada, the majority having settled in Toronto (Giles 2002). The postwar Toronto economy contrasted sharply with Portugal's economy where agricultural stagnation and minimal industrialization left few opportunities for Portuguese male and female workers. Due to their legal status as dependents and their low educational levels, Portuguese women were confined to the lowest paid sectors of the female and ethnic job ghetto in Canada, which predominately included work in factories and cleaning hotels, private homes, and offices.[4] Toronto's new position as Canada's most important financial centre spurred a construction of postwar skyscrapers in the heart of downtown Toronto, including in 1975 the 72 storey First Canadian Place, home to the Bank of Montreal central offices. The growth and centralization of Toronto's financial district and activity, then, stimulated a parallel growth and centralization of cleaning jobs for Portuguese and other immigrant women and men in these new towers.[5] Alongside other groups of immigrant

women, Portuguese women were crucial workers in the expanding post World War Two service sector that so many "Canadian" women shunned in favour of white collar jobs.

The contracting out of cleaning functions within private enterprise and government departments has been on the rise since the 1970s. However, under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, cleaners and other workers who are employed through contractors receive no protection for their unions. They have no successor rights; that is, a union's collective agreement with one contractor does not carry over to another contractor, even though the same workers might be cleaning the same building (Aguiar 2000). When cleaners organize they are threatened by their employer with the possibility that the cleaning contract will be terminated due to higher costs associated with wage increases and better benefits. Thus, most cleaners are not unionized and for those who are, any gains they make from collective bargaining are easily lost with the tendering of new contracts. Often, the workers being re-hired by the new contractor do the same job they did previously, but under inferior conditions (Committee for Cleaners' Rights 1988). Private contractors rely on low wages and the intensification of work to maximize their profits and to beat their competition when bidding for a contract, and thus immigrant women are extremely low-paid workers in a sector of the service industry that relies heavily on their labour. These restrictions on the unionization of contract workers began in the 1970s as part of the larger effort of the Canadian neo-liberal state to undermine workers' collective power (Heron 1996). Also, the facts that most contract cleaners are immigrant women and the state has limited their ability to unionize and retain their union, points to power relations that, contrary to multiculturalism rhetoric, serve to privilege white male Canadians at the expense of immigrant men and, most of all, immigrant women (Das Gupta and Iacovetta 2000).

Despite the strong presence of research on immigrant women workers in Canadian labour history, studies that investigate unionization have actually paid little attention to immigrant women.[6] This situation leads to the perception that they have somehow been absent from or passive in workplace activism. Furthermore, there has been comparatively little analysis of immigrant women's involvement in the post World War Two labour movement, a period that saw a dramatic increase in the unionization of women workers in general. In 1979, the Canadian Food and Associated Services Union, an affiliate of the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU), began a campaign to get the mostly Portuguese building cleaners at First Canadian Place to join their union. The CCU was active in organizing immigrant workers in Toronto through such affiliate unions as the Masons Independent Union of Canada and the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union. Their interest in organizing these cleaners stemmed from the CCU emphasis on the exploitation of immigrants and a greater willingness than that demonstrated by the Canadian Labour Congress to take on tough struggles (Lang 2007). In the case of cleaners, this meant struggling to organize contract workers with little protection in labour law and immigrant women who were generally not perceived as strong unionists by mainstream unions.

The employer, FBM, tried to block the union's certification, arguing that because most of the cleaners could not speak, write, understand or comprehend English, they could not understand the labour board notices posted in English. However, a labour board chairman ruled that language had no bearing on the validity of the union's application and the union was certified. Of the 120 eligible, 96 cleaners had signed union cards, well above the 55% required for automatic union certification. The union was certified in October 1979 to represent the employees of FBM at First Canadian Place, and the first collective agreement was negotiated and came into effect on April 13, 1980 (Deverell 1979). That almost all of the Portuguese

immigrant cleaners at First Canadian Place signed union cards indicates that these women were not only aware of their exploitation but were willing to fight for their rights despite the risk of losing incomes that were so crucial to their families' well-being. Furthermore, they participated in union politics, developed leadership skills, and took on leadership positions within this union's local, including that of president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer, as well as steward and bargaining committee positions. These immigrant cleaners can be situated as important and active members of the Canadian union movement in the post-1945 period.

A second collective agreement with FBM was executed in 1982. In 1984, the union, which had been renamed the Food and Service Workers of Canada (FASWOC), was bargaining for the third time with FBM. On June 3 the union local voted to reject a two-year contract offer, including a wage increase of $.30 an hour effective in January 1985 (Rosenfeld 1984). The next day, 250 cleaners who cleaned First Canadian Place went on strike. The cleaners were demanding a wage increase from their employer of $.50 per hour each year for two years retroactive to April 13, the day the contract with the union expired. In a period of heavy inflation, the wage increase the employer had offered meant little to the workers. Many of these women also held day jobs in factories or cleaned private homes in order to make ends meet. FBM refused the union's demand of a wage increase on the grounds that since O&Y (a company with a net worth of approximately $3.5 billion) would not increase its contract price, FBM would lose their profit (Ontario Labour Relations Board 1985). For most women, this was their first strike, and they desperately wanted to fight for higher wages, despite the threats and the risk of losing their jobs.

The real possibility of injury for Portuguese immigrant men performing dangerous jobs in construction meant that many of these women were in effect the family breadwinners, although they did not appear as such on census or other records. Torontonians first learned about them because they were profiled in newspapers such as the Toronto Star. They included women like Margarida Correia, who supported three small children because her injured husband had not worked for nearly four years. Another was Maria Estrella, a mother of four small children whose husband had been unable to work for seven years (Goldenberg 1984). Their situation underscored the precarious position in which working class families found themselves when a husband was unable to work.[7] The average age of the women involved in the strike was forty years old (Applications), and most of the women were married with children. Like other working class women, these women's activism was rooted in their everyday material realities and their responsibilities to their families. However, as migrants, these women also had trans-Atlantic familial obligations. Migration not only provided new material hope for those migrating, but important material aid to their impoverished families across the Atlantic. Indeed, some women cited their inability to buy and send clothes to their families in Portugal as an impetus to fighting for higher wages (Harper 1984b). These women were thus transnational subjects who played a critical role as breadwinners for transnational family economies stretched across the ocean.[8] Moreover, in striking, they made their own decision independent of their union leadership, which did not make any recommendation on whether to strike or not. As these were contract workers, the union knew the cleaners might not have any jobs to come back to (Iler 2006). The cleaners voted 96% in favour of a strike and actively pursued their own agenda (Crombie 1984).

Furthermore, the striking cleaners were acutely aware of their vulnerable position as immigrant workers in the Canadian economy and were prepared to talk about it publicly. In their coverage of the strike, Toronto journalists noted the deep-seated sense of disappointment expressed by women who, having come to Canada with visions of a better life and prepared to

work hard, found that they were being exploited and ignored because they were immigrants and spoke little English. As Maria Cruz, a striking cleaner, explained to a reporter on the scene: "I knew I had to work hard here, but I didn't know something like this would happen....They are trying to exploit the immigrants, especially the immigrant women. Because we are women and we do not speak English, we have no rights" (Harper 1984b). Facing exploitation as ethnic immigrant women workers, Cruz and others like her joined and actively participated in unions. They challenged their employers and the government in an effort to attain the goals they had hoped for in migration, including ensuring a better life for their children. Furthermore, compared to Portugal, Canada allowed them some space to fight for their rights as workers, and they took full advantage of this opportunity.

In taking to the streets and demanding better pay, these women also directly challenged Canada's self-proclaimed liberal image as a benevolent nation of immigrants that offered newcomers the opportunity not only to work but to eventually enjoy the status and entitlements that came with citizenship. Interestingly, in their communications with the press as well as with employers and state representatives, these women positioned themselves as immigrant women, not citizens, who were being exploited as cheap labour, even though roughly half of the women were Canadian citizens (the other half were landed immigrants). In a letter to Albert Reichmann, President of O&Y Ltd., Emilia Silva, president of the local stated "Mr. Reichmann, surely you can understand our situation. We are immigrants to this country. We take pride in our work and we work hard. We are trying to make a better life for our families" (Silva 1984). Furthermore, the taunts and insults that the women endured at the hands of critics and passers-by - antics that were also covered in the press - belied the notion that Canada was an inclusive haven for immigrants who worked hard. On the picket line, they faced shouts of "go back to your country" from tenants of the building and passers-by (Crombie 1984). The feeling among the women was that they could not truly claim citizenship as a basis to equal rights, that they were not perceived as citizens by the wider society or the state. In their attempts to gain economic justice, they appealed instead to the public's sense of human rights, positioning themselves as poor immigrant women unscrupulously exploited by a rich corporation.

The presence of the women's family members on the picket-line was an important characteristic of this strike and probably helped in attracting media attention. As in other strikes involving married women, children became very much part of the strike (Patrias 1990). The press noted that the children played tag around the buildings and that "on most evenings, children strut along the sidewalk, carrying signs, slurping popsicles, shouting through a megaphone or generally annoying their mothers" (Goldenberg 1984). The presence of children on the picket-line had much to do with the women's inability to pay babysitters at times when their husbands were at work and could not care for them, but it also served a strategic purpose. The children were visible reminders that these women had families to support, so their presence reinforced the justice of their cause. The union encouraged husbands to join the picket line. Many of the men had developed a union consciousness and commitment to the labour movement through their experience with construction unions and they supported their wives during their picket line duties even though it meant that women were spending less time on their domestic and familial responsibilities. Significantly, the men's own experiences with unions did not promote a sense of working-class male masculinity that excluded women from unionism but instead led them to support their wives' activism. Of paramount importance was a couple's shared goal of attaining the financial security hoped for in migration and the desire for respect as immigrant workers in the Canadian economy. As Lucia Ferreira told a Star reporter, "my husband supports me. For sure, he would

like me [to be] at home, but he knows why I am here and sometimes he comes to walk on the line" (Harper 1984b).

As with other immigrant strikes, the ethnic identity of the strikers helped shape the character of the picket line and their cultural displays of picket-line behaviour and dissent reflected a fascinating blend of Portuguese rituals (including festive rituals and dances), worker solidarity, and even Catholicism. The picket line was sometimes reinforced with a Portuguese band. Other times, portable music players blared as women danced directly across from an upscale restaurant favoured by politicians and corporate leaders (Crombie 1984). A booklet of songs sung on the picket line signals the ethnic influence on working class culture. In addition to English-language working-class songs, the women sang a Portuguese translation of the song We Shall Not Be Moved as well as a Portuguese song to St. John, as these women were predominantly Roman Catholic. Their religious faith was very much a part of their union activism. They also sang, and danced, a wedding and party favourite, the Bird Dance (FASWOC songs 1984). They appropriated and continually chanted a Latin American rallying cry in Portuguese: "the people, united, will never be defeated" (McMonagle 1984). More than simply a way of gaining public attention, the ethno-cultural expressions of militancy and solidarity so central to the strike offered a way of claiming a political identity. It defined the strikers in ways that distinguished them from Anglo-Canadian society even though the strike confirmed that these women had much in common with other working-class women. For the Portuguese women who made up the majority of the cleaners on strike, the overlapping bonds of ethnic, class, and gender solidarity served to reinforce the cohesiveness of the group, and a particular form of radicalism was borne of these multiple identities.

The militancy of the strikers marked the strike as exceptional for this group of immigrant women who, as the press repeatedly noted, did not have any experience with unions in Portugal. One reporter declared that the "strike has turned these docile women, keepers of home and hearth, into a bitter, vociferous group intent on fighting their employers" (Harper 1984b). In assuming that the women had been transformed into fighters, this reporter, of course, was drawing on the all too familiar stereotypes of immigrant women, including southern Europeans, as docile before husbands and employer alike. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that points to the women's everyday resistance at home and in the workplace (Miranda 2004). Still, it is clear that for Canadian observers, the women's militant behaviour on the picket line was in stark contrast to their perceptions of how Portuguese women would act. Even the union had expressed scepticism about the women's ability to hold a successful strike. A non-Portuguese union representative, Isabel Saez, publicly admitted that "these women are stronger than any of us thought they would be" (Harper 1984b), which made them all the more newsworthy. Most of all, these otherwise ignored immigrant women emerged from their invisibility to publicly defy their economic exploitation right at the heart of Canada's most profitable financial district. This irony also helped draw attention to their cause in the Canadian press. In defiance of the stereotype that immigrant women workers were not typical striking workers, the women themselves enlarged the definition of who could belong to an active and militant working class. In short, they redefined the political and made themselves public, political, militant, female subjects.

Picket-line anger mounted when a group of about 10 workers who had been on strike were escorted across the picket line to return to work. Four strikers were taken to hospital for injuries and one person was arrested when a shoving match started between the two groups. Tensions mounted further when the police began helping "scabs" (replacement workers) cross the picket line. Many of them had been referred by the Canada Employment Centre for Students, a federally-run agency.

Picketers shouted at strike-breakers who arrived in front of the building and attempted to block underground tunnels leading into the building. Maria Serafin stated, "I'm angry. Tell them [the students] not to take my job because I have a family to feed" (Harper 1984a). On June 13th, three women who had been picketing in one of the tunnels were assaulted by a private security guard escorting strike replacements past the picket line. The women suffered various bruises and scratches and one sprained hand and all received medical attention at Toronto General Hospital. As word of the assaults spread around the building, the women became very upset (Notes 1984). In response, the union pulled the women off all the entrances and gathered them together for a meeting in order to speak with them and calm them down. But as they did so, a cab containing scabs pulled up and the women, already agitated, rushed the car, hitting it with their hands and shouting. Maria Medeiros, a cleaner, was arrested for hitting a male supervisor from FBM with her umbrella (Nettle 1984). Such incidents made the strikers aware that they were not only fighting O&Y and FBM, but also the government. Indeed, the women were particularly incensed over the collusion of the state, through the recruitment and police protection of the strike-breakers. The women saw their aggressive and militant actions as justified in the light of the exploitation and injustice they faced. They were fiercely committed to fighting the exploitation even though it was supported by state laws.

As mentioned earlier, some Portuguese women - about twelve in all - did cross the picket line and return to work during the strike (Nettle 1984). According to a Union representative who spoke with reporters, these women had done so "under pressure from husbands to give up the strike and return to the kitchen in the Portuguese tradition" (Harper 1984b). But the union representative missed the obvious point: the women were not returning to the kitchen but returning to their jobs. The matter of paid employment was not the problem. For some couples, the presence of women on a highly publicized and occasionally violent picket line might have caused tensions at home. Others might have also considered it an embarrassment to the Portuguese community. However, it seems clear that a woman's decision to go back to work had very little to do with a husband's notion of obedient womanhood or with dominant notions of feminine respectability, and far more to do with an immediate need for money. The loss of a regular pay cheque during the strike caused hardship to their families. They also feared that, if they lost the strike, they would probably be fired. Yet, despite such fears being widespread, the vast majority of the Portuguese women did not cross the picket line but stood firm, and their defiance is important in showing that so-called "respectable" gender norms did not dampen the militancy of this group of ethnic female strikers, as has been noted for groups of Anglo-Saxon women workers in earlier periods (Parr 1990; Sangster 1995; Sugiman 1994). Like other strikes in which immigrant women predominated, these women were not constrained either by dominant notions of femininity or working class ones (Guard 2004b; Ventresca 1996).

The striking workers received picket line support from other cleaners, including those who worked at the TD (Toronto Dominion) Centre and were organized by Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). The strikers also received picket line support from other unions and women's groups including other affiliates of the CCU, the United Auto Workers (UAW), as well as Ontario Working Women, and the Canadian Congress of Women. Support from the Portuguese community came through the Portuguese-Canadian Democratic Organization and representatives from the Portuguese Pastoral Council. All of this support from unions, women's, and community organizations also helped the cleaners gain favourable media attention and increased pressure on FBM and O&Y to settle in the union's favour. The strikers' issues also became explicitly political when their actions drew the attention of major politicians, particularly members of the federal New

Democratic Party (NDP). High profile provincial politician Bob Rae and federal politician Dan Heap joined the women on the picket line (Nettle 1984). The strike also triggered a debate that continued long after the end of the strike on successor rights in the cleaning industry and the treatment of immigrant workers in the Canadian economy. The NDP brought the issues to the attention of the Canadian public and Canadian politicians.

After six weeks, the strike ended when the cleaners accepted FBM's new offer. It provided them with a $.35 hourly increase retroactive to April 13, when the old contract expired, and a further $.25 increase in the second year of the agreement. As the journalists reported, when the contract was accepted, the cleaners shouted "the people, united, will never be defeated" in Portuguese. Emilia Silva shouted into a megaphone, "We have proven to everyone that we have the courage. We proved to Canada and to Olympia and York owners of the building that we are women, and we are immigrants but we can fight" (Di Manno 1984). Clearly, these women accomplished an immense feat by winning a strike against a major corporation. They also showed that female immigrants had a right to equality in Canadian society and could be strong and active union members, belying the notion that immigrant women were simply passive victims of an exploitative industrial-capitalist economy.

In the end, the strike, for all of its importance, did not secure long-term rights and security for immigrant cleaners. By February of 1986, the 250 cleaners at First Canadian Place were in danger of losing their jobs, as well as their hard won rights because O&Y was putting the cleaning contract up for tender precisely when the collective agreement was set to expire. A delegation from the FASWOC met with Liberal Ontario Premier David Peterson and Labour Minister Bill Wrye to press for successor rights legislation but they were not successful. In the meantime, the cleaners at First Canadian Place accepted FBM's offer of a pay raise of $0.35 cents, an increased workload, and fewer working hours. They did so because it would allow their employer to remain competitive for gaining the contract with O&Y, which meant that they could keep their jobs and the collective agreement ("Cleaning Jobs"1986). The cleaning contract was renewed. The cleaners were forced to give up many of the gains they had made during their six week strike, as the contracting out process worked in favour of employers and business interests. It was not until 1993 under the NDP provincial government, through Bill 40, that successor rights for contract cleaners were incorporated into changes to labour law. However, Bill 7, the first major piece of legislation introduced by the Conservative Mike Harris government in 1995, eliminated successor rights (Aguiar 2000). Immigrant women were denied, once again, the right to improve their wages and working conditions.

This examination of how an "unlikely" collection of ethnic female militants mounted and sustained a six-week strike at First Canadian Place, and the press coverage as well as political debate that it engendered, provides a useful case study for examining the position of immigrant women in the Canadian post-war economy, labour movement, and neo-liberal state. Portuguese women played a crucial role in the expansion of the service sector in the post-war years while at the same time their entry reinforced an already-existing gender and ethnically-stratified workforce that was low paid and toiled in inferior conditions. These conditions were supported by state laws that limited their ability to unionize and retain their unions through the contracting out process. Yet, despite rhetoric to the contrary, immigrant women could be and were militant participants in the labour movement at a time when labour faced increasing limits on workers' power. Gender, class, and ethnic identities converged to drive this group of workers to assert their commonalities with other working class groups as well as their distinct concerns as ethnic workers. By taking protest to the

street in the heart of Toronto's financial district, and by attracting plenty of press attention, much of it sympathetic, the women became explicitly political subjects and their actions informed a much longer and larger debate on the place of immigrant women in the Canadian economy and state.

Acknowledgement

Endnotes

1. Most scholarly work on the Portuguese in Canada has been produced by sociologists and anthropologists. See Giles 2002; Noivo 1997. For a historical work see Anderson and Higgs 1976.
2. Labouring Feminism and Working-Class History in North America and Beyond Conference, Toronto, Fall 2005; papers by Caroline Merithew, Ginetta Candelario, Teresa Carrillo, Ivette Rivero-Giusti, Jennifer Carson, Julie Guard and Mercedes Steedman. Recent publications include Gabaccia and Iacovetta 2002; Guard, 2004.
3. Under a right wing dictatorship in Portugal from 1933 to 1974, the state enacted laws forbidding strikes, organizing and collective bargaining.
4. 1981 statistics indicate that 86.96% of Portuguese-born immigrant women in Canada worked for wages: 37.30% were in manufacturing, 8.70% in accommodation and food services, and 13.46% in "other services," which includes cleaning (Giles 2002). However, the percentage of women in "other services" was surely underreported as many Portuguese immigrant women worked clandestinely in private domestic service.
5. A 1975 article cited 36,557 cleaners in Toronto, mostly immigrant women (Spiers 1975). A union organizer indicated that in Toronto cleaners were mostly Portuguese, though the Greek, Italian, Latin American, West Indian and eastern European communities were also represented. Iler 1982.
6. Exceptions include Frager 1992; Parr 1990.
7. Franca Iacovetta discusses the participation of Italian men in dangerous construction trades in Toronto, and how injury or death adversely affected the family economy (Iacovetta 1992).
8. It is usually male migrants that are credited with sending remittances home. For example, see Ramirez 1991.

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The Alt-Right's Discourse of "Cultural Marxism": A Political Instrument of Intersectional Hate

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Abstract: This article analyzes the history, production, circulation, and political uses of the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism in the context of the right-wing populist Trump presidency, the rise of fascist movements in the United States and worldwide, and the politics of intersectional hate.

Keywords: alt-right; conspiracy theory; cultural Marxism; hegemony; ideology; populism; right-wing extremism; Trump effect; white supremacy

Introduction: Alt-Right Terror and "Cultural Marxism"

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik car-bombed a government building in Oslo, Norway, killing eight people; he then infiltrated the Norway Labour Party's Worker's Youth League camp and murdered sixty-nine more people. Breivik, a white supremacist, says he committed this terrorism as a way to publicize his 1,500-page manifesto "2083: A European Declaration of Independence." In it, he (under the alias Andrew Berwick) called on white people everywhere to take up arms against "cultural Marxists," a group he frames as the "enemy" of "Western civilization" (Berwick 2011). Breivik's fascist manifesto was full of factual errors and gaps in reasoning, but the story it told about cultural Marxism was much more commonly told and believed than one might expect, especially in the United States. In fact, Breivik's manifesto took a page from the American far right's "culture war" playbook (Boston 2011; Jamin 2018). For almost three decades, everyone from paleo-conservatives to neo-Nazis has used the phrase "cultural Marxism" as a shorthand for an anti-American bogeyman, a symbol for every liberal or left-leaning group the right defined itself against, and an epithet for progressive identities, values, ideas, and practices that reactionaries believe have made America worse than before. As Beirich and Hicks (2009, 118) explain, "many white nationalists see the changes in American society, particularly since the heated decade of the 1960s, as the result of an orchestrated plan—called cultural Marxism—by leftist intellectuals to destroy the American way of life as established by whites."

During Donald Trump's 2016 "Make America Great Again" campaign, talk of a cultural Marxist plot to

ruin America moved from the fringes of right-wing extremism to the mainstream. Using the moniker of the "alt-right," a new generation of Internet-savvy white supremacists supported Trump's race to the White House, whipping up fears about cultural Marxism's threat to America (Wilson 2015; 2016). Those in positions of political power also talked up this supposed threat to America. Steven Bannon, Trump's Chief Strategist at the time, portrayed conservatives as under siege by cultural Marxism (Coaston 2018). In the first year of Trump's presidency, Rich Higgins, the US National Security Council's (NSC) former director for strategic-planning, bemoaned a cultural Marxist plot to turn public opinion against Trump's presidency. In a memo entitled "POTUS & Political Warfare," Higgins explained Trump's unpopularity as the effect of "withering information campaigns" that "serve as the non-violent line of effort of a wider movement" to "execute political warfare agendas that reflect cultural Marxist outcomes" (Smith 2017).

A discourse "is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about—i.e. a way of representing—a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (Hall 1992, 201). Social science and humanities scholars recognize a heterogeneous Marxist cultural studies tradition, and some utilize Marxist concepts when analyzing culture and society (Dworkin 1997; Kellner 2013). But researchers are only beginning to acknowledge and interrogate the far right's production, circulation, and political uses of its own discourse about "cultural Marxism" (Beirich and Hicks 2009; Jamin 2014; 2018; SPLC 2003; Wilson 2015; 2016). How does the alt-right talk about "cultural Marxism"? What statements do alt-right authors make about the history, identity, goals, and impacts of "cultural Marxism" in the US? What media outlets, sites, and platforms circulate this discourse of cultural Marxism, and what political uses does the alt-right make of it in its struggle for power?

To answer these questions and establish some foundations for further and more focused critical studies of the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism, this article interrogates the alt-right's production, circulation, and political uses of a conspiratorial discourse about cultural Marxism in the context of the right-wing populist Trump presidency and the rise of fascist ideologies and movements around the world. The alt-right represents cultural Marxism in partial and selective ways and makes claims about what it is, has done, and is doing to "America" and "the West." The alt-right's aim is to try to get large numbers of people to think about and perceive cultural Marxism and the identities, values, and goals of all of the individuals and groups it frames as cultural Marxists in hateful ways. Overall, I argue that the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is an instrument of intersectional hate. While "Trump won the presidency by making hate intersectional" (Browne 2016), the alt-right wields "cultural Marxism" to advance a white, patriarchal, and Christian conservative vision of America and foment a racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic, and violent backlash against the gains made by the individuals and groups it constructs as cultural Marxist threats and enemies to its "alt-America." In this regard, the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism is a means by which it constructs a patriarchal, white, and Christian supremacist notion of America in response to the destabilization of this order by the ongoing pursuit of social justice and broader societal changes linked to multi-national capitalism and progressive neoliberalism (Fraser 2017).

This argument develops in this paper through four interrelated sections. The first section is a macro-level overview of the alt-right hate movement: its key figures, ideology, hegemonic strategy, media fronts, and convergence with and divergence from the Trump Administration. Having contextualized the alt-right's hate, the second section presents a synoptic overview of the alt-right's hateful discourse on cultural Marxism, tracking its historical emergence, narrative claims, organizational production sources, and widespread circulation. The third section shows the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism to be an easily debunked and empirically groundless

"conspiracy theory of power." The fourth section highlights the alt-right's political uses of this conspiracy theory as a tool of intersectional hate. The conclusion briefly discusses the cross-border movement and noxious permutations of the American alt-right's conspiracy of cultural Marxism in Canada.

The Alt-Right: White Supremacy in the Age of Trump

In the same month that Trump announced his run for the US presidency and kicked off a right-wing populist election campaign, Panitch and Albo (2016, x) observed: "We are at one of those historical moments that compel socialists to undertake a serious calibration of the political forces amassing on the right. . . . Across the globe, the far right is on the move." Hateful right-wing populist leaders, movements, and parties have grown over the past two decades. Such groups ascended in popularity in the wake of the 2008-2009 world capitalist slump and were emboldened by Trump's presidency (Norris 2006; 2016). Today, it is incumbent upon everyone on the left to try to understand the "far right's social base," its "organizational strength and range," its power to "influence mainstream parties and opinion," and its march into "state institutions" (Panitch and Albo 2016, x). The goal of this section, then, is to present a macro-level overview of the alt-right hate movement: its key figures, ideology, hegemonic strategy, media, and convergence with and divergence from the Trump Administration.

In the US, the "alt-right" is a heterogeneous assemblage of far right groups, but the most significant expression of the alt-right today are the youthful, white nationalists that reject mainstream conservatism and neoliberalism, wish to dismantle the Republican and Democratic "establishment," and seek to build a white ethno-State that compels all of society's institutions to protect and promote the values of an idealized white European culture (Hawley 2017; Neiwert 2017; SPLC 2017). Identity

Evropa, Proud Boys, and The Traditionalist Workers Party are a few such alt-right groups, and these may link with longstanding hate groups such as the Aryan Nations, Blood and Honor, Stormfront, and the Klu Klux Klan (SPLC 2017). Some of these groups call for the removal of non-white people from the US; others call for the genocide of all non-white people. Some want to build a world of race-people separated into territorial ethno-States; others see themselves in a race war, believing that "white genocide" will happen if they fail to exterminate non-whites. Some perceive themselves to be racially superior to non-white people, a super-race in a world of clashing races whose destiny is to dominate the globe's inferior races; others frame themselves as racial segregationists wanting to live amongst "folk and families" that look like, talk like, shop like, and pray like them. There are subtle differences between alt-right groups, but all extol the protection and promotion of a specious "white culture" and engage in a struggle to build an authoritarian territorial ethno-State that secures the dominance of white people and culture across every institution.

Apropos Gramsci (1971), the alt-right's intersecting hate groups can be conceptualized as a political bloc or network of groups that struggle for moral leadership (hegemony) in the trenches of American civil society (war of position) while setting their sights on the institutional heights of State power (war of maneuver) using strategies and tactics that combine tools of persuasion and coercion. In civil society, the alt-right is rapidly building up its persuasive powers. It owns publishing houses such as Radix and Washington Summit Publishers (run by Richard B. Spencer) and Counter Currents Publishing (run by Greg Johnson). Steve Bannon's Breitbart News is at the centre of an expansive alt-right media ecology while alt-right sites such as The Alternative Right, American Renaissance, The Daily Stormer, The Occidental Observer, Radical Agenda, and the Right Stuff proliferate (ADL 2018). The alt-right's many groups and culture warriors use the Internet, World Wide Web, and social media platforms to spread their hate ideology, recruit members, and attack opponents.

The alt-right's social media presence is significant, and the "Gramscians of the alt-right" have had "remarkable success in spreading their ideas through their own alternative and almost exclusively online media content" (Nagle 2017, 53). The alt-right also uses violence to achieve its political goals; it has terrorized, injured, or killed more than one hundred people over the past few years (Hankes and Amend 2018; Miller 2016).

During the 2016 US presidential election campaign race between Hillary Clinton and Trump, the alt-right rallied for Trump. This was unsurprising given Trump fashioned himself as an authoritarian populist champion of white, conservative, working class, and petite bourgeois American men and women (Berlet 2015). Trump's populist campaign channelled these people's angst toward Clinton Democrats and his election was a "white-lash" against the modest social gains made by racialized minority groups (CBC 2017). As Trump battled for the presidency, the alt-right crossed over from marginal websites on the political fringe into "mainstream public and political life" (Nagle 2017, 27). Trump's campaign resonated with Richard Spencer, Andrew Anglin, and Nathan Damigo, and these alt-right figureheads entered the media fold in a struggle to speak with and appeal to Trump's base. They imagined that if Trump were elected, Trump might use his presidential powers to "make America great again" by making their racist dream of a white ethno-State come true.

Spencer, head of the National Policy Institute, which is "dedicated to the heritage, identity, and future of people of European descent in the United States, and around the world" and pushes "peaceful ethnic cleansing" in hopes of transforming the US into a white ethno-State, saw Trump as a leader who would support his racist cause (National Policy Institute 2017). At the 2016 Republican National Convention, Spencer said, "Trust me. Trump thinks like me." Harkening back to Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi-era propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* (1935), Spencer called Trump's win the "victory of the will"

and wrapped up a racist speech at a November 19, 2016, meeting of the National Policy Institute by shouting: "Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!" (J. Goldstein 2016). Spencer's crowd responded with a standing ovation, cheers, and Nazi salutes. Anglin, the neo-Nazi publisher of The Daily Stormer, which describes itself as "The World's Most-Genocidal Republican Website," encouraged his anonymous followers and alt-right trolls to "vote for the first time in our lives for the one man who actually represents our interests" (Anglin 2015). After Trump won, Anglin called upon his legion of hate trolls to use the social media to intimidate "brown people" and harass non-Trump supporters until they "killed themselves" (Westcott 2016). Damigo, former leader of the skinhead National Youth Front and now head of Evropa, a group for "a generation of awakened Europeans" who supposedly hail from "the great peoples, history and civilization that flowed from the European continent" (Evropa 2017), rallied neo-fascists to Trump as well. When Trump won the White House, Damigo enthused from his "Fashy Haircut" (@NathanDamigo) Twitter pedestal: "Everything that has happened since @realDonaldTrump was declared the future president shows that we are engaged in total war . . . Trump is the only candidate whose policies would make America Whiter" (Branson-Potts 2016). Jared Taylor, a white nationalist, board member of the Council for Conservative Citizens, and editor of American Renaissance, campaigned for Trump too. He interpreted Trump's inauguration as "a sign of rising white consciousness" and said he supported Trump "because the effects of his policy would be to reduce the dispossession of Whites, that is, to slow the process whereby Whites become the minority in the United-States" (Taylor 2017).

Evidently, Trump's right-wing populist campaign and election energized the alt-right's ideologues of hate. They rode Trump's Twitter-tales to the White House and moved the hearts and minds of many Trump voters to the idea that making America great again meant making white supremacy normal again. As Spencer put it: "We've been legitimized by this

election" (Posner 2016). For a time, the alt-right and Trump converged but lately they are diverging (*The New York Times* 2016; Vegas 2017). The alt-right chastised Trump for removing Steve Bannon from the NSC (R. Roberts 2017); complained that the US-Mexico border wall is really just a fence (Nguyen 2017b); and criticized Trump for being too friendly in international relations with the Islamophobic and anti-Semitic alt-right's top two global enemies—Saudi Arabia (a symbol for the collective Muslim) and Israel (a symbol for the collective Jew). Furthermore, the alt-right is against Trump's war in Syria and opposed to Trump's militaristic sabre-rattling with Russia (Nguyen 2017a). AltRight.com articles such as "The Trump Betrayal" (Wallace 2017a) and "How the Alt-Right Broke up With Donald Trump" (Wallace 2017b) indicate that the alt-right has parted ways with Trump. In a recent interview with *Vanity Fair*, Spencer remarked: "A lot of us feel disillusioned and even burned by Trump. In a sense we thought that the alt-right could be Trump's brain, but now he has Ivanka, and Jared and Paul Ryan for that. Basically people who aren't me" (Vegas 2017). While the Republican and Democratic "establishment" that Trump initially campaigned against tries to bring Trump in line with the neoliberal geopolitical and economic framework of the US Empire, alt-right icon Spencer denounces Trump as a "cuckservative" (Vegas 2017).

In sum, although the alt-right supported Trump's "Make America Great" campaign for the US presidency, it has not won a "war of maneuver" for State power. Currently, the alt-right remains engaged in a "war of position" in civil society and is fighting neoconservative and mainstream Republicans, as well as neoliberal Democrats and the socialist left. Over the past year, the march of the alt-right has been setback by "lawsuits and arrests, fundraising difficulties, tepid recruitment, widespread infighting, fierce [anti-fascist] counter-protests, and banishment from social media platforms" (McCoy 2018). Nonetheless, the alt-right is regrouping and continuing to battle for hearts and minds. A conspiratorial discourse of cultural Marxism is a significant weapon of its hate.

The Alt-Right's Discourse on Cultural Marxism: From Nazism to Breitbart and Beyond

This section is a synoptic overview of the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism; it describes this discourse's origins, narrative claims, production sources, and widespread circulation in society.

In Nazi Germany, Adolph Hitler and Joseph Goebbels used the term "cultural Bolshevism" as an anti-Semitic epithet and as cudgel for attacking any group of people or modernist cultural trend that they perceived to be corrupting or leading to the degeneracy of traditional German society. In post-Cold War America, paleo-conservative think-tanks and white nationalist organizations resurrected the Nazi idea of "cultural Bolshevism" but renamed it "cultural Marxism" (Jamin 2018, 5). One might assume that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the neoliberal "end of history" would subdue conservative anxieties about the spectre of Communism materializing in America, but this was not the case. In the mid-1990s, authors associated with far-right organizations—the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), the Free Congress Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council, the Christian Coalition, the Foundation for Cultural Review—started producing a discourse about cultural Marxism in America. Some of the key texts of this discourse include Michael Minnicino's (1992, 1994) "The Frankfurt School and Political Correctness" and "Freud and the Frankfurt School"; Gerald Atkinson's (1999) "What is the Frankfurt School"; James Thornton's (1999) "Gramsci's Grand Plan"; Chuck Morse's (2002) "Enthralled by Cultural Marxism: Four Horsemen of the Frankfurt School"; and William Lind's (2004) *Political Correctness: A Short History of an Ideology* (Jamin 2018, 5). This discourse about cultural Marxism is not produced by scholars or activists with specialized knowledge about Marxism, but instead by far-right thinkers with no record of accomplishment or experience in this area. What story do right-wing authors tell about cultural Marxism?

The far right's story about cultural Marxism in America usually begins with Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Communist who fought against the fascist Benito Mussolini. According to this alt-right narrative, in prison, Gramsci wrote the *Prison Notebooks* to re-think socialist strategy. Observing how the working class was not spontaneously organizing itself to overthrow capitalism or committing to building Communism, and recognizing that the coercive imposition of Communism upon working people was a recipe for tyranny (Stalinism) and mass resistance (anti-Stalinism), Gramsci devised a plan for winning the working class voluntarily to socialism called "cultural Marxism." To translate Marxism from "economic into cultural terms" (Lind 2004, 5), continues the alt-right narrative, Gramsci urged Marxists to gain "control of the organs of culture: churches, education, newspapers, magazines, the electronic media, serious literature, music, the visual arts and so on" (Thornton 1999). The alt-right says Gramsci's cultural Marxist seed was planted in America when, in 1934, Jewish Marxist intellectuals—Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich and Eric Fromm—fled Nazi Germany to the US and built a new research institute at Columbia University, New York City. There, the Frankfurt School Institute for Social Research supposedly achieved "destructive criticism of all the main elements of Western culture, including Christianity, capitalism, authority, the family, patriarchy, hierarchy, morality, tradition, sexual restraint, loyalty, patriotism, nationalism, heredity, convention and conservatism" (Morse 2002). According to the alt-right, from 1934 onwards, the Frankfurt School and its disciples influenced generations of Americans. The alt-right depicts the New Left social movements of the 1960s—feminism, LGTBQ rights, black power, anti-colonial liberation, environmentalism, and pacifism—as the effect of the Frankfurt School's cultural Marxist ideology (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; Morse 2002; Thornton 1999).

By the early 1980s, neoliberal parties had defeated much of the organized left. Yet, the far-right's story about cultural Marxism represents the New Left as history's victor. By the early twenty-first century, cultural Marxists had supposedly built their hegemony in civil society and taken control of the Federal government, the public education system, and the media and cultural industries (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Baehr 2007; Buchanan 2002; Glazov 2004; Hultberg 2010; Kimball 2007; Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005; MacDonald 2011; Minnicino 1992; 1994; Morse 2002; Thornton 1999; Wenzel 2013). Once in power, this cultural Marxist elite sided with "virtuous" non-white people and minority groups in a battle against "evil" white conservative men. For example, the alt-right says cultural Marxists now use the US Federal Government and the courts to establish social policies and redistributive programs that favour non-white people. They use the education system to build social justice curricula to indoctrinate white students with the ideology of "political correctness" while censoring these students' freedom to speak in oppressive ways. They push affirmative action policy in the workplace to undermine white people's chance at climbing a meritocratic social ladder. They promote open immigration to instigate a demographic shift toward multiculturalism that makes it tough for white people to be proud of their racial heritage. Furthermore, cultural Marxists rule the media and cultural industries, and this control enables them to spread their politically correct ideology through news and entertainment content.

The right-wing authors responsible for this tall tale about cultural Marxism in America are not experts, make no reference to canonical scholarly works on the actual history of Marxism (and socialism) in America (Buhle 2013; Nichols 2015), and fail to substantiate their claims with research. Nonetheless, the story they tell about cultural Marxism in America has made a mark on the public mind. Since the turn of the millennium, derivative retellings, creative adaptations, and contingent remixes of this story about the history of cultural Marxism in America have proliferated.

The far right agitated against cultural Marxism during George W. Bush's two-term presidency (Buchanan 2002; Kimball 2007; Lind 2004; 2005; Morse 2002; Horowitz 2007) and continued its war against cultural Marxism throughout the Obama years (Rogér 2010). Tea Party activists claimed that the election of Barack Obama represented a coup for cultural Marxism (Left-Wing Noise Machine 2011) while "birthers" framed Obama as a foreign-born Muslim who was building a cultural Marxist dictatorship (aided by the Jewish-Marxist banker, George Soros) (Kapner 2009). Right-wing shock jocks (Rush Limbaugh) and Fox News pundits (Glenn Beck) echoed and amplified notions of Obama being a "cultural Marxist" (Beck 2010; Wenzel 2013), as did new alt-right info-tainment sites like Breitbart News. In *Righteous Indignation: Excuse Me While I Save the World*, Andrew Breitbart (2011) described his "discovery" of cultural Marxism as his "red pill" and, between 2009 and 2017, Breitbart News pandered to the ideology of an alt-right audience too extremist for Fox News's ad clients by publishing numerous stories about cultural Marxism with titles like "Political Correctness = Cultural Marxism" (Big Hollywood 2009), "Cultural Marxism is the Enemy" (Ruse 2015a), and "Even Little Girls Can be Cultural Marxists" (Ruse 2015b).

From the 2008 election of Obama to the 2016 election of Trump, alt-right stories about cultural Marxism circulated far and wide. A Google Trends (2018) data visualization of American search interest in "cultural Marxism" from November 2008 to November 2016 shows interest in "cultural Marxism" increasing; it trends upwards during the 2016 election campaign and spikes in the aftermath of Trump's victory. Before and after Trump took the White House, the alt-right's culture warriors of hate produced, consumed, added to, remixed, and reproduced articles, memes, hashtags, tweets and videos that together constitute a digital discourse about cultural Marxism. An April 1, 2018, Google search for "cultural Marxism" returned 1,490,000 results in .37 seconds. A glut of content about

cultural Marxism now circulates through the Internet and World Wide Web, and much of it stems from alt-right media sources—websites, magazines, and blogs.

Spencer, who co-edits Altright.com and *Radix*, promulgates stories such as *"Ghostbusters* and the Suicide of Cultural Marxism" (Forney 2016), "#3 - Sweden: The World Capital of Cultural Marxism" (Right on Radio 2016), and "Beta Leftists, Cultural Marxism and Self-Entitlement" (Follin 2015). Anglin's *The Daily Storme*r publishes stories like "Jewish Cultural Marxism is Destroying Abercrombie & Fitch" (Farben 2017) and "Hollywood Strikes Again: Cultural Marxism through the Medium of Big Box-Office Movies" (Murray 2016) and "The Left-Center-Right Political Spectrum of Immigration = Cultural Marxism" (Duchesne 2015). Damigo's Evropa website features a video called "What is Cultural Marxism?" On vdare.com, the alt-right's intellectual hero Paul Gottfried (2017) bemoans conservatism's capitulation to LGTBQ rights and says its cultural Marxism's fault in a piece titled "Yes, Virginia (Dare) There Is A Cultural Marxism—And It's Taking Over Conservatism Inc." Jared Taylor's *American Renaissance* runs stories like "Cultural Marxism in Action: Media Matters Engineers Cancellation of Vdare.com Conference" (Brimelow 2017). Before his downfall, the alt-right's clown prince Milo Yiannopoulos satirized cultural Marxism in articles such as "I've Been Censored, And It's Getting Dark: How Cultural Marxism Locked me Out of My Car," among others. When Twitter suspended Milo's account, his fans blamed cultural Marxism (Rudd-o 2016).

Yet, the freedom to hate is given more protection in the US than those who wish to live free from hate (Volokh 2015) and alt-right invectives against cultural Marxism freely flow across social media platforms (BBC Trending 2018). On Facebook, a "Stop Cultural Marxism" page describes cultural Marxists as "people who are cancer in human form"; an "Ending Cultural Marxism" group says its mission is "to right what has gone wrong, to stand against the oppression of those who would be enemies to traditional

cultures, races, religions, and creeds"; a "Stop the New World Order & Agenda 21" page describes Cultural Marxism as "the Left Wing tactic of brainwashing youth into living a sick decaying and perverted lifestyle where everything once beautiful and sacred is replaced with sick acts of public degeneracy." Alt-right Twitter trolls "call out" cultural Marxism. For example, Cultural Marxism (@culturalmarxis) describes itself as a "group dedicated to spread the word about Cultural Marxism. Exposing the progressives for what they really are: a bunch of totalitarian control freaks!" The handle @ViscountTroll says, "Trigger-extraordinaire, smash Cultural Marxism, bring forth freedom and strength, Nationalist, exiled Rhodesian."

As of April 1, 2018, the video-sharing site YouTube streamed almost 174,000 videos about cultural Marxism. Some of these included "Cultural Marxism: The Corruption of America" (starring the paleo-conservative Pat Buchanan and the Tea Party libertarian, Ron Paul); "Nazi Rubber Duck Explains Cultural Marxism"; and "The History of Marxist Infiltration and Subversion of Culture." YouTube hate influencers run cultural Marxist conspiracy channels: The European Awakening channel circulates a video called "Destroy Cultural Marxism"; The American Patriot channel runs "Cultural Marxism: The Ideological Disease Destroying America and Western Civilization"; and Chad Jackson's channel spreads "Cultural Marxism - Antonio Gramsci Effect on American Culture." Amazon.com meanwhile retails books about the "corrupting" influence of cultural Marxism as well. Michael Walsh's (2017) *The Devil's Palace: The Cult of Critical Theory and the Subversion of the West*, for example, claims that cultural Marxism "released a horde of demons into the American psyche" that has "affected nearly every aspect of American life and society." For an anti-Semitic twist, Kevin MacDonald's (2017) *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth Century Intellectual and Political Movements* reduces cultural Marxism to an all-encompassing Jewish conspiracy to de-Christianize America.

The Alt-Right's Discourse of Cultural Marxism: A Conspiracy Theory of Power

Evidently, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism in America is massive, and it spreads around the world in a range of non-commercial and commercial forms and across numerous platforms, shaping what people think about cultural Marxism and the impact of cultural Marxism in America and elsewhere. However, far from being an honest or accurate depiction of cultural Marxism in America, this alt-right story about cultural Marxism is an all-encompassing conspiracy theory of power (Berlet 2009; Jamin 2018). Indeed, the alt-right's story about cultural Marxism in America represents cultural Marxists as a malicious elite that is consolidating its power over America and controlling the Federal government, the media and cultural industries, the higher education system, public discourse and opinion at the expense of white conservatives. The conspiracy theorist might address its audience like this: "Hey white person! Look at all the social changes in America. To understand these, you need to first understand that a secretive cultural Marxist cabal rules the Federal Government, the cultural industries, and the education system. The plot to rule America began in the 1930s, when Gramsci developed it, and after World War II, when Jewish academic Marxists implemented it. Foreigners, not Americans, are responsible for producing and putting Marxist ideology in the heads of all of those politically correct social justice warriors (PC-SJWs). In fact, these poor Americans are dupes of cultural Marxist ideology."

The alt-right represents cultural Marxism as responsible for or equivalent to every idea, value, person, group, organization, product and, practice that purportedly offends, challenges, or afflicts the identities of white conservative Christian Americans. Indeed, cultural Marxism is said to be the cause and effect of: social justice (Kirschner 2017); feminism, gender equality, and women's right to get an abortion

or a divorce (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Muehlenberg 2016; Smith 2015); gay, lesbian, and trans people and their rights (Kuhner 2013); racial equality, multiculturalism, and race-mixing (Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005; Storms 2017); affirmative action and "cultural sensitivity training" at Starbucks (Founder 2018); "Big Government" social welfare programs and "gun control" policies (Biver 2014; Torcer 2017); the United Nations' supposed "New World Order" agenda (Hopkins-Cavanagh 2017); liberal organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Moveon.org; social movements: Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter (BLM), ANTIFA and #MeToo (Hopkins-Cavanagh 2017, Smith 2015; Storms 2017; The Taoist Conservative 2017); Colin Kaepernick and the NFL players who took the knee in solidarity with BLM (Canzoneri 2017); Hollywood films such as *Elysium* (2013) (because of its critique of dystopian capitalism) and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) (because of its multi-gendered and multi-cultural casts) (Forney 2016; Murray 2016; Right On 2015); and academic trends such as postmodern and post-structuralist theory (Apostaticus 2016; Peterson 2017; 2018; Salerno 2016). Evidently, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism is a totalizing or global conspiracy theory, as it attempts to identify or explain the historical origin or motor force behind innumerable phenomena that its ideologues dislike, disapprove of, or even hate.

The alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory is totalizing and global, but it can be easily debunked. Bluntly, there is no empirical ground beneath the idea that Marxists rule the big institutions of American society. At present, Trump (a billionaire) presides over the most powerful government in the world and Trump's Cabinet is full of millionaires, not Marxists. The Trump White House and the Republican-controlled Congress and Senate are in no way in league with Marxists and the US State is more supportive of trans-national corporations than it is of the Democratic Socialists of America. After all, Senator Bernie Sanders' reformist social democratic proposals are too radical for the Democratic Party's leadership (and the moneyed interests that back it). Far from being overrun by red-tenured radicals, the higher education system is big business; high-salaried business administrators frequently run universities and colleges. Sure, some social science and humanities professors teach Marx (a canonical thinker), but Marxism's influence is marginal in academia—and the wider society—as compared to the Chicago School's neoliberal orthodoxy. No current studies of media ownership in America support the claim that Marxists have seized control of the means of intellectual production. Millionaires and billionaires such as News Corp's Rupert Murdoch and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg own the US-based ICT and cultural industries.

While Marxist theory has inspired the formation of some intellectuals, social movements, and parties in the US, none have ever achieved a substantive hegemony at any level of US society. No Marxist has presided over the Federal government, the media and cultural industries, the education system, or the nation's dominant common sense. Moreover, the most powerful institutions of American society—the US government, the military, and the corporate sector—have mostly been unfriendly to Marxists, and Marxism has long been America's unofficial "anti-ideology" (Herman and Chomsky 1988). The two dominant political parties are anti-Marxist and, in some instances, they have directly repressed Marxist-minded citizens and social movements (R. Goldstein 1978; 2016; Schultz 2001). In 1919-1920, the Lusk Committee investigated Americans that held Marxist views for sedition; in 1939, the Hatch Act attempted to remove Marxist-minded workers from the public sector; in 1941, Public Law 125 enabled security agencies to investigate public sector workers suspected of being Marxists and fire them if they were. In the early Cold War, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy framed liberals as Marxist "pinkos" and "dupes"; the House Committee on Un-American Activities targeted, investigated and then blacklisted many Hollywood liberals (and Marxists) (R. Goldstein 1978, 2016). In the twenty-first century, right-wing politicians and pundits promulgate brazenly anti-

Marxist ideology to the public while alt-right hate campaigns against cultural Marxists go viral. For more than one hundred years, some US citizens have embraced Marxist, Communist, and socialist ideas, and US State agencies, corporations, and right-wing movements have flacked and demobilized them. In sum, the alt-right's notion that a cultural Marxist elite is ruling over America is ludicrous, and the idea that America's big institutions are backed by cultural Marxist ideology is absurd.

The alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy is easily put to the lie, but why might this conspiracy theory resonate with those who produce, consume and seem to believe so many of the circulating versions of it? Analyzed as a subcultural phenomenon, the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory might be redeemed as a "problem-solving" device, a creative yet confused symbolic response to real social antagonisms and conflicts rooted in a fundamentally hierarchical and systematically unequal capitalism system. As a radically simplistic explanatory mode, the cultural Marxist conspiracy theory might provide the alt-right subjects that digitally prosume it with a way of feeling "in the know," of having special insight into the truth of society, and of being perceptive about the elite. Like all conspiracy theories, the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory enables its alt-right prosumers to gaze behind appearances and reveal what they hide or distort. For example, for the alt-right, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) has a multi-gendered and multi-cultural cast, not because Hollywood seeks to turn a profit by producing globally popular films that target a diverse American and trans-national audience, but because cultural Marxists are pulling Hollywood's strings! For the alt-right, Starbucks is educating its employees about cultural diversity, not because of a brand equity crisis that emerged after a racist store manager called the police on black consumers, but because cultural Marxism has corrupted the way Starbucks runs its business! And so on. Like most conspiracy theories, the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism enables its prosumers to imagine themselves as an intellectual

vanguard—enlightened people who possess special knowledge about how the world works and therefore have a responsibility to enlighten the ignorant or "duped" masses.

However, this assessment of the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory as a subcultural problem-solving device is misguided and far too charitable to those responsible for propagating it. Far from being a subculture, the alt-right is a well-resourced and well-organized neo-fascist hate movement that is struggling to win mainstream power in the streets, and through the Internet and World Wide Web. As the next section shows, the alt-right makes many political uses of its discourse of cultural Marxism, and all are actionable to alt-right's mobilization of intersectional hate.

The Alt-Right's Political Uses of the Discourse of Cultural Marxism: Intersectional Hate

This section identifies and discusses seven political-rhetorical uses of the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism.

First, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism as a "culture war" strategy for constructing an American self in its hateful image. The US is a sovereign territorial state, but the meaning of America is a terrain of struggle between political blocs that vie for hegemony over civil society and the US State. The longstanding American "culture wars" express deep disagreements about the essence of "America" (Hunter 1992). The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is one tool in its battle to construct the meaning of what America essentially is and is not, to draw definitional boundaries—territorial and imagined—around who Americans truly are and are not, and to delineate who naturally belongs to the national community and who is an outsider. Using the discourse of cultural Marxism, the alt-right constructs America as constituted by selective ethno-racial, sexual, religious, and economic characteristics. America's ethno-racial composition is "white,"

"Anglo-Saxon," and "European"; America's gender-sex regime is patriarchal, heteronormative, and centred around the nuclear family; its religious order is Christian; its economic structure is capitalist; the values of individualism, meritocracy, and private property are sacrosanct. For the alt-right, this is the essential America, an alt-American imagined community.

Second, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct an anti- or un-American other, a foil for its alt-American self. The alt-right labels non-conformers to its white, patriarchal, Christian capitalist alt-American ideal—liberals, white social justice activists, non-white people, feminists, LGTBQ people, immigrants, atheists, Muslims, Jews, socialists and so on—as "cultural Marxists." The alt-right also represents politicians, business elites, and celebrities who are not Marxists, as Marxists. A website called "Cultural Marxism: The Decline of Western Civilization," for example, lumps together Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama, Justin Trudeau, Mark Zuckerberg, Eric Schmidt, George Soros, Pope Francis, George Clooney, Oprah Winfrey, and Rachel Maddow, depicting them all as cultural Marxists. For the alt-right, it would seem that behind every liberal is a cunning Marxist, plotting against alt-America. In sum, the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism constructs individuals and groups in the US that do not conform with or express the characteristics of the alt-American Self as an un-American cultural Marxist Other.

Third, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct the people it depicts as "others" to alt-America as not only un-American, but also, as enemy threats to America. For example, T.J. Roberts (2017) declares cultural Marxism to be the greatest threat to liberty in America. Ron Paul (2017, 53) says that cultural Marxism is "a form of cultural terrorism" against America and the West. Western Mastery (2017) maligns cultural Marxism as the #1 enemy of the West. For the alt-right, cultural Marxists are waging war against and destroying America; these anti-Americans trash the First Amendment, wreck the nuclear family, deprive people of jobs, destroy communities, corrupt culture, overturn Christianity, and set back America's military victory in the Global War on Terror (Breitbart 2009; Glazov 2002; Lind 2000; Minnicino 1992; 1994; Yeager 2003). Sometimes, cultural Marxism and "Islamic terrorism" are depicted as in cahoots, as growing and global-local threats to American security (Joondeph 2017; Lind 2001). By depicting people it labels as cultural Marxists and enemy threats to alt-America, the alt-right sews fear, suspicion, and paranoia about its opponents and ignites hatred for a wide range of people that are not anti-American, and most often, not even Marxists.

Fourth, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to agitate for violence against the people it constructs as cultural Marxists and enemy threats to alt-America. In a context where real and imagined threats to America are frequently responded to by the State with police and military violence, and war without territorial and temporal boundaries has been part of the American way of life since 9/11, the alt-right provokes its followers to see cultural Marxists as enemies and to perceive the use of violence as a way to neutralize this supposed enemy threat as legitimate, even necessary. For example, Blahut (2011) invites readers to wage a "war" against the cultural Marxist "enemy": "The hour grows late. We must identify the enemy and fight him, even when that means punishment by the powers-that-be." A "smashculturalmarxism.com" website depicts a white man using a sledgehammer to demolish a symbol of the hammer and sickle. The site's disclaimer states: "We believe that White Europeans have a moral obligation to stand up for their own people and their nations and to oppose this Genocidal system which is destroying us all" (Smash Cultural Marxism 2017). The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism agitates for violence against the people it constructs as cultural Marxists and represents violence as a way to "defend" and "secure" America from this threat. Given the flexibility of the alt-right's epithetical label of cultural Marxism, anyone who does not fit into alt-America is vulnerable to being smeared as a cultural Marxist, and

everyone the alt-right demonizes as a cultural Marxist and enemy threat to alt-America is a potential target of a violent hate movement to "smash" cultural Marxism, online and off.

Fifth, the alt-right uses the discourse on cultural Marxism as a tool of right-wing populism, as a political strategy that "pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice" (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 3). The alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct non-white people and minority groups, as well as their allies, as cultural Marxist elitists, overlords, snobs, villains, snowflakes, and so on that use "political correctness" to undermine or oppress virtuous alt-American people. The alt-right's discourse produces alt-American people as victims of cultural Marxism, as people oppressed in some way by this cultural Marxist elite and its ideology of "political correctness." By constructing cultural Marxists as bad un-American elites and alt-Americans as a virtuous yet victimized people, the alt-right casts itself as a populist vanguard of a people's national liberation movement. While left-wing populism is forward-leaning, and agitates for an intersectional social movement capable of overcoming racism and sexism, winning better jobs, higher wages, and more control over the labour process, and establishing strong public systems for provisioning healthcare, welfare, and education systems to all, the alt-right's populism is backward-looking. It promises to bring its people back to a time when a patriarchal, white, and Christian-supremacist notion of American nationhood had not been unsettled by social justice movements or challenged by economic changes linked to multi-national capitalism and the multicultural meritocratic superstructure of "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser 2017). As a tool of populism, the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is fundamentally regressive.

Sixth, the alt-right uses the discourse on cultural Marxism to deny the reality of sexism, racism, and classism in the US. The alt right's discourse represents historically marginalized groups and their allies as a cultural Marxist elite and frames ideas, movements, practices, and policies that seek to counter and eliminate racism, sexism, and classism as the result of a cultural Marxist elite, not people's struggles. The alt-right's discourse makes it seem as though people who call out and struggle to curb inequality and oppression are cultural Marxist ideologues and portray talk of inequality and oppression as little more than delusions suffered by cultural Marxist dupes. It makes social justice appear to be a top-down cultural Marxist conspiracy as opposed to a bottom-up community response to the existing problems of racism, sexism, and classism. In effect, the alt-right's discourse denies the historical and contemporary social facts of sexism, racism, and classism in the US, invalidates the lived experiences of those people who live with oppression each day, and downplays the agency of these people and their allies to challenge and transform oppressive conditions. In this regard, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism denies and whitewashes reality.

Seventh, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to obscure the essence of the actual elite groups in positions of structural and institutional decision-making power in the US economy and State. While actual Marxist scholars point to the billionaires and owners of big corporations such as The Bank of America Corporation, Raytheon, and Exxon-Mobil as society's "ruling class," the alt-right depicts everyone from Rachel Maddow to George Clooney as cultural Marxist elites. For the alt-right, it seems that being an elite means holding certain liberal ideas as opposed to holding capital. By channelling alt-America's anger toward people who supposedly hold cultural Marxist ideas instead of the people who actually hold concentrated economic and political power, the alt-right's discourse masks and distracts people from the corporate elites that exercise real power in the US. Thus, this discourse enables these elites to proceed with business as usual, securing their profits with help

from two compliant parties. The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is an ignorant alternative to the substantive Marxist praxis of trying to theorize and concretely analyze the complexities, conflicts, and contradictions of capitalism with the goal of moving beyond it. It is undoubtedly easier to rage against non-existent cultural Marxist elites from the comfort of one's smartphone than it is to build organizations and movements capable of taking on real social power. Clearly, the alt-right's discourse is compliant with the capitalist status quo.

Conclusion: The Alt-Right's Discourse of Cultural Marxism Goes Global

Since emerging on the extremist fringes of the American Right in the 1990s, the discourse of cultural Marxism has gone global and has been locally adapted by right-wing thinkers and groups around the world. In the United Kingdom, the British National Party (BNP) depicts cultural Marxism as a "pernicious, destructive ideology that involves importing millions of immigrants from all around the world, particularly the Third World, along with their cultures and religions" and frames cultural Marxism as a form of "enforced multiculturalism" that is a "crime against humanity" (Green 2017). In Australia, the Australian Tea Party figure David Truman says cultural Marxism is a plot to destroy Western Culture, "including Christianity, Capitalism, Authority, The Family, Patriarchy, Morality, Tradition, Sexual Restraint, Loyalty, Patriotism, Nationalism, Heredity, Ethno-centrism, and Conservatism" (Jamin 2018, 8). In Hungary, Dr. Anca-Maria Cernea (2016) says cultural Marxism threatens the patriarchal nuclear Judeo-Christian family by supporting "abortion," "divorce," "homosexuality," "radical sex education," and "hatred of God and the entire human race."

Canada is a multicultural polity with a progressive liberal brand, but right-wing extremism is a problem (Perry and Scrivens 2015) and the American alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism has been gaining ground. For example, the landslide 2018 election of Trump supporter Doug Ford as Premier of Ontario (Mulligan 2016) suggests that Canada's liberal brand may belie growing alt-right sentiment. Following the election of Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper as the Prime Minister of Canada in 2006, the American New Right figurehead Paul Weyrich (2005) sent Harper a congratulatory message advising Harper to liquidate Canada's "cultural Marxist" ideology (CBC 2006). The Rebel Media, a far-right news organization, published articles by Canadian alt-right propagandists such as: "Want to sop cultural Marxist indoctrination? Cut public funding of universities" (Nicholas 2017); "Social justice is socialism in disguise" (Goldy 2016); and "How progressives use our kids for Marxist social experiments" (Goldy 2017). The *Canada Free Press* circulates articles such as "Newspeak and Cultural Marxism" (Mann 2009). The Council of European Canadians (led by the white nationalist professor Ricardo Duchesne), has published articles such as "Cultural Marxism = Everything That's Wrong with the West" (Goodchild 2017). *Your Ward News* (edited by the leader of the neo-Nazi New Constitution Party of Canada, James Sears) is an overtly anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic, and misogynistic propaganda outlet that has regularly perpetuated the lie of cultural Marxism (and it recently organized an anti-Marxist book burning in the East End of Toronto, Canada) (Balgord 2017). In Whitby, Ontario, the ultra-conservative Campaign Life Coalition recorded and uploaded rants like "Radical sex-ed, transgender ideology, and cultural Marxism" to YouTube (Fonseca 2018).

The most high-profile anti-cultural Marxist in Canada is Jordan Peterson, a clinical psychologist at the University of Toronto who has not published peer-reviewed research on Marxism. Peterson became an alt-right idol when publicly challenging Bill C-16, a change to the Canadian Human Rights Act that aims to prohibit discrimination based on gender expression (Cumming 2016). Appearing in videos such as "Identity Politics & the Marxist Lie of White Privilege" (Peterson 2018) and "Postmodernism and Cultural Marxism" (Peterson 2017), Peterson has

tapped into the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism and cashed in on the anxiety and anger of a large and growing alt-right fan base (Southey 2017). Peterson is not a fascist and he often says he hates Nazis, but Peterson's deployment of "cultural Marxism" as a term of opprobrium when ranting against "political correctness" and "social justice" in Canada appeals to reactionaries worldwide. Every usage of "cultural Marxism" is not essentially fascist, but this phrase is used by contemporary fascists as an ideological weapon. When Peterson berates "cultural Marxism," he may be helping the alt-right bring its conspiracy theory of hate into the mainstream (Berlatsky 2018).

Currently, the meaning of cultural Marxism is embattled and articulated for different political and ideological projects by the alt-left and alt-right, progressive and reactionary, socialist and fascist. The alt-right has constructed the meaning of cultural Marxism in a struggle to organize trans-national consent to fascism, and the alt-right's meaning of Marxism is making an impression upon the minds of many. It is incumbent upon actual Marxists to look in the mirror held to them by the alt-right, and begin to counter the image and fascist movement behind it. This cognitive mapping of the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism is a small gesture to that end.

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How do Real Indigenous Forest Dwellers Live? Neoliberal Conservation in Oaxaca, Mexico

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Abstract

Protected areas such as wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and forest reserves have become an important feature of the global economy. Using an intersectional lens, a critical political economy approach, and document analysis, this paper explores how power operates through the production of Indigenous difference, the greening of the economy, and the commodification of the environment. It also considers neoliberal conservation as a racialized process that downloads the burden of protecting the environment onto the most vulnerable Indigenous communities.

Résumé

Les zones protégées telles que les refuges fauniques, les parcs nationaux et les réserves forestières sont devenues un élément important de l'économie mondiale. À l'aide d'une optique intersectionnelle, d'une approche d'économie politique critique et d'une analyse documentaire, cet article explore comment le pouvoir fonctionne au moyen de la création de la différence indigène, de l'écologisation de l'économie et de la marchandisation de l'environnement. Il considère également la conservation néo-libérale comme un processus racialisé qui transfère le fardeau de la protection de l'environnement aux communautés autochtones les plus vulnérables.

Introduction

Protected areas such as wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and forest reserves have become an important feature of the global economy. In Mexico, the establishment of institutions devoted to conservation in the 1980s and neoliberal land reforms in the early 1990s fostered a wave of territorial reorganization that targeted the forests that have historically sustained Indigenous communities. It is estimated that as much as 80% of the forests are communally owned (Bray et al. 2008, 7). Oaxaca, besides being the most culturally diverse state in Mexico, has been praised for both its biodiversity and the existence of strong Indigenous governance institutions. A number of scholars have noted that the combination of self-regulated communities, high biodiversity, and the limited number of national ecological reserves create alluring conditions for conservation projects in this state (Bray et al. 2003; Chapela 2005; Bray et al. 2008). However, less attention has been paid to the impacts and effects that such conservation schemes have on Indigenous peoples' lives.

Tania Li (2010) notes that it is important to explore how conservation schemes distinguish between forested and agricultural lands and raises questions about how risks of dispossession are being downloaded onto communities (386). Similarly, Andrew Walker (2004) observes that this distinction works to "arborealize" or cast Indigenous peoples as primarily forest dwellers. Importantly, while conservation schemes have largely been at the expense of Indigenous peoples, women have been particularly invisible in forest governance. This paper asks: What kinds of gender impacts and effects do these schemes have in places devastated by austerity measures? How do these conservation schemes intersect with the market and the production of cultural difference? Although agriculture has been an integral part of Mesoamerican Indigenous peoples' ways of life, an understanding of conservation as void of people effectively displaces Indigenous farmers away from their lands. In this conservation framework, ag-

riculture is a problem that requires intervention while Indigenous peoples are constructed as "forest dwellers" who have a romanticized relationship with their environments (Matthews 2005, 796; Walker 2004, 314). Moreover, while these conservation schemes are constructed as "just," alternative economic development, they lack a gender focus, thus concealing how patriarchy and the legacy of colonialism have shaped resource conservation.

This article uses an intersectional lens, a critical political economy approach, and document analysis to explore the political, social, and economic dimensions of forest conservation in the Zapotec community of Santiago Lachiguiri, Oaxaca. It shows that a naturalised understanding of the relationships "forest dwellers" have with their territories serves to foster new forms of capital accumulation and is coercive. In the current neoliberal context, conservation is shaped by international policies, national concerns, and local circumstances. An intersectional analysis of how power operates through the production of Indigenous difference, the greening of the economy, and the environment reveals neoliberal conservation as a racialized and gendered process that downloads the burden of protecting the environment onto the most vulnerable social groups. From this perspective, the focus of the intersectional analysis is not only about identities but also intersecting processes by which power and penalties are produced, reproduced, and resisted in contingent and relational ways (Dhamoon 2011, 234). According to Rita Dhamoon (2015), integrating power in intersectional analysis is important for at least two reasons. First, gender differentiation cannot be separated from other systems of domination, including colonialism, capitalism, and racism within which people operate and distinctive degrees of privilege and penalty are accorded. Second, power and penalty can operate simultaneously within and among marginalized communities, shaping the structure that maintains the matrix of oppression (30-31). Thus, my use of feminist insights of intersectionality pays attention to the ways in which the state, indigeneity, colonialism, and the economy operationalize the different ways in which Indigenous men and women are regulated relative to one another in Oaxaca. As a case study, Oaxaca provides insights into how neoliberal conservation has ignited new territorialized conflicts.

To respond to the questions stated above, I use document analysis, which is a relevant method for exploring the motivations, intent, and purposes driving specific phenomena within historical and contemporary contexts. In this article, document analysis relied on theoretical prepositions, highlighting how "problems" are constructed at different scales and "rendered technical" through different strategies (Li 2007). I analyzed different types of documents, including the World Bank reports, government records, agrarian legislation, a community self-study, and press releases, in an effort to illuminate how neoliberal conservation is tied to specific modes of governance and subjectivities, which have disciplinary effects on people. This article is organized as follows. First, it traces the continuities between colonial constructions of the Indigenous Other and the representations that transpire in contemporary policies and resource management practices. Second, the article maps discussions of neoliberalism and its intersection with indigeneity and the environment and highlights how "problems" are depoliticized and rendered technical. Third, it discusses what kinds of impacts and effects neoliberal conservation has in places that have already been devastated by austerity measures. The fourth and fifth sections are concerned with the community of Lachiguiri's experience with conservation. Finally, the paper offers some concluding remarks.

Indigeneity and Nature

Peoples considered Indigenous have long fascinated travelers, anthropologists, and missionaries. The representation of Indigenous peoples as "living in nature," as reminiscence of primitive stages of life, has long been deployed by colonial powers and post-colonial states. The distinction between nature and culture facilitated a utilitarian approach to nature, which became natural resources that existed for human consumption and accumulation of wealth. William Cronon (1995) argues that, through this separation, entire ecosystems were replaced by wheat and cattle and thrived more for their economic value and than for their natural adaptation to new environments. Where land did not have economic use, nature was preserved as wilderness, supposedly "free" from human beings' presence (69). Moreover, these understandings of nature and community created clearly delineated borders between those who were considered people and what was found beyond them and also between people and "savages." Thus, far from be-

ing untouched by human beings, wilderness is a social construction of specific societies and times (69). This construction has functioned to dispossess Indigenous peoples by collapsing them into the realm of nature (Braun 2002). Moreover, characterizations of the "noble savage" functioned to effeminate the colonized Other and create gendered relationships between the latter and Europeans. In this regard, Maria Mies (1986) notes that, when Indigenous peoples and peasants are described as being "closer to nature." they are considered "housewives," whose work has no value (106).

These colonial representations continue to shape state policies and practices regulating Indigenous peoples' access to natural resources. Indeed, expectations of "authentic" Indigenous traditional economic practices coexist alongside various criteria for political recognition (Sisson 2005, 39). Indigenous peoples are recognized to the extent that they rendered themselves legible through the performance of subsistence "hunting gathering" practices, which are bounded to an idealized stewardship of the land (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013, 211). In their demands for recognition and other material rewards, Indigenous peoples themselves have replicated these stereotypical meanings of indigeneity, which have had the effect of freezing their identities in time. As I will show in this paper, in the current neoliberal context, the processes through which the economy is organized, indigeneity is recognized, and the environment is regulated reinscribe these patterns of colonial, racial, and gender inequalities.

Neoliberalism and the "Will to Improve"

This section maps neoliberal conservation and its intersection with the will to improve people's lives and highlights how "problems" are rendered technical through different disciplinary strategies. Neoliberalism has often been discussed as a governance process that emphasizes the efficiency of the market, the regulation of public services, individuals' responsibility, and government deregulation. In this process, the economy, society, and the environment are governed by networked interactions between states, international financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Jessop 2002). Although considered a hegemonic force, there is no single or unitary neoliberalism. Rather, it is a contradictory and messy process that materializes differently across diverse geo-political

spaces yet has important commonalities that account for patterns (Larner 2003; Peck 2004; Castree 2009). By applying the concept of governance to the management of the environment, scholars have shown that the incorporation of environmentalism into the neoliberal economy shapes complex interactions between nature and society (Watts and Peet 2004), which are reworked through colonialism and economic development (Robbins 2006).

Market-driven conservation of the environment or "neoliberal conservation" is here understood as the process through which the expansion of capitalism and protection of the environment become mutually compatible by transforming previously untradeable entities, such as ecosystem services, into commodities. Neoliberal conservation emphasizes a set of institutions, management practices, and discourses aimed at facilitating the commodification of nature's services (McAfee 1999; Hason 2007; Igoe, Neves, and Brockington 2010). This model of conservation relies on the assumption that ecosystems are self-functioning entities where the various outputs or "free" services can be valued and incorporated into the market (Vacanti Brondo 2013). Although conservation policies begin from the conceptual division of nature from society, such policies are reworked when applied to inhabited environments in order to be legitimized as both promoting development and conservation (McAfee and Shapiro 2010; Li 2010).

Conservation of ecosystems started in the 1970s but it was not until the 1980s that a model of "debt-for-nature," involving international environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs), debt-holding governments, and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was implemented in Mexico. In 1982, the Mexican government announced that it could no longer meet its debt obligations and threatened to default on its borrowing. In response, the IMF demanded the substitution of state-driven development for market-oriented policies, which coincided with ideas about the state's incapacity to manage the economy (Altamirano-Jimenez 2013, 157). Between 1982 and 1991, Mexico received thirteen structural and sectoral adjustment loans (Barry 1995). The accompanying structural reforms included investment deregulation, the elimination of import substitution policies, the privatization of publicly owned corporations, and substan-

tial reductions in price supports (Liverman and Vilas 2006). The IMF also proposed to "swap a portion of the country's national debt for the conservation of forests and the titling of Indigenous communal lands, arguably forcing the 'inept' and 'inefficient' state to protect both Indigenous inhabitants and forested areas" (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013, 158).

Because most forests were and are inhabited by Indigenous communities, a relevant question at this juncture was: how to prevent this model of conservation from being perceived as land encroachment by Indigenous communities? As I show elsewhere, the debt-for-nature approach was justified as a deal that would benefit everyone. Indigenous peoples would get their lands titled and countries would get help fostering development while protecting forested areas (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013, 158). Though neoliberal conservation advocates often blame "corrupt" and "inefficient" states as major obstacles to environmental protection, state sponsored protected areas continue to be a central pillar of this model of conservation worldwide.

As a major environmental policy trend, neoliberal conservation involves the superior efficiency of the market, a shrinking state, participation of local communities, transnational networks, and the creation of legal mechanisms to title and privatize property rights to land, forest, water, and fisheries. A critically important aspect of this model of conservation is that it centers the "community as a bounded unity of action" (Li 2001, 157). This understanding is central not only for how communities figure in conservation but also for how ecosystems, struggles over resources, and identity are delimited. According to Li, "Communities" are constructed as entities affected by actions from the outside, concealing how processes of state formation and market involvement have already produced negative effects in specific places (159). Former director of the Centre for International Forestry Research, David Kaimowitz (2003) suggested that in countries of the global South where the rule of law is weak and spotty, only Indigenous communities that are "truly" committed to conserving and protecting the forest can "save" the environment. Thus, far from being counter posed to the market and state, communities are a reflection of how boundaries are constructed for specific economic purposes (Li 2001, 159).

In legitimizing market-driven conservation projects, the idea that such projects are win-win solutions for different "stake holders" and for fostering democracy in the global South has been advanced (Igoe and Brockington 2007). In this framework, Indigenous and local communities supposedly win because this model of conservation forces governments to simultaneously title Indigenous land and fight poverty.

An increasing body of literature shows that this picture is far more complicated than the promises listed by advocates. Benjamin Kohl (2002), for example, notes that, although the stabilization of property regimes is usually represented as promoting good governance in the global South, this policy is embedded in asymmetrical power relations between the global North and South. Similarly, Katja Neves and Jim Igoe (2012) show that there is a "sociogeographical disconnect between the concentration of financial capital in the global north and the concentration of ecosystem use value in the global south" (175). Thus, far from communities being separated from the market and the state, neoliberal conservation involves processes of territorialization that bring then into the realm of the state for the purposes of controlling their resources (Igoe and Brockington 2007, 437).

In this regard, Li (2007) points out that, because in market-driven conservation schemes, it is places and the resources contained in them that are valued not people, conservation projects need to appeal to communities. Such projects must be presented as a form of economic development, as something that "improves" people's lives. She asserts that the "will to improve" justifies actions that deliberately move people from places and rationalize their land uses, reshaping their landscapes, livelihoods, and identities. As a hallmark of colonial relations, the will to improve is not to dominate others but to enhance a target population's capacity to act in certain ways (17). Li identifies two strategies through which advocates and policy makers translate the will to improve into development projects. The first one is "problematization" or the process of identifying the deficiencies that need to be corrected in a target population. The second strategy is the process of "rendering technical," which refers to the practices involved in making complex and contested problems into merely technical matters (5-7). These strategies are useful to illuminate how neoliberal conservation shapes people's behaviors and responses to artificially introduced systemic changes. Moreover,

such strategies are helpful to explore how problematization and rendering technical operates at different scales, highlighting the contradictions and disciplinary strategies produced in and through the implementation of neoliberal conservation.

An analysis of different World Bank reports illustrates how these strategies operate. In its 1990 report, the World Bank identified private property as the problem causing much of the poverty in Asian and Latin American rural communities (1990, 65). The report stated that the solution was to regularize communal property. Because in Mexico, Indigenous peoples' control over their lands had been maintained and recognized in the Mexican Constitution of 1917, neoliberal land reforms were aimed at creating different land tenure regimes. Following Jim Igoe and Dan Brockington (2007, 437), I use the concept of "reregulation" to illustrate how the Mexican state transformed previously untradeable entities, such as the *ejidos* and communal lands, into tradable commodities through privatization and titling of collective land rights. While regularizing property may be seen as a way to protect Indigenous landholdings, I am interested in showing how titling is the prototype of primitive accumulation, allowing capital to access different types of resources (Scarritt 2015, 7). As a prototype of capitalist accumulation, titling has imposed Western understandings of land uses that has had the effect of 'housewifizing' the autonomy and sociality of Indigenous peoples as their unpaid or poorly paid labour is conceived of as having no value (Isla 2014, 6).

As the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was being negotiated, the federal government modified several constitutional articles. Importantly, Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution was transformed to liberalize Indigenous and peasants' control over their agricultural communal lands and *ejidos*. The *ejido* system, a form of land tenure in which plots could be individually used but neither sold nor bought, was legalized with Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which opened new spaces for landless peasants to reclaim lands and for Indigenous communities to get their historical lands recognized by the state. Article 27 had effectively shielded about half of the Mexican territory from the market and recognized Indigenous communities' rights to woodlands and water (Altamirano-Jimenez 2013, 142). However, it had legalized the term *campesino* or peasant, which mediated relationships between the state and communities and even the latter often insisted that people could simultaneously be peasant and Indigenous.

With the counter agrarian reforms of 1992, two important changes were made. First, privatization of *ejido* lands transformed them into a commodity that could be sold, mortgaged, and rented. Second, titling of communal lands redefined people's relationship to a property as a bundle of rights. A new forestry law was also passed at this time to actively promote forest management partnerships between communities and the private sector. According to the reformed Constitution and the Agrarian Law, forest dwellers maintain control of their forests as long as they observe their "customary" land use practices, reproducing the perception that Indigenous peoples live in the forest. According to Nora Haenn (2006), forests were maintained under the communal tenure regime in order for the state to continue to maintain control over how forest resources are used (144). I would add, however, that the distinctive regulations for managing agricultural and forested lands expanded access to goods and services beyond forest resources. The distinction between agricultural and forested lands produced boundaries in previously contiguous regions and a set of intercultural intricacies around how resources are managed. By distinguishing between "peasants" and "Indigenous" communities, risks of dispossession and management of dispossession were differently distributed among communities. Moreover, while land plots were previously granted mainly to males, women had historically participated in agricultural activities and accessed resources informally. Reregulation of land effectively prevented women from having access to the resources they used to and from the inheritance rights they enjoyed before the counter reforms (Deere and León, 2000).

The modification of Article 4 (now Article 2) in 1992 recognized Indigenous peoples' collective rights and solidified a one-dimensional understanding of their identity based on the economic activities they supposedly perform. The fifth paragraph of Article 4 states that, as part of their political autonomy, Indigenous peoples and communities have the right to "*conserve,* improve their habitat, and *preserve* the integrity of their lands according to the terms stated in the constitution" (emphasis mine). Thus, who and what is controlled and

what gendered patterns are produced through processes of reregulation are important questions to consider.

Because "saving nature to sell" (McAfee 1999) is a central tenet of neoliberal conservation, in 1994, the World Bank recommended that, in order for nature to have exchange value, it had to be *untouched*. Later, in the report *Agriculture for Development,* the World Bank (2008) noted that subsistence agriculture had no place in the conservation of forests and recommended that forest dwellers adopt other livelihood practices (1). In these reports, the interdependence between agriculture and forestry in contributing to the livelihoods of rural communities was deemed irrelevant and Indigenous peoples' relations to their lands were translated into a set of management practices aimed at adding value to their forests. Thus, under the guise of helping, reregulation of landholdings created the conditions for the expropriation of Indigenous labour and dispossession of lands and resources deeply affecting women. Although in many cases Indigenous women did not hold land plots, they harvest and grow plants for family consumption in spaces located between plots held by men or along bush lines. Through reregulation, women's informal access to land was eroded, putting the burden of feeding families exclusively on women. According to Li (2010), governing Indigenous peoples in this way is no less significant than colonial, coercive forms of domination (7).

Protected areas have been even more actively established since the United Nations adopted the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in 2002. This document called for signatory countries to designate at least ten percent of their territory as protected for the purposes of climate change mitigation. Right after the adoption of this global strategy, Mexico modified its legal and institutional framework once again for the purpose of increasing its number of protected areas. A year later, the Mexican government established a national program, Payments for Hydrological Services (PHS), and, in 2004, it created a follow-up program in the form of carbon offset and trading. Since then, the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) program, involving both hydrological services and carbon offset, has expanded to be the largest program in the world (McAfee and Shapiro 2010). Thus, to understand neoliberal conservation, power asymmetries among countries, private corporations, powerful ENGOs, marginalized communities, and men and women must be taken into consideration.

Who bears the burden of conserving the environment and who benefits from it are not irrelevant questions.

Austerity Measures: Planting Trees Instead of Maize?

What kinds of impacts and effects does neoliberal conservation have in places that have already been devastated by austerity measures? As noted earlier, in 1982, when Mexico virtually defaulted on its foreign debt, the IMF demanded that the government initiate a series of structural adjustment programs to get back on track. Although structural adjustments increased cash crop production, in the countryside, economic restructuring was marked by the elimination of tariffs and import permits for agricultural goods, the end of subsidies, the dismantling of state-run agricultural institutions, and the elimination of the Mexican Coffee Institute, which used to provide credit for and help coffee producers to commercialize their products. The consequent contraction of domestic market prices, along with cuts in state support for agriculture, made traditional rural livelihoods extremely challenging, fueling massive migration as families struggled to make ends meet. Migration intensified the unpaid work of rural women and children and created a number of households headed by women who were forced to find new survival strategies.

As the Partido Revolutionario Institucional (PRI), the state party, began to lose its stranglehold in the 1980s, notions about survival strategies circulated, downplaying the impact of aggressive austerity measures. One of the main actors in the construction of notions of survival skills and the poor's social capital was the World Bank (González de la Rocha 2007, 46). Ideas about the endless resources of the poor together with the increasing presence of NGOs working with rural communities fit well with understandings of bringing the poor into the market. In this framework, the household acted as the primary social unit responsible for social reproduction despite the fact that this was also a site of production deeply affected by austerity measures (Gonzalez de la Rocha 2007). In the countryside, the idea was that the poor could overcome their circumstances simply by accessing technical expertise, which in this case was provided by external "experts." Economic projects, such as collective corn mills, organic vanilla, shade coffee, and honey, were also actively promoted by the government who used sustainable conservation aid to

co-opt opposition in the countryside, thereby creating the perception that those concerned with sustainability were Indigenous while those concerned with land distribution were peasants (Altamirano-Jiménez 1998, 69).

In 1982, in the forested regions of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, with the support from a Jesuit mission team, coffee farmers from seventeen Indigenous communities formed the Union of Indigenous Communities of the Isthmus Region (*Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo* [UCIRI]). Articulating notions of Indigenous reciprocity and sustainability, this organization was constituted as a cooperative that sought to help shade coffee producers bring their produce directly to the market in the absence of the MCI (Cobo and Bartra 2007, 77). By adapting to the changing economic, political, economic, and ideological conditions created by the neoliberal reforms in the early 1990s, UCIRI was not only capable of inserting itself into the global economy but also of fostering some form of regional sustainable development. Based on an entrepreneurial logic, local participation, and collective decision-making, this cooperative was able to access international markets under the rubric of fair trade coffee. Although women have participated in all aspects of production and, in some cases, were the heads of households, their participation in the organization governance structures has been limited (Altamirano-Jiménez 1998; Chávez-Becker and Natal 2012). UCIRI's commitment to advance equal gender relations has translated into the creation of women led projects however peripheral to coffee. As a result, Indigenous women's working time has expanded without having the same kind of support to promote their products.

Like other rural organizations, such as the Barzón movement, UCIRI attempted to fill the gaps left by a receding state and find ways to deal with recurrent economic crises in the countryside. Visions of a modernized Mexico entering the global economy clashed sharply with the reality experienced by Indigenous farmers and coffee producers and also non-Indigenous farmers in the late 1990s. In 2003, when the national PES program was established, Indigenous and peasant organizations had already formed the national coalition *El Campo no Aguanta Más* (The Countryside Cannot Take It Anymore). This movement had quickly gained momentum and demanded the renegotiation of NAFTA's agricultural chapter and the rollback of federal agricultural subsidies. This social movement also advanced the idea that, for PES to become successful, it needed to be centered on a different understanding of conservation, specifically one that connected peasants and Indigenous peoples' activities to the protection of the environment. In doing so, the *El Campo no Aguanta Más* movement called upon the Mexican state to acknowledge the cultural role of Indigenous agriculture and its role in sustaining all Mesoamerican peoples. This coalition also demanded that the government reject a notion of imposed development that constructed the countryside as "empty of farmers" and the forest as "devoid of people" (UNORCA 2007). According to Kathleen McAfee and Elizabeth N. Shapiro (2010), this movement shaped the evolution of Mexico's PES program. Although initially conceptualized as a market mechanism, PES in practice ended up combining market-oriented restructuring and state supervision with antipoverty goals (8).

President Felipe Calderón fully embraced PES as a rural anti-poverty program. In his words, Mexico's "natural riches are and should be the solution to problems of marginalization and poverty experienced in many rural and Indigenous communities. For this reason we have launched programs focused on payment for ecosystem services such as ProÁrbol (ProTree). With this program we can offer a dignified income for those who dedicate themselves to protect and restore our forests and woodlands, of which Indigenous peoples are the first owners" (Calderón Hinojosa 2007). Later at the Cancun Climate Change Conference in 2010, Calderón said: "we will pay small land holders to plant trees instead of maize on the mountains" (Vigna 2012). In minimizing the role of agriculture to Indigenous peoples, Calderón noted that it was only a matter of choosing what to plant. Moreover, despite the key role Indigenous women play in caring for the ecosystems they live in, women seldom benefit from PES. Since communities are not homogeneous, women's absence from the management of natural resources is replicated in government policies, decision-making processes, and much of the technical assistance provided to communities.

In a context of recurrent economic crises, austerity measures, and the state's inability to offer meaningful support to the countryside, PES became a band-aid solution with pervasive effects. On the one hand, it continued to separate people from their

modes of production and their lands. On the other, by restructuring subsistence agriculture, PES became a means of dealing with *de facto* Indigenous dispossession. As members of *El Campo no Aguanta Más* observed, as a mechanism to alleviate poverty, PES is deeply misleading in that the no-touch forest policy can potentially accelerate the "abandonment of the forest and of the people who live in forested regions" (Merino Pérez et al. 2004, 6). To understand the impact of PES in specific communities, let us discuss the community of Lachiguiri's experience.

Dropping Conservation Out?

Oaxaca is located in southwestern Mexico, next to the states of Puebla, Chiapas, Guerrero, and Veracruz. Besides being the most culturally diverse state, Oaxaca has the largest Indigenous population in the country. According to the 2000 official data (Consejo Nacional de Población 2004), 48.8% of the population belongs to one of the 16 different Indigenous peoples inhabiting eight distinctive regions. Oaxaca is also one of the poorest states in the country. Indigenous peoples' livelihood strategies combine subsistence agriculture, gathering, artisan production, and remittances from both national and international migration to sustain an increasingly transnationalized rural population. Oaxaca has 570 municipalities, more than any other state in the country. Historically, the creation of municipalities was one way through which Indigenous communities were able to maintain their territorial and political autonomy (Velásquez Cepeda 1998; Recondo 2001).

The municipality of Santiago Lachiguiri is located in the Tehuantepec Isthmus and inhabited mostly by Zapotecs who are ruled according to their own legal traditions and institutions. The main authority is the assembly of *comuneros* or communal landholders, mostly males. The municipality covers an area of approximately 26,000 hectares, which are communally owned by 30 villages and communities. In 1525, the Spanish Crown recognized the land title and the collective rights of the Zapotec communities to this territory (Schmidt 2010, 15). Most of the area is mountainous and covered with forests. The *Cerro de las Flores* (Mountain of Flowers) contains forests that many believe capture and filter large amounts of fresh water (Cobo and Bartra 2007). The numerous natural springs on the mountain are

used by people for water consumption and to provide water to the Benito Juárez dam. The economy of this municipality is based on maize but other crops, such as beans, squash, and chillies, are also cultivated for self-consumption.

Coffee provides a source of income for small farmers and has been particularly important to the recent political history of Santiago Lachiguiri as this community is part of the fair trade cooperative UCIRI. Until the late 1970s, small producers depended on the prices imposed by the MCI and were unable to bring their coffee directly to the market. When the PES program started, it primarily targeted shade coffee producers who already had an "eco-friendly market experience." Santiago Lachiguiri became the first community to accept the scheme of Voluntarily Protected Areas in Mexico (Cobo and Bartra 2007, 121).

According to community members, when the representatives from the National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP) and contracted surveyors first came to Santiago Lachiguiri in 2001, they painted a picture full of benefits for the community and encouraged people to voluntarily certify a portion of their lands, specifically the Mountain of Flowers (Schmidt 2010, 19). In August 2003, the communal assembly decided to declare part of the territory a protected area for only five years as an experiment. Without the communal assembly's knowledge, CONANP certified a conservation area that included the flanks of the mountain where over 140 smallholders cultivate the land. Moreover, the certification was issued for a period of 30 years. CONANP, on the other hand, has insisted that the local inhabitants freely participated in the process and were properly informed (Vigna 2012). However, communal landholders maintained that the certification documents never clearly laid out the consequences of "preservation" and "conservation" schemes for communal landholders. The documents briefly stated that lands in the preservation area were "untouchable" (Vigna 2012; Schmidt, 2010; Barmeyer 2012). The immediate consequence of this certification was that all agricultural activities were banned in the untouchable zone. This community, like many others, practices slash-and-burn cultivation wherein land is cleared, burned, and then planted every seven years. Although this ancient technique has been crucial to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems, *comuneros*

have been targeted as "fire setters" who destroy the environment (Matthews 2005). According to *comuneros,* the model of conservation being imposed forces them to "change our production methods, even if it makes no sense in ecological terms" (Vigna 2012).

Moreover, because conservation is often presented to communities as a way to improve their lives, people hoped that the certification process would bring some needed economic benefit and prevent further migration. In my view, this situation reveals that Indigenous communities are neither naturally conservationists nor "fire setters" and that such constructions are embedded in complex power relations. For many Indigenous communities in Oaxaca, the search for economic alternatives cannot be separated from the depopulation of the countryside. However, PES has failed to improve peoples' standard of living. For example, in this particular case incentives were offered only to some families, not the community. Out of 120 smallholders deprived from accessing their lands, only 15 were given assistance, creating mistrust among community members and the perception that some individuals were given preferential treatment (Barmeyer 2012, 55).

Feeling betrayed, community members voted to drop the area's "preserved area" status in 2011. A representative of the communal assembly observed: "The government has deceived us. We are still the legitimate owners of the land, but we have lost control of it" (Vigna, 2012). To these Indigenous communities, a model of neoliberal conservation contributes to declining health and nutrition as a large subset of the services the forest provides to the communities (including agricultural produce, hunting sites, and gathering grounds) are abrogated or diminished in exchange for insufficient and selective payments. Although food is deeply gendered, Zapotec women who are responsible for feeding their families are, ironically, silenced in this debate. However, external experts act on the food and bodies of Indigenous peoples in the global South.

