STANDPOINTS

Black Feminist Knowledges

Edited by
Andrea N. Baldwin, Ashley V. Reichelmann,
and Anthony Kwame Harrison

Standpoints: Black Feminist Knowledges contains essays that explore Black feminist thought through a diverse set of lenses. The essays are divided among sections on localized U.S. framing and stereotypes, global perspectives, and the future. The first section of the book analyzes the representations of Black women and the stereotypes that still confine African American women generations after enslavement. Then, the global oppression of Black women is discussed, along with its resistance. Lastly, the book encourages the reader to imagine a new future and engage with activist culture that rejects sexism and racism. This volume is edited by Dr. Andrea N. Baldwin, Dr. Ashley V. Reichelmann, and Dr. Anthony Kwame Harrison and authored by the students from Baldwin's inaugural Black Feminisms graduate course in the Virginia Tech Department of Sociology.

Standpoints

Standpoints

Black Feminist Knowledges

*A Class Project by Students in
the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech*

Andrea N. Baldwin, Ashley V. Reichelmann,
and Anthony Kwame Harrison

Editors

Cover art by Trichia Cadette with cover design by Robert Browder.

Contents

Part III. Black Geographies and Activist Futures

Foreword

This year, Virginia Tech adopted a new strategic plan—the Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries. This ambitious and bold plan identifies four core values and four strategic priorities. One of its strategic priorities—Elevate the *Ut Prosim* Difference—is closely connected to the university's motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) and one of its core values, Diverse and Inclusive Communities. The *Ut Prosim* Difference, a foundational differentiator for Virginia Tech, recognizes the integral connection with Virginia Tech's land-grant responsibility of access and opportunity, its mission of service to humanity, and InclusiveVT. InclusiveVT is "the institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence" (www.inclusive.vt.edu). The *Ut Prosim* Difference, then, embodies the institution's motto; the institution's core value of diverse and inclusive communities; and the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion. When there is alignment at an institution across multiple dimensions, with diversity at the center, an institution can make significant and transformational shifts.

Virginia Tech is in the midst of such a shift, resulting in a culture change, a change in the dominant narrative, and a change in scholarship. As part of this shift, a space has been created for the scholarship reflected in this volume—scholarship that challenges dominant narratives. To achieve the goal of challenging dominant narratives and dominant histories, other voices, identities, backgrounds, and perspectives must join the conversation, must sit at the table, must produce scholarship, and must be published. This volume is a result of that work and represents that shift. This volume is moving voices, perspectives, and scholarship from the margin to the center. This volume challenges narratives about belonging, narratives about humanity, and narratives about life and experiences. It is scholarship that has often been silenced; it is scholarship from voices and

perspectives that have historically been marginalized in the academy. It is scholarship that now has a forum.

This volume is possible because of bold decisions at Virginia Tech—interconnected decisions with far-reaching implications. One of those decisions was the decision of assistant provost and the director of the Africana Studies Program, Dr. Ellington Graves, to create a new faculty position in Black feminisms. This decision to focus on Black feminist scholarship facilitated the hire of Dr. Andrea Baldwin, assistant professor of Black feminisms. Her presence on campus has been transformational. She has been a catalyst for creating, building, and growing a new community on campus, as reflected in her editorship of this volume. This volume emerged from multiple events, including a speaker series she created. That series brought additional and different voices to campus—voices from the African diaspora. These outside voices provide another lens for students to begin to understand the complex relationships among race, gender, ethnicity, cultural heritage, and cultural backgrounds. Those voices helped inform this volume and inspired students in her class to think outside of traditional and historical boundaries to generate new scholarship.

In addition to the bold decision to support the Africana Studies Program, Virginia Tech also invested in its cultural and community centers. It created new centers and invested in existing centers. The Black Cultural Center was given a new life by its inaugural director, Kimberly Williams. She breathed life, energy, and academic curiosity into the Black Cultural Center not only by creating a space for community building but also by producing an academic environment of learning, of teaching, and of scholarship. As a visionary leader and scholar, she engaged students in the production of knowledge in new, different, and creative ways. The *Black Love* exhibit, as just one example, brought together students and faculty to tell stories through narratives and photos about Black love. As part of the work of developing the exhibit, African American students moved from the margins of invisibility into co-producers and co-creators in an art gallery space that previously had seemed inaccessible to them.

On opening night and closing night and many days and nights in between, they packed the art gallery and owned the space with their laughter, their joy, and their love.

As part of the bold decision to reimagine the Black Cultural Center, and to invest in its transformation, a faculty fellow was appointed. The faculty fellow was charged with supporting the director, engaging with students, and supporting programming. Focusing on developing the academic and intellectual community as part of the mission of the cultural center, Dr. Kwame Harrison, associate professor in Africana studies, served as the faculty fellow last year in the Black Cultural Center. His engagement and partnership with both Kimberly and Andrea produced incredible outcomes. Not only was he involved with the cultural center, but his faculty appointment facilitated unique connections between Africana studies, the Black Cultural Center, Black students, and dialogues about diversity and race in a community of scholars.

This volume and its scholarship represent the building of inaugural communities of scholars. They complement a new effort to create intellectual communities for faculty and students of color, in partnership with the Office for Inclusion and Diversity. Through a new program, Student Opportunity and Achievement Resources (SOAR), Virginia Tech is working to eliminate and reduce barriers to success by creating opportunities for students to find intellectual and academic communities among their peers and with faculty of color. Like this anthology, Virginia Tech is building communities that embody diversity, communities that represent the value of diverse scholarship, and communities that will generate new ideas.

This anthology represents an unwavering commitment to our core value of Diverse and Inclusive Communities and InclusiveVT. It demonstrates our commitment to our new strategic priority—the *Ut Prosim* Difference. It represents the work at Virginia Tech of moving voices from the margins to the center; from disempowerment to empowerment; from unimportance to importance. It is about a platform for stories to be told, with a space and forum to go beyond boundaries, to think about the future. It elevates the role of women,

the role of women of color, and the role of Black women in the academy. It contributes to a growing body of scholarship informed by Black feminist thought. Powerful, dynamic, and personal. May this be the first of many more anthologies at Virginia Tech with scholarship addressing and impacting the human condition from a diverse lens and perspective.

Menah Pratt-Clarke
Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Diversity
Professor of Education
Virginia Tech

Acknowledgments

The editors of this text acknowledge the Black feminist scholars globally who have paved the way for Black feminisms to enter and be a force in challenging and shaping the academy. We acknowledge the courage of those who came before us and the blessing given by our ancestors to continue working in community.

   We acknowledge the hard work and dedication each graduate student put into the separate essays that make up this collection. We also acknowledge the persistence of many influential voices at our own institution that made this possible. Specifically, we want to thank Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, Dr. Sharon Johnson, Dr. Ellington Graves, and the Department of Sociology. We are grateful for the work of Peter Potter, Robert Browder, Tyler Balli, Lauren Holt, Sarah Mease, and Amy Splitt in the publishing and copyediting process. This particular work would not be possible without the dedication and inspiration of Kimberly Williams. We thank her for her endless pursuit of understanding Black love.

Introduction

Black Feminist Pedagogy as Praxis

ANDREA N. BALDWIN AND ASHLEY V. REICHELMANN

> *We hope to invoke perspectives that unbind pedagogy from the*
> *academy and white supremacist education, while simultaneously*
> *celebrating the rich rebellious resistance of each narrative voice*
> *within this work.*
> −Perlow et al., 2018

Standpoints: *Black Feminist Knowledges* is an edited volume intended to demonstrate the power of Black feminist knowledge and its range of applications. The chapters in this book are part of a lineage of Black feminist pedagogical praxis, such as the work of bell hooks, Audre Lorde and Patricia Hill Collins, which continues to subvert a positivist approach to academic knowledge production. These and other Black feminists have written about destabilizing academic margins through the use of everyday experiences and the inclusion of voices. This book pays homage to them and their works.

The volume was envisioned and produced through a pedagogical centering of an ethic of care. It is premised on the belief bell hooks refers to as "education as the practice of freedom" (1994, 207), that is, the "possibility ... to ... collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress" (1994, 207). This type of pedagogy frames education as a process rather than a product (Perlow et al. 2018, 4). Through this framing, we are able to capture important relation-ships between, and the liberating potential of, teaching, learning, and knowledge creation. Being attentive to the liberating potential of one's pedagogy means that we are conscious to enact a praxis that works toward our collective liberation: a praxis that resists the general tendency in the academy to categorize, isolate, and produce competition through discipline. Such tendency is made more pro-

nounced by "a celebrity culture where an internalized need to present oneself as an individual academic star often translates into a drive to abstract and generalize, frequently in opposition to those who are seen as immersed in grounded struggles" (Lock Swarr and Nagar 2010, 2). Instead this praxis builds coalitions through enlisting and privileging the voices, knowledges, and pedagogical practices of marginalized people from various spatiotemporal locations, demonstrating a deep seated understanding that such voices bring the experience and passion necessary for radical social transformation.

This type of pedagogy is not new, but rather built on the work of Paulo Freire (1972), who espoused a communal and dialectical pedagogy. He envisioned society as a classroom and encouraged engaging with "cultures of dissent" (Mohanty 1994, 162). Such a pedagogy makes these cultures visible and helps us develop and engage in strategies that move beyond mere survival and instead toward bettering the present and future. It allows the oppressed to "move beyond victimhood [and survival] to embrace the notion of ... educators, scholars, and activists as active agents ... transforming the academy and/or society itself" (Perlow et al. 2018, 3). This is a loving pedagogy, one that does not divorce scholarly work—and the care and affection that we have for what we do—from the people with and for whom we do it. It is a pedagogy that "extends from our own cultural constructs of what counts as teaching and learning in institutional settings—constructs that reify traditional forms of intellectual activity as the only possible mode of critical interventions" (Ellsworth 2005, 5). When brought into a classroom, this pedagogy allows students to become scholar-activists.

It is through this type of pedagogy that this volume was birthed. In spring 2019, the inaugural Black feminisms graduate class took place in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. Enrolled in this class were nine scholars who came from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, including performing arts, sociology, urban planning, and political science. For the breadth of the class, the nine students engaged in Black feminist theorizing and developed ways to utilize

"feminists' determination to generate alternative ways of knowing …
[that] disrupt traditional claims to power" (Barriteau 2012, 13). The
students participated in a pedagogical exchange that encouraged
them to see themselves as scholar-activists and to be grounded in
the awareness that working in academic spaces is not necessarily
about "how to think about what can be known about … in the epis-
temological sense, but rather about how to think about what I can
do about gender, identity or representation in the ethical political
sense" (Barriteau 2012, 2–3). Most importantly, the students were
then provided the space to engage in these steps for change by ask-
ing difficult questions about themselves and the world around them
through their scholarship.

One of the steps involved imagining an alternative way of being:
a present and a future that is based on the refusal of an Enlight-
enment project's focus on formality and hierarchy. They were then
encouraged to invoke a "collectively produced set of experiences
organized around issues and concerns that allow for a critical
understanding of everyday oppression as well as the dynamics
involved in constructing alternative political cultures" (Aronowitz
and Giroux 1993, 132). The fruits of this pedagogy and the product
of this particular step are *Standpoints*, a collectively produced set of
experiences written by the students themselves.

This collection is organized around and interacts with Black femi-
nist thought in three ways: localized framing and stereotypes, global
and international perspectives, and the future. This organization
is in no way meant to invoke disciplinary boundaries. To the con-
trary, it highlights the percussive potential (Durham, Cooper, and
Morris 2013) of Black feminisms to illuminate "the tension between
competing and often contradictory political and cultural projects …
[thereby being] both disruptive and generative" (Durham, Cooper,
and Morris 2013, 724). It is made evident through the text that the
students were able to both hold in place the integrity of their var-
ious disciplines while simultaneously generating scholarship that
critiqued and complemented these disciplines through the use of
Black feminist frameworks.

In order to get the students to see the potential of such percussive work, and to envision themselves as theorists who could generate alternative ways of knowing, it was imperative that all the editors come from different disciplinary trainings: Dr. Andrea N. Baldwin is an interdisciplinary gender and development scholar, Dr. Ashley V. Reichelmann is a sociologist and Dr. Anthony Kwame Harrison is a trained anthropologist. The intimate interplay between the academic backgrounds of the authors and the editors produced an "outer disciplinary" form of scholarship, one that is not confined to any particular academic boundaries and allows us—authors and editors—to map our bodies and knowledges in the way we would like to map them within academia (Hughes 2018).

The first two chapters of the text consider the experiences of African American women who are still confined by a stereotypical lens generations after enslavement. The two authors each approach the topic differently, but both are grounded in understanding the impact of sustained prejudice and its real consequences on the bodies of Black women. In her chapter, "Mired in Paradox: Black Feminist Approaches to Black Female (Re)Presentations on Screen," Inaash Islam engages in a thorough analysis of how Black women's portrayal in the media has simultaneously allowed for a revolt against, as well as a perpetuation of, these stereotypes. Using the examples from television shows such as *Black–ish* and *Scandal*, as well as popular culture, sports, and politics such as Beyoncé, Serena Williams, and Michelle Obama, Islam demonstrates how Black female representation is a complicated issue. Islam argues that by engaging in the process of "self-defining" (Collins 2000) through social movements and social media, Black women might find the opportunity to showcase their diversity and lived experiences.

On the other hand, in her chapter, "From Plantations to Presidency: A Historiography of Black Women's Oppression Due to White Women's Complacency," Maria Scaptura utilizes a historiography of Black women's oppression to demonstrate white women's complacent role in the perpetuation of prejudice against Black women and their continued oppression. Scaptura begins her analysis at the

nineteenth-century suffrage movement and concludes with Donald Trump's election to demonstrate how the actions of white women have persistently been crucial to the continued legacy of racist, sexist policies which disproportionately hurt Black women. Both authors demonstrate the continued ways that Black and Brown women are restricted by their pasts.

In addition to discussing a localized US perspective, the second section of the volume makes it clear that the oppression of Black women is global and requires us to engage with global perspectives from places like the Caribbean and Africa. In "Our Pussy, Our Prerogative: Afro-Caribbean Women's Oppression, Resistance, and Sexual Liberation," Gerlyn Murrell writes about the long history of Afro-Caribbean women's resistance to oppression. She demonstrates that Afro-Caribbean women were not passive victims of colonial imperial rule but in fact participants in violent and nonviolent forms of resistance. Such resistance was based on the use of their bodies to publicly claim the sexual agency that is evident in Caribbean culture today. Danielle Noumbouwo, in her chapter, "Till Death Do Us Part: Marriage as a Site of Subjugation for Women in Africa," explores the complex role of marriage and motherhood in African societies through an Africana-feminism approach. After questioning whether marriage is an institution that perpetuates the oppression of African women or, conversely, provides a form of liberation, Noumbouwo concludes that marriage, based on traditional African norms of mothering and motherhood, works to subordinate both married and unmarried women by limiting their choices. In the final chapter in this section, Davon Woodard combines Black geography and urban planning to examine segregation in the United States and South Africa. In "Black Feminisms, Deep Space, and Syndemic Segregation in the US and South Africa," Woodard deconstructs boundaries of representation and inclusivity within urban planning theory and history to create a new framework rooted in Black feminisms, one that imagines co-creative urban processes which produce spaces specifically intended for habitation by Black and Brown bodies. Through utilizing examples from outside of the

United States, the authors in this section demonstrate the need to understand the oppression of Black women as a global phenomenon which is not restricted by national borders.