IIn the context of recurrent austerity measures and the impact of ongoing neoliberal restructuring, PES may have been seen as an incentive for Indigenous shade coffee farmers but not as a solution in itself. Although there may be some success stories, the government has largely failed to provide economic alternatives for Indigenous communities living in resource-rich environments. Moreover, the government has not been able to fully convince Indigenous communities that planting trees instead of corn is a life alternative. To the communities living in this region, the main beneficiaries of conservation schemes are usually outsiders, the surveyors and evaluators who are being paid for their studies, the state, big businesses seeking to access and control biodiversity, and corrupt officials skimming off the funds intended for communities. As McAfee and Shapiro (2010) contend, despite PES being envisioned as a market form of biodiversity management, the state continues to be the most important buyer of ecosystem services. To small Indigenous coffee producers, conservation and its exclusive focus on biodiversity leaves the work they do taking care of perennial crops, such as coffee, cacao, and vanilla vines, grown in conjunction with shade trees, out of the equation. From this point of view, ecosystems are constituted by human non-human relationships and interactions. Neoliberal conservation simultaneously removes Indigenous peoples from their lands and appropriates the work they do to protect their forests. Indigenous women are the hardest hit by the ongoing restructuring of the countryside. Rigid gender roles within communities and lack of participation in decision-making structures simply mean that women bear the burden of being heads of the household without having a say on how communal lands are used.

The Flowers Mountain: Stewardship as Relationships

When the communal assembly of Santiago Lachiguiri demanded the early cancellation of their forest certification, it also approved a new communal statute on the management of their forests. Several articles in the document state that the communal assembly is the authority, not the individual landholder. The communal statute states that collective participation and informed consent are required in all issues related to communal lands. The statute notes that the regulation, maintenance, and control of ancestrally conserved lands remains in the community and that PES will be received only on an unconditional basis (Schmidt 2010, 22; Barmeyer 2012, 55). As stated in different forums, Santiago Lachiguiri is not against conservation *per se* but against a neoliberal model that dispossesses Indigenous communities from their lands and resources.

In the recent communal statute of Santiago Lachiguiri, Zapotec *comuneros* center the traditional *milpa* (agriculture plots), which is an ancient, traditional

agricultural system that maintains the balance between food production and caring for the mountain and forests. Caring for the mountain not only involves resource management practices but also complex interactions, ceremonies and fiestas through which healthy ecosystems are co-produced by nature and Indigenous small-scale farmers. Accordingly, it is the relationship of care between nature and people that produces healthy ecosystems, not the separation of people from their lands. Moreover, the emphasis on the historical and cultural role of Indigenous agriculture rejects a stereotypical understanding of the "forest dweller" or noble savage representation. In connecting subsistence agriculture to an ancient collective Mesoamerican past, diverse organizations stand against the arborealization of Indigenous peoples and the artificial division between the categories "peasant" and "Indigenous." Shade coffee producers not only harvest coffee but they also cultivate their food; they can be both peasants and Indigenous. In 2009, the *Red en Defensa del Maíz*, a network of environmentalists, Indigenous communities, and corn producers, issued a declaration in which it was noted: "The Indigenous peoples of Mexico created maize, they are the guardians and creators of the existing diversity of corn. Indigenous peoples' rights are crucial to the preservation of such diversity and food sovereignty." Similarly, in 2012, at the Indigenous Peoples International Conference on Corn, participants stressed: "Our struggles to protect corn as a source of our lives cannot be separated from our struggles to defend our forests, lands, water, traditional knowledge and self-determination" (Declaration of Santo Domingo Tomaltepec 2012). In challenging hegemonic narratives of Indigenous agriculture as environmentally destructive, corn has become central to the identity of Mesoamerican Indigenous peoples and a symbol of their environmental knowledge. Indigenous peoples' efforts to preserve subsistence agriculture and the traditional practices it is associated with hinges on notions of neoliberal development and national narratives that emphasize nature as an ever growing entity, ready to be exploited.

Conclusion

The case presented here illuminates the conflicts and contradictions produced in and through neoliberal conservation schemes, which are void of people. Although conservation has been represented as a win-win situation, an intersectional analysis of different axes of domination and oppression reveals conservation as a gendered and racialized form of capital accumulation that rests on the dispossession of Indigenous communities. In these conservation schemes, Indigenous agriculture has become the problem that requires intervention while payment for ecosystem services has become the solution to improve people's lives. In a context of restructuring and recurrent austerity measures, payments for conserving forests have become a program for supposedly alleviating rural poverty. However, while these handouts may bring some limited benefit, they still push Indigenous farmers away from their lands and conceal the ways in which patriarchy is embedded in market driven protection of the environment. What is at stake in debates on climate change mitigation is how neoliberal conservation reproduces power asymmetries, gendered dispossession, and a neo-colonial division of labour. Thus, in this context, the will to improve is a technique of power to manage those groups of people who have become an obstacle to capitalist accumulation.

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2

Developing Intersectional Solidarities:
A Plea for Queer Intersectionality

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Contemporary progressive politics of protest frequently face a problem of legitimacy, authority and representation. Since at least the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, antiracist, anticolonial feminists and queer activists have taken issue with the politics of representation and the problem of speaking for/about others. Scholars like Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak[21] and Linda Alcoff[22] have urged us to acknowledge that systemic disparities in social location between those who speak and those who are spoken for have significant effects on the content of what is said.

Today, the elisions and exclusions that most contemporary progressive movements prompt in their claims-making receive almost immediate critique. Innovative new information and communications technological platforms enable both the viral explosion of these movements as well as their (internal) critiques from those who are marginalized, excluded, misrepresented, tokenized or erased in political struggles.

Consider the following examples of the SlutWalk,[23] the *It Gets Better* Project,[24] and Occupy Wall Street.[25] Although there is growing sympathy for these movements, in all three cases voices have been raised to deplore how well-intentioned movements inadvertently (re)produce oppression along one or several axes of power – even while attempting to combat it along other axes. In their attempts to contest domination and redress injustice, all three of these movements have been criticized for their failure to take into account the multiple and co-constitutive makeup of power/privilege complex, with its interlocking structural and ideological underpinnings.

Put simply, these social movements – SlutWalk, the *It Gets Better* Project and Occupy Wall Street – were criticized for their lack of intersectional political awareness, and very rightly so. In one of the worst-case scenarios, this lack of awareness was illustrated this past October first by white marchers at the SlutWalk NYC. They were brandishing a placard that said, "Woman is the n*gger of the

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[21] Spivak, G. Chakravorty (2007). *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. Wien: Turia & Kant.

[22] Roof, J. & Wiegman, R. (Eds). (1995). *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity.* Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

[23] Slutwalk. (2011, December 26). Retrieved January 12, 2012 from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SlutWalk

[24] Itgetsbetterproject. (2004, September 16). It Gets Better Project. It Gets Better Project channel. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/user/itgetsbetterproject

[25] Occupy Wall Street. (2012, January 12). Retrieved January 12, 2012 from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupy_Wall_Street

world[26]." Although the slogan was a reference to the 1972 Lennon/Ono song,[27] it soon became apparent that social movements *still* could provide a platform for making much decried parallels between gender and race that black feminists deftly deconstructed some decades ago. Hazel Carby,[28] for example, offered a perceptive critique of such analogies over two decades ago:

> The experience of black women does not enter the parameters of parallelism. The fact that black women are subject to *simultaneous* oppression of patriarchy, class and 'race' is the prime reason for not employing parallels that render their position and experience not only marginal but also invisible.

Three decades later, there is still a lack of intersectional analysis evident among some white protesters: There were N-word signs carried by at least two white protesters at the SlutWalk NYC rally. The signs seem to make claims in the name of a (universal) woman, by mobilizing the N-word in the fight against sexism and violence against women. Such developments disturbingly remind us that the "white solipsism" decried by Adrienne Rich[29] in her 1979 piece, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynephobia," persists in contemporary feminisms. It still leads to single issue

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[26] Quintero, S. (2011, October 13). They're Going to Laugh at You: White Women, Betrayal, and the N-Word. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://www.racialicious.com/2011/10/13/theyre-going-to-laugh-at-you-white-women-betrayal-and-the-n-word/

[27] Peterson, L. (2011, October 6). Slutwalk, Slurs, and Why Feminism still has Race Issues. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://www.racialicious.com/2011/10/06/slutwalk-slurs-and-why-feminism-still-has-race-issues/

[28] Carby, H. V. (1982). White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood. In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Ed.), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Racism* (211-234). Birmingham: Routledge.

[29] Rich, A. (1995). On Lies, Secrets and Silence. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

politics and as Kimberly Crenshaw[30] has argued in her 1993 article, "Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew," "political strategies that challenge only certain subordinating practices while maintaining existing hierarchies [which] not only marginalize those who are subject to multiple systems of subordination but also often result in oppositionalizing race and gender discourses."

The unspoken racial habitus of SlutWalk, white privilege, has been powerfully unravelled from black feminist and black queer/lesbian perspectives, which explain, once again, why women of colour cannot re-appropriate the term 'slut' the way white women in the movement seem able to do. The interlocking social challenges faced by Black women are not reducible to a question of dress.

In an "Open Letter from Black Women to the SlutWalk,"[31] issued by the Blackwomen's Blueprint on the 23 September 2011, the organization noted:

> The way in which we are perceived and what happens to us before, during and after sexual assault crosses the boundaries of our mode of dress. Much of this is tied to our particular history. In the United States, where slavery constructed Black female sexualities, Jim Crow kidnappings, rape and lynchings, gender misrepresentations, and more recently, where the Black female immigrant struggle combine, 'slut' has different associations for Black women. We do not recognize ourselves nor do we see our lived experiences reflected within SlutWalk, and especially not in its brand and its label.

As Black women we do not have the privilege or the space to call ourselves 'slut' without validating the already historically entrenched ideology and recurring messages about what and who the Black woman is. We don't have the privilege to play on destructive representations burned in our collective minds, on our bodies and souls for generations.

In another critique, "SlutWalk a Stroll Through White Supremacy,"[32] Aura Blogando points out that, "We do not come from communities in which it feels at all harmless to call ourselves 'sluts.' Aside from that, our skin color, not our style of dress, often signifies slut-hood to the white gaze."

The *It Gets Better* Project (IGB) has generated similar critiques about the racial and class habitus shaping the movement and its single-issue politics against homophobia. The project seems to be predicated on the assumption that there is a universal experience of being bullied because of one's non-heteronormative sexuality.

In an incisive commentary, "In the wake of It Gets Better,[33]" Jasbir Puar notes that projects like IGB "risk producing such narrow versions of what it means to be gay, and what it means to be

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[30] Matsuda, M.J., Lawrence III, C.R, Delgado, R., & Williams Crenshaw, K. (1993). Word That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech and the First Amendment. Colorado: Westview Press.

[31] An Open Letter from Black Women to SlutWalk September 23, 2011. (2011, September 26). [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://www.womanist-musings.com/2011/09/open-letter-from-black-women-to.html

[32] SlutWalk: A Stroll Through White Supremacy. (2011, May 13). [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://tothecurb.wordpress.com/

[33] Puar, J. (2010, November 16). In the Wake of It Gets Better. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/nov/16/wake-it-gets-better-campaign?showallcomments=true#comment-fold

bullied, that for those who cannot identify with it but are nevertheless still targeted for 'being different,' It Gets Better might actually contribute to Making Things Worse."

The IGB project is chided for its lack of attention to difference and even for irresponsibility because it has ignored the effects of racism on how bullying and homophobia takes shape in the lives of those who are bullied. The need for an intersectional analysis has been powerfully argued by Latoya Peterson,[34] the Editor of *Racialicious*, in "Where is the Proof that It Gets Better?: Queer POC and the Solidarity Gap." As well, IGB's shortcomings in intersectional political analyses have led to the emergence of alternative projects, such as the video campaign launched by Canadian qpocs (queer people of color) and explicitly named the *Embracing Intersectional Diversity Project*.[35]

Similarly, as inspiring as it may seem for many, the Occupy Wall Street movement has engendered well-founded critiques[36] from an anti-colonialist and Indigenous perspective. In particular, the movement has been called to account for its propensity to further the cause of "ending capitalism" by inadvertently trampling on the rights of others, including corroding the rights of Indigenous peoples. As Jessica Yee observes in her article "Occupy Wall Street: The game of colonialism and further nationalism to be decolonized from the 'Left',"[37] the 'occupy' metaphor resonates differently for those activists, such as Indigenous peoples, whose land is already occupied. This difference is especially pronounced when the fact of occupation is conveniently forgotten or even denied within progressive movements claiming trans-solidarities.

The paucity of intersectional political consciousness is evident in the still influential single-oppression framework, despite loud declarations of commitment to diversity and solidarity. Stephanie Gilmore[38] in, "Am I Troy Davis? A Slut?; or, What's Troubling Me about the Absence of Reflexivity in Movements that Proclaim Solidarity," contends that the tendency to subordinate multiply-minoritized groups and the various forms of marginalization and silencing they face – through denial, displacement, misidentification, cooptation or tokenism within progressive political struggles can be addressed by a radical engagement in critical dialogues between queer theory and intersectionality.

Let me elaborate further how intersectionality and queer theory can complement and challenge each other and, further, why it is crucial to uphold and extend a dialogue between them in order to firm up a critical ethos and ethics of non-oppressive politics of coalition. Following Stacey Douglas, Suhraiya Jivraj and Sarah Lamble's "Liabilities of Queer Antiracist Critique" we may call this

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[34] Peterson, L. (2010, October 19). Where is the Proof that It Gets Better? Queer POC and the Solidarity Gap. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://www.racialicious.com/2010/10/19/where-is-the-proof-that-it-gets-better-queer-poc-and-the-solidarity-gap/

[35] Embracing Intersectional Diversity Project. (2011). In *Tomee Sojourner*. Retrieved from http://www.tomeesojourner.com/Creative-Projects/creative-projects.html

[36] Montano, J. (2011, September 24). An Open Letter to the Occupy Wall Street Activists. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://mzzainal-straten.blogspot.com/2011/09/open-letter-to-occupy-wall-street.html

[37] Yee, J. (2011, September 30). Occupy Wall Street: The Game of Colonialism and further nationalism to be decolonized from the "Left." [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://www.racialicious.com/2011/09/30/occupy-wall-street-the-game-of-colonialism-and-further-nationalism-to-be-decolonized-from-the-left/

[38] Gilmore, S. (n.d.). "Am I Try Davis? A Slut?; or, What's Troubling Me about the Absence of Reflexivity in Movements that Proclaim Solidarity". [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://afrolez.tumblr.com/post/11232563013/am-i-troy-davis-a-slut-or-whats-troubling-me

approach 'queer intersectionality' or 'queer anti-racist critique.' What is foundational, they insist, is the refusal to separate "questions of gender, sexuality and queerness, from questions of raciality and racialisation. This form of intersectional critique serves as a tool for building spaces and movements that are committed to interrogating gender and sexuality norms, whilst simultaneously identifying, challenging, and countering the overt and embedded forms of racism that shape them."[39]

If intersectionality can help ground queer theory into lived experiences and struggles where categories such as sexuality, class or race are contested as well as redress the evacuation of the social, then queer scholarship has a definite potential to counteract the dilution of intersectionality within neoliberal diversity mainstreaming.[40] This is true as long as what is understood as queer is not built upon an exclusive focus on, or privileging of, sexuality within identity/diversity politics. Instead, queer[41] must be understood as a political metaphor without a predetermined referent that serves to challenge institutional forces normalizing and commodifying difference.

The kind of queer intersectionality I plea for builds on the remarkable pioneering work accomplished by queer scholars of color, such as Roderick Ferguson, David Eng, José Munoz, Jasbir Puar, Jin Haritaworn, Fatima El-Tayeb, and Gayatri Gopinath. It can be seen as the outgrowth of reciprocal challenges and productive tensions between an *intersectionalized queer*[42] and a *queered* intersectionality. Such a theoretical and political project requires that we analyse what is "queer about queer studies"[43] and that "queer epistemologies not only rethink the relationship between intersectionality and normalization from multiple points of view, but also, and equally important, consider how gay and lesbian rights are being reconstituted as a type of reactionary (identity) politics of national and global consequence."

As persuasively argued by Douglas, Jivraj and Lamble, "[s]exuality, in the form of gay rights, is increasingly taken up by both liberal and conservative forces as a dominant marker of 'western values', which then serves as a key trope in the global war against terror and a pawn in the demise of even the most assimilationist notions of state multiculturalism."[44] In the contemporary cultural and political climate, the need for a critical project – for a queer intersectionality and solidarities – is as important as ever.

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[39] Douglas, S., Jivraj, S. & Lamble, S. (2011). Liabilities of Queer Anti-Racist Critique. *Feminist Legal Studies, 19* (2), 107-118. Doi: 10.1007/s10691-011-9181-6

[40] Ward, J. (2008). *Respectably Queer: Diversity in LGTB Activist Organizations.* Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press.

[41] Ward, J. (2008). *Respectably Queer: Diversity in LGTB Activist Organizations.* Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press.

[42] Johnson, P.E., and Henderson, M.G. (Eds.). (2005). *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

[43] Eng, D.L., Halberstam, J. & Munoz, E. (2005). *What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

[44] Johnson, P.E., and Henderson, M.G. (Eds.). (2005). *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

6

Disorders of Sex Development: De-Queering the 'I' in LGBTQI2-S

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In 1993, activist Cheryl Chase founded the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA61), kick-starting what would come to be known as the intersex rights movement. Since then, the word 'intersex' has become more controversial, more contested and more divisive than ever before. First used in 1917 by biologist Richard Goldschmidt to refer to those conditions that gave rise to atypical sex anatomy – or what was generally referred to as 'hermaphroditism' – the word intersex was never officially adopted or consistently used by physicians, and only gained mainstream recognition after being reclaimed in the 1990s by activists seeking to dispel the stigma associated with these conditions and the vague, demeaning and often sensationalist term 'hermaphrodite.' As with many of the terms lumped under the ever-widening LGBTQI2-S [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered queer intersex 2-Spirited) umbrella, 'intersex' has always been at the centre of heated debate.

Which conditions counted as 'intersex' conditions? Must a condition give rise to ambiguous genitalia or genitalia deemed to require surgical correction for it to be an intersex condition? What then of those individuals whose genitals looked 'normal,' but were at odds with other components of their sex anatomy (such as their chromosomes, gonads or reproductive organs)? Did they have intersex conditions? Or what about those conditions that might give rise to genitalia deemed to require surgical correction, but who had 'normal' hormone exposure in utero and otherwise typical sex anatomy? Were they intersex conditions? And beyond all of this, what did it even mean to claim that one was intersex? Was there even such a thing as an 'intersex' identity and if there was, was it a queer identity? Did the 'I' really belong in LGBTQI2-S?

These many years later, not only do all of these questions remain, but a new, much larger question overshadows them: Should we even use the term intersex at all? Many, including the former Intersex Society of North America[61] (now the Accord Alliance[62]), would rather we not.

Like many other intersex activist groups that popped up around the world during the 1990s, ISNA drew its early energy and rhetoric from social and political movements for women's rights, gay rights and civil rights as well as from queer and feminist academic challenges to biological determinism, sexism and medical authority. Many of these groups engaged in a two-pronged critique. On the one hand, they took on contemporary medical practice: holding protests at medical conferences as they called into question the necessity and timing of genital surgeries, the presumed naturalness of physical sex dimorphism; the heterosexism underlying treatment recommendations and outcome analyses; and defending the dignity of those with atypical sex anatomy. On the other hand, they

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[61] Intersex Society of North America. (2008). Our Mission. Retrieved from http://www.isna.org/

[62] Accord Alliance. (2012). Welcome to Accord Alliance. Retrieved from http://www.accordalliance.org/

engaged in a larger social and political project, making visible the existence and experiences of intersex individuals through videos such as *Is it A Boy or a Girl?*[63] and *Hermaphrodites Speak!*[64]

As with many activist organizations, ISNA's strategies changed with time. Many members became increasingly convinced that the best way to improve the lives of individuals with intersex conditions was through the creation of better medical models of treatment, something they felt was best achieved through collaboration with physicians rather than through a more confrontational activism. Also, they reasoned, it might be best to escape the negative stereotypes, the increasingly messy identity politics, and the association with queerness that had come to haunt the term intersex and shift focus to the concrete medical needs of individuals with these conditions.

Many affected individuals and their parents found the term intersex offensive, arguing that it sexualized individuals with these conditions, and falsely implied they have no clear gender identity, or have a queer identity that they do not claim for themselves. Besides, they said, it was misleading to assert there was such a thing as a intersex identity or community, for while there are many online communities of individuals with intersex, there are no brick and mortar communities of those with intersex conditions living together – and those who do belong to these virtual communities tend to come together fairly infrequently and primarily for meetings about political consciousness-raising.

In 2003 ISNA created the Disorder of Sex Development Consortium,[65] a medical advisory board chaired by feminist thinker and historian of science Alice Dreger to begin the work of advocating for the adoption of the diagnostic label "Disorder of Sex Development" (DSD) and collaborating with physicians to create a new patient-centered model of care. It also began the work of distancing itself from the term 'intersex' and its own more overtly political past. In 2006, due in large part to the work of individuals associated with the ISNA/Accord Alliance, the Pediatric Endocrine Associations of the United States and Europe published their "Consensus Statement on Management of Intersex Disorders"[66] in the journal *Paediatrics* – a special article announcing both a new patient-centered treatment model for intersex conditions (one in which biology or biological factors would gain a new centrality in determining optimal sex assignment) and the adoption of the term 'disorder of sex development.' And in 2008, the Intersex Society of North America quietly dissolved and re-formed as the Accord Alliance,[67] a group which identifies its mission as working to "promote comprehensive and integrated approaches to care that enhance the health and well-being of people and families affected by DSD by fostering collaboration among all stakeholders," which they identify as "patients, parents and clinicians."

Reaction to the recent changes in the direction of ISNA/Accord Alliance and the clinical treatment model for intersex conditions has been mixed, with much of the debate focused on the adoption of the label "disorder of sex development." While this new terminology has pleased many physicians, patients, parents and even some academics, many are angered by the adoption of the pathologizing

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[63] Intersex Society of North America. (2008). Is it a Boy or a Girl? (Discovery Channel). Retrieved from http://www.isna.org/videos/boy_or_girl

[64] Intersex Society of North America. (2008).Hermaphrodites Speak!. Retrieved from http://www.isna.org/videos/hermaphrodites_speak

[65] Accord Alliance. (2012). DSD Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.dsdguidelines.org/about/consortium

[66] Lee, P.A., Houk, C.P, Ahmed, F.& Hughes, L.A. (2006). Consensus Statement of Management of Intersex Disorders. *Pediatrics 118*(2). Retrieved from http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/2/e488.full

[67] Accord Alliance. (2012). Welcome to Accord Alliance. Retrieved from http://www.accordalliance.org/

language of 'disorder.' Some have argued for alternative diagnostic terms that carry a less stigmatizing, less correction-demanding tone, such as "variations of sex development" or "divergence of sex development." Others simply refuse to give up the word intersex.

In the introduction to her 2009 edited collection, sociologist Morgan Holmes acknowledges the taboo she is breaking titling her collection *Critical Intersex*[68] in the era of DSD. She writes, "this collection asserts that we (whether we are scholars, intersexed persons, activists or some combination of these three) are not yet done with 'intersex,' even as we seek to turn a critical gaze on 'intersex.' The implicit imperative in the title of this collection is that it is too soon to accept the language of disorder wholesale and that, in fact, a critical value remains in the use, deployment, recognition and interrogation of intersex." And if the plethora of online support and activist groups explicitly asserting their resistance to DSD are any indication, there are indeed many people who are not yet done with 'intersex.'

Why are so many unwilling to give up the label intersex? For some, identifying as intersex means identifying as having had certain experiences as a result of having a body deemed non typical for a male or a female – experiences which, for better or worse, have influenced the way they see themselves and shaped their experience of their lives. For others, identifying as intersex is a political statement, signifying a critical position towards the presumption that intersex conditions are necessarily pathological and in need of 'fixing.' For others still, identifying as intersex is a way of laying claim to a queerness that has come to be associated with the term that DSD proponents would rather disavow. And while I do agree with proponents of the DSD nomenclature that we harm people when we impose upon them an identity they do not claim for themselves, I also think we harm them when we fail to recognize as legitimate or real the identities they do claim.

Furthermore, the fact that the move from intersex to DSD is partially driven by the desire to reassure others – in particular, parents – that those with intersex conditions are heteronormatively gendered should be cause for great concern. It is true that many children born with intersex conditions will be 'normal' boys and girls and grow up to be 'normal' men and women. But some will not. Some will identify as intersex, both in spite of and because of all the messy identity politics and queerness it entails. Some children born with intersex conditions will even come to identify as trans, as queer, as lesbian, as gay and so on, just as some of *all* children are wont to do. Should we really be trying to reassure anyone of the heterosexuality or the gender normativity of others – be they parents of children with intersex conditions, parents of children without intersex conditions or anyone else? If we really hope for things to "get better,"[69] perhaps we need to consider the value we give to being normatively gendered and heterosexual when we assert that it is something others want, need and deserve to be reassured about.

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[68] Holmes, Morgan (Ed.). 2009. *Critical Intersex*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company.

[69] It Gets Better Project. (2011). What is the It Gets Better Project?. Retrieved from http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/about-it-gets-better-project/

7

'Stand Up' for Exclusion?: Queer Pride, Ableism and Inequality

Danielle Peers and Lindsay Eales, University of Alberta

It was Queer Pride Week 2011 in Edmonton, as we began to write this piece. Our city's billboards are wrapped with rainbow-colored posters of young scantily-clad men with bulging… muscles. Unfortunately, we have come to expect a significant dose of ableism, ageism, racism and fatphobia at Pride festivals across North America. In 2011, however, the Edmonton Pride Festival Society[70] made ableism official!

Edmonton Pride's official slogan in 2011 was "STAND UP."[71] Although dismayed by the ableist[72] language, we were hoping, at the very least, that this slogan signaled a move towards a more political Pride: A move away from the festival that had renamed itself after a bank two years ago and that had begun banning some political queer groups from marching (most notably in Toronto). But what Edmonton Pride is standing up for this year is *not* greater equity. The event listings tell the disappointing story: "Stand up… and boogie"; and "Stand up… and barbeque" – as if there was nothing of political value left for queers to 'stand up' for.

The Pride slogan, poster and website, however, demonstrate that there is still much work to be done. On the poster, "STAND UP"[73] is written in white monolithic letters below the *diversity*-rainbow-coloured silhouettes of six immaculately non-diverse bodies in progressive stages of getting up to stand. On one side of the poster are three square, thin, muscular silhouettes: one in 'thinker' pose; one crouching as though about to begin a sprint; and one standing with arms and legs wide apart, taking up space. On the other side are three smaller, super-thin-yet-curvy multi-colored figures: one on knees and bum sitting in a 'schoolgirl' pose (like the pornography pose, minus the braids and the kilt); one on knees with head thrown back to show off large, perky breasts; one standing with arms and legs pulled together to make space for the more masculine standing counterpart. The Edmonton Pride website bears the slogan and poster below a banner photograph which features scantily-clad, athletic looking white-skinned men wearing afro-like wigs. There is still so much work to be done.

Among the many race, gender and ability issues with these images of supposed queer diversity, is the noticeable lack of fat, gender-queer, wheeling, scootering, ageing, small-statured, cane-wielding, pre-pubescent and dog-guided members of our queer communities. The *lack* of any significantly diverse

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[70] Edmonton Pride Festival. (2012). Home. Retrieved from http://www.edmontonpride.ca/

[71] Edmonton Pride Festival. (2012). Home. Retrieved from http://www.edmontonpride.ca/

[72] Fedcan Blog. (2011). Home. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/ableism-and-disability/

[73] Edmonton Pride Festival. (2012). Home. Retrieved from http://www.edmontonpride.ca/

bodies in the *diversity* poster and website might not have struck many Pride-goers as strange however, since many of these bodies are structurally excluded from Queer[74] events, in general.

Every summer, for example, the Edmonton Pride Festival Society rents one of the most accessible[75] venues in Edmonton, and, through great expense and logistical prowess, manages to transform it into an almost entirely inaccessible space (despite years of being offered free or cheap alternatives for rendering the space more accessible). Year round, gay parties and events are held almost exclusively in bars or galleries that are up or down at least a flight of stairs. Most of these events don't allow minors, won't accommodate wheelchairs, have gender-segregated washrooms, and are not set up for those who see or hear in non-normative ways. With few 'standing up' against (or perhaps even taking note of) these exclusions, many community members end up having to *sit* out most 'queer' events.

Of course, mainstream gay movements are perhaps too easy targets. The pivotal question behind this blog entry extends much further than Edmonton or Pride. We ask: Are our academic, artistic and activist movements that claim to be equity-based any less ableist and any more accessible than the Edmonton Pride example herein?

In Robert McRuer's groundbreaking work, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*,[76] he argues that the exclusion, marginalization or complete erasure of disability is common to contemporary queer politics and to activist politics more generally. One of his most poignant examples is the 2004 World Social Forum[77] (WSF) in Mumbai, India, a global activist network that protested the World Economic Forum by collectively imagining alternatives to globalized capitalism. The WSF earned protests of its own, however, due to its lack of accessibility and the organizers' refusal to include a speaker on disability issues. The WSF's slogan was 'Another World Is Possible,' yet it remained somewhat impossible for WSF activists to imagine disability as having a place in this new world, let alone in the movement that might create it.

There is an eerie familiarity to this seeming impossibility of imagining accessibility and disability issues as vital components of social movements. Think about it. Have you recently attended any of the following?:

- Equity-based academic conferences or lectures organized without any physical, visual or audio accessibility forethought?

- Take back the night or G8 marches planned on inaccessible routes?

- Film festivals in which wheelchair users are deemed fire hazards and are not allowed in the theatre, and where captions are turned off because normate audience members find them 'distracting'?

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[74] Queer Studies. (2011, December 17). Retrieved December 29, 2011 from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer_studies

[75] Accessibility. (2012, January 2). Retrieved January 2, 2012 from Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accessibility

[76] McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability.* New York: New York University Press.

[77] World Social Forum. (2011, December 30). Retrieved on January 1, 2012 from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Social_Forum#2004_World_Social_Forum

- Expensive queer parties or fundraisers held in spaces with gender-segregated washrooms, inaccessible entrances and no minors allowed?

More importantly, did you notice these structural exclusions at the time? People often don't notice these barriers because excluded bodies usually cannot enter these spaces to demonstrate their inaccessibility. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy and one that has very real consequences for the bodies and communities that are excluded, as well as for those of us who fail to address these systemic exclusions.

Odds are, however, that some of you *have* noticed some of these barriers at least some of the time. There are, after all, vibrant activist communities that work hard at identifying and creatively responding to the ways that they participate in the inequitable treatment and exclusion of others. Some projects structured around such an equity politics include: The Vancouver Queer Film Festival;[78] the Acsexxxability sex party folks in Toronto; and the Health, Embodiment and Visual Culture Conference[79] held in Hamilton. The proverbial wheel has already been invented; the wheel is constantly being re-created in exciting new ways. Unfortunately, too many equity-based events have yet to imagine that wheels, canes, and the like have a place in their communities.

As inundated as we are, this week, with the inequitable politics of Pride, Edmontonians are finally getting a taste of equity-oriented queer celebrations. The Exposure Queer Arts and Culture Festival[80] is making radical moves towards removing barriers to their festival and to Edmonton's queer scene in general. It started with their "All Bodies Pool Party": an outdoor, wheelchair accessible, pay-what-you-can, all-ages, all-gender affair. Finally, queer Edmontonians – like queers elsewhere – have a choice: "Stand Up!" for the ableism of Pride, or sit in on an accessible queer/ crip celebration of swimming, mobilizing and imagining more inclusive images, activities, events and communities.

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[78] Vancouver Queer Film Festival. (2008). Home. Retrieved from http://www.queerfilmfestival.ca/

[79] Health, Embodiment and Visual Culture: Engaging Publics and Pedagogies. (2010). Exhibition. Retrieved from http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~english/HealthEmbodimentVisualCulture/Exhibition.html

[80] Exposure. (n.d.). The 5th Annual Exposure. Retrieved from http://www.exposurefestival.ca/

8

Trans Rights in Mexico and Canada: Queering the Geopolitics of Privilege

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When I asked trans activists Angie Rueda Castillo and Irina Layevska what this piece should be about, they both encouraged me to account what is happening in the struggle for trans people's rights in Mexico, and how this may contrast and compare to the state of affairs in Canada.

In Mexico City, a local law [81] was approved in 2008 allowing trans peoples to change their name and sex on birth certificates and other official documents. Despite its narrow provincial jurisdiction and current limited accessibility and affordability, this legal change has been viewed positively by members of the trans communities. The measure allows trans peoples to obtain birth certificates without marginal annotations indicating the sex and name legally assigned to them at birth, and does not require them to undergo genital surgery to obtain identification documents. Acutely aware of the status of trans-related legislations in other parts of the world, activists in Mexico have praised the law not only for addressing issues of social stigma, but also for imposing a medicalized framework, thus enabling recognition of a wider array of trans experiences.

In the field of critical intersectional studies of gender and sexuality, there is a general willingness to be self-critical and open to new ideas and transformation. At the same time, coming from and having carried out my doctoral fieldwork in one location in the global South, specifically in Mexico City, I notice the ways in which many concepts, categories, discourses, policies, strategies, and the like emerge in the global North, become influential and, subsequently, are circulated and taken up in the global South as desirable models of sensible, good or best practices. Needless to say, those flows of ideas are not unidirectional or unequivocal, although it is an intricate task to trace the genealogy of an idea or a concept and how it travels worldwide. Yet, it is hard to be oblivious to the fact that such circulations occur against a backdrop of uneven and hierarchical global geopolitical configurations wherein nation-states' wealth and power differentials matter.

It is commonplace to encounter media representations and everyday interpretations both within and outside Canada, which convey the notion that terms and practices of the global North are inherently better. Despite the widespread consensus among critical scholars that these ranking scales are historically and politically constructed, often the concepts and policies used in the global North echo around the world, while notions and strategies emanating from the global South do not share that fate or privilege.

Let me draw briefly on some of the findings of my doctoral research project on trans women's efforts to obtain rights in Mexico City to provide further example of these uneven travels. Among working class lower-class and economically disadvantaged male-to-female persons, many of whom are street-based sex workers, the terms *jota* and *vestida* are widely used to name each other and themselves. These naming practices emerge out of and reflect the historically specific labour, class, and gender configurations of Mexico City today. The socioeconomic contexts and lived experiences

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[81] Mexico City Oks trans name, ID changes. *Yahoo! Groups*. Retrieved from http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ transgendernews/message/31072

that explain these particular naming practices are complex and deserve more attention than I can give here. Suffice it to say that context matters and these terms are employed differently to refer to what we, in the West, understand as 'transgendered' or 'transsexual' women. As well, a growing number of studies in the field have shown these terms have been in circulation for at least two decades, if not longer. More recently – prior to and particularly after the approval of the 2008 local legislation – terms like *transgénero* (transgender) and *mujer trans* (trans woman) began to be used.

The introduction of terms which have global currency has not however displaced the use of the domestic terminologies. But it has led to a symbolic struggle locally, because the globally circulating terms are valued higher while the geographically influenced terms are viewed as 'backward', incorrect, and derogatory. Their coexistence is certainly hierarchical. Were it not for the resilience of the local notions, one would be tempted to overlook the historicity of all of these concepts. More importantly, their conflicting simultaneity in Mexico City allows us to be critical about the ways in which these travelling concepts from the global North get constructed as intrinsically-superior, taken up as common sense, or seen as an always-there vocabulary due, in large part, to geopolitical privilege.

In Mexico and other locations across the global South, the vocabulary of 'gay' and 'queer' have been taken up by some activists for diverse reasons. What these words mean whenever they travel across borders is ever changing. In Mexico City, terms circulating at the local level (that could have potentially resulted in the rise of a movement for *jotas'* or *vestidas'* rights, instead of trans women's rights) have not been politicized or reclaimed. Rather, it is the embracing of global terms and notions that have helped trans people articulate their demands and gain relative legitimacy in the socio-legal fields. I am not suggesting they have to steer clear of 'foreign' or 'imposed' concepts in their mobilizing efforts. Rather, I am encouraging us – scholars and activists based in the global North – to remain aware of the geopolitical and epistemic privileges that underlie these processes, and to find ways to help dismantle the disparities and inequalities of today's world system, which is inevitably shaping the politics of gender- and sexuality-based social justice struggles worldwide.

The trans population is one of the most marginalized groups in Mexican society today. Structural and systemic vulnerabilities and pervasive discriminatory practices are expressed in higher rates of HIV/AIDS incidence, hate crimes, rates of incarceration, and police extortion, among other problems. Thus the challenges facing trans peoples in Mexico are multiple. On the legal terrain –one area in which the trans peoples seek to effect change – challenges include the need for legal literacy and lack of economic literacy and resources needed to benefit from local legislations. Another major challenge is political literacy, which is essential for transforming the prevailing system of partial citizenship. In the absence of a federal law protecting them, many trans people are undocumented in their own country of birth.

Why does this issue matter to a Canada-based audience such as the one reading this blog series?[82] Why is it important to talk about what happens in Mexico or anywhere else in the global South? As I have maintained, what happens in the global North does matter to what goes on in global South – that is, to how gender- and sexuality-based struggles are framed, what issues are highlighted, what vocabularies are rendered politically viable, what strategies are employed. I suggest that we reflect on the ways in which Canada plays a key role in holding, allocating and administering asymmetrical socioeconomic and political privilege worldwide, and how this conferred privilege may be shaping, in not-altogether helpful ways, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, intersex, Two-spirited (and other) political and academic struggles taking place within and beyond the geographical confines of Canada.

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[82] Fedcan Blog. (2012). Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered/Queer/Intersex/Two-Spirited. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered-queer-intersex-two-spirited/

Having a broader geopolitical dialogue that gets translated into meaningful transnational alliances is needed now more than ever. We should keep an eye out for the ways in which the geopolitical privileges we enjoy that come from being based in the global North, including in Canada, structures what takes place in other latitudes. This proposition is certainly not novel, but as a woman of colour from the global South, I still see value in insisting upon this kind of mindfulness and critical engagement.

9

Homonationalist Discourse, Queer Organizing and the Media

Fatima Jaffer, University of British Columbia

Media stories build on tropes and themes familiar to readers. Such tropes and themes act as a shorthand or 'common sense' of what we as readers are assumed to believe or are likely to accept. I would argue that in Canada these tropes have been in play since at least Confederation, although they have varied in form over time and space. Historically these tropes – of European superiority versus the inferiority of the Other deemed savage,[83] backward or resistant to progress – were applied to Indigenous peoples. More recently on this continent, these tropes, particularly the notion of the barbarian[84] Other have been extended to racialized citizens, immigrants and newcomers. Here, I examine how the figure of the queer, racialized Canadian, continues to appear in national political and media discourses.

On 15 December, 2007 *The Vancouver Sun* carried a cover story[85] entitled: "Canada's Changing Moral Landscape: Are immigrants to the country changing the face of what's considered right or wrong?" The first paragraph reads: "'I hate homosexuality,' says Balwant Singh Gill, a prominent leader in BC's large Sikh community. "Most Sikhs believe homosexuality is unnatural and you can't produce kids through it. And secondarily, no major religion allows it." That article was published five days after the December 10, 2007 action by two thousand protesters, most of them Punjabi Sikhs, to block the Canadian government's deportation of Laibar Singh, a paralyzed refugee claimant from India. Coinciding with International Human Rights Day, the protesters had gathered at Vancouver International Airport and stopped his deportation by Canadian Border Services, which led mainstream media to lambast them for their "illegal"[86] and "violent" behavior.

The connection between these events form the crux of my story of how homonationalism, a phenomenon given name by Jasbir Puar[87] is playing out in Vancouver, a city touted in Canadian travel guides for its tolerance and diversity. By 'homonationalism' I refer to the nation-state's selectively strategic incorporation of privileged queer bodies in the project of nationhood often in times of war, and this strategy's worldwide surge post September 11, 2001. Various scholars and activists have shown how homonationalist discourses also flourish in times of heightened anti-immigrant sentiments. Puar tells us that homonationalism thrives on the perception of "immigrant

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[83] MacLean, J. (1896). Canadian Savage Folk: The Native Tribes. *University of Toronto Internet Archive.* Retrieved from http://www.archive.org/details/canadiansavagefo00macluoft

[84] Jhappan, R. (2010, February 23). The new Canadian citizenship test: No 'barbarians' need apply. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/2010/02/23/the-new-canadian-citizenship-test-no-barbarians-need-apply/

[85] Canada's Changing Moral Landscape. (2008, January 4). *The Vancouver Sun.* Retrieved from http://www.canada.com/topics/lifestyle/relationships/story.html?id=27833c9c-5946-4845-bf1c-2793ca33591c

[86] Stop the deportation of Laibar Singh!. (2007, December 13). *No One Is Illegal-Montreal.* Retrieved from http://nooneisillegal-montreal.blogspot.com/2007/12/stop-deportation-of-laibar-singh-news.html

[87] Puar, J. (2007). *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times.* (Durham: Duke University Press Books).

populations and communities of colour as more homophobic… [which helps fuel] anti-immigrant rhetoric, counterterrorist or antiwelfare discourse."

Scott Morgensen extends Puar's concept in "Settler Homonationalism",[88] in which he takes up "the conditions under which U.S. queer projects produce a *settler* homonationalism," and centres "the terrorizing methods that create queer subjects as *agents* of the violence of the settler state." Queer movements for rights become less 'queer' as their discourse adopts normative settler 'common sense,' which marks the Other – Indigenous and non-white – as backward, unprogressive and frozen in time.

In the remainder of this piece I address the current discourse in 'the West' and in post-same-sex-marriage Canada, in particular, by examining the various racial and sexual logics that such media stories evoke. I am interested in the operations of power that help construct the Canadian national as tolerant or supportive of queer identity, versus the racialized outsider, who is constructed as Other and as irremediably homophobic. Arguably, homophobia is now projected onto non-western Others as reflective of their unprogressive, undeveloped, and backward ethos. In contrast, the West (or whiteness) comes across as liberated, progressive and gay-positive.

Balwant Singh Gill's comment in *The Sun*, "I hate homosexuality," inevitably provoked an outcry among Vancouver's queers. As the facilitator of Trikone Vancouver,[89] an organization of queer South Asians, I expected media phone calls for our reaction. But only two came: one from *Punjabi TV News*, the other from Vancouver's queer newspaper, *Xtra West*.[90] The mainstream media overwhelmingly carried the voices of queer community leaders who decried the South Asian community's culpability for homophobia in Vancouver. The fact that Balwant Singh Gill was the only South Asian quoted in a story on immigrant values shows almost too simplistically how media frames communities of colour as homogenized and monolithic.

It was, as *The Sun* blithely put it, because "Gill, the spokesperson for 39 Sikh temples in British Columbia, appears to combine in one person many of the conservative and libertarian values that immigrants are bringing to and expressing in Canada."[91] Incidentally, the values referenced in the story had been defined as such by an Angus Reed poll that found immigrants hold 'different' values; for example, only 17 percent of immigrants – versus 19 percent of 'real' Canadians – hold middle-of-the-road views. What these middle-of-the-road values are is not clear. It's noteworthy that the only other 'immigrant' quoted in this story was an engineer who came to Canada from Hong Kong. Bill Chu likewise apparently represented the voice of the Chinese community (41 percent of Vancouver's population). Nowhere in the story do we learn that Gill was wrong and that Sikh texts do not allude to homosexuality at all, nor was there an effort made to interview South Asian queers. Further, Gill claimed his comment had been made in an interview with *The Sun* three years before, although this was publicly disputed by the reporter.

The move by the media to publish this story worked in the interests of a state openly angered at the failed deportation of Laibar Singh. By pitting (white) queers against immigrants of colour, the media

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[88] Morgensen, S.L. (2010). Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 16*(1-2). Retrieved from http://glq.dukejournals.org/content/16/1-2/105.abstract

[89] Trikone Nothwest. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved from http://www.trikonenw.org/

[90] Barsotti, N. (2008, January 2). Sikh leader's anti-gay remarks ignite furore. *Xtra!*. Retrieved from http://www.xtra.ca/public/viewstory.aspx?AFF_TYPE=4&STORY_ID=4136&PUB_TEMPLATE_ID=2

[91] Todd, D. (2007, December 15). Canada's Changing Moral Landscape. *The Vancouver Sun*. Retrieved from http://www2.canada.com/vancouversun/news/story.html?id=f3983de2-9657-4650-84a3-ae0c46a1b867&p=1

constructed these two communities as separate and monolithic, failing to take into account not only intersections – one could be both queer and immigrant – but also the alliances that exist among and between the two communities. South Asian queers, such as the members of Trikone Vancouver, were placed in a double bind: we understood all too clearly the obvious perils of the racism versus homophobia trap set by The Sun and other media outlets.

There was one prominent exception to this coverage. *Punjabi TV News* proactively contacted Trikone Vancouver for a reaction. They made an effort to explore various aspects of the story, including the connection with the Laibar Singh case. They juxtaposed two queer positionalities: Alan Herbert, a former gay city councillor and I, representing Trikone Vancouver. Simply put, my position was to condemn the homophobic comment by Gill and to also condemn the racist tone of The Sun's article. I explained the article's impact on South Asian queers, and that by doing nothing to educate on or even acknowledge our existence as South Asian or Muslim queers, it not only fuels racism against us but homophobia too.

When I repeated these points in an interview with *Xtra West*, there was a backlash within the queer community. On 21 December, 2008, well-known members of Vancouver queer scene called a community meeting,[92] at which I was berated for apparently trivializing Gill's comment and condoning homophobia. The perception that I had chosen 'race' over 'queer' meant I had not stood up for Canadian values and had not been queer in a way that was acceptable for a dominant (white) queer community. I was accused of turning my back on the goal of gay liberation. Such accusations emerge from either/or assumptions that pit 'race' and 'queerness' as distinct rather than intersecting identities. My attempt to complicate this binary logic was tantamount to a betrayal of my *country*, a country that posits itself as a 'progressive' forward-thinking, gay-positive nation. At risk of homogenizing the queer community, I must mention that not everyone voiced this position and Trikone Vancouver also had strong allies.

To wrap up the story, Gill apologized for his comments and Trikone Vancouver won a Community Hero award from *Xtra West* for our part in shifting the discourse. However, nine months later, a white gay man, Jordan Smith,[93] was assaulted by a South Asian man and Trikone Vancouver was back at square one. We condemned the assault on Smith, but also had to, again, 'defend' our communities from the homogenizing charge that we, as South Asians, were responsible.

I tell this story to illustrate how the media used anti-immigrant tropes to mobilise homonationalist discourse within the Vancouver queer community, but also, how what is framed as a queer liberation struggle for rights has in fact become a fight for national entitlement and rights to national belonging. Puar explains, "Gay marriage, for example, is not simply a demand for equality with heterosexual norms, but more importantly, a demand for the reinstatement of white privileges and rights – rights of property and inheritance in particular."[94] Gay and lesbian liberation movements have become a drive for privileges lost. As such, they can only benefit those who face 'oppression' on the basis of homophobia alone. The message of the media frame in this example was simple: the homo subject is under threat by immigrant Others.

The message I got from the queer community was also simple: Queers are offered the opportunity of acceptance and inclusion, and we too can 'belong' as queers of colour – if we conform to a

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[92] Vancouver-Group plans response to Sikh leader's comments. (2007, December 22). *Xtra!*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkCknx68kR4

[93] Jaffer, F. (2008, October 23). Cultures of Homophobia. *Xtra!*. Retrieved from http://www.xtra.ca/public/Vancouver/Cultures_of_Homophobia-5727.aspx

[94] Puar, J. (2007). *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. (Durham: Duke University Press Books).

queer identity and a view of queer liberation that leads to the accumulation of national capital. We too can gain rights (and safety from violence) if we join this project of nationhood that centralizes whiteness as national identity. At the heart of this conception of 'Canadianness,' however, is collusion in the project of ahistoricity. This collusion requires a forgetting of Canada as Indigenous land, and that Indigenous notions of Two-Spiritedness were in existence well before European colonization. The invitation to accumulate or 'invest in whiteness'[95] in order to arrive at 'belonging' continues the violence of settler stratification of sexual and racial hierarchies on which the settler nation rests.

This idea of 'Canadianness' requires our participation in the erasure of this history just as it requires a deliberate forgetting of the project of colonization as grounded in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples or the fact that gay liberation and gay-positive attitudes are recent inventions in the West. It's what we do each time we espouse an exclusive notion of Canadian values. It's what we do each time we present ourselves as queer first, people of colour second, and see the two identities as separate and unequal, rather than as intersectional or interlocking, as Sirma Bilge[96] and Rinaldo Walcott[97] argue in this LGBTQI2-S[98] series.

It is critical that we, *individually* as queers, and collectively as queer researchers, academics and activists, re-examine our frameworks for viewing the world and the directions that our research and organizational objectives take. Central to this critical self-reflection project is the need to expose the racial and colonial imaginary that exist alongside Canadian values of diversity and tolerance, which we valorize and promote abroad despite glaring contradictions at home.

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[95] Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).

[96] Bilge, S. (2011, October 18). Developing Intersectional Solidarities: A Plea for Queer Intersectionality. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/2011/10/18/developing-intersectional-solidarities-a-plea-for-queer-intersectionality/

[97] Walcott, R. (2011, October 27). Black queer and Black Trans-Imagine Imagination Imaginary Futures. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/2011/10/27/black-queer-and-black-trans-%E2%80%93-imagine-imagination-imaginary-futures/

[98] Fedcan Blog. (2009). Equity Matters series, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered/Queer/Intersex/Two Spirited. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered-queer-intersex-two-spirited/

12

Rethinking hate crimes: The hard work of creating social equity

Lucas Crawford and Robert Nichols, University of Alberta

May 10th was Alberta's inaugural *Hate Crimes Awareness Day*, an event that raised more questions than answers. Offered as an opportunity to 'celebrate' the successes of the past few decades, many in those communities supposedly most protected by such legislation – racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples and the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer] community, for instance – took this as an opportunity to challenge such legislation as a vehicle for promoting safe, just communities.

A recent Statistics Canada report[116] on hate crimes shows that white people reportedly suffer more instances of chargeable hate crime than Aboriginal people. In the United States, white people are apparently the second-most likely demographic to experience race-related hate crimes. In New York City five years ago, four lesbians of colour were charged and convicted with "gang assault"[117] (and are variously serving time) after defending themselves from a homophobic and assaultive man who threatened them with rape and grabbed for their bodies. He would later characterize the incident as a hate crime committed against him – for his heterosexuality.

By isolating incidents of such violence from their social and political context, the hate crime framework[118] simultaneously obscures the background field of systemic oppression while relying upon it. The 'successful' use of such legislation often depends upon the careful discrimination of instances of specific, intentional hatred and more general, nearly all-pervasive discrimination and derision.

Rather than working to eliminate such discrimination, hate crimes actually require it as a norm against which the particular case can be established as unique, exceptional and a function of the intent of the perpetrator. This requires, in other words, a background of 'ordinary' violence, in which the articulation of violence through homophobic, transphobic, racist and misogynist language and actions are not 'especially' hate-motivated but merely trading on the currency of our day. This 'ordinary' violence is normalized and used as material to be sifted through in search of the supposed 'real' danger: the intentional, malicious, targeted homophobe or racist. But, of course, it is precisely this 'normal' state of affairs that enables such attacks in the first place, by making some bodies seem less worthy than others, some more 'attackable,' and by rendering some populations more vulnerable to premature death.

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[116] Crawford, L. & Ellison, C. (2010). [Canada] Opinion: Hate Crimes Demand Fresh Approaches, Harsher Sentences Don't Work (The Edmonton Journal). Retrieved http://www.everyq.com/blogs/entry/-Canada-Opinion-Hate-crimes-demand-fresh-approaches-harsher-sentences-don-t-work-The-Edmonton-Journal-

[117] Henry, I. (2007, June 21). Lesbians Sentenced for Self-Defense. *Workers World.* Retrieved from http://www.workers.org/2007/us/nj4-0628/

[118] Janhevich, D.E. (2001). Hate Crime in Canada: An Overview of Issues and Data Sources. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection-R/Statcan/85-551-XIE/0009985-551-XIE.pdf

Needless to say, then, hate crime legislation has broken its promises.[119] In Canada, hate crime law simply lengthens offender sentences. This legislation marks an uneasy political marriage: the right's 'tough on crime' stance gussied up as an ostensibly left-leaning concern with marginalized groups. In the wake of the now-farcical Alberta Hate Crimes Awareness Day, it's little wonder that some are asking: why have we put our faith in the justice system to do the hard work of creating social equity and meaningful accountability for violence?

Thankfully, many people have not. In Canada and abroad, hopeful community activists from a variety of social justice and academic communities have been creating alternatives to the hate crime laws championed by large, well-funded, and often predominantly white gay lobby groups. Citing the lack of evidence that stricter punitive measures are successful to any degree in 'reforming' anyone, groups such as the Sylvia Rivera Law Project,[120] Queers for Economic Justice,[121] and the Audre Lorde_Project[122] have vehemently opposed these laws. Numerous members of the LGBTQ community in Alberta are vocally joining these innovative efforts to rethink accountability and justice – outside prisons.

There are many reasons to look beyond prisons for justice. As we saw above, hate crime laws make no distinction between assailants from majority groups who specifically target marginalized people and those who defend themselves daily from discrimination. Moreover, there's no evidence to suggest hate crime legislation is either a deterrent or a useful measure. Quite the contrary: there is evidence suggesting that longer prison sentences increase rates of recidivism. It is a soothing myth that this legislation protects anyone: as the Sylvia Rivera Law Project puts it, "It is hard to imagine that someone moved to brutally attack a trans[gender] person would pause to consider that they might get a longer sentence."[123]

Even if harsher sentences were effective, they rely too heavily on sentencing as a tool to 'dis-incentivize' violence. As a consequence, supporters of hate crimes legislation may end up reproducing the hateful logic of vengeance they purportedly seek to question: to combat 'message crimes,' these laws advocate 'message sentences' in which individuals are made scapegoats for a complex social world that legalizes and condones so much prejudice and bigotry. Don't we have more innovative ways to communicate than this indirect 'message' cycle of punishment and harm?

In Edmonton, we've already witnessed positive work made possible by inventive definitions of justice. Most notably, the family of Robert Stanley (the 75-year old bus driver killed in 2002 by a boulder pushed from an overpass on Whitemud Freeway) adopted a restorative justice[124] approach to the sentencing of one youth. At the family's request, he was not imprisoned, but instead given alternative sentences.

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[119] Wells, K. (2010, May 12). Hate Crimes Legislation Needs to be Strengthened. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://anti-racistcanada.blogspot.com/2010/05/hate-crimes-legislation-needs-to-be.html

[120] Sylvia Rivera Law Project. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved from http://srlp.org/

[121] Queers for Economic Justice. (2009). Home. Retrieved from http://q4ej.org/

[122] The Audre Lorde Project. (n.d.). About ALP. http://alp.org/about

[123] Sylvia Rivera Law Project. (n.d.) About. Retrieved from http://srlp.org/about

[124] Restorative Justice Online. (2012). Tutorial: Introduction to Restorative Justice. Retrieved from http://www.restorativejustice.org/university-classroom/01introduction/tutorial-introduction-to-restorative-justice/tutorial-introduction-to-restorative-justice

A number of Edmonton groups undertake similar work, including a range of Aboriginal organizations, as well as the innovative Youth Restorative Action Project,[125] a committee comprised solely of youth (including former young offenders) who consult with individual young offenders to help determine sentencing. Although restorative justice isn't always feasible (its use in violence-against-women contexts has been critiqued), it shows that there are models of justice that refuse increased imprisonment and pursue more meaningful ideas about safety.

Finally, we have been forced to ask: When we horde disproportionate resources to campaign for harsher punishments, who benefits? Resources are better devoted to supporting marginalized communities – for whom unequal social conditions put individuals at higher risk of entering the criminal justice system. Right now 60 percent of the prairies' federal inmates are Aboriginal people,[126] and LGBTQ people – particularly transsexuals of colour – are victimized by the criminal justice system in great number.

Hate crime advocates promote a lazy entrenchment of further inequality through retaliation sentencing, while others choose hope, change, and support. The events of the past week show that we can look for justice beyond mere prisons, even as we continue the long social justice struggle against hate and violence.

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[125] The Youth Restorative Action Project. (n.d.). News & Announcements. Retrieved from http://yrap.org/

[126] Canadian Centre for Justice. (2001). Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Retrieved from http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/Statcan/85F0033M/85F0033MIE2001001.pdf

15

Seeking Refuge from Homophobic and Transphobic Persecution

Sharalyn Jordan, Simon Fraser University and

Christine Morrissey, Rainbow Refugee Committee

Currently no fewer than 76 countries criminalize same-sex sexual acts or gender variability. Many of these statutes can be traced to colonial imposition, specifically, the British penal code section 377. Direct criminalization and morality laws create the means for abuse of power by police and others in authority. Surveillance and threat is dispersed along networks of family, school and community. Homophobic and transphobic violence often occurs out of the public eye, and unlike war or larger conflicts, people experience this violence in relative isolation. In some cases, religious teachings and psychiatric diagnosis are used to shame and pathologize people who live transgressive sexualities or genders. Stigmatization as evil or mentally ill further isolates people.

These brief accounts below were shared by QLGBT refugees now living in Canada, as part of our research project "Un/Settling." These accounts highlight some of the complexities of persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

A young woman from Nigeria was told to marry a man who was twenty years her elder. She confided in her sister that she was attracted to women and could not marry this man. The sister told her parents. The young woman was kept locked up and beaten regularly by her father for over a month. Rumours spread around her town. Her church publicly denounced her. When she was allowed out, she was assaulted by a gang of young men and neighbours threw rocks at her.

A trans woman from Mexico was picked up by police while walking home in the afternoon. They threatened to charge her with prostitution if she did not perform sexual acts and pay them a bribe. Officers were regularly waiting outside her apartment, following and harassing her.

Gay men who have fled Sri Lanka report being picked up from gay cruising areas by police. They were detained and assaulted by police, and forced to pay a bribe for their release. The police returned to their homes monthly to extort more money, threatening to out them or beat them if they did not pay.

Our research suggests the global terrain of protection and persecution for QLGBT people is in flux and often paradoxical. As Louis George Tin has described in the *Dictionary of Homophobia,*[143] Brazil hosts the largest Pride Parade in the world with over 3 million people celebrating. Yet Brazil also has the world's highest reported rate of homophobic and transphobic murders. While South Africa recognizes same-sex marriage, human rights organizations there report ten cases a week of 'corrective rape' targeting lesbians, most never investigated by police. QLGBT organizers in Poland have been targets of violence, with impunity or complicity from authorities, despite the human rights protections promised by European Union membership. We have heard Bogota described by one man as a great place to be gay but, by another person who spent ten years on the run within

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[143] Tin, L.G. (Ed.). (2008). *The Dictionary of Homophobia: A Global History of Gay & Lesbian Experience.* (Redburn, M., Trans.). British Columbia: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Colombia trying to escape death threats, as a terrifying city to be gay. The first man was protected by his affluence, the second vulnerable because he was poor, and from an area controlled by drug cartels. Legal human rights protection does not translate into on-the-ground safety or access to state protection. Within the same country of origin, people's vulnerability or safety varies considerably based on social class, race, religion, ability to 'pass,' and social networks.

Queer Lesbian Gay Bi and Trans refugees that we know left their home countries because they were in danger, and many did not know that the risks they faced constituted persecution. Often it was only after they left their countries by any means possible that they learned that they could seek refugee protection. Asymmetrical im/mobilities – created by intersectional mobility exclusions based on racism, global north/south disparities, gender, and social class – enable and constrain who is able to leave, how people migrate, and options for permanent status.

In their migration, QLGBT asylum seekers encounter immigration and border systems that enable and restrict mobility based on the priorities of global capitalism, neocolonialism, and post-9/11 notions of security. Canada, along with other Western countries, is using increasingly stringent measures to screen out potential asylum seekers. According to Oxfam's report, *No Price Too High: The Cost of Australia's Approach to Asylum Seekers,*[144] Australia has spent over a billion dollars to detain and process asylum seekers offshore; a half-million dollars per refugee. Legislation before Canadian Parliament now would result in detention of potential refugees, including children, for a full year. Canada Research Chair Catherine Dauvergne argues in *Making People Illegal: What Globalization Means for Migration and Law*[145] that the punitive impact of measures like these function to make asylum itself illegal.

Undertaking an asylum application entails accessing and working within a refugee system that was not designed with lesbian gay bi trans or queer refugees in mind. In the early 1990s, the Geneva Convention criteria for refugee protection stated that, "membership in a particular social group" was interpreted in Canada and by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) to include those who face persecution based on their sexuality or gender identity. Yet, much work remains to be done to ensure that this protection is meaningful.

If a potential refugee makes it to a UNHCR office or one of the 21 countries that extend protection to QLGBT refugees, they must prove an often hidden and stigmatized identity, and their fear of persecution. QLGBT refugees have left countries where they have been under surveillance, arrested, extorted and, for some, imprisoned or tortured, because of their sexuality or gender identity. Survival has required vigilance, secrecy and conformity. The survival tactics do not necessarily disappear on departure. We know one man who spent 27 days in detention after making his way from Iran, through China, Indonesia and Japan, before working up the nerve to tell his duty counsel he was gay. Shame, fear and the impacts of trauma on memory interfere with people being able to make their case.

Refugee decision makers find sexual orientation and gender identity cases some of the hardest decisions to make. Law professor Nicole Laviolette argues that no other kind of claim requires people to provide such intimate testimony about such deeply stigmatized parts of their lives.

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[144] Bem, K., Field, N., Maclellan, N., Meyer, S. & Morris, T. (2007). A Price too High: The Cost of Australia's Approach to Asylum Seekers. Retrieved from http://resources.oxfam.org.au/filestore/originals/OAus-PriceTooHighAsylumSeekers-0807.pdf

[145] Dauvergne, C. (2008). *Making People Illegal: What Globalization Means for Migration and Law.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Without formal guidelines for adjudicators to follow, decision makers rely on their own background knowledge – often based in culturally encapsulated understandings of sexualities and genders – to assess the credibility of an applicant's identity claim. QLGBT refugees are evaluated against expected narratives of refugee flight and Western narratives of LGBT identity that do not necessarily apply. Fair decisions are hampered by the lack of reliable information about on-the-ground conditions for QLGBT people.

Refugee protection is not yet meaningfully accessible for queer or trans people facing persecution. Simultaneously, the right to asylum is in jeopardy, internationally and in Canada, for all asylum seekers. QLGBT refugees are struggling to gain access to a protection system that is under resourced and under erosion. Bringing about refugee protection for QLGBT people facing persecution, preventing further erosion of the refugee protection system that exists, and envisioning just approaches to asylum will require creative and committed political, policy, social service, community building, cultural, and scholarly work.

The social justice risks are as significant as the potentials – as are spelt out in the research of scholars such as Jasbir Puar, Sara Ahmed, Vivien Namaste, and Vancouver activist/scholar Fatima Jaffer. Raising the problem of sexuality or gender based persecution internationally risks othering cultures, faiths, or countries as monolithically and irredeemably homophobic. Moreover, we are mindful that presenting the need for QLGBT refugee settlement in Canada can entrench colonial narratives of rescue and binaries of developed vs. backwards or civilized vs. barbaric. Writing, speaking and organizing around QLGBT refugee protection invites us into echoing homonationalist discourses that equate the West with progress and tolerance of QLGBT citizens with modernity. This homonationalism can ally dangerously with Islamophobia or xenophobia. As Fatima Jaffer explained at the July 2011 Salaam conference held in Vancouver, after 9/11 "I was being seen as not being queer and patriotic, not being Canadian in the way that it's being framed by the queer community."[146]

Post-Colonial Queer/Trans scholarship, antiracist organizing among QLGBT communities, QLGBT migrant organizing, and Queer and Trans intersectionality[147] all play critical roles in interrupting these problematic discourses and their repercussions. Bringing postcolonial, antiracist, Trans and Queer perspectives into dialogue will enhance the community organizing, research, law and policy efforts to create meaningful protection for QLGBT refugees. Collaborations among community organizations working with QLGBT refugees and researchers are contributing to this important dialogue – Rainbow Refugee in Vancouver, AGIR in Montreal, and a number of groups in Toronto are part of this effort. As well, bringing the knowledge constructed through these collaborations into dialogue with policymakers, lawyers, service providers, human rights organizations, and the wider public is a critical step in the social justice agenda for QLGBT refugees.

Recently the two of us met with officers of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), to iron out specifics of how Queer/LGBT community organizations can participate in sponsoring refugees facing homophobic or transphobic persecution. Among the many details we pointed out were the problems with application forms asking for *sex (male /female)* and *marital status*. We also raised the issue that, while waiting for resettlement, in often precarious conditions, QLGBT refugees continue

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[146] Hainsworth, J. (2011, July 29). Homosexuality and Islam not Opposing Forces. *Xtra!*. Retrieved from http://www.xtra.ca/public/Vancouver/Homosexuality_and_Islam_not_opposing_forces-10561.aspx

[147] Bilge, S. (2011, October 18). Developing Intersectional Solidarities: Plea for Queer Intersectionality. [Blog entry]. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/2011/10/18/developing-intersectional-solidarities-a-plea-for-queer-intersectionality/

to face homophobic or transphobic violence. In particular, we drew attention to the interminably long and dangerous waits faced by Ugandans, Nigerians, and other Africans who apply for refugee protection in Nairobi, Kenya. As the Canadian Council for Refugees documents,[148] the target for the Canadian processing centre in Nairobi remains 1000 people per year, despite a caseload[149] of over 7000 people who have willing sponsors in Canada.

Advocating for migration rights for same-sex partners (LEGIT.ca)[150] and refugee protection for QLGBT asylum seekers in Canada (rainbowrefugee.ca)[151] has taught us a few things about negotiating our way around boxes that confine and, through systems, exclude. Working towards human rights protection for those persecuted for the sexualities or gender identities raises complex intersectional social justice issues that call for alliance building, interdisciplinary scholarship, dialogue, and critical reflexivity in our advocacy and research.

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[148] Canadian Council for Refugees. (n.d.). Nairobi: Long Delays-Sign the Statement, contact your MP and raise awareness. Retrieved from http://ccrweb.ca/en/nairobi-action

[149] Canadian Council for Refugees. (n.d.). Nairobi: Long Delays-Sign the Statement, contact your MP and raise awareness. Retrieved from http://ccrweb.ca/en/nairobi-action

[150] LEGIT. (2011). Home. Retrieved from http://www.legit.ca/

[151] Rainbow Refuge Canada. (2011). About Rainbow Refugee. Retrieved from http://www.rainbowrefugee.ca/

16

LGBT Struggles for Human Dignity and Equal Rights in Uganda

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The influence of the Christian Right on LGBT rights continues to spread beyond the United States. It is productive to examine the nature and impact of this influence[152] on the African continent. As a Ugandan lesbian who grew up in an evangelical Christian household, I also think it is useful to examine the role and activities of external actors like the Christian Right in the struggles of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Uganda. United States evangelicals are one of the challenges faced by African LGBT movements as they struggle for human dignity and social justice.

Both anti-gay activists and LGBT activists across Africa are fighting on two fronts: a domestic and a foreign battle. For American evangelicals such as Scott Lively,[153] Africa is a battle ground to export his brand of anti-gay theology, even as it is being challenged in his own country. For African politicians and clergy heightened attacks on gay people have become an opportunity to gain votes. For African LGBT activists it has required us to adopt a Eurocentric advocacy toolkit which, ironically, is spawning a backlash against us in our own countries. And, on the other hand, for LGBT people in Uganda the anti-gay advocacy[154] of the Christian Right is fuelling overt violence and even death.

In March 2009, Scott Lively as well as Don Schmierer of Exodus Internationals, and Caleb Lee Brundidge of *International Healing Foundation*, traveled to Uganda to speak at a seminar called *Exposing the Homosexual Agenda*.[155] Remember, Uganda is a country where homosexuality is *already* illegal. Videos of Lively at the seminar capture him telling his Ugandan audience – a mix of police officers, members of Parliament, students, parents, pastors and their congregations – that homosexuals were responsible for the Nazi holocaust and they recruit children into homosexuality. "Nobody has been able to stop [homosexuals] so far," he agitates. "I'm hoping Uganda can!"

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[152] Gettleman, J. (2010, January 3). America´s Role Seen in Uganda Anti-Gay Push. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/africa/04uganda.html?_r=2

[153] Scott Lively. (2010, July 29). Retrieved March 14, 2012 from the Conservapedia: http://www.conservapedia.com/Scott_Lively

[154] Moylan, B. (2010, January 4). Huge in Africa: The American Evangelicals Goading Uganda to Kill Gays. *Gawker*. Retrieved from http://gawker.com/5439886/

[155] Burroway, J. (2010, January 6). BTB Videos: Scott Lively Delivers His "Nuclear Bomb" To Uganda. *Box Turtle Bulletin*. Retrieved from http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/2010/01/06/19081

The Christian Right's influence in Ugandan politics does not appear out of a vacuum. Christian evangelical missions to Africa date back hundreds of years to European slavery and colonization.[156] Here I look at the evolution of contemporary Christian evangelism and the continuing legacy of interventionism in Africa, which brought Lively to Uganda.

On 1 January 1980, American Presbyterian minister Francis Schaeffer became the first evangelical preacher to stir political activism among Christian evangelicals when he delivered a speech, *A Christian Manifesto,[157]* at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. A strong advocate *against* the separation of church and state, Schaeffer's teachings on 'true Christian living' and opposing humanism spawned a sexual revolution. He's widely cited as the person who birthed anti-abortion movements among evangelicals. Perhaps less known is the role Schaeffer's philosophy has played in a global anti-gay movement that has added a new dimension to discourse on sex and sexuality among African Christian-majority societies.

When Christian fundamentalists were debating federally funded abortion clinics and the abolition of mandatory prayer in public schools, Schaffer's concern was also the propulsion of a humanistic strain in public education. His interventions followed the common trajectory of the Christian Right's protection-of-our-children rhetoric. Schaeffer advocated what he called "true Christian living." In a nutshell, he preached that humanist secularism was the dominant threat to human existence and had only been made possible by the silence of Christians. Further – and this is where Uganda enters the picture – Schaeffer advocated "reaching the lost both at home and abroad." The mission of saving "the lost" must not stop at American borders, he told his followers; the mission is a universal one.

While Uganda has seen the growth of an evangelical movement since the mid-1970s, Shaffer's *Manifesto* added a new dimension to postcolonial African struggles, including navigating Eurocentric thoughts and evangelical beliefs on sex, sexuality, and marriage. Marriage according to many evangelical preachers is to be understood as an institution of human service to God. Linked to this conception is a model of 'the family' based on a hierarchical and individualistic paradigm, one runs counter to the values of traditional African conceptions of family grounded on communal life.

The export of evangelical beliefs from the United States to Africa included the condemnation of same-sex relationships because "they are not in line with God's purpose for procreation." The latter belief is shared by evangelical tradition and many Africans, but for different reasons. Ugandans espouse a 'sex for procreation' view as a way of continuing family lineage: one cannot become an ancestor without offspring. On a community level, a person who dies without a child is believed to become an 'alien spirit.' In contrast, evangelicals advocate procreation because they believe a non-child bearing sexual relationship is contrary to God's intent for marriage.

The fear associated with barren 'alien spirits' stigmatized all childless people, whether the childlessness was caused by barrenness or heterosexuals or homosexuals who choose not to have

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[156] Davidson, B. (2008). The Bible and the Gun. (Episode 5). *Africa Series.* Video retrieved from http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-84165638468056829

[157] Schaeffer, F. A. (1982). A Christian Manifesto. Retrieved from http://www.peopleforlife.org/francis.html

children. Same-sex relationships in Africa predate colonial times, but it is only now that LGBTs are claiming their independence from cultural ties which requires them to have children or to remain silent. This cultural disruption partly informs why homosexuality or its so-called 'promotion'[158] is perceived as un-African.

Homosexuality is not alien to Africa. Rather, what is alien to Africa is the discourse and human rights terminology being used by more visible African LGBT movements. The LGBT movement in Uganda has adopted an agenda that defines LGBT rights as human rights precisely to counter an American-inspired movement against us. The visibility of LGBT activism partly informs the success of the anti-gay movement – but also *vice versa*.

In 2010, a year after the anti-gay seminar in which Lively and Caleb Lee Brundidge lectured Ugandans on the 'gay agenda,' American evangelist and founder of The Call Ministries, Lou Engel, held a prayer crusade in Uganda where he called on the nation to repent for "the sin of homosexuality." Engel echoed Schaeffer's of anxieties about humanism's "takeover of public schools" and "loss of religious freedom."

In his *Manifesto*, Schaeffer had also advocated "compassion for those caught in the problem [homosexuality]." Schaeffer's "compassion" for homosexuals was echoed in Lively's introduction at the conference in Kampala. And that same rhetoric of compassion for homosexuals has spawned 'gay-change therapy' clinics in Ugandan churches, such as the one run by anti-gay campaigner Martin Ssempa,[159] who claims he is helping homosexuals become straight.

In predominantly Christian countries like Uganda, the church, in collaboration with the state, is less concerned with the abolition of prayer in public schools than with the "promotion of homosexuality in schools." The seed of the idea that Lively had planted earlier – that the threat to children comes from particular secular sections of the population – had caught politicians in Africa like a cold. Uganda Member of Parliament David Bahati and President Yoweri Museveni[160] have both expressed fears about a 'secret plot' of Ugandan homosexuals and their American allies to promote homosexuality in schools. At youth conferences presided over by Uganda's First Lady, Janet Museveni,[161] she addressed the dangers of the secular world and urged youth to disavow the "curse of homosexuality" and to embrace "spiritual growth."

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[158] Uganda's Museveni against 'promotion of homosexuality.' (2012, February 23). *BBC HARDtalk*. Video retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/hardtalk/9698847.stm

[159] Nathan, M. (2011, April 18). Uganda- Watch Martin Ssempa Explain Homosexuality as TWO Calls for Investigation. *LezGetReal*. Retrieved from http://lezgetreal.com/2011/04/uganda-watch-martin-ssempa-explain-homosexuality-as-two-calls-for-investigation/

[160] Kasozi, E. & Ahimbisibwe, P. (2010, June 4). Uganda: Opposed to Homosexuality- Museveni. *All Africa*. Retrieved from http://allafrica.com/stories/201006040263.html

[161] Mugisa, A. & Bwambale, T. (2010, August 10). Janet warns on tribalism, reckless sex. *New Vision*. Retrieved from http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/728312

Christian evangelicals also advocate that the state is God's ministry. Successful leadership thus depends on the involvement of the church in policy making so that governments do not abrogate the authority of God. As a predominantly religious country, Ugandan political leaders use churches and mosques as their campaigning grounds. As well, part of their political platforms has included the promise of restoring the nation's waning moral sanity. The fight against homosexuality has given them new material to ensure their election or re-election, as well as to justify Uganda's turn to militarization, as in the case of ongoing raids on LGBT organizations and activists.

Kapya Kaoma, the author of *Globalizing of the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives. African Churches, and Homophobia*,[162] has written that conservative American Christians are building "Christian colonies" in Africa. He examines recent developments in Africa where the introduction of anti-gay bills can be linked directly to the presence and advocacy of United States evangelicals in those African countries. What is happening to LGBT people in Uganda corroborates Kaoma's analysis of the relationship of the Christian Right to the persecution of LGBT Ugandans.

Some critics of the Christian Right argue that these neocolonialist tendencies are not entirely destructive, as some United States evangelicals also fund health and education projects on the Africa continent. But this globalization of the gospel, I would argue, does not always effect positive social change. In fact, in Uganda, it has spawned sexual violence. Two years after Lively introduced the idea that homosexuals are a threat to peace and stability in Uganda, an anti-gay bill was tabled in Parliament by Minister of Parliament David Bahati.[163] On January 26, 2011 David Kato,[164] one of the founders of Uganda's LGBT movement, was murdered after a local newspaper had featured his face with the headline "Hang Them! They Are Coming after Our Children."[165] Since Kato's death, persecution of LGBT persons in Uganda continues to escalate. And this persecution does not stop at Ugandan borders. Campaigns to introduce similar anti-gay bills are springing up in several other African countries.

The anti-gay religiosity in Africa has also provided an opportunity for African LGBT movements to make significant social justice strides in a short time. I believe such movements need to be bottom-up approaches that emphasize proactive strategies to address the immediate threats against us. This bottom-up approach must learn from other liberation struggles in Africa. African feminists, for example, have built a gender justice movement based on their histories, struggles and lived experiences as African women. They understand that their liberation depends on them shaping their own destinies, which includes recognizing education as one of the most powerful weapons against

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[162] Kaoma, K. (2009). *Globalizing Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches & Homophobia.* Somerville, MA: Political Science Associates. Retrieved from http://www.publiceye.org/publications/globalizing-the-culture-wars/pdf/africa-full-report.pdf

[163] Uganda anti-gay bill likely to drop death penalty. (2011, April 26). *The Guardian.* Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/26/uganda-anti-gay-bill-death-penalty

[164] Uganda gay rights activist David Kato killed. (2011, January 27). *BBC News Africa.* Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12295718

[165] Rice, X. (2010, October 21). Uganda paper calls for gay people to be hanged. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/21/ugandan-paper-gay-people-hanged

oppression. Africa has been able to produce many feminist scholars, theologians, writers, and women leaders because liberation movements were mindful that, as Stephen Bantu Biko[166] said, "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

In order to counter the forces against our liberation, African LGBT movements need to ground our narratives of liberation in African-centered experiences. We need to speak out against oppression wherever and however it manifests itself. If African LGBT activists remain silent when donors threaten to cut aid to anti-gay African countries, our silence will only confirm the mantra that homosexuality is imposed on Africa by the West.

Our future as African LGBT movements also depends on our Western allies showing solidarity by following our lead. In the struggle for human dignity and rights, Africans voices must lead the way. We need our own local movements of LGBT thinkers – academically trained and politically savvy activists – whose voices can be carried into the institutions that currently oppress us. We also need the positive stories of resistance by our social movements to be recognized and celebrated.

The emergence of African pro-LGBT movements for social justice in countries like Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda, and of African human rights activists creating safe spaces and positive change in extremely hostile environments, is a *success* story. We need our allies in Western LGBT movements standing with us, and helping us to resist the oppressive impact of African and western religious movements that advocate denying us our human dignity, rights and full citizenship.

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[166] Biko, S. First liberate the mind. (2008). South Africa. Info. Retrieved from http://www.southafrica.info/about/history/steve-biko.htm

23

Desiring and Doing Equity: The Triangle Program for LGBTIQ2S Youth

Doreen Fumia, Ryerson University

I would like to add to the *Equity Matters*[270] discussions about queer equity in public education with some thoughts that have surfaced from an ethnographic study I recently conducted. The study is based on the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) *Triangle Program*, Canada's only publicly funded secondary school classroom for LGBTIQ2S youth from grades 9 to 12. It documents some of the experiences and changes that have taken place over the last 16 years since Triangle opened its doors in 1995. There is much that can be learned about (queer) equity in education from the history and present day operation of Triangle. The student numbers have increased, they are younger, and trans and, increasingly, queer students of colour and Two-spirited students demand instruction more inclusive of their identities, histories and experiences.

An examination of commitments or lack thereof to queer youth points to more than the need for caring education environments. Examining such commitments is also informative of the ways in which decision makers think about citizenship, rights and the future of our nation. That is, the ways in which structured interactions take place in the context of educational institutions is indicative of who we can even *imagine* as belonging or not belonging to our communities.

Triangle Program is a site where both successes and failures of equity in education can be observed. It has been a site for hundreds of LGBTIQ2S students to make their way back to secondary school, take control of what they want to do after high school and for many, to become leaders in their communities. In line with Gloria Filax's research findings in *Queer Youth in the Province of the 'Severely Normal,'*[271] students often arrive at Triangle Program because school administrators' understanding of how to help queer students tends to focus on them as 'problems.' Once understood as a problem, an attempt is made to relocate a student to a different school.

One former Triangle Program student who identified as pansexual was asked twice if was an option. Initially the student turned down the offer because the gifted academic program in which the student was enrolled was preferred. The second time the student accepted because washrooms, among other issues, were becoming an issue, making the student more and more depressed to the point of missing classes on regular basis.

> "So I went with my mom and I fell in love with [Triangle] because I was like, oh my god, I can be myself and they have single bathrooms! I don't have to worry about people beating me up. And that's how I ended up going to the Triangle program. But yeah, I'm really happy that I went and when I chose to go there I kind of thought that I was never

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[270] Fedcan Blog. (2012). Archive for 'Equity Matters.' Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/category/equity-matters/

[271] Filax, G. (2006). *Queer Youth in the Province of the "Severely Normal."* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

> gonna graduate and never gonna go anywhere with my life, so it's kind of a big deal that I did and actually got a lot more opportunities because … I wouldn't have … if I had stayed at a random mainstream school."

The student describes what made it possible to return to school and ultimately to graduate with scholarship funding for higher education: gender neutral washrooms and an environment where there were no beatings. Surely, this is not an unreasonable wish list for a mainstream school setting.

This excerpt from my ethnographic study could be interpreted to mean that Triangle is successful and so too is the TDSB school system because it provides a different social and learning environment for some queer students. However, in many ways Triangle exists as a consequence and a witness to the failure and inaction of the Canadian school system and school administrators. In *Race to Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequality*,[272] Tim McCaskell addresses the disjuncture between celebrating a program such as Triangle and lamenting the very limits of this program. He observes that Triangle is small in scope and rather than being classified as a school, became a program in an existing alternative school (Oasis Alternative Secondary School). Because it is small in scope, McCaskell argues, "it would never fundamentally change what was happening to gay students … in mainstream schools."

The fact that Toronto has a school program for a small number of 'at-risk' queer youth or, for that matter, Africentric-focused schools for Black students stems from the hard work that education activists do to ensure inclusive schools. These efforts do not easily translate into easy 'wins.' Rather, they give rise, more often than not, to singular solutions that do not actually shift underpinning systemic queer phobias or racism. We might end up with programs where problems can be re-located, but the mainstream racist, heterosexist, and phobic systems remain intact.

So what does (queer) equity activism accomplish? Malinda S. Smith references the important work of Sara Ahmed in her *Equity Matters* post on, "The language of equity and diversity in the academy."[273] I, too, find Ahmed's work compelling, particularly her 2007 article, "'You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing': Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation."[274] This work is particularly apt when examining the gap between commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion and the practice of it.

In this article, Ahmed states that equity work is appealing to educational institutions as long as it conforms to the ideal image an institution has of itself. The equity policies that we spend hours developing stand as a *representation* of what it means for schools and universities to be caring, equitable and diverse, without even having to act on – engage in the doing of – the recommendations embedded in them. Too often, what well-written, even well-intended reports and policies *do* is help individual institutions to gain some equity credibility. And, arguably, the Triangle Program does just that for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

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[272] McCaskell, T. (2005). *Race to Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequity.* Ontario: Between the Lines.

[273] Smith, M. (2011, January 19). The Language of Equity and Diversity in the Academy. [Blog Entry]. Retrieved from http://blog.fedcan.ca/2011/01/19/the-language-of-equity-and-diversity-in-the-academy/

[274] Ahmed, S. (2007). 'You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing': Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30* (4), 590-609.

This is not to say that policy recommendations are worthless. However, it is to say that too often what is acted on is controlled and managed by the prevailing economic and marketable priorities rather than by a consideration of the systemic inequities that might accentuate what an educational institution is *not* doing and needs to do. Such revelations of inequities are suppressed because in a marketing conscious academic environment they may make institutions look bad and because they require more accountability for results. Further, as Rosemary Deem and Jennifer Ozga argue in their work on "Women Managing for Diversity in a Post Modern World," organizing around discourses of individualized equity 'problems,' identifies 'difference' but "does not necessarily evoke commitment to action or redistributive justice."

While equity activists strive for systemic change, there is a slippery terrain to be negotiated. Without actually having to admit to racism, queer phobias or ableism or, indeed, to change much of anything or commit to actions or redistributive justice, we are left to celebrate ourselves as being more inclusive based on the *potential* for change. The written policies and reports themselves seem to *represent* a commitment to equity and diversity rather than to any form of social justice or social change.

The school board in Toronto did respond to equity activists when it allowed for the creation of the Triangle Program. These acts are important, but we must question what they enable, produce, and constrain. As McCaskell noted, as a small program, Triangle was never intended to fundamentally change the way that homo, bi, queer and trans phobias are structured into public education. And it is this point that reveals clearly how equity work, and in this instance Triangle, is located on a slippery terrain, caught between the rhetoric of the *desire* for equity and actually *doing* equity.

Concomitant with the gap between the desire for and the doing of equity is how Triangle functions as a school program. One of the strong findings of the ethnographic study is that the school program would not exist without community support, and from outside the school system. This questions the commitment of the TDSB to go beyond a desire for equity. Triangle is located off TDSB property in the basement of the queer-positive Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCCT). Despite the potential conflicts that cohabiting with a religious organization might create, these have not only been avoided but the partnership has allowed Triangle the freedom to operate separate from some of the constraints of mainstream schooling.

Triangle has flourished because MCCT has worked with the queer community to provide ongoing support and stability. McCaskell muses:

> …having some place around that these kids could be taken care of, um, meant a lot less grief to a lot of other people, right? And as well it was a remarkably good deal for the Board because … the Board paid for the teachers and some admin support but it didn't have to pay for the site. The site was operated by MCCT so you know [there] wasn't heating and caretaking and maintaining a building that is a sizeable cost in running a school.

Fundraising efforts have meant that school supplies, furniture, school trips, guest speakers, scholarship money, lunch programs and a massive renovation effort that provides the Triangle Program with three separate classroom spaces, all have come from the community. Each of these campaigns has been labour intensive and none can be assumed as given from year to year. During my research one TDSB Trustee brazenly admits that the Board underfunds the Triangle Program.

A final aspect that emerged from the ethnographic study that I would like to touch on is the effect of the *It Gets Better*[275] campaign. Contrary to popular belief, the IGB campaign was not beneficial for Triangle Program students because they are not students who fit the 'ideal' queer subject of victimhood. They are students who find a place at Triangle where they 'fit' and where they do not have to wait until they graduate until things gets better. In fact, in the Fall of 2010, when the campaign hit the cyber waves, it was a particularly difficult term for the Triangle students who felt oppressed by the dominant messages that a 'better' life was a respectable, bourgeois life (assimilating white heterosexuality). The students were angry that there were no commitments or messages that supported queer youth in the present. In fact, the number of self-harm incidents increased that Fall term and the teachers were convinced that it was the result of the students' interpretation of the IGB message: one of hopelessness for youth living their lives in the present.

Other than the lucky few who gain access to safe(r), more inclusive schools, like Triangle, where they can find sustained support for their beautiful queer selves, students continue to be confronted with the fact that they must wait until they leave school in order for their life to get better. What a sad condemnation of our public school system. The celebration of the *It Gets Better*[276] campaign, important as it may be for some queer youth, is the result of our collective failure to effectively move beyond individualizing equity problems and to actively commit to systemic change. And it is shameful for politicians to play off the IGB campaign, as typically happens when yet another youth commits suicide as a result of what the system likes to call bullying. Such utterances serve as quintessential examples of taking the rhetoric of the desire for equity as a replacement for doing equity.

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[275] It Gets Better Project. (2012). Home. Retrieved from http://www.itgetsbetter.org/

[276] It Gets Better Project. (2012). Home. Retrieved from http://www.itgetsbetter.org/

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Moving Beyond "Slaves, Sinners, and Saviors": An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of US Sex-Trafficking Discourses, Law and Policy

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Moving Beyond "Slaves, Sinners, and Saviors": An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of US Sex-Trafficking Discourses, Law and Policy[1]

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Abstract: This article analyzes stories and images of sex trafficking in current mainstream US public discourses, including government publications, NGO materials, news media, and popular films. Noting the similarities and differences among these discourses, the first part demonstrates that they often frame sex trafficking using a rescue narrative that reiterates traditional beliefs and values regarding gender, sexuality, and nationality, relying heavily on patriarchal and orientalist tropes. Reflecting this rescue narrative, mainstream public policies focus on criminal justice solutions to trafficking. The second part suggests alternative frameworks that empower rather than rescue trafficked people. The article argues that the dominant criminal justice approach to trafficking—the state rescuing victims and prosecuting traffickers—will not alone end the problem of sex trafficking, but that public policies must address the structural conditions that create populations vulnerable to trafficking and empower those communities to dismantle inequalities that are the root causes of trafficking.

Keywords: sex trafficking, public discourses, rescue narrative, framing, public policy, feminism

Awareness of sex trafficking has increased significantly since the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) in 2000. We now regularly hear about sex trafficking from journalists like Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times*, Hollywood movies like *Taken* with Liam Neeson, Hollywood celebrities like Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore, with their Real Men Don't Buy Girls campaign, and activists and survivors like Rachel Lloyd and Somaly Mam, who tour the country to speak out against sex trafficking. Even government-sponsored educational campaigns are attempting to raise awareness about trafficking. A plethora of activist organizations are working on this issue, including Polaris Project and International Justice Mission in Washington, DC, Shared Hope International in Washington State, and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Equality Now, and Girls Educational and Mentoring Services in New York City. These activists come from a range of political perspectives, making for strange bedfellows—some are feminist, some are evangelical, some are progressive, and some are politically conservative. For example, one of the key sponsors of the TVPA was conservative New Jersey Republican Chris Smith, but the bill was also supported by the National Organization for Women (Chapkis 2003, 925).

The diverse social movement against human trafficking at first framed sex trafficking as a problem that occurred in other countries, particularly countries in Southeast Asia and the post-Soviet Newly Independent States in Eastern Europe and Asia. The focus was primarily on sex trafficking; labor trafficking received much less attention. Gradually, the problem came to be recognized as existing within the United States, involving not only non-citizen victims but US citizens as well (Baker 2012). These origins have shaped how sex trafficking has been framed in mainstream public discourses over time. Government actors, anti-trafficking activists, the media, and Hollywood tell stories about trafficking that highlight particular causes of sex trafficking and particular solutions.

This article will examine anti-trafficking stories and images using a feminist intersectional perspective. Based on a review of a wide range of anti-trafficking materials produced by the US government, anti-trafficking advocates, and the media, this article analyzes selected representative images in order to discern common themes as well as distinctions among these discourses. The first part demonostrates how the US government, anti-trafficking advocacy organizations, and the media have, despite their differences, generally framed sex trafficking using a common, gendered rescue narrative: a heroic rescuer saves an innocent and helpless female victim from a cruel trafficker. This narrative of "slaves, sinners, and saviors" (Davidson 2005, 4) relies heavily on patriarchal and orientalist tropes of passive, ignorant, or backward women and girls who are trafficked and of their powerful and/or enlightened male rescuers. It taps into deeply held cultural beliefs about femininity, masculinity, and American exceptionalism, and supports criminal justice solutions to sex trafficking. The second part offers an alternative framework for understanding and addressing sex trafficking, which focuses on empowering rather than rescuing women and girls. While a criminal justice approach is an important part of an effective response to sex trafficking, it will not change the conditions that make women and girls vulnerable to trafficking. This article will argue that the dominant criminal justice approach to trafficking—the state rescuing victims and prosecuting traffickers—will not alone end the problem of sex trafficking, but that public policies must address the structural conditions that create populations vulnerable to trafficking and empower those communities to dismantle the inequalities that are the root causes of sex trafficking.

Rescue Narratives in Anti-Trafficking Discourses

Rescue narratives have a long history, articulated in a range of contexts. In "Two European Images of Non-European Rule" (1973), Talal Asad argues that colonizers used discourses centered on rescuing colonized people from themselves to justify colonial rule in Middle Eastern and African societies. Alternatively, colonizers used narratives of interracial sexual assault and protection of white women as grounds for the brutal oppression of colonized men (Woollacott 2006). This rescue narrative reflected an attitude of paternalism—the idea of "restricting the freedoms and responsibilities of subordinates or dependents in what is considered or claimed to be their best interests" (Oxford English Dictionary). More recently, Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) and Ann Russo (2006) have shown how rhetoric about saving oppressed Afghani women was used to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan. Dominant populations have long used rescue narratives to mobilize and justify interventions into the lives of oppressed peoples, thereby reinforcing hierarchies of power.

In the United States and Europe, the rescue narrative first appeared in the context of sex trafficking over one hundred years ago, in turn-of-the-century campaigns against "white slavery," which was the term used by policy makers, advocates, and the media in stories about white women being forced into prostitution by immigrant men or men of color. This discourse generated a widespread anti-trafficking campaign fueled by anxieties about female sexuality and autonomy, as well as race and immigration, and resulting in laws restricting women's mobility in the interest of protecting them (Doezema 2000). In the United States, Congress passed the White Slave Traffic Act of 1910, otherwise known as the Mann Act, which prohibited the interstate transportation of women for "immoral purposes" and was used to criminalize non-normative, particularly interracial, consensual sexual behavior (Langum 1994).

As in the past, rescue narratives have been powerfully articulated in contemporary discourses on the sex trafficking of women and girls. The rescue narrative that dominates trafficking discourses begins with an evil trafficker or pimp who abducts, deceives, or lures a young, innocent, helpless, and often naive girl into

a prison-like brothel and controls her with brutal violence until a heroic rescuer comes to save the day. The trafficker is often a man of color or from a foreign country, and the rescuer is often a white, Western man. In this narrative frame, the solution to sex trafficking is capturing and criminally prosecuting the trafficker. This rescue narrative appears, in different degrees, in images and texts produced by the US government, anti-trafficking organizations, and the news media, as well as in film.

The US Government

The United States government has been explicit in framing the problem of trafficking in terms of protection and rescue. The name of the law itself—the Trafficking Victims Protection Act—reflects this framing. The US government has used the language of rescue in its anti-trafficking efforts. To implement the Act, the US Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families created the Campaign to Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking in order to identify and aid trafficking victims. This campaign asks people to become rescuers by helping to identify victims. In a public relations campaign called "Look Beneath the Surface," one poster shows a vulnerable, innocent-looking, and scantily clad woman seated in a chair, leaning away from a looming perpetrator who is standing in front of her.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Rescue & Restore Campaign. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/endtrafficking/toolkit.

The text on the poster reads, "Ask the right questions and look for clues. You are vital because you may be the only outsider with the opportunity to speak with the victim." The poster asks the viewer to rescue the woman, presumably by calling the 800 number provided. The image draws the viewer in and generates concern for the woman, but it does this by using traditional depictions of female sexual vulnerability, male aggression, and the need for rescue. In another Rescue & Restore Campaign poster, a woman of Asian descent is portrayed with little clothing, her lips parted and her head tilted deferentially to the side:
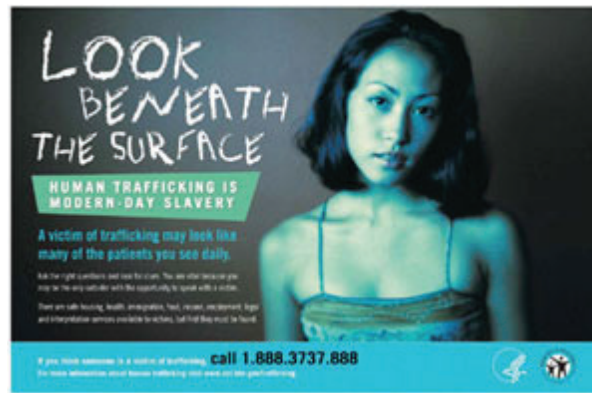
Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Rescue & Restore Campaign. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/endtrafficking/toolkit.

Both of these women are attractive, sexualized, and looking vulnerable. In the brochure using the second image, accompanying text encourages the viewer to rescue the woman by stating, "you can help liberate victims of human trafficking." The brochure, directed at law enforcement officers, health care workers, and social service organizations, then states, "Many victims do not see themselves as victims and do not realize what is being done to them is wrong" (US Department of Health and Human Services 2013). The assumption is that the victim needs another person to inform her that the abuse she is experiencing is wrong. These posters and brochures construct women as helpless and ignorant, requiring rescue or saving by others who "know best" (Kempadoo 2005, xxiv). The viewer, on the other hand, is assumed to be knowledgeable, powerful, and potentially heroic.

The theme of innocence and female vulnerability appears in other government contexts as well. In 2003, the Federal Bureau of Investigation established the Innocence Lost National Initiative to address the "growing problem of domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States" (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2013). Children are certainly innocent victims of trafficking, and the work of the FBI is commendable. Still, the framing of the problem as one of the loss of innocence, rather than child abuse, is striking.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Violent Crimes Against Children, Innocence Lost. http://www.fbi. gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthefts/cac/innocencelost.

In the above image from the FBI's homepage for the Initiative, this loss of innocence is portrayed in the form of a girl with pigtails placed next to a sexualized adult woman. Evoking the virgin/whore dichotomy, this image taps into American cultural anxieties about female sexuality, sexual vulnerability, and the loss of virginity. This portrayal is powerfully mobilizing, but also reinforces traditional gender and sexual norms.

A final example of the government's use of female vulnerability to portray trafficking and mobilize action appears in the 2011 *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report* (US Department of State 2011). Produced annually by the US Secretary of State as required by the TVPA, the TIP report documents the degree to which nations have passed criminal laws against trafficking and are enforcing them (22 US Code §§ 7106-7107 (2000)). Under the Bush administration, TIP reports focused almost exclusively on sex trafficking of women and girls and evaluated the anti-trafficking efforts of countries around the world, but did not evaluate the United States. This has changed under the Obama administration and the leadership of Hillary Clinton, who expanded the TIP report's focus to include labor trafficking and male victims of trafficking. In addition, as of 2010 the report evaluates US progress on fighting trafficking. Nevertheless, this report begins with a focus on female victims and sex trafficking abroad. The second page of the report displays the following images:
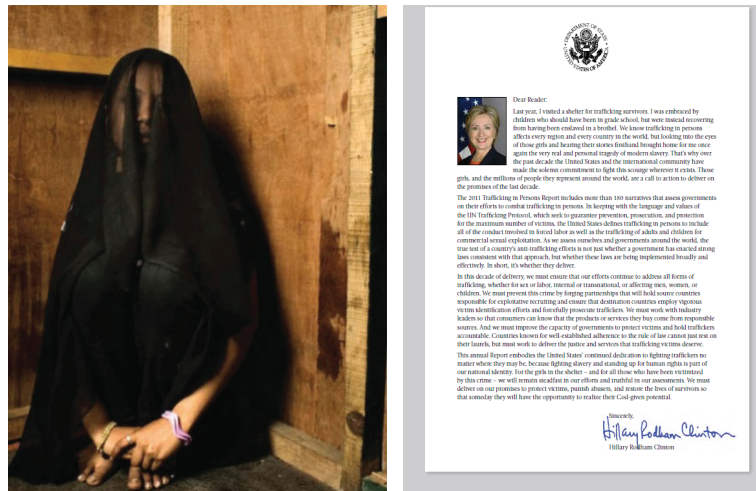
Source: US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2011. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/164452.pdf.

Invoking the trope of the oppressed and veiled Third World woman, this image portrays a silent and helpless female figure, head tilted, hands clasped around her legs, crouched in what appears to be a wooden box. On the next page is a photograph of and letter from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Side by side, these contrasting images are a good example of what Elizabeth Bernstein has described as the "backward traditionalism of third world women that [is] counterposed with the perceived freedom and autonomy of women in the contemporary West" (2007, 140). Clinton's letter begins by describing a visit she made to a shelter for trafficking survivors—children who had been "enslaved in a brothel." While the report does address labor trafficking as well, the initial image and text focus on vulnerable females and sex trafficking, and call on the United States to stop traffickers, "because fighting slavery and standing up for human rights is part of our national identity." Clinton calls on the United States to "deliver on our promises to protect victims, punish abusers, and restore the lives of survivors so that someday they will have the opportunity to realize their God-given potential." Clinton frames the United States as a rescuer of vulnerable people around the world and promotes criminal laws and prosecution as the means to eradicate human trafficking.

The above images are typical in government anti-trafficking publications. They portray vulnerable women in need of help and frame the state, as well as health-care and social-service professionals, as women's rescuers.

Anti-Trafficking Advocacy Groups

Activists against trafficking also use a rescue narrative, but they focus even more on innocent, young and helpless girls, and they expand on the rescue story line by including portrayals of masculine rescuers. Organizations like Shared Hope International (SHI), an evangelical anti-sex-trafficking organization, and Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), a service provider to sexually exploited girls in New York City, have brought attention to the issue of domestic sex trafficking, particularly of minors. The TVPA defines severe forms of trafficking in persons to include "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act," when "force, fraud, or coercion" is present or when the victim is under the age of eighteen (22 US Code § 7102 (8) & (9) (2006)). Travel across national borders is not required for conduct to qualify as sex trafficking. Anti-trafficking advocates such as SHI and GEMS are fighting to raise awareness about underage girls who are sexually exploited in prostitution, framing this exploitation as sex trafficking because it falls within the TVPA definition. Testifying before Congress in 2010, GEMS founder and executive director Rachel Lloyd criticized US policy for ignoring domestic minor sex trafficking (Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law 2010, 14–17).

To counter society's victim-blaming attitude toward sexually active young women, SHI, GEMS, and similar organizations focus on the theme of the threatened innocence of young girls. Rescue narratives require a worthy victim, and traditional sexual and gender ideologies heavily influence what makes a victim worthy: she is virginal and never complicit in her sexual commodification. This is achieved by portraying the victims as so young they couldn't possibly be held responsible for their sexual victimization. At an anti-trafficking conference in Portland, Oregon in 2010, the founder and executive director of Shared Hope International, Linda Smith, and one of her staff members, continually referred to teenagers as "little girls."[2] The phrase "commercial sexual exploitation of children" is commonly used in the movement to refer to the sexual exploitation of any minor, including girls as old as seventeen. SHI's "Protected Innocence Initiative" reports on whether states have criminalized domestic minor sex trafficking (Shared Hope International 2011). Similar to the FBI's Lost Innocence National Initiative, the Protected Innocence Initiative is striking in the emphasis it places on innocence.

Innocence is portrayed in movement advocacy materials by using images of very young girls. In 2008, GEMS produced a film titled *Very Young Girls* about adolescent girls in the commercial sex industry (Schisgall and Alvarez 2008). Most of the girls featured in the film were in their teens, but GEMS promoted the film with this poster:

Source: Girls Educational and Mentoring Services. http://www.gems-girls.org/get-involved/very-young-girls.

The pink Mickey Mouse socks and white sneakers powerfully represent youthful innocence. In 2011, Change. org promoted a Shared Hope International petition encouraging the North Texas Superbowl XLV Host Committee to take action to prevent child sex trafficking at the 2011 Superbowl. The petition, titled "Ask Superbowl Commission to Stand Up and Protect Children" and started by Melissa Snow of SHI, featured this image of a young girl, pouting:

Source: Patrick Schmitt (Director of Campaign Innovation, Change.org), e-mail to author dated January 17, 2011. http://www.change.org/petitions/ask-the-super-bowl-host-committee-to-stand-up-and-protect-children.

By focusing on such young girls, the producers of these images seek to shock and motivate people to take action.

Another way in which advocacy groups represent innocence is by portraying girls as silenced or blinded, and in need of someone to speak or see for them. An example of the visual silencing of victims is the following image from the website of a Texas-based anti-trafficking organization named Beauty Will Rise:

Source: Beauty Will Rise. http://beautywillrise.org/.

In this image, dark male hands cover the mouth and grab the shoulder of a green-eyed white girl. Adult women too are portrayed silenced in this way and in need of someone to speak for them. Facebook's Human Trafficking newsfeed contains an image of a woman with her mouth covered by the words, "Don't be afraid to say it for her!"
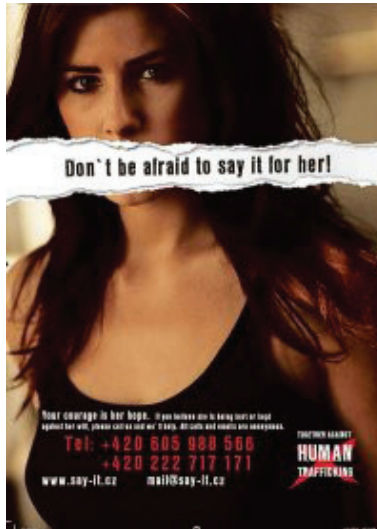
Source: Human Trafficking News Daily: Newsfeed on Global Human Trafficking. http://www.facebook.com/
pages/human-trafficking-news-daily-newsfeed-on-global-human-trafficking/173185018143.

Alternatively, women and girls are portrayed as blinded, as in this promotional poster for the independent film *Holly* about child sex trafficking in Cambodia made by anti-trafficking activists Guy Jacobson and Guy Moshe:

Source: Priority Films. http://priorityfilms.com/dvd.php.

In *Holly*, a white middle-aged American man named Patrick saves a twelve-year-old Vietnamese girl Holly who had been sold by her impoverished family and smuggled into Cambodia, where she is forced to work as a prostitute (Moche 2006). These images portraying women and girls as mute or blind emphasize their vulnerability and helplessness, along with their need for rescue.

The portrayal of innocence and evil is perhaps most exaggerated in the independent film *The Candy Shop*, produced by several activist organizations in Atlanta, Georgia:

Source: Whitestone Motion Pictures. http://whitestonemp.com/film/candy-shop/.

Told as a Tim Burton-style allegory, this short film portrays a demonic man who lures innocent and angelic young girls into his candy shop, where he has a machine that magically transforms the girls into candy, which he then sells to men. The candy-shop owner, who is the trafficker, is tall, skinny and effeminate, wearing garish, tight-fitting clothes, white face makeup, and dark red lipstick, depicting non-normative gender and suggesting nonnormative sexuality. He attempts to lure a twelve-year-old boy to be his apprentice, but the boy realizes what is going on and intervenes to save the girls. In the climactic scene where the boy and the man are fighting, the man falls into his own machine and is transformed into a lollipop. The boy then uses the machine to transform the girls back into themselves, freeing them from the shop and returning them to their parents. The boy's defeat of the effeminate candy-shop owner and his rescue of the girls reestablish normative masculinity. While the film's fairy-tale portrayal of evil, innocence and rescue is an extreme case of the rescue narrative, it shares with the previous examples a portrayal of worthy victims as innocent and helpless. This representation of innocence sets a high standard that could obscure many victims of trafficking, such as underage girls who are sexually experienced or women who are coerced into commercial sex because of poverty or drug addiction, and are thus not perfect victims, locked in a room or chained up. This film also represents a common theme of advocacy organization materials, also seen in the film *Holly:* heroic white males fighting to save young girls from traffickers.

Anti-trafficking activist organizations commonly use images of strong male rescuers. Shared Hope International has a program called The Defenders USA, which seeks to get men involved in the anti-trafficking movement. The Defenders USA website invokes a chivalrous masculinity to inspire men to act as saviors and rescuers (Shared Hope International 2013). A past version of the website asked visitors to "restore a girl" by making a donation. The website had pictures of young, innocent, vulnerable-looking girls with the quotation, "He rescued me," next to pictures of middle-aged white men with the quotation, "I became a defender." Another image caption appealed, "Be the One to Save Her Future." The Defenders USA asks men to pledge not to buy sex. Past pledge cards had images of women and girls pictured in vulnerable positions:

Source: The Defenders USA, Shared Hope International. Accessed 15 June 2012.

The young women are posed looking up at the viewer, or looking away wistfully. They are sad, vulnerable, and bare-shouldered. The current pledge card and a T-shirt for sale on the website have these images:

Source: The Defenders USA, Shared Hope International. http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Take-the-Pledge-card.pdf and http://sharedhope.org/store/protected-innocence-t-shirt/.

Again, the girls are vulnerable, hunched over in a bed or looking up pleadingly, waiting to be rescued.

In contrast to the images of vulnerable girls, The Defenders USA advocacy materials portray men as strong and heroic rescuers and saviors. In 2010, The Defenders USA sponsored a motorcycle ride to raise money and recruit men into the anti-trafficking movement. In the publicity for the event, the organization used highly masculinized graphics, language, and even font:

Source: The Defenders USA blog. Accessed 15 June 2012. http://thedefenderproject.wordpress.com. The current blog can be found at http://sharedhope.org/category/defenders/.

In this image, a white arm with clenched fist grabs two red figures posed in the shape of a heart. The words are in boxy, all-capital letters. Another example is an image at the beginning of a current Defenders USA video directed at truckers, which is posted on YouTube and begins with a silhouetted line of men standing aggressively, legs apart and arms linked, with "The Defenders USA" written underneath them:
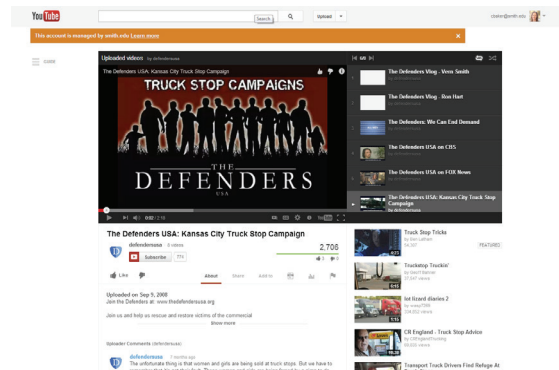
Source: The Defenders USA, YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFCXCEPER2U&list=UUWWWs X94Fy7R57mrBXQ1dWQ.

A brochure currently linked to The Defenders USA website, titled *Time to Man Up*, contains these images:

Source: The Defenders USA, Time to Man Up. http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/About-the-Defenders.pdf.

The Defenders USA blog has posts titled "A Man to Fight for You" and "Let's Be Heroes." All of these expressions and images portray men as strong, aggressive, and tough. Another group, Truckers Against Trafficking, calls on men to be "everyday heroes" using the following image:

Source: Truckers Against Trafficking. Accessed 28 May 2013. http://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/.

As one commentator has said, men are coaxed into participating in women's and other humanitarian issues by being "granted the role of heroic rescuers and saviors" and given a "moral leadership role" (Bernstein 2007, 139).

Utilization of traditional masculinity, however, is not limited to evangelical organizations, as demonstrated in Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore's Real Men Don't Buy Girls campaign, which has produced a number of public-service announcements featuring celebrities like Kutcher and Sean Penn.
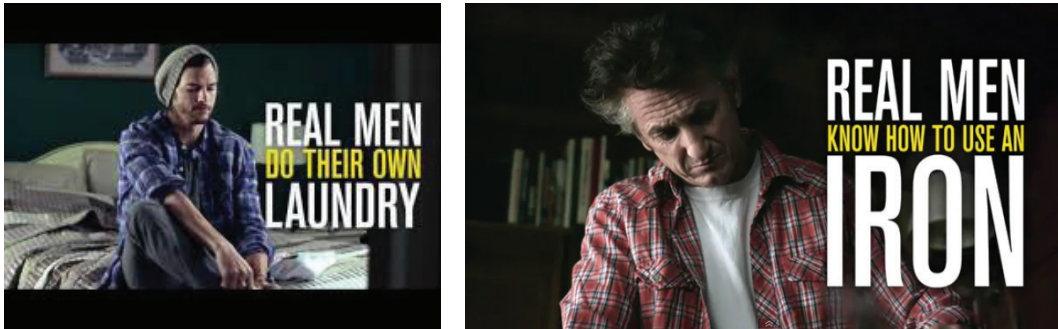
Source: Real Men Don't Buy Girls, Thorn's Channel, YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL95E 64A6AEEED5718.

In these videos, the men appear to be doing traditionally female tasks like laundry and ironing, but as the video progresses the viewer realizes that doing laundry for Kutcher amounts to throwing his dirty socks in the trash can and opening a new package of socks, and ironing for Penn is using the iron to make a grilled-cheese sandwich. After showing their incompetence at traditionally female tasks, both videos end with the words, "Real men don't buy girls." The intent is humorous, but the message is very traditional: men can refuse to engage in a traditionally male behavior—predatory sexual behavior—while still remaining real men who prove their masculinity by not knowing how to perform traditionally female tasks. While these videos challenge demand for commercialized sex from girls, they do so in a way that reinforces traditional gender roles.

The gendered nature of sex-trafficking discourses is apparent from the fact that males are rarely mentioned or portrayed as victims in anti-sex-trafficking campaigns, despite the fact that male victims certainly exist (Curtis et al. 2008; Saewyc et al. 2008). The following image appears on the website of a Texas-based anti-trafficking organization, Beauty Will Rise:

Source: Beauty Will Rise. http://beautywillrise.org/.

The assumption in the text is that only women and children are targets of sex trafficking. One scholar attributes the invisibility of men in trafficking discourses to the gendered assumption that, with regards to prostitution, "women are victims and men make choices" (Dennis 2008).

Similar to the US government's anti-trafficking position, non-governmental anti-trafficking organizations utilize a rescue narrative that focuses on female innocence, helplessness, and sexual vulnerability. But whereas government materials tend to focus on the state or professionals as rescuers, anti-trafficking activists focus on individual men playing the rescuer role. This gendered contrast is amplified in popular media—both in journalistic accounts of trafficking and, even more so, in Hollywood movies.

The Rescue Narrative in Mass Media: Journalism and Hollywood Movies

Both journalists and, especially, Hollywood movies use the most extreme form of the rescue narrative when addressing the issue of sex trafficking. US media often represent women and girls as helpless victims in need of strong men to rescue them, to which is added a portrayal of other cultures, particularly in developing nations, as primitive and/or barbaric, thereby positioning Americans as saviors. The media regularly portrays the cultures from which trafficked women and girls come as backward and unrelentingly oppressive. For example, on the NBC Dateline special *Children for Sale*, the founder and CEO of evangelical anti-trafficking organization International Justice Mission, Gary Haughen, is seen in Cambodia raiding brothels and rescuing girls. In the opening scene of this film, NBC correspondent Chris Hansen describes Cambodia as "an exotic vacation destination, with ancient cities, bold colors, legendary temples, remarkable beauty—and horrendous crimes that go on behind closed doors" (NBC Dateline 2005). He goes on to describe this "dark place" and its "shameful secret." Trafficking is framed as a problem "over there," and privileged Western white men are the powerful moral figures who rescue Cambodian children from exploitative adults. This image from the film is of an American rescuer fleeing from a brothel with a terrified Cambodian child:

Source: NBC Dateline, Children for Sale (2005). http://www.nbcnews.com/video/dateline/4039095#4039095.

This recurring rescue narrative configures white men as needed to "rescue brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1988, 296), often downplaying poverty and focusing on a deficient culture as the cause of trafficking. In doing this, "cultural communities are cast as 'not yet'—not yet realizing feminist potential, not yet enacting human rights values, not yet as modern or progressive as their Euro-American counterparts (who are placed in the role of rescuer)" (Hua 2011, 65). The initial and still predominant framing of sex trafficking as a problem originating outside of the United States likely contributes to this cultural explanation of trafficking.

Sometimes journalists themselves are the rescuers (Hua 2011, 57). Examples include Canadian journalist Victor Malarek, author of the book *The Natashas* (2003) about women trafficked from Eastern Europe, and Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times*, who has written many columns on sex trafficking, particularly

about girls in Cambodia, as well as a book, *Half the Sky* (2009), with his wife Sheryl WuDunn. In many of his *New York Times* columns, Kristof himself is a character within the story, sometimes posing as a john to gain access to brothels in order to save a girl, a technique used by other journalists as well. In one case, Kristof actually bought two girls out of prostitution in Cambodia, which he described in a 2005 story. Perplexed when one of the girls returns to her brothel, he muses, "It would be a tidier world if slaves always sought freedom" (Kristof 2005). Attributing her return to "low self-esteem" and drug addiction, he reports a conversation where he warns her that she will die of AIDS if she stays in the brothel, telling her of "some young women I had just seen, gaunt and groaning, dying of AIDS in Poipet." Nevertheless, she stays, which Kristof attributes to her being "broken" in a world that "poisons its victims." Despite his heroic efforts, Kristof is unable to save the girl. In another story, a video "The Face of Slavery" (2009), Kristof, guided by a trafficking survivor, leads the viewer into the dungeons of Cambodian brothels, describing "unspeakable" torture and showing several close-ups of a girl whose eye had been gouged out by her pimp. While the work of Kristof in raising attention to the abuse and exploitation of women and girls around the world is certainly commendable, he follows a common journalistic pattern of portraying himself as a heroic rescuer of helpless women and girls of color in developing nations.

The rescue narrative is particularly strong in Hollywood movies about trafficking, like the 2007 German-US coproduction *Trade*, in which a thirteen-year-old Mexican virgin is kidnapped by Russian sex traffickers and her seventeen-year-old brother attempts to rescue her with the help of a middle-aged Texas policeman and father figure (played by Kevin Kline), who lost his daughter to sex trafficking years before (Kreuzpaintner 2007).
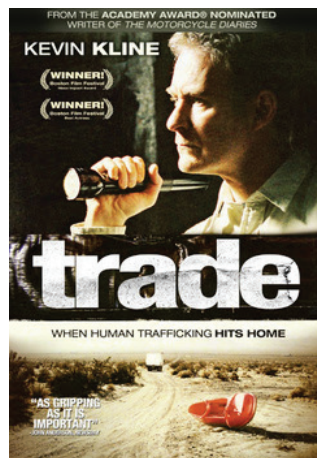
Source: Amazon.com.

In this promotional poster, Klein's character is featured gripping a flashlight and looking intensely beyond the frame. Across lines of age, race and nationality, the older white American male guides the Mexican boy on how to become a man by rescuing his young sister. The theme of threatened innocence is central to the movie. The plot is driven by the race to rescue the girl before her virginity is sold to the highest bidder. In another promotional poster for the film, the girl is dressed in a school uniform, looking down demurely, surrounded by hearts and flowers:

Source: Lionsgate. http://www.tradethemovie.com/.

The girl's innocence is represented not only in her dress and demeanor: there is even a white halo around her face and shoulders. Her virginity begs to be saved from the rapacious red lust advancing toward her from all directions.

The themes of female sexual vulnerability, the heroic fight to protect a girl's virginity, and heroic masculine rescue are also central to the film *Taken* (Morel 2010), which grossed over $145 million at the box office. This film portrays a naive American teenager, who while traveling in Paris is abducted by traffickers, and is eventually saved by her father, a former CIA paramilitary operative (played by Liam Neeson), from Albanian traffickers and Arab procurers. Similar to *Trade*, the plot is driven by Neeson's race to rescue his daughter before her virginity is auctioned to a wealthy Arab man. In the film, Neeson is portrayed as hypermasculine—willing and able to kill anyone who gets in the way of rescuing his daughter:

Sources: The Movie Blog and IMDb.

In the promotional poster to the left, Neeson's character is posed in an aggressive stance, legs apart, pulling a gun out of his long leather jacket and looking as if he is about to whip around. In the poster on the right, he is dark and menacing, photographed from below, again with a gun, and with a superimposed quotation from the film where he threatens to kill his daughter's kidnapper. The central focus of this extremely violent film is the estranged, unemployed father's restoration of his masculine authority through the act of rescuing his daughter. The extreme vulnerability of the daughter, the brutality of the traffickers, and the heroic Neeson character all convey a very traditional story of gender and rescue. Rescue as an exchange of women between men—the trafficker and the rescuer—constructs a form of heroic masculinity.

In both of these films, sex trafficking is portrayed in simplistic, individualistic, good-and-evil terms, where there are only "slaves, sinners and saviors" (Davidson 2005, 4). The focus is on individual victims and perpetrators. Victims are almost always female (although sometimes they are boys); they are innocent, helpless, naive, totally victimized, and needing to be rescued. Rescuers are white Western men. At the start of both films, the disruption of patriarchal authority is portrayed by the absence or the inadequacy of male protectors. The need for male intervention is occasioned by the vulnerability and naïveté of the females who end up trafficked. The plot development in both films centers around males learning or reasserting their manhood by rescuing females, thereby reestablishing patriarchal authority. The male rescuers in both films are former members of law enforcement, but rather than rely on the criminal justice system, they seek vigilante justice. The message to girls is also very traditional. *Trade* and *Taken* begin with girls defying their parents; they are abducted as a result of their defiance. The implicit message in both films is that girls should listen to and obey their parents, and stay close to home because the world is a dangerous place for them.

Men are usually the rescuers, but sometimes women are, although women usually fail in saving the central victim, as in the 2005 Lifetime miniseries *Human Trafficking* or the 2010 film *Whistleblower*. In *Human Trafficking*, a female US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent, played by Mira Sorvino, attempts to save an undocumented woman trafficked into the United States. *Whistleblower* portrays a Nebraska cop (played by Rachel Weisz) who becomes a peacekeeper in post-war Bosnia and exposes the United Nations for covering up a sex-trafficking ring. Both characters' failure to rescue the primary victims in these films stands in stark contrast to the success of male rescuers in *Trade* and *Taken*.

Source: IMDb

The portrayals of the female would-be rescuers on the posters for these movies are quite different than the portrayals of the men on the posters for *Trade* and *Taken*. Rachel Weisz's character holds her arms close to her body and looks off to the side, warily. Mira Sorvino's character strikes an aggressive stance, holding a gun with outstretched arms, but she has a distressed and unsure expression on her face. These poses make the women look weaker than the aggressive and determined poses of the men in the promotional materials for *Trade* and *Taken*.

When placed side by side, the portrayals of sex trafficking by the US government, anti-trafficking organizations, and the media exhibit some common patterns, but also distinctions. All three tend to focus on sexually vulnerable and helpless women and girls in need of protection and rescue. Whereas the government

discourses frame the state or professionals as rescuers, anti-trafficking organizations and the media focus on individual male rescuers. Hollywood distinguishes itself with an extreme and hypermasculinized version of the trafficking rescue narrative, where the rescuer is a former law enforcement officer turned vigilante and playing outside the rules. In all three mediums, race and nationality play out in predictable ways, with white Western men rescuing women and girls, often in developing countries, from traffickers who are men of color or Eastern Europeans. These stories reiterate conservative beliefs and values around gender, sexuality, and nationality. In this way, ironically and despite the good intentions that surely motivate many of the activists on this issue, rescue narratives reinforce some of the social and cultural conditions that make women and girls vulnerable to sex trafficking in the first place—sexism, racism, and xenophobia.

Reframing the Discourses

The film *Trade* was based on a 2004 *New York Times Magazine* article on sex trafficking by journalist Peter Landesman, titled "The Girls Next Door." This article played a significant role in raising awareness about sex trafficking into the United States. In the article, Landesman quotes International Justice Mission's CEO Gary Haughen saying, "Sex trafficking isn't a poverty issue but a law-enforcement issue" (Landesman 2004). This perspective reflects the predominant view that sex trafficking is a criminal justice problem (Gulati 2011), a view that grows naturally out of the stories that are routinely told about sex trafficking. Rescue narratives portray the cause of trafficking to be individual deviant men or networks of criminals and the rescuers to be the state, health-care or social-service professionals, heroic male defenders, or hypermasculine vigilantes. This framing, however, obscures structural factors and the social, economic, and political conditions that create vulnerability to trafficking, such as wealth inequality and poverty, gendered cultural beliefs that devalue women and girls and commodify sex, and the denial of human rights based on race and/or nationality. These are the conditions that the state often creates, perpetuates, or fails to ameliorate through laws and public policies. The responsibility for trafficking is "shifted from structural factors and dominant institutions onto individual, deviant men: foreign brown men (as in the White Slave trade of centuries past) or, even more remarkably, African American men living in the inner city" (Bernstein 2007, 144), in the case of domestic minor sex trafficking.

With the support of many anti-trafficking organizations, the United States has concentrated on criminal justice solutions to sex trafficking. The TVPA focuses on "the three Ps"—prosecution, protection, and prevention—around which the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports are organized (US Department of State 2011, 16). The order of the three Ps reflects the priorities of the Act. The focus and the vast majority of the Act's funding is directed toward criminalization, prosecution, and punishment. The Act created new federal crimes related to trafficking and provided abundant resources to prosecute traffickers. Relatively few resources are dedicated to helping victims directly. Aid for foreign victims of trafficking, including visas to stay in the United States, is very limited, and is contingent on the willingness of the victims to testify against their traffickers, an offer few have agreed to for fear of harm to themselves or their families by traffickers (US Immigration 2013). Even less has been allocated to victims of domestic minor sex trafficking (Baker 2012, 1004). The TVPA made only a modest attempt to address the economic conditions that lead to trafficking by providing limited funds to create economic alternatives to those vulnerable to trafficking, including microcredit lending programs, job training, and programs to keep girls in school (22 US Code § 7104(a) (2000)). The Act prioritizes criminal prosecution and protection of victims over prevention and empowerment of people vulnerable to trafficking.

The TVPA pressures countries around the world to adopt these priorities. Since 2001, the United States has issued an annual Trafficking in Persons report, in which it evaluates every country estimated to have more than one victims on whether it is taking appropriate action to combat trafficking. The United States has determined the criteria for evaluation, which include passing criminal prohibitions, prosecuting traffickers, and assisting trafficking victims. The Department of State ranks nations according to their compliance with these standards. The Act authorizes the President to withdraw non-humanitarian, non-trade-related aid to countries that are not in compliance (22 US Code §§ 7106–7107 (2000)). As a result, many nations around the world have adopted the priorities set by the United States government. The most dramatic example of the criminal justice approach to trafficking is the "raid-and-rehabilitate" method of dealing with sex trafficking, which the United States has supported by funding groups that forcibly remove people from brothels and send them to government-sponsored "rehabilitation" facilities, as was portrayed in the NBC Dateline special *Children for Sale*, discussed above. The federally funded International Justice Mission has sent its personnel to countries like Cambodia and India to conduct raids and sting operations in order to rescue women and girls from brothels and turn pimps and madams over to local law enforcement for prosecution (NBC Dateline 2005).

In response to US pressure and informed by the rescue narrative framing of trafficking, many nations have strengthened border controls and tightened immigration laws in the name of protecting women and girls from trafficking. For example, scholar Mary Crawford has argued that sex-trafficking discourses in Nepal, which, similarly to US discourses, portray perfect victims who are innocent, naive and backward, have resulted in policies that restrict the human rights of women and girls, including their ability to migrate, and do little to address root causes of trafficking like gender and caste (Crawford 2010; see also Parreñas 2008). These restrictions on women's rights and mobility may actually have the opposite effect than what was intended—they may push women further into situations of violence and abuse. In her article on Chinese migrants to Canada, Nadita Sharma argues that concerns about sex trafficking have legitimated increasingly repressive state practices of immigration control in Canada while obscuring that migrants have been "displaced by practices that have resulted in the loss of their land and/or livelihoods through international trade liberalization policies, mega-development projects, the loss of employment in capitalist labor markets, or war" (Sharma 2005, 89). The anti-trafficking rhetoric, she argues, justifies restrictive national and international security agendas and more stringent limits on migration. The underlying assumption about migrants, particularly females, is that they are weak, submissive, and incapable of looking after themselves. The result is to dissuade women and girls from migrating in order to protect them from harm, thereby reinforcing the gender-biased notion that women and girls need constant male (or state) protection.

Rather than framing sex trafficking as a criminal justice problem, an alternative approach would be to view the root causes of trafficking as the economic, political, and social conditions that make people vulnerable to trafficking in the first place. Many argue that neoliberal economic policies have created extreme income inequality and poverty through laws that allow for the free flow of capital while restricting the flow of labor. These policies work to the benefit of corporations, but impoverish people (Barker and Feiner 2006, 95–117). Neoliberal policies forced on poor countries by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have required privatization of state industries and services and a shift from subsistence to export production, which makes populations vulnerable to economic forces outside of their control. These policies have also pushed the development of tourism (and the related demand for sex) and austerity programs that eliminate social services that help women and girls stay out of poverty (Davidson 2005, 45–46). As

Cynthia Enloe has argued, US corporations collude with militarized governments abroad to make women's labor cheap, to erode labor rights, and to cast aside safety and environmental standards (Enloe 2007, 19–38). These neoliberal policies create economies that serve profit rather than people, thereby generating populations vulnerable to trafficking. In addition to economic conditions, political conditions like war or states' depriving ethnic minorities of citizenship rights (Feingold 2003) are factors that might increase people's vulnerability to sex trafficking. Finally, social conditions contribute to making people vulnerable to sex trafficking. Cultural belief systems that devalue women and girls, commodify sex, and legitimate male demand for commodified sex are among the root causes of sex trafficking. Effective solutions to sex trafficking must address these structural factors.

Within the United States, advocates against domestic sex trafficking have also focused on criminal justice solutions to the problem. For example, as discussed above, Shared Hope International presses state legislatures to pass and strengthen criminal laws against commercial sexual exploitation of girls (Shared Hope International 2011), as does the Polaris Project (2012) based in Washington, DC. This criminal justice framing, however, does not address the underlying factors that make women and girls vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. As in the international context, evidence suggests that social and economic factors play a role in creating populations vulnerable to trafficking in the United States. For example, in the late 1990s, shortly after the substantial weakening of the social safety net in the United States with the passage of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, Atlanta juvenile court judges Nina Hickson and Glenda Hatchett noticed increasing numbers of young girls coming through their courtrooms on prostitution charges (Richardson and Boxill 2007, 143). After this law went into effect, the number of children receiving government support went down significantly, but not the number of children in poverty (Child Trends 2013). In 2010, 20% of children in the United States lived in poverty and 42% lived in families below 200% of the poverty level (Child Trends 2012). The high rates of child poverty in the United States and diminishing social support services for children in poverty and homeless youth, along with high rates of child sexual abuse, all contribute to commercial sexual exploitation of minors and their vulnerability to sex trafficking (Estes and Weiner 2001, 3; Anderson 2009).

Race and sexuality exacerbate poverty and increase vulnerability to sex trafficking. Black and Hispanic youth experience much higher rates of poverty—over 40% live below the poverty level and 60% are below 200% of the poverty level (Child Trends 2012). Native Americans on reservations have double the national rate of poverty, and many reservations have six times the national rate of extreme poverty (National Center for Education Statistics 2008, iii). Predictably, Native Americans also experience high rates of sex trafficking (Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center 2009). Poverty and homelessness are particularly acute among GLBT youth, making them especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation (Ray 2006, 1), so challenging heterosexist ideologies and institutions is also part of the solution to trafficking. High levels of poverty, in combination with extreme materialism in United States society and popular culture's sexual objectification of young girls (American Psychological Association 2010), along with glorification of pimp culture (Lloyd 2010), make young people particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. The commodification of sex intersects with stereotypical gender roles to normalize male demand, which feeds off girls made vulnerable by poverty and a culture that sexualizes them.

A comprehensive solution to sex trafficking must include support for laws and social programs to ameliorate the poverty that makes many people vulnerable to trafficking—laws requiring a living wage, adequate healthcare, affordable housing, quality schools, especially for the poor, and strengthening rather than rolling back labor rights. Particular attention should be paid to policies that would reduce the

continuing segregation of women into low-paying jobs, wage disparities based on gender and race, lack of quality child care, lack of paid parental leave, the inadequate and punitive welfare system, and inadequate child-support enforcement. All of these factors contribute to the ongoing economic marginalization of women and children, making them vulnerable to sex trafficking. While criminal law has an important part to play in combatting trafficking, the criminal justice focus of the mainstream anti-trafficking movement obscures the deeper structural causes of trafficking and thus fails to prevent sex trafficking in the first place.

Conclusion

The mainstream discourses around trafficking in the United States reinscribe very traditional notions of gender and sexuality, where female sexual purity is in danger, girls and women need to be protected and rescued, and men are heroic rescuers. These paternalistic discourses also reinscribe relations of power based on race and nationality, and can be used to justify relationships of domination. In her book, *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror*, Gargi Bhattacharyya (2008) argues that sexualized racism is at the center of the war on terror and is used to justify the retreat from previously accepted standards of international conduct in conflict. Sexualized racism similarly pervades the discourses around sex trafficking. Discourses on sex trafficking both abroad and in the United States regularly portray "dangerous brown men" (Bhattacharyya 2008) as evil and barbaric others who threaten innocent femininity, setting up whites and/or the West to be the heroic rescuer. Perhaps the disproportionate focus on sex trafficking over other types of trafficking is connected to the political and cultural work that the issue is performing. The political work is the bolstering of the United States' role as a leader in human rights at a time when this status is being called into question because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the war on terror. The cultural work is assuaging anxieties around gender, sexuality, and race in a globalizing world with increasing female migration and decreasing US economic dominance.

To effectively combat sex trafficking, the anti-trafficking movement must move beyond the simplistic framing of the issue as a matter of "slaves, sinners and saviors" (Davidson 2005, 4) best addressed by a stronger state and aggressive law enforcement, to a more complex and nuanced analysis that attends to the root causes of trafficking—unjust economic systems and conservative ideologies of gender, race and nation. A feminist approach to trafficking must be one that focuses on empowering people, not just protecting or rescuing them. Sexually exploited people are often in the situations they are in because they lack power and control over their lives, so activists must be very conscious about articulating their activism in ways that do not reinforce that disempowerment. The rescue discourse "casts women as victims in need of protection from harm rather than as subjects deserving of positive rights" (Soderlund 2005, 82). But protection is offered selectively and at a cost; it only "stretches to those deemed innocent, while it persecutes, criminalizes, or ignores those who are seen as complicit in their victimization" (Soderlund 2005, 82–83). In the context of the West's portrayal of Muslim women, Lila Abu-Lughod contends, "rather than seeking to 'save' others (with the superiority it implies and the violences it would entail), we might better think in terms of … considering our own larger responsibilities to address the forms of global injustice that are powerful shapers of the world in which they find themselves" (Abu-Lughod 2002, 783). Similarly, in the context of trafficking, rather than using a rescue narrative to frame the problem, which focuses almost exclusively on criminal justice solutions to sex trafficking, activists must focus on the root structural causes of trafficking and work to enhance democracy to empower vulnerable populations most likely to experience trafficking.

Public policy needs to address how trafficking is rooted in political, economic, and social conditions. With this framing of the issue, solutions to trafficking become focused on systemic and preventative solutions

rather than individual, after-the-fact, criminal justice solutions. The experience of trafficking varies widely in different contexts, so local, grassroots solutions are key to addressing the situations of women and girls (Parreñas 2008, 158–66). Policy needs to reflect the issue's complexity rather than relying on simplistic solutions. Particular solutions that address root causes of trafficking ask much more of people than rescue. In his excellent film on sex trafficking in Burma, David Feingold (2003) says, "Saving little Aspu has more emotional resonance than doing something about changing the conditions of her life." Saving her is easier and asks less of society than changing those conditions. Changing the conditions of her life, on the other hand, requires people to face how they contribute to those conditions via economic policies that benefit the privileged, as well as deeply engrained cultural and social biases. Systemic changes are harder to achieve than criminal justice solutions, but they are necessary to eradicate sex trafficking.

Notes

1. The expression "slaves, sinners, and saviors" is drawn from Julia O'Connell Davidson's *Children in the Global Sex Trade* (2005, 4).

2. Intervene Training, Third Annual Northwest Conference Against Trafficking, Portland, Oregon, January 14, 2010 (attended by author).

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I Will Tell Your Story: New Media Activism and the Indian "Rape Crisis"

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Abstract: This article analyzes the mediatized representations of the Indian "rape crisis" that gained global attention in the aftermath of the brutal gang rape of Jyoti Singh Pandey in New Delhi in 2012. While much attention was given to Leslie Udwin's documentary on the incident, *India's Daughter* (2015), which was subsequently banned by the Indian government, there were several other creative responses that attempted to negotiate with the meaning of the event. This article examines two such texts—the multimedia short story *We Are Angry* (2015) and the augmented-reality comic *Priya's Shakti* (2014). Both these texts declare their intention to function as "activist" multimedia pieces that leverage the power of Internet-mediated platforms to raise awareness about the condition of the "Indian woman" in the contemporary moment. This article argues that these texts, in their attempts to portray an essentialized and universalized image of the "Indian woman," reenact certain violent historical erasures along the lines of caste, sexuality, class, and religion. The article undertakes a medium-specific examination of the works, considering their presumed audiences, language, content, and most notably their (failed) attempts at locating themselves within both historical and contemporary Indian feminist landscapes. In doing so, this discussion situates itself within ongoing Indian social justice debates, specifically those pertaining to mediatized narratives of rape, in order to critique the production of "feminism" in *We Are Angry* and *Priya's Shakti*. By considering these texts alongside other, more inclusive online narrative spaces, we underline the importance of multiple feminist voices being heard on the issues in question, as well as the need to question any seemingly universal "we" of these narratives, their audience, or the women they claim to represent.

Keywords: rape narratives, Internet activism, digital humanities, Indian feminisms, transnational feminism, intersectional feminism, multimedia narratives

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2012 rape and subsequent death of Jyoti Singh Pandey (also known as Nirbhaya) in New Delhi, the Indian "rape crisis" became the focus of global media narratives regarding India, and more specifically New Delhi. One event that attracted worldwide attention was the ban on *India's Daughter* (2015), a documentary about the incident directed by British filmmaker Leslie Udwin. While the film was criticized by Indian feminists on many counts, from oversimplifying the issue to enacting white saviorism, the ban itself was seen as an overreaction by the Indian state, which, considering that the Nirbhaya case had already drawn spontaneous and widespread protests in 2012, was fearful of the reaction the film might incite (Durham 2015; Kohli 2015).

As a result of this focus, Indian feminist activism's reaction to sexual assault was brought to the forefront of local and global consciousness. At different times, sensationalized media focus on this issue has resulted in the forced in/visibility of historical feminist struggles with regard to the condition of women of different castes and class (as will be discussed in more detail below). In addition, media coverage of the event created the presumption of a universalized "Indian woman," eliding the higher incidence of sexual assault against those marginalized by caste, and thereby repeating Bhraminical patriarchy under the guise of contemporary feminism. This assumption of a large-scale attempt at feminist redress while continuing to leave the caste system unquestioned suggests that this redress has been largely sought only within the bounds of Brahminical patriarchy. Caste-based limitations of feminist representation have been acknowledged and challenged by works such as Sharmila Rege's *Writing Caste/Writing Gender* (2006), which articulates Dalit-Bahujan women's testimonials on the realities of their lives and feminist struggles (often in counternarrative to mainstream assumptions regarding feminisms within India), and Uma Chakravarti's *Gendering Caste* (2003), which looks at historical responses to rape (such as the Mathura case in 1972 and the rape of Phoolan Devi by upper-caste men) as well as brutal responses to intercaste unions (such as the Mehrana killings in 1991).[1] As Chakravarti asserts,

> The tragedy of our times is that this exploitation is so routinized that when incidents of violation of the rights and personhood of Dalit women, including sexual assaults, make it to our newspapers, they do not evoke the reaction that they should in any civilized society. Only a few incidents make it to our newspapers and get taken up by activists—when they do they expose the reality of caste. (2003, 160–61)

In addition to these intersections of gender and caste, the category of the "universal Indian woman" and the concomitant ideals of nationhood, religion, and family also have disparate implications for individual experiences of cultural policing, sexual harassment, and assault. Along with caste, religion, and class, it is also vital to acknowledge the high risk for LGBT individuals within discussions of gendered violence in India and to bring those matters into the scope of "mainstream feminism." Queer issues have rarely featured in discussions of gendered and sexualized violence in an Indian context, despite the fact that communities that identify outside the gender binary, such as Hijras, face extremely high levels of risk. The institutionalized sexual harassment faced by queer individuals, backed by Indian law, has also been largely absent in these considerations (Narrain 2004; Menon 2009). These intersections of identity were also invisible in feminist discourse directly after the Nirbhaya case, as well as in the creative cultural responses that appeared across various multimedia texts (Dutta and Sircar 2013).

Given the local and global scope of this ongoing debate, this paper will analyze two such texts—the multimedia short story *We Are Angry* (2015) and the augmented-reality comic *Priya's Shakti* (2014)—as examples of issue-driven activism within the new media landscape. Here, "new media" stands for digital works that often require the mediation of a computer, being online, dense, interactive, multisensory, and networked. Both works are primarily concerned with the nature of the Indian "rape crisis," suggesting that the content is intended to create, within this digital sphere, a global feminist community that will lead to real-world changes in India with regard to social justice. However, in the debate that arises as a result of these two attempts to intervene in the discourse surrounding the crisis, the digital cannot be held as simply synonymous with the universal because of the specific contextual localization of the cultural production of this cyberspace. Instead, this cultural contextuality suggests the need for a media-specific analysis that places itself within ongoing Indian feminist debates and representations of the state and its people, reflecting the complex production of discourses of sexual assault in India, which are developed within and both reinforced and undermined by multiple institutions spanning the private and the public

spheres. These institutions include but are not limited to caste, class, religion, region, language, sex, and gender, and function within frameworks such as the family, the nation-state, the Indian historical subject, and the media.

This article attempts to situate these works as new media activisms within a feminist digital sphere, which, while produced as a global narrative and created largely in English to be accessible to the presumed universal subject, have specific connotations when viewed within their intended sphere of influence. Therefore, we first provide a brief outline of the historicity of Indian feminist and postcolonial debates in cyberculture as context for the works in question.[2] We contrast them with other activist projects within the localized Indian context in order to demonstrate the problematic manner in which these works recreate structures of Hinduist Bhraminical patriarchy while purporting to advance the cause of gender equality in India.

Examining Indian Feminist Debates in the 1990s

Before analyzing any artifacts that intervene in or reflect on the "condition of women in India," it is necessary to locate them within the broader terrain of the Indian feminist movement in order to link the themes they explore back to key historical processes and social debates. *We Are Angry* and *Priya's Shakti* mobilize specific narratives related to religion, region, language, caste, and class that have been discussed extensively by Indian feminist activists and scholars. It is, of course, not within the scope of this overview to encompass the entire history of the Indian feminist movement, so it will concentrate on the threads most salient to our argument, from pre-Independence to the 1970s and then focusing on the 1990s. During this period, through a number of socioeconomic shifts, the category of the "universal Indian woman" was simultaneously contested and consolidated. The liberalization of the Indian economy, the strengthening of Hindu right-wing discourse in public life, and the introduction of digital technologies into the mediascape were all key influences in this process, the effects of which are also seen in the texts under consideration here.

The history of the Indian feminist movement as conceived of within the independence struggle meant that a largely unified "woman subject" was created as part of that nationalist discourse, and that this subject's interests were framed as parallel to that of the newly formed Indian nation-state. This also meant that the movement's foundations were informed, as Suresht Renjen Bald notes, by "the biases of its urban male, upper-caste, upper-class advocates" (1983, 1). Given its association with mainstream nationalism, this early feminist movement focused on legal mechanisms for redressing gender inequality rather than on more broad-based structural change in society. This focus meant that important steps, such as the inclusion of gender equality in the new Indian constitution, were accomplished, but larger institutional inequities were left in place. Additionally, as Kalpana Misra points out, for political leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, the "post-colonial Indian state [was] the central institution for promoting development and alleviating socio-economic inequities which precluded women and other similarly disadvantaged groups from their exercise of political and civil rights" (1997, 29). However, this focus on "development" through the state as the key building block for gender equity did not adequately take into account the interstices of identity *within* that construction, which resulted in the post-independence Indian feminist movement being dominated by Hindu, middle-class, upper-caste (Brahminical) women who left their own privilege largely unexamined.

In the 1970s, a new wave of feminist activism arose that focused on the failures of the nation-state, from radical groups like Samta, which has published the feminist magazine *Manushi* (1978–present), to Dalit-Bhahujan women's organizations, which pointed to the systemic biases within the larger women's

movement that did not acknowledge their specific axes of oppression (Liddle and Joshi 1986). Despite these interventions, Mary E. John could still point to the "split subject" of the Indian feminist movement in the 1990s, commenting that "feminists eager to represent India's women—in the villages, at the wrong end of development, suffering the injustices of the state or the limitations of leftist politics or so on—have been doing so while rendering their own identities within the dominant culture largely *transparent*" (1996, 137; original emphasis). That is to say, for example, that when analyses of violence against women—including harassment stemming from dowry demands, rape, and domestic violence—were undertaken, the category of the "victim" was still constructed as universal, undifferentiated by markers of class, caste, region, language, and religion. This emphasis on the "universal Indian woman" ensured that stable positions of societal power from which challenges to patriarchal hegemony could be issued—such as education, political governance, and legal reform—remained unavailable to those most disenfranchised by this hegemony (Agnes 1994).

Within this analytical frame, *all* Indian women were understood to suffer equally under patriarchy. Anupama Rao points out that this construction upheld "the possibility of occupying a feminist position outside caste: *the possibility of denying caste as a problem for gender*" (2009, 55; original emphasis). Nivedita Menon notes that the very category of women in India is fraught because "woman" may not be the basis or default marker of a significant identity when communities, ethnicity, caste, and class play a more central role in the process of self-definition of an evolving performative identity. The creation of a hegemonic feminist identity of "Indian women" in the global landscape, then, inevitably privileges representations of upper-caste urban Hindu feminist preoccupations, distinct from the concerns of groups such as Dalit-Bahujan rights activists, Muslim rights activists, groups working in rural areas, and others (Menon 2015, 38–42).

The 1990s saw this dominant framework challenged again by Dalit-Bahujan feminist organizations, which underlined the erasure of the consistent privileging of upper-caste Hindu womanhood and drew attention to the violence these denials were effecting on the very women mainstream movements claimed to represent (Rege 2003; Rao 2009). This erasure was also reflected in the Indian government's suppression of the reality of caste-based violence in international forums such as the 2001 Durban Conference (Human Rights Watch 2009). Dalit-Bahujan women formulate the "three-way oppression" they face as consisting of specific caste-based discrimination, class-based oppression (since many are employed as manual laborers), and patriarchal regulation by men from all castes, including their own (Chakravarti 2006, 142–43). Caste as a major factor in Indian politics also came to the fore in 1990, when the Mandal Commission recommended the increase of reservations (hiring quotas as affirmative action) in the public sector for employees from lower-caste communities. The nationwide upper-caste protests against the implementation of these recommendations saw a large number of female participants, which made very visible the schisms within any notion of a uniform Indian women's movement.

The 1990s were also a watershed decade for the Indian economy, as Finance Minister Manmohan Singh green-lighted a series of deregulation reforms in 1991, ending the long-standing system of governmental control over most sectors of industry and commerce.[3] Trishima Mitra-Kahn comments on the parallel rise of neoliberalism and right-wing Hindu fundamentalism in this period, wherein the "new Indian woman," who was invariably urban, Hindu, middle-class, and had access to a college education, was also placed under considerable pressure not to be "corrupted" by the West. Mitra-Kahn notes:

Propelled by the idea of gender chaos, dystopic visions of what would happen to Indian culture and
Indian women as India "opened up" to the West promoted a further normative discourse on womanhood.
Appropriating the IWM's (Indian Women's Movement) lingua franca of agency and autonomy, right-wing

discourses invoked the power of various Hindu goddesses and called upon Indian women to embody the Hindu ideal of the chaste, devoted, perfect wife (i.e., pativrata) to resist Westernized modernity. (2012, 112)

Lastly, the 1990s also saw the rise of Internet use in India, particularly in urban centers. While the explosion of connectivity that would come with mobile-based devices was still some time away, young, middle-class, urban India was getting increasingly comfortable with cybercultural technology. The IT sector gained prominence in this period, and the skilled, cheap workforce with a proficiency in English encouraged companies from the United States in particular to set up back-office operations in India. Indian companies also took advantage of these factors, and the sector was positioned as a key player in India's emergence as a "global power" because it was perceived as driving the economy's high growth rate (8–9%) during that time (Sachs, Varshney and Bajpai 1999; Greenspan 2004). Technological proficiency was linked to higher paying jobs domestically and as a way of migrating to the West (the United States in particular). This led to a steady stream of IT graduates forming an economically stable diaspora with strong links back to India, which was facilitated by the use of the Internet. Rohit Chopra traces the rise in the use of digital technologies as interlinked with the use of these privileged virtual spaces to articulate a Hindu right-wing notion of what it means to be "Indian." He notes that

> the possessors of technological skills have historically been vested with the authority to speak for the nation. The associations between technology and nationalism have condensed in ideas about self and other, they have been incorporated in imaginings of the state and the nation, and they have materialized as claims about identity, community, and society. In the present historical moment, this relationship manifests itself, in one form, as an online Hindu nationalism that combines cultural majoritarian claims with technological triumphalism. (Chopra 2008, 5)

Any framing, then, of either the Indian feminist movement or cybercultural technologies as unproblematically or predominantly inclusive, subversive, or secular is on shaky ground from the outset. However, it is these very presumptions that underscore the production, content, and circulation of both *We Are Angry* and *Priya's Shakti*.

The Possibilities of a Postcolonial Cyberculture

The move to relatively new multimodal and multimedia platforms has led to a surge in social participation and interactivity, because such platforms enable different sorts of discussions under the presumed banner of equality within and outside of India. Initiatives like "Digital India" promoted by the current Indian government, which encourage the use of technology to participate in governance, are also motivated by the large numbers (143 million) of Indian users currently on social-media networks like Twitter and Facebook (Dutta 2014; ETTelecom Team 2015). The presumption of equal access subsumes the reality of cyberculture, which is inextricably linked to neo/colonialism—capitalism, language use, and technology functioning within global networks to retain the status quo in favor of the global North (Nayar 2008; Fernández 1999). Interactivity within this sphere is thus dependent upon access to technology, capital, literacy, use of the English language, and media literacy, which indicates that a significant portion of the Indian population may have little to no access to this arena in its current form. Even setting aside the fact that the number of social-media users, while impressive, represents only a fraction of the Indian population, as Nishant Shah (2015) points out, mere access to digital platforms does not mean a dissolution of institutional inequalities.

Yet, as Pramod Nayar (2008) argues, these multimodal interactive digital spaces can be "postcolonialized," if they are used with a view to significant political purposes, as their heterogeneity, contestability, and

contingency create spaces that are polyphonic and open-ended. María Fernández (1999) suggests something similar in her argument, proposing that although the presumed erasure of the body constructs a supposedly egalitarian online sphere, such spaces remain raced and sexed in different ways, indicating that these systemic oppressions can be produced purposefully. The development of an activist digital sphere where the retention of the effects of race, nationality, and sex disrupts any presentation of the universal, creating localized specificities that themselves may open to cross-cultural engagements, could perhaps allow for global activism to be considered respectful of the postcolonial. For instance, the recent digitization of the rural Dalit-Bahujan feminist newspaper *Khabar Lahariya* in partnership with the urban-based digital zine *The Ladies Finger* exemplifies one way of bringing marginalized voices into the cybercultural sphere on their own terms.

As previously stated, both *We Are Angry* and *Priya's Shakti* situate themselves within the Indian "rape crisis," therefore circling issues of sexism, sexual assault, bodily autonomy, class and caste structures, language, Indian cultures, and different feminisms within India, whether or not these are explicitly made present in the works themselves. The use of new media—the augmented-reality image-text production of *Priya's Shakti* and the interactive multimedia mélange of text, images, videos, and sound bites in *We Are Angry*—suggests that the online format contributes to the manner in which this content is framed. As such, these works are positioned to distribute their content widely and to seek amplification through global activist networks. Yet the works themselves reveal problematic biases regarding the authors' own feminisms and privilege. They fail to situate themselves in a manner that truly engages with the historical and cultural context of Indian feminisms.

We Are Angry

We Are Angry is a multimedia short story by Lyndee Prickitt that undertakes issue-based storytelling in a format it terms "360 degree digital fiction" as an alternative to traditional linear narratives. The mixed-media story describes, in retrospect, the fictional abduction and gang rape of a middle-class woman in New Delhi. In full view of various passersby, the male attackers, pretending to be relatives or friends upset at the woman for ignoring her family's needs and being a "wayward wife and mother" who is out late, force her into a car. She is then gang-raped in the car and ultimately abandoned by the side of the road. The text shifts between the intimacy of the victim's first-person account and the distanced third-person accounts of the discovery of her unconscious body, her treatment by doctors, the police investigation, media activism on her behalf, and the reactions of her family. These multiple viewpoints work as narrative nodes to which hyperlinks with additional information, images, sound files, and real-world and fictional news articles are affixed. Although the rape is revealed to be an attempt by a business competitor to force the protagonist to sign papers in their favor, the police wrongly accuse a contentious ex-employee of the victim (implied to be of a lower class) and beat him violently in an attempt to obtain a confession, despite evidence of his innocence.

The victim as narrator is simultaneously voiceless—as a head injury, sustained when she was thrown from the car following the rape, left her in a coma and presumably dying by the end of the piece—and the work's primary voice. Because the coma prevents the victim from speaking for herself externally, the user's access to her internal monologue elicits not only the events of the rape but also the sociocultural sexism inherent in contemporary Indian society, which has shaped her experience of family and her workplace, producing as well the threat of sexual assault as a means by which to discipline and control women. This fictional act of rape is tied in the narrative to the issue of women in the workplace and specifically to the

term "Emerging India," which touts the country as an emerging global economy. In this manner, the digital mixed-media space of the text is joined not only to the woman's narrative and to her abused body, but also to her country. These spaces are interconnected so that her rape is distinctly linked with sexism and globalized Indian power in a capitalist landscape.

The contents can be viewed in two ways: either "read" as a book in paged format, with hyperlinks present, or "experienced" as a series of Internet pages with the same hyperlinks to scroll through. In this manner, the viewer is led to believe they may experience the contents in different ways: the implied distance of reading about the victim's narrative in a book, where the media content is only accessible by the viewer's control of the hyperlinks, or the seeming immediacy of experiencing it in a space where the mixed-media text incorporates and activates embedded files automatically. The narrative thus seemingly begins with the user's own choice of the manner in which they will experience the aftermath of the fictional rape, navigating the text's single plotline as it spirals outwards through the hyperlinks into related topics. While the creation of this agency on the part of the user appears intended to recreate the immediacy of the fictional assault and its aftermath, it does so by problematically acting in counterpoint to the violently disregarded agency of the victim, positioning the event as spectacle.

The choice of a multimedia text for the short story is clearly tied to its concerns, which are those of educated middle-class women pursuing a livelihood within the sexism of different industries and patriarchal Indian society at large. New Delhi, the seat of political power that has also been dubbed "India's rape capital," forms the backdrop to these concerns. At various points, the narrative indicates the woman's own systemic privilege and oppression in accordance with her education, her ability to travel and be educated abroad, her position as "modern" yet restricted by her own family, her running of her own business, and her choice to speak English rather than a local Indian language. The precarity of her failing health is repeatedly underscored by the soundtrack of a jazz piano, which additionally, within India, is indicative of cosmopolitanism. Her own privilege is reflected in her eventual pleas for her life when she states, "And I promise, God, I will speak out not just about my case—who cares if no one marries me—but I will help other women too. And not just those in the privileged class. I promise, God, I will campaign till the end. Just let me live" (Prickett 2015, 19).

The nameless protagonist, who speaks in the first person, is generalized in the additional third-person account voiced by her family, in which, despite the details provided by the story, she remains a "beti" (female child), a "behen" (sister), or "chhoti" (younger female). The reasons for this lack of naming may be twofold. On the one hand, the first-person narration may be seen as an invitation to invest in the conversation with a dying protagonist so that the user remains privy to her last thoughts; on the other hand, the victim's namelessness is possibly a nod to the existing Indian law that forbids disclosure of the names of rape victims, so as to encourage them to come forward and to prevent harassment by the media. Additionally, the anonymity of victims of sexual assault is tied, within the Indian context, to the supposed shame felt by the family of the victim and the possibility of social ostracism if the event becomes public, as the notion of family honor is still strongly associated with the "purity" of its female members.

Although the narrator of the story remains anonymous, the content itself sets up a system wherein middle-class privilege defines the feminist experience of *We Are Angry*. The universal "we" of this angered collective (either the media company that produced the work, Digital Fables, or the people they interviewed) remains a fallacy because the constructed narrative ignores the classist, casteist, and linguistic privilege that remains implicit in its contents. The universalizing "I" of the narrative or the seemingly open "we" of the producers and users implies a shared anger. Yet this construct of citizenship, which the narrator connects to

India's role as an emerging global power, is specifically linked in the narrative to capitalism's privileging of a particular subset of Indian women within upper-caste feminisms or Bhraminical patriarchy. The default position in the text is that of an upper middle-class urban Hindu female subject, which marks out bounds of exclusion for those who do not fall within this worldview.[4]

The connections between the themes of India's emergence as a global power, the default "I" within this narrative representing itself as a subject of middle-class urban Hindu privilege, and the issue of rape play out in a worldwide arena through the use of multimedia technology. Both Partha Chatterjee (1993, 120–21) and Sangeeta Ray (2000, 3) note that as India emerges as a global economic power, prevailing gender binaries and nationalist fault lines shape distinctions between respective meanings of inside and outside, India and the world, and women and men. Men are allowed to function as citizens of the world while women are to remain as a safe, homely embodiment of Indian culture and its traditions. Women are socially positioned as inherently chaste and pure and thus representative of an uncontaminated national culture that is preserved by this segregation. Given the convergent relationship between India's patriarchy and the country's economic progress, and the traditional casting of women as representative of the nation, the rape in *We Are Angry* is a consequence of resource appropriation that ties the universalized Indian woman's body to her role in global capitalism. That is, her sexual assault is intended not only to police her presence in the "masculine" business sphere but also to benefit her competitor by forcing her to accept his business deal.

As such, this narrative frames sexual violence as policing women's agency within capitalist frameworks, while also locating itself within a global landscape that sees capitalism as a means of potential feminist progress. In the narrative, the rape results in the protagonist specifically locating herself as a female worker no longer capable of working in the global marketplace, and therefore, logically, hampering India's chances for economic growth. The identification of women's agency with what Kumkum Sangari terms "direct or conscious political action … with direct participation in the capitalist labor process" (1993, 867) and the celebration of this agency as reformative work to obscure the means by which ostensive progress is used consensually to perpetuate patriarchal hierarchies. This notion of female agency works alongside consistent reformulations of patriarchal structures (as patriarchies themselves are not static) to produce social stratification that is, at least partially, based on the role one holds in the capitalist enterprise and that factors in caste, class, and potential disability. *We Are Angry*'s concern regarding the loss of a female worker's agency is thus intermeshed with capitalism's patriarchal structures, even as it presents itself more broadly as advocating women's agency.

The manner in which the narrative links feminist progress with female agency in capitalism divorces it utterly from capitalism's own historicity wherein postcolonial nations such as India have experienced systemic cultural and economic inequalities (resource appropriation in particular) at the hands of colonizing nations. The text's neoliberal refusal to engage with the fact that India's role in the global marketplace is reliant on its cheap labor and rapid industrialization elides genuine engagement with the problems engendered by capitalist feminism itself. For example, it ignores the manner in which the developmental process for this global emergence has been undertaken by the Indian state by forcefully reallocating agricultural land from already deprived communities to private national and international corporations. These communities have no voice in "Emerging India" and their women would likely find no space within the middle-class urban feminist concerns of *We Are Angry*. Capitalist feminism by itself can hardly be used as an approach to empowerment in an Indian context, given that issues of structural inequality in India are not divided purely along gendered or sexed lines, and global capitalist concerns are unlikely to benefit those who are already systemically disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

The manner in which the plot is centered around a heavily stylized account of a middle-class woman's potential death echoes recent choices within the Indian media to co-opt the mantle of "feminism" through heavily sponsored, publicized, and market-driven initiatives that incorporate the concerns of the middle-class mainstream consumer into their marketing strategies. For example, the recent campaign by Unilever for its Dove brand of soap encourages Indian women to "Break the Rules of Beauty" by rejecting standards of attractiveness that emphasize conventionally valued attributes like fair skin. However, the same brand also, ironically, owns the "Fair and Lovely" line of skin-lightening products that espouse an entirely different worldview. *We Are Angry* reflects a similar clash between the neoliberal capitalism of its narrative and a projected concern for a universalized Indian woman.

One of the ways in which this clash is exemplified in the text is in its reproduction of current media representations of rape-as-spectacle, the additional multimedia content doing more to bolster the story's fictional rape account than to mobilize the user's investment in effective change. The protagonist reinforces her connection to capitalist India by stating that she would have been the face of an "Emerging India," yet her focus on her current "soiled" state leads her to question her marital prospects; her question is hyperlinked to the comments section of the work where a written response is invited. This question, while likely intended to emphasize the traditional concerns of a woman in Indian society, seems problematic at best. Tradition as marriage is mobilized against the protagonist in the process of her staged abduction and again in her consequent fears of shaming and social ostracism, yet the role of traditional marriage in the reinforcement of exclusionary structures remains unquestioned in the discourse of the work. The narrator's potential for marriage is one of only two attempts at the "conversation" that *We Are Angry* claims to want to continue. That this is being asked of the user right after the events of a brutal sexual assault and while the narrator is still barely conscious is jarring and ill-considered.

The only other comment thread on the piece invites general discussion, and neither of the two threads appears to have resulted in sustained conversation with either the author or other respondents. As such, it is hard to see how *We Are Angry* contributes anything new to the ongoing conversations about rape in different Indian contexts, outside of its unusual format as a multimedia text. The awards and reviews displayed on the site, with larger quotes privileging international coverage outside of India, and the use of cyberspace in general suggest that its content, far from educating middle-class Indian youth, who are exposed to much of the same information through ongoing, sustained and sensationalized media narratives, is intended largely for an international audience. Despite its claim of intervening as an Indian feminist narrative, *We Are Angry* provides no suggestions regarding local aims to change existing laws, potential campaigns for awareness, links to local organizations for volunteer work or donations, or any other concrete real-world action. By failing to connect to local initiatives for action, it confers upon itself a mantle of exceptionalism, exacerbated by its "universalized" feminist and digital form.

The Indian urban experience is produced as universal in *We Are Angry*, and local issues are subsumed in favor of a uniting middle-class female voice, employing cyberspace as the arena for conversations about feminist anger. The hyperlinks in the narrative often acknowledge certain localized Indian concerns, such as the high percentage of female infanticide and feticide, rape statistics, marches for women's empowerment in New Delhi, and ongoing problems with the Indian police force.[5] Yet all of these issues, while interconnected, are distinct in their effects upon different factions of the population. The urge to universalize them in *We Are Angry* aligns with the agendas of transnational feminisms, and this is not without merit as it suggests the vastness of the concerns and their global scale. However, the outcome remains representative of only a fraction of the Indian population.

The universalized "we" of its title materializes at the conclusion of the piece, but only as the roar of a privileged middle class that itself is a focused and pre-existing concern for the corporatized Indian media. The finale depicts multiple women and a few men speaking about their anger, and most are educated, middle class, and expressing themselves in English, with a token number of lower-class women speaking in local Indian languages—however, theirs are not the faces we close on. The promise of support for the less privileged is offered in the narrative, yet they are already excluded and made invisible within the activist storytelling of the project. Those less privileged rarely have mainstream representation, and consequently no media voice to contribute as a contrasting narrative to the fictional narrator's own. The lack of coverage, by the mainstream media, of the issues faced by those not within the purview of Brahminical capitalist feminisms works to assure that systemic hierarchies are reinforced by this marginalization. However, the less privileged voices are present within the larger Indian activist cybersphere and therefore could easily have been included among *We Are Angry*'s hotlinks. The choice not to include them undercuts any claim of promised solidarity made in the work.

Priya's Shakti

Priya's Shakti is a digital project in the form of a comic that functions as a standard text-and-image-based narrative (available in open access on the website http://www.priyashakti.com/), and as an augmented-reality text in which pages may be scanned with a free smartphone app, Blippar. The app provides access to additional content such as comics, videos, and anonymized testimony from rape survivors. In a section of the website titled "motivation," the site is described as an "innovative social impact multimedia project" that "helps illuminate attitudes" towards violence against women in India. Further, the website's text explains that

> The project centers on the Goddess Parvati and Priya, a mortal woman devotee and survivor of rape, and is rooted in ancient matriarchal traditions that have been displaced in modern representations of Hindu culture. It creates an alternative narrative and voice against GBV [Gender-Based Violence] in popular culture through the Hindu mythological canon. Through its message, this project can reach wide audiences in India and around the world—anywhere GBV is an issue.

This description mobilizes a number of presumptions about the nature of violence against women in India, chief among them an understanding of the matriarchal traditions of Hindu India as somehow inhibiting gender-based violence, a modern misrepresentation of a liberal religious and philosophical tradition. In response to this assessment, it then moves on to conceptualize forms of effective intervention in public and private discourses on gender-based violence. Finally, it articulates the makeup of its target audience, imagining "Indian" and "Hindu" as belonging to the same demographic, which can then be universalized.

To summarize briefly, the plot follows a girl, Priya, who lives in an unidentified village somewhere in India. She faces sexual harassment from the other villagers and is ultimately attacked and raped by a group of them. As a result, she is ostracized by her family members, who see her rape as having shamed them, and is hounded out of the village into the forest. Destitute, Priya prays to the Hindu goddess Parvati for Shakti. In the Hindu mythos, the concept of Shakti, or strength, is seen as intimately connected to the divine feminine energy of the cosmos. Parvati hears the girl and decides to intercede, descending to the earth and becoming incarnated in Priya's mind and body. She then seeks justice through appeals to village institutions like the *panchayat* (village council), which advocates marriage to her attacker as a form of redressal. In a confrontation with one of the attackers, she reveals herself to him as the goddess Parvati.

Just as she is about to curse him, her husband, the Lord Shiva, learns of her experiences and in a divine rage curses the human race so they are "no longer able to procreate."

This punishment is seen as unjust by both Parvati and the other gods, but Shiva is resolute and soon the earth is beset by war on both the human and astral planes. The destruction ends only when Parvati summons Kali (the aspect of Shakti that symbolizes divine rage), who manages to stop Shiva's rampage. Parvati returns to a devastated earth where Priya is still hiding in the forest and tells her that she has been chosen to spread a message of change. She gives the girl a mantra (a Hindu sacred invocation) to help her in her quest, exhorting people to "Speak without shame, and stand with me … bring about the change we want to see." Priya gains strength from this and returns to the village.

As is evident from this summary, *Priya's Shakti* is overwhelmingly Hindu. But it is necessary to be more specific about what this identification means for the text, because the term "Hindu" functions as a descriptor for a remarkable number of polytheistic practices. These differ radically from each other across region, language, community, and caste, not only in India but also in the other countries these practices have spread to over the centuries. The comic does not spell out its notion of Hinduism in its immediately visible text (seemingly presuming a basic knowledge of the Hindu pantheon), but when it is viewed through the augmented reality app, a definition is supplied. Through the centering of the Sanskrit epics and the focus on the male trinity of gods, one can infer that the text is following a mainstream interpretation of the Hindu pantheon, codified in part, at the behest of the East India Company in the early colonial period, by upper-caste Brahmins. The British colonial powers felt the need to streamline pluralistic practices that resisted any central authority for their legitimation in order to expand their political control (Chakravarti 2003, 114–38; Sangari and Vaid 1990).

As Romila Thapar notes, this process was also given impetus by the activities of Christian missionaries in the colonial period who regarded polytheistic religions as "primitive." It was further buttressed by the Orientalist scholarship in the same period, which attempted to fit the theology into a "comprehensible whole" (Thapar 1989, 218), leading also to an artificial privileging of certain texts as sources of religious authority. These "standardized" versions of the mythos have been mobilized repeatedly to form a notion of Hindu nationalism that retroactively posits the Indian nation as Hindu in *origin*. Moreover, the standardization has had the effect of both naturalizing the superiority of the higher castes and framing the adherents of all other religions as "outsiders" (Hansen 1999). The marginalization of non-Hindu affiliations has particular resonances for any discussion of the modern Indian nation-state that is declaratively "secular"—purporting to treat all its citizens equally regardless of religion, caste, etc.—but whose functioning is increasingly influenced by the Hindu right-wing forces that believe in their primacy based on the aforementioned texts.

Priya's Shakti may simply be using the most popularized form of the Sanskrit narratives to tell a story, but their historical conditions and effects persist when mobilized in this manner. Rather than problematize the codification of the Hindu belief system, the text unquestioningly expands it, and explicitly names the site of its intervention as the modern nation-state of India. For instance, in one panel, Priya's act of returning to the village and beginning her campaign is connected to other events deemed to be significant in order to formulate the image of an "ideal" Indian woman. The events blend the mythological (the story of Savitri) the historical (the contribution of women to the Independence movement), and the contemporary (the Gulabi gang).[6] The juxtaposition of all these events in a single panel has the effect of creating a false sense of historicity, a rhetorical flourish that reproduces the machinations of Hindu nationalism.

The manner in which *Priya's Shakti* centers this Hindu nationalism by conflating different axes of the mythology, history, and the contemporary reality of India echoes the ideology of the popular mainstream

comic series *Amar Chitra Katha*. As Nandini Chandra notes in *The Classic Popular: Amar Chitra Katha, 1967-2007* (2008), the comic series visibly pursued Hindu communalism, anti-Muslim and anti-Dalit sentiments, and pro-Bhraminist ideologies. Indeed, the choice to employ the graphic-novel format and a central Hinduist narrative for *Priya's Shakti* (even with a dark-skinned protagonist, in seeming contradiction with *Amar Chitra Katha*'s more racist delineations, which almost always equate darker skin with likely villainy) suggests an awareness, if not direct invocation of, the ethos of *Amar Chitra Katha* and, consequently, an appeal to its associated readership. Indeed, while Priya's dark skin *is* an interruption of dominant beauty standards for women in India (coded specifically along upper-caste and class lines, with fairness as aspirational), it is not sufficiently contextualized as such, leaving this aspect of the text rather free-floating. As we explicate below, this lack of contextualization also undercuts *Priya's Shakti*'s other moments of potential subversion.

The text's protagonist is, then, posited as representative of the "Indian woman" and becomes part of that totalizing narrative, in effect dismissing the need for the modern Indian nation-state to take into account non-Hindu women in debates about gender violence at all. In addition, Priya's placelessness adds to her probable identification as upper-caste: we are not told her last name or the region of India she is from, and she is dressed in generic clothing and has no linguistic markers in her speech that would code her as belonging to a specific caste or region.[7] As discussed earlier, this universalization of a privileged subject position only serves to reify discursive blind spots in activist movements to the detriment of those most vulnerable to gender-based violence.

The two elements that complicate this formulation are Priya's location in a rural and forested setting and one of the anonymized testimonies of rape survivors that can be accessed through the app. In a rural setting, Priya's interactions with local institutional bodies, like the panchayats, accurately portray their often violently patriarchal nature. However, in the real world, these interactions are also heavily influenced by caste affiliations, and so again Priya's "universal" status becomes an obstacle to situated and sustained critique. One of the recorded testimonies, however, is specific about the narrator's caste as central to her experience, not only of the attack itself but also its effect on police action, media coverage, and help given by mainstream feminist organizations. It is here that the text comes closest to Nayar's formulation of how a postcolonialized, polyphonic, and interruptible digital space may function. However, the relegation of this recording to the margins of the text limits its efficacy considerably. It is placed on the last panel of the comic, with nothing to differentiate it from other links, and is made accessible only through the specialized app.

The text's collapsing of sex into something only associated with procreation is also a dangerous rhetorical moment, which not only delegitimizes any nonreproductive heterosexual contact but also excludes all nonheterosexual sexualities. While Parvati's objection to Shiva's decree attempts to engage with its problematic assumptions, the basic linkage of violence against women to only heterosexual activity is not questioned, and neither is another effect of the mediatized Indian "rape crisis," i.e., the utter disregard of any violence suffered by women that is not sexual in nature. Limiting the discussion of rape to heteronormative procreation also brings up the ways in which caste affiliation is policed on the site of the female body in modern India. As the testimony about caste-based retributive sexual and social violence referenced above shows, revenge for any perceived slight by Dalit-Bahujan men is invariably exacted on the bodies of the women of that community. Vasanth and Kalpana Kannabiran cite several such cases, pointing out that any intimacy between Dalit men and upper-caste women becomes an incendiary event "only when the caste norms are openly flouted by elopement, pregnancy, or discovery" (1991, 2133).

The authorial claim that the text "centers" the experiences of women and attempts to revive Hinduism's "matrilineal roots" also fails to hold up to scrutiny. The concept of Shakti (divine feminine power) is a key part of Hindu religious practice in many communities, often cutting across caste affiliations. The trope of women drawing power from that connection is also a common one in popular cultural productions, like Bollywood films. Parvati's direct response to Priya's prayer could be seen as a subversive act in view of the fact that access to temples is often heavily policed by patriarchal and casteist regulations. However, Priya's implied positioning as upper-caste nullifies part of this subversive potential, which is also undercut by the comic's other narrative choices.

Firstly, goddess Parvati is an aspect of Shakti most closely associated with the domestic space of the home and the figure of the ideal wife.[8] Within the text, she is introduced as the "wife of Shiva" and that remains her primary affiliation. If the purpose of the narrative is indeed to recenter female deities as a response to their displacement in modern Hindu practices, Parvati is an odd choice. Shakti manifests in a number of other forms, most notably those of the goddesses Durga and Kali, both of whom function without deferring to male authority. Durga and Kali do appear in the narrative—Durga is represented by the tiger that Priya rides in her triumphant return to the village, while Parvati prays to Kali to stop Shiva's carnage—but both are prefigured as secondary to Parvati. The primacy of Parvati clearly sets up a hierarchy of appropriate divine feminine qualities, even within Shakti. Secondly, far from centering Parvati, the narrative shifts focus extremely fast from her actions to the effects of Shiva's rage. It is ironic that a text supposedly about female aspects of divine power devotes most of its narrative to the effects of male rage. While the intent of this shift may have been to show the destructive nature of patriarchal structures, the female goddesses are, in effect, once more relegated to the margins (in this case, literally to the margins of the comic's page). Thirdly, even when Parvati takes the form of Kali (the most fearsome aspect of Shakti), it is only to stop Shiva, which once more frames her actions as responses to his. When seen in the context of previously discussed societal processes in which Hindu middle-class women are conscripted into embodying ideal womanhood, this framing becomes more intelligible as a reification of Hindu nationalism.

With respect to the comic's intended readership, the introductory blurb claims that the aim of the project is to provide an "alternative narrative and voice" that can reach "wide audiences" in India and around the world. As pointed out in the discussion of its website, "social impact" is the key metric that the project attempts to leverage. The site buttresses its claims of accessibility and reach in several ways. The comic itself is freely available in open access, as is the augmented-reality app (though the use of the latter presumes a high degree of comfort with technology). Theoretically, the embedded content interrupts the single-author model of the comic, opening it up to polyphonic voices and experiences. It also locates the project in physical spaces; for instance, one video follows the painting of a mural of Priya in Dharavi, a slum neighborhood in Mumbai. As an attempt to show the impact of the comic on the "ordinary Indian," this illustration fails, as we only see passersby stare at the installation in curiosity. They are not asked for their opinions on the project, nor is there any explanation of what the art has achieved in being placed there. There are no other videos of the artwork displayed in public spaces, the other display venues being special exhibits in art galleries. Indeed, the only public space named specifically is Dharavi. This specificity, then, is suspect as it locates the artwork within a particular notion of the "real India" and as a specularization of poverty that does not go beyond a surface engagement. This specularization is also linked to the marketing of such locales to wealthy foreign (mainly white) tourists as an opportunity for "slum tourism," especially following the popularity of the Oscar-winning film, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008).

The site also links to over three hundred news and commentary pieces that the comic has generated since its launch, presumably to prove the "worldwide" aspect of its impact. A scan of the articles indicates that it has been framed most often as a "comic book with a rape survivor as hero/heroine/superhero," with an occasional reference to the fact that she "rides a tiger." As we have shown here, however, most of the comic is not about Priya at all, and the narrative reinforces patriarchal structures at almost every instance.

Conclusion

The unproblematized amplification of texts such as *We Are Angry* and *Priya's Shakti* by global media networks and private international funding bodies with no access to local knowledge only serves to further entrench Hindu nationalist ideology within Indian activist spaces. This entrenchment weaponizes both the language of feminist movements and the technologies of their dissemination against those sections of society that suffer the most under oppressive structures. Both activist projects create a specific conceptualization of sexual assault in an Indian context through their choice to reinforce heterosexuality as a precondition, either by linking sex to procreation (as in *Priya's Shakti*) or by privileging the traditions of marriage in their discourse (as in *We Are Angry*). Moreover, these aspects are implicated in the texts as a means through which their narrative is "Indianized." This centering of heteronormativity sits in contrast to graphic novels such as *Drawing the Line: Indian Women Fight Back* (Bertonasco, Bartscht and Kuriyan 2012) and *The Gaysi Zine: Queer Graphic Anthology* (Gangwani, Biswas and Sur 2015), which have sought to address urban heteropatriarchal practices in India that have arisen since discussions of the 2012 "rape crisis."

Problematic constructions of rape-as-spectacle lie at the forefront of both these projects, and, as we have shown, the nebulous outlines of their goals leave open little chance of effective real-world change. It is worth pointing out, however, that this is not always the case. Pinki Virani's 1998 book (though not a graphic novel) *Aruna's Story* used interviews conducted by Virani to recreate a biographical account of the 1973 rape and subsequent coma of Aruna Shanbaug. The return of this narrative to the public's consciousness incited public support for Shanbaug's care following her lapse into a persistent vegetative state and drew attention to the implicit shaming evident in the choice to withhold information regarding the rape from the police by order of the Dean of King Edward Memorial Hospital (where Shanbaug worked and was attacked). Additionally, Shanbaug's vegetative state and Virani's active campaigning led to a law in favor of passive euthanasia being passed in 2011. Virani's second book, *Bitter Chocolate* (2000), provided anonymized transcripts of cases of child sexual abuse in India and suggested means by which to combat the issue. Against the background of sexual abuse of children being regarded as a particularly taboo subject in India, Virani's mobilization of the media through sensationalist reactions to the book led to The Protection of Children Against Sexual Offenses Act being passed in 2012. While Virani remains a singular example, her interventions do indicate that mediatizing sexual abuse narratives in ways that are cognizant of the sociocultural issues at hand and espouse clear, localized goals can result in genuine real-world effects despite (or even through) the use of rape-as-spectacle.

While the focus of this analysis has been the failure of *Priya's Shakti* and *We Are Angry* to create effective feminist digital texts and spaces, our critique is not meant to foreclose the possibility of postcolonial uses of cyberspace. There are many instances where cybercultural platforms, especially social-media tools, have made significant interventions that interrupt mainstream media narratives. Nayar (2008) posits that "a democracy of registers" is required to create a truly new public space. Twitter is one platform that seems to have the potential to be polyphonic: it is currently being used by a large number of local Indian feminist

organizations to amplify the specific issues that affect them, as well as to create networks of solidarity. For instance, Rekha Raj, a Dalit feminist and poet, affirms that, "In Kerala, the voices of subaltern groups are very prominent on social media, especially sexual minorities and Dalit groups. On social media, all of us are publishers. Only some communities get the space to get published in mainstream media. Social media allows marginalized voices the possibility of being heard in the public sphere" (Subramanian 2014).

While hierarchies of visibility still remain in place, organizations like Round Table India (http://roundtableindia.co.in) and The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (http://www.ncdhr.org.in) use Twitter to boost their analysis of mainstream events from a Dalit-Bahujan perspective. There are also multimodal cyber projects underway like Dalit Camera (http://twitter.com/dalitcamera), a collective of students and activists who upload videos of panel discussions, protest meetings, and performances on Dalit-Bahujan issues. While there is a tendency to disregard the power of cybercultural spaces for rural activism, projects like *Khabar Lahariya*, which is a rural newspaper written, produced, and distributed by local Dalit-Bahujan women (http://khabarlahariya.in), are leveraging the exposure they get from their presence on the Internet quite skillfully.

There is a continued proliferation of projects that stress the need for a multisited and multivocal analysis of structural inequality and patriarchal structures in various locations and registers. This provides hope for a vibrant and truly postcolonial cyberculture that can create a viable alternative public sphere where these concerns are voiced and can be engaged with on their own terms. However, these spaces are precarious and in flux, and it is vital for global activist networks to recognize specific local concerns so that their efforts towards solidarity are not subsumed within oppressive ideological frameworks. The complex uses of new media to approach the Indian "rape crisis" suggest that the creators of these activist projects intend to effect knowledge production in new ways, yet the content they produce must remain attentive to their own historicity and pluralities even within these new landscapes. To do otherwise would be to end up telling the same old story.

Notes

1. It is worth noting here that while Rege's and Chakravarti's works remain important, Dalit-Bahujan theorists, such as the writers at Savari, have noted that these books still function within the privilege afforded to upper-caste feminists in India. As such, Chakravarti's and Rege's names are cited and the names of the Dalit-Bahujan women whose narratives form the basis of the books continue to be elided. For further reading on this, see Savari Editorial Team 2015.

2. The continued relevance of postcolonial critique to intervene effectively in issues affecting marginalized populations within nation states, like India, that continue to perpetuate neocolonial hegemonies in concert with globalist financial organizations has been questioned by theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Critiquing the Fourth World Conference on Women (held in Beijing in 1995), Spivak argued that in this event the category of "Woman" became "global theatre, staged to show participation between the North and the South, the latter constituted by Northern discursive mechanisms" (1996, 2). What is left out of this performance is any acknowledgement of the women thus represented as critical agents able to articulate their own material conditions. We believe that a self-reflexive and dynamic cybercultural sphere might offer postcolonial theorization one way of navigating this particular construction.

3. In 1991, the longstanding policy of protectionism that had governed the Indian economy since independence was put aside. A process of liberalization, which included a reduction in import tariffs, deregulation of markets, reduction of taxes, and greater foreign investment, was initiated and continues to the present day. Proponents of liberalization policies credit them with driving the Indian economy's high growth rate in the 1990s and the 2000s. However, the process has also been seen as exploitative, as the benefits of those growth rates have not been adequately distributed throughout society.

4. Jyoti Puri notes that sexual violence against Indian Muslim women is policed differently in India, particularly in the Hinduized national state (2004, 147). Similar issues are also present with regard to other religions present in India, but given that the narrator self-identifies as an "apsara," the reference to Hindu mythology suggests Hinduism.

5. Notably, the text's use of the term "female infanticide and feticide" is itself indicative of the author's lack of familiarity with ongoing feminist activism in India, as recent years have seen sustained campaigns to clarify this term to "sex-selective abortion." These campaigns have attempted to dislocate the issue from more generalized abortion debates, as well as from larger contextual frameworks of inheritance, dowry, and the like, so that all of these issues can be considered in their individual specificity even while their interconnectedness is recognized.

6. The tale of Savitri is found in the Hindu epic *The Mahabharata*. Savitri is seen as the ultimate devoted wife as she manages to reclaim her husband's life from the clutches of Yama (the god of death).

The Gulabi Gang is a rural women's collective, with a significant presence of Dalit-Bahujan women, located in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It was formed by Sampat Pal Devi in response to the widespread domestic violence in the villages of the area. Dressed in pink saris (as "gulab" means pink in Hindi) and armed with sticks, the women intervene in cases of domestic abuse using a variety of strategies, including public shaming.

7. The lack of a last name may in some cases indicate an act of protest, as this is the primary method by which caste affiliations are identified. *Priya's Shakti*, however, does not seem to fall into this category.

8. The story of Sati recounts how Shiva's first wife won his approval and interest through acts of meditation. Sati's father, Daksha, was against the match, but she did not pay him any heed. However, because of the bad relations between them, Shiva was not invited to a grand *yagya* (religious celebration) that Daksha organized. Sati was very upset at this insult to her husband and immolated herself on the ceremonial pyre. This led to great devastation as Shiva's rage ran amok, and he ultimately retreated from worldly affairs. Sati is reborn as Parvati and, once again through acts of meditation and penance, wins Shiva's favor, and they are married. The practice of Sati, which was followed in some parts of India up till the nineteenth century, requires that widows commit suicide by immolating themselves on their husband's funeral pyre and is patterned on this myth as well.

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Digi-Blogging Gender Violence: Intersecting Ethnicity, Race, Migration and Globalization in South Asian Community Blogs Against IPV

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Introduction

Many of us, as new media researchers and feminists, have struggled with understanding the contexts that frame discourses about women of color and the place of gender studies within global digital cultures and transnational communities. Digital spaces of socialization have been anything but gender-neutral places of dialog exchange (Gregg, 2006; Wilson, 2005). Recent research has pointed to misogynist and xenophobic tendencies of the global blogosphere, especially in blog discourses about racial discrimination and gendered violence (Wilson, 2005; Mathieu 2011). Those who believe there is no gender parity within digital dialogic spaces, suggest that the act of blogging only espouses 'a Utopian *equal turf* image,' when in reality they produce, recycle and replicate the same gendered and racialized hierarchies reflecting offline systems of heteronormativity (Wilson, 2005; my emphasis).

It happens to be 'this very notion of "recognition" on the Internet,' that has plagued 'blogs as a space that…to an extent continues this public-private dispute' along gender lines (Gregg, 2006; Mukherjee, 2013, p. 85-86). Yet, scholars have also explored how blogs mobilize discussions particular to minorities, women of color, feminists, as well as gendered, social, cultural and sexual issues (Gregg, 2006; Sink, 2006). Take the case of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration on immigrant women of South Asian origin in the United States (US). Not only is it a rampant criminal occurrence, but a horrific women's rights desecration that is habitually underreported to law authorities and silenced by ethnic minority communities for several reasons. Recently however, a break in the oppressive quieting is being rallied by a sub-population of the South Asian (SA) diasporic blogosphere who are digitizing their philanthropic commitment to advocate against IPV (gendered, ethnic and racial), enacted on SA women.