The final section is written with the intent to force the reader to confront the present realities of a racist, misogynistic society. It encourages the reader to engage with the creative and intentional activist culture that pushes back against racism and sexism while also imagining an otherwise future. This section engages with a continuous timeline including the past, present, and future. In "Movements Not Moments: Wynterian Analysis of Emergent Anti-Pipeline Resistance and Extant Legacies of Brutality," Jordan Fallon brilliantly applies Sylvia Wynter's argument on the overrepresentation of Man to a contentious modern event: the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline in Virginia. By demonstrating how Wynter's framework allows us to reconceptualize atomized struggles and forge solidarity, mutual care, and the pursuit of true freedom, he develops a crucial toolkit for the reader to understand the intersections between politics and everyday life. Utilizing a social movement approach of solidarity, Philip Ray's chapter, "Toward Supportive Political Action: An Autoethnographic Approach to Afro-futurism and Africanfuturism," deconstructs his experiences approaching Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism through an autoethnographic approach. In his chapter, Ray locates himself as a white man and lifelong science fiction fan in the broader context of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism, paying careful attention to how he enters Afrofuturist spaces. His reflexive essay is written with the goal of supporting Black voices by elucidating how white folks can engage with Black activism and explore ways they may provide support without appropriating the message and strategies of Black collective action. Finally, Kimberly Williams and Andrea N. Baldwin write about the struggle for Black people to love themselves, others, and their communities in the face of anti-Black racism. In their chapter, "Black Love, Black Loving, Loving Blackness," they intimately and poignantly write about their own struggles as well as

joys working with each other and loving the Black community at Virginia Tech.

The volume concludes with "Silly Black Girl: Ode to the Lady with the Magical Hair," a short essay by Trichia Cadett, the artist who created the book's cover. Cadett's artwork was featured in the Black Love project installation written about in the chapter by Williams and Baldwin. Cadette's short essay is a fitting way to end *Standpoints*, because in it, she is able to evoke the magic of Black feminist theorizing.

We hope this collection will serve as the catalyst for a long tradition of loving and critical pedagogy in Black feminisms at Virginia Tech. This text is a gift from the first graduate class, the editors, and other contributors to the futurity of Black feminist praxis at Virginia Tech. It is also a challenge and a call to action. We challenge the wider Virginia Tech community to engage with the critiques provided in this volume and apply them to their own contexts, environments, and disciplines. And we call on the community to never forget that there is always more work to be done. We hope you use this book as a guide and a reminder that we need to keep working until all voices are heard.

References

Aronowitz, Stanley, and Henry A. Giroux. 1993. *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate over Schooling*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Barriteau, Eudine. 2012. "Disruptions and Dangers: Destabilizing Caribbean Discourses on Gender, Love and Power." In *Love and Power: Caribbean Discourses on Gender*, edited by Eudine Barriteau, 3–40. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Durham, Aisha, Brittney C. Cooper, and Susana M. Morris. 2013. "The Stage Hip-Hop Feminism Built: A New Directions Essay." *Signs* 38 (3): 721–37.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth. 2005. *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy.* New York: Routledge.

Freire, Paulo. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Herder and Herder.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York: Routledge.

Hughes, LeKeisha. 2018. "Robin D. G. Kelley and Fred Moton in Conversation Moderated by Afua Cooper and Rinaldo Walcott." *Journal of Critical Ethnic Studies Association* 4 (1): 154–72.

Lock Swarr, Amanda, and Richa Nagar. 2010. "Introduction: Theorizing Transnational Feminist Praxis." In *Critical Transformational Feminist Praxis*, edited by Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar, 1–20. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mohanty, Chandra. 1994. "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990s." In *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, edited by Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, 145–66. New York: Routledge.

Perlow, Olivia N., Durene I. Wheeler, Sharon L. Bethea, and BarBara M. Scott, eds. 2018. *Black Women's Liberatory Pedagogies: Resistance, Transformation, and Healing Within and Beyond the Academy.* New York: Palgrave McMillan.

ENCOUNTERING AND RESISTING STEREOTYPES

1. Mired in Paradox

Black Feminist Approaches to Black Female (Re)presentations On-Screen

INAASH ISLAM

Do (re)presentations[1] in popular culture matter? The simple answer to this complicated question is yes. (Re)presentations in mass media matter a great deal due to the particular function that mass media plays in contemporary society. Mass media—in the form of music, television, news, radio, literature, advertising, and newer forms of social media—operates as a social institution, constructing and transmitting messages and meanings about the ways in which our societies are structured (Conley 2015). Through (re)presenting peoples and relaying particular stories, the media informs us of how certain people and groups are or should be positioned in society. In these (re)presentations, there are always some individuals and groups whose images and stories are privileged and others whose images and stories are marginalized. Paying attention to how these (re)presentations unfold in western[2] mainstream media requires us to engage with particular politics that ask the following questions: Why are certain peoples (re)presented in a particular way? whose ideologies are being privileged? and more importantly, who benefits from the dispersal of such narratives? It is in these politics of (re)presentation that the critical approach of Black feminism is particularly useful, as it provides a critical lens through which we might be able to answer some of these questions.

Black people and Black women in particular share a complicated history with western mainstream visual media. Due to the intentional exclusion of Black voices within the entertainment industry, Black people have had little control over how they are (re)presented on-screen. As such, the confining (re)presentations that have

emerged as a result of their exclusion have had significant negative implications for Black life in the United States. However, as communication technologies have become more advanced and more accessible in the twenty-first century, Black people have increasingly been able to play a part in shaping how they are (re)presented on-screen. Their creative input is evident in the production and popularity of more recent cultural work, such as the television series *Black-ish* and the blockbuster Marvel film *Black Panther*. In television, we have seen a number of leading and supporting roles played by Black women, including Olivia Pope in *Scandal*, Annalise Keating in *How to Get Away with Murder*, and Cookie Lyon in *Empire*. In politics, after the presidential election of Barack Obama in 2008, our screens have been graced by the notable Black female political figure Michelle Obama. In sports, we have seen more media coverage of Black female athletes, such as of tennis superstars Serena and Venus Williams and Olympic bronze-medal-winner and sabre fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad. As this chapter will demonstrate, contemporary Black female (re)presentations on-screen have brought with them new implications for Black women and Black life in the United States.

In this chapter, I use a Black feminist framework to address and complicate some examples of Black cisgender and heterosexual female (re)presentations on-screen. In the first section, I introduce the reader to some of the historical stereotypes of Black women that have existed in dominant US perceptions of Black women. These pervasive stereotypes include those of the Mammy, Matriarch, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Strong Black Woman. Using Patricia Hill Collins's notion of "controlling images" (1999) and Melissa Harris-Perry's paradigm of the crooked room (2011), I then examine the implications of these stereotypes, showing how they can negatively impact the lives of Black women. In the second section, I examine some examples of contemporary (re)presentations of Black women on-screen. Using the works of a number of Black feminists (including bell hooks, Maria del Guadalupe Davidson, Melissa Harris-Perry and Patricia Hill Collins) I show how these (re)presentations are

resisting Black female stereotypes by (1) celebrating Blackness, (2) making visible the invisible, and (3) occupying white spaces as Black bodies. In the third section, I show how Black feminists also complicate these (re)presentations. I argue that while they are revolutionary in many ways, these (re)presentations are problematic. I show how some of these same (re)presentations (1) replicate historical stereotypes of Black women, (2) reinforce whiteness and the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks 1992, 29), and (3) are based on a reel-life/real life disconnect. In the conclusion of this chapter, I draw on Black feminisms to show how Black women might individually and collectively move forward from the confines of such (re)presentations. I argue that by engaging in the process of "self-defining" (Collins 2004) through social movements powered by social media, Black women might find the opportunity to showcase their diversity and lived experiences as Black women.

Historical Stereotypes of Black Women

The commonplace stereotypical perceptions of Black women that exist in the US today are largely derived from historical and social experiences under slavery (Gary 2018). At that time, the dominant ideology of slavery required that white men and women justify the exploitation of Black women by labeling them as deviant, abnormal, or simply suited to subservience due to their race and gender (Allard 1991). A large part of this agenda relied on the creation of "controlling images," which are gender-specific images and perceptions of Black women designed to "make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (Collins 1999, 69). These controlling images manifest as stereotypes that present and confine Black women in particular ways that devalue Black womanhood and ensure that Black women remain politically, economically, racially, and sexually oppressed. These controlling images and stereotypes are not distinct from one another; rather, they overlap to collectively shape US society's dominant perceptions of Black women. The five control-

ling images that will be discussed in this chapter are those of the Mammy, the Matriarch, the Jezebel, the Sapphire, and the Strong Black Woman.

The Mammy

The Mammy is the "faithful, obedient domestic servant" who, through loving and prioritizing her master's or employer's white family and children over her own, symbolizes the "ideal Black female relationship to elite white male power" (Collins 1999, 73). The Mammy accepts her subordination and sacrifice and fully understands her position within the white power structure. This controlling image influences Black maternal behaviors by encouraging Black women to relay to their children the expectation of the assigned place of Blacks in the racial hierarchy. This, Collins (1999) argues, leads to a continual perpetuation of racial oppression that privileges the white power structure while disadvantaging those Blacks who do not follow the white expectation of Black accommodation (74).

The controlling image of the Mammy is also portrayed as asexual—"a surrogate mother in blackface" (74) whose sexuality and fertility are severed to ensure that her only role is to serve a white household with deference and commitment. The image of the Mammy is typically portrayed visually as a "masculinized subhuman creature" (hooks 1981, 71) who has broad shoulders, large arms, and a wide stance. The image of her physical stature in addition to her asexuality ironically serves to further the stereotypical perception that Black women are innately sex driven. The Mammy is portrayed as an acceptable Black woman, the asexual exception who can serve an adequate role in a white household. Additionally, this image of the Mammy starkly juxtaposes the image of the "good" and feminine Euro-American white woman who, while sexual, must deny her sexuality (Collins 1999, 74).

A common (re)presentation of the Mammy in pop culture is Aunt Jemima, originally played by a formerly enslaved woman, Nancy

Green, who served as the face of the pancake mix of the R. T. Davis Milling Company in 1890. Often seen in commercials as smiling and happy, Aunt Jemima (re)presents the Mammy in that she is presented as best suited to domestic work. By presenting the enslaved (or formerly enslaved) as folks unaffected by their enslavement and well-suited to their lowly social positions, white people justified slavery and the post-emancipation mistreatment of Black folks. Thus, in direct contrast to reality, the (re)presentation of the Mammy and other Black folks as happy in their enslavement also helped to make the slave trade seem more humane (Harris-Perry 2011).

The presentation of the Mammy as an older, asexual, and motherly woman also contradicts historical accounts that suggest that most female domestic servants during and after slavery were teenagers and young adults. This invention of the Mammy was deliberately done in order to reimagine the powerlessness of the enslaved and instead present them as nurturing and consenting older women. In so doing, the white supremacist ideologies that created the Mammy caricature we see today negate the injustices of suffering, exploitation, and rape that were committed against the Black women and girls who served as domestic workers in white households (Wallace-Sanders 2008, 58–60).

The Matriarch

The constructed image of the Black Matriarch portrays a mother who does not care or love her own children. The Matriarch is a self-reliant and domineering woman who performs a dominant role in family relationships and personifies bad Black motherhood. More often than not, the Black Matriarch is portrayed as a single mother, since her unfeminine, domineering, and aggressive personality emasculates her partners. The controlling image of the Matriarch underscores her failure as a mother, partner, and woman, since her "inability to model appropriate gender behavior" (Collins 1999, 76)

implies that she is responsible for her own impoverished, single, and culturally deficient status.

The controlling image of the Matriarch was popularized in the 1960s after the release of the Moynihan Report. Developed by former secretary of state Daniel Moynihan, this report sought to examine issues affecting Black Americans in order to make suggestions for integration. It essentially proposed that the problems of Black Americans arose from matriarchies in Black households, which deprived Black children from learning the skills that they needed for success (Stephens and Phillips 2003). By placing the blame for the problems of the Black community on the shoulders of the Matriarch, the Moynihan Report dismissed the racial, social, and economic oppression that has created and contributed to the deficient conditions of Black communities in the US. Black feminist Hortense Spillers (1987) supports this argument, contending that contemporary structures of the Black family were in fact created during slavery, a result of the enslaved mother being positioned as both mother and father to her children. By providing historical context to the Black familial phenomenon in which the mother is the head of household, one can reasonably argue against the perception of the Matriarch as one who has failed her family and contributed to a number of social ills in her community. Instead, the Matriarch can be viewed as a woman whose predicaments are shaped by continuous racial, social, and economic oppression that has lingered since the era of enslavement. However, as it currently remains, the controlling image of the Matriarch as being responsible for the problems in the Black community continues to be portrayed in the media.

The Jezebel

The controlling image of the Jezebel characterizes Black women as being sexually deviant, hypersexual, and sexually aggressive. Also originating in slavery, the stereotype of the Jezebel served to justify the sexual assaults on enslaved women by white men (Collins 1999,

81). The Jezebel is perceived to have many sexual relationships and is sexually assertive, often prioritizing sex over romance. Collins includes within the controlling image of Jezebel the more contemporary stereotypes of "hoochie" and "hot momma" (1999, 81). These stereotypes seem to suggest that Jezebels, hoochies, or hot mommas use their sexuality in exchange for financial or economic benefits or simply seek to trap men by becoming pregnant in order to obtain financial security (82).

The image of the Jezebel was created in an effort to control Black women's sexuality. By portraying Black women as having excessive sexual appetites and increased fertility, white society labeled Black women's sexuality as deviant, discouraging Black women from engaging in sexual activities while also justifying the exploitation of Black women by white men. Controlling Black women's sexuality and fertility also ensures the social and economic oppression of Black women and children. By labeling the Jezebel as deviant, white society encourages Black women to exercise asexual behavior, produce fewer African American children, and suppress the nurturing they would otherwise provide to their children. In contemporary (re)presentations, the Jezebel is most often seen in hip-hop, television, and video games as a "brown-skinned, curvaceous woman … reduced to a sexual ornament for men" (Gary 2018, 12). Starkly placed in contrast to white societal norms, in which women are expected to be sexually passive and reserved, the Jezebel serves to (re)present a Black female heterosexuality that necessitates containment and control.

The Sapphire

The Sapphire stereotype portrays the Black woman as hostile, aggressive, and controlling. The name Sapphire first originated with the character of Sapphire Stevens, who played the wife of George "Kingfish" Stevens on the television and radio sitcom *Amos 'n' Andy* (1928–1960) (Gary 2018). The character of Sapphire emerged in a "humorous" manner to portray the failure of Black women to con-

form to norms of the white middle class, thereby reinforcing the white patriarchy and racial hierarchy. More contemporarily, the Sapphire stereotype appears as the angry Black woman who uses violence, insults, aggression, and threats in order to gain the attention of others.

The Sapphire character contrasts the nurturing character of the Mammy, as she exercises manipulative and demeaning behavior and often speaks loudly and obnoxiously, thereby emasculating Black men. According to Black feminist scholars Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett, "The stereotype of the angry, mean Black woman … is considered an essential characteristic of Black femininity regardless of the other stereotypical roles a Black woman may be accused of occupying" (2006, 490). In portraying the characteristics of the Sapphire as inherent in the African American woman, these controlling images overlap in their collective constraining of Black female behavior. In fact, the overlap of the Matriarch and the Sapphire is evident in Harris-Perry's (2011) argument that Black women's anger is often seen "as a pathological, irrational desire to control black men, families, and communities" (95) rather than a legitimate reaction to unfair circumstances. Hence, the Sapphire as a stereotype is likely to constrain Black women from expressing themselves and advocating for their own interests in the public sphere.

The Strong Black Woman

In dominant US culture the Strong Black Woman is deemed to be the ideal Black woman, who in spite of all odds is resourceful and successful. Much like other controlling images, the image of the Strong Black Woman also has its roots in slavery. She was seen as a woman who was capable of working hard, undertaking difficult work, and managing her emotions in spite of her deprived circumstances (Wallace 1999). The Strong Black Woman is expected to "handle losses, trauma, failed relationships and the dual oppressions of racism and sexism" (Harris-Perry 2011, 186). Contemporarily, the Strong Black Woman is an educated, middle- and working-

class professional woman who also is an overachiever, is assertive, and rejects dependency on others. Furthermore, the Strong Black Woman also shares traits with the Jezebel and Sapphire. Like the Jezebel, she "cares for herself and her own children whether she has a male partner or not" (187). The Strong Black Woman draws on the Sapphire stereotype in that she "channel[s] the angry Sapphire in a socially acceptable direction" (187). Hence, the Strong Black Woman becomes the epitome of the ideal Black woman—one who has successfully navigated her reduced and difficult circumstances. In contemporary (re)presentations, we see three examples of the Strong Black Woman in the film *Hidden Figures* (2016). All three leading Black female characters, played by Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, and Janelle Monáe, are examples of women who persevered in their efforts to contribute to science despite experiencing the dual oppressions of racism and sexism.