Gender-specific IPV has been a highly studied area within feminism, criminal justice and sociology. Yet, studies addressing the impact of such human rights issues on new media research or design have rarely been taken up. With the exception of research that explores feminist and legal theories of violence, or studies on cyber violence, cyber harassment, cyber bullying and privacy (Adam, 2002; Citron, 2009; Dimond, Fiesler & Bruckman, 2011), there is rather limited work on violence against women (VAW) framed within the context of online and mobile techno-cultures. What makes the framing of this intersectional research much more pertinent is the severe underreporting of IPV by SA women to legal authorities, community based organizations (CBOs) and social interventionists in the US, for reasons including their fear that "they may be accused of bringing shame on the family, may not be believed by friends and family, and may also have concerns regarding their immigration status" ("South Asians in the United States," 2003).[1] To address these research interstices, I analyzed blog-generated themes from discussion threads found within three SA community blogs written between 2007-2011 (with emphasis on Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi diasporas) that have exposed intersections of gender/patriarchy, ethnicity/race, and immigration/globalization via digital narratives about IPV against SA migrant women.[2] Seeking theoretical grounding in postcolonial, *colored* theories of intersectionality (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1994; Knudsen, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2005), this essay will explore how ethnicity, race, immigration and experiences of IPV by SA women in the US intersect with/in the structure of gendered, global digital communities and diaspora blogs.[3] Turning to minority gender theories such as postcolonial intersectional feminisms would make communication researchers and social media designers think differently about 'who is being included, who are the digitally marginalized,' and it is through knowledge of their experiences that we could likely comprehend 'how those technologies…can be made more inclusive in scope and address a heterogeneity of human experiences' (Mukherjee, 2013: 12).

Gender Violence: IPV in the South Asian Diaspora

The **Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum** (http://www.apiahf.org/) (APIAHF) has reported that IPV within the SA diaspora in the US is carried out in ways that

supersede mental, physical, sexual, and fiscal forms of abuse (Dabby, 2007). In addition to social/familial isolation and economic incarceration, the dependent legal status of SA women who are in the US on dependent visas such as the H-4 spouse category, is more often than not used as a weapon of oppression by abusive male partners who have been known to make threats of deportation and withholding green card (permanent residency) applications (Dabby, 2007; Das Dasgupta, 2000).[4] This form of IPV that is unique to SA immigrant females becomes much more relevant within the frames of 'immigration and transnationalism, where women find their identities doubly displaced: by the politics of race/ethnicity, and the constructs of gender' (Mukherjee, 2013: 24).

A survey of SA women in Massachusetts revealed that of the 40.8% of the sample who admitted being IPV victims/survivors, 65% were physically, mentally and sexually violated, yet only 30.4% of those who reported their battery were able to seek medical assistance (Raj & Silverman, 2002). For instance, a study comparing IPV perpetration on African American, South Asian and Hispanic women in the US reported that even though the number of known IPV cases within the three racial minority communities were quantitatively similar, the severity of battery and abuse was found to be greater among SA women, as well as the finding that African American and Hispanic women left their abusers more often than battered SA women (Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel & Baig-Amin, 2003). What also differentiates the case of SA IPV perpetration in the US is its unprecedented underreporting (Das Dasgupta, 2000; Mukherjee, 2013). Not only does this coerced and/or willful hushing of spousal violence impede IPV intervention, but it also points to a schism of traditional-global gender expectations that forces battered SA women 'to view it as their own fault/fate, their cultural moorings that teach them to be subservient to their husbands/in-laws,' not to mention 'their fear of community or cultural rejection, and their desire to uphold an ideal ethno-racial image' (Sthanki, 2007; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005; Mukherjee, 2013: 25). Despite there being well over twenty South Asian Women's Organizations (SAWOs) and IPV shelters/services in the US for supporting women from this ethno-racial diaspora, 'South Asian women are usually disinclined to get help or report the violence for many reasons,' including feelings of shame, isolation and fear of losing their immigration

status or sponsorship (South Asians in the United States, 2003; as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 26).

Ethnicity, Race and Globalization

Systemic pressures from oppressive families, immigration laws, assimilation expectations and communal denial of IPV exacerbate battered conditions of minority women (Kasturirangan et al., 2004). Currently, research on SA IPV has been accused of blurring ethnic with racial differences, ignoring linguistic distinctions, religious beliefs, gender expectations and being *culturally unmindful* of the heterogeneous meanings of IPV in the SA migrant community (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Kasturirangan et al., 2004). They fear that a western feminist approach to understanding ethnic gender-abuse in a post-globalized developed context will pedagogically 'ignore the intersectionality of social identities and force women to prioritize their gender identity over their racial or ethnic identity when dealing with domestic violence' (Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Mukherjee, 2013: 41-42).

As a dominant discourse of immigration, globalization can be comprehended as an 'historical narrative based on shifting notions of power, identity, belonging, place, displacement, nationality, globalism and hybridity' (Mukherjee, 2013: 46). Researchers of globalization, transnationalism and gender violence have found that immigration-related isolation becomes an inseparable part of the abuse experienced by SA women, 'majorly due to the invisibility immigrant women experience because of their ethnicity and gender status in the US' (Abraham, 2000; Mukherjee, 2013: 30). Additionally, the communal labeling of IPV as a private issue has done a major disservice to creating consciousness about its perpetration in the US, and has 'disempowered many South Asian women from speaking out and seeking help' (Goel, 2005; Das Gupta, 2006; Das Dasgupta, 2007; Mukherjee, 2013: 30). This tendency to render *private* an essentially *public* (racial, ethnic, gendered) form of oppression warrants 'a need for gender- and culture-specific feminist discourses and paradigms to address local gender issues that occur transnationally,' in the context of the intimidating conditions that are imposed by *push* and *pull* players of neo-liberal globalism (Mukherjee, 2013: 47-48; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; King, 1990, 1991; Ong, 1991; Stalker, 2000).

The temporary-dependent legal status of several SA females permits their abusive partners/spouses to ensure 'control through financial and legal means with severe consequences for the safety of victims/survivors of battering' (Bhuyan, 2007: 229). We must reevaluate the scope of this form of gendered violence from within the cross-cultural frames of transnationalism and global migration (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata & Stewart, 2004). The fact that the migration of SA women to other geo-political spaces as lawful, yet dependent immigrants (in most cases) does much to increase their vulnerability to patriarchal violence is no surprise (Ahmad et al., 2004). The pressures of acculturation seem to weigh heavier on people from minority groups, particularly for women, because of gender status and also because their traditions 'are markedly different than the culture of the host country' (Mukherjee, 2013: 52). Intersectionally speaking, the pressures of cultural, legal, global, social, racial, ethnic, and gendered expectations results in 'stress and tension within immigrant families…*and* studies also report a trend for domestic abuse to either start or become worse after couples' immigration' (Ahmad et al., 2004: 265; my emphasis).

Digital Communities: 'Sense of Community' in Blogs

Globalization does not necessarily create social alienation. It creates a form of ambivalent anxiety because of constant changes in one's location – a happy and nervous mix, such as the ambivalence one often encounters in digital communities comprising globalized relationships (Tomlinson, 1999). Digital communities have added a feather to the time-tested cap of public participation (boyd, 2006; Castells, 2001; Jones, 1999). Spatio-temporal limitations to meeting face-to-face have left it to weak ties to create affective strength in numbers via digital communities (Jones & Mukherjee, 2010). This digital philosophy of socialization implies not an individualistic sense of social capital (accusations, apart), but 'rather a community of like-minded people who create social patterns of networking through CMC' (Jones & Mukherjee, 2010: 22).

Though not bodied in palpable, geo-political spaces, participants of online communities ascribe meanings to their *em*-bodied interactions through collective sharing of relations, affect, beliefs and a sense of commitment to their current discursive

investment. They are interactive digital spaces connected via some 'sense of community' that are as fluid, as they are committed to shared values (Blanchard, 2004; Sink, 2006; Mukherjee, 2013). In particular, for digital natives who are geo-physically distanced from their families and national moorings, participation in 'a virtual community functions as an alleviator of homesickness, partner in culture shock, and helper with assimilation into the new culture,' whether it is for 'connection, support, and political activism among migrants' (Hiller & Franz, 2004).

Social narratives creating a *sense of community* around the politics of nationalism, migration, post-colonial globalization, and developmental marginalization, have often found empowering spaces within weblogs authored by communities and individuals belonging to minority publics in the US, including the SA diaspora (Gajjala, 2006). In fact, the evolution of the locational digi-phrase 'cybernetic safe spaces' can be ascribed to the works of Ananda Mitra (2006) who used it to explain the 'sense of "safety" that real spaces cannot produce,' a familiar 'sense of community' that so many SA migrants seek online, as attempts to place-make their culture and traditions in foreign lands (265).

Feminizing Blogging

Amidst legitimate accusations of misogyny, it is also true that digital media in their developmental stages had assured a certain amount of gender-neutral recognition for its participants, however implicit. Gregg (2006) takes us back to the beginnings of essentially 'gender free' web rings and web hosts, made popular by feminist blogs like Ms. Musings, The Progressive Women Bloggers Ring and Feministe. Sink (2006) studied the ways in which Muslim women in the US, particularly of Middle Eastern descent, renegotiated a strong sense of gender, ethnic, and cultural identities through their personal blogs by sharing their narrative take on the role of relationships and marriage, family values, and the impact of religion.

The democratic possibility of blogging for gender empowerment has created 'independent alternatives to the malestream media,' according to these feminist communication scholars (Greg, 2006; Sink, 2006). Affective engagement offered by the

blogosphere can act something like a digital safe house, particularly for vulnerable populations who want to be freed from 'difficulties and dangers of non-normative gender identification offline' and who also wish to find a 'safe and fairly anonymous forum in which issues of concern and potential threat can be raised and discussed without fear' (Gregg, 2006: 152-53).

Theories of Intersectionality

Gender, culture, minority identities and ritual meaning-creations in postcolonial contexts of social interchange have jointly lent form and substance to theories of intersectionality. If, indeed, blogs make public the ways in which culture, gender, race, class, ethnicity and/or oppression cross paths, in no particular order, to shed light on the 'what, why and how' of IPV on SA women, then I concur that 'approaching the problematic from a race/gender and cultural studies perspective will theoretically corroborate the expected findings' (Mukherjee, 2013: 88).

White, western feminism has repeatedly been accused of favoring gender over race. Post- postcolonial and cultural studies scholars from developed and developing contexts have reacted by turning their attention to 'people of colour *(sic)* cross gender' (Knudsen, 2006: 62; Mohanty, 1994; Suleri, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2005). Many of them started by turning to theories of intersectionality, originating in the works of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1994) and other Black feminists of the late twentieth century. Starting with Crenshaw's explication of violence against minority/African American women as a 'product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism' (1994), postcolonial feminists started recognizing the need for a *transversal* form of intersectionality to understand the issues underlying ethno-cultural patterns of VAW, a theoretical approach that they believed could 'not only pose questions about how ethnicity is gendered, but also how masculinity and femininity are racialized and ethnicized' (Knudsen, 2006, p. 64). Postcolonial gender scholars building on transversal frames of intersectionality theories started researching disability and sexuality studies, colored and minority postcolonial feminisms, queer feminism, and also, the relation between gender/feminism, socialism and nationality that came in later to further transversalize

and complicate the theory (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Knudsen, 2006; Meyer, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2005).

Postcolonial discourses on intersectionality that in the last three decades have particularly concentrated on women of color, minorities and migrants provide 'a devastating critique of socio-political, economic and cultural processes of "othering",' while also focusing on the 'simultaneous importance of subjectivity – of subjective pain and violence that the inflictors do not often wish to hear about or acknowledge' (Brah & Phoenix, 2004: 83). As is apparent in this case, the *othering* that abused women of color/minorities/migrants encountered have been exacerbated by the 'cultural myths that incarcerate them within the normative confines of their own communities' (Mukherjee, 2013: 89). In certain instances, linguistic impediments have also prevented non-English speaking SA victims of battery from seeking help in governmental and/or non-profit CBOs (Das Dasgupta, 2007; Dasgupta, 2006). According to postcolonial feminist scholar Yuval-Davis (2005), the host and migrant community's commitment to 'curtail the politicization of domestic violence in non-white communities are often times undergirded by the workings of an internally operative patriarchal discriminatory politics and an overtly-masculine de facto nationalism,' intersectional practices that operate together with the forces of heteronormative racist politics (Mukherjee, 2013: 90). Moreover, intersectional feminists, who focus on postcolonial and colonial gender discourses, also often dissect diaspora politics, particularly for examining 'the mobility of peoples, commodities, capital and cultures in the context of globalization and transnationalism,' as well as the *categories* and 'configurations of power – both productive and coercive – in "local" and "global" encounters in specific spaces and historical moments' (Brah & Phoenix, 2004: 83).

We all categorize, for better or for worse. That is our chosen way to make sense of a world that we can barely make sense of, even with the tools of categorical explication. When patriarchs or first-world, privileged feminists have categorized colored women, immigrants, refugees and oppressed minorities as 'object or Other,' they have attested to dominant ideologies of representation, forcing us to perceive 'how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have' (Brummett & Bowers, 1999). This forced stasis is indicative of the alienation of engaged

subject positions and their relegation to locations of object-positions. The postcolonial and *colored* intersectional theoretical frame contextualized for this case study espouses that everyone has a story to tell – even those who are systemically muted across gender, cultural, racial and ethnic boundaries. When people engage in active storytelling, it creates narrative opportunities to resist passive objectification via 'explanation(s) for why people are doing what they are doing, how they got "here," and where they are going' (Brummett & Bowers, 1999: 131; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2005; Knudsen, 2006). Such active, subjective storytelling is what we will explore in the following section via narratives digitized by several SA immigrants within three representative SA community blogs in response to the epidemic of heterosexual IPV perpetrated on socio-legally dependent women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh living in the US (Mukherjee, 2013).

The Case Study: Analysis and Discussion

The majority of the current study's blog sample identified *marriage, patriarchy and gender* as systems of 'power, privilege and control that [are] at the base of such abusive behavior' (Mukherjee, 2013: 166). Explicit and implicit references to various marital and patriarchal institutions such as arranged marriages, forced marriages, gendered expectations of husbands, male partners and in laws, as well as the stigma of divorce/separation within the SA community were often discussed themes that emerged from threaded blog discussions.

In *Where's the Garam Paratha, Bahu?*, one of the sampled SA community blogs, the oppressive fallout of SA patriarchal privilege that exacerbates domestic abuse against women is narrativised:

> *The South Asian-American society boasts of some gender prejudiced practices such as separating women to be seated opposite from men in the Sikh Temples [Gurdwara]. The women are often financially manipulated by their husbands and are considered economically non-adept by their male partners…*
> *The male-dominated Sikh American society has created these ill-informed conceited norms when it comes to so-called gender roles…there is nothing called*

gender equality if you are a South Asian immigrant woman…the men hold all the power (2007, cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 166).[5]

Several blog posts shared horrific stories describing how migrant SA women were victimized by immigration-related IPV. Many highlighted specific concerns like the epidemic of familially-enforced fraud and forced marriages among SA immigrants as unethical shortcuts to gaining lawful citizenship through matrimony, all reasonable explanations 'for understanding, tackling and analyzing the occurrence of this human rights aberration against South Asian woman in the US' (Mukherjee, 2013: 170). The 'dependent visa status of abused South Asian women were also taken into consideration,' in several blog discussions in order to 'explicate, justify or predict (on occasion), the prevalence of this form of partner abuse' (Mukherjee, 2013: 170). A digitized example of this thematic prevalence was found in a blog post from *Way to Wisdom*, another SA community blog excerpted from the sample:

> *The problem is further complicated for migrant South Asian women because if they want to divorce their abusive husbands, they also often lose their legal status in the US and will have to forcibly return to their own nation – be it Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, or some other country. These women will have to manage to run away from the abuse, get enough finances to catch a plane back home, and safely reach their families, which is also not completely safe for them as they have to face the plight and stigma of their family and community (2011, cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 170).*

The possibility that some of these abused immigrant women, if forcibly sent home, would face threats of 'honor killings'[6] by family members, for potentially ending a marriage, is not to be dismissed. Honor killings, battery and subordination of women, both in their marital and biological families continues to be regularly perpetrated, particularly on SA women of Sikh religious following, including those who have spent most of their married/partnered lives in western host countries (Gangoli, Razak & McCarry, 2006). The unfortunate irony is that within the frame of globalized transnationalism this very condition of legal dependence for spousal visa-holding SA women becomes a bane and boon that creates 'more spousal abuse on one hand, while also proving to be the only way they can still live in this country in case their own families back home don't accept them' (Mukherjee, 2013: 171).

Of the many fallouts of globalization, one is a tendency to homogenize human experiences and relations. A handful of blog threads wove discourses around the macro-context of developing- and developed-nation economies, their impact on *push* and *pull* forces of labor migration and the resultant dis/possessions of human and financial capital, which to a large extent are related to the legal-financial and socio-cultural limbo that several dispossessed and oppressed minorities find themselves in. A scathing comment that criticizes the neo-global homogenization of battered SA women's experiences by, of all places, a few SA intervention services in America, is evidenced in the blog *Where's the Garam Paratha, Bahu?*

> The South Asian IPV advocacy organizations aren't really as radical, and if questioned, I don't believe that they would admit that their foundation is grounded in the politics of America… that is, encouraging pro-employment pro-migration policies that leads to these human rights violations in the first place… policies that lie at and stem from the very core of capitalistic globalization (2008, as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 178).

Another recurrent theme found in the blog sample addresses how external manifestations of *racial stereotyping* and *ethnic marginalization* exacerbates internal oppression within communities of color, such as the profiling of IPV within SA diasporic communities as an ethno-racial misdemeanor. A self-identified IPV advocate, 'argues passionately against the internal (intra-community) and external (host nation's) racial profiling' (Mukherjee, 2013), in *A Brown Battleground*, another representative SA community blog from the study sample:

> I am not saying that DV is not a major human rights violation that plagues my Indo-Jain community or for that matter any other culture, because know that if our community refuses to address the issue, it will refuse many of the people that I have personally known the fair scope to escape a violent household. However, I absolutely detest the racial stereotyping that is done around this topic, which is completely inappropriate and actually multiplies the abuse faced by these ethnically marginalized women (2009, as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 192).[7]

Other digital discourses that were commonly mobilized as historically intersectional themes underlying the prevalence and maintenance of SA spousal violence in the US

addressed: xenophobic and ethnic alienation by law enforcers, US government's inflexibility to ease legal immigration clauses, growing anxieties of minorities and those who are socio-economically dispossessed, dominant national discourses that have un/consciously institutionalized ethno-racial profiling against SAs, an issue that seemed particularly salient for Muslim SA female survivors of IPV in the US, who may have been consciously reluctant to report/seek help from law enforcement officials for fear of accidentally contributing to the stereotype that all Muslim men are likely armed and violent (if in their particular case, the intimate abusers are/were also of Islamic faith), not to mention 'internal caste based *(sic)* racism (intra-communal differences that sometimes work to ostracize certain members from within the community)' (Mukherjee, 2013: 192).

Conclusion

To situate digital communities within the logic of globalization, we must evaluate its social impact on interconnected members of a *deterritorialized* public sphere. Deterritorialization suggests that our cultural experiences, locations and/or identities are 'in various ways "lifted out" of its traditional "anchoring" in particular localities… being increasingly "penetrated" by the connectivity of globalization,' a contemporary ambivalent space of interconnection that takes for granted notions of physical distance, cultural specificities and technological ubiquity, including 'our interaction with globalizing media and communications technologies – television, mobile phones, email, the Internet… which brings globalized influences, forces, experiences and outlooks into the core of our locally situated lifeworld' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 273). Currently, as is our socially mundane custom, most of us are 'members of multiple communities: global, social, cultural, religious, gendered, racial, economic, national, geo-political, digital, and the list goes on.' Despite that, many of us feel 'alone and disjointed, communal only in parts' (Mukherjee, 2013: 57). Add to this the debasement of essential human rights, freedoms and lives via habitually perpetrated physical, mental and sexual domestic abuse, and 'the sense of spatial and temporal belonging and…freedom of communication also get obliterated for the ones abused' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276). The victims, survivors and advocates need a space where they can engage in intersectional discourses about IPV in ways that are relatively secure, deterritorially accessible and

useful, 'a space that has been evolving for a while now within the discursive interstices of blogs' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276).

Minority and migrant group politics are fluid. We cannot attempt to understand their cultures in 'temporal fixity' because their performativity is within locations, which are most often characterized by intersections, ambivalence and mobile probabilities (Bhabha, 1994; Odin, 2001; Mukherjee, 2013). Postcolonial theories of intersectionality attempt to make sense of minority problems from inside their peripheral locations, and challenge 'the critical view of becoming "the other" in a normative setting' (Knudsen, 2006: 62). In the case of intimately abused SA migrant women in the US, this 'othering' is intersectional: it is ethnic, racial, gendered, and cultural, as these battered, yet resilient migrant females hold the 'potential of being labeled troublesome within their own community, primarily due to the threat that they pose to the model minority image' (Mukherjee, 2013: 89-90).[8]

Male- and state-entitled oppressors have done their bidding to relegate migrant, minority women as 'the symbolic repository of group identity' (Kandiyoti, 1994: 382), in misguided efforts to conflate their public identities with 'the private domain [that] reinforces the merging of the nation/community with the selfless mother/devout wife' (Kandiyoti, 1994: 382). Yet, as bell hooks (1990) argues, ever so neatly, 'margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance' (151). Histories of suppression have, at opportune social intervals and through empowering networks of communication, metamorphosed into her-stories of contemplation, active engagement and awareness-creation. I believe that this study opens up the floor to a performance space for promoting discussions on the untapped ethno-cultural potential of blogging, communal consciousness-creation about intersectional, migrant minority issues, and a furthering of the debate on digital democracy, which in this case has helped to mobilize 'a public forum of consensus and empathy around the issue of domestic violence to hear, heed and help those affected' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276).

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Footnotes　(returns to text)

1. The national IPV/DV hotlines are 1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-787-3224 (TDD). A few helpful South Asian community based resources in the United States that can provide help and safety for victims of IPV/DV are: SAWERA, Oregon (South Asian Women's Empowerment and Resource Alliance; **http://sawera.org** (http://sawera.org) or call 503-778-7386); Apna Ghar, Chicago (http://www.apnaghar.org or call 773-334-4663); Saheli, Boston (**http://www.saheliboston.org** (http://www.saheliboston.org) or call 1-866-4 SAHELI); Daya, Houston (**http://www.dayahouston.org** (http://www.dayahouston.org) or call 713-981-7645).

2. The original qualitative study (doctoral dissertation) used data from ten selectively sampled general-interest SA blogs that discussed several community-specific social, political and cultural issues, including the problem of heterosexual intimate partner violence against adult, South Asian immigrant women in the US, a few posts/comments from which have been presented here as evidentiary data.

3. South Asian im/migrant women will be used as a general term to signify women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who are legally dependent on their male spouses/partners for residing in the US.

4. The H4 visa is offered to dependent spouses of H1-B (temporary, employment-related) visa holders who are residing in the US. The H-4 visa operates on three conditions: first, it stays valid as long as the marriage between the primary H-1B holder and the dependent spouse holds good. Second, it relies on the continued employment of the principal H-1B worker in his/her employment organization. Finally, and perhaps the most double-edged condition is that the H-4 dependent visa does not allow its adherent to work legally in the US.

5. The blog posts used in this essay constitute relevant data that have been excerpted from the original dissertation research study. The real/user names of the blogs, bloggers/commentators and victims have been changed and/or anonymized, and the posts have been paraphrased for reasons of privacy and security. The author's university-affiliated IRB has approved this study.

6. Honor killing refers to a particular kind of intimate familial homicide. South Asian women have on occasion been murdered by their marital or biological families, as a way to restore the family's honor. It is a crime that is also globally rampant in South Asian immigrant communities.

7. The terms IPV, DV (domestic violence), spousal/gendered abuse/violence, battery, etc. are used interchangeably in this essay to signify the various forms of violence that is perpetrated by male partners/spouses/husbands of South Asian women immigrants in the US.

8. 'The Model Minority stereotype has been applied to Asian Americans since the 1960s. This stereotype suggests that Asian Americans as a racial/ethnic group are achieving a higher level of success than the population average, along dimensions such as educational attainment and income' (Counseling Center at UIUC, 2007). This stereotype,

however, is flawed as it ignores ethno-cultural specificities and at times encourages racial and ethnic profiling.

◀ BLOGGING   ◀ GENDER VIOLENCE   ◀ GLOBALIZATION   ◀ INTERSECTIONALITY
◀ PEER REVIEWED   ◀ SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA

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ONE THOUGHT ON "DIGI-BLOGGING GENDER VIOLENCE: INTERSECTING ETHNICITY, RACE, MIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY BLOGS AGAINST IPV"

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The Intersection of Race, Immigration Status, and Environmental Justice

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Abstract: Environmental injustice occurs when marginalized groups face disproportionate environmental impacts from a range of threats. Environmental racism is a particular form of environmental injustice and frequently includes the implementation of policies, regulations, or institutional practices that target communities of color for undesirable waste sites, zoning, and industry. One example of how the United States federal and state governments are currently practicing environmental racism is in the form of building and maintaining toxic prisons and immigrant detention prisons, where people of color and undocumented persons are the majority of inmates and detainees who suffer disproportionate health risk and harms. This article discusses the historical and contemporary conditions that have shaped the present political landscape of racial and immigration conflicts and considers those dynamics in the context of the literature on environmental justice. Case studies are then presented to highlight specific locations and instances that exemplify environmental injustice and racism in the carceral sector. The article concludes with an analysis of the current political drivers and motivations contributing to these risks and injustices, and ends with a discussion of the scale and depth of analysis required to alleviate these impacts in the future, which might contribute to greater sustainability among the communities affected.

Keywords: environmental justice; environmental racism; immigration; racism; prisons; detention centers

1. Introduction

The fact that populations that experience social, economic, political, and cultural marginalization also frequently experience disproportionate environmental risk from a range of government and industry-driven facilities, policies, and practices has led to the development of the field of environmental justice studies (Bullard 2000 [1]; Bullard and Wright 2012 [2]; Taylor 1997 [3]). Since the early 1970s, scholars, community activists, and policy researchers have documented that communities with large percentages of people of color, low-income persons, indigenous people, and immigrants are more likely to host hazardous waste sites; more likely to be hit the hardest by climate change, experience extreme heat and "natural" disasters; and more likely to be in spaces where air, water, and land are contaminated at levels that constitute significant threats to public health (Fothergill and Peek 2004 [4]; Harlan et al. 2006 [5]; Crowder and Downey 2010 [6]; Downey 2006 [7]; Mennis and Jordan 2005 [8]; Mohai and Saha 2007 [9]; Pauli 2019 [10]). The field of environmental justice studies has become a multidisciplinary area of inquiry that has also observed similar patterns on a transnational and global scale, whether it involves hazardous wastes (Pellow 2007 [11]), climate change (Ciplet, Roberts and Khan 2015 [12]), or resource extraction (Jorgenson and Clark 2009 [13]) in the global South and indigenous communities (Alvarez and Coolsaet 2018 [14]; Powell 2018 [15]). In particular, the way

that environmental justice struggles unfold in indigenous communities is often the result of histories of violent settler colonialism, which is frequently experienced through energy extraction regimes (e.g., coal, nuclear, and hydropower) that contribute to climate change as well (Hoover 2017 [16]; Malin 2015 [17]; Voyles 2015 [18]; Whyte 2017 [19]). Scholars have also demonstrated the clear linkages between environmental injustices and food injustices, in that the very same populations that experience disproportionate environmental and climate threats are also facing exclusions from equitable access to and participation in the consumption and production of healthy, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and ecologically sustainable foods (Morrell 2018 [20]; Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn 2011 [21]).

There is a growing literature on the intersection between environmental justice concerns and immigrant communities. Drawing on a national data set, Hunter (2000 [22]) found that U.S. counties with higher proportions of immigrants and non-English speaking households are characterized by greater numbers of large quantity hazardous waste generators and proposed Superfund sites. This was perhaps the first national scale quantitative study linking foreign born persons with environmental risks. A number of studies in the Los Angeles metropolitan area have found that neighborhoods with majority Latinx/Chicanx populations (which, in Los Angeles, are generally significantly high in *immigrant* residents) face the highest levels of exposure to industrial pollution, compared with Anglos/whites, as a result of racially biased urban planning and zoning policies (Boone and Modarres 1999 [23]; Carter 2016 [24]; Pulido, Sidawi and Vos 1996 [25]). An example of racially biased policy and practice occurs when public hearings and public documents related to proposed hazardous facility siting are not translated into the languages that impacted populations speak, creating what some scholars have called "linguistic isolation" (Hunter 2000 [22]). In the case of *El Pueblo Para el Aire y Agua Limpio v. County of Kings* (1991), the largely Latinx and Spanish-speaking town of Kettleman City, California was the site of a proposed Waste Management Inc. incinerator and waste disposal facility, and the project was halted when the court ruled that, under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the defendants had not provided Spanish translations of public hearing documents, thus making it impossible for the local community to have adequate knowledge of and inclusion and participation in the proceedings (Cole and Foster 2000 [26]). Scholars have also found that such communities with high Latinx and immigrant populations are maturing and evolving to deploy sophisticated strategies and tactics to build power to promote environmental justice in urban centers (Carter 2016 [24]).

Even so, the legal system and the courts have generally not been effective sites for the promotion of environmental justice movement goals, either for native born or immigrant communities (Cole and Foster 2000 [26]; Gross and Stretesky 2015 [27]). Therefore, a number of scholars have begun to question the wisdom of researchers and activists seeking redress for environmental injustices through state-based institutions (see, for example, Kurtz 2009 [28]; Pulido, Kohl and Cotton 2016 [29]).

These environmental inequities also result in differential public health risks, which is why this is particularly concerning for residents in affected areas. For example, communities of color in the San Francisco Bay Area—especially those with high concentrations of low-income persons and/or Latinx and Asian immigrant populations—face disproportionate exposure to industrial toxic releases and disproportionate cancer risks and respiratory hazards from air toxics concentrations (Pastor, Sadd and Morello-Frosch 2007 [30]). Additionally, another study found that Latinx and Asian immigrants in California's Silicon Valley face disproportionately high levels of exposure to environmental toxins on the job in electronics firms *and* in their neighborhoods (Pellow and Park 2002 [31]).

In the scholarship on EJ (Environmental Justice) and immigration, the workplace as a site of environmental justice struggles has long been a focus (Gottlieb 2005 [32]; Pellow 1998 and 2002 [33,34]; Taylor 1997 [3]). For example, immigrants from Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia have, since the founding of the U.S. through the present day, faced harsh working conditions that scholars have re-framed as environmental justice concerns. Research on African immigrants and African American enslavement reveals these dynamics and concludes that slavery was a system of control over both

nature and humans that was particularly brutal and harsh, but that even under such difficult conditions, enslaved persons routinely resisted their oppression (Glave and Stoll 2006 [35]; Smith 2007 [36]; Taylor 1997 [3]). Gottlieb (2005 [32]) and Hurley (1995 [37]) found that immigrants from Europe endured and resisted environmentally hazardous and unhealthy conditions in the steel factories, textile sectors, and other industries in the U.S. throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries. Important scholarship details how Mexican and other Latin American immigrants have faced low-wages and high environmental risks in agriculture, landscaping, food service, construction, tourism/recreation, and a number of other services sectors, including "green" industries (see Harrison 2011 [38]; Park and Pellow 2011 [39]; Pellow 1998 and 2002 [33,34]).

Finally, some scholars have argued that we should go deeper to consider the driving forces behind environmental injustice/racism, which must include an examination of racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and the ideologies that undergird those systems of control (Pulido 2016 [40]). Specifically, racial capitalism is the idea that racism is a structuring logic of capitalism. In other words, capitalism is inseparable from race and racism because it requires the production of such forms of social difference to facilitate and maintain hierarchies that are the bedrock of that system (Melamed 2015 [41]; Robinson 1983 [42]). Moreover, the history and ongoing legacies of European invasion of indigenous lands (i.e., settler colonialism) in what is now called the United States continue to shape the experiences that Native peoples and people of color have with environmental racism because widespread ecologically harmful practices and the legal system that enables them rest on a foundation of ideological and juridical structures that have been unfolding for centuries (Hoover 2017 [16]; Voyles 2015 [18]; Whyte 2017 [19]). For these reasons, EJ scholars urge us to integrate and center justice into our thinking and actions intended to theorize and support ecological sustainability (Agyeman and Evans 2004 [43]; Sze 2018 [44]).

1.1. Race, Prisons, and EJ

Despite the fact that the field of EJ studies has focused on the links between environmental threats and spatial isolation of marginalized communities, surprisingly few scholars have paid attention to the role of prisons and imprisonment with respect to environmental concerns. This is an area of inquiry that should be of great importance to environmental justice scholars because prisons are spaces of hyper segregation along racial and national status lines, and prisons are increasingly being documented as sites of considerable environmental and public health threats. For example, there are now confirmed reports that dozens of prisons, jails, juvenile detention prisons, and immigrant detention prisons across the nation are located on or in close proximity to toxic superfund sites and other hazardous land uses, are infested with mold and other air contaminants, have significant water contamination, are marked by food injustices, are institutions where inmates and detainees* are being forced to take harmful pharmaceuticals, and are spaces where toxic and dangerous work is routine (see Braz and Gilmore 2006 [45]; PEJP 2017 and 2018 [46,47]; Perdue 2018 [48]). This is a problem that environmental justice scholars should pay more attention to because of the following reasons: The U.S. imprisons more people than any other nation on earth, and the vast majority of inmates in the prison and jail system are people of color and low-income persons; the fastest growing group of prisoners is women (Alexander 2012 [49]; Cole 1999 [50]; Pellow 2017 [51]); and foreign nationals (immigrants) are being detained in prisons throughout the nation where environmental threats abound as well (Vazin 2018 and 2019 [52,53]).

Prisons are also clearly relevant to EJ-related research for a host of other reasons. Perhaps one of the most enduring successes of the environmental justice movements and scholarship is the reframing and expansion of what the word "environment" means, pushing beyond the traditional conservationist and preservationist definitions of the nonhuman world to include those spaces where human beings also "live, work, play, learn, and pray." In other words, unlike classic western environmentalist narratives, environmental justice politics and scholarship have long taken seriously the injunction against dualist thought—the separation of humans from the more-than-human world, arguably one of

the most important pillars of the science of ecology. In so doing, EJ scholars and activists have been able to effectively integrate what might have previously been defined as social (human) justice concerns into a broader "environmental" framework and to integrate concerns about nonhuman natures into what might traditionally be thought of as strictly matters of human health and social justice. Therefore, the study of prisons as a space of environmental justice struggles is important because carceral systems are sites where nonhuman natures are negatively impacted and where human beings are also exposed to risks 24 hours a day. Thus, prison EJ struggles offer the opportunity to expand the already ambitious EJ re-framing of "the environment" to include those spaces where people "live, work, play, learn, pray ... and do time." More specifically, there has long been a debate in EJ studies over whether environmental inequality and racism are the result of otherwise "neutral" market forces in which persons with less disposable income gravitate toward already polluted communities because the rents are cheaper and the cost of living is lower, as opposed to a more sinister scenario in which hazardous industrial and governmental facilities deliberately target low-income and people of color populations. Some scholars have embraced the former dynamic, known as the "minority move-in hypothesis", and have essentially absolved the state and capital from responsibility for environmental injustice/racism (Been 1994 [54]), while more recent scholarship concludes that, more often than not, environmental injustices result from industrial and/or governmental facilities targeting of low-income and people of color communities *after* residents have moved into a neighborhood. If one applies the same question to the prison system, the results are even more profound and stark because the residents (inmates) of such facilities have virtually no say or agency in where they end up. While they may be able to exercise a range of forms of agency within a prison, inmates are effectively spatially immobilized with respect to the ability to move beyond the prison walls. Thus, the evidence suggests that, whether inside or outside of prison, the minority move-in hypothesis holds little explanatory power (Pastor, Sadd and Hipp 2001 [55]; Mohai and Saha 2015 [56]; Saha and Mohai 2005 [57]).

The research methods we employed included an extensive literature review of scholarly and scientific studies as well as media and government reports on incarceration, immigrant detention and environmental justice, and public health concerns in the U.S., with particular attention to the intersections of these phenomena. We drew from a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary sources, including law, medicine, public health, and the social sciences, as well as reports from government agencies and non-governmental organizations. We supplemented our literature review with the use of brief case studies that allow for an exploration of key issues across a range of environmental justice threats facing persons inside immigrant prisons.

We have included a consideration of the broader prison system in this paper to provide the larger institutional context necessary for understanding the particular challenges associated with immigrant prisons and environmental justice struggles. The primary difference between a traditional jail or prison and immigrant prisons is that the latter are specifically designed to hold persons who are not U.S. citizens and who are alleged to have violated immigration law (which is a civil, not criminal, offense). While inside these facilities, the detainees are generally awaiting trial and/or deportation.

* To clarify, the term "inmate" refers to persons who have been criminally charged or arrested in the domestic carceral system. The term "detainee" encompasses both civilly charged migrants who are found in the U.S. without a green card or visa and asylum seekers who apply for asylum at the border. Neither group is facing criminal charges but are being held in immigrant prisons at the time of this writing under the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy, and both groups are referred to collectively as detainees throughout this article.

1.2. Immigration Status, Incarceration, and Environmental Injustice

Citizenship status has long been the basis of legal discrimination and injustices in the United States (Brickner and Hanson 2004 [58]). Immigrant ghettos, internment/concentration camps, and horrendous abuses by the U.S. government played a major role in the American experience for many current fourth generation families (Cutler et al. 2008 [59], Nagata 1990 [60], Massey and Denton

1993 [61])—yet, as all of these disturbing trends have seen a resurgence in recent years, this history seems long forgotten. There are estimated to be over 45 thousand detainees currently being held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Trump administration wants to double that capacity (E.O. 13768 2017 [62]). Immigrants being detained without a charge on American soil are being subjected to environmental contamination or abusive conditions that are severely affecting their mental and physical health, and this mistreatment has resulted in death in multiple cases (HRW 2018 [63]). Privately owned corporations are profiting from the unethical detention of a largely Latinx population (Vazin 2018 [52]); they, along with ICE and the federal government, are the perpetrators of some of the most severe environmental and social injustices in contemporary American history.

1.2.1. Overview of EJ Issues in Immigrant Detention Prisons *

In this section, we present an overview of some of the major environmental justice concerns that we have documented in immigrant detention prisons in the U.S. These include the fact that many of these facilities are marked by contamination with emerging pollutants, harmful medical practices, unhealthy and abusive food services, and inhumane building conditions. Since the detainees of these facilities are vulnerable, marginalized populations (undocumented immigrants who are often women and children), we argue that these health threats constitute environmental injustices, and the cumulative and combinatorial effects of exposure to one or more of these risks is considerable. We also demonstrate that these practices are the direct result of government policies and are therefore examples of environmental injustice as state violence (Pulido 2016 [40]; Pulido et al. 2016 [29]).

* These facilities are called "detention centers" by ICE and the U.S. government, but in this paper, we will refer to them as they actually function—as immigrant prisons.

Contaminated Spaces

A concerning trend that is seen in both domestic prisons and immigrant detention prisons is the high incidence of these facilities being built on contaminated land. From being located on or adjacent to federally designated toxic superfund sites, exposed to contaminated water and air, or being built in natural disaster hazard zones, America's prisons are inflicting inhumane methods of punishment on inmates and detainees (PEJP 2018 [47]). The types of contaminants in these spaces vary, including chemicals associated with military testing, water treatment byproducts, and fracking pollutants; all of the toxins at these sites pose serious risks to human health (ATSDR 1999, 2005, 2007, 2014, 2018 [64–68]). There are multiple detention prisons known to be contaminated with a range of chemical toxins, as shown by public reporting results, USEPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) listings, and internal military documents—yet, they were still chosen to house thousands of immigrants awaiting trial (Vazin 2019 [53]).

We will offer more details on a particular class of contaminants found in these locations: Perfluoroalkyl acids (PFOA/PFOS). These compounds have been found at multiple locations currently housing migrants, at previous detention facilities, and spaces listed as potential new locations in government documents, including Fort Bliss AFB, Lackland AFB, Federal Correctional Complex Victorville, Goodfellow AFB, Karnes County Residential Center, and Port Hueneme Naval Base. PFOAs have been detected in the water supplies at each of these locations. Humans can be exposed to these compounds by breathing contaminated air, using or ingesting contaminated water, and eating contaminated foods (Post 2012 [69]; Steenland 2010 [70]). The USEPA safety threshold for these chemicals is 70 parts per trillion (ppt), which some studies deem is well beyond the health risk limit, but many of these locations have tested above this concentration. For example, some taps at the Federal Correctional Complex in Victorville, California tested for over 5000 ppt (DOD 2018 [71]). These chemicals are fully fluorinated hydrocarbons that are stable even at high temperatures, nonflammable, not readily degraded by strong acids, alkalis, or oxidizing agents, and are not subject to photolysis (Steenland 2010 [70]). What this means is that these chemicals have a unique stability that renders them practically non-biodegradable and thus, very persistent in the environment. They are emerging

pollutants that have not been largely studied for human health effects despite detectable traces (at the ppb level) in humans, fish, and mammals worldwide (Lau 2004 [72]).

Toxicity research that has been conducted—mostly in mice, rats, and nonhuman primates—has found that high levels of PFOA/PFOS exposure resulted in liver and thyroid disorders, cancer, a multitude of developmental effects, and even death (Lau 2004 [72]). Bioaccumulation rates across species were variable and the Minnesota Department of Health has found that, when compared to nonhuman primate trials, humans exhibit accumulation of these compounds by an order of magnitude above nonhuman primates, with an extremely long half-life elimination. Specifically: *"The results of these studies suggest that it may take more than five years for even one-half of a single exposure to leave the human body"* (MDH 2008 [73]). The long half-life elimination cycle in the body suggests that any exposure or ingestion of these molecules can incur health effects lasting years, with high levels of exposure lasting decades. This means that any babies born at a facility where these compounds are present are at great risk for negative developmental and generational health effects. A study in the *Journal of Reproductive Toxicology* found that prenatal exposure to environmental pollutants mutates the fetal epigenome, with potential effects ranging from developmental disorders, childhood disease, and transgenerational impacts (Perera and Herbstman 2010 [74]). This means that not only are babies harmed by being on these sites, but also any children that immigrant detainees carry could also suffer health effects from their exposure in the womb. Given the increased incidence of health effects from exposure to pollutants on vulnerable populations, one can infer that any pregnant women, children, or babies held at these locations are at high risk for long-term chronic health impairment. This exposure could cause harm to generations of families in the future, the magnitude of which will be a direct result of contemporary U.S. immigration policy. Detainees at these facilities are not provided free alternatives to tap water.

Harmful Medical Care

Not only are immigrant detainees being exposed to pollutants, stress, and abuses that directly harm their health, but they are blatantly being refused medical care to mitigate the effects of these injustices while being detained. This constitutes maltreatment in the current immigration system and inherently magnifies any health effects that detainees may suffer from that are associated with exposure to environmental hazards in these facilities. Moreover, environmental impacts do not stop at the moment of exposure; rather, they evolve into short or long-term health challenges that must be handled with care by medical practitioners, and the absence of such care for certain groups or those being held against their will is an environmental injustice in and of itself. The deliberate denial of medical care to immigrant detainees in these prisons is pervasive—almost every lawsuit, news report, inspection result, and testimony has cited little or no access to medical care for those detained by ICE across the nation (HRF 2018 [75]; HRW 2018 [63]; OIG 2018 [76]). This practice has led to multiple documented avoidable deaths; for example, between 2015–2017, half of the 16 deaths reported in these facilities were cited as a direct result of medical care having been denied or withheld (HRW 2018 [63], DHS 2016 [77]). One reason for this is that medical understaffing is rampant in detention facilities due to budget cutting measures. For example, one detention prison was found to have only one physician responsible for over two thousand detainees, which is a ratio under which it would be impossible to even attempt to provide adequate care (ACLU 2014 [78]). A Human Rights Watch collaborative report found that deaths linked to inadequate medical care were resultant from unreasonable delays, poor practitioner and nursing care, botched emergency responses, and mismanaged care of the mentally ill (DHS 2016 [77]). This disregard for the well-being of detainees is not just evidenced by the withholding of care, but also by the practice of malicious and abusive "health care" delivery as well.

In July 2018, a class-action lawsuit was filed against U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the Office of Refugee Resettlement's juvenile detention facilities, citing gross over-prescription of psychotropic medication disguised as vitamins for the purpose of sedating minors held by the agency (*Flores v. Sessions 2018* [79]). This case details how minors were forced to take up to ten pills in

the morning and nine in the evening, resulting in weight gains by as much as 100 pounds in a few weeks (*Flores v. Sessions 2018* [79]). Minors in two facilities testified that refusal to take the medication resulted in being forcibly injected with a sedative that immediately put them to sleep (*Flores v. Sessions 2018* [79]). These children reported feeling depressed, constantly tired and sluggish, suffering rapid weight gain, and feelings of emptiness as a result of these medications (*Flores v. Sessions 2018* [79]). Teachers at the Shiloh Detention Center in Manvel, Texas stated that the children there were so heavily sedated they could not stay awake for their classes, sleeping for hours in class during instruction. These lawsuits delineate seven of the specific psychotropic drugs administered to these minors (Clonazepam, Duloxetine, Guanfacine, Geodon, Olanzapine, Latuda and Divalproex), but others–as well as substances delivered by injections–used in the facilities are currently unknown (*Flores v. Sessions 2018* [79]).

These drugs can produce serious side effects with normal dosing, but the mixing and overuse of these substances seen at these locations could cause irreversible effects on these children's still developing minds and bodies. The rapid weight gain induced by these drugs puts these minors at risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, gallbladder disease, cancer, respiratory ailments, and stroke (Mayo Clinic 2015 [80]). Constant chemical overloading of these minors is directly causing a plethora of immediate health effects, but the long-term mental and physical impacts of long-term use and multi-drug interactions are not known; thus, the health of these young people could be forever damaged by practices sanctioned under United States immigration policy. As of November 2018, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement was still found to be in violation of the July 2018 cease and desist order against prescribing psychotropic medications without parental consent, and the court assigned former U.S. Attorney General Andrea Sheridan Ordin as the Special Master/Independent Monitor to ensure compliance. The practice of overdosing minors and the withholding of medical care are stark examples of dehumanizing treatment of these detainees, whom we note have not been charged and have not committed any criminal acts. Rather, their mistreatment is resultant purely based on their categorization as "other" or "alien." The flagrant abuse of asylum seekers and immigrants is morally abhorrent and is a direct result of the resurgence of racially motivated animosity toward nonwhite persons in America (Alexander 2012 [49]; Escobar 2016 [81]).

Unhealthy and Abusive Food Services

In December 2017, the Department of the Inspector General released a report on inspections at five separate immigrant detention prisons contracted to for-profit private companies by ICE and found "potentially unsafe and unhealthy detention conditions," specifically citing unsanitary food handling practices at these locations (OIG 2017 [82]). This governmental document uses reserved rhetoric, but the admission of inadequate food conditions is clear, and it corroborates other reports and detainee testimonies from these prisons. Detainees have reported being served maggot-infested food, raw meat, moldy and expired foods, as well as limited food rations in multiple facilities across the country (HRF 2018 [75]). Detainees have widely reported physical symptoms commonly associated with this kind of diet, such as hunger, weight loss, and sickness as a direct result of poor food quality (HRW 2018 [63]). These prison environments mimic the "food deserts" seen in immigrant and low-income communities outside the prison walls. Lack of access to healthy, ecologically sustainable foods is a major problem in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color and creates lifelong negative health consequences from exposure to pesticides, herbicides, and dangerous food additives (Walker et al. 2010 [83]). Highly processed foods such as hydrogenated oils, meat products, and sugars not only impact the body, but have significant impacts on the sustainability of our environment (Clark and Tillman 2017 [84]). The issue of forced consumption of unhealthy food is not disconnected from the environmental impacts that those specific food products may have on the planet. Prisons that choose primarily unhealthy and unsustainable food options are reinforcing the demand for the types of food products that are harming the environment well outside their walls. Food justice and environmental justice are intrinsically

linked when one examines these dynamics at the macro-scale and should be considered in tandem when analyzing EJ issues.

The effects of an unhealthy diet are numerous and take a severe toll on the body, and they can lead to foodborne illnesses that can cause lifelong ailments (Golan et al. 2010 [85]). For example, infections from Salmonella (*Campylobacter jejuni*) from undercooked poultry products, milk, and contaminated water can cause chronic arthritis, heart infections, blood infections, and chronic irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) (Golan et al. 2010 [85]). Infections from *E. coli* bacterium resulting from the consumption of undercooked beef, spoiled milk and juice, and contaminated produce in immunocompromised patients can lead to hemolytic uremic syndrome—the long-term effects of which can be permanent, causing end-stage kidney disease, neurological complications, and diabetes (Golan et al. 2010 [85]). *Listeria monocytogenes* infections from improperly stored deli meats, dairy products, and seafood can cause infections of the brain and spinal cord, leading to severe neurological dysfunctions such as seizures and paralysis or death (Golan et al. 2010 [85]). Many reports from these facilities also document enforced hunger through the provision of minimal food rations to detainees, which poses a host of other health risks for this population. Long-term meal deficits can lead to glucose intolerance and insulin resistance, resulting in type II diabetes, mental changes, immune system dysfunction, ketosis, organ failure, and death (Carlson 2007 [86]). The knowing provision of spoiled, contaminated food, and the withholding of food to immigrant detainees by private prison corporations is a well-documented human rights abuse that can irreversibly harm detainees' bodily function well beyond the duration of their confinement in these spaces.

Inhumane Building Conditions

Reports from the Department of Inspector General, the ACLU, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, and testimonies from filed lawsuits all report on the unsanitary and extreme conditions to which detainees are subjected while being held in ICE custody. Rat infestation, sewage spills, maggots in showers, bug infestations, and contaminated water have all been reported (ACLU 2014 [78]; HRW 2018 [63]; HRF 2018 [75]; OIG 2017 [82]). Freezing cold holding cells with no provided blankets is a routine practice at processing centers at the border, and officers and detainees alike refer to these cells as "hieleras," or freezers (HRW 2018 [63]). Minors at juvenile detention prisons in Texas and Arizona have reported being held without air conditioning in the blistering summer heat (Anapol 2018 [87]; Ellis 2018 [88]).

The World Health Organization states that unsanitary and extreme living conditions have been linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases from indoor air pollution, illness and deaths from temperature extremes, and the spread of communicable diseases (WHO 2010 [89]). Unsanitary and dangerous conditions within privately owned ICE contracted detention prisons are a violation of the Eighth Amendment rights against cruel and unusual punishment that applies to all persons in the U.S. regardless of citizenship (Human Rights Clinic 2014 [90]; *Ball v. LeBlanc* 2015 [91]). To an even further degree, the fact that these detainees are not being held for any crime, but rather just waiting for a civil court hearing, is a clear mistreatment of human beings on the sole basis of their country of origin.

In sum, undocumented persons from various nations who are seeking to live in the U.S. have been subjected to harsh conditions in immigrant detention prisons, which includes exposure to a range of chemical pollutants, harmful medical practices, unhealthy and abusive food services, and injurious building conditions. We argue that these phenomena are well within the ambit of environmental justice studies because they reflect the intersection of social inequality and environmental/public health threats, particularly as they concern vulnerable populations. Our argument that these practices also constitute environmental racism stems from the observation that the overwhelming majority of immigrant detainees are people of color. In a recent study of the 630 ICE facilities in operation in the U.S., researchers found that Mexican nationals make up 43 percent of the population, and individuals from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras made up an additional 46 percent (Ryo and Peacock 2018 [92]).

In the next sections, we consider specific carceral sites where environmental injustices are impacting immigrant populations.

2. Brief Case Studies

2.1. Texas Immigrant Detention Prisons, Fracking, and Climate Change

Many immigrant prisons are located on or near current and former waste dumps and toxic waste sites. For example, the largest immigrant prison in the U.S.—the "South Texas Family Residential Center"—is built to hold up to 2400 children and female detainees and is located just outside of Dilley, Texas, on a former "man camp" for oil and gas workers known as Sendero Ranch (Wilder 2014 [93]). The facility is owned and operated by CoreCivic, the second largest for-profit prison company in the U.S., and was built during the Obama administration in order to handle the rising number of immigrant children and families from Central America crossing the Mexico–Texas border without authorization. The prison was built in a region often called "the waste epicenter" (Bernd 2017 [94]) of the Eagle Ford Shale, a 30-county region where 20 saltwater disposal wells pump fracked wastewater back into the ground.

The Karnes County Civil Detention Center is another immigrant prison in the region and has been described as the "drilling epicenter" of the Eagle Ford Shale, a region that has experienced several well blowouts, local evacuations, and the majority of its residents reporting major environmental health problems (Song 2015 [95]). This region has thousands of oil and gas wells, many of which the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality does not even know exist, producing a massive and violent transformation across the landscape, threatening water tables, air quality, and human health. A Center for Public Integrity investigation concluded that a contributing force behind these increasing threats to human and environmental health is the fact that Texas regulatory agencies do far more to protect the oil and gas industries than the public (Song, Morris, and Hasemyer 2014 [96]). While the free residents of the region face considerable risks, the detainees at the Karnes facility are at an even greater disadvantage, given their legal status and immobility. The water at the prison is heavily chlorinated, and immigrant prisoners report that it smells and tastes foul (Bernd 2017 [94]).

Oil and gas extraction releases a range of health threatening chemicals, including hydrogen sulfide (a deadly gas found in great volumes in the Eagle Ford shale and Karnes County in particular), volatile organic compounds like benzene (a known carcinogen and contributor to leukemia), particulate matter and sulfur dioxide (which contribute to lung irritation and respiratory ailments), as well as carbon monoxide and carbon disulfide. Health studies demonstrate that, depending on the dosage and duration of exposure, these substances can cause a range of problems, including headaches, nausea, asthma, eye irritation, neurological harm, and cancer.

At both the South Texas Family Residential Center and the Karnes County Civil Detention Center, there have been allegations of forced family separation, sexual assault, inadequate medical care, malnourishment and depression among children, and many other objections. As is the case at many detention prisons around the nation, detainees routinely resist these harsh conditions through hunger strikes, sit-ins, and other means of protest and defiance against this brutal system. In 2015, mothers imprisoned at the Karnes County facility went on a hunger strike and one of their complaints was that the tap water was foul tasting because it had been heavily chlorinated, most likely in an effort to disinfect any pathogens related to the nearby heavy industrial fracking operations. The mothers had been purchasing clean water at the prison commissary to maintain their health, but the authorities shut the store down, thus forcing inmates to drink the water they suspected was contaminated. This action was one of many institutional decisions the detainees were resisting in order to achieve some semblance of health and justice.

More broadly, the spatial co-location of these detention prisons in fossil fuel extraction zones is worrisome on a number of levels. The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts that growth in U.S. oil production will meet 80% of new global demand for oil in the coming years (until at least 2024),

with much of that growth coming directly from oil produced by fracking in South Texas (Associated Press 2018 [97]). Thus, international migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are caged, with children often separated from their families, and placed at great risk of exposure to contaminated water and air as an indirect result of repressive, militaristic U.S. foreign policies in Latin America as well as climate change-induced drought and human migration (Blitzer 2019 [98]; World Food Programme 2015 [99]) and as a direct result of the U.S.'s oppressive anti-immigrant policies and an intensified commitment to global fossil fuel production, all of which serve to amplify nativism and global climate change (Worland 2018 [100]).

2.2. Northwest Detention Center

The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington is an immigrant prison marked by a multitude of environmental justice threats. This area is known to have contaminated air, water, and soil and is known to be in a high-risk zone in the event of natural disasters. The company that runs this facility (The GEO Group) has also been charged with forcing immigrant detainees to work against their will, serving inedible food, and not providing adequate medical care. This is one of the largest detention prisons currently operating in the United States and exemplifies the severity of injustices to which immigrants are subjected (ICE 2017 [101], PEJP 2018 [47]).

The Northwest Detention Center is directly adjacent to a Superfund site (ID: WAD980726368) in the Tacoma Tideflats area of Washington State—where a coal gasification plant leeched toxic sludge into the soil for more than thirty years. The facility opened in 2004 and currently holds over 1400 immigrant detainees (ICE 2017 [101]). The USEPA superfund contaminant list shows this area to be polluted with 27 different compounds, including antimony, arsenic, benzene, beryllium, cadmium, chromium VI, copper, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, selenium, silver, tetrachloroethylene, thallium, and zinc. These toxicants are found in soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, and air supplies on site (USEPA 2018 [102]). These chemicals and compounds can be ingested through water supplies, breathing contaminated air, and skin exposure. Health impacts can range from skin irritation, respiratory infections, developmental difficulties, cancers, organ failure, and death (ATSDR 2018 [68]).

During a public comment period in 2017 for a proposed pause on further industrial projects at the site, citizens living around the Tideflats reported headaches, sore throats, and the inability to breathe the outdoor air without respiratory distress because of living close to the area (City of Tacoma 2017 [103]). Citizens are not living on the premises like immigrant detainees are forced to, so it is highly likely that detainees are suffering from health effects associated with these pollutants to a higher degree. Yet, health effects are just one of the environmental dangers facing detainees held at this facility. The very building is constructed upon a low-lying floodplain on top of loose soils that are prone to liquifying during earthquakes (Johnson et al. 2004 [104]). Scientists also estimate that the Tideflats is the exact location that volcanic mudslides will flow into if nearby Mt. Rainer combusts, and this area would be completely wiped out by seawater if a tsunami ever hits the Puget Sound (USGS 2016 [105]). For these very reasons, the Tideflats is only zoned for industrial projects. Nonetheless, as a result of political lobbying, government officials approved an immigrant detention prison in this hazard zone in 2004. If any of these disasters were to hit Tacoma, the GEO group would have less than eight minutes to evacuate almost 1500 detainees, and their safety plans and protocols have never been released to the public. The area the Northwest Detention Center is built on should never be used to imprison human beings, as it is at extreme risk in the face of any disasters and is a highly polluted site.

In April of 2017, 100 immigrant prisoners at the Northwest Detention Center launched a hunger strike to protest the conditions of their confinement. The complaints that motivated this strike echoed many of the prisoners' concerns during a similar strike in 2014 at the same facility (which lasted 56 days): abuse by prison guards, maggot-infested food, and inadequate medical care, among other issues. While both of these protests on the *inside* of the facility were remarkable (considering how legally disempowered undocumented prisoners are), there have also been resistance actions taking place

outside the prison. In April of 2015, the Northwest Detention Center Resistance Coalition (NDCRC), a Seattle-based activist group, set up a human blockade outside the facility to prevent buses and vans from transporting detainees to Sea-Tac airport for deportation. The NDCRC activists explicitly stated that they were acting in solidarity to support the immigrant prisoners *and* to make a public statement that linked the oppressive conditions at the facility to the problem of climate change-driven migration. As one participating activist, Ahmed Gaya, declared, "On a broader scale, we think the struggles of migrant and climate justice are one and the same. Many people are migrating and are forced to leave their homes because of climate change" (Bogado 2015 [106]). Like many scholars and advocates concerned with the intersections of immigrant rights and environmental and climate injustice, NDCRC activists believe that continued climate change will lead to more forced migration, and nations like the U.S.—which have contributed disproportionately to global greenhouse gas emissions—have an ethical responsibility to address the consequences for people fleeing their home countries in search of refuge. This NDCRC action was also intended to highlight what activists believe are oppressive conditions inside the facility. While the Northwest Detention Center is still operating, the protests within and outside of the facility have led to much greater media attention on the conditions facing those inside; several lawsuits have been filed by detainees and government officials against the GEO group, commissary prices have declined so that some basic necessities are more affordable for detainees, and new legislation has been proposed (although not yet passed) to strengthen protections for detainees at the site.

3. Discussion

This paper considers the U.S. prison system as a site of environmental justice struggles, with a specific emphasis on the troubling conditions confronting thousands of immigrants imprisoned and awaiting trial and possible deportation. There are several reasons for extending the reach of EJ studies to the prisons system. The vast majority of inmates and detainees in the U.S. carceral and immigration systems come from vulnerable and marginalized groups (e.g., low-income persons, people of color, women, and immigrants). There is a myriad of public and environmental health hazards associated with the U.S. prison system, including air, water, and land pollution that place inmates and detainees in harm's way. If the environmental justice literature has successfully and effectively reframed and redefined "the environment" to include those spaces occupied not just by nonhumans, but also by people (such as the home, workplace, recreational sites, schools, and houses of worship, for example), then prisons meet that expansive standard as well as any place. As noted earlier, the prison is also a space of institutionally enforced immobility, thus rendering the debate over the so-called "minority move-in" hypothesis moot and suggesting generative new directions for research on mobility justice (Sheller 2018 [107]), which emphasizes the role of power and inequality in shaping social systems that govern our mobility and immobility. Studying environmental injustices in prisons also affords scholars the opportunity to push our analyses and proposals for solutions far beyond the typically reformist orientation of the literature. That is, much of the EJ literature tends to imagine justice being successfully exacted from existing structural and political arrangements (for a critique, see Benford 2005 [108]), while a growing number of scholars contend that justice is likely only possible after the abolition of capitalism, the nation state, or both (Pulido, Kohl, and Cotton 2016 [29]). While such a transformation may be unlikely in the near future, the prison is a space where one can appreciate the logic of scholars and activists who embrace such visions of change because it is an inherently brutal form of state-sanctioned violence, supported by unforgiving market economy institutions. That is, states and markets thrive on the production and maintenance of social and environmental inequalities, so radical solutions are needed to address those entrenched structures.

The question of immigration also suggests that transformative—rather than reformist—thinking and action are in order. Undocumented immigrants are often vilified as enemies of the nation, while those who are also imprisoned are literally caged and subjected to human rights abuses and cruel and unusual punishment, such as environmental and health assaults. Considering that prisons are

sites of legally-sanctioned enslavement (see James 2005 [109]), defined here as either penal captivity or forced labor (or both), imprisoned undocumented immigrants are doubly marginalized because they were never seen as having any meaningful rights in the first place, even outside of the context of the carceral system (De Genova and Peutz 2010 [110]). If that is an accurate assessment (and we believe it is), then demanding reforms of the political class in charge of this system will likely yield limited results. Therefore, if we locate the roots of environmental injustice in general and environmental racism directed at immigrants in prison in particular in centuries of U.S. settler colonialism and racial capitalism, then we feel compelled to conclude that bolder, more disruptive scholarship and politics are required to address such longstanding and violent configurations of power.

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Teaching against Hierarchies: An Anarchist Approach

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Abstract: The state of California spends more on prisons than on colleges and universities, and the fact that these two budgetary figures are often compared shows the relationship between the two state institutions. Our classrooms, starting from a very early stage, not only prepare children to be productive members of the consumer economy but educate them for complacency in the face of state violence and mass incarceration. In attempting to move away from hierarchical models of education, this article looks at the feminist pedagogical theory of bell hooks and antiauthoritarian and anarchist theorists such as Jacques Rancière and Derrick Jensen in order to begin investigating alternatives to current education systems. It also identifies major problems in attempting to construct antihierarchical classrooms within a larger society that is still suffering from oppression and structural inequality, and claims that, if not paired with direct action, any attempt for revolutionizing education will meet up against repressive state institutions.

Like so many other children, I loved learning: "All children (and other humans, and for that matter nonhumans!) love to learn. You have to work really hard to beat that out of them" (Jensen 2005, 187). I would stay up late into the night and read science books until my eyes blurred; obsess over amphibian identification manuals; play writer and practice writing poetry after finding a collection by Lewis Carroll. On the weekends, I would build tree houses made from wood that I had stolen from nearby construction sites, invent bizarre "machines" using broken roller skates, or endlessly rearrange model train tracks to create the perfect (that is, most complex) living-room rail system. However, also like so many other children, I disliked school, this dislike increasing when I entered the public high school system, where students were confronted with a series of detentions, suspensions, a horrible prison-like punishment called "Saturday School" (where extra school time was represented as a punishment for even minor transgressions, and which extended students' weekday incarceration into their only days of freedom), and repeated threats of expulsion. Patrolling the edge of the school's perimeter were security guards, who would work as hard to keep people in as to keep them out, making sure that we didn't miss an important lesson. This was a school where demands to "sit down" and "be quiet" were more frequent than invitations to wonder. My aversion to school was more than a simple uninterest in subject-verb agreement or the American Civil War; it was an aversion that went beyond that.

Most people who work in education—either in pedagogical theory or in classroom instruction—understand that schools do much more than teach us how to read and count; that, secondary to introducing us to the natural world and showing us pathways to intellectual development, schools are one of primary producers

of "productive" members of the dominant culture. I understand schools as giving students the experience and tools that they can then use to survive the "real world," and find work, become consumers, and support the economy; these are tools such as obedience, subservience, and "respect for" (fear of) authority and the state. At this task schools are exceedingly successful, and most students leave the education system having been taught to respect power and money and value consumer goods. And even though teachers do not often make much money, in the classroom they hold positions of power and often unwittingly reproduce systems of hierarchies, which then become influential in shaping the students' worldviews.

With the promise of learning without state-mandated imprisonment inside the school's walls, university offered me a greater degree of autonomy, better access to resources, and courses in subjects that were actually interesting and engaging. Indeed, at least in the humanities and social sciences, in departments where critical thinking is valued, much time and a fair portion of the material is spent unlearning many of the lessons that were presented in schools as fact. However, once at university, socialization continues or, perhaps more likely, adult students can begin to reenact many of the social lessons learned in school, from the gendered violence at fraternity parties (and the dismissive responses by university police to reports of rape and sexual assault) to the structured class division made evident in the separation between basic student residence halls and luxury student accommodations within the same university, allowing rich students better resources and housing while poorer students are housed in dated and often substandard dorms. At the faculty level, inequality seems structurally ingrained, with women and people of color less likely to hold tenure-track positions and more likely to hold precarious employment as part-time adjunct instructors, lacking job security, equal access to buildings and university support, and medical insurance (Glazer-Raymo 2003, 100–1). On modern education, Arthur Evans writes:

> Modern schools and universities push students into habits of depersonalized learning, alienation from nature and sexuality, obedience to hierarchy, fear of authority, self-objectification, and chilling competitiveness. These character traits are the essence of the twisted personality-type of modern industrialism. They are precisely the character traits needed to maintain a social system that is utterly out of touch with nature, sexuality, and real human needs. (Evans [1978] 2013, 136)

This is the coming together of theory and practice.

Drawing on the work of feminist theorists such as bell hooks and Audre Lorde, this article introduces the ideas of anarchist theories of education through the critiques and suggestions of Ivan Illich, Derrick Jensen, and Jacques Rancière, among others. Through working towards an understanding of the way that schools and prisons connect, the teacher's role in the classroom, and the way that schools and universities operate to strengthen existing hierarchies, I attempt to contribute to the growing discussion of the use of intersectional anarchist praxis as a way to inform and radically alter the methods and outcomes of education. By focusing on the classroom as a site for anarchist struggles, the necessity of intersectional analyses of pedagogical models, and inherent problems associated with being an anarchist educator in a hierarchical state institution, I argue that the transformation of society and the transformation of the education cannot be separated—educators who are serious about fighting against racism, sexism, and class hierarchies should not abandon the feminist and anarchist pedagogical theories either inside or outside the classroom. In our classrooms, we must not only offer antiracist and feminist materials but also model our teaching according to those practices. Furthermore, once we leave the classroom, our dedication to radical social change should not remain amongst the desks and chalkboards—our struggles in the classrooms must also be paired with our struggles on the streets.

Education is an Intersectional Issue

In her influential 1989 essay, Kimberlé Crenshaw outlines a theory of intersectionality, which argues that cultural and biological categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and other markers of perceived or actual identity form relationships with each other across intersecting lines. These interplaying axes function through complex networks of systemic oppression and contribute to social injustices that form at the "intersection" of hierarchies. Crenshaw sets up intersectionality to challenge the "problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (1989, 139). In the introduction to their edited collection, *Intersectionality and "Race" in Education*, Kalwant Bhopal and John Preston write:

> In recent years, the concept of intersectionality has taken center stage and become a dominant model with which to engage in how differences such as "race," gender, class, sexuality, age, disability, and religion interweave and intersect upon individual lives in a modern "risk" society. Intersectionality has become a model upon which to understand, analyse and engage with difference in which difference itself becomes a defining feature of "otherness." Otherness is related to the notion that identity itself is fragmented, fragile even, yet constantly evolving through multiple engagements and relationships in society; and through this complexity, intersectionality helps us to engage with understanding outsiders and what it means to be a "stranger" in modern society. (2012, 1)

Instead of turning towards a presumed neutral category in order to understand and analyze people's experiences (usually the white heterosexual first-world male perspective), intersectionality recognizes a plurality of perspectives, which can be drawn upon to create a more nuanced and complex understanding of history and events. This recognition of the "rich material provided by history" (Feyerabend 1984, 27–28) and the move away from fixed methods and perspectives have found a home in much of historical theory, especially in the works of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, who challenges the methods of white feminists, and whose own practices are "purposeful and ideological" (1988, 62). We also find this recognition in the work of other feminists, such as bell hooks—who states that feminists must understand "the politics of difference" (1997, 2)—and Elsa Barkley Brown, whose work attests to a plurality of histories, perspectives, and paradigms, which can exist simultaneously and operate in varying dialogues with each other. Peter Burke (2012, 479) talks about the "cultural" or "polyphonic turn" when attempting to understand histories, and the feminist journal *S&F Online* had a special issue on "Polyphonic Feminisms" in 2010. Many of these writers and theorists challenge the fixed hegemonic knowledge that is privileged over the marginalized voices and experiences of people excluded from knowledge-making processes (Mohanty 1988, 67).

When addressing the theories and practices of a radical education, concepts of intersectionality must be at the forefront of any conversation about teaching methods and the canon. Opening her article on black feminist pedagogy, Barbara Omolade writes:

> Black feminist pedagogy aims to develop a mindset of intellectual inclusion and expansion that stands in contradiction to the Western intellectual tradition of exclusivity and chauvinism. It offers the student, instructor, and institution a methodology for promoting equality and multiple visions and perspectives that parallel Black women's attempts to be and become recognized as human beings and citizens rather than as objects and victims. (1987, 32)

To move towards intersectional education is to understand that the Western canon is set up in support of this "neutral" category and acts as reinforcement for what bell hooks calls the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (1997, 7) and what Omolade names as the "Western intellectual tradition of exclusivity and

chauvinism" (1987, 32). This intellectual canon, which prioritizes the literature, art, and cultural production of Western European traditions, does more than simply build a recognized common language from which all peoples can draw in order to express themselves in more meaningful ways; by implication, it also says that this language is only meaningful if it draws from Western traditions, all other patterns of art and culture being marginal to the central and highest Culture. Decentralizing epistemological theories and reclaiming "difference" then becomes more than a superficial move towards a more diverse aesthetics; it is—as Omolade claims—necessary for full participation in society as creative agents and "human beings and citizens rather than as objects and victims" (1987, 32).

Just as our teaching materials do not spring from an unbiased sense of "real history" or "real knowledge," so our teaching methods must be transformed through radical and intersectional analyses of our methods and places within the classroom. The teacher's actions and modes of instruction can either reinforce existing hierarchies or work to abolish them. In her article on teachers' hidden biases, Karyn Wellhousen notes that not only are teachers more likely to call on boys than girls, but when calling on girls, the teacher's response is more likely to be a single word or noise of acknowledgement (such as an "OK" or "uh-huh"), whereas those same teachers engage more with boys' questions by offering follow-up questions in response or by supplying a more detailed answer (1996, 36–37). Wellhousen's example of this subtle misogyny stands out as just one instance of the reinforcement of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy and does not represent a direct and conscious act of repression performed by a sexist teacher but evidence of how internalized and externalized oppressions are influencing both the teacher's instructional style and the students' sense of self-worth; if these effects remain unexamined, we will end up reproducing the oppressions that exist in the larger society within our own classrooms.

An intersectional approach to education would radically displace the site of focus from the "neutral" category of the Western canon towards a complex and interwoven polyphonic periphery. Given the wealth of research on offer attesting to the importance of this deprioritization of the white heterosexual male experience, it should be alarming that schools still stick so rigidly to the accepted canon. However, the adherence to this model has some potentially very beneficial effects, depending on where in the hierarchy one might be placed: It operates to support the status quo through the emphasis on a centralized perspective which, through its marginalization of difference, acts as an insidious foundation for students becoming immune to injustices around them or accepting of the injustices they must themselves endure.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

Perhaps one of the most tragic outcomes of this systematic oppression in the Western education models is what the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) calls the "school-to-prison pipeline," a "disturbing national trend" wherein students—kindergarten through high school—are pushed out of public schools and funneled into juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. The ACLU notes that many of the children who eventually end up in jails and prisons have learning disabilities and are often victims of childhood poverty, abuse, or neglect. And while these children would certainly benefit from additional educational services and counseling (which are often offered to their wealthier counterparts), they are instead "isolated, punished, and pushed out" (ACLU 2014). In Salinas, a town near where I live in Monterey, the city council is working hard to build a new juvenile detention center, and there are plans to move the Youth Center—alternative and half-way housing for children—into this new detention site (Cortez 2014, 1). Children of color, children who are immigrants, and children who are poor are more likely to be denied access to alternative resources

and recommended for or forced into detention (Faruqee 2013, 1); once there, they lose educational and employment opportunities as well as the support of their family and community, a network which is then replaced by the trauma of child detention. A recent study has suggested that perhaps over 90 percent of children in detention experience trauma that could lead to PTSD (Abram et al. 2004, 403–10).

In a conversation with Amalia Mesa-Bains, bell hooks notes that "the public school is becoming a holding camp, a kind of symbolic concentration camp before prison, and many of us see a return of racial apartheid with regards to public education" (hooks and Mesa-Bains 2006, 48). Mesa-Bains responds that many black boys in the public school system are traced by educators and administrators in special education, which she points out "has a special relationship to prison"; once in these special-education classrooms, students will not exit until they "hit adolescence, and then many of them make their way into the courts and prisons" (48). In this sense, it is easy to see the coming together of education and incarceration. While in school, poor students and students of color are separated from their more privileged classmates until such a time when it becomes more socially acceptable to move them conveniently into prisons, serving the interests of the expansive prison-industrial complex. Once such children turn eighteen, they are then moved into a jail or a prison as adults and can become contributing members of the prison camp, working for $0.20 an hour (and sometimes forced to work for nothing) in a labor setting where unionization is illegal, and where there are no alternatives (Wagner 2013). These prisoners produce goods that are sold on the market to profit private companies, which now have access to the perfect workers: unpaid, unable to unionize, and unable to quit. Let us not forget that although slavery among the general US population was abolished by the the Thirteenth Amendment to the constitution, there is a provision that allows for the continued enslavement of people if they have been convicted of a crime.

In the US, schools and prisons are often designed by the same architects and contracted out to the same construction companies; the architect for San Quentin State Prison, George Sellon, has also designed several high schools that are still standing, including El Cerrito High School and the McKinley School. As children grow older and increase in grade level, so their schools more often resemble prisons. Allison Arieff argues for the necessity of access to nature in an educational setting, and laments that schools are not often set up to provide natural surroundings:

> Many preschools already are: outdoor activities are emphasized—swinging, walking, digging. But as kids get older, in this generation more than any that has preceded it, the time they spend in nature decreases significantly. Throughout the United States, students are installed in institutional, even citadel-like environments early on: they arrive at school in cars or buses (where once they might have walked) and step directly into buildings, where they spend 8 hours in classrooms, interacting with the outdoors only in prescribed spaces and only for allotted amounts of time. (Arieff 2008)

Arieff's observation sets up the maturing child as gradually being deprived of freedoms and access to nature. However, this gradual shift allows students to become accustomed to the change and accept their new surroundings, since, as William Deresiewicz noted in a lecture at Stanford University in 2010, in which he compared schools to prisons, "people don't mind being in prison as long as no one else is free. But stage a jailbreak, and everybody else freaks out" (Deresiewicz 2010).

Access to nature, after-school activities, and learning resources are often allotted out in ways that reinforce these intersectional oppressions. In my own county of Monterey, students in Spreckles—a school district of largely students of color from poor families working in the valley's agricultural fields—receive roughly a third of the educational budget allocated to students in the Carmel Valley school district, an area of largely affluent rich and upper-middle-class white families. These institutionalized hierarchies

within education facilitate the exploitation of poor migrant families, whose children are less likely to be given a high-quality education and more likely to be recommended for child detention, and then eventually sent to jail or prison. The education system has become perhaps the greatest site for the reinforcement of hierarchies and oppression, and so must become a primary site of our struggle.

Classrooms as Sites of Struggle

Derrick Jensen's position regarding the role of the teacher in an institutional and hierarchical education system is rightly skeptical. He makes analogies between sensitive teachers who attempt to alleviate the distress of a prison-like education system and some bureaucrats in Nazi concentration camps who hoped to alleviate the distress of people imprisoned there:

> I hate industrial schooling because it commits one of the only unforgivable sins there is: It leads people away from themselves, training them to be workers and convincing them it's in their best interest to be ever more loyal slaves, rowing the galley that *is* industrial civilization ever more fervently…. I participate in this process. I help make school a little more palatable, a little more fun, as students are trained to do their part in the ongoing destruction of the planet, as they enter the final phases of trading their birthright as the free and happy humans they were born to be for their roles as cogs in the giant industrial machine, or worse, as overseers of the giant factory/enslavement camp we once recognized as a living earth. Doesn't that make me, in essence, a collaborator? Hell, drop the *in essence*. (2005, 190–91)

As I desperately cling to the bottom of the faculty ladder at a local university, I am more often questioning my role as a university educator within a state institution. Like Robert Haworth, pedagogical theorist at West Chester University, I wonder if I am "doing something different in my classroom or just reinforcing and reproducing state and corporate interests" (Haworth 2012, 1). And as I move towards anarchist models of pedagogy, I wonder if my efforts to abolish hierarchies within a state institution are being coopted by those structural hierarchies themselves, reinforcing them by offering the illusion of intellectual and, therefore, personal freedom. I worry that this is contributing to social control and to the socialization of students as consumers and productive workers—placated to acquiesce in institutionalized violence and imprisonment—who will then self-sacrifice to the god called "the Economy." I wonder, like Jensen, if my work really offers students the possibility of escape or if I am just training the next generation of bureaucrats, politicians, policemen, and real-estate agents, who, like me, are just cogs in the machine, building our own ever smaller metaphorical and literal prison cells. I worry that when I set up prison education projects, while I may be helping the prisoners in some small way, I am doing a great service to the prison-industrial complex, which blatantly uses programs such as mine to legitimize their existence, the prison's role in "rehabilitation," and the "positive" effects of incarceration on society. Can the radical educator use the classroom to break down the hierarchies that have created that classroom? Can liberatory education theory provide something concrete to the struggle, and not just supply university graduates with a more nuanced vocabulary to justify their privilege?

For Lena Wånggren and Karin Sellberg, in "Intersectionality and Dissensus: A Negotiation of the Feminist Classroom," the answer is yes: "Teaching becomes a way of questioning power dynamics and social structures that exist both within and outside of the classroom" (2012, 543). They build upon the critical theory of bell hooks and Jacques Rancière, and understand that the classroom is a microcosm of society (552) and that bringing the struggle into pedagogy becomes a necessity for its success in society more broadly; it is "crucial to a larger emancipatory project" (548). Audre Lorde wrote that "sometimes we

are blessed with being able to choose the time, and the arena, and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle where we are standing" (2009, 140), and Wånggren and Sellberg ask educators, especially feminist and anarchist educators, "Should not the classroom be one of our main focuses, a central space in which to practice politics?" (2012, 542). Here, Lorde, Wånggren and Sellberg express something vital to the success of any revolutionary movement: There is no waiting for the perfect time and place, and everything that the teacher with a revolutionary perspective does must be done as if the revolution were in progress, because it always is. To Lorde, our battles against hierarchy and oppression are fought every day and on all terrains; we cannot simply wait for structured debates or hope for a supportive academic council, because all small and seemingly insignificant manifestations of gendered, racist, or homophobic dominance are the foundation upon which wars, genocide, and systematic violence are built. Lorde says we must fight where we are standing, because if we wait for the perfect time and place, we will have already lost. Wånggren and Sellberg recognize that for the educator the battlefront is in the classroom, where we have the opportunity either to destroy the prevailing social hierarchies or to reinforce them through complacency. While noting that the classroom is only one of many sites for struggles—the educators must take their fight to the streets as well—it is our focus in the classroom that constructs our education practice as either emancipatory or simply a tool that reinforces the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" and becomes coopted, serving merely to strengthen hierarchies and state power.

Dismantling Power and Teaching Against Hierarchies

When working to create a nonhierarchical model for education, many who draw from anarchist theories of knowledge acknowledge a shift away from the center and towards the periphery. Peter Burke called this the "polyphonic turn" (2010, 479), which is a recognition that the philosophy of history and of science has moved away from positivist notions of universal truth and access to any kind of authentic past or knowledge that is unmediated by social and cultural perspectives.[1] Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, described historical and scientific theories as paradigms that can shift when evidence builds up enough to challenge existing paradigms (2012, 23–24). When that happens, the scientific community might accept the new paradigm as a more adequate representation of truth, at which point scholarly material and textbooks will change to reflect this altered paradigm.

As a rebuttal to this notion of paradigm shifts as scientific revolution, Paul Feyerabend wrote *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. Feyerabend's theory of knowledge draws on a comparison with the political philosophy of anarchism; he writes with "the conviction that anarchism … is certainly excellent medicine for *epistemology*, and for the philosophy of science" (1984, 17; original emphasis). His theory, called epistemological anarchism, posits scientific progress and development not as the result of paradigm shifts from one system of "normal science" to another, but as what happens when the rules that generally constrict scientific methodology are violated. This breaking away from traditional methodology is "both reasonable and absolutely *necessary* for the growth of knowledge" (24). In using the term "anarchism" to explain his position, Feyerabend writes:

> The hallmark of political anarchism is its opposition to the established order of things: to the state, its institutions, the ideologies that support and glorify these institutions. The established order must be destroyed so that human spontaneity may come to the fore and exercise its right of freely initiating action, of freely choosing what it thinks is best. (187)

Applying this belief to science, Feyerabend believes that there should be no privileged scientific method or privileged theories, and that scientists should be open to learning from all perspectives and even times, claiming that there "is no idea, however ancient and absurd that is not capable of improving our knowledge" (1984, 47). Instead of being confined to a single discipline or paradigm, a scientist "who is interested in maximal empirical content, and who wants to understand as many aspects of the theory as possible, will accordingly adopt a pluralistic methodology" (47). If a change in paradigms is the aim and determiner of a scientific revolution, then as scientists, Feyerabend says, "we must be prepared to introduce and articulate alternatives to [a singular theory] or, as we shall express it, ... we must be prepared to accept a *principle of proliferation*" (1995, 139; original emphasis). There can be no completely useful theory of knowledge that is free from exceptions, and such a theory of knowledge should not govern scientific progress. When considering methodologies, it is a hindrance to the evolution of science and to revolutions to have anything but an open and nondogmatic approach to any potential theory; a determined fixation on any one theory or methodology as a universal truth or fixed set of rules, Feyerabend believed, was not only unrealistic but also detrimental to scientific development itself.

This "principle of proliferation" and the polyphonic turn should inform not only how we understand knowledge but how we teach ways of knowing. Regarding a pedagogy based on his call "against method," Feyerabend claims that teaching should "be based on curiosity and not on command" and that "the 'teacher' is called upon to further this curiosity and not to rely on any fixed method. Spontaneity reigns supreme, in thought (perception) as well as in action" (1984, 187). Just as there is no fixed epistemological model, so there is no fixed pedagogical model; the line between the "teacher" and the "student" becomes less rigid, allowing knowledge to flow more freely from peripheral theories and perspectives across a decentralized network of epistemologies.

The recent work of Wånggren and Sellberg makes use of Jacques Rancière's theories of political dissensus and his notion of the "ignorant schoolmaster" to create a radical pedagogy that "not only challenges the power structure of the classroom, but makes way for a new organisation of power in society in general" (Wånggren and Sellberg 2012, 548). Rancière sets up dissensus to be the opposite of consensus; in this model, no one agrees to a certain perspective, interpretation or action, with each person having different concepts of autonomy, knowledge and power. This "concept of a generative dialogue or productive disagreement remains in Rancière's political philosophy" (Wånggren and Sellberg 2012, 553n). A pedagogy of dissensus does not centralize all truth to be within the control of the teacher; instead, the teacher merely acts as an informed facilitator who allows students to create meaningful truths on their own terms:

> Political dissensus is not a discussion between speaking people who would confront their interests and values. It is a conflict about who speaks and who does not speak, about what has to be heard as the voice of pain and what has to be heard as an argument on justice. And this is also what "class war" means: not the conflict between groups which have opposite economic interests, but the conflict about what an "interest" is, the struggle between those who set themselves as able to manage social interests and those who are supposed to be only able to reproduce their life. (Rancière 2011, 2)

Here, the tension is between the reproduction of a preexisting thought and the tension that arises through dissensus: to effectively wage class war, we must not engage with bureaucrats and the social elite on their terms—entering into debate with them regarding how we might agree or disagree with the distribution of resources, education, culture, etc.—but we must question the very existence of these various forms of material or cultural resources as commodities. As teachers and students, we might not sit to negotiate with

which of the Great Works of Literature we would engage, but instead question the very notion of canon and perhaps even literature.

The temptation to lean towards a standardized canon is something that Feyerabend might understand as a desire for easy intellectual clarity at the expense of genuine exploration:

> It is clear, then, that the idea of a fixed method, or of a fixed theory of rationality, rests on too naïve a view of man and his social surroundings. To those who look at the rich material provided by history, and who are not intent on impoverishing it in order to please their lower instincts, their craving for intellectual security in the form of clarity, … it will become clear that there is only *one* principle that can be defended under *all* circumstances and in *all* stages of human development. It is the principle: *anything goes*. (1984, 27–28; original emphases)

In this theory can be found Rancière's figure of the "ignorant schoolmaster," described by Wånggren and Sellberg as someone whose greatest attribute as an educator is their unknowing (2012, 546); indeed, Rancière writes that "the most important quality of a schoolmaster is the virtue of ignorance" (2012, 1). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière recites the revelation of Joseph Jacotot, who initially believed that the good and hardworking professor would strive to bring his own students up to his or her own level of knowledge and expertise. However, after leaving his Flemish-language students with a bilingual edition of *Télémaque* in French and Flemish, they were able to learn French without his guidance or explication (Rancière 2012, 1–3). He realized that "uneducated people could learn on their own" and that he or she can be "a teacher who teaches—that is to say who is for another a means of knowledge—without transmitting any knowledge" (Wånggren and Sellberg 2012, 546). Rather than adhering to an educational model that presents students as blank slates upon which the teacher can encode knowledge, in Rancière's model the teacher enters into a dialogic relationship with the students, and instead of merely striving to create an impression of the teacher onto the student, the teacher, as Myles Horton and Paulo Freire say, becomes a tool which the students can use in their own curiosity and exploration: "The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves" (Horton and Freire 1990, 191).

Removing the authority of the teacher from the classroom is an important part of radical education models for Rancière and Freire, and indeed the current system of hierarchy in the classroom is merely a result of the way that oppressive power relationships perpetuate themselves. In a letter to Derrick Jensen, a woman describes her own experiences in the US education system:

> I had a few teachers who cut me slack for my creative approaches to getting by, those who were allies in getting through the miserable bullshit we all had to endure, but never one who loved me into becoming myself. They were all still so damaged from their own debilitating institutional education that few could even see that possibility of what real education is. (Jensen 2005, 187)

Here, the former student recognizes the way that patterns of oppression replicate, maintaining systems of hierarchy and domination. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, this is a central theme in Freire's understanding of how the oppressed might easily transition into the role of oppressor: "The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility" (2005, 45). Later, in conversation with Horton, Freire explains a few of the errors teachers make, often when replicating the education models that were handed down to them:

> The other mistake is to crush freedom and to exacerbate the authority of the teacher. Then you no longer have freedom but now you have authoritarianism, and then the teacher is the one who teaches. The teacher is the one who knows. The teacher is the one who guides. The teacher is the one who does everything. And the students, precisely because the students must be shaped, just expose their bodies and their souls to the hands of the teacher, as if the students were clay for the artist, to be molded. (Horton and Freire 1990, 181)

Rancière, Horton and Freire see the process of removing the teacher as a figure of authority as one of the important steps toward challenging all figures of authority and authoritarianism. Indeed, many believe that Freire did not go far enough, and that his model of liberatory pedagogy was far too dependent on "on the notion of betterment through existing educational institutions" (Rouhani 2012, 1729). Contrasting with Freirean notions of pedagogical revolution within a set of parameters, "anarchist pedagogies seek out and affirm a wide range of everyday spheres of learning," which have no centers as prioritized foci of information and which seek to break down hierarchies within the classroom and in wider society. In discussing the pedagogical theory of Ivan Illich (1971), Robert H. Chappell explains that "the dismantling of the public education system would coincide with a pervasive abolition of all the suppressive institutions of society" (1978, 368).

However, this cannot be accomplished without a radical shift in the way educators see their role in the classroom and in the intellectual development of their students, and this shift does not arrive through revising the methods under which we were educated. By diminishing the legitimacy of the polyphonic voices that offer alternative peripheral perspectives, educators perpetuate a universalist approach to education, which positions progress and development as conformity to the Western canon and which has become synonymous with ideas of what it means to be "modern," "progressive," and "democratic." Under this approach, the participant in such a version of democracy is conditioned to see their personal agency as contingent on adapting to this narrow model, with their own perspectives, experiences, and cultural legacies coming secondary to the "neutral" white, heteronormative, first-world, male Cultural Product. The ignorant schoolmaster allows for knowledge to circulate through complex networks of histories, knowledges and perspectives, and while I would never suggest that the educator be completely neutral in this process (it is the educators' responsibility to challenge perpetuations of oppression and hierarchy in the classroom—whether stemming from their own actions or those of their students), the teacher committed to abolishing the privilege of a centralized, self-interested perspective must encourage not only the proliferation of ideas but also the decentralization of starting points.

Theory/Practice—Classroom/Society: Educating towards Revolution

In an interview between Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich, Lorde says that "the learning process is something you can incite, literally incite, like a riot" (Lorde 2007, 89). In this, the connection between education and revolution becomes central to liberatory education. In her presentation at the Modern Language Association convention in 2013, Mary Gutierrez noted that "believing in equality does not automatically lead to a more equal society," and that there must be another step (Gutierrez 2013). At the same conference, Katherine Bond Stockton explained that although many "progressive" academics have abandoned the claims of "trickle-down economics," many still adhere to the idea of "trickle-down theory." If the educators just present revolutionary theory to their students (or, in some cases, simply ingest it themselves), then the claim of "trickle-down theory" posits that the new theoretical framework will transform the classroom, and therefore also society.

However, just as we have abandoned (or rejected from the outset) the claims of "trickle-down economics," we must abandon and dispel the myths of "trickle-down theory." Along with Gutierrez and Stockton, I argue that teachers who are committing themselves to radical education must move beyond theory towards radical pedagogical practice in the classroom, but also—I add—towards revolutionary action on the streets, because there are limits to transformative education, especially within the confines of state institutions. Working towards a liberatory education model within state educational facilities is not enough, since although there might be a minor shift in method, any major revolutionary expansion will meet up against the walls of the state. Even major transformations in a nationwide or international educational paradigm will be short-lived if these internal institutional changes are not accompanied by external social changes. Unless revolutionary change manages to dismantle oppressive power structures—by means of which the state justifies its domination and violence—any move towards a nonhierarchical and more democratic education will be failing to mirror the society that is "supporting" it, and therefore will be forced to buckle under external pressures. If educators fail to join the struggles in the streets and support the international struggles that are working to transform wider society, then any project towards emancipatory pedagogy will continuously challenge the authority of the state. Then there is only so long that this challenge can be maintained if not coupled with a whole network of complex dissidence, direct action on the streets, and projects to dismantle state power and hierarchies across institutions and societies.