In this section, we have identified and recognized the significance of the social, political, and economic agendas that sought to create controlling images of Black women. And while these images may seem far removed from the real-life experiences of Black women, the next section will demonstrate the real-life implications of these stereotypes for contemporary Black women in the US.

Implications

It is unsurprising that the implications of these stereotypes of Black women and life linger in US society and continue to shape expectations of Black women. In addition, individual practices of media consumption can play a large role in inculcating particular beliefs and messages about these stereotypes. Once these beliefs and messages are internalized, they can also inform individual behaviors and perceptions (Jerald et al. 2017). According to cultivation theory (Gerbner et al. 2002), "repeated exposure, over time, to a consistent set of messages gradually leads viewers to accept those messages and portrayals as reality" (Jerald et al. 2017, 613). The exposure to media or perceptions that proliferate Black female stereotypes, in

addition to the societal expectations placed on Black women, might encourage Black women to internalize and accept those stereotypes as truths. In fact, according to certain behavioral assimilation approaches, when exposed to a stereotype, people will often consciously or unconsciously behave in ways consistent with those stereotypes (Burkley and Blanton 2009; Wheeler and Petty 2001). The power of media and societal expectations are particularly evident in cases in which individuals feel compelled to conform to stereotypes in order to fit in.

On the other hand, Jerald et al. (2017) also argue that individuals who are exposed to stereotypes might engage in other "self-protective strategies" (614), like engaging in a politics of respectability in order to distance themselves from stereotypes that do not conform to their self-perceptions (Crocker and Major 1989). Davis and Gandy (1999) suggest that Black men and women who have a strong sense of their racial identities use their racial beliefs to evaluate media content and identify only with content that boosts their self-esteem. In doing so, they reject these negative images. However, it must be acknowledged that the cost of this continual rejection can be stress, depression, and racial battle fatigue (Smith, Allen, and Danley 2007; Ashley 2014; Davis, Levant, and Pryor 2018).

For Black women, navigating the external stereotypes and developing a stable sense of self can be difficult and strenuous. Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) likens the process of Black female self-perception and recognition to the crooked room paradigm. The crooked room was a concept developed in a psychological study on field dependence, which placed subjects in a crooked chair in a crooked room and asked them to vertically align themselves. Many were unable to align themselves correctly, often perceiving themselves to be aligned when they were tilted as much as 35 degrees. Harris-Perry likens self-perception of Black women to the experience of individuals in this study, stating, "Black women are standing in a crooked room, and they have to figure out which way is up. Bombarded with warped images of their humanity, some Black women tilt and bend themselves to fit the distortion" (2011, 29). They do

so, Harris-Perry explains, in order to qualify for "citizenship," which she deems as "membership in a body politic, a nation, and community" (36). The crooked room paradigm proposes that Black women have long been excluded from citizenship in the national imaginary, resulting from the perpetuation of Black female stereotypes and controlling images. Having undergone a "misrecognition" (22), Black women are denied their citizenship, a recognition of "their humanity and uniqueness" (36), and their right to access resources that are afforded to other citizens.

Harris-Perry's crooked room paradigm accurately demonstrates the implications of stereotypes on the lives of Black women. Burdened with having to navigate life in a crooked room, Black women negotiate with mainstream American and culture-specific expectations while also contending with the controlling images that might influence their self-perception and behaviors. Jerald et al. (2017) found that there are several key components of mainstream and culture-specific expectations with which Black women must negotiate. Black women are expected to engage in activities related to their homes, prioritize romantic relationships, act as sexual gatekeepers and refrain from having sex outside of committed relationships (Parent and Moradi 2010), endorse traditional femininity, and remain emotionally resilient in the face of hardship (Jerald et al. 2017, 611). It can be argued that white women also face the same kinds of expectations. However, Black women uniquely experience the burden of these expectations due to a history of controlling images. Furthermore, in the case of Black women, all of these expectations are rooted in either subverting or reinforcing Black female stereotypes and controlling images.

Those Black women who conform to such ideals and successfully manage these sometimes contradicting expectations gain higher social status and become respected Black women (Collins 1999). Those who either fail to successfully navigate the crooked room or adopt behaviors and actions that align with Black female stereotypes might experience harm in the form of physical, emotional, or mental stress (Jerald et al. 2017). Additionally, research suggests that

women who internalize the cultural assumptions of the Jezebel as hypersexual may not only view their sexuality as a source of self-esteem and thus engage in risky sexual behaviors but also place themselves at a greater risk for sexual assault and harassment and experience increased victim blaming (Davis and Tucker-Brown 2013; Townsend et al. 2010). Harris-Perry (2011) suggests that for women who adopt the stereotype of the Strong Black Woman in order to manage expectations, showing or failing to show strength in order to claim citizenship can cause Black women to internalize shame. Critiquing the notion of shame, Harris-Perry suggests that the ideal of the Strong Black Woman dehumanizes Black women by rendering them incapable of being weak while also overemphasizing a reliance on their individual qualities. In doing so, Black women are greatly disadvantaged because the responsibility of failure is placed on individual Black women rather than on the oppressive structural sources of inequality.

It is therefore imperative to contextualize the historical roots of the controlling images that continue to define Black women. Identifying the agendas behind the creation and reproduction of the stereotypes of the Mammy, Matriarch, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Strong Black Woman allows us to recognize the power and implications of these stereotypes on Black life today. Furthermore, it also gives us better insight into why (re)presentations of Black women matter, provides the first step to improving the conditions and perceptions of Black folks in US society, and allows us to better appreciate when contemporary (re)presentations resist controlling images and stereotypes.

Contemporary (Re)presentations of Black Women On-Screen

Although not always, contemporary Black female (re)presentations on-screen are constructed or performed to actively subvert the controlling images that have structured the perception of Black

women in the US today. There are an increasing number of positive and empowering (re)presentations of Black women on-screen that align more with the self-perceptions of Black women. In this section I draw on Black feminist interpretations of contemporary (re)presentations of Black women to show how they resist historical stereotypes of Black women.

The Empowered Black Woman

As Collins (1999) makes abundantly clear, controlling images and stereotypes serve to create and maintain the racial and sexual oppression of Black women. Through the consistent devaluation of their Blackness by the dominant culture, Black women have come to understand how they are positioned within the white racial hierarchy. It is imperative, then, that contemporary (re)presentations of Black women present Blackness in a celebratory manner in order to reclaim the value of Black womanhood.

Singer and superstar Beyoncé is often regarded as the contemporary epitome of the empowered Black woman. She represents the Black woman who "has it all—career, family, power, and crazy sex appeal" (Davidson 2017, 90). Her visual album *Lemonade* (2016) has been hailed as an artistic piece that celebrates and engages with issues of Black womanhood and Black life. Through a blend of poetry and film, Beyoncé has created a visual and aural autobiography that addresses allegations of her husband's infidelity, explores her personal insecurities, pays homage to her African roots, and focuses on celebrating her Blackness and cultural identity.

In this album, she celebrates Black womanhood by showcasing other Black women, emphasizing their value and beauty while also rejecting the notion that Black women must adhere to white ideals of beauty in order to be recognized as valuable. Black female pop artists like Beyoncé use their art and music to celebrate passion, love, and sexuality as part of their freedom, and this celebration has "come to signify not only interpersonal relationships but also Black women's struggles for liberation and freedom at a broader level"

(Emerson 2002, 131). Angela Davis cites Audre Lorde's theory of "The Erotic as Power" (1998) to suggest that celebrating Blackness is common in Black popular culture, as Black artists are keen to connect themes of sexuality and liberation. As such, for Beyoncé, celebrating the empowered Black woman in *Lemonade* also means an unapologetic celebration of Black womanhood, parenthood, love, and sexuality—aspects of Black lives that have often been denied due to the influence of controlling images.

A celebration of Black womanhood necessitates an engagement with ideals of femininity and beauty. As one of the most recognizable Black female athletes on-screen, Serena Williams has long had to contend with comments and criticisms regarding her physical appearance. Her body has been critiqued by journalists for being hypermasculine, for exceeding "the boundaries of femininity" and "the boundaries of humanness" (Schultz 2005, 347). This kind of rhetoric hearkens to Black feminist Sylvia Wynter (2003) and her article "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," in which she argues that Black men and women have historically been negated from inclusion within "the generic 'normal humanness'" (266), resulting in a continuation of racialized difference that treats Black women as "Other" (Said 1979). Furthermore, the kinds of critiques Williams has received regarding her athletic body also seek to distance her from her femininity and instead ideologically code her and other athletic Black women as masculine. There is a specific agenda behind the effort to ideologically code Black female athletes as unfeminine. This agenda seeks to stereotype Black women by drawing on myths that "link African American women's work history as slaves, their supposedly 'natural' brute strength and endurance inherited from their African origins, and the notion that vigorous or competitive sport masculinized women physically and sexually" (Vertinsky and Captain 1998, 541). Hence, it is for these reasons that the on-screen (re)presentation of Serena Williams succeeding as a strong and beautiful Black female athlete on the tennis court should be interpreted as an important claim to Black women's beauty, value, and humanness.

For Black women, controlling images and stereotypes have regulated and subsequently devalued their sexuality, behavior, beauty, identity, and humanity. Resisting these stereotypes through new (re)presentations allows them to not only reclaim their value and gain recognition as Black women but, more importantly, to celebrate their Blackness and their womanhood.

Feminism and Politics

Black female (re)presentations are also tackling feminist and political issues in order to subvert stereotypes and controlling images. One of the feminist issues that some Black (re)presentations focus on subverting is that of the "white male gaze." The white male gaze refers to a white, masculine, and heterosexual perspective that presents and represents women as sexual objects for the pleasure of a white male viewer. Controlling images of the Mammy, Matriarch, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Strong Black Woman are evidence of the gaze created by white heterosexual male power structures that seek to control the perception of Black women. Pope (2018) states that the white male gaze is particularly evident in the way in which Serena Williams's physique is scrutinized. Pope views Williams as operating in a "predominantly white space, under the gaze of the predominantly white audience of her white-dominated sport" (2018, 7). It is in this context that Williams's body has been so harshly critiqued for being too muscular, too masculine, and "sometimes, too Black" (7). Hobson (2003) argues that such critiques are reminiscent of the image of the Hottentot Venus, who, as a Black female form, was scrutinized by the white male gaze for being "freakish" and "ugly" (90). In a manner that seems to reject this scrutiny, Williams appeared in Beyoncé's music video for "Sorry" (featured in *Lemonade*), unapologetically dancing and flirting with the camera. In this video her delightful and surprising cameo subverts the white male gaze by presenting her body as "a celebration and reclamation of the Black feminine form" (Pope 2018, 7). Thus, Williams seeks to reiterate the value, femininity, and diversity of Black female bodies.

Williams's presence in "Sorry" also underscores how Beyoncé's particular album can be viewed as a feminist and political move that emphasizes and showcases the complexity and beauty of Black women. In *Lemonade*, Beyoncé makes visible the invisible by addressing the systematic oppression of Black people in the United States. In fact, the visual album opens with a "plain-faced Beyoncé wearing a black hoodie that reminds us of the unjust death of Trayvon Martin" (Edwards, Esposito, and Evans-Winters 2017, 87). This particular scene undergirds the reality of state-sanctioned racialized violence against Black men and women in the US. In a subversive way, Beyoncé draws a connection between racialized violence, hegemonic masculinity, Black women, and the Black community throughout her visual album. Her underlying message is clear: systems of oppression hurt people, and those hurt people then hurt other people. Using her husband's infidelity as an example, Beyoncé demonstrates that the historical denigration of Black people results in harmful ideologies that devalue Blackness and constitute hegemonic masculinity: "A person damaged by violence against them at the systemic level does not easily shed those wounds when they come home to their lover" (Edwards, Esposito, and Evans-Winters 2017, 90). Webster (2018) argues that Black men may find themselves emasculated if, due to systematic oppression, they cannot fit into hegemonic standards of masculinity that include education, wealth, or status. Hence, unable to pursue options available to white men, Black men may seek a reinforcement of manhood and power when their masculinity is threatened, resulting in a mistreatment of their partner. In this way, Beyoncé seeks to artistically make visible the invisible issues that shape the contemporary experiences of Black communities.

In various subversive and overt ways, contemporary Black female (re)presentations creatively tackle feminist and political issues such as body positivity, racialized violence, and gendered domestic violence by making them visible in the public eye. Such (re)presentations bring to light the need to upset established racial and

gendered hierarchies in order to improve the lives of the Black community and change the conditions that continue to oppress them.

Black Bodies, White Spaces

In her 2015 Emmy acceptance speech, Black actress Viola Davis perfectly captured the frustration of being a Black body in Hollywood, a historically white-dominated cultural space. Davis said, "In my mind, I see a line. And over that line, I see green fields and lovely flowers and beautiful white women with their arms stretched out to me, over that line. But I can't seem to get there, no how. I can't seem to get over that line" (Gold 2015). Here, Davis draws on Harriet Tubman's vision of "standing on opposite sides to white women but never being able to cross the line" (Davidson 2017, 95), indicating that she recognizes that Black and white women are ostensibly equal and yet that Black women face a continual denial of access and equality to resources that are available to white women. Unless and until Black women gain recognition as legitimate citizens in the national imaginary, they will continue to experience overwhelming challenges as Black bodies in white spaces (Harris-Perry 2011).

Black actresses, writers, and other female (re)presentations indeed have significant barriers to face in the white-dominated space of entertainment. Nevertheless, there have been some contemporary (re)presentations of Black women in television and film who have come to the fore in the past decade. Two of the more popular Black female (re)presentations in prime time television include Olivia Pope (played by Kerry Washington) and Annalise Keating (played by Viola Davis). Notably, both characters were produced by Black female executive producer Shonda Rhimes, which might explain why they serve as female leads in their respective shows. It is significant that these Black women are playing Black female characters in the white-dominated space of television. Yet it is also important to recognize how these characters are in and of themselves also situated within white spaces.

In *Scandal*, Olivia Pope is a Black female attorney, crisis-manage-

ment expert, former White House communications director, and owner of her own public relations company. Olivia Pope serves as a "fixer who manages the crises of powerful Washington DC elites with the help of her associates" (Griffin 2015, 37). As a powerful political figure who is also in a romantic relationship with the (white) president of the United States, Olivia Pope serves as an iconic Black character who has successfully managed to situate herself within the white space of politics. Pope has also gained the authority and the respect of others, to a point where she is a recognizable "'power-player' who freely circulates in the same world as that of her white male lover (and other white males)" (Chaney and Robertson 2016, 142). Olivia Pope's character is quite revolutionary in that she successfully navigates a historically white-dominated space in a Black female body.

In sport, Serena Williams and her sister Venus Williams perform as stellar tennis players who have multiple championship wins to their name. Their success as contending Black bodies in this historically white-dominated sport has been perceived as threatening to other players on and off the court, which has resulted in mainstream society's preoccupation with surveillance of the sisters. Douglas (2012) argues that this form of surveillance "is used by whites to observe, identify, and ultimately, control the range of available representations of the sisters" (2012, 127). In the media coverage of this surveillance, the Williams sisters are often denigrated with "race talk," which Black feminist Toni Morrison (1993) describes as "the explicit insertion into everyday life of racial signs and symbols that have no other meaning than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of the racial hierarchy" (57). Race talk in media coverage highlights the fear held by white folks of Black bodies in white spaces. However, the kind of race talk and discrimination that the Williams sisters experience is a particular form of *Black* and *female* denigration, labeled "misogynoir" (Ifekwunigwe 2018, 122). Coined by queer Black feminist Moya Bailey (2014), misogynoir represents the misogyny directed at Black women, which focuses on both race and gender as a basis for bias. For the Williams sisters, misogy-

noir is experienced through criticisms of their athletic bodies, often coded as being masculine or too Black. Despite being constantly denigrated and pathologized by misogynoir, the Williams sisters continue to grace our screens and demonstrate Black excellence and Black female resilience by winning tournaments and championships, thus performing their Blackness in the white-dominated sport of tennis.