While engaging in the transformation of education within institutions is vital to the transformation of society, it does not in itself lead to such transformation. In order for a revolutionary education project to succeed, it must manifest as part of a larger revolutionary project that is rhizomatic and anarchistic. The radical historian and educator Howard Zinn understood this when he wrote about the possibilities of anarchism as a model for revolution. Succeeding in the struggle for a more equal society will mean taking part in the struggle on the streets, in our homes, in our classrooms; we cannot be part of shifts towards equality and liberation without adopting a holistic approach to revolutionary social theory—it must inform our teaching materials, our teaching methods, our place in the classroom, and our place in society:

> The anarchist sees revolutionary change as something immediate, something we must do now, where we are, where we live, where we work. It means starting this moment to do away with authoritarian, cruel relationships—between men and women, between parents and children, between one kind of worker and another kind. Such revolutionary action cannot be crushed like an armed uprising. It takes place in everyday life, in the tiny crannies where the powerful but clumsy hands of state power cannot easily reach. It is not centralized and isolated, so that it can be wiped out by the rich, the police, the military. It takes places in a hundred thousand places at once, in families, on streets, in neighborhoods, in places of work. It is a revolution of the whole culture. Squelched in one place, it springs up in another, until it is everywhere. (Zinn 2009, 653)

Imagining Anarchist Educations

When attempting to envision the possibilities for an education that lives up to the standards of an almost impossible ideal, most anarchist theorists advocate a questioning of the very nature and purpose of education to begin with. This questioning involves investigating what philosopher Judith Suissa calls "the optimal vision of 'the good life'" (2010, 4) and then going on to really ask ourselves what would be the purpose of an education system within such a model, or whether the very idea of an education system is incompatible with these visions. There have been many attempts to develop anarchist models of education within universities, creating spaces and conversations that are fraught with "tensions and ambiguity"

(Haworth 2012, 2). Because even though "[on] the one hand the role of the university is (increasingly) about social reproduction: creating docile, debt-ridden workers for capital," on the other hand "the university is a potential space of community and commons"—a small site of resistance against capitalism (Noterman and Pusey 2012, 180).

However, even an examination of these anarchist university projects cannot provide us with any purely replicable template, since each project of learning must be entirely student-driven and will change shape even as it is in progress. In his experiments in anarchist education models at the University of Mary Washington, Farhang Rouhani attempted to become an active student-participant in the very classes on anarchist theory that he was facilitating, and regarding this experiment he says: "For me, our pedagogical experiments turned me into an anarchist, in ways that have greatly improved my abilities to teach, learn, live, and act in the world" (Rouhani 2012, 1738). In this revelation, Rouhani makes clear that the divisions between teaching and learning or theorizing and acting become diminished, and a transformative education becomes truly possible. For him, there existed a chance of a liberatory pedagogy within university institutions, even if dwarfed by the larger hierarchical model in place: "In this sense, the attempt to build an anarchist pedagogy within the context of an otherwise primarily coercive institution shares many of the same challenges as building an intentional anarchist community in a capitalist society, though on a smaller and more limited scale" (1735).

Though confined by administration and preexisting templates for pedagogical models, the university acted as a launchpad for students to take the antihierarchical practices they had learned in the classroom and apply them to direct action that attempted to transform the city. One student involved in Rouhani's project explains: "We were ready to take on the city, the university had become too small" (Rouhani 2012, 1735). These testimonials offer me hope that, farcical as our attempts of revolutionizing education may seem, there may develop a method for action from modeling antihierarchical practices and teaching against hierarchies in our classrooms.

Like Rouhani and countless others who have been influenced by anarchist pedagogies, I work to not only bring anarchist theories into my classrooms but to apply the very method of my "teaching" to the aim of removing the authority of the instructor and creating a sense of empowerment as I encourage my students to take control and responsibility over their own learning. And although students seem to respond positively to these methods as part of a larger and more rigid framework, I remain skeptical of the university and school system's ability to exist in any way resembling its current form if there is to be revolution in education. Inequality and violence seem too entrenched in the system's very understanding of itself, and imagining a substantial school system where hierarchies are not reproduced is like trying to imagine a fair prison system. To me, the barbed wires around prisons appear analogous to the walls around schools and the gates leading into universities, and perhaps as long as schools and prisons exist there will be that cord which connects them.

Note

1. For a review of this development, see Zammito 1993 and Roth 2012.

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"América Latina Vai Ser Toda Feminista": Visualizing & Realizing Transnational Feminisms in the Women's Worlds March for Rights

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On August 2, 2017, ten thousand feminists from around the globe took to the streets of Florianopolis, Brazil to march for women's rights. The *Marcha Mundos de Mulheres por Direitos* (Women's Worlds March for Rights, or MMMD) was a central part of an academic conference jointly titled the 13th Women's Worlds Congress / 11th *Seminário Internacional Fazendo Gênero*. Using this March – both its physical forms and its digital translations – as a case study, this essay explores how the visual rendering of dissent articulates and realizes transnational feminist politics and solidarities.

August 2nd, 2017, Florianopolis, Brazil. 5:00 P.M. We are at a conference, jointly titled the 13th Women's Worlds Congress / 11th *Seminário Internacional Fazendo Gênero*. [1] Written on that day's schedule: *The Women's Worlds March for Rights*. When we arrived at the meeting point, the sun had begun setting and vibrant purples and pinks were splashed across the sky. The noise was revving up. The cacophony of drums, each percussionist rehearsing a beat, joined the hum of cars passing through the busy intersection and the faint ocean sounds of seagulls and waves hitting the shore. Activists readied their signs, painted their banners and bodies, and greeted one another with embraces and kisses. A coalition of indigenous women from throughout the Americas performed an opening ceremony to bless the land, demand *demarcação já* (recognition of their land rights) and pay homage to its ancestors. Then, as part of this

academic conference, 10,000 feminists from all over the world began marching in protest and in solidarity.

In 2017 in Brazil and in the United States, where the authors of this paper were born, there is much to protest. Progressive-leaning governments have been replaced by nearly all male, all white, conservative administrations, almost exclusively comprised of representatives over the age of fifty and from societies' capitalist elite. In these countries and around the world, politicians increasingly evoke nationalist discourses to justify sweeping neoliberal reforms. Oppression, though ever present, feels more acute. It is in this global context of extreme nationalisms that we take a transnational approach to the aesthetics of dissent, in general, and the visuality of The Women's Worlds March for Rights (the *Marcha Mundos de Mulheres por Direitos*, hereafter MMMD), in particular. Such an approach, in times of rising and violent nationalisms, is itself a form of protest. And it seems that women, whose rights and status are appreciably menaced, are the major protagonists of protests at this moment.

This essay tells the story of a particular demonstration to suggest that visualizing protest and the feminist aesthetics of dissent facilitate transnational solidarities. In the case of the MMMD, the protests' visualizations – disseminated via photos, films, social media posts, etc. – live on, connecting feminist activists and academics from all over the world. The first section of the essay provides background information about the organization of the conference and March as well as the planning of its audiovisual coverage. The second section discusses the meanings and manifestations of transnationalism in this context. The last section reflects on the MMMD's visuality, and on the process of digitally rendering live protest. Throughout we draw on a digital archive of photos and video. [2]

The Conference (WWC/FG), the March (MMMD), and the Audiovisual Committee

The *Seminário Internacional Fazendo Gênero* (International Doing Gender Seminar, or FG) is an academic meeting, created by a group of women-identified teachers and researchers who met at the Institute of Gender Studies at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. It is a congress that began modestly in 1994 with the aim of bringing

together researchers and students who work on gender, women, feminism and sexuality from interdisciplinary perspectives. Gradually, the biannual meeting has been growing and gaining (inter)national notoriety; in 2008 about 3,000 people attended. The FG 10 in 2013 had more than 5,000 registered and the FG 11, that took place from July 30th to August 4th, 2017, had 9,695 registered participants. This last FG was quite different, especially because it was held in conjunction with the 13o *Congresso Mundos de Mulheres* (13th Women's Worlds Congress, or WWC), which entailed, in addition to further internationalization, an opening of the event to the feminist, LGBT and women's social movements.

One of the main objectives of the congress was to have a real meeting between academics and activists, allowing spaces for dialogue, joint activities and a discussion between knowledges, between issues and policies, between academia and activism. To achieve this, the first step was to set up a Commission of Social Movements to be part of the WWC's Organizing Committee. The committee began meeting in November 2016 to deliberate on how to carryout activities beyond the traditional spaces of academic debate such as talks, round tables, mini-courses, presentations, and posters. This in mind, the Debate Forums were designed to be eminently political, as were the plenary sessions, workshops, talk wheels and the MMMD. Various movements – workers unions, black women's movements, feminist groups, rural women's movements, indigenous women – joined in this organization, and together these movements conceived of and designed the March, the performances of the movements, the themes to be raised in the tents and conversation wheels, and the places to be visited in the sightseeing routes.

The MMMD was the culmination of this meeting, bringing together academics, activists and people from the city of Florianópolis. The students and faculties marched alongside the women of the Movement of Peasant Women, Indigenous activists, Women of the Landless Movement, trade unionists, black women's groups, participants in the slut walks from various places in Brazil, *Ni una a menos* from Argentina, from LGBT movements of sex workers. Organizers proposed four stops, three of which were carried out: in front of the Santander Bank (Indigenous women, farmers, black and *quilombolas* movements); in front of the Cathedral (LGBTQIA+ folks); in front of the

Social Security Office (workers movements and the MMD). [3] The stop in front of the City Hall, to protest regressive public policy, was not realized.

In terms of audiovisual coverage, the conference organizers' goals for the WWC/FG were to emphasize the visibility and consolidation of feminist networks and gender studies through images, including photographs, reports and film. Thus, the archiving of audiovisual material began in 2016 with the recording of the organization meetings, which was made possible by the voluntary labor of producers from Manacá Cine Studio (under the direction of cinematographer and CEO Márcia Navai). [4] The material leading up to the conference, collected and edited by Manacá since the end of 2016, began to feed social networks, along with the graphic material produced by a team of volunteer students. [5] The producer's goal, in addition to advertising WWC/FG, was to put together material for a documentary to show the scale of the event, to highlight the mobilization of women and the LGBTQ+ population both inside and outside the academy, to explore debates within feminist and activist communities, and to call attention to extant activist networks.

Fourteen individuals, including Márcia Navai, Ana Veiga (the Programming and Communication Coordinator and co-author of this article), ten students, and four professionals comprised the committee responsible for audiovisual coverage of the event. Students were paid for their time, while professionals offered their services according to their artistic, activist and professional priorities and in exchange for keeping the rights to their images. Together, this group photographed and filmed conference activities such as keynotes, round tables, thematic symposiums, discussion forums, workshops, mini-courses, thematic visits, conversation circles, artistic presentations and "Tent" programming. [6] In addition to registering these numerous conference activities, each member of the audiovisual team was an active documentarian – including film and photography – of what, for many, served as the highlight of WWC/FG: the MMMD. The following footage gives an overview of the sounds, scope and substance of the March: Marcha Internacional Mundos de Mulheres por Direitos e Fazendo Gênero. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swuHNUZ9z4c&feature=youtu.be)

In this short video, we see women from various parts of Brazil and the world. The sound of the drums, symbolic of the struggles of women of African descent and characteristic of the larger *Marcha Mundial de Mulheres* (World March of Women) group, accompanied protestors throughout the March. While feminist marches all over the world share a recognizable percussion, the multi-lingual chants signaled the presence of a diversity of movements. The repeated cries of *Ni Una Menos* (in Spanish), or not one [woman] less, connected this March with the movements to end violence against women in Argentina and other Latin American Countrie. It also points to interplay between the digital and the sonic: from #BlackLivesMatter, to #NiUnaMenos, hashtags are part of the sound geography of live protest. [7] *Demarcaçaõ Já* (in Portuguese), or demarcation now, is the call of indigenous women, demanding indigenous sovereignty over their ancestral lands. The chant from this paper's title – *"Se cuida, se cuida, se cuida seu machista, América Latina vai ser toda feminista,"* or "be careful, be careful, be careful Mr. misogynist, Latin America is going to be all feminist" – foregrounds transnational unity in the movement against machismo. Working in solidarity, marchers from across the globe displaced nationalist discourses, which often reifies gender roles, relegates women to an idealized stereotype, and diminishes their contributions (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989; Enloe, 1990; Moghadam, 1994). Rather, protestors emphasized shared, subnational (i.e. "Latin America") and cultural (i.e. "anti-misogyny") formations, and they represented a diversity of women. The novelty of the MMMD is that it transformed an academic conference into a march, and in so doing it created a transnational space of research, exchange, and protest, affirming women as protagonists of knowledge production as well as political movements.

Reading Transnational Feminism in the Aesthetics of Dissent

Although the MMMD was called "International," and indeed it did bring together women of 33 nationalities, we argue that one of the most remarkable features of the March was its transnationality. And transnationalism, we argue, is a boon to feminist activism. To define the term: transnational approaches are materially and historically situated (Mato, 2005), but they recognize "multidirectional connections between locals", and the asymmetrical flows of power between them (Tambe, 2010: 3). Transnational scholars have made clear that this methodology is not a zooming out, or lack of

accountability for the local. Rather, it is an approach "from below" (Flores, 2009), that emphasizes subjects' negotiations and exchanges between nations and states. It is radically local (Matory, 2005). Feminist approaches to transnational methodologies provide a critique of and an alternative to the global, which can be essentializing; the international, which relies on top-down approaches; and the comparative, which can reify differences and leave the category of nation unchallenged (Tambe, 2010; Seigel, 2005; Briggs, McCormick & Way, 2008). Transnational feminist methodologies trouble hierarchies of time, space and objects of study (McClintock, 1995). In other words, transnational feminism contests the ways temporal hierarchies – that place Anglo-American women as the vanguards of progressive gender politics and that situate other women as "backwards" in terms of gender relations – are often mapped onto geographies. Transnational feminists reject this imperialist progress narrative. Anne McClintock's (1995) analysis in *Imperial Leather* of how a commodity such as soap is at once domestic and imperial, and how rituals of domesticity staged the civilizing mission, has been an influential model for transnational feminist scholarship. Through the aesthetics of dissent, we can trace the transnational contours of the MMMD, thereby insisting on a feminism that pushes against virulent nationalisms and progress narratives, that accounts for identities and experiences that are shaped in relation to one another, and that takes seriously the aesthetics of dissent as objects of study.

Another transnational feature of the MMMD is the people and ideas that met there in protest. The March comprised people of various localities and nationalities. Residents of Florianopolis marched side by side with the folks who came to WWC/FG from other Brazilian states and from other countries, which is one element contributing to the protest's transnational character. Many were academic women: teachers and students. This transnationality can also be thought of in another dimension, in the meeting of women from distinct indigenous peoples (nations), coming from different parts of Brazil, mobilized for the meeting. In interviews, some of these women affirmed the importance of their visibility, realizing that the WWC/FG and the MMMD enabled this. At the forefront of their agenda, indigenous participants advocated for respect of indigenous peoples and the demarcation of their lands. [8] Many Mozambican activists, artists and academics attended the March, in preparation for the upcoming Women's Worlds Congress in Maputo in 2020. In some ways, this particular March is similar to

feminist protests (such as the January 21st Women's Marches) in other parts of the world, both in terms of the content – sexuality, abortion, racism, disability, violence, and environmental and reproductive justice – and (to some extent) the form – posters, chants, banners, music. Thus, its registration and dissemination are significant beyond a specific case study. But the MMMD also exemplifies several tenants of transnational feminism that were perhaps missing from protests like the January 21st Women's Marches. Calling the MMMD an example of transnational feminisms in action recognizes the agendas of marchers beyond a pre-determined, Eurocentric model of what feminist activism can look like (Basu, 1995). For instance, the central space occupied by rural women seeking agricultural reform and indigenous women fighting for sovereignty points to flourishing feminist struggles that are not often highlighted in U.S. women's marches. Tracking how the MMMD was conceived and visualized is especially crucial for understanding transnational feminist networks across the Americas and in the Global South.

The Repertoire and The Archive: Registering Feminist Protest

A protest is an affective and embodied assemblage that is experienced in the moment. [9] The sensations of a march – singing, moving, sweating, embracing – cannot be exactly reproduced. What is digitally rendered becomes registry, an archive of sorts that translates the event into film, image, and text. Performance studies scholar and transnational Latin Americanist Diana Taylor's theorizations on the repertoire and the archive are particularly useful in dissecting MMMD's off and online engagements. According to Taylor, the repertoire "enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge" (Taylor, 2003: 19). It requires presence. Even if the embodiment changes, however, the meanings may remain the same. An archive, on the other hand, separates the "knowledge from the knower" (Taylor, 2003: 19). It consists of material or digital objects that do not necessarily change, although the ways they are interpreted may. [10] The media below, from an archive of coverage assembled by the audiovisual committee, suggest which sorts of images are selected, classified, and presented for analysis. Following this same vein of performance studies scholarship, reading the March as a performance has political implications. Specifically, because

performance relies on embodied and performed behaviors rather than on literary and historical documents, it makes space for memories, experience and struggles from locations which have been silenced, such as the those across the Global South (Conquergood, 2002). In other words, to read a protest through aesthetic and performances of dissent is to take nonverbal forms of knowledge seriously. It is a form of decolonizing scholarship.

In addition to the translation that takes place when a march becomes an archive, transnational forms of protest also require translation across geographies. We suggest that performances of dissent and the images that capture these, translate politics in a way word cannot. Translation between geographies often fails, and especially the translation of feminist politics between the global North and South (Costa, 2006). Linguistic translation, as Spivak reminds us, is one word or idea standing in for another, which dislodges any possibility of literal translation (Spivak, 2012: 242). But images – and the proverbial 1,000 words contained within them – do not strive for literal translation. Rather, they aim to reflect a repertoire. Moving away from a text-centric understanding of translation into the realm of the visual and the experiential might open up space for translations that are more capacious because they are sensate. The constitutive elements of feminist protest – song and chant, movement, signs, body paint, costume – can be more universally understood via visuals, without necessarily being universalizing.

The MMMD featured many visual and performative elements, which refer to contemporary transnational feminist movements, and which illuminate aspects of the March's liberatory vision. At the foundation of this visual rendering is the belief that we must envision alternative worlds in order to create them. The process of visualizing (of rendering visual), then, is a process of world-making that may be more translatable across borders and languages than solely text is. If we read the archive and the repertoire from the MMMD as a feminist, anti-racist, queer roadmap of sorts, the vision points toward indigenous sovereignty, reproductive justice, liberatory queer love, and transnational solidarity against all forms of oppression. The following images, from an archive of coverage collected by members of the audiovisual committee, suggest some of the March's transnationalism:

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/sneider1.png)

[Figure 1] Photo Credit: Márcia Navai

Pictured here (Fig.1) is the *batucada* (musical group) *Cores de Aidê* and marchers donning Women's World March attire. Dressing in clothes that represent the particularity of the March (like the pink pussy hats of the U.S.-based Women's March) is one aesthetic common to feminist protests. The Afro-Brazilian drumming bears traces of connections with Africa, and the songs and chants are accessible only in Portuguese. Still, because a photo does not transmit sound, its visuality translates to a wide audience.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/snyder2.png)

[Figure 2] Photo Credit: Lorelay Andrade

In this image (Fig.2) a protestor marches using a bra as her top. On her back are the words "leave her in peace". Such visuals are connected to tactics used in Slut Walks, a transnational feminist movement against rape-culture.

The written language combined with the body also makes for easier translation. Brazil is the only country in the Americas whose official language is Portuguese. While it can be difficult for Spanish speakers to understand spoken Portuguese, they are more likely to understand written Portuguese (because the writing bears more similarity than then pronunciation). An image of the body-writing, then is more translatable across Latin American feminist circles.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/snyder3.png)

[Figure 3] Photo Credit: Márcia Navai

In this image (Fig.3), marchers use attire such as feathered headdresses as well as paint associated with their indigenous tribes combined with text reading "demarcation now". In the context of a march, tribal attire is immediately registered and interpreted by viewers as a form of indigenous protest. Whether painted, undressed or adorned, the body as canvas is another aesthetic tool of dissent.

The prominence of images of indigenous women compared to their relatively small numbers in the March point to another way visuals facilitate transnational feminist agendas: archives of protest may, in a small way, seek to address asymmetries of power. For instance, even though MMMD organizers redistributed funds to finance resource-poor women's attendance, the absolute numbers of attendees still favor women with socio-economic privilege. And yet, visual renderings may communicate and "redistribute" presence in less numerically absolute terms.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/snyder5.png)

[Figure 4] Photo Credit: Rafaela Martins

The *Santa Vagina* (the holy vagina, Fig. 4) is connected to other feminist movements' uses of pussy iconography. To consider the travels of this iconography as a worthy object of study reflects a key tenant of transnational feminisms. Reading the *Santa Vagina* as a heuristic device, the religious reference speaks to the specificities of the Latin Americas, where the Catholic church played a prominent role in colonization and continues to influence policy related to women's bodies and autonomy. [11] The bearers of the "saint" wore hijabs, to make a statement about how religious institutions, in general, often oppresses women.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/snyder6-.png)

[Figure 5] Photo Credit: Márcia Navai

Transnational feminist approaches pay attention to multi-directional flows of people and ideas. Here (Fig. 5) a Mozambique activist joins Brazilians in protesting "Fora Temer". [12] At the MMMD, Brazilians used the opportunity of such an international gathering to amplify local agendas like "Fora Temer," and these causes then became part of transnational feminist consciousness. Also typical of feminist protests are flags and banners of various movements and groups.

Beyond the audiovisual committee and the mainstream and alternative media professionals who covered the event, participants helped in the registration and circulation of audiovisuals. [13] Rare were the protesters who did not use their cell phones or cameras to take at least one image, so that they might record their memories of that unique moment of unity and strength on the part of women and of LGBTQ+ folks. Short visits to pages on the social networks of various people participating in the meeting and the March gave the notion that what we did in the name of women's rights [14] was expanding into dimensions physical presence alone could never reach. [15]

The very visuality of the March has become an icon for feminisms, acquiring great symbolic value for its physical size, aided by the registry of audiovisual resources. In

addition to the latent memory of the 10,000 people who physically participated, the images spread through social networks, reaching tens of thousands of viewers, inspired to share – through images – narratives of feminisms and of women's movements that are active and current. This image (Fig. 5) of organizers from Mozambique and Brazil holding the WWC banner facing an impressive row of press corps hints at the level of visual coverage the protest received.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/snyder6-1.png)

[Figure 6] Photo Credit: Beatriz Tramontin

Posters, songs and cries of struggle about issues like sexuality, abortion, racism, disability, violence, land rights, and environmental justice brought such topics into evidence and debate, gaining strength and power as they were visualized and heard through these media. Even so, RBS TV (*Rede Brasil Sul*, The Southern Brazil Network Group), the largest communication network in the state of Santa Catarina [16], erroneously reported that the March was just one more "*Fora Temer*" ("Get Out, Temer") protest. One of the March's prompts was certainly outrage over Brazil's current administration, but the way the mainstream news media presented the March's goals signals an attempt to erase its feminist political character and its central demand – women's rights – a discourse

which has been expropriated and watered down by governments both throughout Brazil and across multiple locations and levels. Failing to circumvent the grandeur of the protest, which was widely reported by other media and networks, RBS used the power of its reach to modify the content of the March's claim, seeking, once again, to render invisible women and LGBTQ+ communities, as per usual in Brazil and in most parts of the world. The alternative media, as is common in times of repression, maintained pressure on mainstream and conservative news outlets and held them accountable to the facts. While these outlets – in this case Media Ninja, Portal Catarinas, Maruim and Desacato, among others – provide coverage with few financial and material resources, they remained significant in terms of addressing the substance and demands of the protest organizers and attendees.

After the heat of the event cools (the repertoire), the richness of the captured material (the archive) presents other challenges: how should the collection be shared? With whom? For what purposes? How may we think of these registries in a way that is less ephemeral? How can we increase access to captured and archived material, especially for activists, feminists and researchers? How do these messages translate across locals, or do they fail to do so? What do the archive's travels indicate about transnational feminisms and feminist forms of protest?

Conclusions: Politics of Protest, Temporalities of Dissent

Oppression knows no borders, therefore struggles against it must also work to build transnational solidarities. The WWC/FG and the MMMD demonstrate that visualizing protest is key to alternative worldmaking. Reading protest as performance, and interpreting visuals as part of the aesthetics of dissent, honors other ways of knowing and creating knowledge. Moreover, we suggest that visual renderings might be more capacious translators of feminist politics than written word alone. The MMMD's visuals illustrate key tenants of transnationalism; for instance, organizers attempted to address asymmetries of power by prominently featuring the demands of indigenous women, and images from the March recognized objects like pussy iconography as transnational

symbols whose particularities reflect local context. Also, both the archive and the repertoire of the protest facilitate multidirectional exchanges of people and ideas. The MMMD speaks to a current way of doing politics, which operates through images, and courses through networks at transnational scales. In a sense, the dream of a feminist siblinghood is still alive, often made possible by exchanges of knowledge and contacts through social networks and communication channels such as Facebook and YouTube. The dissemination and sharing of academic knowledge also begin to appropriate these tools.

Transnationality in women's and Latin American women's movements has often been viewed via a model of solidarity between women in the United States and Europe towards Latin American women, by way of financing projects, helping implement action plans, conducting educational missions and even "teaching" or providing texts about the role of women (Thayer, 2001). However, what we see in the MMMD was something different from this type of "transnationality"; it was much more horizontal, with indigenous women, Afro-descendants and peasants taking a leading role. The MMMD represented a popular feminism, but closely followed, encouraged, acclaimed, and assumed, by all the women who were there – Latin American, African, Asian, European and North American.

The visual production had a fundamental role of representing the March, and these representations were replicated and reshaped in social and traditional media, as well as in memory. Specific aspects of the MMMD become accessible to all, and it is possible to relive the emotion and affect. As Sara Ahmed explores in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), feminism is a political movement and it is also part of our bodies, an affective movement. At the protest (IRL), we experienced the sensations of strength and unity, of taking over the city, of being together, of shouting at the top of our lungs, all in the center of the downtown, which is a confrontational space. Facilitated by the archive – and via the media, the photos and films in circulation, and a documentary in the process of being made and distributed – the protest continues happening long after August 2, 2017 when the March took place. Through ongoing circulation, transnational feminist networks build and strengthen. Feminists visualize and begin to realize a world spelled out in the March's protest songs (which can be heard in the video below):

Se cuida, se cuida, se cuida seu machista – America Latina vai ser toda feminista; Take care, take care, take care Mr. misogynist – All of Latin America will be feminist!

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Footnotes   (returns to text)

1. This article is written in what the Sangtin Collective refers to as a "blended we". Even as we have experienced the march (and its organization) differently, the voices of all three authors have been woven together to produce one narrative (Nagar & Sangtin Writers, 2006).
2. The archive of photos and videos documenting the Congress come from varied sources: a team of journalists, film and journalism students, and the filmmaker/photographer Marcia Navai, who hopes to create a

documentary about the event. Navai, who has access to all the sources, also gathered coverage from alternative media sources including Portal Catarinas and Midia Ninja.

3. In her text *Alphabet Soup?*, Brazilian feminist theorist and anthropologist Regina Facchini (2005) tracks the use of acronyms used to describe queer communities in Brazil. The acronyms moved from GLS (gay, lesbian, travesti) to GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) in the early 1990s to the more expansive LGBTQIA+ that denominates trans and includes queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or aromatic, and + to represent all the identities that are unnamed in this acronym. Hereafter, we will use the shortened version, LGBTQ +, with an understanding that this term includes a wider range of identities than listed in the acronym.

4. It is worth noting that the lack of funding and reliance on volunteer labor is another transnational truth of feminist form of protest. In this case, the authors would especially like to recognize the work of numerous student laborers, Marcia Navai (mentioned above), Sandra Alves from Midia Ninja, and the reporters from Portal Catarinas.

5. The main social network used in Brazil is Facebook, followed by Instagram and Twitter. These were the main networks to advertise and circulate material about the event.

6. Tent programming refers to activities that took place in large, covered tents with the following themes: Women's World Tent, Feminine Tent and Solidarity and Health Tent.

7. The official website of *Ni Una Menos* movement is: https://niunamenos.com.ar/ (https://niunamenos.com.ar/)

8. Demarcation, *demarcação* in Portuguese, refers to the officialization (or reappropriation) of indigenous territory, which has been historically expropriated by landowners and agribusiness in Brazil.

9. In Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages*, she proposes that assemblages are "attuned to interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency"; and in this way, assemblage creates a "side-ways" reading of identity, one that

accounts for "emotions, energies, affectivities, textures as they inhabit events, spatiality, and corporealities" (Puar, 2007: 128). Identities form and un-form in her assemblage, they move fluidly and in that fluidity, spaces for activism open up. The embodied elements of protests involve sight, sound, smell, taste, energy, place, people. Live transmission may capture the sounds, sights, people and place.

10. Furthermore, archived materials are always corruptible via removal and manipulation.

11. See *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* by Alys Weinbaum for an example of transnational feminist use of heuristic device (2008).

12. *Fora Temer* refers to protests calling for the dismissal of the current Brazilian president, Michel Temer, who was brought to power after the removal (which many consider a constitutional coup) of Dilma Rousseff, the first woman elected President of the Republic in Brazil.

13. In this context, mainstream media denotes the Globo conglomerate, Record, and SBT (*Sistema Brasileira de Televisão*). These are the companies which provide open access television. Alternative media here refers to Ninja Media, Portal Catarinas, Maruim and Desacato.

14. To read more about the organizer's goals, click here (https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1wzI41gPrjmdXplMDhITXJnYmVUN0VqMENLN1dpaHFkbEdV to access the March's manifesto.

15. The traffic around posts from high profile activists in attendance, like Monique Prada from CUTS (*Central Única de Trabalhadoras e Trabalhadores Sexuais,* a center for women workers and sex workers), and Indianara Siqueira from *Casa Nem* (a home for transgender and transexual sex workers), suggest the enormity of the March's reach and impact. Still, as with any grass-roots social media phenomena, organizers lose control over the coverage. We will never fully be able to know or track the extent or effect of the March's media coverage.

16. The network, at the time called RBS (*Grupo Rede Brasil Sul*, The Southern Brazil Network Group), is a local affiliate of the Globo

network, and now has been sold NSC (*Noticias Santa Cantarina*, Santa Catarina News).

13TH WOMEN'S WORLDS CONGRESS ❮   **BRAZIL** ❮   **PEER REVIEWED** ❮   **PROTEST** ❮

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS ❮

WOMEN'S WORLDS MARCH FOR RIGHTS (MARCHA MUNDOS DE MULHERES POR DIREITOS) ❮

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Intersectionality in the Contemporary Women's Marches: Possibilities for Social Change

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Abstract: The Women's Marches of January 2017 and 2018 were some of the largest mass demonstrations in history. They represent an important stage in the American feminist movement in its current iteration. Unlike the first and second waves of the movement, which were led by privileged class cisgender white women, the leadership of these marches includes women of color who have brought a vision of intersectionality and diversity to the marches. Banners covering a wide range of issues including reproductive choice, #MeToo, equal pay, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ rights, and support for immigrants, became the hallmark of these marches. Is the contemporary feminist movement finally recognizing the importance of intersectionality? Or, is it merely paying lip service to the concerns of diverse people by way of representational politics? This article provides a historical analysis of the contemporary "Women's Marches" with the specific intent of evaluating their contribution to intersectionality and diversity within the mainstream feminist movement.

Keywords: women's marches, feminism, women's movement, history, three waves, intersectionality

> After fifteen years of a women's movement which professes to address the life concerns and possible futures of all women, I still hear, on campus after campus, "How can we address the issues of racism? No women of Color attended."
>
> Audre Lorde, 1984

These are exciting and challenging times for the feminist movement in the United States. On one hand, the #MeToo movement has provided the social context for more cisgender women to break the silence on sexual assault. On the other hand, women's testimonies are not considered credible enough to stop the assault on social justice. The confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court, and the new abortion restrictions introduced in states like Alabama, Missouri, and Ohio, question the credibility of women's revelations of sexual assault, and threaten many hard won rights such as reproductive justice, legalization of gay marriage, asylum laws, and DACA. This crisis in gender, racial, and sexual justice in contemporary society also creates a unique opportunity for different groups to come together and participate in an intersectional struggle for social justice. Does the current activism in the feminist movement, with its massive marches of 2017 and 2108, have the potential for creating an inclusive and diverse agenda of struggle against a conservative, white supremacist transphobic, hetero-sexist, patriarchal political establishment?

Women's Marches 2017 and 2018

On January 21, 2017, exactly one day after Donald Trump's inauguration as the Forty-Fifth President of the United States, more than five million people, a majority of whom were women, took to the streets in protest. On that day, nearly four million people marched in sixty-three cities across the United States (Abrahams 2017). Many women wore pink "pussy" hats to protest "the hyper-masculinity of Trump's election campaign, and his attitude towards women throughout—from his stance against reproductive rights …, to his boasts of "grabbing 'em by the pussy" *(ibid.)*. Widely covered by news channels and social media outlets across the globe, the Women's March on Washington turned out to be, "somewhat unexpectedly, one of the largest mass demonstrations in American history" *(ibid.)*. Following the march, women continued their activist work, "the voices of marchers are in more spaces than ever — in voter registration drives, in conversations about #MeToo and sexual harassment, and in political campaigns across the country, as women gear up to run for office in record numbers" (North 2018).

One year later, on the same date January 21, 2018, more than one million women once again took to the streets protesting Trump's Presidency and his policies, this time urging women to vote. The MeToo, Timesup, and PowerToThePolls movements, which had gathered momentum in the one year since the first march, figured prominently during the second march. What sets the contemporary marches of 2017-18 apart from previous demonstrations and organized protests is the optics of diversity among the issues represented in the marches. Protestors carried banners and chanted slogans on a wide variety of issues ranging from reproductive rights, prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault, to support for immigrants, Muslim women, Black Lives Matter, and so forth. Those of us who have been teaching intersectionality in Women's Studies classrooms for more than a decade were moved by this representation of diversity in a mainstream women's march. Once the dust of the initial excitement settled, it gave way to serious speculations regarding how rigorously intersectionality was practiced in the marches. Is the contemporary feminist movement in its current iteration finally recognizing the significance of how class, race, gender, sexuality, ability, ageism, and more affect people's lives? Or, is it merely doing lip service to the concerns of diverse people by way of tokenism and representational politics?

In other words, how *inclusive* is the women's movement today, thirty-seven years after Audre Lorde (1984, 125) inquired, "How can we address the issues of racism?" Secondly, to what extent are the women's marches representative of feminism in the United States today? To answer these questions, this article provides a historical analysis of the 2017 and 2018 "Women's Marches" and their contribution to feminism with specific attention to how they address intersectionality and the inclusion of diverse people's struggles within the mainstream feminist movement.

The Marches and Feminism

The Women's Marches and the activism surrounding them have a significant impact on what has been described as the fourth wave of the feminist movement (Abrahams 2017; Baumgardner 2011; Rivers 2017; Sollee 2015; Solomon 2009). Starting in the mid-1990s, the feminist movement gained popularity through blogs and social media outlets, and during the last decade "feminism got cool" (Zeisler 2016, x). Feminist issues such as equal rights, women's empowerment, and school and workplace safety have become part of mainstream discourse. They have in turn contributed to increased political consciousness among liberal feminists who are leading these marches and uprisings.

However, throughout its history, the American feminist movement has been divided along racial, class, and gender lines. Dominant narratives of this history have focused on the contributions of privileged class cisgender white heterosexual women who played important roles organizing in the movement, and as such these narratives reflect the racial, cultural, and class interests of the organizers. Contributions to the movement since its inception by black feminists like Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, have either been neglected or rendered marginal. Unlike this historical lack of inclusion within the mainstream feminist movement, for the first time during the contemporary marches of 2017 and 2018, we saw diversity both in the membership of the march organizing committee,[1] selection of speakers at the marches,[2] as well as in the issues represented. The march organizers, "in refusing a singular identity of woman as well as who can be supporters of women's rights, attempted to bring the reality of living in bodies marked by social difference into a common voice of dissent" (Moss and Maddrell 2017). Scholarship and activism by queer and black feminists such as, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, Cathy Cohen, and Andrea Ritchie, to name just a few, have played an important role in contributing to this shift in the approach and organizational efforts of these marches.

In the months following the first march, the visual representation of diversity even prompted the question, can "a movement embracing such wide-ranging goals — from protecting immigrants to stopping climate change, from racial justice and religious diversity to reproductive freedom — channel its support into sustained political action? Other recent movements, like Black Lives Matter and Occupy Wall Street, may have offered insight into and prominence for their issues, but they haven't delivered major policy shifts" (Gade 2017). Irrespective of whether or not movements that attempt to address multiple intersecting issues, such as the Occupy and Black Lives Matter movements, are able to deliver major policy shifts, the women's marches have succeeded in mobilizing a vast majority of women and they may even succeed in channeling their efforts into "a sustained political action," as suggested above. However, in attempting to do so, the marches have the potential to replicate the existing structures and agendas of first and second wave hegemonic feminism or they can center non-white and non-middle class cis and trans women's struggles in substantial ways that shift the historical praxis of feminism. Which path the contemporary marches will take ultimately depends on how committed the leaders and participants in these marches are in pursuing the goals of intersectionality.

Historical Overview of the Feminist Movement: The Three Waves

The wave metaphor continues to be employed for describing the history of the women's movement in the United States despite widespread criticisms (Cobble et.al. 2014; Hewitt 2012; Nicholson 2015). It has been argued that the concept of waves, which was only retrospectively developed to describe the first wave, "willingly lumped all of our predecessors, the entire sweep of US women's rights activism from the 1840s to 1920, into a single wave" (Hewitt 2012, 659). The wave metaphor is used to describe the history of gender activism as unfolding in "ebbs and swells" (Nicholson 2015, 5), with the first and second waves representing periods of heightened activity, and the periods in between representing low points in feminist activism. Such a construction is not only erroneous; it renders the labor, civil rights, and social justice activism of the 1930s through 1960s invisible or insignificant to the movement (Cobble et.al. 2014). In other words, only the struggles and accomplishments of one segment of the population are represented using the wave metaphor within what is traditionally known as the American feminist movement: privileged middle class white women.

The First Wave

Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are honored in history as pioneers of the first wave. However, critics like bell hooks (1981) and Angela Davis (1983) dispute this claim, arguing that early feminists like Mott, Stanton, and the Grimké Sisters came to a realization of their own oppression only after encountering it in the abolition movement, which was a precursor to the women's rights movement. Further, the contention over the right to vote between black men and white women in the nineteenth century, revealed the racist tendencies of many early women's rights activists including Stanton and Anthony (Davis 1983; hooks 1981). Activist and scholar Sally Wagner (1996) makes a similar argument about the racism of white feminism regarding the "Indigenous roots" of early American feminism. The autonomy and freedom enjoyed by Native American women in the neighboring Iroquois Nation provided Stanton and Matilda Gage the models upon which to develop their own aspirations for freedom. Thus, at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, which is considered the first ever organized initiative by American feminists even though there were other movements preceding it, neither the freedoms enjoyed by Native American women, nor the activism of African-American was recognized.

Early feminists of the mid-nineteenth century focused exclusively on problems typically encountered by white and privileged class women. For example, the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions adopted at the Convention foregrounded issues such as gender equality, marriage, property rights, child custody, and suffrage ("Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" 1848). Historical accounts of the first wave fail to recognize the intersectional struggles of working women and women of color, as is illustrated in the working class Lowell Mill Women's Strike in 1834 (Robinson 1883) abolitionist activism by Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth in mid-nineteenth century, and anti-lynching campaigns led by Ida B. Wells Barnett in the 1890s (Davis 1983).

The Second Wave

As with the first wave, historians often site the 1968 protest against the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey as the beginning of the second wave of feminism, which continued well into the 1980s (Siegel 2007). The August 1970 Strike for Equality in New York City organized by Betty Freidan and the National Organization for Women (NOW) represented the largest march of the era, drawing over 50,000 women (Siegel 2007).

The 1960s and 1970s were a period of radical activism in US history. Like the first wave, second wave protests and demonstrations, including the Stonewall uprising, were directly inspired by the Civil Rights movement (hooks 1981) and the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations (Cobble, et. al. 2014), although their influence on second wave feminism is rarely discussed within mainstream feminism. "Hegemonic feminism" is "white led, marginalizes the activism and world views of women of color, focuses mainly on the United States, and treats sexism as the ultimate oppression. Hegemonic feminism deemphasizes or ignores a class and race analysis" (Thompson 2002, 337).

Whereas the women's strike is well documented in history, other organized protests of the same period, in which working class women, immigrants, and women of color participated, are left out of the mainstream history of the women's movement because these do not directly impact the lives of the women who are identified with feminism. Strikes organized by the National Farmworkers Association led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta in the 1960s, in which hundreds of immigrant farmworkers across California participated; the Dewey's Lunch Counter sit-in in Philadelphia (1965) and the Compton Cafeteria Riot in San Francisco (1966) led by Queer and Trans women (Stryker 2008); community

protection and activism organized by the Black Panther Party in which women played an active role (1966); and the Native American fish-in protests (1964), and occupations at Alcatraz (1969) and Wounded Knee (1973) all question the very foundations of colonialist, heteropatriarchal white capitalist nationalism, but rarely figure into mainstream historical accounts of second wave feminism. The sexist patriarchal oppression of middle class white women is central in second wave feminism. Even when women of color experienced similar forms of sexist patriarchy white women failed to recognize the differences and intersections of these experiences and reclaimed white middle class heterosexual women's struggles as representative of all women's struggles.

Diverse groups contributed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism in the second wave. After the Stonewall uprising of June 1969, lesbians who were active within the feminist movement organized around sexuality explicitly. They were dismissed as "the lavender menace" by none other than Betty Freidan in 1970 (Schneir 1994). They responded by calling themselves the Radicalesbians and demanding support and recognition from fellow feminists within the movement, emphasizing "the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution" (Radicalesbians 1972, 167). However, the antagonism and homophobia they encountered within the mainstream women's movement was not much different from the resistance Barbara Smith and other organizers of The Combahee River Collective encountered later in the mid-1970s and 1980s:

> A Black feminist presence has evolved most obviously in connection with the second wave of the American women's movement beginning in the late 1960s. Black, other Third World, and working women have been involved in the feminist movement from its start, but both outside reactionary forces and racism and elitism within the movement itself have served to obscure our participation. (Smith et al. 1977, 177)

Hegemonic feminism prevailed in suppressing the representation of diverse struggles within the second wave. But the main contribution to the movement by these diverse movements, in particular black feminists, was that they represented not just one aspect of oppression, but in fact "a whole range of oppressions" (182). There was, however, a difference in the separatist politics advocated by queer white women's organizations like Radicalesbians, and the more inclusive and intersectional politics practiced by black feminist organizations which did not "advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand[ed]" (180). Chicanx scholar Cherríe Moraga (1981) expresses a similar frustration with feminist politics and the lesbian movement while putting together an anthology of writings by women of color, "I had nearly forgotten why I was so driven to work on this anthology. I had nearly forgotten that I wanted/needed to deal with racism because I couldn't stand being separated from other women. Because I took my lesbianism that seriously" (xvii). The result of this struggle to connect to other women of color, especially Black, Chicana, and Asian-American women, is *This Bridge Called My Black*, the first anthology of writings by women of color, co-edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. This anthology, in addition to scholarly writings by bell hooks (1981), Angela Davis (1983), Mary Crow Dog (1990), Becky Thompson (2002), and others, contributed to the rewriting of second wave feminist history from radical women of color perspectives.

The Third Wave

The so-called third wave[3] gained momentum for a brief period in the early 1990s. Diversity and the language of intersectionality finally entered the movement as a reaction to the lack of diversity in the

second wave of the 1970s and 1980s. Activists like Rebecca Walker travelled across the country, recruiting minority women to participate in the electoral process (Cobble et al. 2014). Concerted efforts were made to focus on the struggles of black, Native American, Latinx, immigrant, and under-represented Asian American women. However, the creative artists, publishers, and activists of the period, "confront[ed] many of the same difficulties as their predecessors in mobilizing diverse constituencies around common goals" (Hewitt 2012, 667). The activism that occurred during this period was scattered and narrowly divided based on individual groups' interests and identity politics.

Two major marches that occurred during this period were the April 1993 March on Washington for LGBTQ Rights, and the October 1997 Million Women March organized by Black grassroots feminist activists. The LGBTQ march, attended by approximately a million people, launched a national movement demanding basic civil rights and inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people in all major social institutions and practices. Their charter of demands included the establishment of laws and protections against discrimination, as well as funding for HIV/AIDS education and research (Smith 2013). The Million Woman March organized in Philadelphia called all women of African descent to come together to address "the economic deterioration of African American communities, the importance of nurturing young children in a positive environment, finding a collective voice in politics and the civil rights movement, and strengthening black families" (Jones 2008). In spite of their contributions to the LGBTQ movement and to the Black struggle, neither of these two major events is included in mainstream accounts of feminist organizing.

Any major march or protest carried out in the name of "women" or women's rights, such as the Women's March, Women's Strike for Equality, or Women's Convention, is typically identified with mainstream feminism. The terms feminism and feminist movement are not usually used to describe mass mobilizations by women of color, such as in the Million Women March or the Black Lives Matter marches. Problems faced by underprivileged communities, such as racism, police brutality, Muslim travel bans, lack of humane working conditions, unsafe neighborhoods, homelessness, and detention of immigrant women and children, are not considered feminist issues per se. Feminists may raise these issues under the banner of human rights or social justice, but these are not perceived as directly influencing mainstream feminism. By the same token, as articulated by the campaign, Say Her Name, sexism within communities of color prevents putting women at the center of struggles against police brutality, deportation, etc. in large Black or immigrant rights rallies. This goes to the heart of intersectionality and the failure to pay attention to factors that go beyond the dominant group's concerns within any given group:

> Feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. (Crenshaw 1991, 1242)

Crenshaw frames this discussion in terms of the failure of identity politics to recognize intragroup differences, as evident in the developments of the feminist movement during the so-called third wave in the 1990s. Despite claiming to be "broader in their vision, more global in their concerns, and more progressive in their sensitivities to transnational, multiracial, and sexual politics" (Hewitt 2012, 661), third wave feminists, emphasizing identity politics, failed to recognize, as stated by Crenshaw above that, "racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people" (661). In feminist praxis intersectionality needs to occur at two levels, integrating different groups' concerns within the same space, as well as recognizing the need to address more than one factor of oppression in individual lives, which contributes

to a recognition of interlocking systems of oppression within our communities, in turn paving the way for a broad platform of coalition (Collins 1993).

In spite of these serious omissions and criticisms it has received, the wave metaphor continues to hold sway in contemporary feminist politics (Baumgardner 2011; Hewitt 2012; Siegel 2007). In her defense of the wave metaphor, Baumgardner (2011), argues:

> Personally, I find the waves useful shorthand in describing the broad strokes of feminist history, which most people don't know in even the most cursory way, much less a nuanced one. The American history we get in schoolbooks is also condensed, politically retrograde, and filled with holes—yet it at least provides the barest frame to view where we have been and where we are going. Feminism needs that same road map. We can add to it, balk at it, revel in it—but first we have to have it.

Even Linda Nicholson (2015), who is highly critical of the wave metaphor for its failure to encapsulate the varied and complex history of women's activism, concedes: "there is one use that the wave metaphor is suited for – to identify those moments in history when issues of gender mobilize large numbers of people in very public, noisy, and challenging ways, that is, when such issues are able to generate large scale social or political movements." Based on this, it is possible that this moment in history when issues of gender has mobilized a large number of people to participate in the women's marches, will be described as yet another wave. It remains to be seen whether this mass mobilization will lead to political change. But the question still remains: is it ONLY when white women come together in large numbers and fight for a cause, that it is considered a huge upheaval contributing to social and political change? The latter seems to be the case given the historic events leading to the origin and use of the wave metaphor in feminism.

Diversity in the Contemporary Women's Marches

From the beginning, the Women's March on Washington was ridden with controversies, most of them having to do with diversity. The initial naming of the march as the Million Women March drew consternation from activists in the black community who felt that the organizers were appropriating the name of the successful march they had organized in 1997, as mentioned earlier. The women's march organizers, who were initially all white women, brought into the committee activists of color like Tamika Mallory, Linda Sarsour, and Carmen Perez who had extensive grassroots, community, as well as national organizing experience. They then changed the name of the march to the "Women's March on Washington," after the famous march by Martin Luther King Jr., thereby honoring his legacy (with permission from his daughter). Making concerted efforts to right the mistakes of previous feminist movements, the organizers created an inclusive platform and vision of diversity, "recognizing that women have intersecting identities and are therefore impacted by a multitude of social justice and human rights issues" (womensmarch.org).

Intersectionality figured prominently in the mission, agenda, and organization of the marches. It was reflected in the list of speakers at the 2017 march in Washington, which included political activists and celebrities like Angela Davis, America Ferreira and Janet Mock. However, "gaps" or fissures appeared between the organizers intentions and how the marches themselves unfolded:

> Some black activists still boycotted the march for its apparent roots in white feminist thought. Some white women boycotted the march, too, because they didn't think issues of race and racism belonged

next to issues like equal pay and reproductive rights. The clash in perspectives had little to do with the Women's March itself. But the march served as an illuminating microcosm of progressive American society in general, and the feminist movement in particular, which has only just begun to account for how the white supremacy of its past still affects its present. (Carteucci 2017)

Despite the tensions, it is noteworthy that the Women's March organizers did create the space for intersectionality and inclusion of "all women, femmes, and allies" (womensmarch.org), a factor that has been emphasized by scholars and activists of color since the 1970s. Yet, the rift described above between white women and women of color, which can be traced back to the first wave, continues to this day and unfortunately could not be bridged during the actual marches. Racism in the women's movement is a structural condition and in order to understand the reasons for this rift, we have to once again examine the broader historical context of contemporary hegemonic feminism, of which the marches are a fair indicator.

While reaction to Trump's election was the trigger for the massive marches of 2017 and 2018, that they were organized and led by cisgender women and millions of women from the United States and around the world participated in them, is no coincidence given the popularity and support for feminist issues in the current decade. As with the first and second waves, the contemporary feminist movement has to be analyzed using the lens of intersectionality. Feminism has grown in contemporary times from an object of derision during the 1990s backlash era,[4] to a popular movement. According to Valenti (2014), "As feminism's star has ascended, so has the number of celebrities willing to lend their name to the movement. Feminism is no longer "the f-word", it's the realm of cool kids." Recent activism by Hollywood stars around the #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns and their willingness to speak out about feminism and women's rights during awards functions,[5] are just a few examples of the strong presence of feminism in public culture. This transformation in popular sentiments is captured in the contrast between *TIME* magazine's 1998 cover story "Is Feminism Dead?" to its recent issue in which it named the "Silence Breakers" of the #MeTooMovement as the 2017 Person of the Year. In twenty years, feminism's star has once again risen.

Popular feminism, influenced by market choices and materialist aspirations has become trendy enough to warrant packaging by advertisers for selling goods ranging from feminine hygiene products to soaps, sneakers, and kids toys. For a generation bred on marketplace feminism (Zeisler 2016), where concepts such as women's empowerment, choice, and feel good feminism are commoditized and sold as consumer goods (Kirkpatrick 2010; Zeisler 2016), Hillary Clinton's stunning defeat at the polls sent a shockwave across the American middle class. Thus, when out of sheer frustration over the election results, Teresa Shook created an event on Facebook for a Women's March and invited her friends to join, her page flooded with responses the very next day (Stein 2017). Thus, what started as a campaign identified with choice and empowerment for the white middle class just a few years ago, has transformed since the election of Trump into a movement to hold on to hard won freedoms that are being threatened by his government. The recent nomination and election of Bret Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court and Dr. Christine Blassey Ford's sworn testimony in front of the US Senate Judiciary Committee that Kavanugh sexually assaulted her in high school have only contributed to the intensification of feminist organizing around sexual assault/domestic violence. It has led to a noticeable increase in women's participation in the political process, with an unprecedented number of women elected to Congress in the 2019 mid-term elections.

The Women's Marches and the Previous Waves

Just as the first wave of the feminist movement was influenced and organized by activists involved in the abolition movement and the second wave was influenced by civil rights and anti-war demonstrations, the current feminist marches in the United States have also been influenced by broader global and national movements that preceded them, such as the Green Movement of Iran in 2009, the Arab Spring of 2011, the Occupy Movement later in the same year, the Black Lives Matter movement which began in 2013, as well as protests organized by grassroots organizations in the Sioux nation at Standing Rock in 2016. The optics of women of color as active organizers of these movements has made mainstream American women's activism during the contemporary crisis almost imminent. In an age of activism in which social media has played a pivotal role in organizational efforts, American cisgender white feminists are stepping out of their homes, and following the lead already taken by women of color in other parts of the world. In this respect as well, just as in the leadership and diversity of banners representing multiple women's struggles in the marches, there seems to be a change in the current wave of feminist organizing compared to the first and second waves.

In a recent survey "of issues that motivated participants to attend" the 2017 march on Washington, researchers came up with the following results:

> Women's Rights (53%) was the top motivating reason. Four other issues—Equality (41.5%), Reproductive Rights (23.4%), Environment (22.5%), and Social Welfare (21.7%) – were reported by more than 20% of respondents. In addition, more than 15% of respondents reported that Racial Justice, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) issues, Politics/Voting, and Immigration were issues that motivated them to attend. (Fisher et al. 2017)

The authors of the survey rejoice that factors other than women's rights motivated participants with diverse concerns to join the march albeit they comprised only fifteen percent of the participants. Implicit within this reaction is the assumption that "women's rights" do not represent systemic violence, institutionalized racism, or other issues relevant to poor, under-represented, and people of color.

Once again here as in previous waves of the feminist movement, the slogan popularized by Hillary Clinton during the 1995 Beijing Conference, "Women's Rights Are Human Rights" only works to the advantage of the women who are championing it. The lack of inclusion of issues affecting women of color in mainstream feminism is the central reason many black women felt they didn't belong in the mainstream feminist movement as well as in the Women's Marches:

> This has always been my problem with traditional feminism. Its lack of intersectionality is exclusionary. When feminists proclaim 'women's rights are human rights' it feels more like they mean 'white women's rights are human rights.' I am a black woman, and I will not be made to choose between my womanhood and blackness. So while white women can choose to ignore racism and systemic oppression, I cannot. My very survival is dependent on confronting these issues head on…. In cities all over the U.S., black women, some I knew and some I didn't, expressed their frustrations over feeling as though their voices, their issues, and their concerns and causes weren't given nearly as much as value as those of the majority. (Holloway 2018)

This concern was frequently expressed even during the organizing of the second March in 2018, prompting Women's March co-organizer Carmen Perez to remark, "If you don't see your community at the table, make sure to pull up a chair…. And if you're white, scooch your chair over a little. Make room for us" (Solis 2018).

Underrepresented Groups and the Marches

The substitution of white women's concerns for all feminist concerns in the women's marches is symbolized by the pink pussy hats that many women wore during the marches. The hats were popularized as symbols of resistance to Trump's misogynistic comments in a video that went viral a few days before the election. At the same time, they have been criticized for not being inclusive. Pink pussies are not representative of all women's anatomies or identities, they exclude women of color, non-binary, and trans women. Pamela Moss and Avril Maddrell (citing Boothroyd et al. 2017) sum this up by arguing that, "there is a politics of purity at play within the March that consistently, systematically and systemically sets up white women with female genitalia who display appropriate emotions as the ideal" (2017, 617-618). Moss and Maddrell's statement is part of the reason black women rejected the pink hats. Choosing symbols cisgender white heterosexual women identify with in a culture that already marginalizes certain groups of women, and then claiming them to be representative of all women's experiences, does not advance intersectionality.

"I'd had enough before it even began," Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza (2017) said in an essay last year about plans for this year's women's march. "Fifty-three percent of white women who voted in the 2016 presidential election did so for a man who aims to move society backward. Where were all of these white people while our people are being killed in the streets, jobless, homeless, over-incarcerated, undereducated?" (Solis 2018). As explained earlier using Crenshaw's warning regarding the tension between intersectionality and identity politics, hegemonic feminism has confined itself to a narrow definition of gender rights in spite of warnings by black feminist critics like Audre Lorde who professed, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (1984, 138).

The intersectionality Lorde is calling for is visible in the scholarship and activism of black feminist organizations like Black Lives Matter, INCITE, and the organized protests at Standing Rock. According to Cohen (2016),

> feminism does a number of different things, in relation to racial justice movements today. I am especially thinking about the role of black feminism. I'll give you three things that I think it does: first, it makes us think differently about or, hopefully, expand where we look for victims of and resisters to state violence.... [Secondly, it] happens through the denial of state welfare assistance, and it happens in the ways we militarize the public schools that primarily black, Latino, and poor kids attend.

Like the movements organized by black civil rights, anti-war and LGBTQ organizations during the second and third waves, contemporary Black, Latinx, and Native American struggles have to a large extent addressed the institutionalized racism, sexism, and discrimination encountered by underprivileged, queer, cisgender, and transgender women of color today.

The large number of cisgender white women turning out to the women's marches, while a positive sign of feminist consciousness, was on a national scale compared to their numbers at Black Lives Matter or DACA protests. Cisgender white women's apathy towards critical problems faced by people of color and their participation only in issues that have direct consequences for their lives means they have the luxury of peacefully marching without any perceived threat or danger from law enforcement. These factors lead many black and trans women who frequently face violent threats and harassment from law enforcement

to stay away from the 2018 Women's March (Holloway 2018; Quarshie 2018; Tseselsky 2018; Wortham 2017). Tseselsky (2018) makes an important point when they argue that,

> From deliberately branding itself a "march" rather than a protest to not having a specific list of demands or stances, the march strategically made itself appealing to almost everyone. But in that ambiguity, it lost its radical potential.... When your "protests" are deemed acceptable because they are escorted by police and granted city permits — in other words, sanctioned by the same state perpetuating the violence you're organizing against — who are you really resisting?

The Black community not only felt disengaged from the "feel good feminism" espoused by the marchers, it was outraged by the relaxed atmosphere of the marches and the friendliness with which law enforcement officers greeted and protected the marchers, compared to the violent treatment they encounter in the hands of law enforcement during Black Lives Matter protests. Activist and writer Luvvie Ajayi echoes this sentiment,

> This march, the fact that it could go off peacefully and cops are wearing pink hats, and no one felt like they were in danger, and militarized police didn't show up, that's white privilege at its core... They have the access and ability to do the things the majority of black and brown people who protest don't have. (in Ramanathan 2017)

In addition, given that the Women's March is a national organization which worked in conjunction with sister organizations at the state level within the United States and a few countries abroad, the failure to network and mobilize grassroots organizations that work with local communities led to the failure to bring these communities to participate in the march in 2018. In Portland, Oregon for example, this disconnect between the national march and local groups led to the splitting of the march into four different events, each led by a different organization and with Women's March Inc. not participating in any of these events. According to Candi Brings Plenty, founder Director of the Portland Two Spirit Society, which hosted the Indigenous Womxn's March, one of the four events held in lieu of the Women's March in 2018, this march is a "response to the under-represented womxn and allies who were offended by the white feminist narrative that took over the face of the march" (Acker 2018).

In the period between the two marches, the co-organizers of the Women's March on Washington applied to trademark the name Women's March Inc. Several organizations came together to file an opposition to it (Harnish 2018). By the time the second march came around in January 2018, cleavages appeared when local community organizations at the state level tried to use the name Women's March in their organizational efforts (Stockman 2018; Stuart 2018). While non-profit organizations registering their brands is not unusual (i.e., Black Lives Matter has done it), the problem here is that the women's march is not a unique brand name, it is a common description for marches led by women, and as argued by the group of organizations that came together to oppose this trademark application "the movement is large and diffuse, and that no single organization can control it" (Harnish 2018). Attempting to brand a movement and a march dominated by middle class cisgender white women participants as Women's March Inc. by none other than a group of diverse women who will be leading it, would represent yet another aspect of hegemonic feminism. In March 2019, however, the organizers officially withdrew their application after the US Patent and Trademark Office ruled against their request, stating that, "the process has become a distraction from important work in our movement" (Lang 2019).

The holding up of banners and signs supporting Black Lives Matter and veiled Muslim women during women's marches are effective only to the extent that they provide a visual image of diversity. They are not accompanied by structural changes in the organizing of the marches, nor the participants. In order to achieve that, the Women's March organizers should reach out to local grassroots organizations and under-represented communities of color in each state, urging them to take the lead in the organization of these marches. From this perspective, while the massive women's marches of 2017 and 2018 introduced changes in leadership and optics, they represent a continuity with rather than a break from, the mass movements of the first and second waves of the feminist movement. The solution lies not in discouraging white women from participating in these marches because the point is not to exclude them or delegitimize their concerns; rather, it is to consciously build coalitions around problems faced by oppressed populations. This could also be one way to bring disenchanted white working class and poor white women to the feminist movement, so that they become part of the solution rather than the problem to the political crisis facing America today.

Conclusion

Hundreds of pictures from the women's marches of 2017 and 2018 reveal white women in pink hats carrying diverse banners and signs supporting a range of causes including reproductive rights, women's political representation, Black Lives Matter, anti-Trump slogans, images of veiled Muslim women, and support for immigrants. While these are a welcome change from the single-issue focus of the suffrage movement and the second wave, they are not a substitute for the lack of significant presence of people of color who felt marginalized during these marches. There are other factors that are different about the contemporary marches. The leadership of the March committee includes women of color who have community organizing experience, and espouse a vision of diversity and inclusion that is unprecedented in mainstream feminist activism. This welcome change in the leadership of the women's marches is a direct consequence of years of scholarship and activism by black feminists. The marches are also a result of the continuing emphasis on intersectionality in feminist and Women's Studies curricula for over two decades. There is currently, however, a gap or discrepancy between the organizers mission and vision of intersectional feminism, and the reality of the marches themselves, which leads one to conclude that the marches represent the continuity with, rather than a break from the hegemonic feminism of the past.

The massive women's marches of January 2017 and 2018 had more people of color, banners, and slogans representing diversity than in the past. However, these are mere tokens within a movement that is still largely dominated by white cisgender middle class American women. While intersectionality has just entered the vocabulary of this movement and has been embraced by its leadership, the life and death struggles of cisgender and trans women of color have to be recognized as significant aspects of the American feminist movement alongside other issues like reproductive justice, sexual assault, and equal pay, which currently dominate its agenda. While these are factors that affect all women, cis and trans, Black feminists and women of color have taken the lead on how to address these issues from radical intersectional perspectives. It is time for them to take the lead in marching the feminist movement to its next stage.

Notes

1. Three out of the four members of the Women's March on Washington organizing committee are women of color with long histories of social justice work: Tamika Mallory is a grassroots black rights organizer with years of experience working in the National Action Network organizing marches. Linda Sarsour is a former executive director of the Arab American Association of New York. Carmen Perez is the co-founder of Justice League of New York and Founder of Justice League, CA, having spent twenty years doing activist work fighting the prison system. Bob Bland is a fashion designer who is CEO of an organization promoting environmentally friendly manufacture and distribution of textiles.

2. There were diverse speakers at the Washington 2017 Women's March, which included Angela Davis, Janet Mock, America Ferreira, Madonna, and Ashley Judd. The 2018 Women's March organized event in Las Vegas had among its speakers Alicia Garza, Co-Founder of the *Black Lives Matter* movement.

3. The term was first used by Rebecca Walker who declared in an interview with *Ms. Magazine* in January 1992: "I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave."

4. The backlash against feminism lasted through the 1990s. Discussion of this episode of backlash is reflected in Pulitzer winning author Susan Faludi's (1991) book*, Backlash*, and in a *TIME Magazine* (1998) cover entitled, "Is Feminism Dead?" The picture accompanying the caption in *TIME Magazine* tried to cover the entire sweep of the feminist movement using pictures of early organizer, Susan B. Anthony, second wave stalwarts Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, and finally resting on the character Ally McBeal from a popular television show of the time. Needless to say, black women were missing from this picture.

5. During the 2014 Video Music Awards function, Beyoncé performed her song Flawless with the word FEMINISM embossed on a giant screen behind her. Her performance included a video clip of author Chimamanda Adichie providing a definition of feminism in one of her TED Talks (Valenti 2014). A few years later during the Golden Globe Awards in January 2018, on the heels of the Weinstein sexual assault revelations and the rise of the #MeToo movement, actors wore black in protest and spoke in support of the brave women who broke the silence on sexual harassment and assault.

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A New Heroic Figure: Female Protestors and Precarity in Puerto Rico

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A New Heroic Figure: Female Protestors and Precarity in Puerto Rico

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Abstract: This paper offers a critical look on an isolated, failed incident of protest carried out by a young Puerto Rican woman and her two children. In doing so, it explores the possibilities of radical political thought and action on the island. Furthermore, by situating this event within the larger context of danger—physical, social and discursive—that women in Puerto Rico are subjected to, it seeks to question the manner in which female protestors' vulnerability and agency challenge those on the left to formulate gender-progressive strategies for emancipation. Lastly, it is argued here that this protestor features as new type of radical political subject on the island that could very well serve as a figurehead for large-scale social movements arising from a shared sense of precarity.

Keywords: female protestors, nontraditional protests, precarity, Puerto Rico, vulnerability

> Our task is to find a new heroic figure.
> — Alain Badiou, *Philosophy for Militants*

Introduction: Vulnerability and Vision

In April 2014, Christina Victoria Pasquinucci trespassed into a Walgreens construction site in the municipality of Hatillo to protest the chain pharmacy's hyperbolic expansion in Puerto Rico.[1] A local online newspaper covered the event under the headline "Mother Invades Walgreens Land in Protest of Monopoly" (Quintero 2014).[2] In the article's opening line, however, Pasquinucci is referred to as an "environmentalist" who made the incursion into the site with her young son and daughter (ages six and two, respectively). According to the report, the woman perpetrated an act of civil disobedience by blocking the entrance to the construction site with a van that donned scribbled messages such as "Enough is enough, Walgreens," "Hatillo = culture," and "Support local [businesses]." She also planted what was meant to be the first of many trees. In her words, the protest was directed "against the American monopoly in pharmacies" and "on behalf of the local economy and natural medicine." Her plan was to set up camp on the site for several weeks. Unfortunately, she ended up abandoning it the very same day.

Upon arriving at the scene, police threatened Pasquinucci with reporting her to social services and filing a formal complaint of child abuse with Puerto Rico's Department of the Family for exposing her children to the protest. Regarding her son and daughter's participation in the act, she was quoted as saying, "I wanted them to be part of the message because this is for their health and their future" (Quintero 2014). Thus, the event could be summarized as follows: A female protestor exposes herself to arrest by breaking into private property, accompanied by her children, to deliver a clear-cut message regarding an American corporation's

control over a significant sector of the local economy. Her plan for a sustained occupation of the site is cut short, however, due to law enforcement's gender-specific manner of dealing with the protestor. This manner was particularly cruel and tantamount to torture.

Police could have very well arrested Pasquinucci if she refused to leave the premises and could have also arranged for a family member to pick up the children. The officers' choice to forego these options and threaten her instead showcases women's particular vulnerability as protestors. One could argue that women's incursion into the space of a political manifestation expands the spectrum of ways and forms in which law enforcement and other entities (such as the media) can and will respond. As pertains specifically to law enforcement, recent reports by the American Civil Liberties Union (2012) and the US Department of Justice (2015) have found that Puerto Rican police have been particularly abusive when called to intervene in situations of "citizen unrest," acts of civil disobedience, marches, picket lines, and other forms of individual and mass protest. This abuse reaches even more worrisome levels when women protestors are arrested and/or detained, as they are often forced to suffer acts of bodily aggression through touching, groping and sexual harassment. Furthermore, the gender violence specific to situations of political opposition in the street occurs within the wider context of general police unresponsiveness and mishandling of cases of domestic violence and sexual assault, which run rampant on the island.[3]

In this particular case, one could safely assume that if Pasquinucci was willing to drive her van into the construction site, she was certainly willing to risk being arrested. Thus, that threat, from the responding officers' perspective, would not have been enough to dissuade her from her chosen course of action. The threat, then, had to be augmented by expanding the spectrum of acceptable state violence towards her: "Your children will be taken away." And thus the proposed occupation came to a screeching halt. No more trees would be planted on the site, no walk-in protestors would join in, and the construction would continue as scheduled. This failure was further punctuated by the manner in which the media covered the event: "Mother Invades Walgreens Lands in Protest of Monopoly." "Mother" in the headline seems to respond to the manner in which the police handled Pasquinucci's act of civil disobedience—as prima facie evidence of parental negligence and not as a political act. Therefore, it could be argued that the protestor's motherhood made her the least ideal political actor to convey such an urgent message regarding American corporate control over Puerto Rican economy. This, perhaps, helps explain the discrepancy between the headline and the article's opening line. While the rationale for the act corresponded to the views and values of an environmentalist, the protestor was not handled by law enforcement as such but rather as a "bad" mother— someone to be punished not for a political, unlawful act that arose from her deepest convictions but rather for the foolishness and irresponsibility displayed by a woman in her (vulnerable) condition of motherhood. Judith Butler elaborates as follows on the vulnerability of protestors:

> Indeed, even in the moment of actively appearing on the street, we are vulnerable. This is especially true for those who appear on the street without permits, who are opposing the police or the military or other security forces without weapons. Although one is shorn of protection, to be sure, one is not reduced to some sort of "bare life." On the contrary, to be shorn of protection is a form of political exposure, at once concretely vulnerable and potentially and actively defiant. How do we understand this connection between vulnerability and defiant resistance within activism? (Butler 2013, 168–69)

In trying to understand the "connection between vulnerability and defiant resistance within activism" as it played out in Pasquinucci's particular act of dissent, what is significant is that her children were present on the scene not out of necessity—as an unfortunate but inevitable result of the objective conditions that shape her daily life (i.e., there being nobody else to take care of them)—but, rather, were active participants

in the protest. Their presence was desired and responded to a larger political project and/or vision; as Pasquinucci put it, "I wanted them to be part of the message because this is for their health and their future" (Quintero 2014). In a sociopolitical context where parents—especially those who belong to the most socially disadvantaged classes—and their children are policed in a variety of forms, this statement is nothing short of liberatory.[4] Pasquinucci's children were there to receive an education in civil disobedience as a legitimate response to corporate greed and state complicity with foreign corporations. Thus, in Alain Badiou's terms, Pasquinucci's protest against Walgreens was "at the service of a true idea" (Badiou 2012a, 30), which we could articulate as follows: If protesting is the ultimate recourse of the disenfranchised and the vulnerable, it stands to reason that the most necessary protestors are those whose increased vulnerability makes them the least ideal by any stretch of the imagination. As Butler continues,

> women are at once vulnerable and capable of resistance, and that vulnerability and resistance can, and do, happen at the same time, as we see in certain forms of feminist self-defence, or even in certain openly political movements of women in the public sphere where they are not generally allowed to appear (trans women in Turkey), or where they suffer harassment or injury by virtue of appearing as they do (and this would include Muslim women wearing full veils in France, for instance). (2013, 169)

In this case, it could be argued that female protestors in Puerto Rico are not allowed to appear in the public sphere as mothers, even when identifying themselves as environmentalists or under any other similar guise.[5] To do so is to put themselves at risk in ways that male protestors would seldom, if ever, have to do. Now, as Butler notes, this does not mean that women as a group are inherently more vulnerable than men as a group: "Rather, certain kinds of gender-defining attributes, like vulnerability and invulnerability, are distributed unequally under certain regimes of power, and precisely for the purpose of shoring up certain regimes of power that disenfranchise women" (2013, 170–71). In the context of public protests, chief among these attributes are legitimacy and credibility as political actors, the presence or absence of which can be determined by the monikers used to identify those protesting. In all probability, if it would have been a man protesting with his children, the media would have only tagged him as a "father" if the protest was directly related to a parental issue. He would not be expected (much less forced) to speak from that position. Furthermore, it would be hard to imagine police officers tending to the situation in the same way. In all likelihood, the children's mother would have been called to pick them up as their father was taken into custody. Additionally, the headline would have read drily, "Environmentalist Invades Walgreens Land in Protest of Monopoly." The editorial choice of naming Pasquinucci "mother" in the actual headline is meant to entice readers to click on the news story while concomitantly dismissing the woman as a legitimate and credible political actor, for "mother" means that she could only really be serious about issues related to childrearing, and the fact that she brought her children with her means that she cannot be taken seriously at all. Butler argues:

> We think about goods as distributed unequally under capitalism, as natural resources, especially water, are, but we should also surely consider that one way of managing populations is to distribute vulnerability unequally in such a way that "vulnerable populations" are established within discourse and policy. (2013, 170–71)

Vulnerability here—as made use of by both police and the media—makes possible the discursive transformation of political activism into parental negligence. Thus, if one is not careful as a reader, one risks misrecognizing the nature of the interaction between police and protestor. The threat levied by officers, as reported, could easily be misinterpreted as a direct consequence of the protestor-as-mother posing a greater danger to her own children by making them unwilling accomplices to a criminal offense than the

danger inherent in the figure of the mother-as-protestor, who is "crazy" enough to think that she could stop Walgreens by simply parking her van at the site and planting a few trees. By threatening to take her children away, the police not only managed to coerce the protestor into relenting in her dissent as originally designed, but this egregious tactic also has the added ideological effect of erasing seemingly all traces of "politicity" from the event.

Furthermore, the police threat illustrates how women, as they move across different spheres of social life, always have something "extra" to lose. A key part of the protestor's vision for her dissent was certainly rooted in an ethics of care: *Walgreens is bad for the economy and the environment. People should turn to natural medicine and alternate ways of healing, physically and socially. This knowledge and practices will be beneficial for my [and everybody's] children in the future.* In this sense, the protestor presented herself as more than simply a messenger or a political opponent, but as a caretaker, with her dissent springing from her beliefs as well as her feelings. The threat to take away her children, its effectiveness on that day, also implies that all of us as intended subjects of her care were in fact taken away from her. One could thus view her protest as situated within the coordinates of personal responsibility and human connectivity, which strike at the essence of precarity as conceptualized in feminist theory. As Isabell Lorey notes, "To say that life is precarious is thus to point out that it does not exist independently and autonomously, that it cannot be grasped with any identities derived from this. Instead, life requires social support and political and economic conditions that enable it to continue, in order for that life to be liveable" (Lorey 2010).

Taking this into account, the woman's understandable decision to comply with the officers' orders makes Badiou's question particularly daunting and almost heartbreaking: "How are we to be faithful to changing the world within the world itself?" (2012b, 67). It is a question that initially seems directed at the possible trappings that daily life might pose (in the form of co-optation by or compliance with the established order) to those who seek to radically change existing structures of power. The question, however, when considered in relation to the protestor's incursion into the construction site and its aftermath, can be rearticulated as follows: How are we to remain faithful to those who stand the most to lose when changing the world within the world itself? This question is about care, about the possibility of "joining in" as protestors long after Pasquinucci was coerced into leaving the site, so as "to open a new sequence of political invention" (Badiou 2012a, 22).

Former Pussy Riot member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, in her correspondence with Slavoj Žižek during her imprisonment, offers what I choose to read as a partial (and inevitably hopeful) answer to both Badiou's original question and to my reformulation: "All of our activity is a quest for miracles" (Tolokonnikova and Žižek 2014, 28). Here, the admittedly modest, but no less significant and necessary, miracle is that the Walgreens protest, although cut short and seemingly stricken of its political meaning, may become a type of contagion for future instances of radical thought and action on the island. Thus, while one could easily dismiss the event as a failure—a brief, isolated and minuscule stand taken against state and corporate entities that had no discernible impact and was covered by a single local media outlet—it might be worthwhile to consider the protest as significant for the future of emancipatory politics in Puerto Rico and elsewhere, insomuch as the actor's stated vision and plan for protesting was revolutionary.[6]

Island Intellectuals and the Political Imagination

As regards the possibility of revolution in Puerto Rico, local intellectuals seem to have relinquished any hope of bringing about radical political change through the difficult relating of theoretical and activist work.

Their motto seems to be that all our intellectual activity is a quest for miracles, or, more precisely, for proving miracles false or impossible. Historian Carlos Pabón Ortega, for example, has even gone so far as to argue that "today what [intellectual activity] is about is interpreting the world, not transforming it" (2014, 143). Furthermore, at present, the most ardent desire of a significant sector of the island's "intellectual class" is to distance themselves as much as possible from both political party lines and grassroots movements. Legal scholar Érika Fontánez Torres, for example, reflecting on the short-lived community-based effort named Action of the People, which sought to oppose a series of austerity measures introduced by the government in 2015, posited that the most urgent political task at the time was not mobilizing under the moniker of the people, but rather questioning and problematizing what "the people" could possible mean (Fontánez Torres 2015). Her comments find resonance in a series of op-ed pieces and short articles written by academics over the past five years that seem to take more exception to the difficulties, challenges and affronts experienced by the local intellectual class than to the broader spectrum of state-sponsored precarity. As such, one finds searing articles denouncing the perils (for academics) of anti-intellectualism on the island, the supposedly innate exclusionary character of the mass of Puerto Rican people, and the failings of the University of Puerto Rico faculty to defend their own interests in tumultuous times (Quintero Herencia and Pabón Ortega 2015; Rodríguez-Casellas 2013; Pabón Ortega 2011). This is troubling for at least three reasons. First, it showcases an almost total absence of reflexive critique on the part of the "intellectual class" (composed mostly of tenured male professors of the University of Puerto Rico system), who, when compared to the majority of the population, enjoy considerable time, space and independence to think deeply, seriously and freely about anything. Second, these writings serve as prima facie evidence of a severe disconnect between what passes for "radical thought" in university circles and the day-to-day events, both major and minor, that highlight many islanders' attempts to resist, refuse and/or elude official state policy, and that, for the most part, are not receiving the critical and creative attention academics and cultural critics could offer, which could be translated into future modes of dissent. Lastly, the insistence on the existence of such a thing as an "intellectual class" and the academics' passionate defense and lobbying for it to be recognized, respected and valued, is nothing less than a seemingly righteous attempt at further promoting social hierarchies in a country besieged by severe socioeconomic inequality.

The end result is an inaccessible and unengaged class of academics that, when actually broaching matters separate from their particular set of group interests, more often than not offer the reasons why an individual or collective act of dissent will not in any way conquer the minds and hearts of the population, much less alter the balance of power in Puerto Rico or elsewhere. One could even go so far as to say that an ideological premium is placed on teachings and writings that ultimately serve to chill any speech acts that allegedly "make too much" out of singular acts of dissent, such as a woman protesting at a Walgreens construction site with her two young children. The underlying logic is that harboring hope within the current political context in Puerto Rico is not the intelligent choice to make when out of nowhere a random person brilliantly and/or brutally refuses to accept their everyday reality on any given day. It would thus seem that the headline of these intellectuals' political imagination would read: "Walgreens Will Forever Strike Back and Win, So Why Bother at All?"

Fortunately for us, as Jacques Rancière points out, "Frustrated hope does not make reality any more than disowning hope makes thought" (2014, 24). Therefore, while it might be too farfetched to imagine that by simply parking a van in the middle of a construction site, Walgreens's expansion on the island would be slowed down; or that through a sustained occupation of that site, the protestor would have succeeded in "raising awareness" as to the urgent need for islanders to support their local economy; or that, inspired

by her, other people (mothers, fathers, children) would trespass on the property of the multiple American corporations currently operating or establishing themselves on the island, bringing such activity to a screeching halt; or that, in the future, political protests would be a critical part of children's upbringing on the island, one would have to admit—with Badiou—that "Mother Invades Walgreens Land in Protest of Monopoly" is not the only thing that can be said about what transpired there on that day. And this simple, modest admission has revolutionary implications in the contemporary Puerto Rican context.

In that vein, here are some possible headlines from online newspapers of an alternative political imagination: "Mother and Children Flip the Script on the Manner in Which Protests Are Conceptualized and Practiced on the Island"; "Woman and Her Two Young Children Invade Walgreens Land with Extreme Vulnerability and Vision, Plant a Tree"; or simply, "Take That, Walgreens." But take what, exactly?

Isolated, seemingly random and innocuous acts of dissent have taken place in Puerto Rico over the past couple of years.[7] The protagonists of some of these events have acted alone in a variety of settings—government-sponsored celebrations, hospital waiting rooms, Twitter—moved by perhaps purely individual concerns and without a clear-cut, properly political agenda. The context of and reactions to their actions, however, have shed light on patterns of prejudice and exclusion by race, gender and class that run rampant on the island. Other acts—such as those of an ex-convict who every three months walks alone for two days from the municipality of Morovis to the Capitol building in San Juan on behalf of prisoners' rights—stand in contrast to the dominant forms that protests (and political activism in general) have taken in Puerto Rico to this day. I would argue that these events, taken together, form a quantum of disparate, unorganized opposition that reflects the precariousness of contemporary life in Puerto Rico and how people, in their everyday existence, are attempting to denounce it.

Precarity and Protest

Walgreens's expansion in Puerto Rico is part and parcel of a historically oppressive economic model that through tax incentives and the like continues to foster and depend almost exclusively on foreign corporate investment in the island, offering little if any real chance of building a sustainable local economy. On the contrary, while the government supposedly pushes for the development of small and medium-sized independent businesses, the overwhelming majority of jobs available in the private sector—after five straight years of layoffs and cutbacks in public-sector jobs—are temporary positions in retail and construction, which offer no decent wages or benefits. The only alternatives to these positions are jobs in the informal sector (domestic work, care work), which ensnare workers in even greater insecurity. Meanwhile, universities continue to promote short, fast-track technical programs that train healthcare professionals and medical technicians for jobs somewhere outside of Puerto Rico. In fact, at present, Puerto Rico is in the midst of what has been officially termed its second great mass migration, which features a "flight of talents"—young, educated and highly skilled professionals—from the island to the US and elsewhere. The official story is that our best and brightest migrate at a rate of 200 per day on account of poor quality of life on an island besieged by crime, substandard governmental services, and political and economic instability. Consequently, since 2012, newspaper reports have pointed to the continued aging and impoverishment of the population and the corresponding precariousness of its present and future living conditions. Soon, as the story goes, the island will be the exclusive province of the old and the poor, who in our collective political imagination have neither the resources nor the agency to "steer the economy in the right direction." In the meantime, 45% of the population live under the poverty line, with those most affected being women and children.[8]

In spite of all this, there has yet to arise in Puerto Rico an organized movement embodying a sense and outrage about precarity as a shared condition. Rather, workers' unions continue to strike due to the government's failure to comply with or renegotiate existing collective bargaining agreements—a discourse that sounds extremely self-centered and selfish to many. Similarly, the primary oppositional, and outwardly leftist, progressive political party, which made its debut in the 2012 elections, adopted the curious moniker of Partido del Pueblo Trabajador (Working People's Party), failing to capture the lived reality of the overwhelming number of under- and unemployed islanders. The only exception to this pattern was the University of Puerto Rico student strike of 2010–11, which garnered enormous support among large cross-sectors of the population and was explicitly articulated as a movement bent on assuaging social inequalities through a political, financial and ideological investment in the public university system. However, much of this movement's discourse and appeal was co-opted by the present government, which not only employed the strikers' rhetoric during its successful campaign run in 2012 but also employed several of the movement's leading voices as advisors to the governor and in other high-profile positions. These appointments were meant to symbolize the administration's stated desire to establish a "government of consensus" that was allegedly welcoming of a diversity of beliefs and proposals from across the political spectrum. Alas, the consensus on all matters political appears to have been decided beforehand. Therefore, the calls made to the citizenry have not been invitations to dialogue but rather to compliance. And insomuch as no large-scale oppositional movement has developed, one could say that people have in fact complied.

However, as Lorey (2010) argues, "In insecure, flexibilized, and discontinuous working and living conditions, subjectifications arise that do not wholly correspond to a neoliberal logic of exploitation, which also resist and refuse." The Walgreens protest, and other similar events mentioned in the previous section, are instances of a particular subjectification, which has sporadically shown its face on the island and which—because it arises out of the set of experiences of hardship common to so many whose life has become precarious on account of the economic crisis and the manner in which the government has tended to it—has real possibilities of provoking empathy and solidarity among different social sectors. As Lorey points out, "the precarious have no common identity, only common experiences." Thus, one does not have to envision this type of protestor as a representative or spokesperson for a particular cause. On the contrary, the possibility arises of viewing, for example, the woman (any woman, everywoman) who parked her van in the middle of that construction site, scribbled some messages on it, and planted a tree, as somehow demonstrating the type of action that the lived conditions of millions on the island may very well demand, in fact, if they are to be changed. Because while Pasquinucci's act might be ridiculous to some—in its curious mixture of enthusiasm and futility—it is also quite easy to replicate and improve upon by anybody (everybody) with access to markers, poster boards and a small tree. And, of course, an idea. This, I think, multiplies the possibilities of staging future and frequent acts of dissent, along with the corresponding interruptions to daily life, during regular business hours. And while each individual act on its own may prove to not be enough to spark a prairie fire, their repeated occurrence would certainly make the local sociopolitical climate a highly combustible one.

It is this combustible climate that those on the left—academics, activists, artists, community organizers, and the like—must be able to identify and take advantage of in order to start mobilizing around a new radical subject in Puerto Rico, both free of the trappings of identity politics (workers, governmental employees, pro-independence groups, etc.) and, ideally, disinclined to engage in so-called "oppression Olympics." As Lorey (2010) notes:

> If precarization has become a governmental instrument of normalization surpassing specific groups and classes, then social and political battles themselves should not assume differential separations and hierarchies. Rather, those who wage such battles should look specifically for what they have in common in the midst of normalization: a desire to make use of the productivity of precarious living and working conditions to change these modes of governing, a means of working together to refuse and elude them.

To Lorey's insightful analysis, and in the spirit of generating discussion and debate directed towards making such coalition building possible, one could add Rancière's thoughts regarding the beginning of the political. As he writes, "The political—in the strong sense of word—is the capacity of anyone to concern himself [*sic*] with shared affairs. It begins with the capacity to put away one's ordinary language and small sufferings, and to appropriate the language and suffering of others. It begins with fiction" (2014, 50).

Now, while Rancière's words are certainly inspiring, there is something to be said about the specificity of the oppression to which women in Puerto Rico, for example, are subjected to, which may very well make it difficult for others to relate to them and appropriate their language, so to speak. This specificity requires—paraphrasing poet Eileen Myles—for us all to be equal in the complexity of our gaze (Myles 2012, 56). Especially when it comes to gender violence. I specifically have in mind the social construction of danger as a gendered attribute that seems to shift, change and assume an impressive array of forms that serve to constrain women's agency, quality of life, and chances of survival. As discussed, the Walgreens protest evidences how a political actor was turned into a negligent mother by way of police action and the media's nefarious implementation of scripts of danger into the event as originally planned and executed by Pasquinucci. As a result, an act of civil disobedience was turned, officially, into a possible case of child abuse. This is no coincidence, for in the Puerto Rican context women's physical and discursive movements must be quick, yet calculated and cautious, as women must avoid "becoming a danger" to themselves and/or their loved ones.

Gender, Motherhood and Danger

In February 2012, a 58-year-old man shot and killed his eight-year-old son as the boy slept (Colón Dávila 2012). Then he shot himself. His wife, a police officer in training, had just fled the house with the couple's older son to look for help. She had been beaten by her husband and, according to the statement she gave to authorities, had left the youngest child sleeping, thinking that no harm would come to him. After the story broke, commentary and discussion on the incident centered around the mother's apparent lack of sense demonstrated by 1) leaving the young boy in the house, and 2) being involved in an abusive relationship to begin with. Seeing as the aggressor was no longer around to be tried and punished, the woman was left to take the blame for the child's death, the logic being that she, as a woman, should have known the danger inherent in entering and ultimately fostering an abusive relationship. Also, she should have recognized the risk she took in choosing to leave the house without her youngest child. Thus the danger women in Puerto Rico are made vulnerable to—by living in a patriarchal society where domestic violence runs rampant—is a condition that they are ultimately held as most (if not solely) responsible for, insomuch as they must measure their day-to-day actions always taking into account the possibility of harm.

This same discussion was replayed in traditional media outlets and social media platforms in December 2014, when two women were sexually assaulted and killed on a forest path close to their home, where they regularly exercised in the mornings (Colón Dávila 2014). As of this writing, no one has been charged with the crime. What was identified immediately by seemingly everybody who chimed in on the public

discussion—from police officers, neighbors, and family members to Facebook users, talk-show hosts, and newspaper analysts—was the dangerousness of the area in which the two women chose to walk every day. Thus, reporters on the scene narrated a cautionary tale of female foolishness while cameras focused on the solitary, rural path where dead bodies and stolen cars had been found before, implying that the event, while tragic, could have easily been avoided if the two women simply had more sense.

The knowledge to be surmised from these two events and the Walgreens protest is as follows: Women cannot work out alone, together—too dangerous. Cannot flee from certain physical danger if it means leaving their children behind—too irresponsible. And they cannot bring their children to a protest—so obviously dangerous and irresponsible that it is tantamount to child abuse. As Butler writes:

> Indeed, vulnerability cannot be understood restrictively as an affect restricted to a contingent situation, nor can it be understood as a subjective disposition. As a condition that is co-extensive with human life, understood as the invariably social life of the human animal, and as bound to the problem of precarity, vulnerability is the name for a certain way of opening onto the world. In this way, vulnerability not only designates a relation to the world, but asserts our very existence as a relational one. To say that any of us are vulnerable beings is thus to establish our radical dependency not only on others, but on a sustaining and sustainable world. This has implications for understanding who we are as emotionally and sexually passionate beings, as bound up with others from the start, but also as beings who seek to persist, and whose persistence can be imperilled or sustained depending on whether social, economic and political structures support us, or not. (2013, 184–85)

Following Butler, one could say that the way in which women in this part of the world "open up to the world" is heartbreaking due to the loneliness inherent in such an opening, as the world has apparently closed them off, making them vulnerable to an array of exceedingly cruel contradictions. First, they, as criminals of conscience, will not even receive the recognition of being arrested for their beliefs; second, while they can and are in fact routinely killed as innocents, they are unable to die guilt free; and third, if they are to survive the death of their loved ones, stricken ever so violently from them, they will not be allowed to mourn them without accepting responsibility for deaths in which they had no part. What connects the four women involved in the events discussed here is the overwhelming social desire to punish not the decision to protest or the decision to work out or the decision to flee, but, rather, to punish the women's demonstrated refusal to live their life according to a societal understanding of the danger inherent in being a woman in Puerto Rico. In this sense, their actions are interpreted to mean a falling out with the larger community—discrete acts of treason committed by those who do not wish to belong any longer. They are those who seem more willing to embrace the precarity of their condition in its full consequence, rather than comply with the societal expectations that have been set in place for them to survive, with greater or lesser success, the dangerous conditions society itself continues to reproduce.

As Lorey writes, "The conditions that enable life are, at the same time, exactly those that make it precarious. For this reason, as Butler argues, there must be a focus on the political decisions and social practices under which some lives are protected and others not" (2010). A question thus arises: How does feminist, revolutionary thought engage protection? Or, in Rancière's terms, how are we to craft a fiction where vulnerability and invulnerability cease to be gendered attributes?

From my perspective, feminist organizations in Puerto Rico have not been able to articulate such a position, insomuch as events like the Walgreens protest seem to go unnoticed by them. Feminist discursive practices on the island are for the most part rights-centered, which is not surprising considering that the preeminent feminist groups are either headed by lawyers or lawyers make up a considerable portion of the

membership. Furthermore, there is a noticeable trend among feminist activists to either work closely with governmental entities—serving on advisory boards, running for political office, and/or holding positions in the public sector—which limits the horizon of feminist political action to that which can be attained through formal, legal means. As such, issues like abortion, gender violence, hate speech, and the use of stereotypes in commercial media are (as they should be) usual and urgent topics. However, other subjects and issues tend to fall by the wayside, in particular if the issues and subjects involved are somehow clad in illegality.

Feminist scholar Ariadna Godreau Aubert (2014, 2015a, 2015b) has shed light on these issues and subjects in her writings on sex workers, female prisoners, the penal code, and the police. Her work, grounded in the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in women's lives, portrays the bodies and selves of women on the island as riddled by ideological and sociopolitical trappings of precarity and offers a cartography of the complicity of state, corporate and individual actors in holding women in "their place." Godreau Aubert argues:

> If precarity is the experience of "those who proper place is non-being," within a colonial reality, it also embodies the anxieties fostered by a complex relationship between non-being for Other (dependence) and being misplaced (illegibleness). In the same way that the Island politics are determined by the subordinate relationship with the US, colonialism denies women's autonomy, limiting their readings to their relationship with patriarchal expectations. Women become misplaced or illegible when public policies declare them unreadable and unworthy of participation. Occupation positions women in marginal settings, prescribing the must's and ought-to's of the feminine while forewarning against deviance. (2015b, 2–3)

It is possible that one of the effects of women becoming misplaced within a context of colonial and patriarchal domination is that certain groups of women also become misplaced and/or unnoticed by the very organizations set up to advocate for them. On this point, Godreau Aubert offers a scathing critique of what she terms are Pyrrhic victories in the feminist struggle on the island. According to her, too much energy is directed at (and wasted on) voicing claims toward government officials for the step-by-step inclusion of a gender-conscious agenda in schooling, policing, etc. Too often, according to her, such incursions have led to the adoption of less than adequate provisions and protections for women, which nonetheless must be celebrated by all, no matter how insufficient they may be, because they required significant time and effort. What is celebrated, then, is the manner in which the horizon of feminist political action closes in on us with every seemingly good-faith governmental commitment to meet with, hear out and engage activists. Organizations celebrate the occasion of being granted an audience with reluctant interlocutors, as opposed to seeking out and engaging other publics with the aim of embracing and following the possible acts of failed and/or ludicrous and/or futile revolution that are taking place outside of their membership, under no banner. The end result is that the possible political brilliance of such acts is missed and its authors—like Pasquinucci—are, in a sense, left alone.

So how might feminist, revolutionary thought engage protection? With hope. With the vulnerability and vision of that lone female protestor, whose singular act of dissent illustrates that in the realm of the political, desire, will and optimism—however uncalculated the risk, however frustrated the goals—trump objective living conditions time and again. We must, in our most critical and creative thought exercises, strive to seek out and identify these events, and offer their protagonists, in solidarity, the protection of the countless things we could and will in fact continue to say about their actions: "Take that, Walgreens!" "That," after all, is whatever we choose to make of it, with brilliance and/or brutality.

Postscript: A New Heroic Figure

In Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Slavoj Žižek's correspondence, initiated by her in January of 2013 and compiled in *Comradely Greetings* (2014), the then incarcerated political activist and the famed philosopher exchanged views on revolutionary politics. But in actuality, theirs is a conversation on precarity and its possibilities. Žižek's second letter starts off as follows: "Dear Nadezhda, I sincerely hope that you've been able to organize your life in prison around small rituals to make your stay there at least tolerable, and that you have some time to read. Here are my thoughts on your predicament" (Tolokonnikova and Žižek 2014, 33). He goes on to wax poetic on the role of radicals in our societies. Tolokonnikova responds to and comments on Žižek's ideas and theoretical insights. The philosopher, happy and relieved at knowing that his letter arrived at its intended destination, writes back, and after going on a bit about "radical and emancipatory politics," admits the following:

> But, my dear Nadya, I feel a certain sense of guilt in writing these lines: who am I to explode in such narcissistic theoretical outbursts when you, as a concrete individual, are exposed to very real empirical deprivations. So please, if you can and want to, do let me know about your situation in the prison: about the daily rhythm, about (maybe) the small private rituals which make it easier to survive.... I have always thought that true heroism lies in these apparently small ways of organizing one's life so as to survive in crazy times without losing one's dignity. (51–52)

To this, Tolonnikova responds: "Don't waste your time worrying about giving in to theoretical fabrications while I supposedly suffer 'empirical deprivations.' There's value to me in these inviolable limits, in my being tested this way.... I'm finding inspiration in here, ways of evolving. Not because but in spite of the system. Your thoughts and anecdotes are a help to me as I negotiate this conundrum. I'm glad we're in touch" (55–56). Žižek then recognizes his mistake and in his following letter apologizes: "Let me begin by confessing that I felt deeply ashamed after reading your reply ... my expression of sympathy with your plight basically meant, 'I have the privilege of doing real theory and teaching you about it while you are basically good for reporting on your experiences of hardship'" (57–58). He proceeds to call her an equal partner in the dialogue.

One would be tempted to say that up to this point—until Žižek's apology and recognition of his interlocutor as his equal—Tolokonnikova was alone in their dialogue due to the philosopher's assumption that her ability and desire to theorize were also taken from her, along with her freedom. This assumption, in actuality, represents that something extra that could be and was in fact taken away from the jailed female protestor, who had to explicitly demand that Žižek stop wasting his time excusing himself for sharing his thoughts because, ultimately, he was wasting *hers*. That something extra in this case was a definite sense of a shared struggle, within precarity, which at that particular juncture found the activist jailed and the philosopher on the outside, but which, from Tolokonnikova's perspective, could at any point in the future find her on the outside and the philosopher behind bars. Žižek failed to see this insomuch as he failed to truly see her. There is a certain lack of complexity in his gaze, which makes them truly unequal and which helps us trace and identify Tolokonnikova's heroism. You see, Žižek was wrong: True heroism, at least in this case, does not reside in the activist's "small rituals" that help her organize her life behind bars. Rather, the heroism that this woman (any woman, everywoman) exhibited in the exchange is in remaining faithful to changing the world while in the world itself. And the *world itself* at that time in her life was not only made up of time in prison but of the time wasted by those contacting her from the outside, who failed to consider her situation in all its complexity. For Žižek, Tolonnikova's precarity, the real empirical deprivations that

she was subjected to as a prisoner, disqualified her from the "privilege" of engaging in theoretical thought. In this respect, she is much like the woman who invaded that Walgreens construction site, whose precarity, the real empirical deprivations she was subjected to as a young mother in contemporary Puerto Rico, disqualified her from the "privilege" of being recognized as a legitimate political actor. In a way, the two women share the same struggle. Heroes often do.

Notes

1. There are more than a hundred Walgreens pharmacies currently operating in Puerto Rico. For more information on the matter, see Cintrón Arbasetti 2014.

2. All translations from Spanish are my own.

3. On April 10, 2014, for example, the island's leading newspaper, *El Nuevo Día,* dedicated its editorial to the mishandling of sexual assault cases by Puerto Rico's Police Department (http://www.elnuevodia.com/editorial-impuneel-malmanejodeloscasosdeviolacion-1749345.html).

4. Under the present administration, parents are under direct threat of a fine if they do not show up on the scheduled day to pick up their children's grade reports in public schools. Department of the Family personnel are on site during Black Friday sales to make sure no young children are present. Both parents and children are submitted to searches of their persons with hand-held security wands in order to gain entrance to government-sponsored Christmas celebrations and gift giveaways.

5. An exception to this could be the activist group Madres contra la Guerra (Mothers against the War). However, one could argue that in their case "mother" is the chosen speaking position and metaphor for the articulation of the group's opposition to military campaigns—something along the lines of "our children's lives will not continue to be lost to war"—whereas in the Walgreens protest, "mother" is not the moniker chosen by the protester but a label imposed by the media and, more importantly, the reading that is made of the protestor by the police.

6. My use of the term "revolutionary" aligns with James Penney's definition: "By revolutionary I mean to describe a politics based on two primary assumptions: First, that thoroughgoing social change is not only possible but that its possibility is signaled by the very conservative doctrine that insists on its impossibility; and second, that the possibility of this change isn't discernible from within the logic of the social situation in which this change is speculatively, counterintuitively imagined" (2013, 176).

7. For a discussion on a slew of sporadic, haphazard incidents of protest that have served to pinpoint the workings and consequences of systems of exclusion based on race, gender and class in Puerto Rico, see Rebollo Gil 2014.

8. For a summary and analysis on poverty in contemporary Puerto Rico, see Rivera 2013.

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Creating Consciousness, Creating a Legend: A Conversation with Virginia Espino, Historian and Producer of No Más Bebés (2015)

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Recommended Citation

Creating Consciousness, Creating a Legend: A Conversation with Virginia Espino, Historian and Producer of *No Más Bebés* (2015)

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Virginia Espino

"Inside I feel pain, remembering," says Carolina "Maria" Hurtado, in Spanish. Consuelo Hermosillo echoes her in English, "It's like when you bury somebody, you're always going to carry it in your head." Whether they speak in Spanish or English, the pain and anger felt by these Mexicanas, who were coercively sterilized in the Los Angeles County–University of Southern California Medical Center in the late 1960s and early 1970s, is palpable. While traumatized, they were not, however, silenced by their pain and spoke up with courage against this injustice as part of a group of ten plaintiffs in the 1978 *Madrigal v. Quilligan* case, a federal class-action lawsuit filed against E. J. Quilligan, MD, and other hospital obstetricians. The voices of Dolores Madrigal, the lead plaintiff, and other Latina women who participated in the lawsuit are at the center of a recent documentary, *No Más Bebés* (*No More Babies*) (2015) by Virginia Espino and Renee Tajima-Peña. Told in a moving manner, interspersed with interviews and a variety of archival material, the documentary shows these women's little-known story that resonates with intersectionality across issues—of gender, race, immigration, class, and reproductive choice—of enduring and urgent relevance.

Espino and Tajima-Peña have been friends for more than a decade; their mutual interests and their children coincidentally brought them together. Espino, who calls herself a "daughter of California," grew up in her hometown of Los Angeles. She is a historian by training (taught by Vicki L. Ruiz) and earned her PhD in American History from Arizona State University, where she specialized in Latina and Latino history, as well as public history. From 2008 until recently, she worked as an oral historian for the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Oral History Research. She is now dedicated full time to Moon Canyon Films, the company she and Tajima-Peña created to coproduce *No Más Bebés*. While *No Más Bébes* is Espino's first film, Tajima-Peña has been making films since the 1980s. A professor, writer, filmmaker, and Asian American activist, Tajima-Peña's corpus revolves around issues of race, immigration, injustice, and the legal system. Currently a professor at UCLA, Tajima-Peña is an Academy Award-winning filmmaker and a Guggenheim Fellow (2011) who, in addition to her best-known work, *Who Killed Vincent*

Chin? (1987), has made many other films, among them *Calavera Highway* (2008), *Skate Manzanar* (2001), *Labor Women* (2002), and *My America... Or Honk If You Love Buddha* (1997). She is currently at work on an interactive historical documentary and video-game-based learning project on the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans, *Building History 3.0.*

At the fortieth anniversary of the filing of the *Madrigal v. Quilligan* court case, Tajima-Peña and Espino reassemble and reconstruct the story to remind viewers of a tragic, shocking, and buried episode in our nation's past and history. The film interviews both the women who were sterilized under duress and the doctors who worked in the hospital. It also focuses on another central figure, one of the attorneys who represented these women, Antonia Hernández, then a recent graduate of the UCLA law school; she, along with Anna NietoGomez, another member of the Chicana feminist organization *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional*, offered legal assistance to the women.[1] In the trial, they argued that under *Roe v. Wade* (1973) a woman's right to bear a child was constitutionally protected just as much as her right to abortion. As the film's director writes, the documentary "attempts to navigate the gulf between accountability, as it is legally defined, and justice—the muddy waters through which policy, gender, race, and ethics travel from the public sphere to the maternity floor and which structure an intimate moment of a woman's life: birth" (Tajima-Peña 2013).

The documentary situates this episode within a broad historical and social milieu, and illuminates how the contexts of Chicano nationalism and white mainstream feminism came to bear on the events. It also directs our attention to how reproduction was racialized by the eugenics and anti-immigration movements in California. It is not surprising, then, to see how, within this environment, the federal government sponsored and supported population-control measures and how family planning programs were abused, leaving racial minority, immigrant, and poor white women most vulnerable. Thus, while the film focuses on Latina women, their story echoes the experiences of Puerto Rican, African American, and Native American women who have all been subjected to sterilization abuse.

Emotionally powerful and aesthetically savvy, the documentary tells a story of the politics of reproductive control, of reproductive rights and justice, of tragedy and survival. It is a salute to the courage of the "Madrigal 10": Guadalupe Acosta, Estella Benavides, Maria Figueroa, Rebecca Figueroa, Maria Hurtado, Consuelo Hermosillo, Georgina Hernandez, Dolores Madrigal, Helena Orozco, and Jovita Rivera.

In the following interview, Virginia Espino, historian and producer of the film, speaks about her research on this marginalized episode in history, the challenges and rewards of collaboration, intersectionality, and the story's importance for Chicana history and reproductive justice.

Hidden Histories and the Making of a Film

Anupama Arora, Laura Muñoz, and Sandrine Sanos (*JFS*): We wanted for you to talk a little bit about how you came to the topic of your film, why it became so important, and if there were any difficulties when you were doing the writing, and during the filming as well.

Virginia Espino (VE): I learned about this history through Dr. Vicki Ruiz in one of her courses; she was my graduate school mentor, and one of the things she tries to do in her classes is to bring out these histories, these unknown histories, these untold histories, these histories that have been what she calls "hidden in the shadows." She tries to bring them out of obscurity, so in her lectures she talks about things that generally haven't been discussed.

At that time, in the mid 1990s, it was primarily Chicano historiography. There weren't a lot of books written about Chicana feminism. Maylei Blackwell's *¡Chicana Power!* only came out in 2013.[2] Vicki mentioned the

history [of sterilization] in a class, and she mentioned it from the perspective of the activism, the fact that there was a lawsuit. She didn't talk about it in terms of racism only, but how these women fought back during the Chicano movement, these Chicana activists. I [wound up] in the neighborhood I grew up in, very close to my home, like ten minutes away. But not only that, it was part of my whole surroundings because of the county hospital towers. I don't know if you've been to Los Angeles, but if you've ever driven on the 5 freeway or the 10 freeway, you see the hospital looming large across that part of LA. If you stay primarily on the West Side, you're never going to see it. So it was like a fixture, in my childhood and my youth, and to hear that these sterilizations were taking place at the time when I was growing up, in the 1970s, and I never learned about it, never heard about it, never read about it, I was shocked. I was angry.

But at the same time, that is why I was in graduate school and I wanted to do my PhD in history, to learn about these stories, to uncover these stories. So I made it my project, to write my first paper. I think I wrote my very first paper on this issue and Vicki published that later on in *Las Obreras* journal through UCLA (Espino 2002). So it started there, and became a bigger project with my dissertation. I wanted to tie it into questions and issues of population control. [I looked at] Thomas Malthus and the principle of overpopulation [that] started with him. Some of the ideas that he talks about in regards to Europe and the peasant class, you could see some parallels in the discussions of overpopulation in the 1970s, and some of the ideas that Paul Ehrlich talks about go back to Malthus and Mathusianism; so that's what I looked at in my dissertation.[3] But Vicki is very much interested in how we can write history for the public good, such as public history, museum studies, etc. When we started, she was teaching out of Claremont Graduate School. And that's where I first learned about the history of sterilization abuse in LA. But she took a position at Arizona State University, and I followed her out there. So, that year that I was there at Arizona, I got a full potpourri of the different ways history can be used, because they have a pretty strong public history program there: oral history, museum studies, museum collecting. She encouraged me to apply to a fantastic summer internship where you can apply your historical knowledge to a larger, broader audience.

Documentary film wasn't part of my education, but I knew it was a good way to bring history alive; and just by coincidence, around the time that I was working on my dissertation, I met Renee [Tajima-Peña]. We have a mutual friend here in Los Angeles who thought we would be great friends because of our similar interests and also the fact that we both had kids that were about a year old at the time. She was a new mom; and I had my second child. We would have play dates and talk about our work and our research, and ideas about how we wanted to apply the information we were gathering. I think she was working on a project called *The New Americans* for PBS.[4] She thought this would make an amazing film, to document this history of sterilization abuse—especially because we're both from Los Angeles, both women of color, and we were both new moms. And it was something we both found so outrageous and so appalling. Also, the idea of allowing people to tell their own stories, that's very important to both of us. Instead of me theorizing about how they could feel based on newspapers and court records, I really wanted to hear their own words. I wasn't able to find them when I was writing my dissertation, but we really knew we had to do [this] for the film, to find the plaintiffs and get them, hopefully, to talk to us.

JFS: And how difficult was it to find them and convince them to speak on camera, which is a whole different dimension? And to have them revisit the story as well?

VE: Well, it's not something that you would do for a book or a dissertation; you would not go to a private investigator and pay them to find people. People would consider that unethical and just crossing the line as far as what you do for your research! But for a documentary film, you have a different set of ethics. The other strange coincidence is that Renee and I both have a mutual friend who is a private investigator; her name

is Angelica Garza and usually she works with lawyers, in trying to find information for the defendants and lawyers. And she found a couple of the people. She found Dolores Madrigal first. My husband is a journalist; he was a journalist for the *Los Angeles Times* for many years. And he wasn't able to find any of the women just by their name and by their birthdate through his databases; that's when we decided to take it to the next level.

Although, I should add, before we decided to consult a private investigator, I had some information about Dolores Madrigal, who was the lead plaintiff in the case. I was able to find her previous residence, and I was able to find people who knew her and they gave me a trail, where she might have gone after she left that residence. They gave me a trail of the churches she attended and some of the places where she lived. So we were able to find people who knew her, but she had left the state. And that's when we decided to consult the next level of researcher, that is, a private investigator. And that's when we found her.

JFS: Was the PI collaborating with you, working for free, doing this pro bono? Did the investigator have a feminist investment in this?

VE: The thing is that when you're an intellectual woman of color, interested in these kinds of stories, you have a small community of people. And so we all kind of know each other. Angelica was actually somebody we would hang out together with, we would end up at the same political events, we shared the same political views, and I think she calls herself a feminist. But we weren't necessarily just focusing on women's issues, because we have an intersectional approach in how we address our politics. I think I met her at a labor strike, I can't remember, but she's definitely a politically minded person and was on board right away to help us find these women.

Also, whenever Renee could pay somebody, she would. She got a grant through the California Council for the Humanities, so that was our seed money. It's a wonderful program in California that allows for these kinds of storytelling. After that, we won a grant through Independent Television Service (ITVS) and PBS to continue the project. So everybody that we deal with is usually somebody who is sympathetic to the issues that are being addressed and has a strong sense of social justice and purpose. The next person that we contacted to help us find people, her name is Clara Solis. She's a mom where my kids went to school, and that's how I met her. She's also a PI and she's very good friends with Angelica. She's also part of the same community: she worked for UFW [United Farm Workers], worked for political campaigns here in Los Angeles.[5] We all kind of knew each other somehow. Six degrees of separation! I think that everybody feels so strongly when you grow up in LA—Angelica is from LA, Clara's from LA, I'm from LA, Renee's from LA—that our histories never get told on that broad, big scale of a PBS broadcast. Usually, it's not even mentioned in certain circles—unless it's the Brown Berets, that's a narrative you get to hear a lot about, but not reproductive justice and how we were involved in that struggle.[6]

JFS: Would you say that you see your work as contributing to building an archive of women of color?

VE: Absolutely. We donated some of our records so far to the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.[7] The CSRC has one of two archives on sterilization in Los Angeles and their focus is on what the professor Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez donated.[8] He was the doctor and anthropologist who testified on behalf of the plaintiffs. He donated all of his records to the CSRC, and we complemented that with our records; and we hope to have a digital archive with all of these items that we collected. Many of the interviews didn't make it into the film, and we hope to make them available as well. So a component of the documentary film project is that we hope to have a digital archive of the resources, so the researchers can move the research forward and find new information, ask new questions, take it to different angles, maybe from the legal angle, from the medical perspective. I think there's a lot of ways you can look at this issue and further the research.

Speaking to the Plaintiffs, Women Speaking

JFS: And was it difficult once you found the women and met them, to convince them to speak?

VE: It was hard. At first, they were willing and then they got cold feet. Well, not all of them. Certainly Dolores Madrigal: She got cold feet after we planned our trip to go out to see her, and we were able to continue with our plan, and our trip, and our interview because her son was a very strong advocate for participating. He did not know she had been involved in this lawsuit and he thought it would be a good idea for her to talk to us. So it was really because of him that we were allowed to follow through with the interview. This [was] before I actually met her.

When I met her, the bond was instantaneous because she reminded me of someone I knew in my family, like an aunt or a grandma—and also, someone who had so much knowledge that isn't quantifiable. She doesn't have a degree, but she had all of this healing knowledge, all this folk wisdom, and so it was a beautiful meeting. And I'm still very close with her. She calls me regularly, she tells me to pray for her, she says she's praying for me because I have my own problems [laughter], and that's I think another thing that made it easy for her to open up to me because my life is not perfect. I was very honest about my own struggles in my life, about raising my kids, and even though I have an education, and I have more economic privilege, you don't get off scot-free. So we share things about our own struggle: being moms, being daughters—well, she hasn't been a daughter for a while—but my mother had cancer, and Dolores Madrigal was somebody that I would go to because she was so connected to the Catholic Church and my mom's very Catholic. So she helped me a lot through that, ironically enough.

But she didn't want to interview again. We just brought up the painful memories, and she wasn't comfortable having them come to the surface. She wanted to keep [them] repressed. She hasn't seen any of the screenings. She's not interested in actually seeing, viewing the film. There was a moment when she said, "Well, maybe…" and then she said, "No I can't, I don't want to go back there, I want to leave that in the past," in the closet, so to speak. So she was hard to convince, but we were able to convince her, but then she did not want to keep participating. And there was one woman who said, "I don't even want to go back there. Please don't come back here. That's not something I want to recall. I appreciate what you're doing, but I don't want to be a part of it." Some we could not even find, no matter what the PIs were able to dig up. We couldn't locate them.

And then you have people like Carolina Hurtado. Mrs. Hurtado, who plays a big part in the film, who was just so open, who had a completely different perspective. Probably because her husband was so supportive. A powerful daughter and a husband to take her lead, insofar as to what did *she* want to do, how did *she* want to handle it. So that was a very different kind of film experience, where she would let us come back every day if we wanted to. She tries to come to all of the different screenings. The problem is she lives in San Diego, and a lot of the screenings are up here in Los Angeles, so it's hard to get her up here. But they're really enjoying the whole ride. It's painful, it's a painful history, but she feels like she's been elevated to this level of respect that she didn't have before. This anonymous person who participated in this great important legal battle is not anonymous anymore, and she likes that celebrity and that fame.

JFS: That makes sense, because, in some way, it's a way of recreating a different form of community, years after this particular project. Do you think the women you interviewed see this as contributing to Chicano history in the same way as you do?

VE: Probably, once they've actually gone to some of the college screenings, because they can witness it; they can witness the student population who is in the audience and [who are] mostly Latinos. I don't know if they're Chicanos or Chicanas, but they're certainly Latinos and Latinas. So they can see that they're

educating a whole new generation about this history, and how these students are embracing this history, how professors at UC Santa Barbara, professors at California State Fullerton, professors within all these universities within the California system are filling up their auditoriums, can hear them speak and can hear their stories on the screen. So I haven't asked them that question, but I think it would be hard not to see your impact when you've got 500 kids in the audience who are captivated by what you have to say. It's pretty incredible.

And then, they ask them to take pictures with them. It's like Beyoncé! They're celebrities but not because of their dancing, their singing, but because of the role they played in this important legal battle. It's pretty awesome to witness that and to experience that. I told my mom today that I made history. I made historical figures. In the sense [that] I didn't create this narrative but, through this film process, we created these legends who are going to be part of the historiography of not just Chicano/a history but also women's studies, ethnic studies. They're going to be central figures for the next... maybe forever, part of the canon. They are part of this canon, and their stories of who they are and how they each understood it. Some people identify with Dolores Madrigal and they cry. They're so upset after the screening, they're like, "I can't believe she had to go through this horrible thing and then be abused at home." And then other people identify with Mrs. Hurtado: "Oh, she's so funny, she's so lovely, it was so wonderful to get to know her, to meet her. What a strong woman. We're fighters, we fight back." So the audience members have these different women to look to, to understand their own experiences, and possibly their own pains, or their own struggles.

Feminism, Race, Class, and Reproductive Justice

JFS: It's fascinating to hear you talk about this reception. One of the things that was striking to us (some of us not knowing that history) was how the film touches on feminism, civil rights, immigration, reproductive justice, the stories of those who are invisible. And the story of these women in LA in the 1960s and 1970s reminded us of what we know about African American women in the early twentieth century. So there's actually a longer history of these forced sterilizations, which shows us how reproductive justice is always racialized and is always a political issue. We were wondering whether you had any thoughts on whether the plaintiffs, at the time, conceived of it in those terms. Because there's a clash between the Chicano movement, which was male-dominated, and white mainstream feminism, which didn't have a place for these women; and how we could think about reproductive justice now, especially in this moment when it is under attack.

VE: Those words weren't being used back then, not even by the Chicana activists. I think African American activists or Chicana activists were not talking about reproductive justice. That came later, with their own understanding and interpretation of their role. You can hear the women in the film talking about "well, that's my own personal right," so internally, they have this notion of bodily autonomy, of my own right to determine if I want to have twenty kids, if I want to have any kids. They understood that. But they did not have that term, reproductive justice. We're not really sure how they feel about issues like abortion. Because some of them are very religious. We never talked about that whole idea—how they understood reproductive justice, as far as the ability to receive a safe and legal abortion. But they certainly understand what it means to raise your kid in a free and healthy environment, with a quality education. They were all interested in their kids' education, in their kids' role in school and healthcare. You know this was something that changed the way they viewed the healthcare system. All those things that are part of reproductive justice [and] are part of their everyday lives. Later on, terms such as intersectionality and reproductive justice would help make sense of this period, but they themselves didn't use that kind of language.

They didn't talk about feminism, although you can see how Mrs. Hurtado was a strong powerful woman who advocated for her right to sexuality. She talks about the difference between "mansa" and "mensa": that's to me a way of looking at women's power.[9] I'd never even heard these terms. I was the one who did the interviews and I probably didn't understand what she meant at the time. In terms of understanding women's behavior, it was really interesting [that] she articulated it that way. I think Consuelo Eduncio says about her granddaughter [that] she wants her to have liberty and to decide for herself if she wants to have kids, if she wants to get married, if she doesn't want to get married. What if she wants to go to college? Those kinds of things are definitely part of their ideological thinking. Whenever I bring any of the plaintiffs to a screening, they always say, "We're here because we don't want this history to repeat" and "When you go to a doctor, don't go alone, make sure you go with somebody." So they always have advice for students in the audience.

JFS: There's a way in which this history shows the limits of feminist coalitions and, speaking about intersectionality, [exposes] the very issues on which, in the 1970s, those that talked about reproductive justice would not find common ground. That's why the story is powerful because it speaks to the possibilities and limits of feminist coalitions.

VE: I think that, for me, personally, as a historian, the white feminist movement needed to grow up a bit, as far as their politics. They needed to be educated just as we, I, needed to be educated on what reproductive justice really means to those who are in that fight. To think of including teen moms, teen parents, into that discourse just wasn't something I had considered. And when I was educated on that, it just opened my eyes on how we throw away teen pregnant girls; they're tossed-away people because, in our view, they've ruined their life. You know, they're not married, they're sixteen, and they're pregnant. Instead of finding ways to help them finish school, finding ways to help them raise their kids in a healthy environment free of violence, we just toss them aside like trash or like damaged goods, so to speak. I was really interested in what other people were saying, in what the other experiences were in relation to African American and Chicana experience. Just like today, we always need to have the white majority be willing to listen to what is *our* perspective, what is *our* viewpoint. That was the case then. There were some who did understand, but they were primarily from more of the leftist organizations, more of the socialist feminist groups who were looking at the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. And that's how they interpreted these abuses. So they weren't strictly feminists, so to speak. They had a class analysis that allowed them to be more accepting of this 72-hour wait period that the white feminists from the mainstream did not want to sign off on.

The Afterlives of *No Más Bebés*, the Meanings of Collaboration

JFS: Do you see your film in light of what you just said, of also reminding people of the need to think about that, because the issue of restrictions to reproductive health is a big debate topic right now? It's happening in Texas and elsewhere in the United States. Do you see your film as contributing to hopefully more effective mobilization on the part of feminists, with that intersectional frame? Was that on your mind when you made the film or since then?

VE: We definitely wanted the film to be a tool for social justice advocates, for reproductive justice advocates, and how they use that is really dependent on the community that they're in. So, we are working very closely with the California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, and they're being asked now to screen the film, and host screenings and host discussions, because they're able to frame it within that reproductive justice dialogue that Renee and I aren't really immersed in. We are definitely advocates of it. We try to encourage

discussion of it, but we're not on the ground in the grassroots like some of these other organizations. And so, we're so happy when people from those movements want to screen our film and want to host a discussion.

Last night, I Skyped in an interview with some folks in Pennsylvania, reproductive justice advocates. They have a "herstory" celebration in February where they have different film screenings that focus on women of color and their roles in history. So for instance, [consider] the fact that this film is being shown in Pittsburgh, where I don't think there were any Latinos or Latinas in the audience or not very many; the organizer told me that it's always a black/white narrative. It's because of the geographies of where we are. So it's wonderful to be able to have this conversation with other groups.

I think that our film is doing work that we only are beginning to understand. We don't really have a strong sense of how it's being used in different settings. But the fact [is] that we have people at the grassroots or just basic community organizers, and then we have people at these prominent universities, Yale, Brown, and so on. It's pretty exciting that we have created a product that is of interest to this wide spectrum of people. It's just so rewarding.

JFS: Yes, it really is. It resonates because it's such a moving film. It's moving, it's political, it's a real story. It's all of that at the same time.

VE: Yes, I have to give credit to Renee. Renee really had the vision of just the visual elements. You know, like the idea of Mrs. Hurtado pulling out her wedding dress, or Mr. and Mrs. Hurtado dancing, or Mr. Hurtado singing. You know, it's like all of these little elements that would really get a window into who they were as people.

JFS: And that's the distinctive feature of your film, the collaboration between you and Renee, but also your friends you were talking about who were PIs. There's always been a strong tradition of collaboration in feminism. Could you say more about that, and how that really shaped the process and the film itself?

VE: I think it definitely means being an advocate for people of color in film, and I'm certainly interested in making sure that if someone is going to get a gig, that they are at least a person of color. In this case, with this film, it was important that they were Spanish-speaking and hopefully Latina, and if not, at least they should be Spanish-speaking because the women were Spanish-speaking, and I wanted to make sure that they felt comfortable with a room full of individuals who are basically strangers. Also, when you are thinking about "miking" a person, you really have to go through their clothes, and I wanted to make sure that whoever was going to do that was going to have a vibe that the women would be comfortable with. So, making sure that there were people of color on the crew was a big priority for me.

I don't know if you were following our Twitter memes that we started posting around the time of the broadcasts. We [Renee and I] got some young Latino graphic artists, undergraduates (we are meeting a lot of undergraduates on our tour). I asked them, "What was this like for you, what was this process, what did it mean to you?" And one of them said, "I never imagined that I could use my creative talent for social justice or to create consciousness."

I told Renee, "We're creating this whole world through this film of people who are understanding an ideology differently, even down to the graphic artists." I just thought that was really cool. And those memes are amazing! They're very strong. They're very powerful in their own right. I think, in some regards, they're feminist, they're activist, and they celebrate our community, our culture, and the role that everybody played in this documentary, including Dr. Rosenfeld.[10]

JFS: What has it meant for you as an academic to do the documentary as opposed to a book monograph?

VE: Well, I when I finished my dissertation, I had children. I had three kids, eleven and under, so I was not going to write. It was just going to be too difficult to carve out that time. I came back from living abroad

with my family. Renee and I began to work on the documentary right away, but I also had a full-time job. Trying to balance between the full-time job, kids, and the documentary, it just would have been impossible to write, and especially because I am just a queen of procrastination when it comes to writing. I felt that once the documentary was done, I would get back to the writing, and I still might because there is so much that is not in the film that I learned through this process. I think that the monograph is very important. It also lives a long time and becomes part of the canon, but I'm fairly certain that there are people who are seeing this story in film form that would have never picked up a book, would have never come across it. So that's rewarding in and of itself. With this documentary, what I get as far as making an impact socially is very rewarding.

JFS: So how transformative has this moment been for you?

VE: It's not. For me, it's more of an honor; it's more rewarding; it's just this feeling of incredible satisfaction when you do things that help other people. I can't even explain how good that feels. If I die tomorrow, I have really made a big impact, and I've given back to all the people who have made Chicana and Chicano history, to all the people who challenged racism so that I didn't have to experience that same kind of racism as an adult. I definitely was there during the heyday of the hate of Mexicans in the 1970s, but to see people fight back gave me back my culture in a sense.

Because when I was growing up, my parents didn't speak to me and my sisters in Spanish, and they were very much into us assimilating because they had experienced so much racism [that] they didn't want us to have to jump those same kinds of hurdles. So, no Spanish. They moved us into a neighborhood that was mostly Anglo, and so I felt like I was stripped from all of that richness of my culture, and to get it back because of the Chicano movement was... that was transformative. I feel I'm giving back to that same movement of celebrating our culture, of celebrating who we are, honoring our stories, honoring our differences, our uniqueness, and to watch other people have a transformative experience is very rewarding. I wouldn't change anything. If I never write the book, I'll be happy with this project!

Notes

1. Both Antonia Hernández and Anna NietoGomez are major figures in the Chicano movement. Hernández earned her JD at the UCLA School of Law in 1974. From 1985 to 2004, she was the president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a national nonprofit litigation and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the civil rights of the nation's Latinos through the legal system, community education, and research and policy initiatives. She is currently the president and CEO of the California Community Foundation.

NietoGomez is one of the central figures in Chicana feminism and labor activism. In 1968, she cofounded the Chicana student group Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc (The Daughters of Cuauhtémoc, the Aztec emperor) at California State University, Long Beach. Las Hijas is considered one of the earliest Chicana feminist organizations in the nation; it published two critical outlets that defined and shaped Chicana feminism, the short-lived newspaper *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc,* and the journal *Encuentro Feminil.* Las Hijas formed originally within the nationalist organizations of United Mexican American Students (UMAS) and its later iteration, still known as the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MECHA). The male leadership of UMAS and MECHA perceived women as secondary in the movement; Las Hijas responded with demands for accountability and a political education campaign that challenged the discrimination and sexism they experienced in the movement. For a full history of Las Hijas, see Blackwell 2013.

2. Maylei Blackwell's *¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, published in 2013 by the University of Texas Press, was the first monograph on Chicanas in the Chicano movement published in the United States.

3. Espino refers here to Paul R. Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969).

4. The documentary mentioned by Espino, an episode in the PBS series *The New Americans*, was *The Mexican Laborer*, directed and produced by Renee Tajima-Peña and produced by Evangeline Griego.

5. The United Farm Workers (UFW) is a labor union that represents agriculture and farm laborers in the United States. Because of its mostly Filipino and Mexican-origin membership, who united under the UFW banner in 1966, and its political leaders including Larry Itliong, Cesar Chavez, and Dolores Huerta, the UFW is associated with the emergence of the Chicano movement. See Matthew Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (University of California Press, 2014) and Mario T. García, ed., *A Dolores Huerta Reader* (University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

6. The Brown Berets (so named because of the brown berets they wore, with the color referencing people of Mexican and indigenous descent) are a militant Chicano nationalist organization that grew out of a Los Angeles-based student organization called the Young Citizens for Community Action. Its members were closely associated with the Los Angeles high school walkouts in 1968 and charged themselves with providing protection for participants at Chicano movement's political events. Because of their stances on self-defense and police brutality, the Brown Berets were subject to state and federal police infiltration, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO).

7. "Virgina Espino and Renee Tajima-Peña Collection of Sterilization Records" at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library.

8. "Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez Sterilization Papers ca. 1972-1979" at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library. See also Vélez-Ibáñez 1980, 239–40.

9. "Mansa" in Spanish means meek or tame, while "mensa" means stupid or foolish.

10. Dr. Bernard Rosenfeld, who at the time of the lawsuit was a medical student in residence at the Los Angeles County–USC Medical Center, shared the confidential hospital records with the plaintiffs' attorney Hernández.

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Feminist Debate in Taiwan's Buddhism: The Issue of the Eight Garudhammas

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Feminist Debate in Taiwan's Buddhism: The Issue of the Eight Garudhammas

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Abstract: In 2001, during an academic conference on Humanistic Buddhism in Taipei, Venerable Shi Zhaohui, accompanied by a few Buddhist clergy and laypeople, tore apart a copy of the Eight Garudhammas (Eight Heavy Rules), regulations that govern the behavior of Buddhist nuns. Zhaohui's symbolic act created instant controversy as Taiwan's Buddhist community argued about the rules' authenticity and other issues within Buddhist monastic affairs. This paper examines the debate over the Eight Garudhammas and situates the debate within Taiwan's cultural terrain as well as the worldwide Buddhist feminist movement. I argue that while Zhaohui's call resulted in the abolishment of the rules neither at home nor abroad, it profoundly affected nuns' position in Buddhism and contributed to broader discussions on women and religion. In making this argument, I revisit the impact of Western feminism (and Western Buddhist feminists) on Eastern religions and reconsider the tensions this relationship encompasses.

Keywords: feminism, Buddhist feminist, Taiwan Buddhism, Eight Garudhammas, Shi Zhaohui

Introduction

During a 2001 academic conference on Renjian Fojiao (Humanistic Buddhism 人間佛教) in Taipei, and accompanied by a few Buddhist clergy and laypeople, Venerable Shih Chao-hwei (Shi Zhaohui 釋昭慧) tore apart a copy of the Eight Garudhammas (Eight Heavy/Special Rules 八敬法), regulations that govern the behavior of Buddhist nuns.[1] Chao-hwei, a Buddhist reformer and arguably Taiwan's most outspoken nun, claimed the precepts reflect gender hierarchy and inequality within the Buddhist *saṅgha* (monk/nun community) and have functioned as a "tyrant," enabling monks' male chauvinism and dampening nuns' self-esteem.[2] She asserted the rules were not from Buddha but were later inventions by the male Buddhist hierarchy to discourage the development of *bhikkhuni* (nuns') monastic order. After two thousand years of consequences, Chao-hwei argued, it was time to drop the regulations. Chao-hwei's symbolic act created instant controversy as Taiwan's Buddhist community argued about the rules' authenticity and other issues within Buddhist monastic affairs.

This paper examines the debate over the Eight Heavy Rules and situates the debate within Taiwan's cultural terrain and the worldwide Buddhist feminist movement. I argue that while Chao-hwei's call resulted in the abolishment of the rules neither at home nor abroad, it profoundly affected nuns' position in Buddhism and contributed to broader discussions on women and religion. It also provides insight into the parameters within which feminism within Taiwan's Buddhism currently operates. The paper first explores feminist discussion of gender within Buddhism. It then identifies the social context that contributed to the rise of Buddhist feminist consciousness on the island. An explanation of the Eight Heavy Rules and their historical development is provided before the main part of the paper, which focuses on the debate over the call for terminating the rules. The paper concludes by assessing the impacts of the

incident and connecting the debate to the broader international Buddhist women's movement.

Buddhism and Gender

Although commonly recognized as containing a liberating egalitarian theology (i.e., the belief that all living things are equal), Buddhism, like many organized religions, is "an overwhelmingly male-created institution dominated by a patriarchal power structure" (Paul 1979, xix). Issues concerning women in Buddhism have increasingly attracted the interest, not only of religious scholars and feminists, but also of the general public, as Buddhism has experienced revitalization in Asia and gradually become popular in the Western world. Gender and Buddhism as a subject of academic inquiry, however, remains in its infancy and mostly in a peripheral position, despite being a millennia-long issue (Faure 2003; Li 2002).

Much of this field's literature deals with textual studies. Concentrating on Pāli texts in the Theravāda tradition, I. B. Horner (1930), for example, surveyed early Buddhist portrayals of women and feminine symbols, finding that females, especially in terms of their sexuality, were often described as mysterious, sensual, elusive, polluted, corrupted, and destructive; thus, the tradition implied, they needed to be controlled and conquered.[3] In examining various Mahāyāna texts, Venerable Shi Yinshun (印順) questioned the Eight Heavy Rules' legitimacy in the 1960s by pointing out their inconsistency in Buddhist scriptures (see Shi 1981; 1988; Qiu 2001a; Shih 2002). Diana Y. Paul (1979) similarly examined texts in the Mahāyāna tradition and found a wide spectrum of portrayals of women, some positive and many negative. Unlike Horner, who asserts that the larger (misogynist Hindu) culture led to inconsistencies between Buddhist texts and ideals, Paul regards the ambiguous images as highlighting the development of Buddhism from a primitive stage to the next. Gu Zhengmei (古正美 1985) confirms the presence of sexism in the Buddhist canon while pointing out other ambiguous and contradictory portrayals of women. Rita Gross's *Buddhism After Patriarchy* (1993) examines Buddhist canonical literature from Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, providing arguably the first feminist analysis of Buddhist texts and theology in the United States. Employing the analytical framework Western feminists used to critique Christian patriarchy, Gross explains gender ideology in Buddhism as well as male dominance in monastic orders.

Another area of feminist scholarship in gender and Buddhism emphasizes the connections between theory and practice. Through interviews with American Buddhist nuns and lay female practitioners, Sandy Boucher ([1988]1993, xi), for example, illustrates these women's "spiritual paths within the context of Buddhist practice and establishments." Utilizing a feminist framework, the book provides critical insight on the tension between feminism and patriarchal Buddhism, religious activism and spiritual conviction, monasticism, and laity, etc. Gross (1993), on the other hand, calls for a feminist transformation of Buddhism in the Western world through creation of a new type of monastic community, reconstruction of an androgynous view of Buddhism, and incorporation of serious meditation practice with work and motherhood responsibilities (see also Tsomo 1995). Shih Chao-hwei (1999) approaches gender inequality, within monastic orders, from Buddhist discipline and ethics. Her work reflects Western feminist critiques of religion while embodying strong local consciousness and subjectivity (Li 2002). Li Yuzhen (李玉珍 1999) and Cheng Wei-yi's (Zheng Weiyi 2007) ethnographies explore women's experience with Buddhism and their interpretations of Buddhism. Chen Meihua (陳美華 1998) and Cheng apply postcolonial theory and Third World feminist analysis to the Western feminist critique of Asian Buddhism. Both argue that Western Buddhist feminist scholars often presume superiority over Asian Buddhist women by stereotyping them as patriarchy's victims and by speaking

for them. In envisioning the future of the field, however, Li (2002) deems postcolonialism impractical and ineffective in promoting an international Buddhist women's movement. She argues that Taiwan Buddhism's diverse nature and modernization have long promoted a dismantling of the stereotypes of weak, passive, and helpless Buddhist women. Postcolonial discourse cannot explain the phenomenal achievement of Taiwan's bhikkhuni saṅgha (Li 2002). She urges future inquiry into gender and Buddhism that will locate Taiwan's Buddhism in a global context and encourage dialogue between Taiwanese and international scholars.

Buddhist Feminist Consciousness-Raising in Taiwan

Taiwan seems an ideal place for a Buddhist feminist movement because of Buddhism's current social prominence. Buddhism benefitted greatly from the island's economic growth since the 1960s (particularly after the '80s). As people could give more economically, they contributed to traditional religions, which also benefited from a growing connection in people's minds to grassroots identity. With Taiwan's economic success, people pushed for greater political openness and the lifting of Martial Law (obtained in 1987). Democratization further decentralized religious activities and allowed religious groups to expand. Charismatic Buddhist leaders arose. In the past two decades, the Buddhist population increased fourfold, from about two million in the mid-1980s to more than eight million currently, about 35 percent of the island's 23 million people (Laliberté 2004; "Religion" 2010). Major Buddhist organizations have woven themselves into Taiwan's social fabric by running multi-million-dollar enterprises, including temples, schools, hospitals, and other social institutions.

Economic prosperity and political democratization in Taiwan also liberated women from traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The contemporary women's movement in Taiwan took root in the 1970s when Lü Xiulian (呂秀蓮, later the island's only female vice president, 2000-2008) proposed the so-called new feminism, promoting the idea that people should be human first and men and women second, and calling for a rise in feminist consciousness (Qiu 2001a). Li Yuanzhen (李元貞) later instituted *Awakening* (婦女新知) magazine and a foundation of the same name in the 1980s to campaign for equal education, equal work, and equal pay. Since then, a wide range of women's organizations arose promoting diverse agendas relating to women's rights (Li 2005). In general, the women's movement has transformed Taiwan from a traditional patriarchal society into one more willing to challenge authority and open to gender negotiation and discussion. Women's lives, especially for the younger generation, have dramatically improved.

Taiwanese society's openness and the improvement of women's rights contribute to the success (both quantitative and qualitative) of the island's female Buddhist monastic orders. The current ratio between nuns and monks in Taiwan is about five to one (Yang 2002). Women play a crucial role in major Buddhist organizations. Venerable Zhengyan (證嚴) of the Tzuchi Foundation (Ciji or Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation 慈濟基金會), for example, is probably the most respected woman in Taiwan. Other women also hold key positions and constitute the majority of volunteers. Even the male-led Foguanshan (佛光山) and Fagushan (法鼓山) monasteries, two of the most influential Buddhist organizations in Taiwan, rely heavily on nuns' assistance. All executives of Foguanshan's five branches are female, and women usually constitute over 80 percent of seminary and activities participants. Taiwanese nuns' educational level is also impressive, particularly among the younger generation. About 80 percent in the Xiangguang (香光) Female Monastery are college educated. Many nuns hold master's and Ph.D. degrees, often from Western institutions (Cai 1998). The Dalai Lama has visited Taiwan twice to observe Buddhism's Taiwanese

experience, particularly the so-called "bhikkhuni phenomenon," in order to assess the possibility of re-establishing female monastic orders in Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhist historian Jiang Canteng (2003) finds three factors crucial to the success of Taiwanese nuns: the increasing education in Taiwan, society's openness, and nuns' economic independence. He asserts that nuns have become the keystone of Taiwan's Buddhism; if nuns were to strike, Jiang posits, the whole Buddhist system on the island would immediately collapse (see also Cai 1998).

Another significant factor in the strength of Buddhism and the bhikkhuni saṅgha in Taiwan is the implementation of Humanistic Buddhism, which sets the island's Buddhism apart from other Buddhist traditions, including those of its counterparts in Japan and Korea. This school of thought came from Venerable Taixu (太虛) and his student Yinshun, who envisioned universal salvation instead of selective salvation. They encouraged monks and nuns to actively participate in the secular world, help improve society, and build the Pure Land on Earth instead of waiting for it in the afterlife. Most major Buddhist organizations in Taiwan claim lineage from Humanistic Buddhism and vigorously engage in secular affairs (i.e., building hospitals, schools, charities, and media outlets) and social movements (i.e., environmental protection, anti-nuclear power, anti-corruption, and anti-gambling). Among the island's prominent Buddhists, Chao-hwei probably most keenly connects the ideals of Humanistic Buddhism with actions. Since her national debut in 1989 condemning media stereotypes of Buddhists nuns, and in addition to her protest against the Eight Heavy Rules, Chao-hwei has regularly participated in social movements, walking hand in hand with secular protestors to, for example, fight against nuclear waste as well as for animal rights and, later, women's rights (Shih 2008).

The Establishment of the Bhikkhuni Monastic Order and the Eight Garudhammas

Buddhist feminists have questioned the merit and the validity of the Eight Heavy Rules for more than a century. The precepts remain controversial within the Buddhist community, both in Asia and worldwide. The call by Chao-hwei to abolish the rules rekindled the controversy and generated heated debate.

Narratives about the Buddha's reluctance to establish the first bhikkhuni saṅgha are well documented in Buddhist canon (see for examples Gross 1993; Cheng 2007; Shih 2000). These stories state that five years after the Buddha Siddhāttha Gotama achieved enlightenment and founded the *bhikkhu* (monks') monastic order, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, the Buddha's aunt and stepmother, asked him to set up a monastery for women. He rejected the request of Mahāpajāpatī and her 500 female followers three times. Discouraged but persistent, the women shaved their heads, put on monastic robes, and traveled on foot to the Buddha's next stop. Moved by the women's determination and miserable condition, Ānanda, the Buddha's closest aide and half-brother (son of Mahāpajāpatī), pleaded for a bhikkhuni monastery on behalf of the women. Again, his proposal was rejected three times. According to Davids and Oldenberg's translation (*Vinaya Texts*, 322), Ānanda then asked the Buddha, "Are women, Lord, capable—when they have gone forth from the household life and entered the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Blessed One—are they capable of realizing the fruit of conversion, or of the second Path, or of the third Path, or of Arahatship?" The Buddha assured Ānanda that women possessed the same potential as men to achieve enlightenment and perfection. Ānanda then asked why—since women could benefit from the monastic order and since Mahāpajāpatī had been very kind in caring for the Buddha—her and the other women's wish could not come true? The Buddha finally relented under one condition: "If then, Ānanda, Mahāpagāpatī [Mahāpajāpatī] the Gotamī take upon herself the Eight Chief Rules let that be reckoned to her as her initiation" (*Vinaya Texts*, 322). When she heard the rules, Mahāpajāpatī was

said to have accepted the rules without hesitation.

According to an oft-quoted statement, the Buddha expressed concerns over the negative impact the bhikkhuni order might have on the fate of Buddhism:

If, Ānanda, women had not received permission to go out from the household life and enter the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, then would the pure religion, Ānanda, have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast for a thousand years. But since, Ānanda, women have now received that permission, the pure religion, Ānanda, will not now last so long, the good law will now stand fast for only five hundred years. (*Vinaya Texts*, 325; see also Gross 1993, 32)

By admitting women into Buddhist orders, as the Buddha was said to predict, Buddhism's worldly life span would be reduced to half its natural duration. The Buddha used a further unflattering analogy to describe the damage female monastic orders would produce:

Ānanda, in whatever religion women are ordained, that religion will not last long. As families that have more women than men are easily destroyed by robbers, as a plentiful rice-field once infested by white bones will not long remain, as a sugarcane field invaded by red rust will not long remain, even so the True Dharma will not last long. (Quoted in Goodwin 2008, 207)

His prescription for the potential disaster, recorded in Buddhist literature, was the Eight Heavy Rules: "Even, Ānanda, as a man, looking forward, may build a dyke to a great reservoir so that the water may not overflow, even so, Ānanda, were the eight important rules for nuns laid down by me" (Quoted in Gross 1993, 33).

The Eight Heavy Rules vary in different Buddhist texts, but generally include the following:

1. A nun, however senior, must always bow down in front of a monk, however junior.

2. A nun is not to spend the rainy season in a district in which there are no monks.

3. After keeping the rainy season, the nun must hold the ceremony of repentance of their offences before monk and nun saṅghas.

4. A nun who has committed a serious offence must be disciplined by both saṅghas.

5. A nun must not admonish a monk, whereas a monk can admonish a nun.

6. A nun must receive the upasampada ordination from both monk and nun saṅghas after two years of studying the Precepts.

7. Every half month the nun must ask the monk saṅgha to give exhortation.

8. A nun must not in any way abuse or revile a monk.

These rules appear to position nuns as abjectly inferior to monks. Respect flows one way, from nuns to monks. Buddhist texts often use gender stereotypes that favor traditional masculine characteristics over traditional femininity. While women's potential to become enlightened is not entirely denied, male as the norm is never doubted. For example, a perfectly enlightened human image is embodied in a male (the Buddha's) figure with the so-called 32 physical signs/characteristics of a Great Man. To be born as a woman, on the other hand, is a result of negative karma accumulated in the previous life. Some Buddhist canonical literature attributes 84 acts/attitudes to women, including being envious, greedy, weak in wisdom, prideful, jealous, stingy, lustful, sensual, etc. Because of their perceived flawed nature, women are said to be born with five obstacles preventing them from achieving enlightenment and becoming rulers/monarch, the king of Gods, the king of death, warriors, and Brahmā. Nuns are thus to obey more disciplines and rules than monks.[4] Men may enter and withdraw from the monastic order seven times, while women receive only one chance. Many observers attribute Buddhist misogyny to Hindu culture

or East Asian Confucianism. However, while cultural influence on religion might be worth scholarly exploration, it is not good scholarship to place the blame on culture alone without being critical of dynamics within the religion itself. As Diana Y. Paul points out, "if Buddhists accepted nonegalitarian beliefs from outside their original teachings and incorporated them as sutras [scriptural canon] … they had to have accepted such beliefs as worthy of the status of scripture. To that extent, they could not have considered such nonegalitarian views as the antithesis of the Buddha's doctrine" (Paul 1979, xxiii).

Challenging the Eight Garudhammas

Chao-hwei's call to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules involved an almost decade-long process. She first engaged in a pen fight with advocates of the rules in the *Saṅgha Magazine* (僧伽雜誌) in 1992. Two articles in back-to-back issues of the magazine emphasized the importance of nuns following the Precepts, citing a long list of monastic ethical standards for relationships between monks and nuns. These include:

- When a monk speaks, nuns should put down what they are doing immediately, listen, and reply to the monk respectfully, without moving their bodies or avoiding eye contact.
- Monks should be provided with desirable food (before nuns are served) and they should also be given a larger quantity (than that given to nuns).
- Nuns should not claim any success for their achievements; rather, they should attribute their success to monks.
- By nature women/nuns like to reveal others' privacy and to gossip in their spare time.
- It is typical for women to be good at concealing their own mistakes.
- Nuns should study and memorize the 84 Acts of Women in order to avoid such actions. They should also follow the Eight Heavy Rules strictly (see Shih 2002, 31-2).[5]

To Chao-hwei this was "enslaving education," "brainwashing" nuns to accept and rationalize their inferior position in the Buddhist community. She contested each of the claims and accused the magazine of distorting Buddhist doctrine and of advocating "male chauvinism" (Shih 2002, 32, 67).

Chao-hwei frequently wrote thereafter to protest incidents of gender inequality within Buddhist circles and denounce *Saṅgha Magazine*'s use of the Eight Heavy Rules to discipline nuns and advance male privilege. Her most critical remarks came in mid-2000 after the magazine published three articles presumably by nuns (pen names were used), detailing their "fun experiences" performing the 84 Acts of Women as instructed by their superiors in order to remind the nuns to avoid those behaviors. Chao-hwei asserted that such a performance not only violates Buddhist discipline and ethics, but also forces nuns and other women to unconsciously confirm those "hysterical stereotypes" about women as truth. She criticized the nuns' male superiors (monks) as "anomalous playboys" and "chauvinist pigs" who "obtained sexual satisfaction/gratification through voyeurism" by watching nuns perform those acts (Shih 2002, 113, 120, trans. by author).

The call to end the Eight Heavy Rules was strategically planned to coincide with two important events in early 2001: a conference commemorating Venerable Yinshun's 96th birthday and lifelong achievements, and the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan. A founder of Humanistic Buddhism, Yinshun was among the first monks to advocate for gender equality in Chinese/Taiwan's Buddhism (Qiu 2001a). In preparation for the conference, Chao-hwei wrote an article describing how the rules have become an "unequal treaty" between monks and nuns and a "tight shackle" limiting the development of nuns' potential. She argued both that the Heavy Rules contradict the central doctrine of Buddhism and that the Buddha permitted abolishing/modifying trivial rules incompatible with local tradition and culture (Shih 2002, 139-48).

Chao-hwei also attempted to use the Dalai Lama's visit to make her call more salient internationally. She wrote three days before the conference that gender issues should be a major part of Buddhist ethics for the new century—the theme of the Dalai Lama's speeches in Taiwan. She suggested that actions were more important than talk and urged the Dalai Lama to help restore nuns' orders in Tibetan and Vajrayāna Buddhism (Shih 2002, 169-73).

The conference took place on March 31, 2001 in Taipei. During one session, Chao-hwei read a declaration to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules. In the document, she emphasized Mahāpajāpatī's role in Buddhist history by calling her a "brave woman with revolutionary consciousness" (Shih 2002, 175). Chao-hwei entitled the declaration "The Second Revolution of Modern Mahāpajāpatī" to echo Mahāpajāpatī's first (failed) attempt to get the Buddha to reconsider the rule that requires a nun to bow down in front of a monk, regardless of the seniority of the two. As Chao-hwei read the declaration, eight other prominent Taiwan Buddhists (two monks, two nuns, two laymen, and two laywomen, intended to represent the unity of clergy and laity) symbolically tore up the rules one by one. Shi Chuandao (釋 傳道 2002), one of the monks participating in the event, affirmed the act as the nuns' declaration of independence—asserting freedom from their current subordinate position. Jiang Canteng (2001a, 110), a well-known historian of Buddhism who also participated in the rending of the rules, called the incident a "daring act," and, "the first of its kind in thousands of years of Mahāyāna tradition," one with "great potential to affect Buddhism in Asia and in other regions" (trans. by author).

In spite of its potential historical importance, the act faced immediate condemnation and generated passionate debate. The Buddhist establishment's conservative faction questioned its legitimacy and severely criticized Chao-hwei for violating the Buddha's teachings; some even called for her expulsion from the Buddhist order. The following section analyzes four central issues emerging from the debate.

The Authenticity of the Rules

The most intense debate concerned the Eight Heavy Rules' authenticity. Proponents claimed the Buddha laid the rules down as a precondition for organizing the nuns' order and therefore should not be overruled. The reformers, however, argued that the rules were not authentically from the Buddha but were instead later additions to Buddhist *sutras*.[6] Chao-hwei pointed out four major problems with the rules. First, according to Buddhist literature, the rules were a preventive guide given before the bhikkhuni order was originally established. This is inconsistent with all other monastic regulations, which always *followed* mistakes. Thus, in Chao-hwei's opinion, the rules are unattributable to the Buddha. Second, contradictory canonical descriptions invoke suspicion about authenticity. Some texts regard the rules as fundamental disciplines, others do not mention them; some treat rule violations as severe offenses, while others regard them as minor. Third, according to Chao-hwei, the Buddha taught that all living things are equal, the core Buddhist principle; the rules manifest gender inequality, however. Fourth, Chao-hwei suggested that if the rules were laid down by the Buddha, then he must be seen as not only law giver, but also law breaker. She cited a Buddhist story: Mahāpajāpatī complained about some monks' mischief. The Buddha scolded the monks in response, not Mahāpajāpatī. If the rules were followed, Buddha would have disciplined Mahāpajāpatī for wrongly admonishing monks. Reasoning that he would not contradict himself, Chao-hwei concluded that the rules did not come from the pro-equality Buddha (Shih 2002, 207-11).

Granting the power of Chao-hwei's main moral message, her supporting arguments can nevertheless be questioned. Like many other practicing Buddhist feminists, Chao-hwei tends to romanticize the

Buddha as a flawless godly figure. She is reluctant to entertain the possibility that the Buddha might be a product of his time and culture. While the Buddha clearly challenged some social norms of his time (i.e., eventually allowing women to enter monastic life), he might have also been affected by the prevailing misogynist Hindu culture and occasionally followed the era's conventions. The rhetoric Chao-hwei uses, seemingly effective at first glance, is sometimes contradictory and undercuts her point. One example is Chao-hwei's use of Mahāpajāpatī's "first revolution"—asking the Buddha to reconsider the rule on nuns bowing down to monks—to sustain her own "second revolution" in abolishing the rules. Another example is the story of Mahāpajāpatī's complaints about monks. Both instances affirm, rather than challenge, the existence of the Eight Heavy Rules during the Buddha's time. On other occasions, Chao-hwei seems to admit that the rules, or at least parts, in fact came from the Buddha and that the Buddha was indeed not fond of organizing the bhikkhuni saṅgha in the first place. However, she reasons that both originally not allowing nuns to create an order and issuing the rules stemmed from the Buddha's love and mercy for women, to protect them from danger and attack (Shih 2002, 359; Shi 2002, 76). This explanation, again, romanticizes the Buddha and contradicts her main thesis.

Whatever her inconsistencies, Chao-hwei's opponents—represented by the high hierarchy of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BARCO), the governmental organization overseeing Buddhist activities in Taiwan—failed to provide substantial counterarguments. Instead they asked Yinshun to verify the rules' authenticity. His brief reply (35 words) contains two points. First, the Eight Heavy Rules are indeed Buddha's teaching. Second, any modification to fit contemporary cultural norms would need to follow proper procedure: consensus from the Buddhist elders and passage in a council meeting (Shi 2001, 232). Yinshun's response surprised most reformers, since he was the first in Mahāyāna Buddhism to question the rules' authenticity. Seeing contradictions between Yinshun's current position and his early statements, historian Qiu Minjie (2001b) asked for further explanation. In response, Yinshun referred to Venerable Qingde's (清德) *Yinshun's Thoughts on Buddhist Disciplines* (印順導師的 律學思想, see Jiang 2001b). Interpreting this move, Jiang (2001b) suggested that Qingde and Chao-hwei's main arguments are in agreement; both assert that parts of the rules may indeed have come from the Buddha but that the male Buddhist hierarchy likely added other parts later.

Chao-hwei's opposition argued that while Yinshun questioned parts of the rules, he never called for modification or termination. Qiu (2001b) nevertheless considered it simply a matter of time: the Buddhist environment in the 1960s—when Yinshun raised his doubts—did not allow him to propose any gender reforms. Jiang (2001b) agreed, claiming that the new generation can turn the page as society changes. Although deeming Yinshun "the greatest monk since Xuanzang"[7] ("玄奘以來第一人" see Shih 2002, 226), Jiang (2001a; 2001b) nevertheless considers him a "historical figure" and "a giant in thinking but midget in action" in regards to Buddhist reforms. Jiang sees Chao-hwei, on the other hand, as the one to implement Yinshun's thoughts and Humanistic Buddhism (Jiang 2002, 3).

Involvement of Laity

Another key issue concerned lay involvement. Chao-hwei's opponents insisted on the concept that only saṅgha should be involved with resolving saṅgha's problems. They argued that the Eight Heavy Rules are monastic ethics with no relevance to the laity. Chao-hwei disputed her opponents' view by accusing them of being hierarchical, seeing themselves as superior to the laity. She argued that Buddhism will not survive without the laity and its financial support. She further asserted that the meeting by the Buddhist Association following the conference was illegitimate because the convening nuns were not

included. Chuandao echoed this point, asserting equality between the monastic orders and the laity and the importance of a transparent process (Shi 2002). Qiu (2001b) took a different tack, explaining that members of the Buddhist order led the event, while the laity only supported it; therefore, the call to end the rules did not violate the principle at stake. She also pointed to many cases in Buddhist history in which the laity helped solve problems among the clergy. The opinions of laypeople, she claimed, have been important and respected historically.

To End or Not to End the Garudhammas

Many in the Buddhist community questioned the need to formally abolish the Eight Heavy Rules, reasoning that the rules were typically not followed anyway. For example, Venerable Xingyun (星雲) of the Foguanshan Monastery asserted that the rules had long been "frozen" in his monastery. He claimed that time would eventually eliminate the rules; there was no need for a dramatic ending (see Su 2001). Chao-hwei (Shih 2002, 217) responded that "The Emperor's New Clothes" is an appropriate analogy for those who refuse to see gender inequality. She noted in many monastic orders a recent resurgence in emphasizing the rules through various venues, including Buddhist seminaries and media. This "demeaning trend," Chao-hwei claimed, was the tipping point that led to her call to abolish the rules (Shih 2002, 161).

Many have spoken out in support of Chao-hwei. Historian Yang Huinan (楊惠南 2002), for example, told of a nun who immolated herself in protest because she was not able to rationalize the teaching that women are by nature inferior to men and thus unable to achieve enlightenment.[8] One restaurant owner, Li Desheng (李德昇 2001), observed gender inequality within monastic practices. From his vantage point as a layman active in Buddhist circles, he concluded that one's sex, not one's ability, education, talent, seniority, integrity, or moral conduct, determined the position one held in the Buddhist hierarchy. Li noted that he feels unsettled when seeing nuns, always the ones carrying out day-to-day monastic business, usually positioned at the periphery of power. Chen Minhe (陳明和), a business professor, argued that the bottom line is that the rules are outdated, unfit for modern life, and therefore need changing. Modernization of Buddhist disciplines, he claimed, would positively impact Buddhism (Conference 2002, 190-1).

Means to Bring Out the Issue

Critics gave two main objections to Chao-hwei's methods. First, many considered tearing the Eight Heavy Rules in a public gathering to be too dramatic. Take Buddhism historian You Xiangzhou (游祥洲), for example. Although supporting Chao-hwei's cause, he nevertheless thought her methods were somewhat abrasive. In his opinion, reforms such as this should be promoted more gently (Conference 2002, 196-7). A layman, Xie Dakun (謝大焜), with no apparent awareness of his male privileges and with a bias toward a backlash against feminism, accused Chao-hwei of creating a showdown with the (male) establishment. He suggested that

women should understand their bodies' limitations. They need to first seek to control their reproductive issues and develop their knowledge and economic ability. Only then they can gradually become equal with men. I hope that all nuns, including Venerable Chao-hwei, will rise up. Then they will naturally be equal with all monks without needing to fight for equality. (Conference 2002, 192-3)

Venerable Hokuan (厚觀) similarly questioned whether nuns can really achieve equality even if the

rules are terminated. He argued that women, like Buddhists in the early days, should "bear persecution without complaining" and "be rational and forgiving" (Quoted in Shih 2002, 199, trans. by author).

Chao-hwei fought back, arguing that it would have defeated the declaration's purpose if it had not been presented publicly. She admitted that nuns might not receive equal treatment after abolishment of the rules, just as women are not necessarily treated equally in everyday life despite constitutional protections. But, she claimed, that should not be the excuse for perpetuating gender inequality (Conference 2002, 205).

Some nuns also expressed discomfort over Chao-hwei's forcefulness and preferred a more modest method of resistance, not wanting to display family feuds in front of others. In a study about nuns in both Taiwan and Sri Lanka conducted not long after the controversy, Cheng (2007) found herself entangled in the controversy. She claims that nearly all of her Taiwanese nun informants, regardless of individual opinions about the rules, expressed disapproval toward Chao-hwei and her supporters due to their sharp language, blunt criticism of opponents, and tendency to create factions within the Buddhist community. Cheng quotes a typical response:

> [Chao-hwei's] appeal was right, but her method was wrong... [M]ost people cannot accept the method she used... If you based your appeal on theory, or to hold a conference so that both men and women could discuss together calmly, then perhaps everybody would accept the result... In the Buddhist tradition, the Vinaya is sacred and should not be stained. But she openly called people to tear apart [the rules] in public... But what right [did] she have to ask the laity to tear apart the rules... In traditional Buddhism, the laity did not have any right to interfere with the monastic affairs... It's just like no one should interfere in the domestic affairs of your family... She made a big issue out of it and gained lots of fame... I don't feel what she did benefited her appeal. But I completely agree with her appeal.[9] (2007, 88-9)

The second objection to the event's execution concerned who should call for abolishment. Opponents claimed that due to the importance of the issue, many more than the handful of people who participated in the event should have been involved in the decision. They suggested that the elders of the monastic orders, through appropriate protocol, should discuss the matter extensively and come to a consensus ("Minutes" 2002, 234; Qiu 2001b). In Chao-hwei's opinion, however, consensus creation among Buddhist elders is problematic for two reasons. First, it does not solve the problem of a small number of people making the decision for the whole group. Second, the current power structure within Taiwan's Buddhist hierarchy benefits male privilege and dominance by excluding women from decision-making processes. Sharing power with Buddhist women, in her opinion, will not occur without a forceful call for gender equality (Conference 2002, 196-7).

Conclusion

In spite of her failure to end the Eight Heavy Rules within Taiwan's Buddhism, and despite some questionable tactics in the attempt, Chao-hwei's efforts deserve admiration from feminists with an interest in greater equality within religion. This paper focuses on four themes that emerged from the debate over the Rules. Collectively the themes point to some of the current limits for feminism in Taiwan's Buddhism. The debates over the Rules' authenticity and whether or not they should be ended point to a literalistic stance toward (even questionable) traditional Buddhist texts that feminist Buddhists must negotiate. Questions over the involvement of laity and Chao-hwei's methods suggest the difficulty of pushing conventional bounds of propriety through novel feminist action. The debates arguably show that

while Taiwan's Buddhist feminism may in some ways be at the forefront of feminism within Buddhism more generally, it operates within a context in which Buddhist traditional practice often takes precedence over the central concept of the equality of all living things.

Chao-hwei's call to end the Eight Heavy Rules unfortunately did not produce a consensus among Buddhist organizations. However, at least one short-term consequence seems apparent as Taiwan's Buddhist governing bodies lifted gender restrictions on leadership positions and recruited more women into their offices (Wongyen 2001; Taipei's 2001; "Personnel" 2002). In a broader sense, the controversy brought gender issues in religion forward in both academic discourse and public awareness on the island. Prior to the event, essentially only a few scholars paid attention to gender issues in Taiwanese religion or Buddhism. Many practicing Buddhists were unaware of gender inequality in either Buddhist texts or the monastic system. The event also exposed the need for feminist consciousness-raising in religious circles. Seeing great accomplishments from Buddhist women, many people in both Taiwanese society and the Buddhist community more broadly have celebrated the achievements. To some, the controversy itself illustrates the power women hold, as Chao-hwei was able to challenge the system, even if not entirely successfully. Many observers, however, overlook the more subtle, but perhaps more stubborn forms of sexism in Buddhism beyond the structural problems such as the Eight Heavy Rules. Strongly distinctive attitudes toward men and women still exist. These might be residues from sexist images of women in Buddhist canon and/or from patriarchal cultural norms.

An argument can be made that this more subtle sexism affects more Buddhist women than does the issue Chao-hwei is fighting. The Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation is arguably the largest and most effective women's organization in Taiwan. Women volunteers are its backbone. Their active involvement in charity, medical aid, and social movements has won wide respect from the government and public. On the surface, the foundation's women embody the new, empowered women who claim independence through volunteerism. In reality, however, its core belief is centrally based on conservative family values and division of labor. Jobs in the foundation divide between men and women according to conventional gender traits and stereotypes. Field studies reveal that women participate more in the private sphere with the organization, while its men are more active in the public sphere; men are privileged in organizational activities. In other words, women in the foundation might have achieved "body liberation" by walking out of their homes, but their minds remain constrained by traditional gender roles (Chen 2004).

The Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation's Zhengyan often perpetuates gender stereotypes and unequal relationships. When discussing marital infidelity, for example, she seldom places responsibility on unfaithful husbands; instead she advises women to look into themselves to understand their husbands' behaviors. If women improve themselves, show tenderness and merciful hearts, she suggests, the husband will eventually return. Zhengyan even asks wives to accept their husbands' mistresses—"Love the person he loves, so everybody will be happy" (Shi n.d.; see also Chen 2004, trans. by author). Foguanshan's Xingyun, likewise, often invokes gender stereotypes in his talks on family ethics. He asserts that women should uphold the five goodnesses in order to maintain a happy family. That is, women should take care of housework, be patient and not complain, remain chaste, respect and serve their husbands, and treat relatives and friends with care. In warning monks to resist sexual temptation, Xingyun recites stories from Buddhist literature describing women as corrupt, dangerous, and ugly beneath their appearance (Lin 2001). Thus, with these currently most respected Buddhists' teachings, the liberation of women's minds seems far away.

Intercultural Implication

Issues derived from the call to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules involve the position of nuns in Taiwanese Buddhism in the larger context of the international Buddhist women's movement, and more specifically, the question of whether Buddhist women can achieve common goals cross-culturally. The controversy foregrounds tension between different Buddhist traditions. With their phenomenal success, and also because the bhikkhuni order exists only in Mahāyāna Buddhism, some Buddhist women in Taiwan might regard themselves as superior or at least in a better position than their Buddhist sisters elsewhere, especially in Theravāda and Tibetan traditions. Some carry their own version of the "white man's burden," feeling obligated to help other Buddhist women. In justifying going public against the Eight Heavy Rules, Chao-hwei, for example, claimed that

> if Taiwan's bhiksunis were not be [*sic*] able to serve as the spokespersons for female Buddhist practitioners in the world on gender issues, then it's wholly impossible for those in Tibetan Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism to expect that "one of these days their time will come" in such a patriarchal society as Asia! Therefore, on second consideration, I decided that I really should not be subtly impeded by the status of Buddhist women in the Tibetan and Theravāda tradition[s], and maintained a discreet silence thereby. (Shih 2008, 132-3; for support for the notion that Taiwanese nuns lead Buddhist reform in Asia, see Qiu 2001b)

Like those long-criticized Western feminists, these Buddhist women feel a need to speak for the Buddhist women of South Asia and Tibet whom they stereotype as helpless victims of male dominance. Chao-hwei's challenge to the Dalai Lama to promote women's rights and restore the bhikkhuni saṅgha, although well-intentioned, appears prideful and disrespectful to some.

This sense of superiority provides an interesting contrast to how some Buddhist women in Theravāda and Tibetan traditions view Mahāyāna Buddhism because of the questions regarding the legitimacy of the Mahāyāna nuns' order (or of the entire Mahāyāna tradition). One of Cheng's Sri Lanka informants, for example, disapproved of the Mahāyāna tradition bluntly: "Mahāyāna Buddhism is not the real Buddhism. It was forged! After Lord Buddha preached Dharma, there was a disagreement and some people became astray from Dharma... that's why they made up Mahāyānaism...." (Cheng 2007, 179-80). The origin of the Mahāyāna bhikkhuni ordination in Sri Lanka does not alter many Theravāda women's opinions. Another informant, in fact, felt threatened by Mahāyāna Buddhism: "People think that people from America, Taiwan, Korea, Burma, all these Mahāyāna countries want to come to destroy our Theravāda Buddhism... Monks and nuns in Mahāyāna countries live together. That's why we don't like Mahāyāna Buddhism..."[10] (Cheng 2007, 80). Many Theravāda women believe their Buddhism is more authentic and more closely reflects the original Buddhism (Tomalin 2009). Some Theravāda women therefore prefer the status quo to diffusion of bhikkhuni ordination from Mahāyāna Buddhism.

After observing Taiwan's nun orders twice, the Dalai Lama called a meeting to discuss the possibility of restoring bhikkhuni saṅgha in Tibetan Buddhism. The issue has been put on hold, probably due to concerns over the "legitimacy" of Mahāyāna bhikkhuni ordination. Chao-hwei has been frustrated by the Dalai Lama's non-action, arguing that the benefit outweighs formality issues. The Dalai Lama explained his position more explicitly in June 2005:

> Although there has previously been discussion regarding bhikshuni [ordination], no decision has been reached. However, we need to bring this to a conclusion. We Tibetans alone can't decide this. Rather, it should be decided in collaboration with Buddhists from all over the world. (Quoted in Chodron 2005)

During the first Conference on Tibetan Buddhism in Europe two months later in Zurich, the Dalai Lama repeated the same opinion, but suggested that Western nuns should organize a committee and to carry out the work. He personally donated 50,000 Swiss francs to the cause (see Chinvarakorn 2007). His speech disappointed many conference participants who anticipated the Dalai Lama would deliver a more promising announcement regarding bhikkhuni ordination (Tomalin 2009).

To bridge the gap between women from different Buddhist traditions, the International Association of Buddhist Women, also known as Sakyadhita (Daughters of the Buddha), was organized by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Ayya Khema, and Chatsumarn Kabilisingh in 1987. The association positions itself as the governing body of the international Buddhist women's movement. It has two major objectives: educating Buddhist women and restoring the bhikkhuni saṅgha (Fenn and Koppedrayer 2008). Through conferences and networking, the organization has promoted dialogue among Buddhist women from different cultures. Major issues remain, however. The association helped some Theravāda women receive bhikkhuni ordination through Korean nuns in 1996 and Taiwanese nuns in 1998 as "international" or "transnational" rather than Mahāyāna ordinations. Insisting on their Theravāda identity and integrity, none of these nuns consider themselves Mahāyāna, nor do they wear robes as in Korean or Chinese traditions (Tomalin 2009). However, their ordinations are not recognized by other Theravāda women, who ironically question the ordained nuns on which version of the Eight Heavy Rules the latter observe (Cheng 2007). The gap between the three traditions seems to have narrowed very little.

Cross-cultural differences may also be a problem for Sakyadhita's education objective. Buddhism attracts many upper-middle-class intellectuals in the Western world (beyond the diasporic Asian population). With the advantages in language (English hegemony) and training in feminist theory, Western Buddhist women appear to dominate the conversation, although some efforts to merge the needs of Western Buddhist women with those of their Asian sisters have been consciously cultivated. In studying Sakyadhita, some observers point out that the organization tends to "prioritize and reflect western feminist approaches and interests" and values Buddhist scholarship/theory over practice (Tomalin 2009, 94; Fenn and Koppedrayer 2008, 50). Although it may be unavoidable, the creation of a Western Buddhism might further divide Buddhism rather than promote unity. The needs for women in existing Buddhist traditions vary greatly. Whether Sakyadhita's current objectives can benefit all Buddhist women and whether it is even possible to promote one common agenda given the diverse nature of Buddhism and feminism remain to be seen.

Notes

1. This paper uses the pinyin system for Chinese names and phrases in English because it is the most commonly used system internationally. However, exceptions are made for those authors who prefer the Wade-Giles system with works published in English. In these cases, pinyin romanization of their names is provided in parentheses after the Wade-Giles romanization.

2. This paper generally uses Pali spelling for Buddhist terms except for in quotations and references, where I have retained the authors' original spellings.

3. Buddhism developed into three major schools. Theravāda is generally viewed as the oldest surviving Bud-

dhism and the school that most closely resembles the original Buddhism, with the most conservative theology and practice. It is popular in South and Southeast Asia, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Mahāyāna is viewed as a reformed Buddhism with a relatively liberating ideal of gender equality. It became a mainstream movement in the fifth century and eventually spread northeast from India to East Asia, including China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The third school of Buddhist thought is Vajrayāna, also known as Tantric Buddhism, practiced in Tibet, Mongolia, and Western China. It is an offshoot of Mahāyāna Buddhism and is classified as the fifth or the final period of Indian Buddhism.

4. For instance, there are 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns in Theravāda tradition; 253 for monks and 264 for nuns in Vajrayāna tradition; and 250 for monks and 348 for nuns in Mahāyāna tradition. Most additional rules are gender specific and thus apply only to nuns (see Tsedroen 2006; Tomalin 2009).

5. As indicated in the *Saṅgha Magazine's* website (http://www.sanghamag.org), the publication is for nuns and monks only. The general public has no direct access to the magazine. I therefore rely on Chao-hwei's account for the content of the story.

6. Buddhist feminists argue that the Eight Garudhammas resulted from the First Buddhist Council, held three months after the Buddha passed away. The Council's purpose was to safeguard the purity and orthodoxy of Buddhist doctrines and discipline. One result was the compilation of Buddhism's canon, which came to be especially important for Theravāda Buddhism. Five hundred arahant (enlightened monks) attended the meeting—neither nuns nor laypeople were invited. The conservative Mahākassapa, the principle disciple of Buddha, led the meeting and handpicked the participants, against the more reform-minded Ānanda who was castigated for violating Brahmanical rules. Half of Ānanda's accused errors involved women (i.e., assistance in establishing the nuns' monastic order; permission given to women to pay respect to Buddha's body before men were allowed to do so; and assumed carelessness in not preventing women's teardrops from falling on the Buddha's body). In defending himself, Ānanda argued that Buddha instructed his disciples not to be confined by minor rules. Mahākassapa pressed for specification of such rules. The Buddha did not define them, Ānanda answered. Mahākassapa concluded that without specification from Buddha, no rule would be considered minor (see Laohavanich 2008).

7. Xuanzang (c. 602–664 CE) was probably the most well-known Chinese Buddhist monk in history. Ordained at the age of twenty, he spent much of his adult life searching for and translating Buddhist scriptures. In 629, he reportedly embarked on a seventeen-year overland pilgrimage to India. This journey later inspired Wu Cheng'en's (吳承恩) classic novel *Journey to the West* (西遊記).

8. Self-immolation is one form of body offering in Buddhism and has been practiced in Chinese Buddhism since the early medieval period. The *Lotus Sutta*, a major Mahāyāna scripture, contains probably the most famous case of self-immolation: the Bodhisattva Medicine King sets himself on fire to express his devotion to the Buddha. In this Sutta, the Buddha praises his action and opens up the practice to all. This story of auto-cremation has provided the scriptural inspiration and authority for the practice. In examining accounts of self-immolation in Chinese Buddhist history, Benn (2007) points out that Chinese Buddhists have believed that the practice is a selfless stimulus that evokes a cosmic response. The practice could (often simultaneously) produce at least three types of responses: the rulers responding to the needs of the people within human society, the cosmos responding to human's petitions, and the soul's (possibility of) becoming a Buddha. Benn argues that in the minds of many Buddhists, self-immolation is "far

from being a disrupting force, [but] an act that [is] supremely in harmony with the universe...." (Benn 2007, 6).

9. While Cheng deserves praise for giving voice to her nun informants, her failure to point out problems with such a quotation could lead to misunderstandings. First, anyone who pays attention to the controversy should have known how frequently Chao-hwei uses theory and Buddhist literature to support her claims. Second, a call for a conference to resolve the issue might not have been viable because the Buddhist hierarchy was still mostly controlled by males. Third, Chao-hwei does not dispute the sacredness of the Vinaya, but the quotation misses the central point she was trying to make: at least parts of the Eight Heavy Rules were not entirely laid down by the Buddha, but were a later addition to Buddhist literature. Fourth, the claim about the rights of the laity within the Buddhist community can be disputed (see above). Fifth, there are cases where few would dispute the need for outside interference in one's family affairs, particularly when domestic violence is involved. Sixth, Chao-hwei had been in the national arena for a few decades by the time of this incident and thus had accumulated fame for herself over the preceding years. Accusing her of using the event merely for her personal gain cannot be entirely justified.

10. This informant incorrectly includes the United States and Burma in Mahāyāna Buddhism and fails to understand that only Japanese Buddhism allows monks to have a married life.

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Just Like Us: Elizabeth Kendall's Imperfect Quest for Equality

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Abstract: This essay analyzes United States academic Elizabeth Kendall's 1913 travelogue *A Wayfarer in China* through the lenses of gender and criticism of imperialism. In China, Kendall sought to transcend social norms while reflecting empathetically, though sometimes contradictorily, on the lives of the people she encountered. In her travelogue, Kendall is exploring China's wild areas but also the metaphysical, untamed space beyond conventions in a quest for gender equality and cultural autonomy. She also defends Chinese immigrants in the US at a time of overwhelming anti-Asian prejudice.

Keywords: Kendall (Elizabeth), China, travel literature, women, imperialism, immigration

First published in 1913, then forgotten, and republished in 2011 (a century after the author's journey), Elizabeth Kendall's (1865–1952) *A Wayfarer in China* has yet to receive scholarly attention placing it within the well-established frameworks of female travel literature and critical study of colonialism through travelogues. Kendall's well-written narrative involves bold forays into remote lands at a crucial moment in China's history (as dynastic rule was drawing to an end) and equally bold statements regarding the cultures that the author encounters. Her perspective is sometimes startlingly contemporary for its critique of cultural domination, including both the presence of the West in China and the Han majority subjugating Tibetans and other indigenous minorities. At other times, Kendall appears to succumb to the dominant racist projections of her time while, in reality, possibly defending the Chinese in the most effective way she can.

Kendall is consistent in her insistence that women equal or exceed men in their ability to endure hardship, navigate the open road of unknown lands, and connect with the locals. This is a perspective common to many female travel writers of previous centuries, as seen in the works of Odette du Puigaudeau, Isabel Eberhardt, Alexandra David-Néel, and many others. Debunking male contemporaries for their clichés about conquering the hostile Other is a prominent feature of female travel literature. It has been demonstrated by Reina Lewis in *Gendering Orientalism* that women's limited access to Western superiority led to alternative and often less degrading representations of racial difference than those produced by their male contemporaries. Nicholas Clifford rejects this notion, however, when analyzing China travelogues of Kendall's contemporaries, including a large number of women (although his book contains only passing references to Kendall, in favor of better-known explorers such as Isabella Bird): He argues that race takes precedence over gender, giving these women the status of "temporary men" (2001, 30). This claim ignores the cultural baggage the female travelers carried with them as a consequence of having been cast in the role of women in their own countries. Even if she could live like a man while traveling, Kendall still received a lifetime of gender-based conditioning, which influenced her viewing of the people she encountered. In her

writings, she is caught precisely in the conflict between what she has experienced and what she believes. She vacillates between imperialist Western cultural conditioning and a universalist stance of embracing the Other as akin to herself.

When Sara Mills describes women's writings as "more tentative than male writing [and] less able to assert the 'truths' of British imperialism" (2003, 3), she suggests that women leaving the beaten path of imposed "femininities" were less on the side of norms, having realized that the interests of their culture's men are not necessarily aligned with their own. Regarding women travelers, Mills writes: "It is in their struggle with the discourses of imperialism and femininity, neither of which they could wholeheartedly adopt, and which pulled them in different textual directions, that their writing exposes the unstable foundations on which it is based" (3). It is through this very instability that *A Wayfarer in China* opens new lanes of enquiry regarding feminism and anti-imperialism in travel literature of the early twentieth century. When faced with Kendall's colorful tales and idiosyncratic observations on culture, race, and gender, a reader must ask why there are so many contradictions in her writing. This article explores them and offers some possible answers within the framework of women travelers' discourse on gender and imperialism.

Kendall was a professor of history and political science at Wellesley College.[1] *A Wayfarer in China*, based on her travels in 1911 across remote areas of Western China, reflects a repeatedly expressed longing to reach "another world" (1913, 233, 247, 303), her ultimate compliment for places of natural beauty: an untamed space beyond restrictive norms, including those based on gender but also those rooted in the normative imperialist ideologies that place Western industrial globalization as a paradigm of progress. In this sense, Kendall was an early detractor of imperialism and a proponent of racial and cultural equality. She was ahead of her time in anticipating postcolonial and global feminism movements for diversity, as well as intersectional striving for gender and race equality. She was traveling at a time when China was in decline, precipitated by unequal treaties, Western military and commercial settlements, and the widespread use of opium following China's defeat against the British in the two Opium Wars (1839–60). Julia Lovell (2014) has demonstrated how crucial this defeat was to the financing of world imperialism through opium sales, and has argued that it is key to understanding China's current rhetoric, policies, and place in the world. Kendall was traveling at an influential moment in Chinese and world history. Phoebe Chow likens the push for free trade with China by Westerners during Kendall's time to a missionary activity due to its zealous ideological underpinnings (2017, 38). Colin Mackerra (2000) has shown how Western images of China have evolved in parallel with political power relations influenced by trade policies, largely as a legacy of the Opium Wars. Given that twentieth-century views on China are markedly different from the Orientalism of the previous centuries, Kendall must be contextualized as traveling through the twilight of modern China. The ambiguities noted above exist not only in her writing but also in China's outlook toward the future at a pivotal moment in the country's history, as well as in the West's attitudes toward China and Chinese immigration. It seems that one of Kendall's goals was to reassure her US readers that the Chinese are not a peril at a time when they were targeted by strict immigration policies and scapegoated when they did reach the US.

Kendall's views on herself as a female traveler reveal a rejection of gender bias. However, it is also important to note that there were a significant number of Western women traveling and writing at her time and during the previous two centuries. A recent article by Carl Thompson (2017) gives an excellent summary, including extensive bibliographical references, of these women's lives, how their work was received at the time, and contemporary scholarship. Throughout over twenty years of rediscovery and revival (through articles, books, reeditions, and anthologies), there remains the unresolved question of the nature and

significance of a possible generalized difference between male-authored and female-authored travelogues. According to Kendall herself, being a woman is actually beneficial in that it marks her as unthreatening to the people she meets and helps her interact with the locals: "It is true, I had some special advantages. I was an American and a woman, and no longer young. Chinese respect for grey hair is a very real thing; a woman is not feared as a man may be, and hostility is often nothing more than fear" (1913, ix). She portrays her own identity with an undercurrent of self-mockery: "I was a 'scholar,' a 'learned lady,' but what I had come for was not so clear. A missionary I certainly was not. Anyway, as a mere woman I was not likely to do harm" (52). Although she considers femininity an advantage for cross-cultural interactions, she also recognizes that she is going against the social norm, which generally allows freedom and autonomy to men alone (albeit with exceptions for women travel writers in certain circles). She expresses indignation with the men who try to discourage her by giving her bad advice and condescending warnings. In the preface, she states: "Of course I was told not to do it, it would not be safe, but that is what one is always told" (ix). Later, she is more specific in her denunciation: "the enemy was usually a well-bred, intelligent European or American with charming manners and the kindest intentions" (240). She deconstructs the warnings as reflecting irrational biases: "A request for some bit of information so often met with no facts, but simply the stern remark that it was not a thing for a woman to do" (238). In other words, these men do not take into consideration Kendall's strengths, knowledge, or ambition to explore new places, but rather reduce her to the category of woman, subject to the social norm of remaining in closed spaces or in male company.

Freedom from Imposed Alterities

In an indirect way typical of her narrative voice, Kendall refutes the warning that her dog (whom she brought with her from the United States for company throughout the entire journey) would be harmed by Mongolian dogs: "I knew my dog and he did not" (239). Extending her dog as an analogy for herself, Kendall asserts her own capacities as an individual, against the men who question the prudence of leading an expedition as a woman without white male company. Significantly, she does not encounter any such discouragements while actually traveling (she does sometimes meet Westerners), suggesting that she reaches places where such social norms no longer operate. She is only criticized while in larger cities, preparing her expeditions, and only by her own compatriots or other Westerners. Kendall is freer to pursue her goal of exploration in Chinese rather than Western company (this is largely due to white privilege but not exclusively so: She implies that the cultures she encounters are generally more woman-friendly than her own). Her travels in remote areas of China leave her free from warnings, which she considers irrational, and gender discrimination, which she considers unwarranted (since, according to Kendall, being a woman is an advantage when on an expedition). She is "unsafe" in the company of other Westerners in "civilized" areas, but ontologically safe and free when among native populations (Chinese and minority).[2]

Kendall's observations on her own experience suggest her awareness of a larger paradigm of male domination. She notes that the warnings she received were not based on any real knowledge of the risks involved, since those who offered them had not experienced the alleged dangers firsthand: "I found, as I had found before, that those who knew the country best were most ready to speed me onward" (ix). This also suggests that the risks themselves were less realities than products of the minds of urban Western men and women who were not explorers. When men do explore, however, Kendall claims that they are less adventurous than women: "Ordinarily the woman, if she has made up her mind to rough it, is far more

indifferent to soft lying and high living, than the man" (127). This observation goes against the stereotype perpetuated by the well-intentioned men who told her that Inner Mongolia, for example, is no place for a lady.

The luxury of solitude in places of natural beauty appears to compensate for the discomforts that Kendall experiences: "The inn at Lu-ku, a rather important little town, was most uncomfortable; but a delightful hour's rest and quiet on the river bank before entering the town freshened me up so much that the night did not matter" (89). Kendall has made up her mind not to complain; perhaps, as she suggests, this is because she and other women travelers are grateful to escape from oppressive norms and content to draw sustenance from the natural environment wherein there are no social norms at all. Kendall states that avoiding conventional travel (hotels, trains, guidebooks) is part of her plan (236, 290, 301). She specifically chooses little-explored routes, considering but rejecting the more popular paths, so that she "would not need to fear being too comfortable" (237). Comfort equals civilization, whose perks do not compensate for conventions of inequality. Kendall's descriptions imply that female travelers were more accepting of the rough conditions of remote areas because they had more to gain from leaving the comforts of urban and Western civilization behind. As shown by Mary Russell (1994), this theme is recurring in works of many women travel writers, who contradict stereotypes and insist that their abilities to withstand the ruggedness of the journey are not only equal to but very likely superior to those of men. It could be that Kendall is framing her own experiences to fit her larger case for women's competence as explorers.

Rejection of human civilization is a recurring theme in *A Wayfarer in China*. Kendall often detours the inn experience; in one instance, she sees a courtyard filled with pigs and insists on sleeping there instead of in her designated room, much to the horror of witnesses (63). There, on her bed in the hay, she enjoys an "unusually pleasant evening" (63). In another place, she "found an open loft which proved very possible after ejecting a few fowls" (94), following her rejection of the best room in the inn because of its offensive smell. Sleeping among animals (or napping by streams and graveyards) is a satisfying, refreshing experience for Kendall, while being confined in human spaces intended for her is often an annoyance that she insists on avoiding, finding her own surprising alternatives. This may be representative of how she perceives and reacts to norms on a larger scale. She insists on finding her own unexpected pathways and is satisfied with them. On another occasion, while waiting for a delayed ship, she lodges in an open shed with horses while others crowd into a waiting room. When she finally reaches her cabin on the ship, which she has to share with another passenger, she longs for her quiet corner in the open shed, remarking: "Civilization has some compensations, but half-civilization is not attractive" (307). Perhaps "civilization" in Kendall's case would mean having a cabin to herself, while complete lack thereof means being left alone under the open sky. Either way, it means freedom from others (and their gender bias) in the peace and quiet of one's own thoughts. It seems that the presence of compatriots within "civilization" (including on their way to it) is an annoyance to Kendall, whereas isolated Westerners living in the remote areas are desirable as occasional company. Local people can sometimes further her quest for transcending her society's norms, though she prefers to maintain a certain distance, at least during the first half of her journey: "If they came too near I laughed and waved them back, and they always complied good-naturedly" (44). The distance Kendall keeps from people suggests an individualistic quest to encounter the Other as an object of her own ideologies. Getting too close might blur the message she is trying to embody, articulate, and portray. In this way, she is like the Orientalist described by Edward Said, for whom the Orient is "a hard-to-reach object" to be interpreted but never really understood for what it is; it is also feminized as a mysterious Other, with metaphors of veiled women standing for an entire civilization: "This cultural, temporal, and

geographical distance was expressed in metaphors of depth, secrecy, and sexual promise" (Said 1978, 222). At the same time, however, as Lewis (1996) has described, women are much less likely to sexualize and racialize a culture than men are. Feminizing a culture does not operate as seamlessly when a person herself has also been subject to the stereotypes of femininity. This is not to deny the existence of white privilege among Western women travelers but only to explain why their regard was often not as objectifying as that of their male counterparts.