These contemporary (re)presentations of Black women subvert the narrative that white-dominated spaces in the US are just for white folks. Gaining recognition and emphasizing value in these spaces as Black bodies can be, and is, quite a challenge in current times. Nevertheless, these (re)presentations provide hope that with the right tools, Black women have the potential to successfully navigate the crooked rooms they occupy. However, it is important not to be completely misled by the positive role that contemporary Black female (re)presentations play in Black life. In the next section, I draw on Black feminist critiques to critically examine how these (re)presentations might also be viewed as problematic.

Mired in Paradox: Black Female (Re)presentations Critiqued

Undoubtedly, (re)presentations of Black women today have come a long way from the stereotypes and (re)presentations of the past. While the aforementioned contemporary (re)presentations are indeed revolutionary in that they are diverse, multifaceted, and intersectional, some Black feminists would argue that these (re)presentations are still quite problematic. As such, this section will demonstrate the ways in which Black feminists complicate and critique such (re)presentations.

Rooted in the Past

While the (re)presentations of Black women that we see on-screen

today are indeed quite diverse and empowering, Black feminists have noted that many of these (re)presentations are based on or have traces of historical stereotypes and controlling images of Black women. For example, a few weeks after the release of Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, Black feminist bell hooks (2016) wrote a critical review of the album problematizing Beyoncé's work. One of hooks's major critiques focused on the music video for "Hold Up," in which Beyoncé responds to her husband's infidelity by destroying objects in a neighborhood. In her post, hooks critiques Beyoncé's celebration of rage, arguing that by focusing on the spectacle of violence, Beyoncé reinforces the narrative that connects Black women to violence. It is definitely arguable that in this particular music video, all viewers might see is an angry Black woman who is reiterating the stereotype and controlling image of the Sapphire. However, within the context of *Lemonade*, it is more probable that Beyoncé is expressing her personal experience of pain, intimacy, and hurt– emotions that she knows other Black women have also experienced at the hands of patriarchy (Rao 2016). Some Black feminists and writers like Jenn Jackson, Melissa Harris-Perry, and Jamilah Lemieux also support this argument and have pushed back on hooks's critique, arguing that Beyoncé and her visual album express diverse manifestations of Black feminism and Black femininity which are ultimately much needed and invaluable.

In television, the Olivia Pope character has been critiqued for manifesting elements of the Jezebel and Mammy stereotypes in several instances throughout the series. Presented as a sexually aggressive female who "willingly engages in passionate ... sexual relations with the married President" (Chaney and Robertson 2016, 142), Pope can be interpreted as enacting the Jezebel stereotype. Additionally, according to Griffin (2015), Pope also undergoes "mammification" (35) in her profession as a crisis manager, in that she occupies the position of the "'proverbial 'mammy' who cares for all the needs of others, particularly those most powerful" (hooks and West 1991, 154). Pope fits within the Mammy stereotype in that she preserves the interests of others, often at the cost of her own hap-

piness. It is a shame, then, that for a series with a brilliant Black female lead, *Scandal* and its writers have not taken the opportunity to deviate from historical stereotypes and instead continue to use elements of controlling images to create narratives for the series.

Constructing and performing (re)presentations of Black women on-screen that do not replicate problematic stereotypes can be a difficult task. Doing so is especially challenging when many of the everyday behaviors and interactions of Black women–such as expressing anger, engaging in care work or mothering, engaging in sexual behaviors, and so on–are made deviant through controlling images. Nevertheless, the critiques that Black feminists provide on these (re)presentations help to inform artists, writers, and television and film producers of ways in which they might consider improving (re)presentations of Black women on-screen.

Reinforcement of Whiteness

According to some Black feminists, one of the greatest disappointments concerning contemporary (re)presentations of Black women is how these (re)presentations reinforce whiteness and the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Olivia Pope is also an example of a character that reinforces whiteness. The narratives of Olivia Pope, including her relationships with white men, might be interpreted as a compliment to her beauty, strength, and sexual desirability, but the reality is that such representations of white-Black relationships are reminders of harsh historical realities (Chaney and Robertson 2016). For example, when the character of Fitz professes his love for Olivia without divorcing his white wife or abandoning his white children, we are reminded of the "relationships that existed between Octoroon and Quadroon women and the children they bore with the sons of wealthy white planters" (Chaney and Robertson 2016, 143). While Pope may seem powerful, her relationship with her white lovers is not only reminiscent of the history of Black bodies being the property of white men but also a reminder of how a Black woman's reputation, worth, and value are in the control

of white men (143). This critique of *Scandal*'s characterization of a Black woman puts into perspective how whiteness is still privileged within the fictional world of a Black female lead.

Films such as *Precious* and *The Help* have also been critiqued by Black feminists for privileging whiteness and encouraging ideas of white saviorism (Hughey 2014). In these films we see narratives of Black female suffering eased only through the help and generosity of white folks. These films amplify Black women's invisibility, encourage ideas of the Strong Black Woman by implying that Black women suffer and still persevere, and also "depict Black people as dependent on the mercy of those with systemic power and privilege" (Griffin 2014, 192). By positioning Black women in these narratives, such films are invested in reinforcing a "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks 1992, 29) that privileges whiteness and white racial, economic, and social structures.

It is often the intention of Black female (re)presentations on-screen to empower Black women and deviate from the controlling images that have typically (re)presented them in the past. However, when such (re)presentations privilege whiteness, and white males in particular, and reinforce the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, they consequently reduce Black life and womanhood to the power relations of the Black-white paradigm, thereby becoming significantly problematic. If the goal remains to create and present positive, empowering (re)presentations of Black women, then these (re)presentations must emphasize the value of Blackness and Black womanhood without privileging whiteness.

The Reel Life–Real Life Disconnect

Contemporary (re)presentations can do significant harm, just as stereotypes of Black women have historically harmed Black life in the United States. A staunch critique that Black feminists have regarding contemporary (re)presentations of Black women is that these (re)presentations run the risk of disconnecting real life from theory (re)presented on-screen. For example, in analyzing Beyoncé's

song "Run the World (Girls)," Davidson (2017) shows that the message that Beyoncé shares with young girls is that they "run this motha." In her interpretation of the lyrics, Davidson points out that the harsh reality of contemporary (and historical) life is that girls and women do not run this world. Hence, proliferating such inaccurate statements can disillusion young girls into becoming "dispossessed of their ability to act where instead of running 'this motha' they are the ones being run" (91). Alternatively, one could also read these lyrics simply as an anthem of empowerment that encourages Black women and girls to use whatever power and influence they possess in their spheres to work towards some type of liberation. Nevertheless, as it is with most music, the interpretation of these lyrics is left up to the audience.

Beyoncé has also been critiqued rather severely for her encouragement and practice of hypercapitalism (hooks 2016). Due to her hypervisibility as a Black female superstar, singer, and performer, Beyoncé has been unjustly burdened with the responsibility of creatively alleviating the injustices inflicted on Black women. Indeed, in noting that there are a number of other Black (and white) women and men in the entertainment industry who make money without addressing societal problems, the responsibility placed on Beyoncé as a Black feminist music icon may seem unjust. At the same time, however, it could also be argued that the capitalist messages that she (and many other Black and white pop stars) fosters in her work can be considered disillusioning to those who consume her work. It can be argued that the hypercapitalism practiced and encouraged in Beyoncé's music and videos further disempowers Black women by teaching them that money is their solution. To this day, Black women continue to be over-represented among the nation's poor, they experience higher rates of mortality and receive inadequate health insurance, and they are also at much greater risk for exposure to violence than white women (The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, 2015). The glamour that Beyoncé, other Black artists, and television characters such as Olivia Pope and Annalise Keating encourage is a fantastical illusion that is, in reality, inacces-

sible to many Black women who have limited "access to systems or opportunities to create, and grow wealth" (Edwards, Esposito, and Evans-Winters 2017, 92). In this way, some Black female (re)presentations dig an even deeper divide between reel life and real life, running the risk of disempowering and disillusioning Black women and the mainstream society in which these women are situated.

Some contemporary Black female (re)presentations pose a real danger of encouraging Black women and girls to pursue avenues in life that may largely be inaccessible to them. The critique that Black feminists provide adds weight to the need for those in charge of creating or performing these (re)presentations to consciously promote messages that would realistically empower Black women, and/or guide them to a more accessible route to empowerment.

Where to Go from Here?

With Black feminists highlighting the problematic elements of contemporary (re)presentations of Black women, the current state of Black female (re)presentations may seem to be quite discouraging. However, there still remains hope for future creation of empowering Black female (re)presentations in the media. Considering that the "devaluation of Black womanhood after slavery ended was a conscious, deliberate effort on the part of whites to sabotage mounting Black female self-confidence and self-respect" (hooks 1981, 59), it is important that Black women and their allies take practical steps towards building self-confidence and self-respect.

I make two practical suggestions for those Black women and their allies who are looking to either distance themselves from or create change in problematic (re)presentations and controlling images. For scholars, writers, journalists, students, and other creative individuals, centering Black womanhood as an epistemological site in their work and creating knowledge about Black women's lived experiences is an effective step by which one might respond to and correct the misrepresentations of Black women. In scholarship and activist work, they might consider adopting Black feminisms as

praxis to undertake their work. Placing Black women in and at the forefront of discussions fosters critical thought that allows educators, service providers, policy makers, and others to address the intersectional and historical roots of problems that cause Black female oppression. More specifically, by centering Black womanhood as an epistemological site, we can all challenge the mainstream assumptions of Black women by educating the public about the long-term and very real effects of controlling images on the Black community.

Secondly, one of the recommended ways in which Black women and their allies might resist controlling images is by engaging in the process of "self-defining." Coined by Patricia Hill Collins (2004), this process requires that Black women understand what they are capable of when they express and define themselves. Through self-defining, Black women can articulate their identities, positionalities, and experiences instead of being spoken for by characterizations and controlling images. Self-defining allows for Black women to create genuine (re)presentations of themselves by expressing themselves as sincerely and realistically as possible. This process helps to "validate Black women's power as human subjects" (Collins 2004, 114). In this way, not only can Black female social and political advancement become more than a mere possibility, but Black women can also make a claim for the recognition that they have long been denied (Harris-Perry 2011). One of the outlets that Black women might turn to in their journey towards self-definition is by participating in digital Black feminism through social and cultural movements online. A number of Black-focused digital campaigns seek to engage Black women and men in the process of self-defining by increasing their awareness of issues surrounding police brutality, violence against Black communities, erasure of positive images, the devaluation of Black bodies, and other issues pertaining to Black women, who face multiple oppressions on the basis of class, gender, and race.

In direct response to the pervasive stereotypes in on-screen media (re)presentations, it is also important for Black women to

call out problematic (re)presentations of Black femininity and womanhood that reiterate controlling images. Advocating for better (re)presentations, better-developed characters, and more Black female leads in television and film is one way in which Black women can flip the script and resist the force of controlling images. As Kimberlé Crenshaw notes, "When you can't see a problem, you pretty much can't solve it" (2016). Hence, by living unapologetically as Black and female in various spaces, Black women can take advantage of the opportunity to dispel myths, stereotypes, and controlling images both individually and collectively. Engaging in self-defining remains a critical process for Black women's survival, development, and ability to thrive as individuals. It is in this resistance that Black women can move forward from the lingering confines of the controlling images that have sought to devalue them.

References

Allard, Sharon A. 1991. "Rethinking Battered Woman Syndrome: A Black Feminist Perspective." *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 1:191–207.

Ashley, Wendy. 2014. "The Angry Black Woman: The Impact of Pejorative Stereotypes on Psychotherapy with Black Women." *Social Work in Public Health* 29 (1): 27–34.

Bailey, Moya. 2014. "More on Misogynoir." *Moyazb* (blog), April 27, 2014. http://moyazb.tumblr.com/post/84048113369/more-on-the-originof-Misogynoir.

Burkley, Melissa, and Hart Blanton. 2009. "The Positive (and Negative) Consequences of Endorsing Negative Self-Stereotypes." *Self and Identity* 8 (2–3): 286–99.

Chaney, Cassandra, and Ray V. Robertson. 2016. "Chains of Psychological Enslavement: Olivia Pope and the Celebration of the Black Mistress in ABC's Scandal." *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 9 (3): 126–53.

Collins, Patricia. H. (1999) 2004. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* New York: Routledge.

Conley, Dalton. 2015. *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2016. "The Urgency of Intersectionality." Filmed October 2016, TEDWomen, 18:42. https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/transcript?language=en.

Crocker, Jennifer, and Brenda Major. 1989. "Social Stigma and Self-Esteem: The Self-Protective Properties of Stigma." *Psychological Review* 96 (4): 608–30.

Davidson, Maria del Guadalupe. 2017. *Black Women, Agency, and the New Black Feminism.* Routledge: New York.

Davis, Angela Y. 1998. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Davis, Ashlee W., Ronald F. Levant, and Shana Pryor. 2018. "Traditional Femininity Versus Strong Black Women Ideologies and Stress among Black Women." *Journal of Black Studies* 49 (8): 820–41.

Davis, Jessica, and Oscar H. Gandy. 1999. "Racial Identity and Media Orientation: Exploring the Nature of Constraint." *Journal of Black Studies* 29 (3): 367–97.

Davis, Sarita K., and Aisha Tucker-Brown. 2013. "The Effects of Social Determinants on Black Women's HIV Risk HIV Is Bigger than Biology." *Journal of Black Studies* 44 (3): 273–89.

Douglas, Delia D. 2012. "Venus, Serena and the Inconspicuous Consumption of Blackness: A Commentary on Surveillance, Race Talk, and the New Racism(s)." *Journal of Black Studies* 43 (2): 127–45.

Edwards, Erica B., Jennifer Esposito, and Venus Evans-Winters. 2017. "Does Beyonce's Lemonade Really Teach Us How to Turn Lemons into Lemonade? Exploring the Limits and Possibilities

Through Black Feminism." *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Edu-
cation* 16 (2): 85–96.

Emerson, Rana A. 2002. "'Where My Girls At?': Negotiating Black
Womanhood in Music Videos." *Gender and Society* 16 (1): 115–35.

Gary, Danyelle. 2018. "She's a Queen and a Boss: Examining the
Representation of *Empire*'s Cookie Lyon from a Black Feminist
Perspective." Master's thesis, Valdosta State University.

Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, Nancy Signorielli,
and James Shanahan. 2002. "Growing Up with Television: Cultiva-
tion Processes." In *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and
Research*, edited by Jennings Bryant and Mary-Beth Oliver, 43–67.
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gold, Michael. 2015. "Viola Davis's Emmy Speech." *New York Times*,
Sep 20, 2015. https://www.nytimes.com/live/emmys-2015/
viola-daviss-emotional-emmys-acceptance-speech/.

Griffin, Rachel A. 2015. "Olivia Pope as Problematic and Paradoxical:
A Black Feminist Critique of Scandal's Mammification." In *Femi-
nist Theory and Pop Culture*, edited by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek,
35–48. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Griffin, Rachel A. 2014. "Pushing into Precious: Black Women, Media
Representation and the Glare of the White Supremacist Capital-
ist Patriarchal Gaze." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 31
(3): 182–97.

Harris-Perry, Melissa V. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and
Black Women in America (For Colored Girls Who've Considered
Politics When Being Strong Isn't Enough)*. New Haven: Yale Uni-
versity Press.