Privileged as a Westerner in imperialist times, Kendall utilizes the East to argue in favor of gender equality in a textured variety of ways. Just as she portrays the boldness of women as explorers compared with men, she insists on the ruggedness of the native women she meets. The persona she adopts as a writer (with her imperviousness to discomfort, for example) reflects her gendered agenda to enlarge the boundaries of femaleness and contradict the dominant stereotypes of her own culture. The lens through which she views the local people (albeit from a distance) also suggests that she is using them to portray an expanded view of male and female roles, through insisting on ways in which men and women she encounters do not fit the Western stereotypes (men with long hair and women wearing trousers being her most basic examples). Getting too close to the locals, however, may expose too many flaws in their own culture, not allowing it to fit a tidy image Kendall can use in her feminist quest for individual transcendence, combined with her unconventional (and conflicting) views on equality. Indeed, when she does get close, she betrays some of her professed ideals in a constant tension that is often influenced by the racism of her time, while at other moments her pendulum swings willfully free of them. She benefits from the "flexible positional superiority" described by Said, "which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient, without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (1978, 7). However, being a woman makes her more aware of the condition of otherness than her male counterparts—and perhaps it is the tension between her identification with a "universal" (in reality, white male) perspective, as a writer seeking credibility and readership, and her desire to advocate equality for women and, by extension, greater racial, cultural, and social equality, that accounts for her frequent contradictions.

Flowery Kingdoms or Anthill Humanity

In lieu of human contact, Kendall favors a spiritual connection with the land. This includes wilderness areas but also places where the land has been assiduously modified by human hands. Frequent critical descriptions of the austere accommodation she receives stand in contrast to her idyllic depictions of land wherein nature and human ingenuity coincide: "It was all charming, with the artificial beauty of a carefully ordered park" (156). Similarly: "All this day and the three succeeding ones we were traveling through a district park- or garden-like in its exquisite artificial beauty" (115; see also 22, 50). Highlighting both the aesthetic and functional values of such land, she praises "the garden-like cultivation of the Chinese" (162; see also 136, 169), further observing that "the Chinese has his garden as surely as the Englishman, only he spends his energy in growing things to eat" (260). The land, whether carefully tended or seductively wild, most often is portrayed as pleasant, including "the charm of a dilapidated village set in untidy gardens and groves of fine trees" (175). Her descriptions often verge on utopian, with fields "blossoming like the Garden of Eden" (167) or the writer finding herself in "the loveliest and most fertile spot in the Chinese Eden" (180). The implied comparison is with her own country, which is no longer paradise, having fallen from the divine grace of harmony with nature. Kendall equates paradise with sparsely populated areas with little or no

influence from the West. In such places, she can bond with the land and sometimes its people in a way that furthers her quest to leave civilization (sometimes Western civilization, sometimes any civilization) behind. Her Eden imagery grafts a religious discourse of Christianity onto rural China, and hence, while seeming to commend the Chinese, it also degrades them by incorporating them into a Western framework. China only exists in reference to the West—even as heaven to Western hell, it cannot stand as its own culture. This framing is not, however, used by Kendall for imperialist or even Orientalist purposes but rather to produce a paradigm. As a political scientist, Kendall is interested in what direction the world is moving and searching for ideas on how societies should evolve, which might be applicable to her own country. Thompson brings up a relevant distinction between travel literature's purpose today (escape and entertainment) as opposed to previous centuries, in which it served to reflect upon and provoke debates regarding social, political, and economic issues in the writer's country, as well as about international or global matters (2017, 136). The utopian/dystopian leitmotif espoused by Kendall must be viewed from this angle.

Kendall's utopian élan recalls feminist and other progressive movements in her own country. Feminist utopian novels by authors such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman were being published in the United States at Kendall's time. Gilman's first novel, *Moving the Mountain* (1911), depicted a female explorer in Tibet and made an explicit link between this "primitive" culture and an ideal society to be forged in New York City, particularly with regard to gender equality. Her later and more famous novel *Herland* (1914) also challenged dominant ideas of what is civilized and what is primitive by depicting technological and social innovations perfected by a remote enclave of women. With proto-ecofeminist zeal, Gilman has them working in harmony with nature, shunning personal accumulation of wealth. Like Gilman's, Kendall's utopian descriptions may be designed to entice readers who are already interested in the idea that a better world exists somewhere in the Far East—a mountainous Shangri-la of equality where women hold their own—and spur them into a critical assessment of their own society.

Kendall's satisfying encounters with native people consistently occur in places of natural beauty, assimilating the locals into nature, not culture: "I laughed, and everyone else laughed, and in five minutes I was sitting on the grass under the walnut trees, offerings of flowers and mulberries on my lap, and while the whole population sat around on stone walls and house roofs, the village head man took off my shoes and rubbed my weary feet" (60). These people are not representative of a stifling and gender-biased civilization but rather exist, in Kendall's mind, as extensions of a joyful and fruitful natural landscape. The entire population of a small village is tolerable to Kendall, as long as they retain a childlike or Edenic quality (strewing her lap with fruits and berries and using laughter instead of speech). She also suggests that they are beyond knowledge of and/or shame about sensual pleasures, as the man massages her feet without any apparent awkwardness from anyone, an unlikely situation in her own civilization at the time.

When she arrives in more populous areas, with their indications of Western presence, Kendall's descriptions inverse the utopian motif: "the horrible land was all alive with swarming, toiling, ant-hill humanity. It was a nightmare" (228). This suggests that she is not only critical of the gender bias of Western civilization but also of its imperialist presence. Her own awareness as a woman breaking free in spite of repressive and unjust constraints contributes to her empathy for the Chinese, who are, in contrast to neighboring countries of the time, effectively resisting colonial domination. The last of the Chinese dynasties (the Qing), led by Manchurians and not by the (nonetheless privileged) Han majority, fell later the same year Kendall was traveling (1911), giving way to the Republic of China, which lasted until the Communist revolution of 1949. China under the Qing dynasty controlled a large part of not only what is today Inner Mongolia (still a province of China) but also Outer Mongolia, which gained independence later

in 1911, when Russian-occupied large stretch of Outer Mongolian plains also became independent, together forming the country known as Mongolia today (Sunderland 2004). Of the ethnically Mongolian lands that Kendall was riding across, some were colonized by Russians and some by Chinese. According to Kendall, government did not play a large part in the lives of the people she met, except in the cases of (non-Western) colonialism and (Western) imperialism, both of which she frequently criticized.

Siding with the Other

As a Caucasian woman, Kendall was part of the imperially dominant race yet the nondominant gender. In her travelogue, her personal experience as a woman questioning restrictive gender-based norms also appears to further identification with the native peoples subjected to imperialist presence, as she frequently distances herself from other Caucasians to align with subjugated populations. Her criticisms of Western imperialism can be seen in the utopian/dystopian schema through which she describes China existing for/by itself and China under Western influence. For example, the Great Wall is "a huge protecting arm," the sight of it flawless until she spots the American Legation below: "clean, comfortable, uncompromising, and alien" (232). Alien to whom? To that particular landscape, to China, to herself: China emerges as a shield against Kendall's own alienating civilization, a Great Wall separating transcendence from routine conformity to debilitating norms. Here, China's flaws are due to the West and not to China itself; they are the results of foreign military settlement.

Kendall criticizes imperialism as a hostile form of domination that pretends to be beneficial and amenable: "It is not to be wondered at that the people of Yunnan are alive to the danger of foreign interference, for they see the British on the west and much more the French on the south, peering with greedy eyes and clutching hands over the border.... they have more the aspect of a fortified outpost in a hostile country than the residence of the peaceful representative of a friendly power" (29). This is similar to how she perceives the "well-intentioned" gentlemen who try to interfere with her own autonomous plans. They are ominous, not friendly. China rejecting imperialism is a metaphor for her rejection of male influence in her own life. She frequently expresses her affinities with China and the Chinese, suggesting that the West has a lot to learn from the East and is not learning as much as it should, just as male explorers could learn from women who are more rugged and intrepid than them when facing the perils of travel. Moreover, imparting Western values destroys Chinese manners, which are in fact superior in Kendall's view: "I have met bad manners in the Flowery Kingdom, but not among the natives" (129). Acknowledging the "rose-colored" image she gives of China, Kendall says this must be excused from someone who during months of traveling "never met anything but courtesy and consideration from all" (321). Her Orientalist longing for an exotic, idealized East is nonetheless tempered by a gender-prescribed assimilation with the Other and balanced by a harsh political criticism of imperialism—rare for her time, and even more so when linked with a critique of gender bias. Alongside her specific denunciations of the Western presence in China, she criticizes imperialism as an institution.

Kendall describes the shops in Chengdu as "truly native undertakings," which "show what the Chinese can do for themselves," yet admits that the new commercial arcade has "all the artifice of the West" (175). It seems her feelings are mixed regarding the benefits of imitating the imperial culture, just as she suggests that women do not and should not imitate their male counterparts in exploration. Kendall describes a place she calls Lololand, on the western borders of Szechwan and Yunnan provinces, which is not under Chinese rule

but governed by tribal chiefs. Considered savages by the Han colonists nearby, they nonetheless (or perhaps because of this) earn Kendall's respect. They are darker, taller, and, significantly, "better formed" than the Chinese. Kendall's indirect narrative voice employs physical descriptions to convey value judgements: "Their features are good and they have a frank, direct expression which is very attractive" (76). The women are described as "holding firmly to the feminine petticoats" (76), unlike the trouser-wearing Chinese. The fact that Kendall describes them as having *retained* something that the Chinese have lost ("holding firmly to") implies that progress itself is both undesirable and linked to the dominant population. (Kendall was probably aware, despite her employment of this rhetorical device, that the Han Chinese women were not evolving into trouser wearing and therefore the Lolos could not be said to retain a custom the Han had given up.) Kendall's metonymical narrative strategies serve to draw indigenous women closer to her own culture, bridging the gap between them and herself through symbolic devices such as clothing and physical features. She likens the Lolo women to Italians (thus closer to her own European ancestry) "in feature and color" and describes their dress as "more European than Chinese" (90). Although this would certainly be true of the minority groups in northwestern Xinjiang, her descriptions are applied to members of Tibetan subgroups, who would be unlikely to differ morphologically to a significant extent from Han Chinese. The photographs included by Kendall also do not suggest any such difference.

Although critical of the institution of imperialism as well as Western cultural influences, Kendall does not condemn individuals. She idealizes a group of French nuns passing by, their mere presence making the place "purer and better," and describes the local native women, ethnic minorities, as "alert and intelligent" (142). In this case, women are described along similarly positive lines, regardless of cultural differences between them. Perhaps it is this affinity among women that Kendall is seeking when she dissolves national boundaries. The Mongolian woman is, by Kendall's account, "as much a man as her husband, smoking, riding astride, managing the camel trains with a dexterity equal to his" (261). Kendall is seeking the same universal human identity for herself and for all women. Rejecting both male domination and cultural imperialism, she implies that the West, with its "well-intentioned enemies," has a lot to learn from indigenous nomads. In this way, she takes a position against modernity—another way to reject her own country and the Western imperialism dominant in the world. She does not believe in a linear course of human evolution that equates industrialization with social progress, a belief used to justify Western imperialism. She perceives the natives she encounters throughout her journey as closer to nature and also more egalitarian, especially the non-Han peoples. At times, however, she seems less interested in their realities than in how she can stage them to act out her own convictions. These include an ideological desire for equality between men and women, and possibly between cultures, though this latter point is less easy to act upon, as Kendall seems held back on many occasions by dominant racial prejudices and stereotypes.

Contradictions and Credibility

Kendall seems to be the Jekyll and Hyde of racial equality. Her shifting between ideological personas is most likely due to her inward and outward exploration of how far she can or is willing to go beyond social norms, and possibly of how much she can deviate from them and still be read and respected by her peers. Her troubling contradictions may also explain why she has been given so little scholarly attention. It would be easy, but unfortunate, to dismiss her work as totally unreliable because of its flagrant and radical

inconsistencies. The extent of such contradictions in her work suggests that she herself was torn between conventions and autonomy regarding her views on race and culture.

By the time she reaches Mongolia, Kendall's references to her nameless cohort of servants (guide, translator, carriers) give way to a dichotomy represented by two of them: Wang and Ivan. Their binary colonized/colonizing relationship highlights Kendall's identification with the former and withholding solidarity from the latter.[3] At the time of her travels, Mongolia was colonized by both Russia and China. Kendall considers the Russians to be white like herself, but this does not in any way create feelings of greater proximity. She describes her Russian guide Ivan as "a thoroughly bad sort, lazy, stupid, sullen, and brutal to his horses" (297), which appears to be the only incidence of biting criticism towards an individual throughout her travelogue. Her servants have acquired names now, especially since she has found an excellent Chinese assistant, Wang, in largely Russian-colonized Mongolia. Kendall expresses much fondness for Wang, often citing examples of his competence in contrast with the Russian members of her crew. If she feels more at home among the Chinese, this is certainly an example of such an affinity. She illustrates her preference for Wang in an episode when everyone gets drenched by rain due to the Russians' incompetence, and she is happy to have Wang curl up under her cart in his sheepskin while the Russians can go and sleep on the open ground: "I commit them cheerfully to all the joys of rheumatism" (298). (Although for a contemporary reader it may seem strange that letting a man curl up under her cart can be seen as a gesture of respect and cozy, norm-bending proximity.) The Russians she describes are brutal in their actions, taking over Mongolian land, but friendly to all on an individual level; other whites, whom she calls Anglo-Saxon, are more reserved individually but fairer, Kendall says, in matters of policy.[4] She is eager to criticize the Russians in favor of the Chinese, demonstrating that to her whiteness does not automatically create proximity, while, ironically, one of her harshest judgements is aimed at the Russians' disinterest in racial segregation, a bewildering example of Kendall's many disturbing contradictions. It is all the stranger in that Kendall congratulates herself frequently on eating with locals and using their accommodation where male travelers rely on their own supplies.

Russians are clearly the least favorite among the ethnic groups that Kendall encounters. Nonetheless, she praises a Russian settler who has the pride of "a good New England woman showing her parlour" (283). Arriving at this woman's house after arduous travel with infrequent meals is part of the narrative's utopian-dystopian motif. This angel of the house keeps her abode spotless and her children in perfect discretion, and prepares sumptuous fresh food. She is a paragon of efficiency and cleanliness, from her tidy red bonnet to her floors without a speck of dust, even under the sofa (Kendall checked). Like the "Lolos" who look like Europeans, this frontier woman is likened to someone from Kendall's own region. This persistent need to draw people closer to her, especially those living beyond the pale of dominant conventions, includes but is not limited to minority groups.

Kendall suggests that distinctions between ethnic groups, and how we perceive them, are as superficial as the clothing their members wear. In a candid but somewhat troubling passage, she claims that she cannot assert herself as forcefully as she might wish on the Chinese she encounters in the city, who "looked like Western men" in their dress and can no longer be treated like "beasts of burden" (291).[5] This suggests a more imperialistic attitude than stated in her summary of the relationships she maintains with her servants: "Pay them fairly, treat them considerately, laugh instead of storm at the inevitable mishaps of the way, and generally they will give you faithful, willing service" (43). Kendall frequently contradicts her own statements of racial and cultural egalitarianism, suggesting she is not entirely free from the dominant norms she seeks to escape. This is most explicit in her support for racial segregation in Russian-Chinese interactions, all the

more strange in that she has taken pride in traveling alongside the Chinese, sharing food and lodging with them.

Kendall show her support for segregationist practices when a Russian asks Wang to have tea with himself and Kendall, and she considers the point in Wang's favor when he refuses: Wang "understood what was suitable better than the Russian" (291) by taking his tea on the other side of the room. Yet it seems that for months she has been eating and drinking with locals, without any mention of racial segregation. In Mongolia, especially, she mixes with the locals in shared mirth: "The Mongols were gay young fellows, taking a kindly interest in my doings. One, the wag of the party, was bent on learning to count in English, and each time he came by me he chanted his lesson over, adding number after number until he reached twenty. The last few miles before getting into camp was the time for a good race" (258). She notes that Mongolians and Chinese are "free from inconvenient prejudices" (279) and thus willing to share her tent and provisions when it is too rainy for them to make a fire and cook their own food. Here, it is significant that Kendall considers gender- and race-based divisions as both inconvenient and prejudiced. She is not, however, consistent in this view insofar as race is concerned. Significantly, it is specifically the contact between two local residents—one white, one nonwhite—that provokes such thoughts in Kendall. Perhaps it is that she does not like to *see* the races mix but implicitly does not consider *herself* as belonging to any race, as part of her general transcendence of the self's fixed identities, in order to move beyond the norms of her civilization. Admittedly, this is a disappointing blind spot in someone who elsewhere takes pride in sharing the company of the Chinese and defends subjugated peoples seemingly out of a sense of justice.

When Kendall witnesses the subjugation of minority populations by the Han Chinese, her affinities usually shift towards the oppressed minority tribes. Observing a deserted outpost, she mentions that the Chinese are constantly expanding further westward, moving on as soon as their hold on a place is assured. She calls it the Chinese "occupation" (114), implying an unjust takeover of land that is not rightfully theirs. This critical terminology, however, is not consistently employed, as on other occasions Kendall uses positive terms such as "achievements": "Those who deny the Chinese all soldierly qualities must have forgotten their achievements against the Tibetans" (126). This passing reference could be an instance of subtle irony, as her more detailed examples consistently side with the colonized. "Achievements" could also be understood as countering the point of view of those Westerners who criticized the Chinese for their lack of bellicosity (with Kendall thus characteristically supporting an underdog, even if at the expense of people with even lower status). Could her remarks be seen as intentionally ironic when she describes the Chinese in racial terms as "blue-gowned men of the ruling race, fairer, smaller, feebler, and yet undoubtedly master" and comments, "It was the triumph of the organizing mind over the brute force of the lower animal" (124)? It is possible that Kendall is not describing what she feels to be true but ironically portraying—even caricaturing—a dominant ethos. It also may be true that she is including dominant stereotypes that she feels will help her gain readership and credibility. One other possibility for such discrepancies in her views on racial equality or integration is that Kendall's views evolved while she was traveling, and that the book, written from her notes and diaries, does not always take her most recent view into account. Most likely, however, she is making a case in favor of the Chinese because they are the ones most in need of positive identification among US readers, in a time of overwhelming prejudices targeting Chinese immigrants.

A Pro-immigrant Stance

Kendall is aware of the importance of Chinese immigration and the racist attitudes towards the Chinese in the United States. At the time of her travels, the workers and workers' unions were often against immigration, contesting that the Chinese brought wages and benefits down and supposedly took jobs from Americans, while the bosses were in favor of expanding immigrant labor. As is true in today's United States, anti-immigration sentiments often reflect, exacerbate, excuse, or mask racism. Although the country was founded on immigration, certain ethnic groups are labelled "un-American" and scapegoated for the US's problems, whatever they may be at the time. The Chinese immigrants Kendall observed worked in mines, in laundry shops, and on railroads, with conditions that other workers would not accept. There was much racial discrimination in both policies and attitudes towards the Chinese; more so than for any other immigrant group in US history, as historian Erika Lee demonstrates in her book *At America's Gates*. The Anti-Coolie Act of 1862 stipulated a monthly tax specific to the Chinese; the Naturalization Act of 1870 limited citizenship to whites and blacks; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was a ban on Chinese immigration that lasted until 1943; it also denied citizenship to Chinese already in the US and was the first immigration policy to target a specific ethnic group. Other Asians, such as the Japanese, were not affected by this policy; in fact, they were sought to replace Chinese workers. Only during WWII did policy shift to persecuting the Japanese and granting citizenship and (very limited) immigration quotas to the Chinese.

Although it is difficult to imagine an Asian counterpart of Kendall, a Chinese woman venturing through the wilds of the United States just to see what was there, with a cortege of local servants and guides, Chinese people were an ordinary presence in many parts of the US throughout Kendall's life. The vast majority were men, as it was even more difficult for Chinese women to obtain visas. Boston had a thriving Chinatown, established around 1870. Kendall may have been in the nearby city of Wellesley, Massachusetts in 1903, when 234 Chinese were arrested in Boston's Chinatown for failure to produce their papers during a raid. Although whites and blacks expressed solidarity with the Chinese in the context of the raid, including friends and spouses of the Chinese, this raid occurred in the context of rampant anti-Chinese sentiment. This makes it all the more significant when Kendall feels at home in China and likens the Chinese to herself in particular and to United States Americans in general. (It is also interesting to note that Kendall returned to China in the 1920s to teach at Yenching University [Clifford 2001, xvii], suggesting an ongoing affinity.) She was writing at a time when Chinese were often refused reentry to the United States, even after spending much of their lives in the country, but were also fighting back using the legal system (Lee 2005, 141). This is eerily reminiscent of Donald Trump's recent actions targeting specific immigrant groups, suggesting that the US has always been and remains today a land of immigrants, their defenders, and those who scapegoat them.

Kendall consistently sides with the least industrialized and/or most oppressed ethnic groups, shifting this affinity according to context. The Han Chinese are oppressors with regard to minorities (they comprise the army, which is responsible for occupying minority lands), but are oppressed in the United States. Kendall concludes her account by affirming similarities with the Chinese; a closeness that allows her even to state that she felt "at home" among them (310). This may be an implicit message for her compatriots, during Sinophobic times: If the Chinese are "like us," we should not be singling them out for the strictest immigration policies or conducting police raids into their neighborhoods; if Kendall feels at home among them, Americans should also make them feel at home. In a context that scapegoats "the Chinaman" or "the Coolie" as an exotic and dangerous Other responsible for economic hardships, her observations on how "like us" the Chinese are do not seem superficial. There are, however, many contradictions in Kendall's

outlook, which may be explained by her desire to publish an acceptable travelogue for a public bound by the norms of a specific time and place. Through analysis and contextualization of her arguments, it seems apparent that the writer is trying to do more than gain personal credibility. She seeks to use her voice to defend the Chinese at a time of crisis for this immigrant population in the US. By reassuring her contemporaries that the Chinese are a worthy people not so different from themselves, she is assuaging an overwhelming collective fear (and may in fact be protecting and saving lives). In the context of virulent prejudice resulting in raids, murders, reentry refusals, and property confiscations, her goal may not have been total intellectual lucidity but rather making the Chinese appear likeable and acceptable, even if this means resorting strategically to stereotypes and racism. She assures readers that the Chinese like Wang, who refuses to drink tea with the Russians, will stay safely in their racially determined and circumscribed place. Perhaps this is not what she believes but a compromise that she thinks will be most effective in erasing the Americans' feeling of being threatened by the Chinese. She must choose her transgressions carefully and does not always do so consistently. In her writing, there is, nonetheless, a recurrent identification with the Other and rejection of dominant powers. She makes a bold, egalitarian statement; although it is not formulated consistently, it still holds power and meaning. These inconsistencies may suggest a woman caught between her own overwhelming desire for freedom, her own society's norms, her desire to defend the Chinese from persecution in the US, and incomplete, inchoate views on cultural autonomy.

To further her own positive identification with the Chinese, Kendall likens them to United States Americans. She notes the Chinese love of money and material gain, which she characterizes as equal to that of her own compatriots. Like the Americans of her time, Chinese shun religion and will not bow to religious leaders. They are more interested in "the bread-and-butter, or, more precisely, rice, aspect of life" (311). She also makes some sweeping observations of the forces guiding the world's nations: in America and in Europe, the chief concern is industry, which controls policy. In China, material interests are also the strongest, with merchants as the "strong men" of society, rather than priests (as in India) or soldiers in Japan (312). As Lovell suggests, the marriage of Chinese love of business and Western love of industry is a cornerstone of today's world, lending a prescient tone to Kendall's observations. When Kendall was traveling, much of the world was colonized, divided among European powers, which was justified by racial pretexts. Today it may seem trite for an American to say that the Chinese are "just like us," but at her time, it may have been both intended and received as a radical sociopolitical statement.

Conclusion

Kendall was travelling at a crucial time in China's modern history and seems aware of this in her text, especially since *A Wayfarer in China* was published two years after her voyage, and thus after some key events had already taken place. She mentions China's new experiment in government, founding a republic, and thinks that it will succeed, although she admits this is a totally new concept for China. She presents the Chinese government as almost libertarian in its hands-off approach and the little influence it has on the people: "The tyranny of the majority may exist in China, but it is not exercised through the Government" (313). It is interesting that she chooses a pejorative term to refer to democracy.[6] Again, this could be seen as an implicit criticism of the Western political culture, for which democracy is a founding attribute. Following this logic, Kendall's own society is tyrannical; China may be too, but this is not an institutionalized pattern. Similarly, she states, a Chinese person "is not a government product, nor is he likely to be just yet" (313).

At the same time, the Chinese, according to Kendall, are "democratic" in nature, thereby placing a political cornerstone of the West in an Eastern context and furthering her notion that the Chinese are the most "like us" (and/or have the potential to be).[7] It corresponds to (justifies?) her overall feeling of "at-homeness" in China, and by extension her argument regarding the Americans' similarities with the group that is most alienated in her own country, which implies the need to improve their situation.

In addition to her plea in favor of the Chinese as model immigrants, Kendall appears to have another (somewhat conflicting) agenda. "Progress" in the forms of imperialist expansion, Western dominance, and even industrial capitalism is not desirable to her on a personal level; she also considers it undesirable for the people who are subjected to these processes and, more generally, as a paradigm for the world's development. Whether she believes "progress" is on an inevitable, linear course or whether alternatives can exist is not clearly explained. Kendall does, however, suggest that those who are the least "civilized" according to Western or Han Chinese standards are actually more advanced (and also more akin to Westerners). She frequently mentions women and recurrently universalizes their experience by citing them as the representative members of their ethnic group. This hints at some possibility of evolving under a paradigm that reflects virtues and values of traditional indigenous cultures, including women's voices as well as the new utopian ideologies in the United States at her time.

"Everywhere there is interest, for everywhere there is human nature" (vii); and this human nature, Kendall implies in the book's last sentence, is much the same the world over.[8] During a cross-cultural encounter, a Western traveler of Kendall's time could not, perhaps, avoid essentializing the Other. Welcoming Mongolian women into her tent is less a way for Kendall to learn about their lives and more to get beyond the oppressive norms of her own. Yet their proximity reminds her that there is something different in the world from Western civilization, and she is right there in the middle of this deeply foreign culture, transcending conventions and prejudices. Kendall's travelogue articulates an imperfect but significant statement of racial equality that is rare for her time, and a relentless identification with the Other that implicitly acknowledges the original social paradigm of Othering: of women in a world of male false universals.

Notes

1. Wellesley College, one of America's top liberal arts colleges, is located in the greater Boston area and remains a women's college today, with notable alumnae such as Hillary Clinton. Its founding goal was to prepare students for "great conflicts, for vast reforms in social life" (Wellesley College 2007). There is little biographical information available about Kendall. She is briefly mentioned in Kuehn 2008 and 2009.

2. "Minority" refers here to ethnic groups indigenous to China but not part of the Han majority. These include the Manchus, who were the ruling dynasty of the time (although the Han were still privileged and culturally dominant). Most minority groups did not fare so well, and there was active conquest (witnessed by Kendall) of their lands and subjugation to Han culture. Tibetans and Mongolians within colonized territories are some, but not all, among the minority groups encountered by Kendall.

3. At the time of Kendall's travels, Mongolia was fighting for independence from China, which it gained just months later, with the help of Russia. It was a loosely knit territory of fiefdoms, and much of the land, before and after independence, was owned by Russians and Chinese since Mongolians did not traditionally recognize land ownership.

4. For example, "An Englishman or an American would scarcely have asked my boy to sit at table with us, but on the other hand he would have spared the Mongol's poor little hayfield" (293).

5. As she explains, "nowhere else in my journeyings did I encounter such dawdling and shiftlessness—but there at least you may relieve your feelings by storming a bit and stirring things up; these people, however, looked like Western men, and one simply could not do it" (291).

6. That the majority can act wrongly was recognized as a potential flaw of democracy as far back as the Greeks and the founding of (Western) democracy itself. The term "tyranny of the majority" was coined by John Adams and later used by Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill. It has since been often used as a synonym for democracy when the intent is to criticize it.

7. "And the Chinese is democratic in very much the same way that the American is" (313; see also 203). In addition to the love of freedom, democracy (or egalitarianism) and opportunism seem to be the dominant traits Kendall ascribes to both her own people and those she meets halfway around the world: "the Chinese, in so many things essentially democratic, abases himself before the power of riches as much as the American, and far more than any other Asiatic" (314).

8. The theme of human nature is also prominent in the preface, where Kendall suggests that human nature, everywhere, is essentially good—a belief she shares with the Transcendentalist movement.

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The SlutWalk Movement: A Study in Transnational Feminist Activism

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Abstract: In the past two years the term "slut" ricocheted through the North American media and showed up on signs and banners on every continent as young feminists and their allies launched a series of demonstrations under the name of SlutWalks. In January 2011, a Toronto police officer told students at York University that if women wanted to avoid rape they should not dress like sluts. This incident sparked international outrage, with protests spreading quickly throughout the world, and revealed the misogyny and victim-blaming vitriol that characterize contemporary patriarchal culture. In the wake of the global SlutWalk movement, important questions have emerged about "reclaiming" the word "slut," whether this form of protest effectively challenges rape cultures, whether it promotes sexual agency while deploring slut-shaming, and whether it reflects the aspirations of women of color who face different historical and cultural realities without the cushion of white privilege. Using the theoretical framework of transnational feminism and drawing on social-movement research, the goals of this paper are to examine the global SlutWalk movement and to interrogate its significance as a resistance strategy that challenges patriarchal attempts to control women's sexualities through sexual violence and slut-shaming.

In the past two years the term "slut" ricocheted through the North American media and showed up on signs and banners on every continent. A new form of protest emerged called SlutWalks, initiated by young feminists who were furious with victim-blaming, slut-shaming patriarchal cultures. These protests were unlike any in the past, their mood upbeat and playful but at the same time deadly serious. People in outrageous attire with drums beating, bodies painted and dressed in vamp couture, comingled with mothers in jeans strolling babies, men, transgender people, nuns, and others. They marched, they carried homemade signs, they had speak-outs, they danced, they cried, and they shared stories of sexual assault and humiliation. The Toronto incident on January 24, 2011 that "went viral" was the comment of Constable Michael Sanguinetti, a Toronto police officer who spoke to a small group of students about personal safety at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, noting, "I've been told I'm not supposed to say this, however, women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized" (Rush 2011). Sanguinetti's remark struck a raw nerve, and several young women responded by organizing the first SlutWalk in Toronto on April 3, 2011. They expected a hundred or so participants, but the event attracted several thousand people. Protests organized around the theme "Because We've Had Enough" opposed slut-shaming, sex-shaming and victim-blaming in society. Several thousand people in Toronto protested against rape cultures that perpetuate the myth that what women wear is a key component in getting raped. The invitation to join the SlutWalk in Toronto read, "Whether a fellow slut or simply an ally, *you don't have to wear your sexual proclivities on your sleeve*: we just ask that you come. *Any* gender-identification, any age. Singles, couples, parents, sisters, brothers, children, friends. Come walk or roll or strut or holler or stomp with us" (SlutWalk

Toronto 2013; original emphases). Sanguinetti apologized for his remarks, saying, "I am embarrassed by the comment I made and it shall not be repeated" (Rush 2011). Organizers Heather Jarvis and Sonya JF Barnett were chosen as *Utne Reader* visionaries in 2011 (Aldrich 2011).

Although the SlutWalk protests emerged spontaneously from a groundswell of rage among young university women who were insulted by one police officer's concept of a rape-avoidance strategy, they spread quickly throughout the world (Roy 2011). SlutWalks represent the spontaneous outrage of women, the LGBT communities, and pro-feminist men around the world against patriarchal rhetoric. Feminists of all ages and genders have participated in the SlutWalks. Selma James, a veteran feminist who attended the SlutWalk in London, wrote, "This was the new women's movement, born of student protests and Arab revolutions, tearing up the past before our very eyes. It has a lot of work to do and it is not afraid." James reported she had received much kudos for her placard that read "Pensioner Slut" (James 2011).

SlutWalks are new shoots of creative and edgy protests against the misogynist culture that promotes dress codes or sexuality codes to differentiate "good girls" from "bad girls." This new form of activism emerged at the same time as Occupy Wall Street and the upheavals and protests subsumed under the label of Arab Spring. Judith Butler discussed these new movements and her experience of participating in a SlutWalk in Ankara in the following terms:

> When I was in Ankara, Turkey, and I was on a march with a group of transgender women, queer activists, human rights workers and feminists, people who were both Muslim and secular, everyone objected to the fact that transgender women were being killed regularly on the streets of Ankara. So, what's the alliance that emerged? Feminists who had also been dealing with sexual violence on the street. Gay, lesbian, queer people, who are not transgender, but are allied because they experience a similar sense of vulnerability or injurability on the streets. (Bella 2011)

The SlutWalk movement pierced the hold that rape cultures have on societies, turning the objectification of women on its head with its bold, audacious parody of the slut, and has become a unique and innovative form of protest against gender-based violence. While originating in North America, SlutWalks spread like wildfire to other continents and countries, including those in the global South. In 2011 protests took place in over 200 cities (including 70 in the United States) and at least 40 countries (Westendorf 2013; Global Voices 2012). Locations have included Spain, Hungary, Finland, Norway, South Korea, South Africa, Australia, Ukraine, Mexico, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Germany, Morocco, England, and Canada, among others. Common protest signs at these marches read, "My Dress Is Not a Yes," "Stop Sexual Profiling," "Walk of No Shame," "It's a Man's World—Let's Fuck It Up," and "Slut Pride." In Morocco, SlutWalk founder Majdoline Lyazidi, who is twenty years old, challenged women who are sexually harassed on the streets to "stand up for yourselves and demand respect. Shame has to switch sides!" (SlutWalk Morocco 2013). Instead of being defensive about expressing their sexuality, SlutWalkers are going on the offense, using street theater to make their points and garnering more media attention than mainstream marches for women's rights. Rose Munro, a Scottish feminist activist who spoke at the 2011 Edinburgh SlutWalk, blogged about the significance of this event:

> Since SlutWalk my friends have been talking collectively about rape and sexual violence as if victims have a right to be heard. Sentences have been uttered like: I was raped, my mother was raped. Friends who'd never heard this before started saying, I cannot any longer be a bystander to rape jokes, now I've heard this about you/your friend/your sister/your mother. It's been a golden opportunity. We've gone some way to making victims less ashamed, which means the problem is becoming more visible to ordinary people. This is important progress. (Munro 2011)

From India to Australia, Denmark to Mexico, each protest has been locally organized with independent initiative and without any overarching organization, blueprint, bylaws, etc. Instead, these protests have taken many forms, some less focused on the "slut" image, especially in more conservative countries like India. Women in bikini tops have marched next to women in burkas, students marched alongside grandmothers and nuns, and significant numbers of men have participated in the events. Gay, lesbian, and transgender people have been well represented in the marches. One young Muslim woman in a burka held a sign stating that her burka had not protected her from rape. The message across the globe was loud and clear: Don't focus on how we dress—focus on the rape culture.

Brazilians held SlutWalks in more than 40 cities in the summer of 2011 and in a dozen or so cities in 2012 (Garcia 2012). Brazilian blogger Lia Padilha wrote:

> We Brazilians are faced everyday [*sic*] with the control of female sexuality. The religious-conservative conception is repressive and tells women that they should hide their bodies from society and save themselves for their husbands. On other hand, the voracity of capitalism has interest in the naked female body, and in this case, exposes, trivializes and violates female sexuality and attacks. (Freitas 2011)

Trishla Singh, media coordinator for the SlutWalk Delhi explained that for centuries words like "slut" have been used in India to hinder the development of women, and today the pejorative term is used against women who go out in the evening or take jobs at call centers. Before SlutWalk Delhi occurred on July 31, 2011, there was sharp debate in the media. Umang Sabarwal, a nineteen-year-old student who set up a Facebook page to support the event, said, "The way the men stare, you feel like meat" (Roy 2011). According to a global poll by the Thomas Reuters Foundation, India is the fourth most dangerous place in the world to be a woman, and rape is the fastest growing crime in India (Banerji 2011). In 2009, a group of young women were sexually attacked in a pub in Mangalore by men who called them sluts and justified their assault because the women were dressed "indecently," consumed alcohol, and mixed with non-Hindu youth, according to Rita Banerji, a gender activist in India (Banerji 2011). The attack was videotaped and excerpts were shown on TV repeatedly.

More recently, in December 2012, the brutal gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman student in New Delhi by a group of men on a bus sent shock waves throughout the world and triggered tremendous upheaval in India. Protests shook many cities as women and men of all ages came into the streets day after day to express outrage over this vicious attack (Timons, Mandhana and Gottipati 2012). In India, many girls and women are regarded as a family's property—either the family they are born into or the one they marry into (Banerji 2011). Parents, husbands, and in-laws decide everything, including whether the female relative goes to school, her clothing, whom she can marry, when she has sex, how many children she has, and whether she is allowed to live. To those critics of India's SlutWalks who point to more serious women's issues like female infanticide, female feticide, dowry violence, and honor killings, Banerji responds that

> the issue at the crux of the SlutWalk is one and the same as for all the other above-mentioned afflictions. It is about the recognition of women as individuals with certain fundamental rights, including that of safety and personal choices, which *no one*, not even the family, can violate…. The basic message of the SlutWalks to society is this: "*A woman's body is her personal domain! And nobody else's!*" (Banerji 2011; original emphases)

SlutWalks are decentralized, manifesting many formats and cross-national variations. Digital social media and mass media have created cross-national flows of information regarding SlutWalk activities. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter appear to be the main organizing tools for the hundreds of local protests that were organized on every continent. Most events have a Facebook page with mobilization

plans, photos, and video clips, as well as statements of purpose, slogans, and mission statements. Jackie Smith writes in her study of the anti-WTO protests of 1999 that "both national and transnational social movement groups make extensive use of Internet sites and electronic list serves to expand communication with dispersed constituencies and audiences … [that] allow organizers to almost instantaneously transmit alternative media accounts and images of protests" (Smith 2002, 220). Since the "Battle of Seattle" Smith documents, the role and importance of social media has greatly expanded, and the SlutWalk movement illustrates this expansion very clearly.

SlutWalks as a Case Study in Transnational Feminist Solidarity

For the purposes of this study, research methods used to obtain information and commentary about SlutWalks included online searches of public media and social media. I conducted targeted Internet searches of international press sources such as the Associated Press, BBC, Reuters, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, social media sources such as Facebook, and feminist blogs including *Ms.*, the Crunk Feminist Collective, Feministing, and Jezebel. Rich information and commentaries were found on Facebook pages for each city's event. In addition, I studied dozens of YouTube videos of SlutWalk protests from around the world. Finally, I attended SlutWalk Chicago in 2012 and videotaped the event.

SlutWalk Chicago, September 29, 2012. Photo by Joetta L. Carr.

My case-study approach is similar to that employed by Valerie Jenness in studying the prostitutes' rights movement (Jenness 1993). Jenness argues that the case-study methodology is the "preferred strategy when 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed … case studies allow for exploration, description, *and* theory building" (Jenness 1993, 11; original emphasis). In documenting and describing the prostitutes' rights movement named COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), Jenness found that social movements representing stigmatized groups face added contradictions regarding legitimacy and morality, and she explored "how social movements associated with deviance and deviants operate differently" (Jenness 1993, 7). SlutWalkers are likewise building a movement that welcomes sex workers, transgender people, and other "deviants." Drawing from Jenness's case study of the prostitutes' rights movement and its blurring of the distinction between "good girls" and "whores," I argue that the SlutWalk movement has challenged the historical definition of "slut" and reframed its associated imagery. Additionally, SlutWalkers redefine

the problem of sexual violence as caused by men who rape, not by women who "ask" to be raped. Also at issue is legitimacy, as SlutWalks contest law-enforcement attitudes toward rape victims and the ideology underlying these attitudes while legitimizing the expression of female and LGBTQ sexualities. In close parallel with Jenness's theory of reconstructed social problems derived from her study of COYOTE, the SlutWalk rhetoric reconstructs the problem of rape, similarly blurring the distinction between "good girls" and "bad girls" while upholding sexual agency.

The SlutWalk movement presents an opportunity for scholars to apply feminist theories to a new form of transnational feminist activism located at the margins of mainstream society. Drawing upon transnational feminist and social-movement theories, I argue that SlutWalks have the potential to open up "new spaces for political and intellectual engagements across North/South and East/West divides," as Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar call for in their edited collection *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* (2010, 14). According to Swarr and Nagar,

> transnational feminisms are an intersectional set of understandings, tools, and practices that can: (a) attend to racialized, classed, masculinized, and heteronormative logics and practices of globalization and capitalist patriarchies, and the multiple ways in which they (re)structure colonial and neocolonial relations of domination and subordination; (b) grapple with the complex and contradictory ways in which these processes both inform and are shaped by a range of subjectivities and understandings of individual and collective agency; and (c) interweave critiques, actions, and self-reflexivity so as to resist a priori predictions of what might constitute feminist politics in a given place and time. (Swarr and Nagar 2010, 5)

Swarr and Nagar further suggest that "grounding feminisms in activist communities *everywhere* is a means to interrogate all forms of implicit and explicit relations of power (e.g., racist/classist/casteist), and to contest those power relations through ongoing processes of self-critique and collective reflection" (2010, 5; original emphasis). Feminist analysis of the SlutWalk movement can fulfill the potential to create the new spaces and directions in transnational feminist discourse and practice called for by Swarr and Nagar.

Chandra Mohanty's groundbreaking theoretical work on transnational feminism, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1986), argues for the "need to highlight Third World women's activism and agency, as well as to recast the category of Third World women to imagine new forms of transnational solidarities and collaborations" (quoted in Swarr and Nagar 2010, 5). This paper both highlights Third World women's activism and agency and contributes to creating a springboard for transnational collaborations among scholars and activists. Critical transnational feminist models also challenge the dichotomy between feminist academics and activists (Swarr and Nagar 2010, 2), and feminist praxis provides a framework to synthesize the feminist political activism embodied in SlutWalks with feminist scholarship.

Historical Context for the SlutWalk Movement

The new form of transnational feminist protest represented by SlutWalks emerged within the historical context of the women's liberation movement. The "second wave" of the feminist movement began as an activist movement in the sixties and was subsequently taken up by the academy. In 1970, at the height of the women's liberation movement, Susan Brownmiller wrote that "the women's revolution is the final revolution of them all" (Brownmiller 1970). Women in industrialized countries in particular made great gains in the sixties and seventies in terms of legal rights, such as making marital rape illegal, the creation of rape-crisis centers, workplace rights (e.g., naming sexual harassment), and reproductive rights. The SlutWalk

movement can be situated historically within the anti-rape movements of the sixties and seventies, which spawned rape-crisis centers and Take Back the Night marches and rallies. In Europe, the first international Take Back the Night event occurred in 1976 at the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels (Take Back the Night 2013). Over 2000 women from 40 countries participated. Under the name Reclaim the Night, marches also occurred in Italy, Germany, England, India, and Australia. At the same time, Take Back the Night marches emerged in the US and Canada. They have continued to be organized on campuses and in cities throughout the world, focusing on eliminating all forms of sexual violence.

The women's liberation movement in the sixties emerged during a historical period of great political upheaval on every continent. From African liberation struggles to the worldwide student strikes, sit-ins and uprisings against unjust wars, colonialism, and racism, from the Native American occupation of Alcatraz and Wounded Knee to the Stonewall Tavern protest in New York City that launched the gay liberation movement in the US, this cauldron of political activism created favorable conditions for feminists. However, soon after the liberation struggles of the sixties and seventies, the New Right movement in the US was launched during the Reagan era to clamp down on gains made by women and to roll back reproductive rights, affirmative action programs, no-fault divorce, and LGBT rights, to name a few. Jessica Valenti, in a *Washington Post* piece on SlutWalks and the future of feminism, commented, "In a feminist movement that is often fighting simply to hold ground, SlutWalks stand out as a reminder of feminism's more grass-roots past and point to what the future could look like" (Valenti 2011). SlutWalks can also be situated within the recent wave of worldwide grassroots protest movements led by young people that appear to be organized through and fueled by social media (for example, the uprisings in Egypt, Turkey, or Brazil). While SlutWalks draw on and in some ways resemble earlier forms of feminist activism, at the same time they represent radical new shoots of feminist activism unfettered by mainstream organizations and partisan politics.

SlutWalks Contest the Patriarchy

The continuing subjugation of women to men in many parts of the world reflects social relations that are based on traditional property relations under capitalist imperialism. Patriarchy, the prevailing ideology of male domination that provides the framework for understanding sexual violence, is also is an essential part of capitalism, as Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty argue. Although they criticize "a notion of universal patriarchy operating in a transhistorical way to subordinate all women" (1997, xix), they also make the critical point that "global realignments and fluidity of capital have simply led to further consolidation and exacerbation of capitalist relations of domination and exploitation … as processes of recolonization" (Alexander and Mohanty 1997, xvii). Marx and Engels argued that two radical ruptures were necessary for revolution—of traditional property relations and of all traditional ideas flowing from these relations (Marx and Engels 1848). Of course, social practices rooted in patriarchal relations take different forms in different parts of the world, from bride burning in India to slut shaming in North America. While the basis of the traditional patriarchal family has eroded as millions of women entered the workforce in the last few decades, the capitalist system is still based on traditional social relations concentrated in the patriarchal family (Avakian 1999, 15). Although patriarchy cannot be eliminated under the existing capitalist imperialist superstructure, the seeds of its unraveling exist in revolutionary socialist movements.

The new form of sisterhood represented by the SlutWalk movement has defied patriarchal social control over female sexuality and its insistence on defining appropriate sexual behavior. Protesters demand the right to define their sexuality on their own terms while protesting rape cultures so predominant in most of the world, which are characterized by misogyny, victim-blaming, sexual objectification of girls and women

in pornography and the media, popularizing rape myths, and attitudes of rape acceptance in society.[1] In addition, the SlutWalk protests foreground the most outrageous social practices rooted in the patriarchal system, including incest, marital rape, bride burning, and the commodification of women and girls.

Slut-Shaming as a Rhetorical Weapon

The word "slut" conjures up a woman who has sex with random, indiscriminate partners and therein gets a bad reputation. Women and girls who are called sluts are shamed, shunned, and judged to be less worthy than other women (Tolman 2005, 7). They are fair game for sexual attacks, harassment, insults, and humiliation fueled by our cultural stereotypes about women. "Slut-shaming" is a powerful tool to attack and discredit girls and women whose behavior or speech is nonconforming and rebellious, or who dare to hold men accountable for their actions. This epithet, like the words "whore" and "bitch," plays a vital role in invalidating, dismissing, silencing, and degrading women who fight for their humanity and for control over their sexuality and body.[2] Long used as a weapon to humiliate and ostracize girls and women who break the sexual mores of societies or rebel against stifling convention, the term is now being appropriated by angry women who refuse to be dehumanized by the patriarchy.

Alice Walker was asked during an interview on June 15, 2011 what she thought of the SlutWalk phenomenon:

> I've always understood the word "slut" to mean a woman who freely enjoys her own sexuality in any way she wants to; undisturbed by other people's wishes for her behavior. Sexual desire originates in her and is directed by her. In that sense it is a word well worth retaining. As a poet, I find it has a rich, raunchy, elemental, down to earth sound that connects us to something primal, moist, and free. The spontaneous movement that has grown around reclaiming this word speaks to women's resistance to having names turned into weapons used against them. I would guess the police officer who used the word "slut" had no inkling of its real meaning or its importance to women as an area of their freedom about to be, through the threat of rape, closed to them. (Archer 2011)

As with Walker's response reproduced above, many other commentaries on the SlutWalk movement have focused on its appropriation of the culturally pejorative term "slut." For example, the FAQ section of the New York City SlutWalk website addressed the question of the event's name in the following terms:

> Some SlutWalk supporters have co-opted the term as a means of reclaiming the insult and defusing it of its sting by wearing it as a badge of pride to indicate sexual self-awareness and humanity. Others have rallied around the word in order to highlight its inherent absurdity and illegitimacy; while still others seek to remove the word from our popular lexicon, believing it to be an inherently violent term. All these views are welcome at our march and in our organizing; a multiplicity of voices is the greatest strength against prejudiced monolithic ideologies. (SlutWalk NYC 2013)

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the origin of the word "slut" has been traced back to the Middle Ages in England, where it was used to depict a slovenly person. Chaucer used the word "sluttish" to describe a slovenly man in 1386. Another early usage was "kitchen maid or drudge," and this reference to a dirty female continued through at least the eighteenth century. Similar words referring to a "dirty woman" are found in Dutch, German, and Swedish dialects. The sexual connotation developed later. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary's first definition of slut is "*chiefly British*: a slovenly woman"; the second definition is "a promiscuous woman; *especially* prostitute"; and the third is "a saucy girl: minx." The Oxford English Dictionary's entry classifies the term as "derogatory" and switches the order of definitions

so that a "woman who has many casual sexual partners" appears first and "a woman with low standards of cleanliness" is second. The unabridged Oxford English Dictionary defines slut as "a woman of a low or loose character; a bold or impudent girl; a hussy, jade." Interestingly, the popular *Bridget Jones* series written by contemporary British novelist Helen Fielding at the same time emphasized the original meaning of the word and combined its distinct uses to connote dirty and slovenly habits in Bridget, a bold and saucy young woman (Fielding 1996). To further complicate the sociolinguistic nuances of "slut," it is used as a non-judgmental slang term in gay, bisexual, and polyamorous communities, referring to individuals who openly choose to have multiple sexual partners. According to the book *The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Polyamory, Open Relationships and Other Adventures*, "a slut is a person of any gender who has the courage to lead life according to the radical proposition that sex is nice and pleasure is good for you" (Easton and Liszt 2009, 4). Here the term is reclaimed to declare sexual agency and personal choice to lead a non-monogamous lifestyle.

During the SlutWalk in Boston on May 7, 2011, speaker Jaclyn Friedman said that although the original definition of "slut" was an untidy woman, now the term is used to label women who "stepped outside the line that good girls are supposed to stay inside ... it is used to keep us in line, separate us, police each other," while "all we want is to enjoy the incredible pleasure that our bodies are capable of" (Friedman 2011). Germaine Greer, one of the leaders of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s and 70s, brilliantly tied together the two definitions:

> Twenty-first century women are even more relentlessly hounded and harassed by the threat of dirt. No house is ever clean enough, no matter how many hours its resident woman spends spraying and wiping, Hoovering, dusting, disinfecting and deodorising. Women's bodies can never be washed often enough to be entirely free of dirt; they must be depilated and deodorised as well. When it comes to sex, women are as dirty as the next man, but they don't have the same right to act out their fantasies. If they're to be liberated, women have to demand the right to be dirty. By declaring themselves sluts, they lay down the Cillit Bang and take up the instruments of pleasure. (Greer 2011)

SlutWalkers are speaking in a voice that deplores sexual violence while embracing sex positivity. They have taken the sting out of a word that has been used to control their sexuality. They are refuting the virgin/whore dualism with righteous anger, humor, and creativity. The young women who sparked this movement have performed a semantic sleight of hand in appropriating the word "slut," making it impossible to tell the "good girls" from the "bad girls." They have adopted the slogan commonly seen on SlutWalk signs and banners: *We Are All Sluts!*

SlutWalks and Sexual Agency

One strong message of the SlutWalk movement is that women have the right to be sexual beings without being judged, raped, discounted, or harassed, as well as the right to express their embodied sexuality by appearing on the streets in "slutty" attire and revealing clothing. In doing this, they are exposing mass media's objectification of women's bodies to sell movies, liquor, magazines, music, cosmetics, underwear, and thousands of other products and services. By reclaiming their sexuality, women are not only rejecting the rape myth that what you wear can lead to sexual assault; they are also challenging the dominant discourse that sex is dangerous for unmarried women and only "bad girls" are overtly sexual (Tolman 2005, 80). There is a very thin line between being viewed as a slut and being viewed as a respectable young woman, and this line can shift and become a moving target as young women attempt to "walk the line" and

maintain their reputations. SlutWalks represent the rebellion of thousands of young women and others against having to walk that tightrope.

Cultural scripts for girls and women regarding sex carry a double standard that is confusing and paradoxical. While boys are encouraged to express their heterosexuality as a sign of masculinity, girls are supposed to remain virgins or at least wait for a serious monogamous relationship and become the object of their lover's affections (Tolman 2005, 5). Sexual subjectivity means being the *subject* in the development of one's sexuality instead of being a sex *object*. In order to become the subject instead of the object, one must develop sexual agency. As Deborah Tolman (2005) discovered in her interviews with teenage girls, the girls who are able to develop agency with regard to their sexual lives are better equipped to make informed and conscious decisions about when, with whom, and what they choose to do or not do sexually. She defines sexual subjectivity as "a person's experience of herself as a sexual being, who feels entitled to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, who makes active sexual choices and who has an identity as a sexual being" (Tolman 2005, 6). In critically deconstructing and then embracing the traditionally derogatory label "slut," women are expressing their sexual agency and subjectivity.

Never before in history have girls grown up in a culture that encourages five-year-olds to strut onstage in sexy clothes and heavy makeup to compete as beauty queens on TV, where pole dancing is taught at the local gym, and where middle-school girls are pressured to give oral sex to their male schoolmates. Girls often hurl the term "slut" at other girls whose sexual behavior is out of line with the cultural double standard, or as payback for perceived wrongdoing. Today's girls and young women have grown up in the age of cybersex, cyberbullying, sexting, sexual violence in video games, increasingly violent pornography, and media saturated with sex. The "pornification" of mainstream culture, the attacks on women's reproductive freedom, the epidemic of sexual violence, and the widespread use of the label "slut" create a toxic brew.[3] It is in the context of this hypersexual culture that SlutWalks have emerged as a new form of protest.

Feminist Debates about SlutWalks

Of course, the SlutWalks have their thoughtful critics and have stirred up controversy in feminist communities. Feminist scholar Gail Dines, author of the book *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality* (2010), and Wendy Murphy insist that young women cannot reclaim the word "slut" in a pornified society:

> The term slut is so deeply rooted in the patriarchal "madonna/whore" view of women's sexuality that it is beyond redemption. The word is so saturated with the ideology that female sexual energy deserves punishment that trying to change its meaning is a waste of precious feminist resources. (Dines and Murphy 2011)

Along the same lines, Samantha Berg, the feminist blogger and activist who founded the Stop Porn Culture movement, expressed the following view in an essay entitled "On the Feminists-in-Underwear Walks":

> In 2008 frat pledges at Yale held signs declaring "We Love Yale Sluts" in front of the campus Women's Center and in 2010 another frat's pledges chanted, "No means yes. Yes means anal!" Young pornfed men have been giving women proof long before SlutWalks that positively sexy feminist tactics aren't working. "Yes Means Yes" is a useless strategy for stopping men who are turned on by the thought of violating a woman's "no." Such men view women enthusiastically wanting sex as a challenge to find something more degrading than they believe merely poking a woman vaginally already is (in this case anal sex is the next level) and will never be happy with hordes of lovely ladies begging for it. Like the global appeal of sex with virgins, the whole point is to break something irreplaceable. (Berg 2011)

Another major criticism of SlutWalks appeared in an "Open Letter from Black Women to the SlutWalk" (Black Women's Blueprint 2011). This letter was signed by dozens of activists, scholars, anti-violence advocates, and organizations serving Black women, and it begins with a commendation to the SlutWalk movement:

> First, we commend the organizers on their bold and vast mobilization to end the shaming and blaming of sexual assault victims for violence committed against them by other members of society. We are proud to be living in this moment in time where girls and boys have the opportunity to witness the acts of extraordinary women resisting oppression and challenging the myths that feed rape culture everywhere.

However, the letter then goes on to argue that the legacy of slavery and the dehumanization of Black women through rape make it impossible for the signers to reclaim the word "slut," or the related term "ho," more commonly used against Black women:

> As Black women, we do not have the privilege or the space to call ourselves "slut" without validating the already historically entrenched ideology and recurring messages about what and who the Black woman is. We don't have the privilege to play on destructive representations burned in our collective minds, on our bodies and souls for generations. Although we understand the valid impetus behind the use of the word "slut" as language to frame and brand an anti-rape movement, we are gravely concerned. For us the trivialization of rape and the absence of justice are viciously intertwined with narratives of sexual surveillance, legal access and availability to our personhood.

While applauding the organizers of SlutWalks for their spirit and acknowledging their well-meaning intent, the authors of the letter also challenge the movement to change its name and bring Black women's voices to the forefront. They cite the historical patterns in the feminist movement of excluding or marginalizing women of color and declare that justice for women is "intertwined with race, gender, sexuality, poverty, immigration and community" (Black Women's Blueprint 2011).

Leaders of SlutWalk Toronto, the movement's original group, have embraced these criticisms and shared the letter with other SlutWalk collectives, challenging them to engage in serious introspection and dialogue and to address privilege, intersectionality, and inclusivity (SlutWalk Toronto 2011).

The leaders of SlutWalk NYC have also engaged in serious reflection and self-criticism after a young white woman held a sign at their event that read, "Woman is the Nigger of the World," quoting the title of a song written by John Lennon and Yoko Ono in 1972 (Simmons 2011). Although Ono, a woman of color, coined this slogan, the song was banned on airwaves in many countries in the early 1970s as too inflammatory (Hilburn 1972). The image of this placard, which referred to women's oppression by citing the most derogatory racial epithet used against African American people, went viral and caused a strong backlash in the Black feminist community and beyond. Black feminist blogs and forums criticized the white women's position as privileged and misguided. SlutWalk NYC issued a formal apology to the Black community, and the organization held forums and discussions on strategies for greater inclusion of more Black women's voices. They also described the rich diversity of SlutWalkers, including women of color, transgender and queer people, sex workers, and men across much of the globe. After months of discussions and analysis, the NYC SlutWalk leaders announced on Facebook that they were rebuilding their coalition and that they were currently focusing on reproductive freedom struggles. On March 4, 2012, their last post to date on Facebook was signed by "former SWNYC organizers":

> As we have been indicating over our various social media sites for several months, SWNYC has splintered. Many of us realized too late that working under the "SlutWalk" moniker was too oppressive to many communities that

we should be allying with. How could we claim to be creating an intersectional and safe feminist community with such a privileged name? Many former organizers have moved on and have been working on forming new feminist organizations since the fallout.... We cannot forget our past mistakes. If we do, we'll never be better feminists; that's what we want more than anything.

Salamishah Tillet, a Black professor of English and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania who spoke at DC SlutWalk, expressed a more nuanced view of the movement. Although she voiced some of the same criticisms as the Black Women's Blueprint group, she also stated the following in an article in *The Nation*:

> I would raise the question, "Are black women confident enough in their respectability and femininity that they can wear shorts and a halter and say I am still someone worthy of your respect? Someone who is worthy of being respected?" (...) As a longtime activist against sexual violence who has seen the way survivors are consistently silenced, the idea of a march that brought attention to sexual violence and celebrated its survivors was too compelling to ignore. I had to be there.... For me, walking alongside women who confidently wore the clothing in which they had been sexually assaulted was exciting and empowering. As a black woman and a rape survivor, it was one of only times in my life that I felt like I could wear whatever I wanted, wherever I wanted, without the threat of rape. (Tillet 2011)

Janell Hobson, a Black women's studies professor and scholar at SUNY Albany, also wrote a response to the Open Letter from Black Women on the *Ms. Magazine* blog, expressing concern about the "politics of respectability" that became a theme among SlutWalk critics:

> But instead of seeking respectability, what would it mean to confront the danger of a word that was historically constructed to support economies of slavery and legal segregation? (...) The truth is, white women have historically benefited from the racialized virgin/whore dichotomy embodied in words like "Jezebel" and "slut." That can encourage black women to distrust white women, especially those whose privilege has blinded them to considering what a SlutWalk would look like in solidarity with black women, with low-income women, with immigrant women, with queer women, with sex workers.... I'd suggest that black women, rather than oppose SlutWalk, should think of the ways it can be appropriated to serve our needs. I would like to see a SlutWalk with black women front and center. (Hobson 2011)

In the wake of the global SlutWalk movement, important questions have emerged for feminists and gender scholars. Does "dressing like a hooker" minimize the forced prostitution of millions of women and children who are trafficked in the sex industry? Can we uphold sexual agency while deploring sexual objectification of women and girls? Some criticize SlutWalks as titillating spectacles that reinforce the objectification of women. At the same time, however, this movement has captured the imagination of many women, men, and transgender people around the globe.

The SlutWalk protests portend sharpening battle lines between women and the patriarchy throughout the world. The palpable global outrage of women and gender-nonconforming people at rape-culture rhetoric strengthens the struggle against gender oppression. Who controls women's bodies and women's sexualities is not a settled matter, but without such control we have nothing. Women in the US have lost ground in the area of reproductive freedom, and we are dangerously close to turning the clock back to the time when there were few options available to women who wanted to control their fertility and their sexuality, a situation that still exists for millions of women throughout the world. Reproductive freedom was a key demand of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 70s, as women carved out space to express their sexuality, to be free agents of their sexual expression, and to control their reproduction. Whereas feminists in the

1960s reveled in the invention of the Pill and legalized abortions, heterosexual women today are faced with the possibility of losing the ability to have sex without the threat of unwanted pregnancy. The pressures on girls and young women to control their sexuality are different from those experienced by women of the sixties, and it is unproductive to examine today's gender and women's liberation struggles through the lens of conditions that existed forty years ago. After all, many people were aghast at the image of feminists throwing their bras into the trash during the 1968 Miss America Pageant and at the Gay Pride parades with their provocative messages and costumes. We can learn from and build on these tactics, since the "street theater" they relied on created lasting and politically potent imagery and symbolism.

SlutWalk Chicago, September 29, 2012. Photo by Joetta L. Carr.

A year after the first SlutWalk, on April 18, 2012, an event took place in Toronto where two organizers of the first Toronto SlutWalk delivered a speech entitled "SlutWalk 1 Year Later: Sluts of SlutWalk Talking about Slut Talk" (Motherhood Initiative 2012). On May 25, 2012, Toronto held its second SlutWalk, in which several hundred people marched, including many men. One man held a sign that read "Patriarchy sucks for everyone." Many US cities held SlutWalks in 2012, including St. Louis, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento, Washington, Seattle, Tallahassee, Salt Lake City, Detroit, Richmond, and Minneapolis. SlutWalks also occurred in 2012 in London, Berlin, Korea, Jerusalem, Vancouver, Hamilton (Canada), Seoul, Kolkata, Melbourne, Perth, New Zealand, and especially Brazil, where there were SlutWalks in a dozen cities in late May. In Brasília, the capital, more than 3,000 people marched, and over 1,000 gathered in São Paulo and in Recife. Hundreds marched in Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Vitória, Curitiba, and other locations (Garcia 2012). According to my survey of SlutWalk Facebook pages this spring, more than twenty SlutWalks were scheduled for 2013 throughout North America as well as internationally, from Singapore to Melbourne to London and beyond. The full extent and meaning of the contributions of the SlutWalk movement to the overall struggle against gender oppression and the patriarchy may only be understood in the decades to come.

Notes

I am an activist scholar who teaches in the Gender and Women's Studies department at Western Michigan University. I have been an activist all of my adult life, participating in a variety of social justice and environmental movements, including feminist activism. I am interested in the connections between academic and activist feminisms. My teaching and research are in the areas of sexuality, rape, and gender violence, and I have been a therapist of rape and incest survivors for many years. My activism in women's liberation movements began in feminist consciousness-raising groups in the 1970s. I am active in Take Back The Night, abortion rights movements, and International Women's Day. When the SlutWalks emerged two years ago, my scholarly curiosity and my activist stirrings led me to develop this paper. I participated in the Chicago SlutWalk in the fall of 2012.

1. The concept of "rape culture" was first used in the mid-1970s by such feminist activists as the New York Radical Feminists in Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson's book *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women* (1974) and in Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975). In addition, a documentary film entitled *Rape Culture* by Margaret Lazarus and Renner Wunderlich was produced in 1975 through a collaboration between the DC Rape Crisis Center and Prisoners Against Rape, Inc.

2. Following the first wave of SlutWalks in 2011, another high-profile slut-shaming incident was provoked by Rush Limbaugh in late February of 2012. Limbaugh, who hosts a popular conservative national talk-radio show, called Sandra Fluke, a Georgetown University law student and reproductive rights advocate, a slut and a prostitute after she was not allowed to testify at a House of Representatives Oversight Committee hearing on birth control coverage policy proposed in President Obama's Affordable Care Act (Keyes 2011). In the course of this hearing, an all-male panel of religious leaders testified against religious institutions being forced to offer birth control coverage with no co-pay. In response, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi convened an unofficial hearing of the House Democratic Steering Policy Committee, which heard Fluke's testimony on February 23, 2012. In a three-day on-air barrage against Fluke, Limbaugh stated that she "must be paid to have sex" and asked, "What does that make her? It makes her a slut. Right. It makes her a prostitute" (and, he added, "We're the pimps"). He further said Fluke was "having so much sex, it's amazing she can still walk ... so frequently that she can't afford all the birth-control pills that she needs." In the end, he recommended that in return for paying for Fluke's birth control pills, "videos of all this sex [should] be posted online so we can see what we are getting for our money" (Keyes 2011).

3. The popular term "pornification" appears to come from Pamela Paul's book *Pornified* (2005) and refers to pornography being so "seamlessly integrated into popular culture" that it is ubiquitous in mainstream media, pop music, advertising, magazines, and cyberspace (Paul 2005, 4).

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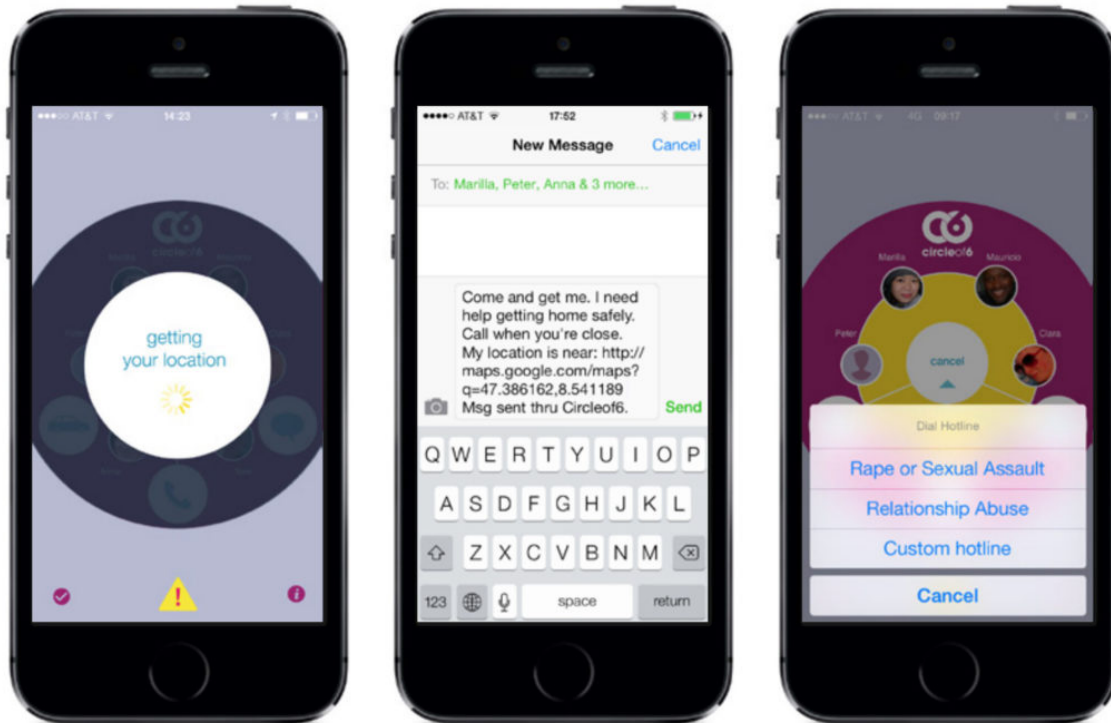
ISSUE NO. 13

Exploiting a Dystopic Future to Unsettle Our Present-Day Thinking About Sexual Violence Prevention

Rena Bivens

After researching 215 existing apps designed to prevent sexual violence (Bivens & Hasinoff, 2017), I propose a fictional app called 'Ultimate Witness.' Using 'Protect 2 End' software, this factory-installed app analyzes real-time data recorded within a 10 foot radius, with the help of an algorithmically curated rendering of attitudes, behaviours, and biomedical shifts that signal future perpetration of sexual violence. Importantly, this is not a desired, future prototype – it is a speculative design (Disalvo, 2012; Forlano & Mathew, 2014). Alongside the app description, I examine what became possible in the future setting – what infrastructures, discourses, and social dynamics emerged – and how that future connects to the present. Based on critical extensions of historical and present-day expert discourses surrounding sexual violence, I use Ultimate Witness to open up space to think and talk about the kind of future worlds we would like to see – and those we may wish to avoid.

From **Circle of 6** (https://www.circleof6app.com/) to **LadiesSafe** (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.appypie.appypie3349f4da0283&hl=en) and the **YWCA Safety Siren** (http://ywcacanada.ca/en/pages/mall/apps) , there are hundreds of mobile phone applications (or 'apps') designed to keep you safe from sexual violence. All you have to do is pick one and press download.

(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/bivens1.jpg)

We can register these apps within a long history of designed interventions geared towards 'ending' sexual violence. Consider **female condoms with teeth** (https://rape-axe.com/) , **nail polish that detects date rape drugs** (http://www.undercovercolors.com/) , **anti-rape underwear** (https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/ar-wear-confidence-protection-that-can-be-worn#/) , belts with labyrinth-like closures, and – this next example is a bit extreme – **lingerie** (https://www.bustle.com/articles/29655-indias-electric-shock-anti-rape-bra-society-harnessing-equipment-is-terrifying-and-necessary) complete with pressure sensors covering the breast area that can deliver up to 82 electric shocks while sending text messages to the police and your parents with your GPS coordinates (Gibson, 2014; Wilkinson, 2013).

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(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/d408a1f0-e056-0131-6ccc-0aa0f90d87b4.jpg)

Scholars like Noble (2018), Balsamo (2011), Bardzell (2010), Wajcman (2010), and SSL Nagbot (2016) have demonstrated that design is a political act. Technologies always carry with them assumptions, goals, and values since they are never designed in a social vacuum. They are both shaped by society and play a role in shaping society.

Drawing on scholarship from communication studies, science and technology studies, human-computer interaction, and design, we can ask questions about who the intended and unintended users are (i.e., potential victims, perpetrators, bystanders), which scripts (gendered, racialized, etc.) are baked into these designed artifacts, and what work they do in the world.

Recently, Amy A. Hasinoff and I **compiled a list of 215 apps** (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/suppl/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1309444?scroll=top) designed to prevent sexual violence (2017). We were curious what was being communicated by this entire set, or population, of apps. As a collective intervention, how have apps been designed to respond to the problem of sexual violence? Instead of analyzing each app as an individual tool or act of resistance, we answered this question by examining all features programmed into this field of design. Our findings indicated a strong orientation towards 'incident intervention' (74% of all 807 features in our sample). In other words, designers predominantly chose to program features that would alleviate *specific* incidents of violence, largely by 'alerting other people that an incident is happening' (Bivens & Hasinoff, 2017, p. 4). It was overwhelmingly victims (or potential victims) who were mobilized by designers since 94% of 'incident intervention' features were designed exclusively for this group. While the vast number of apps do not explicitly specify the gender of the victim or perp (72% leave the victim undefined while 95% leave the perpetrator undefined), there is still a tendency towards naming the potential victim as female (26%) and the perpetrator as male (4%). Also, no apps specified victims or perpetrators that exist outside of the male/female gender binary.

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(https://adanewmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Screen-Shot-2018-04-08-at-9.27.34-PM.png)

As a collective intervention, we were disappointed by these design choices. Misconceptions about sexual violence that experts have been debunking for decades had been reproduced in and through these apps (Bivens & Hasinoff, 2017). Sexual violence experts have long argued that persuading perpetrators to stop assaulting might be a more effective prevention strategy, yet this field of design largely placed the responsibility on victims to prevent their own rape. Only 0.02% of apps in our sample targeted potential perpetrators. Also, perpetrators are rarely strangers; sexual violence usually occurs between people who know one another. However, the 'incident

intervention' approach is oriented towards interrupting sexual violence by sending help to the scene. The most typical arrangement of features involves pre-loading the app with contact details of the user's closest and most trusted friends and family members so that the user can activate an alarm which sends location coordinates, and other potentially useful data such as an image or audio file. Collected data can also be used as evidence to later help convict the perpetrator. However, known perpetrators may use forms of coercion that would decrease the effectiveness of these features (e.g., abusing a power relationship and emotional manipulation). Some features involve asking friends or family to watch over the user via location-based data, or send an alarm when the user deviates from a pre-selected pathway. Others are designed to turn off when the user has entered a 'safe' space like home or work. Again, these features presume a sudden, unexpected attack, likely by a stranger. Hasinoff and I (2017, p. 15) argue that, collectively, this field of design imagines and promotes an understanding of sexual violence as 'an inevitable force of nature' that cannot be prevented but only 'avoided by vigilant and responsible individuals.'

Enter Speculative Design

Speculative design lets us step outside of the limits of our present-day society. It is an approach that relies heavily on imagination to conjure up new designs set in future worlds (DiSalvo, 2014). When we begin to imagine the future, technological developments are typically invoked. Futures presented to us from the realm of science fiction have helped forecast this imagined world. From universal translators to teleporters and hoverboards, futuristic technologies are seen as spectacular developments. We watch sci-fi films or read sci-fi novels in awe of the future societies depicted for us, yet at the same time we find ourselves struggling to unravel what social impacts result and whether we should fear these reconfigured societies or hotly anticipate them.

By imagining a fictional, future app that would 'end' sexual violence, speculative design exercises detach us from the present and encourage us to engage in future world-making practices. The point is not to predict the future but 'to better understand the present and to discuss the kind of future' that we desire along with – as the example I

will soon share demonstrates – *the future worlds we wish to avoid* (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 3). In these discussions, we can consider what became possible in the future setting – what infrastructures, discourses, and social dynamics – and, importantly, how that future connects to the present.

Speculative designs can offer us a spectacle by being extreme. They can force us to pause, unsettling our assumptions and worldviews. However, as DiSalvo (2012) argues, spectacle alone is not enough. Speculative design should provoke discussion and debate, pushing us beyond our current ways of knowing, understanding, and intervening in the world. Ranging from manufactured prototypes to mere descriptions, the intention is not to develop tangible design solutions. Instead, speculative design can be mobilized to help us critically reflect on the broader relationship between technological development and social change.

Ultimate Witness: An App to End Sexual Violence

Ultimate Witness comes factory-installed on every mobile device and cannot be disabled or removed. This app records and permanently stores a complete repository of detectable data within a 10 foot radius of the device, including the device user and anyone else within this range. Imaging and auditory technologies capture sound, still, and moving images based on XSC3 heat and light filament sensors. Biomedical technologies capture comprehensive data on heart rate, blood pressure, drug and alcohol levels, hormonal and adrenaline levels, as well as neural activity in the brain and physical movements (including 24/7 tracking and recording of eye movements).

All data is stored in an encrypted raw file format. Several copies of the data are sent through high-performance filtering and processing software programs. The most crucial filtration process is the Protect 2 End software program. This software uses a state of the art prevention algorithm that was initially based on 250,000 actual sexual violence cases brought to Canadian courts over the last few decades, focusing particularly on the evidence given to describe the events preceding the crime. Alongside this data, the algorithm is always adapting due to its machine learning capabilities, which permits the category of sexual violence to achieve maximum

malleability. Protect 2 End analyzes audio and images for misogynistic language and incidences of rape culture, making links to an algorithmically curated rendering of expected attitudes, behaviours, and biomedical shifts that signal future perpetration of sexual violence. This data is continuously checked against historical data about the individual in question. Identity data sets, including but not limited to gender, race, socioeconomic status, and nationality, offer further alerting mechanisms tailored to the individual's social position.

Here's just one example of how it works: if someone hears a song like Blurred Lines, which normalizes sexual violence, a flag is raised on that individual's profile (a unique identifier that is associated with all devices known to be used by the individual). Later on, he casually objectifies a woman in a private conversation to a friend: another flag is raised. Let's say he goes out to a drinking establishment a few days later in the evening (as captured by time/date/GPS recording) and stares at a woman for more than 10 seconds, scanning her body and glancing repeatedly at her breasts and hips: more flags will be raised. If he then approaches the woman, a sedative will be delivered, rendering him unconscious within 2 minutes. Any identity-related mobility access devices (vehicles, doors, passports) and currency-related access (bank accounts, credit cards) associated with the individual become instantly inoperable. Authorities will be alerted and the immobilized would-be perp will be taken in for questioning at a local law enforcement facility. The flagged actions that led to his sedation would be revealed and a facilitator would take him through the appropriate unlearning exercises and isolation procedures.

What Work does Ultimate Witness do?

I am using Ultimate Witness to extend and magnify elements of our contemporary cultures surrounding sexual violence prevention. I considered a wide range of prevention efforts and broader technocultural contexts, including the intensification of datafication, surveillance, and computation-driven policing. Contemporary discourses that have taken shape on university and college campuses relating to sexual violence and rape culture have also influenced my thinking. As well, I am thinking through discussions over the past two years sparked by the Ontario government's 2015 report

It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment and Bill 132 (Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act) that required all Ontario colleges and universities to put together a sexual violence policy, including my own.

Ultimate Witness is also modeled as an extension of the field of design that Hasinoff and I encountered in our sample of 215 existing apps. Like those technological interventions that came before it, Ultimate Witness is not designed to reprogram attitudes, beliefs, norms, or values that function at the individual, interpersonal, community, or societal level to perpetuate sexual violence. There is no serious effort to reprogram the systems that generate and sustain the power relationships that enable perpetrators to commit sexual violence and escape sanctions. Instead, the strategy is to intensify surveillance, datafication, and extreme policing measures to improve apprehension rates as a preventative measure in and of itself, while covertly accumulating profit by selling data and identity profiles.

Sexual violence remains inevitable with Ultimate Witness, but there is a shift from interrupting sexual violence to avoiding it altogether. Ultimate Witness attempts to turn the social antecedents of sexual violence perpetration into measurable indicators. In this way, the app moves from the measurement of sexual violence that has occurred to the measurement of future perpetration. The future of sexual violence becomes the technologically-manufactured, premature capture of the presumed antecedents of sexual violence. Whereas existing apps were oriented towards 'incident intervention' that aimed to interrupt a particular type of sexual violence (namely stranger assault), Ultimate Witness is only successful in its promise of a future free of sexual violence if it can accurately predict, measure, calculate, and monitor the factors that precede perpetration. This approach echoes preventative policing strategies that have disproportionately targeted marginalized groups, reifying implicit biases in the process. Predictive measures are prone to the possibility of generating the very identities (in this case, perpetrator or abuser) that the categorization seeks to observe, merely through categorization and measurement (Cheney-Lippold, 2017).

While everyone becomes an active user of Ultimate Witness by definition, it is perpetrators who are the intended user. This design choice explicitly reverses the

outcome of our earlier study where victims were the primary target of design. On the surface, Ultimate Witness presents an open and non-discriminating orientation towards perpetrators. Underneath that surface, however, are the mechanisms that Ultimate Witness deploys to recognize and identify perpetrators. Relying on data about sexual violence from court cases is limited by the disciplinary, cultural, and structural domains of power that function to influence who reports, who is arrested, and who faces trial. Biases are already baked into these legal and judicial systems, and experiences of sexual violence in Ultimate Witness only appear if they are read as legible by these systems. This is intended to mimic the erasure of experiences of sexual violence that are not reported or otherwise made invisible to authorities and thereby have less capacity to influence policy. While most people do not report, those who do may also find their case to be deemed unfounded by the police (that is, dismissed as baseless). According to a recent study, one in every five sexual assault allegations in Canada is unfounded, which is twice as high as the unfounded rate for physical assault and much higher than other crimes (Doolittle, 2017).

The impulse towards translating the social world into data informed Ultimate Witness. Collecting, storing, and processing data is a common strategy to track and manage social problems. Governments and practitioners often advocate for a data-driven strategy since numbers are legible to both the public and funders, despite the downfalls that collection entails. In 2017, the Government of Canada announced a $101 million-dollar federal response to gender-based violence. While the details are sparse, most of the funds ($77.5 million) have been allocated towards a new Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre housed within Status of Women, which will facilitate knowledge sharing, increased data collection, and aid efforts to address the 'new frontier' of 'cyberviolence' (Smith, 2017).

An interesting aspect of the speculative design approach is the capacity to play with temporal dimensions of a social problem. In this way, the history, present, and future of sexual violence can be reconfigured or alternatively arranged. For example, many in the anti-violence field champion the necessity of always believing survivors. This makes sense given the historical memory of anti-violence experts who can easily recall why the voices and experiences of survivors of sexual violence ought to be centered.

Decades of anti-violence work were required to raise awareness and achieve legal reforms because survivors were not believed, or they were blamed for their own assault. Yet these are not the only histories and present-day realities. When we focus on issues like racialized criminalization practices and the relationship between anti-Black terrorism and the specter of Black rape – that is accusations against Black men, particularly by or in defense of white women – we find another reality: due process for the accused. At times, these perspectives – survivor-centered approaches and close attention to due process – appear to be in conflict. Instead of co-existing, they take up different amounts of space in the material-discursive practices surrounding anti-violence work.

Ultimate Witness aims to provoke a sense of fear and anxiety that may be productive in bringing some of these tensions and temporal relations to the surface. As a future-oriented speculative design that is explicitly (although only temporarily) detached from the present, there is potential to open up space for difficult conversations regarding how to navigate survivor-centric approaches and due process for the accused. By design, Ultimate Witness invites us to think of anyone – including ourselves and loved ones – as possible targets of a machine-driven accusatory mechanism. At the same time, the example included in the description closes off this possibility. While anyone can theoretically become a perpetrator in this future-world, the victim-perpetrator relationship is intentionally gendered in the explanation of how the app works. This echoes the dominance of the female victim – male perpetrator dyad within mainstream conversations about sexual violence, and was highly visible among the set of 215 apps we studied. Yet scholars have pointed out that continuing to rely on this dyad invisibilizes other forms of sexual violence, such as lesbian and gay experiences (Edwards et al., 2015). Ultimate Witness is thereby designed to simultaneously conceal and open up these difficult discussions, permitting multiple pathways for engagement.

Finally, Ultimate Witness is designed to create a flexible and adaptable category of sexual violence. The description intended to surface this anxiety, only identifying sexual violence after the far-reaching data collection capacities had been unveiled. Here I am gesturing towards the concerns – currently voiced only by a few scholars – regarding expanding terms. For example, Khan (2016b) argues that "'[r]ape culture" has

become a surprisingly elastic term.' Khan (2016a) discusses the variety of examples that have been claimed as part of rape culture, including songs (e.g., Blurred Lines), sexualized advertisements, speaking invitations to defence lawyers, and calls for due process. Karaian (2014; 2017) has also been critical of the term 'rape culture.' Her work examines sexting and revenge porn, raising critical questions about the utility of equating non-consensual distribution with sexual violence. Since we are already engaging in critical debate about predictive policing, racial profiling, and algorithmic biases, Ultimate Witness extends these discussions to the realm of sexual violence to encourage deliberation on our contemporary conceptualization of the category of sexual violence.

Concluding Visions

It is a dystopic future world that is constructed here; a world that we would wish to avoid. If my use of speculative design is intended to disrupt the ways in which we think and talk about sexual violence, a dystopic design tends towards extending those aspects of our discourses and technocultures that are potentially problematic, making them more visible. By merely exposing these elements, the assumption is that we will be more aware of them and eager to discuss and dismiss any assumptions and ideas that we now wish to avoid. Recent commentary about films like *Blade Runner* suggests that '[a]t their best, dystopian visions … are helpful self-preventing prophesies' (Bankston, 2017). Could a dystopic speculative design be artfully deployed in a way that would shift our understanding of sexual violence as fundamentally sociotechnical and compel us to resist such a future?

Or, perhaps, would a utopic app better perform this work? A utopic vision could similarly conjure up a world without sexual violence, but actively build one that we would actually want to inhabit. We would then be forced to distill which ideas about prevention are essential for this future world and therefore which ideas we ought to focus on in the present.

At the same time, a dystopic/utopic distinction may be too simple. While many organizations and government strategies are committed to 'ending' sexual violence, is

there any utility to imagining worlds where we do not presume to be able to eradicate this problem? If there is, perhaps we could explore how to think differently about issues such as justice, victimhood, reduction, and recovery, and how to implement our future renderings into present-day action.

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❮ **MOBILE PHONE APPS** ❮ **PEER REVIEWED** ❮ **RAPE PREVENTION** ❮ **SEXUAL VIOLENCE** ❮ **SOFTWARE DESIGN** ❮ **SPECULATIVE DESIGN**

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Torn: A Social Media Drama over the Aziz Ansari Scandal

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Abstract:

This is a work of fiction that addresses social media platforms and communication channels that are intimately entangled with contemporary movements related to empowerment, oppression, and sexual violence. We created a video that is composed solely of screen recordings from our protagonist's computer and smart phone. Within a Canadian context and from the perspective of a graduate student, our narrative explores fear, ambivalence, identity, pressure, performance, and image management through the lens of the recent scandal that surrounded celebrity-comedian

Aziz Ansari and the broader relationship to the #MeToo movement.

When we received *Ada*'s "Call for Papers" for this issue, we knew we wanted to submit. We have been friends and colleagues for several years and have both tackled the central themes of this special issue — "sexual violence, social movements and social media" — in our scholarship and activism. The call thus provided a good opportunity for collaboration based on our mutual interests and expertise. But at the same time, as we brainstormed about the possibility of producing a creative-critical intervention into these issues, we realized that a core feeling emerged for both of us: fear.

This special issue draws attention to two themes: 1) the ways social media has facilitated sexual violence through new platforms and technologies; and 2) how social media can assist sexual assault survivors and allies to share experiences and expose patterns of sexual violence. While these are, of course, urgent issues, we wanted to tackle *Ada*'s theme from a different angle, based on some of our own experiences and research. Specifically, we wanted to engage in feminist self-critique to consider how social media platforms and communication channels can sometimes be sites of pressure, performance, image management, and inner conflict. We believe that fear colors all these sites. To illustrate this, we sought to create a narrative dramatizing how social media can exert pressure to espouse particular viewpoints because we fear being on the wrong side of a sexual violence debate. We may also feel compelled to perform particular stances on various platforms because we fear being "called out" for what we say or fail to say. We may fear that our image as 'woke' feminists will be tarnished because we cite or associate with people who are considered problematic. We may

struggle with inner conflict, but feel we must quash one rogue part of ourselves -— at least publicly — for fear of being shamed for our ambivalence. In the current moment unfolding in North America, we fear feminist responses that may reject our focus on these less visible characteristics because of the broader strategic ingredient that undergirds #MeToo.

It is this question of ambivalence, this feeling of being torn between identities, perspectives, political affiliations, and inchoate feelings, that is central to our story. We ask, how might nuance be suppressed, and uncertainty disavowed, within the current imperative for progressives to be feminist "AF"?

We are equally interested in exploring how the digital channels we now use to mediate so much of our sociality can build community, while also polarizing politics and exacerbating conflicts. How do the material and semiotic opportunities and constraints of texts, twitter, email, blogs, emoticons, acronyms, GIFs, etc., shape how meaning is made, relationships are formed, and selves are constructed?

We explore these themes and questions through the lens of the recent scandal that surrounded celebrity-comedian and out-feminist man Aziz Ansari. In January 2018, the youth-focused website Babe.net (tagline: "babe is for girls who don't give a fuck") published an article entitled, "I went on a date with Aziz Ansari. It turned into the worst night of my life" (Way 2018). The story is a first-hand account from a 23-year-old woman (writing under the pseudonym "Grace") who believes that Ansari pressured her into unwanted sexual activity after ignoring her "non-verbal cues." At the end of the article, Grace firmly categorizes the incident as one of "sexual assault." The web article ignited a fierce controversy, both within and outside the feminist community, regarding the merits and ethics of the publication, and whether Ansari's alleged conduct — which is described in grotesque detail — should be included as part of the "#MeToo" moment. Some saw the article as an important (if flawed) "reckoning" (Framke 2018) that exposed the everyday sexual coercion of hetero-dating. Others saw it as a vicious example of "revenge porn" (Flanagan 2018) by a woman who was disappointed by a date.

The rich, often vitriolic debate that followed the article took place not only on mainstream news channels, but also on social media platforms. We therefore found it was a perfect case-study upon which to creatively engage with the issues and tensions relevant to this special issue.

After brainstorming a number of questions and conflicted feelings about the anti-sexual violence discourse in general, and the Ansari story in particular, we decided to create a fictional story that dramatized these issues. Our methodology thus falls within the category of "critical storytelling" (Gough 1994) because it invites identification and disidentification, evokes affective responses, and eschews rational and linear argument. We want to present the story of our protagonist, Rumer, as a dilemma, one that we all face and that has no easy answer. Given the contexts of both white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, it is not self-evident how one should navigate between conflicting feelings, identities and outside expectations. The form we chose performs the very site — the digital stage — upon which we are most focused. We emphasize speed and conflict in both content and form. This approach intentionally mimics the ways in which we can never fully access what someone is thinking about a situation, especially when we are relying on digital expressions on social media to try to do so. Thus, as a viewer you are not meant to know everything or process everything. This confusion — and even frustration — is intended as an outcome of watching this video.

Our process in producing the video was collaborative and spontaneous storytelling. That is, we did not go into the process with any prior theoretical commitments or definitive take-home messages. However, now that the project is complete, it is clear that our own background in critical scholarship and political activism informs the piece. In particular, intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989) is key to "Torn," as Rumer is indeed torn by different aspects of her identity. In trying to figure out how to respond to the Ansari scandal, her South Asian heritage, Brown identity and personal experience with anti-Brown racism are put at odds with her commitment to call out culture, the anti-sexual violence movement, and survivor-centrism. Critical race feminism thus helps us understand the problem with the false binary that is presented to Rumer — either she condemns Aziz or she is an apologist for sexual violence.

We draw from our knowledge of theoretical concepts developed in critical communication studies including the politics of representation to consider the implications of silencing an important episode of *Master of None* (Warner 2017); context collapse, impression management, and reputational economies in relation to how Rumer and her best friend, Maddie, draw on their knowledge of, and assumptions about, an imagined audience while trying to protect their online image (Marwick and boyd 2011, Duguay 2016, Hearn 2010); and how meaning is created online and simplified (Langlois 2014, Lim 2013). Overall, a sociotechnical perspective informed by science and technology studies helped us consider how the technical architecture of

the social media platforms and messaging systems that Rumer and Maddie use and navigate shapes the speed of their interactions, while in turn their own use of these technical spaces shapes the communities that continue to flourish online (McPherson 2014, Kitchin & Dodge 2011, Balsamo 2011).

Our story's central characters are: 1) Rumer, a graduate student and feminist activist of South Asian origin living in Canada; 2) Rumer's best friend, Maddie, a graduate student and passionate feminist activist whose origins are not made clear; 3) Rumer's brother, a South Asian man; 4) Rumer's professor and TA supervisor, Valentina Kent, whose origins (and tenure status) remain unclear; and 5) the virtual followers and commentators on social media who engage with Rumer in direct and indirect ways.

As the story begins, Rumer is preparing to watch Ansari's show, *Master of None*, as part of her weekly television-watching date with Maddie. The two friends have created a blog entitled "Divest from Whiteness," which advocates for people to unlearn White-centric ways of living in the world and make conscious efforts to support and engage with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) priorities, businesses, communities, concerns, and cultural productions. One of their strategies is to watch TV shows that star and/or are produced by a Person of Color, then post analysis about them afterwards. They encourage their blog followers to join in the TV-watching in their own homes, and then contribute to the discussion on their open comment forum.

The first plot point begins with Rumer being informed by Maddie that Ansari has been "MeTooed." The drama unfolds as Rumer tries to grapple with her mixed feelings in response to the scandal, while simultaneously navigating conflicting viewpoints from Maddie (who demands she publicly condemn Ansari), her brother (who defends Ansari), her professor (who comes to be publicly shamed for refusing to expunge excerpts of Ansari's book, *Modern Romance*, from her syllabus), and her social media followers (who begin to assume that her initial "silence" on social media indicates faulty politics), some of whom become her ex-followers (when they determine she has failed to "call out" Ansari quickly enough).