Hobson, Janell. 2003. "The 'Batty' Politic: Toward an Aesthetic of
the Black Female Body." *Hypatia* 18 (4): 87–105.

hooks, bell. 1981. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*.
Boston: South End Press.

———. 1992. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End
Press.

———. 2016. "Moving Beyond Pain." bell hooks Institute blog, May 9,

2016. http://www.bellhooksinstitute.com/blog/2016/5/9/mov-ing-beyond-pain.

———, and Cornel West. 1991. *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intel-lectual Life*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Hughey, Matthew. 2014. *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ifekwunigwe, Jayne O. 2018. "'And Still Serena Rises': Celebrating the Cross-Generational Continuities of Black Feminisms and Black Female Excellence in Sport." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and Sport, Leisure and Physical Education*, edited by Louise Mansfield, Jayne Caudwell, Belinda Wheaton, and Beccy Watson, 111–31. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jerald, Morgan C., Monique Ward, Lolita Moss, Khia Thomas, and Kyla D. Fletcher. 2017. "Subordinates, Sex Objects, or Sapphires? Investigating Contributions of Media Use to Black Students' Fem-ininity Ideologies and Stereotypes About Black Women." *Journal of Black Psychology* 43 (6): 608–35.

Morgan, Marcyliena, and Dionne Bennet. 2006. "Getting Off of Black Women's Backs: Love Her or Leave Her Alone." *Du Bois Review* 3 (2): 485–502.

Morrison, Toni. 1993. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Liter-ary Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. 2015. *Black Women in the United States*. n.p.: Black Women's Roundtable. http://ncbcp.org/news/releases/BWRReport.BlackWom-eninU.S.2015.3.26.15FINAL.pdf.

Parent, Mike C., and Bonnie Moradi. 2010. "Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory and Development of an Abbreviated Version: The CFNI-45." *Psychol-ogy of Women Quarterly* 34 (1): 97–109.

Pope, Delilah. 2018. "Beyonce's Lemonade and the Re-Appropria-tion of Identity." https://scholarworks.harding.edu/mcnair-research/1.

Rao, Sameer. 2016. "ROUNDUP: What You Need to Know About the Reaction to bell hooks' Critique of 'Lemonade.'" Colorlines, May

12, 2016. https://www.colorlines.com/articles/roundup-what-you-need-know-about-reaction-bell-hooks-critique-lemonade.

Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Schultz, Jamie. 2005. "Reading the Catsuit: Serena Williams and the Production of Blackness at the 2002 U.S. Open." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 29 (3): 338–57.

Smith, William A., Walter R. Allen, and Lynette L. Danley. 2007. "'Assume the Position…You Fit the Description': Psychosocial Experiences and Racial Battle Fatigue Among African American Male College Students." *American Behavioral Scientist* 51 (4): 551–78.

Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17 (2): 64–81.

Stephens, Dionne P., and Layli D. Phillips. 2003. "Freaks, Gold Diggers, Divas, and Dykes: The Sociohistorical Development of Adolescent African American Women's Sexual Scripts." *Sexuality & Culture* 7 (1): 3–49.

Townsend, Tiffany, Anita J. Thomas, Torsten B. Neilands, and Tiffany Jackson. 2010. "I'm No Jezebel; I Am Young, Gifted, and Black: Identity, Sexuality, and Black Girls." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 34 (3): 273–85.

Vertinsky, Patricia, and Gwendolyn Captain. 1998. "More Myth than History: American Culture and Representations of the Black Female's Athletic Ability." *Journal of Sport History* 25 (3): 532–61.

Wallace, Michele. 1999. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. London: Verso.

Wallace-Sanders, Kimberly. 2008. *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Webster, Sina H. 2018. "When Life Gives You Lemons, 'Get in Formation:' A Black Feminist Analysis of Beyonce's Visual Album, Lemonade." Senior Honors Thesis.

Wheeler, Christian, and Richard E. Petty. 2001. "The Effects of Stereotype Activation on Behavior: A Review of Possible Mechanisms." *Psychological Bulletin* 127 (6): 797–826.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/ Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337.

Notes

1. The term *(re)presentation* is used to refer to both "presentation" and "representation." *Presentation* refers to the presentation of the self-curated by the self, while *representation* refers to the portrayal of someone curated by someone else.
2. The word *western* (and *west*) is not capitalized as a statement intended to call into question the hegemony of western discourse over all other discourses.

2. From Plantations to Presidency

A Historiography of Black Women's Oppression Due to White Women's Complacency

MARIA SCAPTURA

Many people claim the Trump 2016 election came as a shock. Political analysts, reporters, scholars—nearly everyone—were left wondering how Trump got the votes. When it was revealed in exit polls that nearly 53 percent of white women voted for Trump (CNN 2016), white feminists everywhere were flabbergasted. Yet, Black feminists were unsurprised (Cooper 2019; Winfrey Harris 2016; O'Neal 2016). While the above number is largely contested—Pew Research (2018) estimates the number is actually closer to 47 percent—the message is clear: white women vote differently than women of color.

White women voting for Trump in the 2016 election is not an anomaly: white women's voting patterns in the most recent presidential elections are closer to those of white men than to those of women of color (Setzler and Yanus 2018). In the last four presidential elections, more than half of white women cast their ballot for Republican candidates (Cassidy 2012). Fifty-six percent of white women voted for Mitt Romney in 2012, 53 percent voted for John McCain in 2008, and 55 percent voted for George W. Bush in 2004 (Cassidy 2012). The gap in white women's party votes has grown in the last twenty years, when it was nearly equal in the 2000 presidential election: 49 percent voted for Gore, and 46 percent voted for Bush (Cassidy 2012; CBS 2000). Based solely on white women's voting patterns in the last twenty years—and the widening gap between their votes for each party—it is unsurprising that white women voted for a Republican candidate.

Beyond past voting patterns, Frasure-Yokley (2018) found that white women were more likely to vote for Trump if they held sexist attitudes. Women of color on the other hand were not likely to vote for Trump at all (Frasure-Yokley 2018). Further, white women who believe that women as a group are not emotionally fit for office are more likely to support Trump (Bracic, Israel-Trummel, and Shortle 2018). These findings support Setzler and Yanus's (2018) conclusion that white women's sexist, and I would add racist, views affect their political choices which have larger social and economic implications.

In fact, throughout US history, much of white women's political behavior has contributed to the subordination of other women, particularly Black women. This is exemplified through several historical moments: in the first and second waves of feminism, in the eugenics and birth control movements, and finally, in the workforce and in welfare reform. In each of these moments in history, white women chose to support their race over their gender to maintain a racist, patriarchal system.

Moment 1: First and Second Waves of (White) Feminism

Suffrage Movement

Throughout the suffrage movement of the nineteenth century, suffragist groups failed to include Black women. White suffragists did not want Black women being associated with the suffrage movement because they were not as concerned about Black suffrage as they were for white suffrage (Davis 1981). In 1851, Sojourner Truth gave a speech to the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, entitled "Ain't I a Woman?" arguing that even though she did not fit the white definition of "womanhood," she was a woman and deserved inclusion in the movement. Truth's speech emphasized how Black women were not considered "women" in the eyes of

white people. White women tried to silence her because they did not like her bringing race to the forefront of women's suffrage.

White suffragists used racist tactics to argue for white women's right to vote. In 1893, Susan B. Anthony and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) argued for a "literacy test" for anyone wishing to vote (Davis 1981). This disproportionately favored white women and dismissed the rights of working-class, Black, and immigrant people. This argument was used throughout the suffrage movement by white women when Black male suffrage and the fifteenth amendment were in reach. White suffragists argued that their education and moral influence made them more deserving than Black men to gain the right to vote (Ault 2019).

During the 1913 Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC, Alice Paul, the lead planner, told Ida B. Wells that Black women were to walk in the back of the parade because it was segregated (Russell 1996). Wells refused to follow white suffragists' segregation rules and decided to walk with her Illinois delegation between two white women (Russell 1996). A few years later, in 1919, the Black women's Northeastern Federation of Clubs applied to join NAWSA, but officials would not even consider their application (Davis 1981; Kraditor 1965). NAWSA claimed that admitting Black women would mean NAWSA would not be able to secure Southern white women's support and that "the defeat of the amendment will be assured" (Kraditor 1965, 169). As Davis (1981) argues, "Woman was the test, but not every woman seemed to qualify" (83). Black women were seen as "expendable entities" for white suffragists whose only goal was white women's suffrage (Davis 1981). This rejection led to a schism in the suffrage movement in which Black suffragists were expected to choose between their race and their gender.

While Black women were actively excluded from white women's political organizations, many Black women created their own social movement groups that focused on racial equality and justice for the Black community. One such club was the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), founded in 1896, whose motto was Lifting as We Climb (Harris-Perry 2011). This organization brought activist

and social clubs together all across the country to focus on "the struggle to free people of color from the bondage of slavery, illiteracy, and prejudice" ("History NACWC"). The foremothers of the NACW were Harriet Tubman, Helen Appo Cook, Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, and others ("History NACWC"). Part of these clubs' goals were to provide a counternarrative to stereotypes of the hypersexuality of Black women by providing an image of chastity, religious fidelity, and social respectability (Harris-Perry 2011, 61). This laid the groundwork for the "politics of respectability," which allowed Black women club members to "control the terms by which they would be seen" (Harris-Perry 2011, 61). However, women who did not follow the strict criteria of "acceptable feminine behavior" determined by the club were often excluded in the movement (Harris-Perry 2011, 61).

By creating their own clubs, Black feminists focused on their intersectional identities within issues like Black suffrage, housing, violence, and discrimination. The lack of understanding of Black women's intersectional identities left them unrecognized in other political and social landscapes. Black women were thought to either align with white women's suffrage or Black men's suffrage, but not both. Barkley Brown (1989) argues that this decision fragments Black women's identities. Prominent Black feminists of the time like Ida B. Wells, Frances E. W. Harper, and Mary Church Terrell ignored this exclusion and created their own movement. By addressing issues relevant to Black women, they brought attention to problems such as education, lynching, disenfranchisement, and racial equality.[1]

Women's Liberation Movement

Exclusion continued into the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Black women's experiences were so rarely considered a priority to women's liberation that they were often ignored or dismissed. For example, the women's liberation movement was focused on women entering the workforce, but Black women had been working in the

service sector as maids, cooks, and so on for decades (this issue will be discussed more at length in Moment 3: Work and Welfare). White feminists privileged their own experiences over those of women of color. Many Black feminist scholars point out that they were actively disregarded in the liberation movement by white women who presented it as a "for-whites-only ideology and political movement" (Collins 1996, 13; hooks 1984; Combahee River Collective 1983).

Feminist organizations during the 1960s and 1970s were rooted in other movements like the Civil Rights, Black Power, Anti-War, and Socialist movements. Feminist groups like Bread and Roses or the National Organization for Women (NOW) were comprised of mainly white, middle-class, college-educated women who were inspired by these other movements (Breines 2007). While they adopted goals of anti-racism, anti-war, and anti-sexism, many white women in these groups focused solely on ideas central to white women's struggles. For example, in an interview, then-president of NOW Betty Friedan described work and economic empowerment for women: "Economic equity is an enormous empowerment of women. … Women with income take themselves more seriously and they are taken more seriously" (Erickson 1994). This means of equality—through employment in the workforce—ignored the centuries of Black women in the workforce. As a result, they were not respected or "taken more seriously."

Like Friedan, white feminists of the liberation movement focused on issues central to their oppression: paid work outside the home, equal responsibilities in the home, and reproductive rights. Breines (2007) argues that the issues white feminists were prioritizing were not at the "top of [the] list of pressing issues" for Black women, who were more concerned about their basic survival (21). While organizations of the women's liberation movement claimed to be focused on anti-racism, their goals did not consider women of color's own experiences and objectives. Instead, white feminists focused on goals they incorrectly thought were applicable for all women.

Black feminist scholar bell hooks (1984) argues that women who believe that "all women are oppressed" ignore the diversity of expe-

riences that sexism plays in individual women's lives. White feminist theory is often blind to the white supremacist framework that operates to uphold a racist, sexist, and capitalist system (hooks 1984). She states, "As long as these two groups or any group defines liberation as gaining social equality with ruling class white men, they have a vested interest in the continued exploitation and oppression of others" (hooks 1984, 15). White feminist rhetoric has historically focused solely on women's interaction with men (Hurtado 1989), thereby overlooking other systems of oppression like racism or homophobia. By trying to gain equality with white men, white women are not challenging the system in place but simply trying to fit within it: "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Lorde 1984, 112).

This blindness to a white supremacist framework is seen particularly in affirmative action policy. Many white women do not realize that they have benefited the most from these policies (Wise 1998). Wise (1998) found that white women's views on affirmative action are not entirely different from their white male counterparts: "White male privilege operates as a veil, clouding the ability of many white women—even committed progressives—to perceive the degree to which they too are implicated in the system" (Wise 1998, 17). By ultimately reaping the rewards of affirmative action, while at the same time condemning it, white women demonstrate a lack of support for other women who experience systemic discrimination because of race and gender. Public aid programs have been around for almost a century, providing valuable resources for white Americans to build up their wealth and create the middle-class as we know it today (Katznelson 2005). However, Black people were often excluded from these programs, including Social Security: "But the black affirmative action programs instituted since 1965 in fact were paltry in their scope and scale compared to the massive governmental transfers that disproportionately aided whites in the previous three decades, 1935–65" (Katznelson 2005, 1). Now affirmative

action policies aimed at helping Black people and other people of color are construed as "reverse discrimination" against white people (Wise 1998, 11). This framing against affirmative action erases the entire history of policy built on aiding white people, particularly white women who benefited the most from these policies.

The exclusion from the women's liberation movement led many Black women to separate themselves from it and leave the term *feminist* behind, feeling that it could not be "cleansed of its racist and elitist historical baggage" (Taylor 1998, 43; Collins 1996; Combahee River Collective 1983). Adopting terms like Walker's (1983) *womanism* helped Black women distance themselves from the goals of white feminists who only hoped to improve their own position in society. In womanism and Black feminisms,[2] the focus centers on Black women's experiences and the Black community. They directly challenge the patriarchal, racial hierarchy in which subordinated groups had been historically excluded and ignored (Collins 2002).

White women have historically minimized Black women's experiences and inclusion in women's movements, acting as if their privileged experiences were applicable to all. This translates to contemporary issues because many white women claim to not see the realities of sexism or inequality in their lives today (Horowitz, Parker, and Stepler 2019). White women who voted for Trump submit to the belief that their social position is secure because of their whiteness (Jaffe 2018; Strolovitch, Wong, and Proctor 2017). By holding on to racist and sexist beliefs, white women support a patriarchal and racist system that further suppresses women of color.

With the majority of white women (53 percent) voting for Trump, there is a clear disconnect between white women and women of color. Some white women who claim to be feminists do not seem to be concerned with the Republican position on issues that affect women nationwide, like access to birth control, abortion, and welfare. This is exemplified in this headline from the *Guardian*: "Can You Be a Feminist and Vote for Donald Trump? Yes, You Can." Women interviewed for the article argue that they identify as feminists but still believe in "traditional femininity" (Fishwick 2016).

These women are quoted as saying: "I simply prefer the leadership of a strong male," and, "I'd like a female president, but I couldn't vote for Hillary" (Fishwick 2016). Many of these women excuse their voting choice as an exercise of free will but do not seem to consider how this affects other women. This contemporary example directly parallels the shortcomings of white women in the suffrage and liberation movements: white women choosing to work within a white supremacist system in ignorance of Black women and their experiences of oppression.

Moment 2: Medical Treatment and Medicalization of Black Women

Eugenics Movement

The infamous eugenics movement was at its peak in the early twentieth century, but it has its roots in slavery, when enslaved Africans were raped and forced to bear children against their will. Their reproductive choices were not valued because they were not considered human by whites in power (Roberts 1997). Years later, academics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thought that welfare programs and charities made it so that "unfit people were allowed to survive and reproduce" and that they were draining national resources (Tyner 2016, 140). By *unfit people*, (white) academics were referring to poor and immigrant women and men who were considered "vectors of degenerate hereditarian material" that were, according to them, "unfit" to reproduce (Tonn 2017). Starting in the late 1800s, there was a fear that groups considered "unfit" would taint the gene pool of the "superior race," and solutions aimed at reducing "inferior traits in the population" included segregation, sterilization, marriage restraints, and federal immigration policies (Katz and Abel 1984, 231). Together, these policies and priorities fell under the umbrella term *eugenics*, referring to its literal translation "well-born" or "good genes" (Online Etymology Dictionary).

Eugenicists acted on "scientific" theories of criminality that perpetuated harmful stereotypes of people of color, particularly Black women and their supposed hypersexuality (Tyner 2016, 142). These "undesirable hereditary traits" were often coded as "feeblemindedness," associated with criminality and promiscuity (Katz and Abel 1984, 232). This allowed for the perpetuation of racial hierarchies. The eugenics programs of the time, Costa et al. (2007) argue, were in place to encourage "the reproduction of individuals considered talented" and discourage "the reproduction of undesirable ones" (7). It was all done in the name of forming a healthy population and securing the nation's future (Costa et al. 2007). Furthermore, promiscuity and hypersexuality in those deemed "unfit" by eugenicists were considered the greatest threat to their vision of a "healthy population." However, it is clear that the reason for eugenics and establishing a "healthy" (that is, white) population was by violating the basic human rights of others, primarily women of color.

Costa et al. (2007) and Tyner (2016) argue that the eugenics movement was used as a form of social control. Those in power (white male doctors and scientists) were trying to decide who was considered worthy of reproducing. Charles Davenport, a zoologist turned eugenicist, became famous for his scientific perspective on genetics and biology that targeted the betterment of society (Largent 2011). His wife, Gertrude Davenport, however, was the one to encourage his career move to eugenics. A scientist in her own right, Davenport was heralded among white feminists as a groundbreaking woman in science in the twentieth century (Tonn 2017). Davenport did her own work in eugenics, arguing that the "germ plasma" was used by immigrant and poor women to "contaminate previously pure family lines" (Tonn 2017). Davenport actively argued in newspaper columns that the "incompetents" that carry hereditary "imbecility, criminality and disease" were draining the taxpayers of one hundred million dollars annually (1912, 147). Through eugenics, Davenport argued, society would be cleansed of such "undesirable" genetic traits.

While white women supporters of the eugenics movement perpetuated a narrative of a superior race and of Black women draining

resources, Davenport actively participated in the scientific community responsible for this state violence against Black women. Her fame and degree gave her work weight in a movement that was desperate to reduce Black control over Black communities and was willing to use state power to enact violence against them. This violence is seen in the lack of control given to Black bodies to make basic decisions about their reproductive rights. White feminists of the time held Davenport up as a sign of women's progress while she was adamantly taking away the rights of poor women and women of color. Davenport's actions sharply contrast the use of Black women's bodies during slavery, when they were used to supply more enslaved people. After slavery, Black women's bodies were (and still are) characterized as nonproductive for having children and viewed as drains on society. This idea is further perpetuated by stereotypes labeling them as "irresponsible, selfish, over-sexed, and scheming" (Zack 1996, 151).

Tyner (2016) and Katz and Abel (1984) point out how through state support, involuntary sterilization was deemed legal and nonviolent: "With the support of purported scientific knowledge and experts the state was able to both identify a 'dangerous' class and subject it to special institutions, bureaucratic surveillance, and involuntary 'treatment'" (Katz and Abel 1984, 236). Between 1907 and 1931, thirty states had passed compulsory sterilization laws, which resulted in over 64,000 people being involuntarily sterilized until the laws were ended in 1964 (231). Furthermore, sterilized women outnumbered sterilized men three to one (234). As Champlin (2016) argues, "At the heart of policies that deny poor women the ability to have children is the idea that they do not deserve to shape their own lives and families" (6).

In 1973, even after sterilization laws had ended, two Black girls by the names of Mary Alice (age fourteen) and Minnie Relf (age twelve) were sterilized when doctors threatened to terminate their welfare benefits unless their mother agreed to this procedure. Their mother was illiterate and was unsure what she was consenting to, thinking she was agreeing to birth control shots for her daughters ("Relf v.

Weinberger"). Instead, Mary Alice and Minnie were sterilized, and their reproductive choices were permanently taken away. The family filed a case against the federal government, and it was uncovered that between 100,000 to 150,000 people were sterilized annually under federal programs (Champlin 2016; "Relf v. Weinberger"). The government used eugenics as a form of state-sponsored violence to maintain a capitalist, sexist, and racist system with those deemed "unfit" at the bottom. Those primarily affected by this state-sponsored violence were Black women, who were stereotyped as "hypersexual" and therefore viewed as "unfit" to be in control of their own reproductive choices.

Black Women in the Medical Testing of Birth Control

A parallel to the eugenics movement is the exploitation of Black women in the medical testing of the birth control pill. In 1960s Puerto Rico, women were given the birth control pill before it had gone through rigorous human trials or received federal approval in the US. Two hundred and twenty-one women were involved in two clinical trials, many of whom used the pill between one and three years (Planned Parenthood 2019). As in the case of sterilization, many of the Puerto Rican women involved in the study were semiliterate or illiterate and were unable to consent to these trials. Researchers claimed to have chosen Puerto Rico as the testing site because of its accessibility to the US, its lack of laws on contraception, and its "well-established network of birth control clinics" (Planned Parenthood 2019, 3). These conditions all allowed for their testing to go on without major scrutiny.

In *The Birth Control Pill: A History*, Planned Parenthood made the claim that using illiterate and semiliterate women allowed researchers "to test whether or not the pill could also be used by women around the world, regardless of their educational accomplishments" (3). They also justified not obtaining written consent by claiming that doing so was not common procedure at the time. These decisions, Planned Parenthood claims, "opened [the

researchers] to fallacious charges of racism" (3). The trials are framed as altruistic and "for the greater good," but whose greater good? Margaret Sanger (1919), the founder of the birth control movement, adamantly argued for birth control as a continuation of eugenics and "racial betterment" (para. 4). Planned Parenthood, by stating that these charges of racism are "fallacious," glosses over the racial aspects inherent in the researchers' decision to test the pill on women in Puerto Rico and not elsewhere. The history of the pill as recounted by Planned Parenthood ignores the oppression of women of color as test subjects and shows a disregard for women's bodies as their own.

When the pill ultimately received FDA approval in the US, it was a symbol of white women's liberation, giving them control over their family planning, but few women of color would get the same access and opportunity to use it. Advocates for birth control framed it as "voluntary" or "self-determining motherhood" (Davis 1981; Sanger 1919). However, as Davis (1981) points out, "What was demanded as a 'right' for the privileged came to be interpreted as a 'duty' for the poor" (121). For women of color, the pill was an extension of racist eugenic policies that targeted them years earlier. It was a "racist strategy of population control" rather than an individual choice for women of color (Davis 1981, 124).

When the Hyde Amendment passed in 1977, withdrawing federal funding for abortions, states followed suit and cut funding for abortions in individual states (Davis 1981). This primarily affected women of color who relied on state assistance. However, this was ignored by white feminists in the birth control movement who popularized the idea of birth control as an individual choice (Davis 1981). We see similar state laws being proposed today, with recent bills in Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, and other states attempting to limit abortion rights. These bills mostly target women of color because they rely on federally funded health care more than white women, and have less access to contraceptives or family planning services (often leading to unplanned pregnancies) (Godbolt 2017; Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health). Statistics indicate that white women

have voted for lawmakers in these states who are attempting to limit not only women of color's rights, but their own.

Black Women's Bodies and Medical Care

Historically and contemporarily, white men—as doctors, as lawmakers, as men—feel qualified to tell women what to do with their bodies. White men's experiences are considered the "normal" standard, and they are diagnosed, listened to, or cared for sooner. Seen as antithetical to the normal standard, Black women's medical symptoms are often ignored or unfamiliar to those in the medical industry. In *The Status of Black Women in the United States* report (2017), it is noted that Black women have higher rates of chronic diseases than white women (90–94). Further, Black women have the highest rate of heart disease mortality (177.7 per 100,000) and have the highest rate of death from all cancers (161.9 per 100,000 Black women, compared to 142.1 per 100,000 white women; DuMonthier, Childers, and Milli 2017). Black women are consistently affected by chronic illnesses and still have the highest death rates.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently published a report finding that Black women die of pregnancy-related causes 3.3 times more frequently than white women (Rabin 2019). The report states that the solution to women dying from preventable issues is to recognize symptoms of health concerns during and after pregnancy. These health concerns that result in death, like high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, also disproportionately affect Black women, often causing complications several weeks after delivery (Rabin 2019). The CDC concluded that "sixty percent of all pregnancy-related deaths can be prevented with better health care, communication and support, as well as access to stable housing and transportation" (Rabin 2019). Doctors are not recognizing these potentially deadly health concerns in Black mothers because there is not enough attention brought to this issue of disparity in treatment in which Black women primarily suffer. "Class lines in medicine are also racial lines"

(Durazo 2006, 181). Doctors are measuring Black women's health in relation to white bodies, expecting all women to experience complications in the same way. The medical system ultimately upholds capitalist, colonial interests by subjugating women of color (Bridges 2009). The medical violence used for social control results in the exclusion and withholding of treatment for those in disadvantaged positions.

When you look at the Trump administration's stance on insurance and the medical industry, these themes of racial, gender, and class inequality are carried throughout. Trump promised during the campaign to not cut social security or Medicaid (Costa and Goldstein 2017); however, in his first year, the president and the Republican Congress tried to drastically scale back the Affordable Care Act (Paletta and Werner 2019a). While primarily unsuccessful, they managed to eliminate the financial penalty to enforce the individual mandate (Miller et al. 2018). Some states are allowed to expand access, while others are instituting barriers to Medicaid, such as work requirements that ultimately limit access for those who need it. Medicare, as recently as 2015, covered 55.5 million people, and Medicaid helps 74 million people (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2015; Kaiser Family Foundation 2017). By restricting access, millions of people will be affected, primarily institutionally disadvantaged groups. This is why the capitalist, patriarchal system was set up in the first place: to benefit those in power. We see this through eugenics programs, medical testing on Black women's bodies, and the disproportionate access to health care throughout our country. Trump's platform further extends this racial hierarchy in his policies on Medicaid and Medicare that put those with minoritized identities at an institutional disadvantage.

Moment 3: Work and Welfare

Discrimination in the Workplace

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan (1963) describes the "problem that had no name," in which women across the country were unhappy in their lives as homemakers and housewives (63). However, this broad generalization ignored an entire group of women already in the workforce: Black women. In 1900, 17.0 percent of the labor force was women, but 40.7 percent of them were Black women (Gottfried 2013, 48; Amott and Matthaei 1996, 412). Many Black women could not afford to stay home and be full-time homemakers. Instead, they had to earn a living outside of the home. In fact, for white women to become liberated working women, they relied on the labor of Black women. This represented the double standard in the women's movement that Audre Lorde wrote about in *Sister Outsider* (1984): how classism and elitism in the white women's movement subjugates Black women's experiences while white women simultaneously claim to fight for gender equality.

In the workplace, Black women have had to face issues of discrimination, low pay, and exploitation for years. One area disproportionately occupied by Black women is care work and reproductive labor (Glenn 2010; Gottfried 2013; Browne and Misra 2003).[3] At the start of the twentieth century the majority of reproductive and care work was performed by white immigrant women and Black women. By 2000 the majority of reproductive labor was performed by Hispanic and Asian/Pacific women (Duffy 2007, 328). Black and Asian/Pacific women are still overrepresented in the reproductive labor force today (330). Meanwhile, although Black women may be moving out of domestic work, many are still concentrated in low-wage service jobs (Lewis 1977). This work is labor-intensive and unwanted by most people, so as a result, women of color are expected to fill these low-wage occupations (Glenn 1992). Women of color were often forced into domestic labor because of a number of social limitations: "economic need, restricted opportunities, and educational and employ-

ment tracking mechanisms" (Glenn 1992, 32). Further, white people would hire minoritized workers as a means to show off status and reinforce social distance from those they consider less privileged (Glenn 1992, 10). This was done to elevate their own status in the community and reinforce a racial power hierarchy.

This racial inequality in reproductive labor was perpetuated by government programs and negative stereotypes. Government programs that were set up to help people find jobs would direct Black and Hispanic women into low-wage service work (Glenn 1992). Additionally, the negative stereotype of Black women as a "bossy black maid" would deter employers from hiring Black women (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008, 232). Women of color's perceived job skills are racialized and predetermined by employers and existing workplace structures. As Glenn argues, racial prejudice in hiring can be camouflaged as coming from differences in skill, education, and training (1992, 33). During the 1920s and 1930s, job titles changed depending on the race of the worker: white women were considered "housekeepers" while Black women were considered "cooks," "servants," or "laundresses" (Glenn 1992, 10). While they were performing the same job, their titles were different because white women were perceived to be more skilled to employers than Black women.

Duffy (2007), building on Glenn's (1992) framework, makes a key distinction about visibility in these service sector jobs: white workers are often made visible to the public, while people of color are disproportionately made to work in less visible space like the "back rooms" (331). White women are hired for reproductive labor jobs that are visible and interact with customers, such as waitresses, dental assistants, or hairdressers, while Black women are hired for jobs that are hidden and considered "invisible," like janitors, maids, or nursing aides (Glenn 1992).

With a growing demand for reproductive and care work, many workers are unable to move out of the service sector for better paying jobs. Glenn (2010) argues that with the decline in public welfare, the "off-loading" of care work onto home care workers has allowed the medical industry to reduce labor costs and maximize profits

(154). Home health aide positions are some of the lowest-paid occu-pations, often staffed by migrant women of color (179). The growing industry of home care increases income inequality between women of color and whites. Low-wage care work depends on this inequality to keep hiring a disadvantaged workforce. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008) found that live-in domestic workers see these low-wage jobs as an "occupational bridge" to move on to better jobs, but many of them remain in reproductive labor years later (229).

We also see this racial hierarchy operating in Glenn's (1992) study of nurses: she found that white women helped perpetuate the power hierarchy in which white male doctors are at the top and Black nurses at the bottom. The white nurses rarely challenged the gendered division of labor in the workplace and would justify the lower status of Black nurses by perpetuating racial stereotypes, saying, for example, "They lie" or, "They steal" (Glenn 1992, 26). White nurses benefit from their relationships with white male doc-tors and choose to participate in the oppression of minoritized women. By keeping others in subordinate positions by focusing on how minoritized women were different—and exploiting those dif-ferences—white women maintained their status above minoritized women. In Clawson and Gerstel's (2014) book, *Unequal Time*, nurses in different workplaces had very different experiences based on their race and gender. The workplace with primarily Black nurses had stricter shift, sick, and vacation policies because employers expected them to take advantage of the system. The white nurses' workplace, however, was more flexible, allowing them to trade shifts and vary the length of their schedules to their liking.

This racial and gender inequality is explored in Hennessy's (2015) article on the "double bind" of working and professional mothers' experiences. Low-income, single mothers are chastised as irre-sponsible when taking time off work to care for their children; all the while, white, married, middle-class mothers are hailed as "self-less" for doing the same thing (1107). The working-class mothers experience a contradiction when they are told by society to devote themselves to their children but at the same time told that they

should not rely on welfare or public services to do so (1110). Further to the point, white, middle-class mothers are able to pay someone else to care for their children (often a low-wage care worker), allowing them to perform both roles: intensive mothering and devoted worker. This clear double standard about middle-class and working-class mothers as workers is a result from the way in which the second-wave feminists went about working toward their goal of women entering the workforce. Middle-class women can enter the workforce and receive praise for "doing it all," while working-class women do the same thing and are reprimanded for "not being a good mother/worker." This is further demonstrated by the racial disparities in class: white women's money and privilege allows them to pursue both goals—mother and worker—while many Black working mothers do not have the means to meet both demands and are met with severe scrutiny, unlike their white counterparts.