The entire story is told through Rumer's computer and phone screens, where she interacts with other characters through various platforms, searches the internet, creates documents to store quotes she finds online (that she will later, presumably, think and write with), watches videos, and peruses multiple sites. We chose this narrative method for various, overlapping reasons. First, it demonstrates the extent to which identity politics and the characters' lives, relationships, and communicative strategies are

mediated through technology and various platforms.

Second, by focusing on Rumer's screens, the audience is privy to Rumer's private research, her struggles with her multiple identities and relationships, and her careful editing, curation, self-censorship, and presentation of her public self to friends, family and followers. By demonstrating the importance of Rumer's deletions and hesitations for the plot, we are also calling attention to the ways in which these 'drafts' and decisions are rendered invisible if we focus our attention only on the 'final version' posted on social media.

Third, the screens and sites show the ways we can survey others, while always also being under surveillance (including how we are reviewed, ranked, rated, praised or shamed), engaging both panoptic and synoptic dynamics. Furthermore, the screens illustrate the increasing importance of image management strategies, such as the practice of 'social media hygiene' (that is, being vigilant to clean up any posts or publicly available personal information that may jeopardize one's reputation with peers and potential employers).

Fourth, we are also witness to the collateral damage that is buried in the midst of Maddie's insistence that Divest from Whiteness cancel Aziz. That is, the specific episode that Rumer and Maddie were planning to watch ("The Thanksgiving Episode," S02 E08) centers an identity that is rarely represented: a Black woman's experience of coming out. The episode has been celebrated due to the fact that the central actor, Lena Waithe, co-wrote the episode, helping to create multidimensional characters that are "unapologetically black and female" (Kai 2017).

Finally, through these screens and our editing of them, we hope to convey the manic speed at which we are increasingly bombarded with issues and information, emphasizing that these temporal dynamics — and our resulting confusion — are ultimately embedded within our responses.

As a South Asian woman and a white woman, we see ourselves in both Rumer and Maddie, have undergone comparable challenges in our own lives, and are still struggling to navigate the paradoxical way social media both opens up, and suppresses, dialogue. In our first submission to *Ada*, we did not disclose personal details regarding our backgrounds and identifications. Later, during the review process we received requests to reveal our identities or positionalities. Receiving this feedback sparked a

number of reactions. On one level, we could have predicted this request given legitimate concerns around appropriation, authenticity, and power dynamics. On a gut reaction, we felt some resentment and hesitation. That is, can't the piece stand on its own without having to cater to identity politics? But the truth is, we know that in our own research, when we are evaluating other texts, we too have wanted to know the identity of the authors, to the extent that we have even resorted to online searches to glean some clues about their background.

In our narrative, identity politics also play an important role in several ways: accusations are being made against a brown man (Aziz Ansari); Rumer's brother appeals to Rumer's commitment to her South Asian heritage and community; and Lena Waithe's story of coming out as a Black woman is suppressed. Ultimately, these complexities are trumped by the strategic alliances and single-issue politics that dominate the sociotechnical space that Rumer's particular community thrives in.

It is this quagmire of ambivalence that we grapple with in our lives and in our fictional story. How do we reconcile our understanding of the unequal power dynamics between whiteness and racialization; the inevitable reductionism and reification that is produced by identity politics; the epistemic insights that can only be gained from experience with oppression; and the need to be strategic in bringing about social transformation?

While we don't have any definitive answers to these questions, we hope our project inspires self-reflection while creating more space for uncertainty, ambivalence, different viewpoints, and difficult conversations.

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ISSUE NO. 1

A Discrepant Conjuncture: Feminist Theorizing Across Media Cultures

Krista Lynes

A scene in Sandra Schäfer and Elfe Brandenburg's *Passing the Rainbow* (2008) exposes a compelling predicament in transnational feminist media studies: the search for connections, comparisons or adjacencies between feminist media objects in disparate locations around the globe. Schäfer and Brandenburger's experimental documentary and art project reflects on and theorizes the media landscape of post-Taliban Afghanistan and the scene in question reveals an interview with an activist from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) about the media activism the group undertakes. In it, the interviewer asks whether RAWA works with other feminist media organizations, referring obliquely to the work of the Self-Employed Women's Association's *Video SEWA* program in India. The question was rooted in an understandable desire to see the connections between the activist use of video for self-empowerment across national and cultural spheres. The RAWA representative, however, responds as follows:

We have no direct organizational contacts with them in the sense that they can force their views on us and we have to conform to them. Unquestionably, a person's thoughts and mentality depend on his or her social environment. In less developed countries, of which Afghanistan is one, women have been told for years that they should only perform certain activities. In Europe, women already engage in all these activities. [...] They say: "Women can neither do agricultural work nor work as an engineer!" But that is simply not true! What a European woman can do, an Afghan woman can do, as well. There are no mental or anatomical differences between us. A European woman, for example, has very different expectations and ideas. Maybe her notion of equality is different. A European woman who works in a factory demands the same wages as a man. But the Afghan woman doesn't even think about such demands. And why not? Because in Afghanistan there aren't even the factories in which women could work. Even if some women in Afghanistan do not yet have the self-confidence, for some the main issue is finding work!

The RAWA activist's response not only reverses the interviewer's question (shifting registers from cooperation to cooptation), but also used the opportunity presented by a question about transnational cooperation to discuss the failures of equality-based models of feminist politics.[i] Her statement thus poses a challenge both to the presumption of solidarity among feminist media activists around the world, but also to the search for affinities or resemblances between media works and media activism in the global system.

The caution about cooptation is to a great extent grounded in RAWA's experience working with Western feminist partners, particularly the Feminist Majority Foundation. In the spring 2002 issue of *Ms. Magazine*, under the new ownership of the Feminist Majority, an article entitled "A Coalition of Hope: How the International Feminist Community Mobilized around the Plight of Afghan Women" proposed that the Feminist Majority itself was the primary force behind the shift of U.S. policy toward the Taliban. The Feminist Majority Foundation Board Chair Peg Yorkin stated, "If we had not prevented the U.S. from recognizing the Taliban, think of how much worse this all would be."[ii] In an open letter to the magazine, RAWA accused it of being a "mere mouthpiece of hegemonic, US-centric, ego driven corporate feminism," and emphasized RAWA's role in providing education, relief, medical assistance, and political organization for over two decades in Afghanistan.[iii]

The RAWA activist's statement serves to highlight the fact that feminist groups around the world are not equal — the terms of their exchange may be unequal, as may be their access to resources, and their political weight at the national and transnational levels. Likewise, demands for equality may be articulated along different axes (of class, for example, rather than gender), or equality may not serve the interests of feminist struggles at all. Feminist media activists frequently work parallel to one another, within distinctly different economic, political and social frameworks, and through media whose conditions of production, distribution and reception are incommensurable. Intersections or sites of cooperation occur through the difficult work of political alliance, the circulation of media objects in transnational circuits or through new media platforms, and through the very labor of feminist scholarship that attempts to

understand the global dimensions of feminist media production, circulation and spectatorship.

As feminist scholars of global media, we are driven to identify the considerable gaps in our knowledge and practices at the scale of the global, the transnational or the cross-cultural. This very scale demands an imaginative leap across specific instances in the interest of a critical scholarship that understands and engages the effects of an expansive global capitalism, in the interest of forging sites of solidarity and resistance, and in the service of what Chandra Talpade Mohanty terms a "feminism without borders." Such scales of analysis (in media, activism and academics) focus on questions of production and reception in cultures of exchange, attending specifically to the differential relationships in the global system and the uneven terms of cooperation, even as the aim of scholarship and cultural production remain to discover possibilities for alliances, alternative histories or new identity positions. Mohanty argues that feminist analyses that cross national, racial or ethnic boundaries produce and reproduce difference through the naturalization of analytic categories, categories that presumed cross-cultural validity, arguing instead that unity needs to be struggled towards by "uncovering alternative, non-identical histories that challenge and disrupt the spatial and temporal location of a hegemonic history."**[iv]**

For the transnational feminist media scholar (and indeed for a filmmaker in political solidarity with RAWA), the connections, for example, between RAWA and SEWA are generative for a "feminism without borders," just as the conflict between RAWA and Feminist Majority Foundation serves a critical warning, an example of an expansive and reductive transnational feminism searching not for instances in a cultural-historical conjuncture so much as family resemblances.**[v]** A rejection of familial, analogical, or (worse) presumptive associations between media activists and video works around the globe raises the very question of how scholars might find productive intersections in feminist activism within the global system. To focus merely on local cultural production obscures the manner in which, in Stuart Hall's terms, "historical processes with different time-scales and trajectories […] may be convened in the same conjuncture."**[vi]** The current context of globalization, neoliberal politics and late capitalism focuses our theoretical attention on both the very real and immediate effects

of a globalizing political economy, as well as the relational geographies of power at the local, national and transnational scale. In theorizing the contemporary conjuncture, however, we must be attentive to discrepancy, to multiplicity of the contexts of globalization as, in Lawrence Grossberg's terms, "overlapping and competing geographies of locations, places, and diagrams, with their different logics of boundaries (coding), connectivities (territorializing), and stratifications."[vii] A "discrepant conjuncture" signals also the limits of a conjuncture to account for all historical processes, and specifically those (subaltern) processes that operate outside the logics of globalization, capitalism and liberal democratic forces.

The RAWA activist's caution provides an important guideline for transnational feminist scholarship: the incommensurability of different feminist struggles, and thus the specificity of the aesthetic and representational strategies mobilized in media work, are themselves generative of feminist theorizing in the globalized present. Rather than attempting to fill the gaps in our knowledge and practice, then, these gaps themselves might shed light on the differential positions of women in the global system, and the uneven character of cross-cultural exchange. Such an approach entails a complex understanding of the material, cultural, and political conditions of global contact *and* of the discrepancies that continue to make contact impossible. The work of feminist scholars of new media, therefore, might be to make manifest these discrepancies as theoretical, cultural and political objects.

The necessity of such a practice is evidenced by the compelling desire to examine RAWA and SEWA together, to work at elucidating in theory the discrepant conjuncture between these two associations. The drive behind such an endeavor is not a taken for granted universalism, but an articulation of what anthropologist Anna Tsing calls "universal aspirations."[viii] Rather than hastily dismiss universals in favor of culturally specific analyses, Tsing argues that universals allow scholars, activists, and cultural producers to conceptualize the global, even as a fiction, imaginative act or aspiration. Drawing from Gayatri Spivak's compelling statement that 'we cannot not want the universal, even as it so often excludes us,' Tsing argues for a scholarship of global connection through "generalization" from small details, a generalization that involves, first, a unification of the field of inquiry through "spiritual, aesthetic,

mathematical, logical or moral principles," and second, collaboration among different knowledge seekers to turn disparate forms of knowledge into compatible ones.**[ix]** Such collaboration involves patient, provisional work of *bridging* and *negotiating across* incompatible differences. Tsing observes, however, that both features of generalization mask one another: "The specificity of collaborations is erased by pre-established unity; the a priori status of unity is denied by turning to its instantiation in collaborations."**[x]** The interplay of these two forms of generalization, according to Tsing, define the global scale.

Rather than resolve the tension between universalization and negotiation, Tsing uses the term *friction* to describe the unstable, unequal and creative forms of interconnection across difference. She notes, "Friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power."**[xi]** Her method: ground the work of universalizing in specific historical contexts, through the unstable and shifting arrangements of power/knowledge in the global system; likewise, frame the work of negotiation and collaboration in the aspirational and unfulfilled imaginary of a (perpetually unachieved) universalism. The work of encounters across difference in the world thus becomes a model for critical and cultural production, the careful theorization of discrepant conjunctions rather than a single-minded cultural explanation.

Tsing's concept of friction becomes a powerful metaphor for transnational feminist media production, circulation and criticism, for the entangled technologies, politics, geographical locations, semiotic codes, and subjective processes involved in visualizing sites of struggle across local contexts. Friction challenges the models of proximity, instantaneity, speed and flow, networks and webs that govern the more utopic visions of communications technologies. These latter metaphors ally new media with the discourses of freedom, self-actualization and transparency that governed (capitalist) models of globalization from the 1990s onward. The term 'friction' is both material and metaphorical: it highlights the difficult work of transnational translation across media cultures, the specific encounters of cameras and web applications, technical training, technology transfer, censorship, incommensurable platforms and exhibition spaces in which media objects emerge. Metaphorically also, friction points to the generative and

repressive aspects of global connection through new media channels. Tsing stresses that friction is not a metaphor for resistance: "Hegemony is made as well as unmade with friction."**[xii]** Friction is productive of global connection but also importantly impedes the smooth operation of global power.

The focus here on a "discrepant conjuncture" of media activists, cultural objects, and political processes functions as an invitation to conceptualize the gap in our knowledge and practices as precisely the space of friction in and across transnational spheres. On what grounds—through what generalizable categories—might RAWA and SEWA may be compared? Through the lens of video as a mediating voice in women's political activism? Through their common social justice work? The search for a common lens provides a generalized model for approaching the two organizations, even as the concepts vital to this scholarship necessarily shift from one context to the next, are fleshed out in frictional, paradoxical or competing terms in different contexts. The critical ground of such a feminist media analysis lies not in exposing a common underlying structure in each case—and thus identifying a form of mimesis in aesthetic strategies or political actions—but in examining a generalized category across incommensurable social, cultural and political spaces. It also involves a careful parsing of the material connections and discrepancies to illuminate the historical and cultural differences between media activism, even as one might envision and enact common political and cultural projects across these differences. Questions emerge not only about the vastly different political reality of contemporary Afghanistan and India, but also about the position of women in public life, including within the international division of labor.

RAWA was founded in 1977 by a number of Afghan women intellectuals as a political and social organization fighting for human rights and social justice in Afghanistan. It aimed to involve Afghan women in social and political activities, and fought for the establishment of a democratic and secular government in Afghanistan.**[xiii]** After the coup and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, RAWA became involved in the resistance movement, and separated itself from the Islamic fundamentalists who were fighting against the Soviet occupation. They played an active role in providing basic services for women and children—many of whom were refugees in camps in Pakistan

—under the repressive regime of the Taliban. Their work providing schools and hostels for Afghan children and a hospital for refugee women and children in Quetta was largely framed by the resistance to the brutal conditions of women brought upon by occupation and political repression.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), by contrast, is a trade union, started in 1972 out of the Textile Labour Association, India's oldest and largest union of textile workers founded in 1920 by a woman, Anasuya Sarabhai. The textile labor movement drew from Mahatma Gandhi's successful strike of textile workers in 1917, and formed a Women's Wing in 1954 to assist women in mill workers' households. By 1968, the Association offered classes in sewing, knitting, embroidery, spinning, typing and stenography. Finding the exploitation of women workers still rampant, and the rights of self-employed women largely unprotected, the leaders of the TLA and the Women's Wing, on an appeal from women who worked as used garment dealers, formed the Self-Employed Women's Association in 1971. Its initial aims were to represent poor and self-employed women workers. Their main goals are to mobilize women to demand work security, income security, food and social security, meeting basic needs such as health care, childcare, and shelter. They aim to organize women to be self-reliant, both economically and politically (in their decision-making ability).**[xiv]**

While both organizations emerge—led by women—in the 1970s, the extension of the labor movement in post-colonial India to the informal sector (a labor movement that had its roots in decolonization) meant that the video activism undertaken by SEWA served to build unity among self-employed women and voice explicit demands for social justice and economic rights. The members of Video SEWA included women working in the informal sector (head loaders, vegetable vendors, home-based workers), many of whom produced documentaries representing their living conditions and political struggles. They formed a cooperative in 2002 to produce educational and informational video programs to shed light on the social and economic conditions of self-employed women, to provide information about the services provided by SEWA (including healthcare and childcare), and to bring awareness to women in an effort to create solidarity and mobilize women workers. Their videos include documentary accounts of the conditions of self-employed women (as vendors and hawkers, home-

based garment workers, or agricultural workers), alongside informational videos about the work of SEWA in organizing self-employed women into a worker's movement. They include information about unions and cooperatives, about microfinancing, or housing projects. Ultimately, Video SEWA aims to provide a tool for communication between groups of self-employed women, and between them and policy planners and government officials.

RAWA's use of video, by contrast, is constituted by the persistent and chronic state of emergency in Afghanistan, under Soviet occupation and through the multiple human rights violations perpetrated by the Taliban regime. The use of video activism served to provide evidence of human rights violations perpetrated by the Taliban, and resisted both the ban on image making and on women's participation in public life. The graphic images of beatings, executions and stonings served largely to bring international pressure to bear against the Taliban regime, as well as to solicit material support for their social work. The video work is thus largely aimed at an external audience, international human rights organizations and the international media. The videos and reports are largely distributed through RAWA's website, although they are also included in some of RAWA's publications.

Yet, SEWA and RAWA both work with women largely cast out from the structures of democratic citizenship and wage labor. The work of visualizing their experiences, of mobilizing collective experience stems from their location in an impossible space, both within the structures of global capitalism (as the last instance in a chain of super-exploitation) and illegible and unrecognizable as political or economic subjects (either through the political ban on public life or through the economic exclusions in the informal economy). The generalizable category—the speculative universal described by Tsing above—turns out to be not the media activism that makes both groups appear to transnational audiences, but rather the gendered nature of economic exclusion at the heart of their social justice work.

Interestingly, this fact was laid bare in the very statement by the RAWA activist with which I began, and in its invocation of the work involved in transnational feminist media scholarship. Her emphasis on the impossibility of demanding income equality in

Afghanistan ("the main issue is finding work!") signals the importance of examining how women are differently situated in and by global processes. The media activism each group undertakes serves as an important site of generative friction, rather than as the generalizable lens through which the feminist media scholar might undertake cross-cultural comparison. For RAWA's framing of human rights abuses conforms more readily to the documentary function of investigative journalism, while SEWA's documentary projects are modeled more fully on participatory models of community video. The RAWA activist's statement served to unseat the notion of the commonality of oppression as well as of the specificity of discourses of empowerment. Her warning to the interviewer serves to remind the scholar that the use of media in activist work engages the specificity of the political struggle undertaken. And further, that common strategies or aesthetics may obscure the differences between the same term across contexts. The frictions between media activists and media objects in the global sphere invite scholars to write (rather than paper over) the discrepancies between the social, political, aesthetic and cultural worlds in which media emerge in meaningful imaging processes. The important gaps—the incommensurable ways in which imaging practices function in specific contexts—rather than disabling transnational feminist media work, become rather the generative site of feminist critical engagement and an important predicament for thinking through the multiple contradictions and multiplicities of feminist politics in a globalized present.

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[i] For further discussion of the critical challenge the RAWA activist poses to a "feminism without borders," and to an extended consideration of the circulation of RAWA's videos in transnational media circuits, see my discussion in the fourth chapter of *Prismatic Media, Transnational Circuits: Feminism in a Globalized Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[ii] Amy Farrell and Patrice McDermott, "Claiming Afghan Women: The Challenge of Human Rights Discourse for Transnational Feminism" in *Just Advocacy? Women's*

Human Rights, Transnational Feminisms, and the Politics of Representation. Wendy S. Hesford and Wendy Kozol, eds. (Rutgers University Press, 2005), 43.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 107-116.

[v] The special issue of Ms. Magazine which discussed the work of the international feminist community in addressing the "plight of Afghani women" also included a "Tree of Feminist Life: A Listing of National Organizations and Networks" from 1858 to 2002. Obscured by *Ms.* Magazine's family tree was clearly the "family dramas" between organizations, but also the exclusivity of the very organizational schema employed, a genealogical model focused on the metaphor of the family. See http://www.msmagazine.com/spring2002/treetable.asp.

[vi] Stuart Hall, "The Meaning of New Times" in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies.* David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, Eds. (London: Routledge, 1996), 230.

[vii] Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 60.

[viii] Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1.

[ix] Ibid, 88-9.

[x] Ibid, 89.

[xi] Ibid, 5.

[xii] Ibid, 6.

[xiii] See http://www.rawa.org/goals.htm.

[xiv] See http://www.sewa.org/About_Us.asp.

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Krista Lynes (https://adanewmedia.org/author/krista)

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2 THOUGHTS ON "A DISCREPANT CONJUNCTURE: FEMINIST THEORIZING ACROSS MEDIA CULTURES"

Dr. Maria-Jose Gamez-Fuentes
APRIL 29, 2013 AT 6:50 AM

Dear colleague, my name is Maria-Jose Gamez-Fuentes and I am a Reader on Gender and Media Studies at the University of Castellon (Spain),

member of the Institute for Feminist Research and Vice-Head of the Research Institute for Social Development and Peace of this university. In reading your text the concept of "ethical witnessing" came to my mind. Would you say that your idea of "friction" could be related to ascribing political valence to the act of spectatorship? And whereas this process has long been the focus of feminist interventions, how could we engage into modes of production in popular culture that would replicate this friction and, in turn, enable ethical witnessing? Due to my research on vulnerability and accountability regarding national and transnational configurations of gender violence, I find your ideas most inspiring since they revitalize feminist debates and ways of production from the 60s and 70s that I believe are of the utmost importance in the presence of the current crisis. Innovating in the field of patterns of recognition and frames of intelligibility with a focus in intervening in structural violence is a filed of work that, I believe, should interpellate both feminist media and mainstream media. I hope you find these words worth engaging into some kind of distant conversation. Regards, Maria Jose

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Krista Lynes
MAY 12, 2013 AT 5:11 PM
Dear Maria-Jose,

I am very grateful for your comments, which are very much in concert with the political force I intended in the work. I think you're right to read the notion of friction in the light of feminist accounts of the politics of spectatorship. I'm very interested in how a politics of location might be joined to feminist accounts of spectatorship (I draw particularly from Teresa de Lauretis's concept of imaging, a concept where the subject who appears on screen, the producer and viewer and bound together and inscribed in ideology). I'm interested in how experimental media might render this 'friction', by highlighting the acts of mediation produced by camera, shot, frame, etc. In my larger work (Prismatic Media, Transnational Circuits), I call these artistic and experimental works "prismatic media"— works that "refract" or "diffract" the evidentiary mode of witnessing

present in more journalistic or mass media forms (through things like multi-channel works, disruptions of narrative or framing, foregrounding perspective, or engaging with the very repressive regime of mainstream representations of gender and sexuality). With regard to popular culture, though, it seems that mass media works against such "prismatic mediations", to produce seamlessness and suture rather than the kind of friction that might result in ethical witnessing. What are your thoughts about the possibilities of engagement in popular media forms? It seems to me that feminist interventions have taken up popular culture, but I remain a little skeptical about the manner in which mainstream media might disrupt the frames of intelligibility confirmed by ideology (although I'm wedded to the feminist creative interventions that do this disruptive and prefigurative work). I would be more than happy to continue these discussions either on ADA's forum or directly (krista.lynes@concordia.ca).

Very best,
Krista

ISSUE NO. 15

#MosqueMeToo: Islamic Feminism in the Twittersphere

Camille Point

Camille Point, McGill University

Bio: Camille Point is a 3rd year undergraduate student in the Departments of English and Communication Studies at McGill University. Her research and academic works focus on exploring the relationship between media and cultural studies, including discourse surrounding gender politics and feminist activism.

Abstract: In this paper I examine the impact of social media campaigns, using the trending hashtag #MosqueMeToo as an artifact to analyze the extent to which these visual codes (through their democratic modes of participation) provide Muslim women with an accessible way to share their lived experiences and claim space within a virtual forum. Through highlighting the widespread impact of the hashtag Islamic feminist movement, I argue for the benefits of having a carefully articulated and tentative convergence of contemporary feminism and religious belonging rather than a critical distance between the two.

At the threshold of the third millennium, the status of women in Muslim societies was caught in the crosshairs of bias against the Islamic faith, the racialized Muslim, and women's rights (Al-Sharmani 2014). In spite of the increasing integration of sexual, racial, class, and national difference within contemporary feminist theory, some Muslim women continue to be subjected to a dual problem linked to their gender belonging and their religious association and must consequently face distinct forms of discrimination and violence. In contrast to their male counterparts, they continue to be neglected by both Muslim civil rights advocacy organizations and women's rights organizations-rendered invisible under international eyes (Pasha 2014). Confronting this marginalization head-on, Islamic feminists have passionately sought to secure their

roles in their societies on their own terms by increasing their visibility in the digital world and situating themselves at the virtual center of their concerns and discourses (Cooke 2000). As such, it is imperative to consider the effects that new communication technologies have on feminist debate and activism, specifically in exposing the violence committed against Muslim women. Considering the fact that fourth-wave feminism focuses on online technology more so than previous feminist movements, the accessible and distributive nature of social media outlets such as Twitter not only provides a new mode of critique, but also a contemporary method of community building, namely through the sharing of collective experience. This intersection of online feminism and Islamic faith ultimately provides a grounding for the emergence of a new branch of feminist activism that not only expands on digital frontiers but also establishes an intersectional framework that accurately addresses the representation, treatment, and identities of Muslim women (Schenato 2017).

In this context, this article examines the nature and impact of social media campaigns that focus on empowering Muslim women, using the trending hashtag #MosqueMeToo as an artifact to analyze the extent to which these digital identifiers (through their democratic modes of participation) provide Muslim women with an accessible way to share their perspectives and lived experiences within a virtual forum. Advancing this conversation, I seek to address how the #MosqueMeToo Twitter feed reveals the intimate linkages between feminism, knowledge production, and networked community building in the new media era, offering an exemplary case of the cultural and social work that hashtag feminism does in both online and offline spaces. Drawing from sources such as Tara L. Conley and Kimberlé Crenshaw, I explore the ways in which the syntactical mode of tagging and categorizing through hashtags ruptures conventional forms of knowledge production and intersectional awareness by dismantling hierarchies solely based on gender and race. Here, I argue for the benefits of having a carefully articulated and tentative convergence of religion and feminism rather than maintaining a critical distance between the two; in doing so, this paper acknowledges the significance of including an intersectional interplay of both paradigms, especially in holding the potential to advance Muslim women's struggles for equality. Most importantly, it makes significant contributions to the current national

debates regarding gender and Islam, race and ethnicity, and transnational feminist studies.

In a *Washington Post* opinion piece titled "What Happened When I Was Sexually Assaulted during the Hajj," Egyptian-American columnist and gender activist Mona Eltahawy discloses on a number of subject matters: the importance of ensuring the safety of female pilgrims, how she has come to reconsider her own fears, and the inspiration she gained from reading another woman's account of being sexually assaulted (2018). It is not entirely a personal anecdote, per se, but rather an optimistic collage of ambitions, with occasional fabrics of rhetoric that serve to empower other victims of sexual violence to denounce the widespread issue of misconduct in religious settings. The article consists of a detailed description regarding Eltahawy's experience of having been sexually assaulted twice while performing the hajj-the annual pilgrimage to Islam's holiest site in Mecca-at the budding age of 15 (2018). She recounts having arrived with her family in Saudi Arabia, veiled from head to toe in the required clothing, and being subsequently groped by two men during the holy event. According to the columnist, it would take her several more years before she would publish her story, and eventually birth her own codified term-one that would encourage many other Muslim women to narrate their similar encounters under the slogan #MosqueMeToo (Eltahawy 2018).

Figure 1. A screenshot of the #MosqueMeToo hashtag feed.

On a broader scale, intersectionality, as an analytic frame that embraces multiple axes of inequality, emerged during the 1960s and 1970s from the efforts of feminist and civil rights movements (Zimmerman 2017). The key insight of intersectional feminism emphasized the idea that multiple socially constructed identities and categories of difference cannot be understood simply as distinct terms; rather, the categories of race, social class, gender, sexuality have to be considered as factors that interact

simultaneously within society to produce a range of hierarchies and inequalities (Zimmerman 2017). Yet to what extent the original body of work is of current relevance beyond its original context is disputable. Recently, some critics have questioned the limits of intersectionality and its tendency to conflate intragroup differences. As evinced in the outpour of testimonies from other Muslim women around the world, it is critical to note here that the visibility of Eltahawy's effort bears a significant amount of credence to another iteration of feminist work that originated in the Twittersphere. #MosqueMeToo intentionally rearticulated the #MeToo movement created by black feminist Tarana Burke, which initially showed solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. However, it was only when actresses began to adopt it within the context of the film industry that the phrase gained international exposure. This oversight highlights a common concern about the ways that the contributions of women of color can be sidelined, only to have the same ideas lauded when they are presented by women in higher-privileged communities. For Eltahawy, this sourced her inspiration to expand on a movement which she viewed as being "very privileged, very white," adding that there exists a hierarchy which dictates who gets attention, when in reality #MeToo has to be available to all people (Barron 2018, Par. 6). Through the creation of her viral hashtag, Eltahawy managed to subvert the power dynamics of a mainstream movement by asserting a focus of her own choosing. By simply adding the term "Mosque" to the equation, she was able to broaden the confines of the #MeToo discussion to encompass the real-life experiences and views of Muslim women altogether.

With respect to identity, critical legal theorists like Kimberlé Crenshaw have explicitly located the problematic nature of a Western-centric feminist ideology in its failure to include non-privileged women within this context. Consequently, I draw on the insights provided by Crenshaw and the notion of multiple oppressions to illustrate the backlash that arose in response to the #MosqueMeToo movement, and to further question intersectionality's ostensibly all-encompassing, all-inclusive character-specifically in its relative absence of religion. As outlined in the article "Intersectionality" (2016), Cooper notes that Crenshaw first coined the term to discuss the relationship between "structural intersectionality" and "political intersectionality," drawing on the notion of the vulgarized social construction thesis to illustrate the necessity of identity politics (3).

This assumption, as she states, has been used to legitimize movements for affirmative action by dismantling the claim that one's identity is the only source of one's political perspective on the world. Rather than assuming a universality of that perspective, Crenshaw espouses that it is vital that we take on an intersectional lens to understand the full extent of identity categories and to view them as potential coalitions as opposed to distinct political interests (Cooper 2016). One crucial problem that Crenshaw's critique reveals is the tendency for categories of oppression to be defined in terms of their "apparent" intersectional experiences, resulting in the false universalizations of members associated with a specific subgroup. Significantly, this structure of affiliation can fragment identities and render multiple oppressed groups vulnerable to anti-women rhetoric and claims of theocratic patriarchy-as displayed in the varied responses to the #MosqueMeToo movement.

In the subsequent aftermath of her story's publication release, Eltahawy was met with brash and aggressive comments from within her own community, with some refusing to believe that such abuse could take place. Meanwhile, other critics, namely anti-Muslim xenophobes, took to hijacking the #MosqueMeToo hashtag to validate their stereotypes of all Muslims. When asked if this was something she considered before sharing her story, Eltahawy replied, "I am very aware that Muslim women are caught between a rock and a hard place: Islamophobes/racists who demonize all Muslim men and our community that defends all Muslim men. Neither side cares about Muslim women" (Ismail 2018). Here, Eltahawy alludes to the double bind of gender and religious discrimination that Muslim women face, even within feminist social justice movements. This lack of recognition of differences among women has in some instances, though not always, worked to function as modes of exclusion through a process of cultural translation whereby ideas and experiences among geographic, cultural, and religious spaces are not being taken into account (Fenton 2016). Considering that "the discursive construction of the 'other' as homogeneous and disempowered is similar to the construction of religious women as suffering from being uniformly and automatically oppressed" (Salem 2013, 21), Muslim women are thus susceptible of being clustered as individuals with contrasting agendas: either rejecting feminist values or religious beliefs (Abdallah 2012). This ruptured perception is amplified due to the already-prevalent construction of their belonging to a unique

classification as being victims of an oppressive and patriarchal set of values (Fenton 2016). One way to dismantle such silencing effects and reconcile agency with religion is to reconceptualize the discussion that revolves around feminism and religion, namely by approaching our engagements with digital texts in a way that is predicated on creating a new framework of understanding that embodies multiple perspectives. This would ultimately represent a turning point in which Muslim women can reclaim their agencies to mobilize new modes of feminist and religious critique.

Figure 2. A screenshot of Mona Eltahawy's twitter post regarding the backlash and defensiveness in response to #MosqueMeToo.

While there is no denying that digital platforms can sometimes serve as hostile and unwelcoming places for its users, they may also have the unexpected effect of strengthening an online group's self-definition as a community. Hashtag activism proposes the pursuit of disruption through acts of counter-narratives and resistance, and in doing so, encourages countercultural learning and awareness-raising for improved conditions. In theory, hashtag feminism-or the digital practice of activism in the form of Twitter hashtags-has been widely adopted within the burgeoning sphere of online feminism (Gunn 2015). This is most notably attributed to the fact that the Internet provides a space where victims of inequality can be brought together in a

manner that acknowledges their pain, narrative, and isolation. Tara L. Conley (2017) has written extensively on the discursive power of hashtags in her article "Decoding Black Feminist Hashtags as Becoming," documenting how online feminist spaces have served to foster communities of validation and support, education and empowerment, as well as radicalization and contention. She closely examines the stories and conversations attached to four prominent campaigns that trended nationally in the United States (#SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, #BlackPowerIsForBlackMen, #WhyIStayed, and #YouOkSis) in order to illustrate how their rhizomatic approaches enable them to "connect to other stories, events, encounters, and desires, and form new(er) articulations of lived experience" (Conley 2017, 30). As Conley proposes, these campaigns reflect a contemporary vernacular that was created and proliferated by Black women as part of a goal to transcend platforms into both public and private spaces. In other words, they share a common language that speaks to disrupt and challenge previously held beliefs about Black women, their experiences, and their roles in their communities (Conley 2017). By mapping prominent Black feminist hashtags from their origins to their development, Conley illustrates how movements like #YouOkSis transformed the way that networked technologies were being leveraged in order to accommodate and propagate meaningful and necessary critical dialogues on race, feminism, and online representation. In similar fashion, #MosqueMeToo was created in an effort to reposition the discourses of both gender and religious dynamics, for it was precisely the impassioned online discussions around the movement that revealed a disturbing revelation surrounding the precariousness of women's lives in religious sites. Likewise, the proliferation of retweets that appeared in less than 24 hours opened up important opportunities for feminists to disclose their narratives of sexual harassment and interrogate the abuse of power that lurks inside the walls of mosques and other Muslim spaces (Sykes 2018). Despite occurring in different cultural and social contexts, both projects nonetheless demonstrate the extent to which hashtag activism is able to promote feminist politics and reclaim public space by making visible women's lived experiences.

Because today's feminists, in contrast to their antecedents from previous movements, heavily focus on and make use of online technology, social media outlets such as Twitter provide a unique prospective for enabling a more fluid forum for debate and

activism (Zimmerman 2017). Indeed, the very public nature of Twitter plays a large role in insisting on intersectional feminist frameworks, necessitating a rejection of conceiving identity in terms of binary thinking (Zimmerman 2017). This refusal to give into the fabricated binary between both realms is reminiscent of the micropolitical work that hashtag activism does, partly because it does not fall exclusively into the models of traditional public engagement. The very public nature of sites like Twitter further plays a large role in offering those who are marginalized and disenfranchised a substantial space to find commonalities amongst each other and politically organize themselves on their own terms (Eagle 2015). For instance, hashtags-as personalized catchphrases that can be easily coined, searched, and linked-have the potential to engage concerned citizens and policymakers in wider conversations (Dadas 2017). The participatory qualities and circulatory potential of these codified terms is contingent on the notion that the more interaction and intersection among user-generated content there is, the stronger the resulting communities are. This explains why Twitter is invaluable in raising consciousness about ideas, movements, and information in real time. The digital practice of hashtagging, which exists and thrives on the basis of duplication, carves out a unique space where participants can recognize the transnational pervasiveness of an issue by simply assessing a repeated catchphrase mentioned in other tweets (Dadas 2017). Most significantly, the embeddedness of social media technologies in everyday life allows for more personal feminist politics than ever before, enabling women to express their shared affinities without relying on mainstream media (Lane 2015). Instead of resorting to traditional methods of broadcasting, a woman can instantaneously communicate her experience by including a hyperlink, such as #MosqueMeToo, to connect her frustration to a larger movement.

Figure 3. A screenshot of a twitter post by a user sharing their story of being inappropriately touched in crowds during the Hajj pilgrimage.

As #MeToo has shown, hashtags can prove to serve as valuable resources through their ability to raise awareness on social causes; at the same time, they also run the risk of oversimplification by neglecting underrepresented intersectional nuances. The risks of this activism should not dissuade participants from using hashtags to bring publicity to their cause, however. The structures of hashtags have provided opportunities for women to define their actions of feminism by forming collective communities, especially for those seeking to express their beliefs, globally, with other women who share in their social identity (Golbeck, Ash and Cabrera 2017). Using the language of assemblages, these rhetorical interventions are visually powerful, working to establish an opportunity for participants to immediately position themselves within a larger visual body of work across the globe, both online and offline. Like other movements that were spawned in the Twittersphere, #MosqueMeToo indexes one way that people perform feminist activism via new media technologies and social media networks of creation and sharing, paving the way for the convergence of both physical and virtual activism. The popularity and polarizing effect of the movement underscores the feminist need for an online platform like Twitter because it serves as a valuable, activist tool amenable to the inclusion of social categories that are beyond intersectionality's theoretical reach. #MosqueMeToo is more than a simple hashtag: it is a statement of justice, a demand for both intervention and visibility, and beyond that, a reminder that there is, in fact, strength in numbers.

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Against All Odds: A Legacy of Appropriation, Contestation, and Negotiation of Arab Feminisms in Postcolonial States

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VIEWPOINT

Against All Odds: A Legacy of Appropriation, Contestation, and Negotiation of Arab Feminisms in Postcolonial States[1]

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Abstract: Arab feminists have always faced challenges related to the burden of colonialism, accusations of westernization, isolation from their cultural heritage, and elitism, but the biggest challenge of all has been the fact that their activism and their entire lives have all been in the context of authoritarian postcolonial states. This article engages with a persistent challenge to Arab feminists that questions their impact, their awareness of their cultural and societal problems, and undermines their achievements over the years. It constructs a narrative of what feminists have achieved against all odds, within the constraints of authoritarian postcolonial states that have politically manipulated and appropriated women's rights issues. It sheds light on how Arab feminists contested power, negotiated with power, won and lost battles, but have persisted and still do. A survey of key trends in Arab feminisms is attempted, with a focus on Egypt and brief references to Arab countries.

Key words: feminism, Arab feminisms, Arab women, modern Egypt, gender and state, postcolonial states, women's movements

Introduction

For the last few years, since the tumultuous wave of revolutions that shook the Arab world in 2011, and the direct and oftentimes violent confrontations with state structures, I have been very preoccupied with the question of how feminists negotiate power, or, how Arab feminists have managed their relation with modern postcolonial nation states. The opening up of political spaces brought about by large scale protests and activism enabled revisionist analytical rethinking of positions, self criticism, and much soul searching by feminists and other social and political activists about the impact, or lack, of years and years of activism and oppositional politics. Younger women, empowered by the revolutionary possibilities in the air and feeling confident in their power to effect change, questioned the effectiveness and value of feminist movements. Additionally, feminists with a history of activism disagreed on whether women's activism in Egypt could be described as a movement. These and many other related discussions foregrounded one key issue: that many of the critical appraisals of women's movements in Egypt and the Arab world do not take into consideration the realities and processes of power; rather, they focus on the end result such as the success or failure of women obtaining a specific right or demand.

Arab feminists have always faced challenges related to the burden of colonialism, accusations of westernization, isolation from their cultural heritage, and elitism. However, the biggest challenge of all has been the fact that their activism and their entire lives have all been in the context of authoritarian postcolonial states. This point was brought home in the immediate aftermath of revolutions that, despite the violence and tragic consequences, had opened up political spaces for

oppositional activism and negotiation with state bodies and restored confidence in people's agency and ability to effect change. In the context of relative political liberalization, feminists were at the forefront of political movements for change. If we acknowledge the obvious facts that authoritarianism is not good for any body, especially women, dictatorships by definition are inimical to social movements, and collective action or new ideas can potentially lead to change and shake the status quo or hegemonic power structures, then we might be able to assess and understand what Arab feminists have accomplished (or not) in a new light.

This article engages with a persistent challenge to Arab feminists that questions their impact, their awareness of their cultural and societal problems, and undermines their achievements over the years. I construct a narrative of what feminists have achieved against all odds within the constraints of authoritarian postcolonial states that have politically manipulated and appropriated women's rights issues. In other words, I will shed light on how Arab feminists contest power, negotiate power, win and lose battles, but have persisted and still do. I attempt a survey of key trends in Arab feminisms with a focus on Egypt and brief references to Arab countries. While there are important differences in context and processes between Arab countries, I argue that the Egyptian story is an Arab story with important variations, or at least a story that resonates with many Arab stories. Importantly, this article is grounded in my research on women's movements in the Arab world and beyond, as well as my experience as a feminist activist involved in the women's movement in Egypt for more than three decades.

Beginnings

The emergence of the "woman question" in the Arab world began against the background of colonial domination and the initiation of the modernization project at the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. Historians of the Arab world note how the "backward status of Arab women" was used by colonialists as a stick to beat Arab societies (Sayigh 1981) and how many early reformers internalized this colonial discourse putting the burden of Arab "backwardness" on the shoulders of women. Qasim Amin (1899) argued the backwardness of women in Egypt was an obstacle to progress and that improving their status, which meant liberating them from the burden of tradition and superstition, was a prerequisite for national independence from colonialism and for becoming a modern nation. The link between women's liberation, national liberation, and the modernization project has always been a double-edged sword. Bettering the status of women as a condition for modernization was behind Amin's call for the education of women. At the same time, women in the Arab world were burdened with the impossible task of simultaneously being both the icons of tradition and the trail-blazers of modernity; or to use Najmabadi's insightful phrase, to be "modern but modest" (1991, 49). It also meant that any discussion of women's status in society inevitably became a discussion of something else: national identity; national independence; the relation with the west; the necessity or lack of safeguarding cultural specificity; how to emulate the western model of modernity while fighting western colonialism; and so forth. Needless to say, this symbolic dimension of the "woman question" complicated women's liberation struggle.

What did women do vis-a-vis the ambivalence in modernist discourse? What were the strategies that women resorted to? To begin, many women embraced modernist discourses about gender roles and division of labor, or what feminists have labeled domestic ideology. A glance at the magazine *al-Fatah*, the first women's magazine published in 1892 and owned by a woman, Hind Nawfal, provides a fairly good overview of how women appropriated yet contested modernist discourses on gender. The magazine propagated the view that women were responsible for their own advancement and it was conditional on their becoming good managers of their households and their families. Household duties are valorized and put on an equal footing with duties of political leaders or

managers of companies. In this sense, embracing domestic ideology becomes a strategy to ensure worth and status for women. At the same time, the magazine presented its readers with news and biographies of prominent women who have distinguished themselves in the public sphere, hence supporting their aspiration to acquire more roles outside their homes (Nawfal 1892).

It is important to highlight that modernist discourses did not go unchallenged. As an example, Malak Hifni Nasif's was one of the voices to critique modernist discourses on gender of the *nahda* reformers. She refuted Amin's call for the unveiling of women as a condition for their emancipation and argued instead for prioritizing access to education so women can make informed choices as regards their lives and bodies. She lambasted the *nahda* reformers for propagating a "pseudo *nahda*" and exposed the double standards that were implicit in their views and practices (Nasif 1910). Also, the magazines and journals published in the last two decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon published numerous articles by women writers who argued for their right to education, employment, and participation in the public sphere. Women challenged misogynist ideas implicit and explicit in the discourses of some *nahda* reformers whose modernist views on gender roles were not always conducive to women's quest for freedom and equality.[2]

Women and National Independence

Feminist movements in the Arab world were integral partners in national independence movements and struggles against colonialism. This partnership is acknowledged as a key feature of Arab women's movements and one that is persistently highlighted in mainstream literature as to why some women's movements gained legitimacy. In Egypt, women participated in the 1919 revolution against British colonialism. The sixteenth of March is celebrated as Egyptian Women's Day, which marks the date of women martyrs shot by British soldiers during demonstrations in 1919. Women's participation in the 1919 revolution accorded value and legitimacy to the nascent women's movement in Egypt.

Empowered by their participation in the 1919 revolution, the Women Committee was formed in the Wafd party. The period from the 1920s to the early 50s is generally acknowledged as vibrant in the history of the women's movement. The Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU) was founded in 1923. This union mainly consisted of members of the women's committee in the Wafd who decided to establish an all women organization and depart from the Wafd party because the Wafd's disregarded the opinions and demands of the women's committee. The EFU played an important role in raising awareness, lobbying for the advancement of a women's rights agenda, and mobilizing resources and public opinion to advocate for national independence. Members of the union assumed radical positions on national independence, democracy, and Arab solidarity. The EFU publically rejected the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, which did not resolve the issue of independence and the full withdrawal of British troops from Egypt.

The participation of women in national liberation movements in Arab countries has been acknowledged and documented (Arenfeldt and Golley 2012). Furthermore, Arab women's rights activists agreed to give precedence to national independence over their demand for rights. The classic example is Algeria. In 1958, as a reaction to a call by French colonialists to Algerian women asking them to burn their veils in a public square and chant Algeria is French, Algerian women wore veils as a symbolic confirmation of their national identity and immersed themselves in the struggle for independence postponing their struggle for gender rights. However, the downside is women's participation in national independence movements did not translate into an acknowledgement of their demands after independence in postcolonial nation states. In fact, and with reference again to the Algerian case, despite women's huge sacrifices in the war of liberation, they were asked by their comrades to return to their homes. Bearing in mind significant variations between Arab countries,

women were not recognized as equal partners in the process of constructing modern nation states (ibid.).

State Feminism in Postcolonial States

State feminism in the Arab world usually has negative connotations and is generally seen as one of the obstacles that have impeded the formation of strong feminist movements. This is not universally true, as state feminism in Scandinavian countries, for example, denotes a reformist agenda adopted by the state to rectify gender inequality in state structures and mechanisms by enacting gender sensitive laws and increasing the number of women in public office. State feminism is regarded by many in a positive light, despite recent criticisms by feminists. Historically, state feminism in the Arab world is a phenomenon of the 1950s and 60s, which is the beginning of independent postcolonial states. However, state feminism in the Arab world brings to mind words like cooptation, appropriation and manipulation. Why?

In an article on state feminism in Egypt, Mervat Hatem describes the role of state feminism in the 1950s and 60s as paradoxical (1992, 232). On the one hand, much was achieved: the 1956 constitution guaranteed equality before the law and no discrimination based on gender, race, language, religion, or belief and granted women political rights. Labor laws were modified to enable working women to perform their reproductive roles. On the other hand, the Personal Status Laws (PSL) were left intact, meaning that patriarchal domination of women in the private sphere was left unchallenged. This created a bizarre situation where women attained equality in the public sphere but were subject to the authority of male members of their families in the private sphere. The classic Egyptian story that captures this anomaly is the story of an Egyptian woman minister, member of the cabinet, who was traveling on official business but was detained at the airport because her husband decided to ban her from traveling. The second important problematic feature of state feminism in the Arab world is that it was supported by a postcolonial state that deliberately and effectively "demobilized Egyptian feminist organizations" (Hatem 1992, 233). Postcolonial Arab states, with variations but without exception, developed into authoritarian postcolonial states that clamped down on dissent and all forms of opposition movements, instituted one-party systems, and nationalized social movements.

Again the classic Egyptian example of the tension between feminist organizations and the postcolonial state is the story of the Egyptian Feminist Union founded by Hoda Shaarawi in 1923. As mentioned earlier, this was an independent feminist organization, which advocated for a political and social agenda. In 1956, the EFU was dissolved by orders of the Revolutionary Council Leadership and replaced by the Association of Hoda Shaarawi, a charity organization that provided social services; it was no longer allowed to pursue a political agenda nor practice activities of a political nature. This new state of affairs resulted in the expulsion of many feminists from public life. Some were able to withdraw quietly and refocus their attention to apolitical public service; others paid a high price for their independence. Doria Shafik, for example, paid a heavy price for publicly objecting to the dictatorial nature of the new political order. In 1957, she went on a hunger strike at the Indian embassy in Cairo to protest against what she described as the dictatorial direction of the Nasser regime. She was banned from public life and put under house arrest. Her life ended tragically with suicide (Shafik 2014). However there are three important points to remember: (1) many feminists seized the opportunities opening up for women to rise and pursue successful careers that at a later stage, when the political sphere opened up slightly, were able to return to public life armed with expertise and authority they gained over the years; (2) other feminists worked within state structures and accommodated the political restrictions; and (3) all the achievements of state feminism are based on the work of independent feminists, their demands, their programs, and their ideas.

From the 1990s to the first decade of the twenty-first century, state feminism went through a new phase, a type of mutation manifested in the establishment of National Councils for Women headed by the "First Ladies." These new structures came in response to new international developments regarding the role of governments in supporting women's rights agendas as well as local developments in policy and political ideology. In the next section, I examine the conditions that led to these formations.

The Internationalization of Women's Rights

The historical roots of the internationalization of women's rights extends back to 1975 when the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) declared 1975 as the "International Women's Year." The First World Conference of Women in Mexico City was held in that same year and 1976-1985 was announced as the UN Decade for Women. The UN also dedicated a voluntary fund to support this declaration. In 1979, The General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Second World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985 was described by many as "the birth of global feminism"(United Nations 2019) as it situated women's rights agendas at the center of world politics. The Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women declared women's rights as human rights, and more importantly, committed states to specific actions to guarantee their compliance with the agreed resolutions. The strategic objective H.1.b in the Beijing Platform for Action, committed governments to create a national machinery, where it does not exist, and strengthen, as appropriate, existing national machineries, for the advancement of women at the highest possible level of government; it should have clearly defined mandates and authority; critical elements would be adequate resources and the ability and competence to influence policy and formulate and review legislation; and among other things, it should perform policy analysis, undertake advocacy, communication, coordination and monitoring of implementation (United Nations 1995). The formation of National Councils of Women, or other forms of national machineries to promote women's rights in the Arab world, happened against the background of these global trends in international politics. While the scene in the Arab world is diverse, one common feature has been that these international organizations were headed by First Ladies, princesses, or prominent members of the ruling elite.

There is a vast amount of scholarship assessing the impact of the role of the UN and the internationalization of women's rights on women's movements all over the world. Elisabeth Friedman (1999) distinguishes between the term "internationalism" and "transnationalism." According to Friedman, internationalism "particularly addresses the interaction between states, often to the exclusion of non-state actors" (359). Transnationalism on the other hand is used to characterize regular activity crossing national borders that involves non-state actors (Risse-Kappen 1995, 3; quoted in ibid., 359). A question arises: to what extent has this development (i.e. making women's rights issues an important component in international politics or interstate relations) been good for women? This question remains a matter of contention and much debate.

Sylvia Walby (2002) argues that the integration of feminism in the international discourse of human rights, with the emphasis on the responsibilities of states to protect those rights as a prerequisite for inclusion in the international regime of "civilized states," led to positive measures undertaken by states in support of women's rights agendas. Walby foregrounds how feminists world-wide used this development to lobby their governments. She says that in this international regime, "the nation-state has been the subject of a successful pincer movement by feminists organized at both grassroots and trans-national levels" (550). Feminist researchers also shed light on how participation in these high profile UN conferences helped them legitimize their demands and mobilize resources

and strengthen local women's movements (Friedman 1999). On the other hand, feminists note the complex and mixed effects of the internationalization of women's rights and have also drawn attention to potential negative consequences, namely the manipulation of international mechanisms by political leaders with detrimental effects on women's movements, the unequal distribution of resources and social capital, and the divisive effect of negative perceptions of foreign funding in local contexts (Alvarez 2000).

How do these debates play out in the Arab world? It is noteworthy that Egypt and Tunisia were amongst the countries that proposed the UN dedicate a year to the discussion of women's rights agendas in the international arena. This opportunity was seized by women rights activists who participated in international conferences, joined international networks, and consolidated transnational alliances. International forums and meetings also became platforms for lobbying governments in the Arab world. Examining processes of political change in Egypt, Mona El-Ghobashy (2008) argues that the internationalization of the political regime in Egypt since the mid-1990s was a key factor that afforded "activists and ordinary citizens unexpected political leverage in their asymmetric share of public power with the executive" (1593). El-Ghobashy points out that despite the absence of democratic governance, the Egyptian state was a signatory to human rights conventions and bilateral treaties, which imposed international legal commitments. She furthers that integration in the international standard setting regime created a space for rights activists to use the concept of the rule of law to contest state violations of rights.

In addition to committing to international conventions, Egypt invested in being recognized as an important player on the international scene and a modern nation worthy of a seat in the "global club of civilized countries." One of the persistent tropes in Egyptian mainstream media has been the necessity of safeguarding the "image of Egypt," which is a narrative about an imagined civilized and modern state who is an important player in international politics. Hence, the internationalization of Egyptian politics plus the projected self-image of a modern state afforded rights activists disproportionate powers vis-a-vis state representatives in international forums as they invoked the standards of the rule of law to challenge violations and argue for rights. I argue elsewhere that this imagined role of Egypt as a key player in international politics and membership in the international club of civilized nations was a key factor in the negotiations over Article 11, or the "women's article" in the Egyptian constitution endorsed in 2014, and was acknowledged by many feminists as a positive step forward in enabling a women's rights agenda (Elsadda 2015).

There are important stories yet to be told and documented about how feminists have made use of international forums to further their agendas in local settings. One such story took place in 1985, right before the Nairobi conference. In May 1985, the Supreme Constitutional Court in Egypt ruled that Law 44/1979 (Jihan Law) was unconstitutional on procedural grounds. The Jihan Law introduced some basic amendments to the PSL that regulated polygamy, facilitated women obtaining divorce subsequent to a husband's taking another wife, and most importantly provided protection for divorced women who had custody of the children by giving them the right to occupy the marital house for the period of custody. In a country with a major housing problem, this was a very important measure to protect women and young children from the adverse effects of divorce. The Jihan Law indeed was unconstitutional because of the circumstances of its approval in parliament.[3] However, it was directly linked to the President's wife's influence and a manifestation of a state feminism that had become extremely unpopular and vulnerable to opposition. Yet, the *substance* of the Law was aligned with the demands of women rights activists and addressed inequitable legal issues that had an adverse impact on women's daily lives and women rights activists saw the annulment of the Jihan Law as a setback to women's rights.

With the possibility of annulment, women rights activists formed the Committee for the Protection of the Family and Women to lobby parliament to endorse the Jihan Law and avert annulment. The Committee first met in the Association of Hoda Shaarawi, which was chosen for its

historical and symbolic value. The Committee made an effort to mobilize women by announcing times and dates of meetings in newspapers and by publishing the committee members' demands and advocacy articles in newspapers and magazines. However, the committee was subjected to a vilification campaign by conservatives and was not always successful in finding locations for large meetings and members had to organize meetings in houses. Notwithstanding, the efforts of the committee were relatively successful: Law 100 of 1985 was passed with very similar articles to Law 44 that was annulled, but with a compromise to appease conservatives.[4] The point to note here is the Women's Conference in Nairobi (1985) was the main reason for expediting the process of the (previously) annulled Law 44 going back to parliament to be passed in record time. The annulment would have been a sign of a lack of commitment on the part of the state to furthering women's rights agendas and a possible embarrassment on the international stage.

Going back to the National Councils of Women (NCW) in Arab states, they soon become the twenty-first century mutation of state feminism. Theoretically per UN directives, states are required to ensure the autonomy of national machineries by providing the necessary resources and legal structures. In authoritarian postcolonial states' practice, these bodies gradually became arms of state manipulation over women's rights issues. Because most of these councils were headed by First Ladies, they were intolerant of dissenting voices and were exclusionary rather than inclusionary. In Egypt, it gradually became clear that the primary goal of the NCW was to nationalize women's rights agendas, making it the prerogative of council members to act as the sole representatives of women's rights issues in local and international forums.

How did feminists interact with NCWs? Again, we find ourselves in a very varied and complex scene. Bearing in mind the already existing diversity in ideological and political positions amongst feminists, we can discern a wide spectrum of positions and interactions ranging from a radical standpoint that rejected cooperation under any circumstance to the other end of the spectrum that focused on accommodation. Between these two positions, are forms of interaction based on assessments of the political context at any given moment, appraisals of potential losses and gains, and decisions to cooperate based on campaign or project issues. It is these stories that need to be documented and written.

In the years since 2011, the NCW in Egypt became a site of contestation not just between feminists and the state, but also between state institutions due to interstate divisions, power struggles, and the rise of Islamist parties and their entrance into formal politics. While I will mention some key features very briefly for the purpose of shedding light on how feminists interact with the state, this is another story that remains to be written. In March 2011, feminist organizations came together and formed the Coalition of Egyptian Feminist Organizations (CFO). The main aim was to ensure that the voice of feminists was heard and noted by revolutionary groups and state actors. One of the tasks undertaken by the CFO was the reformation and restructuring of the NCW to make it more autonomous (independent of state control), in harmony with independent feminist organizations, and effective in pursuing and implementing gender sensitive policies within state institutions. Meetings were held with state actors and a proposal was submitted to the cabinet. It was a moment when CFO meetings with the cabinet to lobby for the reformation was possible because the political sphere was open and accommodating to dissenting voices, which enabled the CFO to voice their views in the media and wider audiences.

However, these efforts to reform were stalled and did not materialize. In the second half of 2012, the NCW became a target for attack by the new Islamist political elite and efforts were made to take over the institution with the view of Islamizing it. A struggle ensued between the then NCW members and Islamist state actors. In October 2012, the NCW issued a statement rejecting the 2012 draft constitution written by a constituent assembly with an Islamist majority ("Egypt's National Council for Women Rejects Constitution Draft"). Under normal circumstances, this dissent of the NCW would be unthinkable and must be understood as a concrete example of the divisions and

conflicts between state institutions. At the time, this position was in harmony with the position of feminist organizations and the non-Islamist political parties and movements in the country, and was consequently welcomed and endorsed. Events, however, took an unfortunate turn on all fronts and tensions between independent women's organizations and the NCW rose in regards to its role of becoming the sole representative of women's issues locally and internationally, as well as its role in the nationalization of the women's movement.

Transnational Arab Feminisms

I would like to focus on the distinction made above between "internationalism" and "transnationalism," where transnationalism characterizes non-state actors, women rights groups, and independent feminists working together across borders. Long before the UN and the internationalization of "rights talk," Arab women forged alliances with feminists and feminist organizations all over the world. Much has been written about Hoda Shaarawi's participation in the ninth Congress of the London-based International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) held in Rome in 1923. Also important to remember is that Shaarawi traveled wide and far, or sent delegates from the EFU, to meetings and conferences all over the world to make the case for the independence of Egypt, confront Zionist claims to Palestine, and establish links with feminists across the world. A trip to Berlin introduced Shaarawi to Sarojini Naidu, an Indian feminist who became Governor of Uttar Pradesh after independence (Lanfranchi 2012, 176-77). The two women exchanged experiences and learned from each other.

Transnational solidarity between feminists sharing experiences and strategizing together continues to be a very important aspect of Arab feminisms. These transnational encounters have not been without challenges and problems due to unequal power relations, colonial legacies, and regional and international disputes and rivalries. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that there are strong feminist networks and alliances in existence today that have succeeded in addressing and managing some of these older challenges. Transnational feminism has also benefited from the internationalization of women's rights because more platforms and opportunities for interaction and exchange are made available and possible.

Arab Feminists and Islam

The Islamic feminism movement is generally acknowledged to have emerged in the 1980s, gaining prominence in the 1990s. However, if we think of Islamic feminism as a form of women's engagement with Islamic heritage, the production of knowledge that empower women, and arguing for rights from within an Islamic framework (i.e. one of the approaches undertaken by women to advocate for their rights), then we need to go further back in history. Aisha al-Taymuriyya (1840-1902), Malak Hifni Nasif (1886-1918), and Nazira Zein Eldin (1908-1976) are all women who engaged with Islamic texts and dictums regarding women with the view of challenging patriarchal interpretations that undermined women and consolidated male power. Even women who are perceived as representing the "secular" feminist movement, such as Hoda Shaarawi, argued for women's rights from within an Islamic frame of reference. In Tunisia, the reform of the Code of Personal Status was conducted with recourse to the premise that Islamic texts allow for multiple interpretations and are adaptable to changing historical conditions. In other words, the entire reform project was phrased and conceptualized from within an Islamic frame of reference. The same can be said regarding the reforms of the *mudawanna* in Morocco in 2004 (Charrad 2012).

Islamic feminism is and continues to be a highly contested label, as many of its key advocates and practitioners distance themselves from the label, problematize it, or qualify it. It has changed its meaning over the years and has many definitions and manifestations, almost as many as the women who engage with it. In her earlier work, Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2011) links the beginnings of the Islamic feminist movement with the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran in 1979. Mir-Hosseini uses the term "Islamic feminist" to describe the "Islamist Iranian women who after the 1979 revolution played a crucial role in silencing other women's voices" (4), meaning she identified Islamic feminists as supporters of Islamist agendas. In a later phase, she makes a distinction between "Islamic feminists" and "Islamist women," arguing that Islamic feminists do not necessarily subscribe to political Islam, and more importantly, engage critically with Islamic texts and Islamist movements. Such engagement culminates in the Musawah movement in which Hosseini herself is a key member (ibid.). Further, Omaima Abou Bakr (2013), a prominent Egyptian Islamic feminist, defines the Islamic feminist movement as an intellectual and activist project that focuses on "the production of gender-sensitive knowledge within an Islamic frame of reference," adding that "[b]esides critiquing patriarchal discrimination [in male mainstream jurisprudence], the ultimate aim is reform and reconstruction (3). It is this Islamic feminist knowledge production project that is now recognized as characteristic of the movement.

In the 1980s, women's groups in Egypt were self-identified as secular. A more accurate term I suggest would be non-Islamist due to the many meanings and connotations of "secular" in the Egyptian context.[5] In preparation for the 1993 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the issue of how to frame women's rights agenda (i.e. using a universal rights approach versus a rights approach compatible with Islam) was the subject of heated discussions amongst feminists. The consensus at the end was in favor of arguing for rights from within an Islamic/cultural framework. This was particularly the case with the task force that worked on proposing amendments to marriage and divorce laws in Egypt, a campaign that eventually led to passing Law 1 in 2000, which made it possible for women to obtain a no-fault divorce (khul') and introduced a new template for marriage contracts with an appendix listing possible conditions to be inserted in the contract. The aim of Law 1 was primarily consciousness-raising. The ICPD, which convened in Egypt, was an important milestone in the history of the women's movement in Egypt because it enabled public debates on gender rights, pushed rights agendas, and encouraged the formation of feminist groups. The overall experience, particularly the direct and confrontational encounters with Islamists in the NGO forum, convinced many feminist groups to rethink their positions vis-a-vis ignoring or disregarding the culturalist and Islamist discourses in their activism.

Hence, framing women's rights agendas with reference to values and concepts in Islam has been a key strategy undertaken by women rights activists in their battle for rights. I argue the picture is blurred or distorted due to the large variations in the usage, meanings, and connotations of the terms feminism, Islam, and religion, as well as the conflicting, even adversarial, ideological positions pitting secular feminism versus Islamic feminism. Importantly, Mir Hosseini (2011) notes the rancor and anger often exhibited by radical voices from both camps vis-a-vis one another, despite the fluidity and transformations in the positions of many feminists' responses to historical changes. Mir-Hosseini's feminist views regarding the relations, tensions, and dynamics between feminism and religion have developed and changed along the years. Her more recent position calls for "a reconciliation and transcendence of the distinction" between secular feminism and Islamic feminism (ibid., 11).

If one of the arguments for the importance of Islamic feminists in Arab societies has been that their references to Islamic values and concepts enable them to address larger audiences in their societies and legitimizing their work by virtue of its closeness to Arab cultures and values, then how effective has this approach been? This is a difficult question to answer, particularly as I have persistently blurred the boundaries between Islamic feminists and secular feminists. In certain

contexts, resorting to religious justifications often is very useful and is a strategy adopted by a diversity of feminists. However, when an Islamic feminist in Egypt challenges the core of patriarchal discrimination with solid scholarship and iron-clad arguments, she will be met with maximum aggression and may be dismissed or denied access to public platforms. History has shown that producing feminist theological knowledge is one thing, but having the authority and the power to disseminate this knowledge and be accepted by the mainstream is another. Similar to secular feminists, Islamic feminists are not looked upon favorably by orthodox and conservative religious establishments; they too are regarded with suspicion by authoritarian postcolonial states, who have consistently sought to manipulate the power of religion to their own ends. Like secular feminists, Islamic feminists are entangled in the complex circle of state, religion, and dictatorship.

Concluding Reflections

I have attempted a brief survey of my experience with how feminists in Egypt have made use of the political opportunities presented to them. Important to this process is how they negotiated, accommodated, or confronted power by taking into consideration multiple key trends in the history of Arab feminisms. My aim has been threefold: (1) to highlight the variety and richness in direction and activism; (2) to invite a revision of some dominant stereotypical narratives about feminist activism that undermine much that was achieved; and (3) to shed light on an important variable that often gets lost in accounts, which includes how Arab feminists practiced and advocated for their rights in authoritarian contexts that are not by definition genuine supporters of rights and freedoms. In other words, Arab feminists, in their struggle for gender justice, did not only confront patriarchal prejudice and discrimination, but they did so in undemocratic authoritarian settings that are inimical to all forms of collective organizing and action.

In the aftermath of the wave of Arab revolutions in 2011, feminists in Egypt seized the opportunities that were presented to them consequent to the opening up of political spaces for mobilization and activism on the ground. They formed a feminist coalition; partnered with broader coalitions; joined new political parties and various initiatives; organized campaigns; organized and participated in street demonstrations; participated in negotiations with official bodies and state actors over legal reform and constitutional reform; lobbied members of parliament; and led media campaigns to raise consciousness regarding gender justice. Now, with the vilification campaign against rights groups and the closing down of political spaces that marks the current moment in Egypt, it is easy, and very common, to hear voices that question the ability of feminists to attain the goal of gender justice. Despite the fact that right now the light at the end of the tunnel is difficult to see, it is important to remember that gains have been achieved. There is consensus amongst feminists in Egypt that one of the revolutionary gains has been the breaking of the taboo about sexual violence. A law has passed criminalizing harassment, anti-sexual harassment units have been established in police stations, and the issue is no longer treated as a taboo but as a social challenge that must be addressed. Tunisia, the jewel of the crown in Arab revolutions, passed one of the most progressive anti-violence against women laws in the world.[6]

The history of Arab feminisms is a history of appropriation, manipulation, and negotiation with power in authoritarian postcolonial states. Arab feminisms, however, are not *in* crisis, as has been suggested in some forums, but are constantly operating in crisis mode, the modus operandi of feminists living under dictatorships. We have accumulated a lot of experience and skills in confronting challenges, accommodating setbacks, and surviving against all odds. To answer the question what can feminism accomplish, we must first acknowledge and recognize what feminism has accomplished, and under what circumstances. Understanding the past is a prerequisite for charting the future. And our past is, understandably, strewn with numerous losses and gains, achievements and setbacks, and

success and frustration. There is significant scholarship that documents women's movements in the Arab world, yet much remains unsaid and unwritten. These are the little fragments, the differentiated stories of state and non-state actors in local, regional, and international settings. Who said what and why? Why was one meeting successful? What made an international solidarity campaign successful, while another one failed? I make a case for the necessity of remembering, preserving our memory, both short term and long term memory. All things considered much has been achieved. I argue that feminism has been one of the most successful social movements in the Arab world, if not the most successful.

Notes

1. This article is adapted from a keynote address delivered at a conference at the American University in Beirut, "Feminism in Crisis? Gender and the Arab Public Sphere," on 19-20 January 2018.

2. A good example is Shibly Shimayyal, a reformist and medical doctor, who introduced social Darwinism to the Arab cultural scene through his translation of Buchner's commentary on Darwin. There was a fascinating exchange in the year 1886 between women writers and Shimayyil, as they challenged his views. He used pseudo scientific arguments that were popular in the 19th century to argue for the superiority of men over women and for undermining women's demands for suffrage and freedom (Shimayyil 1886).

3. The Jihan Law was passed by presidential decree during the period of recess of parliament and was not subsequently presented to parliament for endorsement as per constitutional mandate. In addition, the Law was not of an urgent nature, which would have allowed the President to use his exceptional power to pass a law during parliament recess period. Strictly speaking, it was unconstitutional.

4. While Law 44 allowed a wife to divorce her husband should he marry another wife without proving harm, which meant that marrying another wife was acknowledged as harm that did not need further proof. Law 100 stated that a wife had to prove harm related to her husband's second marriage.

5. Nadje al-Ali has an important intervention in the use and connotations of the term secular in Egypt (al-Ali 2000).

6. For details about the anti-sexual harassment movement in Egypt post-2011 see Elsadda 2018 and Tadros 2016.

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A History of Their Own: A Conversation with Vicki L. Ruiz

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Vicki Lynn Ruiz

Vicki Lynn Ruiz—the granddaughter of a unionized, immigrant coal miner—grew up listening to stories told by her mother Erminia Pablita Ruiz Mercer and her grandmother María de la Nieves Moya. Her understanding of Mexican American women's history emerged from their kitchen-table remembrances. In her book, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (1998), Ruiz recounts, "My mother and grandmother would regale me with tales of their Colorado girlhoods, stories of village life, coal mines, strikes, discrimination, and family lore." Similarly, Ruiz's first book, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives* (1987), emanated from the stories of union leader and civil rights activist Luisa Moreno, who invited Ruiz into her Guadalajara, Jalisco, home one summer while Ruiz was completing her graduate coursework. The bonds that grew between Ruiz and all three women, whom she describes as her first mentors, set her on a pathbreaking journey that made invaluable contributions to the fields of Chicana studies and Latina history.

To say that Ruiz's work centers these academic fields and that her intellectual impact extends broadly across academia, nationally and internationally, is no overstatement. Awarded a 2014 National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama, Ruiz served as the elected president of the American Historical Association (AHA), the American Studies Association (ASA), the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, the Organization of American Historians (OAH), and the Pacific Coast Branch of the AHA. She is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Such accolades, commitment, and service to the profession have been built earnestly and painstakingly over four decades and at five universities in the American borderlands, where she has taught and provided administrative leadership since 1987. Over the decades, Ruiz has made invaluable interventions in a variety of disciplines—such as social history, American history, Chicana history, women's studies, and labor history—and notably by directing 25 PhD dissertations and bringing new cohorts of scholars into the profession, including the filmmaker Virginia Espino.

Ruiz has made it her life's work to recuperate stories that tell the rich history of Chicanas in the making of America. In the introduction to *From Out of the Shadows*, Ruiz writes, "As farm workers, flappers, labor

activists, barrio volunteers, civic leaders, and feminists, Mexican women have made history. Their stories, however, have remained in the shadows" (xiii). Making Chicanas visible as part of the United States, and writing them indelibly into the nation, has been Ruiz's ongoing political project, one that—through placing colonialism, migration, and gender as central—seeks to decolonize history and higher education. Drawing on a variety of sources—primarily oral and personal narratives, but also pamphlets, popular culture (including advertisements), newsletters, songs, poems, and even missionary reports—she brings "out of the shadows" the stories of Chicana and Chicano arrival, settlement, and survival in the United States, and most importantly their various contributions—as historical actors, as resistant subjects—to the social and cultural landscape of the US, whether through their unionizing work for good working conditions and better wages, their intra- and interethnic networks and coalitions, or their protests against racism. For instance, through focusing on the cannery workers in southern California, Ruiz's first book *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives* (1987) provides a rich portrait of women's work culture and Mexican women as leaders in labor activism in the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA).

Ruiz's important article, "Nuestra América: Latino History as United States History" (2006), exemplifies the kind of penetrating inquiry she demands of historians and academia writ large. She provides a different chronicle of three canonical moments of American history: 1848 (the end of the Mexican-American war), 1898 (the Filipino-Cuban-Spanish-American war), and 1948 (post–World War II and an important moment in the desegregation of US Latinos). She suggests that we disrupt conventional narratives by examining what happens to US history when we tell it as a story of US imperialism. The narrative threads of imperialism, decolonization, and transnationalism are woven across Ruiz's scholarship. Her coedited anthology (with Ellen Carol DuBois), *Unequal Sisters* (1990)—a collection of thirty essays—is now required reading in many history and women's studies courses; and it uses a multicultural framework, "one in which many pasts can be explored simultaneously to organize a genuinely national, a truly inclusive, history of women" (xiii). Other projects too accomplish Ruiz's career-long goals. Works such as the collection *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia* and the digital *Latinas in History: An Interactive Project* (with biographies, timelines, and lesson plans) provide rich and invaluable resources for educators and the larger community.

Thus, whether it is her scholarship on Mexican women and their unionization in the California food processing industry in the 1930s and 1940s, or her initiatives within institutions and professional organizations (such as Humanities Out There), all of Ruiz's work provides a model of civic engagement, one that is governed by an ethical impulse toward social justice and change.

In the interview that follows, Ruiz offers her thoughts on a variety of topics such as race and activism in the academy, the importance of collaborations and conversations, and feminism.

The Politics of the University

Anupama Arora, Laura K. Muñoz, and Sandrine Sanos (*JFS*): We want to begin with what has been on our minds and part of many discussions across the academe: the challenge a lot of us faculty face to do what we want to do, and keep true to what we want to do, but also learn to preserve ourselves.

Vicki Ruiz (VR): You want to do good work. And also things that *you* want to do. Sometimes you feel you have to be on committees to try to move the needle forward, to make the academy a more humane and accessible place. I feel great when I'm able to contribute and help a junior scholar or a student, to watch them grow into themselves. When I was dean, one of the things I am most proud of was making sure that

embattled women assistant professors, who were facing tenure battles that shouldn't have been battles as they had clear-cut cases, got tenure. And, as dean, that was incredibly gratifying to me. But some battles that I participated in thirty years ago that I thought, by now, would be gone—they're still there! That's what's so frustrating.

JFS: Why do you think that is? Many of us are committed to the work. It reminds us of a theme in your work: the idea of "fictive kin." To think of transgenerational communities is also a feminist principle, like you were saying; for example, supporting those who are junior to us, the mentoring of students. And yet, institutionally, that is still such a fraught space. We still have to battle so hard.

VR: I think that some of the issues are the same, but I also think that, in a way, it's harder today because of the increasing corporatization of the university, the increasingly private public university. And the headlong rush into STEM, particularly in public universities, troubles me as it frequently means a devaluation of the humanities. The proposals that float—higher tuition for students in engineering, in the physical and biological sciences, as opposed to the humanities or the social sciences (what are we—the cheap degrees?)— to me, run counter to the mission of the university. I feel very strongly our mission in state schools is to reflect the demographic realities of our country. We need funding to make activities and resources available for underrepresented students, for faculty of color. But, for example, if you're some sort of administrator of diversity, then you are seen as the diversity police, rather than seeing a commitment to diversity as a collective responsibility.

And then there is the issue of funneling of money into STEM, into centers of innovation to help faculty commercialize their research, particularly for colleagues in engineering, biosciences, physical sciences. How about putting these resources into undergraduate and graduate education writ large? And then, for me, it's not just dividing the campus but [promoting] a growing chasm of inequality.

JFS: And maybe even reproducing inequality for underrepresented students, for first-generation students, first-generation faculty.

VR: Absolutely. Why is the University of California Irvine's Student Outreach and Retention center (called SOAR) also the site of the food pantry? Shouldn't a food pantry and issues of food security be center stage? Shouldn't [the pantry] have its own office? Shouldn't we have more social workers? I do understand the priorities at a Research 1 university, an AAU university—the emphasis on research—but we can't forget our educational mission, and our educational mission to *all* students. Speaking about research universities, we often have not been good neighbors.

JFS: What do you mean?

VR: At times, universities are very isolated; they're not an integral part of the community. People don't see the institution as a place for partnerships. I also think in terms of community partnerships rather than community engagement. What is the difference? We have to differentiate between initiatives that really partner with neighborhood groups, associations, constituencies, and the programs that are based on a charity model, which say, look, we are here; our students are going to do this and that. Not that I think there's something wrong with that, but it's more of making our students feel good. Instead we need to think about how we can leverage the resources of the university, and how we can leverage our networks to improve the lives of people in our neighborhoods, of our neighbors.

JFS: And this sort of emphasis on community partnerships has been a theme in your work. We noted that in your article "Citizen Restaurant" you said that "our obligations as agents of change do not end at the campus parking lot" (Ruiz 2008, 2). You emphasize the meaning of what we do in the classroom and

how it must expand beyond the classroom. How do you think we could reimagine that especially for first-generation students in the university?

VR: Well, I think that, often, first-generation students are certainly closer to the ground on these issues. We have two very dynamic and active undocumented student groups on campus; and undergraduates are working one or two jobs, but their advocacy, activism, and their community projects are integral to what they do and who they are. However, unlike students of my generation or an earlier generation where people majored in social movements to the detriment of their studies [laughs], these students have a really good sense of balance. The students that I have met and worked with here, at Irvine, over the last 15–16 years, have a really good sense of that balance of trying to negotiate all the demands on their time.

Last quarter, I had a young Armenian American woman who commuted on Metrolink from Glendale (about fifty miles away), switched trains at Union Station in downtown LA, taking the Orange Line to Irvine (about a two-hour train trip), and then had to wait for a bus to take her on a twenty-minute ride to campus. That is a lot of coordination, and she was doing it! The day she had classes, she was up at 5:30! She's an A student who wants to be an attorney and go into family law. I had another student (white male) who was driving in from Redlands, which is at least an hour and a half away. There's a sense of appreciation of their education; it's not just a goal or, I'm going to get a degree and that's it. They really value the undergraduate experience.

Race, Politics, and the Public

JFS: Continuing in the same vein, in June 2015, you sent a letter in the name of the American Historical Association (AHA) to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to protest their decision to deny undocumented students access to top-tier universities in the state (AHA 2015). This policy by the Board of Regents is an example of the "renewed politics of exclusion" that you have discussed in your writing.

VR: Yes, and I never received a reply, by the way. They never acknowledged it. They don't have to.

JFS: Was it covered by the local news?

VR: Not that I know of. In fact, at the AHA's annual meeting in Atlanta, one of my presidential plenaries, "Students on the Front Lines: The Fight to Desegregate Public Higher Education in Georgia from the 1960s Atlanta Student Movement to the Undocumented Student Movement Today," featured the [Executive] Director of Freedom University, Laura Emiko Soltis; Charles A. Black, former chair of the Atlanta Student Movement; and current [Freedom University] student Melissa Rivas-Triana (Ruiz 2015). And while our session was well attended, there was no media coverage.

JFS: That's very symptomatic of the unwillingness to address those issues. So then, what do we do? How do we continue to further decolonize higher education?

VR: We need to continue to try to heighten the consciousness of students and colleagues. I haven't been successful at op-eds, but I know people who are really successful. To me, Héctor Tobar is a wonderful public intellectual. He's a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist; he's a PEN [award] winner and now an assistant professor at the University of Oregon after a long career at the *Los Angeles Times*. He's educating through the way he writes, particularly [by] placing materials on Latinos in East Coast publications like *The New Yorker* or *The New York Times*.[1] Not everyone has that talent, but we should nurture and get people to try. To me, learning to write for a larger public should be part of a graduate seminar that all students in the humanities and social sciences should take.

JFS: Yes, it is important to learn to imagine different publics and to think about the different constituencies of people one is speaking to.

VR: A couple of years ago, I gave a talk at the Rotary Club here at Irvine, and then this year I gave a talk at the Santa Ana Kiwanis Club. I was able to engage people in conversation. No one person was hostile; it wasn't the sort of poisonous environment of anonymous comments on the Internet. We had a really nice discussion. Not everybody agreed, and that was OK. It gives me hope for civility. Making those connections is important. We can only change the kind of things we can and always encourage conversations. And bring injustices out into the open that many people don't acknowledge. For example, one of my mentees, Julian Bugarin, is a born organizer. With earnestness and a touch of charisma, he, as the student government labor liaison, has made his peers much more aware of the differentials in wages and benefits between custodial workers and gardeners employed by our campus and those employed by subcontractors. He has done so by organizing events that bring workers and students in conversations with one another. He is one among many social justice-minded undergraduates seeking to raise awareness as well as [promote] actions on campus. These are undergraduates and *their* initiatives.

JFS: What you're saying also echoes what's been in your work all the way through. It's not just working at the national level, it's also taking seriously what's local, what are our immediate local communities or those micro-level narratives that rarely get heard but that you should make your business to know.

Feminism(s) Today

VR: I feel extraordinarily privileged to have interviewed the women I have interviewed, to have worked with undergraduate and graduate students. I owe a tremendous intellectual debt to my graduate students. It's a collective effort. [In fact], there are so many feminisms. But, also, when you decouple gender from the social justice train, it's no longer feminism. Feminism and social justice are intertwined; and social justice is the core of feminist thinking. It's not about leaning in, out, or sideways; it's collective. You have scholars who will pronounce themselves as feminists and yet, in their daily interactions with colleagues and students, they're not practicing what they preach. They don't see the contradiction.

JFS: We agree that practice is really important; what we think about also has to be what we live. Do you see an awareness of feminism, or Chicana feminism, in your undergraduate students?

VR: It's disturbing. With some I do, with some I don't. There is no historical memory. When I took women's history in 1976, it changed my life, and I had a mentor who changed my life; it was Jean Gould Bryant who encouraged me to go to graduate school. There are still students who not only have no knowledge of Latino history, they have no knowledge of US women's history. I know that there is variation, depending on the teacher and the state-mandated curriculum, but it can be very unsettling.

However, I should say that last week I was interviewed by this incredible young Latina eighth grader, Emerson Orozco, for National History Day. She was talking about Chicanas in the movement for her National History Day project. And she had won her school competition, and wanted to interview me and get an idea where she can go for more sources, and I thought, this is great! I thought, here's someone who gets it. This is someone who has a consciousness. When I asked her if she had a knowledge of this history, she asked me if I had watched the film *No Más Bebés* and [said] that her grandmother had been one of the women who had been sterilized and one of the plaintiffs. I told her that it was made by my former student, Virginia Espino, and was based on her dissertation about this topic. So, through the project, this eighth grader was honoring her grandmother's legacy, a grandmother that she never met since she died in 1992.

But her father knew the stories. This was an important part of her personal legacy, and she was doing the project to honor her grandmother.

JFS: It shows the importance of transmitting that memory, of why we do women's history, gender history, Chicana history. We never cease to return to these topics and principles. Our work is so much more important because students don't always have that political awareness or consciousness.

VR: It is important. I want students to be *curious*. For instance, I want all students, whether they are history majors or not, to be able to go to a public history site and be able to evaluate it, to be able to weigh evidence, and think critically.

Conversations and Collaborations

JFS: In your article on Latino history as US history, you write about the ways in which we have to think of Latino borderlands history as something that unsettles the narrative (Ruiz 2006, 2011). In the same way, women's historians have said that it's not just about adding women to the narrative, but that putting women into the picture changes the narrative. You've done that work, but it still needs to be done institutionally and politically. And we wonder if you have any thoughts about how we need to keep on doing that.

VR: I think we should talk more to our colleagues about what we do, and talk about our research and our teaching and not get so involved with some of the petty politics. We spend so much time with the campus politics (the important struggles and the unimportant) that we don't really get a chance to discuss each other's work. And it's sad to say that it's often only the colleagues who are responsible for your merit who actually read your materials.

I feel this is the last department I will chair. The Department of Chicano and Latino Studies at the University of California Irvine is incredibly special. Not counting emeriti, the department is predominantly women, eight women and two men. I appreciate this sense of interconnectivity among the women. And a sense of listening to each other and collaborating, and [that] we will disagree with each other.

There's this common collaboration and talking with one another. At meetings, we disagree, but afterwards we'll have a cup of coffee, or have lunch. Once there was a fairly hot meeting, and I was not happy, and everybody filed out and I stayed there, trying to compose myself, and Ana Rosas came back about five minutes later, and asked me if I was OK. And I said, I will be, give me ten minutes, and I will be. But it's that sort of that level of collaboration that is rare and something that should be nurtured.

JFS: And I think it's especially urgent to foster this in the climate of corporatization of the university that puts so many more demands on faculty.

VR: You're so scared that somebody is going to take something from you that you begin to, sort of, pick on each other rather than join forces. It's not productive. We have to reach out in terms of commonalities [but] respect differences, respect our disciplinary differences.

JFS: That's why interdisciplinary programs such as women's and gender studies have a place because they try to always think in terms of intersectionality.

VR: Yes, it's both intersectionality and the idea of respect. We have to respect each other, and we also have to begin these kinds of conversations. Often the university is, in a sense, like graduate school all over again because we are competing. We should be mentoring each other, and not competing.

JFS: Absolutely, but it's hard to remember this, you know, when in Arizona ethnic studies are cut or when women's and gender studies departments have their resources curbed. That is the hardest to remember when there's a feeling of being embattled.

VR: Being embattled, it sets up, temporarily, a sense of us against the world. But you can't maintain that; it has to be something deeper than that. It's not about retreating, it's about amplifying your visibility. I am the biggest cheerleader for the department. If a colleague or student gets an award, I immediately send it to the communications office in the School of Social Sciences because I want my colleagues to know.

JFS: In part, explaining to others what *we* do is a way to build bridges. At the same time, the mood is so bleak. What do you think are the challenges and possibilities? For instance, we are thinking of the collection, *Presumed Incompetent*, on female faculty of color in the academy (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012).[2]

VR: Yes, we are presumed incompetent. I'm actually on this committee right now for the Vice Chancellor for Advancement, basically a fancy name for the chief fundraiser. I was in a meeting, and a donor who I had never met was sitting next to me, and he was talking about the candidate's desired attributes for the job description. And he kept going, *he* should do this, *he* needs to be that. And I kept going, *she, she*. And he just sat glaring at me, and he said, well, *the person*. And it's one of those things where I hate doing this, but I made a point of announcing that "well, not all of you know me, but some may know that I'm a recovering dean. I was dean of the School of Humanities." I just felt that I had to let him know, and I felt bad that I had to do that. I also felt bad that I was the only woman faculty member in the room, and none of the women staff members and certainly none of my male colleagues said anything, and I thought that I had to do what I had to do myself. It's not going to be a fun committee! I came back home afterwards, and my husband asked me, "How'd it go?" I said, "Oh, I just played feminist bitch for the last hour," and he said, "Oh, I bet you enjoyed it." I'm sorry, but this is 2016, and you just don't say "he" to refer to a candidate. Then, the donor also said *this person* has to have gravitas. I said, excuse me, but "gravitas" reeks white male privilege. He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "It reeks white male privilege. Period." I said, "I've known a number of women and men from underrepresented groups who have applied for higher education jobs and have been told that they didn't get positions because they were perceived as lacking gravitas!" The donor asked me, "What would you use instead of gravitas?" I said that we could use a variety of words such as "stature," "respect," "poise," "confidence."

JFS: Yes, one has to constantly push back against this coded language that makes the unspoken culture.

VR: And there's an increasing allowance for this type of intolerance, to say exactly what you mean, in the public culture. You see it in actions all over the country—against women's rights, against people of color, against religious minorities. When did we become the 1920s? It is a scary time, and it's what I try to tell my students, that you have to be involved; you can't retreat into your own private social media world.

Activism, Social Justice, and the Academe

JFS: Continuing in this same vein of activism, the news has recently (and rightly) focused on the work of Black Lives Matter. Thinking about the ways in which state violence manifests itself, how might we broaden the political critique of Black Lives Matter?

VR: Black Lives Matter is exceptionally important. And important for undocumented students. "Black Lives" is not only a political issue for me but also a personal issue. It's about basic human decency and dignity; and the stripping of people's humanity, whether it's by the authority of the state—whether it's ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] or a cop on the beat.[3] It's this authorial exercise of power. It's dehumanization of people of color. I've been asked, "So, why don't you say Latino Lives Matter?" To me, that's an appropriation, but certainly there can be coalitions that develop. I mean, that's part of what I've

done as a historian, to look for and find those moments of coalition. I would not want Latino Lives Matter to be perceived as appropriation, not that it necessarily would be, but that might be the perception.

JFS: So it's not so much that we need to hashtag Latino Lives Matter but to build coalitions that are the hardest to build, especially in politically difficult times.

VR: Yes, and these coalitions have to emerge at the grassroots level; [they're] not going to emerge from the top down. And these coalitions are fragile. Mary Wolford, who works on the rural land rights movement in Brazil, talks about coalitions and how it's the banalities that undermine coalitions, not really state authority (Wolford 2010). It is the petty tensions that bubble up, and the problem of what she refers to as the banalities, the day-to-day stuff that takes away from the larger common goals.

JFS: It's the hardest to build transnational coalitions. The discourse over undocumented students echoes the discourse on refugees that is both European and American; and for those who are subject to violence and vulnerable, for them to nonetheless try to organize is the most challenging.

VR: It's historical memory. Cherríe Moraga said it best: "The right to remember is a political act, one that counters our erasure from historical records."

JFS: Well, thank you so much for your time. And congratulations on getting the National Humanities Medal from President Obama.[4]

VR: Thank you. When I stepped on the stage, I thought about my mother and all of my students. In fact, Daniel, my youngest son, who was there, said to me, "You were thinking of Grandma up there, weren't you?" And I said, "Yes, I was!" And her spirit was certainly present.

Notes

1. Two examples of Tobar's recent pieces are "Latinos' Slow-Burn Anger" (*The New York Times*, March 9, 2016) and "The Trump Affront to Latinos" (*The New York Times*, July 20, 2016).

2. See also the Facebook page for *Presumed Incompetent*, which is followed by over 14,000 people.

3. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a federal law enforcement agency under the Department of Homeland Security, which is charged with detaining and deporting immigrants.

4. Vicky Ruiz was one of ten recipients of the 2014 National Humanities Medal, which was conferred in a White House ceremony on September 10, 2015.

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Excerpt from Vicki L. Ruiz's *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (1998)

When I was a child, I learned two types of history—the one at home and the one at school. My mother and grandmother would regale me with tales of their Colorado girlhoods, stores of village life, coal mines, strikes, discrimination, and family lore. At school, scattered references were made to Coronado, Ponce de León, the Alamo, and Pancho Villa. That was the extent of Latino history. Bridging the memories told at the table with printed historical narratives fueled my decision to become a historian.

From Out of the Shadows focuses on the claiming of personal and public spaces across generations. As farm workers, flappers, labor activists, barrio volunteers, civic leaders, and feminists, Mexican woman have made history. Their stories, however, have remained in the shadows.

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Race, class, and gender have become familiar watchwords, maybe even a mantra, for social historians, but few get beneath the surface to explore their intersections in a manner that sheds light on power and

powerlessness, boundaries and voice, hegemony and agency. This book addresses issues of interpreting voice and locating power between and within communities, families, and individuals. Women's lives, dreams, and decisions take center stage.

Women of Mexican birth or descent refer to themselves by many names—Mexicana, Mexican American, and Chicana (to name just three). Self-identification speaks volumes about regional, generational, and even political orientations. The term Mexicana typically refers to immigrant women, with Mexican American signifying US birth. Chicana reflects a political consciousness borne out of the Chicano Student Movement, often a generational marker for those of us coming of age during the 1960s and 1970s. Chicana/o has also been embraced by our elders and our children who share in the political ideals of the movement. Some prefer regional identification, such as Tejana (Texan) or Hispana (New Mexican). Spanish American is also popular in New Mexico and Colorado. Latina emphasizes a common bond with all women of Latin American origin in the United States, a politicized Pan American identity. Even racial location can be discerned by whether one favors an Iberian connection (Hispanic) or an indigenous past (Mestiza or Xicana).

As part of her stand-up routine, lesbian writer and comic Monica Palacios articulates her multiple identities as follows:

> When I was born
> I was of Mexican-American persuasion
> Then I became Chicana
> Then I was Hispanic
> Then I was a Third World Member
> (my mom loved that)
> Then I was a woman of color
> Now I'm just an Amway dealer
> And my life is happening.

Literary critic Alicia Arrizón refers to Palacios's work as "one of challenge where humor becomes the tool of reconstructing ways of understanding the self." Poet and novelist Alicia Gaspar de Alba conveys the image of the Chicana writer as "the *curandera* (medicine woman) or the *bruja* (witch) ... the keeper or culture, the keeper of memories." The exploration of identities, the conservation and creation of cultural practices and traditions, and the reconstruction of historical narratives are not without political intent. In the words of Sonia Saldívar-Hull, "The Chicana feminist looks to her history ... to learn how to transform the present."

Focusing on the twentieth century and the Southwest, this book surveys women's border journeys not solely in terms of travel, but of internal migration—creating, accommodating, resisting, and transforming the physical and psychological environs of their "new" lives in the United States. These are journeys of survival, resiliency, and community. They reveal, to quote Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "the material politics of everyday life, especially the daily life struggles of poor people—those written out of history."

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