The workplace and the expectation of the "ideal" worker are centered on white male bodies, thereby reinforcing a system built to keep white men at the top (Acker 1990). In larger organizational structures, racial stratification is built into institutional systems and is seen in official rules, informal rules, lines of authority, and job descriptions of the workplace (Glenn 1992, 32). In this power structure of the institution, white men are at the top (protected by their white male privilege) and women of color are at the bottom as subordinates, with white women in the middle (Glenn 1992, 34). Glenn (1992) argues that instead of questioning gendered divisions of labor, white middle-class women instead put the burden of domestic service on more oppressed groups of women (7). By hiring women of color to fill their own roles in the home and not paying them a living wage, some middle-class white women are perpetuating systemic, racial inequalities. The workforce, reproductive labor, and the "double bind" of devotion to both work and motherhood all reinforce white male dominance and are perpetuated or executed by white women.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996 to limit welfare benefits in an attempt to end individual reliance on welfare in America. It included a marriage incentive and a five-year cap on benefits, and it replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Hays (2004) argues that the purpose of PRWORA was to instill "good" morals that make those on welfare self-sufficient and hardworking; however, it did little (if anything) to aid those experiencing poverty. In her interviews with women on welfare, Hays (2004) found that many women felt guilty for being on welfare, showing how embedded the idea of self-sufficiency is in American culture (205). PRWORA reinforced white, patriarchal, heterosexist values that force people to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" when they may not have the means to do so.

For many years welfare has been framed as a "handout" by politicians, and common stereotypes paint welfare recipients as exploiting the system (Brown 2016). The traditional "Southern Strategy" of the Republican Party has portrayed those with minoritized identities as a threat to jobs and resources, with Republican political leaders using racially coded words to describe the minoritized as the "inner city" or "ghetto" (Brown 2016). In Trump's campaign, we still saw this phenomenon of "backlash voters" that got him elected: GOP candidates that targeted racial animosities in voters. "Nearly two-thirds of whites without college degrees, for example, said that benefits encourage poor people to remain in poverty" (Lauter 2016, 3). The group Trump targeted in his campaign–these "backlash voters" who feel most threatened by Americans with minoritized identities –are taking the script given to them by the media and Trump.

These animosities have been carried out in many recent policies. In the proposed annual budget, the Trump administration recommended major cuts to domestic spending in welfare programs that

provide food and housing assistance, like the $17.4 billion cut proposed to the budget of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Paletta and Werner 2019a; Paletta and Werner 2019b). These cutbacks target those most institutionally disadvantaged: poor women of color.

There is a clear connection between race and the public perception of the "lazy" welfare recipients that politicians perpetuate. In Moynihan's report *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965), he blamed Black women as heads of households for hindering equality for Black people (Harris-Perry 2011, 93). Harris-Perry (2011) points out that Moynihan's report gave policymakers a way to blame Black mothers for poverty, rather than the state for denying these women assistance. The stereotype of the "lazy" welfare mother is a "myth that punishes individual black women based on assumptions about the group" (Harris-Perry 2011, 45). Rather than holding accountable a system that has failed those that need it most, welfare critics rely on and perpetuate a stereotype of Black women rooted in a racist report. Contrary to this stereotype, whites receive more SNAP benefits than any other race, with white women making up 20.2 percent of beneficiaries (Lauffer 2017). White women benefit from the stereotype of the "welfare queen" because they are less scrutinized for using a system built to aid those in need, while Black women are looked down upon for the same need. For one group it is seen as "trying to get back on their feet," while for the other it is seen as "exploiting the system."

Further propagating this myth, the Trump administration attempted to make drug tests mandatory for those on welfare. However, this was struck down by a federal judge in March of 2019. Abramovitz (2018) argues that "poverty is increasingly treated as a criminal offense" in which entire communities are scrutinized for seeking aid (XXVIII). Mandatory drug testing furthers these misconceptions of welfare recipients as "lazy" and "exploitative." And because a majority of TANF and SNAP recipients are women, it becomes an issue of gender and racial inequality. Further, these drug tests would not be required for Medicare or Social Security,

which primarily serve the middle and upper classes (Abramovitz 2018). This policy would further perpetuate inequality between classes, thereby keeping women of color in poverty. These stereotypes and myths, as Collins (2002) argues, are a part of "a highly effective system of social control designed to keep African-American women in an assigned, subordinate place" (5). Stereotypes are used to maintain control over disadvantaged populations that have no other means to reverse their effects.

Black women are expected to work within white, patriarchal systems in the workplace, while white women continually benefit from their labor. In welfare reform, we see a heteronormative, patriarchal system of the "family" and "individualism" pushed onto people who need assistance. This targets Black women because it brings to mind stereotypes like the "welfare queen" that make people believe they are unworthy of public assistance. This further dehumanizes the poor and maintains a capitalist system that keeps the privileged at the top.

Conclusion

Each of the discussed themes represents issues relevant to current political policies and platforms that secured Mr. Trump the election. By targeting the "backlash voter" who believes those with minoritized identities and the poor are stealing resources and jobs, the Republican Party no longer needs the "Southern Strategy" of the Nixon era to win elections. Trump won by targeting white men's and women's racism and sexism (Setzler and Yanus 2018; Frasure-Yokley 2018).

In each of the themes discussed—suffrage and liberation movements, medicalization, work and welfare—white women have continually chosen to support their race over their gender. In feminist movements, white women have actively oppressed and ignored Black women's voices. In the medicalization of Black women's bodies, white women have perpetuated their own "racial superiority" in eugenics and gained the benefit of individual choice from birth con-

trol. In the workplace, white women continue to earn almost seventeen cents more on the dollar than Black women and exploit their labor for their own progress in the workplace (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2019). Further still, white women reinforce and benefit from stereotypes of Black women in welfare policy.

The commonality in every theme is that white women–either intentionally or not–benefit from the consequences of inequality. Affirmative action, welfare, health care, and birth control all advance white women more than they help Black women. And yet, white women continue to vote for candidates who propose limiting these resources. White women who argue for a feminism in which all are equal, and then support candidates like Trump, are voting to uphold a system of sexism, racism, and exploitation from capitalism and for their own suppression.

A hierarchy with white men at the top works in part because white women are complicit. White women often do not see their own oppression or place in the hierarchy because they are "seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power" (Hurtado 1989, 845). This, however, does not excuse behavior that belittles or exploits Black women. White women who negate Black women's voices and experiences ultimately reinforce white male dominance. Many of these Trump-era policies put women–both white and Black–at risk.

References

Abramovitz, Mimi. 2017. *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present.* London: Routledge.

Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender & Society* 4 (2): 139–58.

Amott, Teresa L., and Julie A. Matthaei. 1996. *Race, Gender, and Work: A Multi-Cultural Economic History of Women in the United States.* Boston: South End Press.

"An Examination of the 2016 Electorate, Based on Validated Voters."

2018. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. September 18, 2018. https://www.people-press.org/2018/08/09/an-examination-of-the-2016-electorate-based-on-validated-voters/.

Ault, Alicia. 2019. "How Women Got the Vote Is a Far More Complex Story Than the History Textbooks Reveal." *Smithsonian*, April 9, 2019. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-women-got-vote-far-more-complex-story-history-textbooks-reveal-180971869/.

Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health. "Women of Color Need Improved Information and Access to Effective Contraception." https://bixbycenter.ucsf.edu/news/women-color-need-improved-information-and-access-effective-contraception.

Bracic, Ana, Mackenzie Israel-Trummel, and Allyson F. Shortle. 2018. "Is Sexism for White People? Gender Stereotypes, Race, and the 2016 Presidential Election." *Political Behavior* (2018): 1–27.

Breines, Winifred. 2007. "Struggling to Connect: White and Black Feminism in the Movement Years." *Contexts* 6 (1): 18–24.

Bridges, Khiara M. 2009. "Quasi-Colonial Bodies: An Analysis of the Reproductive Lives of Poor Black and Racially Subjugated Women." *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 18 (2): 609. http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/apps/doc/A215061787/ITOF?u=viva_vpi&sid=ITOF&xid=ba1c2db0.

Brown, Elsa Barkley. 1989. "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14 (3): 610–33.

Brown, Jessica Autumn. 2016. "The New 'Southern Strategy:' Immigration, Race, and 'Welfare Dependency' in Contemporary US Republican Political Discourse." *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 8 (2): 22–41.

Browne, Irene, and Joya Misra. 2003. "The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (1): 487–513.

Cassidy, John. 2012. "What's Up with White Women? They Voted for Romney, Too." *New Yorker*, November 8, 2012.

https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/whats-up-with-white-women-they-voted-for-romney-too.

CBS News. 2000. "Campaign 2000 Results." http://www.cbsnews.com/campaign2000results/election/.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2015. "On Its 50th Anniversary, More Than 55 Million Americans Covered by Medicare." https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/its-50th-anniversary-more-55-million-americans-covered-medicare.

Champlin, Emily R. 2016. "The Myth of the 'Welfare Queen': Reproductive Oppression in the Welfare System." *Poverty Law Conference and Symposium* 6. https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/povlaw/6/.

Clawson, Dan, and Naomi Gerstel. 2014. *Unequal Time: Gender, Class, and Family in Employment Schedules*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1996. "What's in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond." The Black Scholar. 26 (1): 9-17.

———. 2002. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Routledge.

Combahee River Collective. 1983. "The Combahee River Collective Statement." In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Barbara Smith, 264–74. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Cooper, Brittney C. 2019. *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*. New York: Picador.

Costa, Robert, and Amy Goldstein. "Trump Vows 'Insurance for Everybody' in Obamacare Replacement Plan." *Washington Post*, January 15, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-vows-insurance-for-everybody-in-obamacare-replacement-plan/2017/01/15/5f2b1e18-db5d-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c_story.html.

Costa, Tonia, Eduardo Navarro Stotz, Danielle Grynszpan, and Maria do Carmo Borges de Souza. 2007. "Naturalization and Medicalization of the Female Body: Social Control through Reproduc-

tion." *Interface-Comunicação, Saúde, Educação* 3. http://socialsciences.scielo.org/scielo.php?script=sci_art-text&pid=S1414-32832007000100006.

Davenport, Gertrude. 1912. "The Eugenics Movement." *Independent* 72 (3294): 146–48.

Davis, Angela Y. 1981. *Women, Race, & Class*. New York: Vintage.

Duffy, Mignon. 2007. "Doing the Dirty Work: Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective." *Gender & Society* 21 (3): 313–36.

DuMonthier, Asha, Chandra Childers, and Jessica Milli. 2017. *The Status of Black Women in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research. https://www.domestic-workers.org/sites/default/files/SOBW_report2017_com-pressed.pdf.

Durazo, Ana Clarissa Rojas. 2006. "Medical Violence against People of Color and the Medicalization of Domestic Violence." *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 179–188. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Erickson, Kathleen. 1994. "Interview with Betty Friedan." *Region* (September). https://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications/the-region/interview-with-betty-friedan.

"Eugenics (n.)." Online Etymology Dictionary. https://www.ety-monline.com/word/eugenics.

"Exit Polls 2016." 2016. CNN, December 9, 2016. http://www.cnn.com/election/2012/results/race/president.

Fishwick, Carmen. 2016. "Can You Be a Feminist and Vote for Donald Trump? Yes, You Can." *Guardian*, November 17, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/17/feminist-vote-for-donald-trump-women-hillary-clinton-gender.

Frasure-Yokley, Lorrie. 2018. "Choosing the Velvet Glove: Women Voters, Ambivalent Sexism, and Vote Choice in 2016." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 3 (1): 3–25.

Friedan, Betty. 1963. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Dell Publishing Company.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1992. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18 (1): 1–43.

———. 2010. "Neoliberalism and Globalization." In *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America*, 152–82. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Godbolt, Dawn. 2017. "Medicaid: America's Largest Health Insurer." Center for Global Policy Solutions, July 6, 2017. http://globalpolicysolutions.org/medicaid-americas-largest-health-insurer/.

Gottfried, Heidi. 2013. "The Puzzle of Gender Segregation: From Historical Roots to Contemporary Divisions." *Gender, Work, and Economy: Unpacking the Global Economy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Graham, Renée. 2019. "White Women: From Slave Owners to Trump Voters." *Boston Globe*, February 15, 2019. https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2019/02/15/white-women-from-slave-owners-trump-voters/qtFsr-WAhns6YzxytWxY9cI/story.html.

Harris-Perry, Melissa V. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hays, Sharon. 2004. *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hegewisch, Ariane, and Heidi Hartmann. 2019. "The Gender Wage Gap: 2018 Earnings Differences by Race and Ethnicity." Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2019. https://iwpr.org/publications/gender-wage-gap-2018/.

Hennessy, Judith. 2015. "Low-Income and Middle-Class Mothers Gendered Work and Family Schemas." *Sociology Compass* 9 (12): 1106–18.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 2008. "Maid in L.A." In *Feminist Frontiers*, edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Janet Lee, 219–236. Boston: McGraw Hill.

hooks, bell. 1984. "Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory." In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 1–15. Boston: South End Press. https://diyworkshop.noblogs.org/files/2015/10/

Bell_Hooks_Feminist_Theory_from_Margin_to_Cente-
BookZZ.org_.pdf

Horowitz, Juliana Menasce, Kim Parker, and Renee Stepler. 2019.
"Views of Gender in the U.S." Pew Research Center's Social and
Demographic Trends Project, January 22, 2019. http://www.pew-
socialtrends.org/2017/10/18/wide-partisan-gaps-in-u-s-over-
how-far-the-country-has-come-on-gender-equality/.

Hurtado, Aida. 1989. "Relating to Privilege: Seduction and Rejection
in the Subordination of White Women and Women of
Color." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14 (4):
833–55.

Jaffe, Sarah. 2018. "Why Did a Majority of White Women Vote for
Trump?" *New Labor Forum* 27 (1): 18–26.

Jones-Rogers, Stephanie E. 2019. *They Were Her Property: White
Women as Slave Owners in the American South*. New Haven: Yale
University Press.

Kaiser Family Foundation. 2018. *Medicaid in the United States*. San
Francisco: Kaiser Family Foundation. http://files.kff.org/attach-
ment/fact-sheet-medicaid-state-US.

Katz, Janet, and Charles F. Abel. 1984. "The Medicalization of
Repression: Eugenics and Crime." *Contemporary Crises* 8, no. 3
(July): 227.

Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An
Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*.
New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Kraditor, Aileen S. 1965. *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement,
1890–1920*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Largent, Mark A. 2011. *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced
Sterilization in the United States*. New Brunswick: Rutgers Uni-
versity Press.

Lauffer, Sarah. 2017. *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2016*. Alexandria, VA:
US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office
of Policy Support.

Lauter, David. 2016. "How Do Americans View Poverty? Many Blue-

Collar Whites, Key to Trump, Criticize Poor People as Lazy and Content to Stay on Welfare." *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 2016. https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-pol-poverty-poll/.

Lewis, Diane K. 1977. "A Response to Inequality: Black Women, Racism, and Sexism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 3 (2): 339–61.

Lorde, Audre. 1979. "An Open Letter to Mary Daly." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* 66-71. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984.

–––. 1984. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* 110-113. Berkeley: Crossing Press.

National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. "History." http://nacwc.org/history.

O'Neal, Lonnae. 2016. "The 53 Percent Issue: This Time, the Problem in American Feminism Has a Name." The Undefeated, December 20, 2016. https://theundefeated.com/features/black-women-say-white-feminists-have-a-trump-problem/.

Paletta, Damian, and Erica Werner. 2019. "Trump Budget to Propose Slashing Domestic Spending, Boosting Defense." *Washington Post*, March 8, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-budget-to-propose-slashing-domestic-spending-boosting-defense/2019/03/08/1758b6e0-41c2-11e9-a0d3-1210e58a94cf_story.html?utm_term=.4451fd140101.

–––. 2019. "Trump to Demand $8.6 Billion in New Wall Funding, Setting Up Fresh Battle with Congress." *Washington Post*, March 10, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-to-demand-86-billion-in-new-wall-funding-setting-up-fresh-battle-with-congress/2019/03/10/c5eec1e6-4342-11e9-90f0-0ccfeec87a61_story.html.

Planned Parenthood. 2019. *The Birth Control Pill: A History*. n.p.: Planned Parenthood. https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/1514/3518/7100/Pill_History_FactSheet.pdf.

Rabin, Roni Caryn. 2019. "Huge Racial Disparities Found in Deaths Linked to Pregnancy." *New York Times*, May 7, 2019.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/health/pregnancy-deaths-.html?action=click&module=News&pgtype=Homepage.

"Relf v. Weinberger." Southern Poverty Law Center. https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice/case-docket/relf-v-weinberger.

Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.

Russell, Kathy. 1996. *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap between Black Women and White Women*. New York: Doubleday.

Sanger, Margaret. 1919. "Birth Control and Racial Betterment." *Birth Control Review* (February). Library of Congress, microfilm 131:0099B.

Setzler, Mark, and Alixandra B. Yanus. 2018. "Why Did Women Vote for Donald Trump?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51 (3): 523–27.

Strolovitch, Dara Z., Janelle S. Wong, and Andrew Proctor. 2017. "A Possessive Investment in White Heteropatriarchy? The 2016 Election and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Sexuality." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (2): 353–63.

Taylor, Ula Y. 1998. "Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism." *The Black Scholar* 28 (2): 18–28.

Tonn, Jenna. 2017. "White Feminism and Eugenics: The Case of Gertrude Davenport." *Lady Science* (blog), The New Inquiry. December 15, 2017. https://thenewinquiry.com/blog/white-feminism-and-eugenics-the-case-of-gertrude-davenport/.

Truth, Sojourner. 1851. "Ain't I A Woman?"

Tyner, James A. 2016. *Violence in Capitalism: Devaluing Life in an Age of Responsibility*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Vargas, Theresa. 2017. "Guinea Pigs or Pioneers? How Puerto Rican Women Were Used to Test the Birth Control Pill." *Washington Post*, May 9, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/05/09/guinea-pigs-or-pioneers-how-puerto-rican-women-were-used-to-test-the-birth-control-pill/.

Walker, Alice. 1983. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. New York: Harcourt.

Winfrey Harris, Tamara. 2016. "The Failure of White Feminism." Bitch Media, November 16, 2016. https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/some-us-are-brave-0.

Wise, Tim. 1998. "Is Sisterhood Conditional? White Women and the Rollback of Affirmative Action." *NWSA journal* 10 (3): 1–26.

Zack, Naomi. 1996. "The American Sexualization of Race." In *Race-Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*. New York: Routledge.

Notes

1. As of March 2019, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, has opened an exhibit dedicated to Black suffragists entitled *Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence*. Through portraits, material culture, and other artifacts, this exhibit brings to light the people and organizations that were overlooked in bringing about universal women's suffrage.

2. Alice Walker (1983) defines a *womanist* as "a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually" and as "courageous" or "willful" (xi). A womanist is "responsible. In charge. *Serious*." (xi). And she is "committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female" (xi). Black feminism, expanded by Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* (2002), focuses on Black women's lived experiences, looks at each of these unique experiences as intersecting oppressions, and empowers Black women in order to challenge these oppressions (31–36). "Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women's lived experiences and aim to better those experiences in some fashion" (31).

3. Reproductive and care work include domestic activities like cleaning, buying groceries, making food, laundry, and child care. This work has largely been performed in the home by unpaid women but has since moved into the paid labor market (Duffy 2007; Glenn 1992).

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

3. Our Pussy, Our Prerogative

Afro-Caribbean Women's Oppression, Resistance, and Sexual Liberation

GERLYN MURRELL

> *Black women are the beached whales of the sexual universe,*
> *unvoiced, misseen, not doing, awaiting their verb.*
> —Hortense Spillers, 1984

The images of the Caribbean and its inhabitants have been severely distorted by European outsiders, specifically through the use of the male gaze, which has relied on the depiction of the Black female body as Other and hypersexualized. For example, the Maroon legend Grandy Nanny was rumored by the British to have caught the bullets from the British enemy in her buttocks and fired them back using her fleshy posterior (Steady 1981). This version of the Grandy Nanny story contradicts that of her as a Maroon leader, military tactician, and obeah practitioner who Jamaican folklore tells us caught bullets with her hands and was instrumental in protecting and caring for her people (Steady 1981). The fact that Nanny's buttocks are depicted by the British as a weapon demonstrates just one of many examples of the historical use of sexual imagery to degrade the Black female body in the Caribbean.

In the colonizer's imagination, Black Caribbean women, especially those considered "unruly," were relegated to what Wynter (2003) called the "nadir of its Chain of Being: that is on a rung of the ladder lower than that of all humans" (301) and were seen as oversexed, insatiable, and vulgar. Andrea Shaw (2006) writes that the "unruly" Black woman's body is one that violates European standards of what is an appropriate and desirable body or being. This designation justified the treatment of these women as superhuman *and* nonhu-

man, lacking any individuation. As such, the Black female body in the Caribbean was compared to the Victorian lady (read as the ideal of beauty), though the Black woman would never be conceived as respectable (Edmondson 2003). The British Victorian lady is one who displays proper etiquette; is middle-class, educated, modest, subordinate; practices conspicuous consumption; and abstains from anything publicly sexual and crass (Hope 2013). After slavery many Afro-Caribbean woman tried to adopt the image of the Victorian lady in hopes of being deemed respectable (Beckles 1989). Adopting this image of respectability meant that the Afro-Caribbean woman would be a representation of a virtuous, educated, and acculturated woman (Edmondson 2003). Doing so created the class of Afro-Caribbean middle-class women who looked down on sex work, public performance, and Caribbean popular culture, punctuating the divisions between "middle-class" and "lower-class" Afro-Caribbean women.

Respectability was based on the notion of heterosexual, monogamous, Eurocentric, male-headed, middle-class, nuclear families and marriages. These were largely unavailable to Afro-Caribbean working-class women who worked outside the home doing semiskilled and unskilled labor to support their mostly extended households (Safa 1995). Some of these women engaged in sex work and in sexualized public entertainment, which placed them even further outside of the realm of respectability. Based on this history, Afro-Caribbean women in contemporary society continue to navigate a space where they are expected to acculturate to ideals of respectability even as they are "represented as the antiwoman, pathological and lascivious viragos who undermine the nationalist project" (Edmondson 2003, 2).

There are, however, many Afro-Caribbean women who reject notions of respectability. In this chapter I carry out an analysis of the scholarship about the lives of Caribbean sex workers as well as public entertainers such as Alison Hinds in the 1990s and Rihanna in the 2000s to demonstrate how Afro-Caribbean women have rejected respectability and come to embrace their sexuality as an

acceptable and authentic part of their identity. In contemporary postemancipation society, these women are demonstrating ownership and control over their own bodies as they exercise their freedom through sex work and Caribbean popular culture. This exercise of freedom includes displaying the body at Carnival, in the fete, and in the dancehall, along with gyrating, wining, and wukking up (isolation of the limbs and movement of the hips in a sexual manner) in sexy costumes, booty shorts, and belly shirts.

In this chapter I examine why and how Caribbean women's sexual agency should be celebrated. I argue that history demonstrates that Afro-Caribbean women have not been passive actors who epitomize the characteristics ascribed to them. Instead, they have actively resisted their oppression, specifically sexual oppression, and have found ways to be sexually liberated through their choices of resistance, including performing sex work and participating and performing in Caribbean popular culture such as dancehall, calypso, and soca music. To exemplify the above, this chapter will include a historical analysis of the treatment, images, and prescribed roles of Afro-Caribbean women during slavery and of Afro-Caribbean women's patterns of resistance throughout Caribbean history and in contemporary society, including resistance to notions of Victorian respectability. The chapter will end with a discussion about the future of sex work and public performance for Caribbean women and present-day controversial standpoints on Afro-Caribbean women's expressions of female sexuality.

Afro-Caribbean Women During Slavery

In this chapter, I use the term *Afro-Caribbean women* to refer to women in the Caribbean who were either brought from West Africa to the West Indies or are African descendants who were born in and are living in (or had lived in) any of the Caribbean countries. The term *Caribbean* refers to the diverse grouping of states spanning the geography of the Greater and Lesser Antilles as well as the mainland of South America, which share a similar historical colonial legacy.

It includes Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, and Dutch-speaking countries, including formerly colonized and now independent island nations as well as overseas territories. Throughout this chapter Afro-Caribbean, Black, West Indian, and specific nationalities, such as Jamaican, Guyanese, Trinidadian, and so on, will be used interchangeably but will all be referencing Afro-Caribbean women. Particularly in scholarship written about slavery in the Caribbean, the terms used in the different sections of this chapter will mirror the terms used by the scholars being referenced.[1]

Slavery in the Caribbean was based on a plantation society that resembled a pyramid, with the small white ruling class at the top; mixed, mulatto, and light-skinned Blacks as well as poor whites in the middle; and the Black and nonwhite labor-class at the bottom (Knight 1973). Knight (1973) references Beckford (1972), who identified the stratification of race, class, and color and the permanent debilitation and impoverishment of the peasant sector as some of the social effects of a plantation society. These specific social effects, as will be briefly discussed, are what helped give rise to the creation of Caribbean popular culture, and as such, race and class differences derived from plantation society continue to persist in modern-day Caribbean society. The role of Afro-Caribbean women during slavery was complex and ever changing. A brief history of enslaved Black women's lives in the Caribbean is important to contextualize their treatment in sex work and their initial treatment in Caribbean popular culture. I begin with the treatment of enslaved women.

Treatment of Afro-Caribbean Women

Enslaved Black women who labored in the field were considered beasts of burden, comparable to animals such as mules or donkeys, which were used for carrying loads. They were likened to horses and cattle as a species that is bred and whose bodies were used as a means of production in the labor economy (Beckles 1989). Black women were expected to perform arduous physical labor, and their

well-being was not a priority. For example, as field hands in Barbados, Black women were subjected to the same exhausting productive employment as men (Beckles 1989). In the extant literature on this topic, there is far more scholarship on the treatment of Black women during slavery in the Caribbean than that of men. The exploitation of female labor in the fields was justified by planters (white slave owners) who sought to work Negroes equally: the men with the women and the weak (read women) with the strong (read men) (Beckles 1989). Ironically, as enslaved women persevered through their objectification and hypersexualization, they proved to be anything but weak, which led to the Black woman being depicted as superhuman.

"House slaves," enslaved women who performed tasks in the home, were not exempt from objectification. For example, in the mid-eighteenth century, the *Barbados Gazette* ran an advertisement that read: "To be sold a Lusty Young Barbadian Negro Wench, a very good washer; whoever has a mind to purchase her may speak with Mary Burch, widow, at her home in Swan Street" (Beckles 1989). The term *lusty* in this advertisement is a double entendre for the overt meaning of healthy and strong as well as a covert sexual connotation. Men and women were both enslaved domestic workers; however, evidence suggests that women, specifically between the ages of twenty and fifty, were kept by white men as mistresses, especially in the Dutch Caribbean, where it was illegal for Europeans to marry enslaved women (Kempadoo 2004).

Sex Labor During Slavery

Enslaved Black women in the Caribbean could not exercise their agency in performing sex work. Sex was an important commodity to the economy of several Caribbean countries. White males would loan out enslaved women to visiting "gentlemen" and ship captains as a convenient way of obtaining cash (Beckles 1989). The money men paid for the women exceeded the "market value" generally ascribed to women. Slave owners expected a substantial proportion

of money earned, and the women were considered fortunate to have "some degree of control" over the disposal of their time and labor (Beckles 1989,142). However, the extent to which women had control over their time and labor is questionable. When both rural and urban white families would hire an enslaved African, they were hiring her as a nanny, cook, seamstress, and washerwoman with the *expectation* that any sexual labor and benefits were included (Beckles 1989). The women were not permitted to keep the monies made from their sexual labor. Afro-Caribbean women had little choice in becoming a prostitute or mistress because they were the "property" of slave owners and meant to perform sexual labor as easily and seamlessly as cooking.

Enslaved Women's Lives

Afro-Caribbean women in the West Indies were thought to be acquiescent to the white man's whims (Bush 1990). These women were viewed as conniving and licentious, and the white man's morality was considered susceptible to the seductive capabilities of Afro-Caribbean women (Bush 1990). The contemporary European ideal was of a refined, modest woman. The Black woman was constantly compared to the European women and always considered a lesser being in appearance, morality, and intelligence. Though white men espoused disgust with the physical appearance of Black women, their alleged repulsive appearance failed to repel the white men sexually, as they thought Black women good enough to be mistresses but not wives (Bush 1990).

Society, Power, and Law

Enslaved women were crucial to the social fluidity of West Indian society (Bush 1990). Enslaved domestic workers were central to the integration and diffusion of Black and white culture during the process of creolization. Michel Foucault, as quoted by Bush (1990), believed that the body is the ultimate contact point of power rela-

tions. This power was exerted over the bodies of those enslaved. Their bodies were used as a means of productive and reproductive labor. Bush (1990) quoted Foucault (1977) stating that the productive body also had to be a subjected body. As such, those enslaved did not own their own bodies, nor were they able to assert any rights over their bodies. Historically, slave owners exercised their power through the punishment of enslaved bodies. Punishment ranged from being whipped and tortured to being raped and having their physical needs and environment severely altered (Bush 1990). Though the honor and self-esteem of the slave "master" may have come from his power over the enslaved, this power was reinforced by slave laws (Bush 1990).

Slave laws existed to aid in the sociopsychological dehumanization of the enslaved Africans. The masters' primary goals were to protect their property and to socially control an unwilling workforce (Bush 1990). Slave laws throughout the Caribbean were not the same. Enslaved people exposed the contradictions and weaknesses within this social system based on coercion and punishment through their open resistance to and rejection of the slave laws. The survival of this system depended on the enforcement of a repressive legal code, and this was fundamental to societies dependent upon slavery. As such, familiarity with the function of the operation of West Indian slave law is central to an objective analysis of the life of the individual enslaved woman.

The slave laws in the Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean, the Code Noir and Siete Partidas respectively, were based on Roman law and, as such, were considered "more humane" than the legal codes of the Anglophone Caribbean (Bush 1990). For example, the Siete Partidas designated the enslaved as a person and not just property (Bush 1990). Under their legal codes, the French and Spanish masters not only had rights over the enslaved but also had duties towards them. In contrast, British West Indian masters owned enslaved people as their private property that were sellable and moveable as debts and assets respectively (Bush 1990). Enslaved persons in the Anglophone Caribbean were not as protected under

the legal codes as those in the Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean.

In contrast to the French and Spanish law codes, the English law codes held the status of the enslaved woman identical to that of the enslaved male and offered her little protection from maltreatment, sexual abuse, and overworking, even during pregnancy (Bush 1990). The French and Spanish, in theory, recognized that it was in their best interest to protect enslaved women and their families. To the contrary, before ameliorative legislation in the 1780s, the Anglophone Caribbean society offered no such protection. It was only after the 1780s, that English law codes changed to protect the woman–not because of her maltreatment but because the protected woman could be "encouraged" to have many children (Bush 1990). As such, this so-called amelioration served to sustain the enslaved labor force and added to the economic slave system.

Patterns of Resistance

The historical narratives and literature about enslaved Afro-Caribbean people, from slavery to contemporary society, present a one-sided picture of the lives of women, specifically in the Anglophone Caribbean. Though the documentation has been limited, readers may be able to infer and (re)imagine the narratives of other Afro-Caribbean women who were enslaved in Francophone and Hispanophone colonies in the Caribbean. Enslaved Black women were not just victims of their circumstances and the afflictions they endured. They did not labor idly without thinking about their oppression. Green (2006) reiterates that the women "acted as historical subjects and social agents who placed certain limits on the assault on their dignity and the level of humiliation they were prepared to endure" (5). A brief history of enslaved women's resistance efforts is necessary in understanding that contemporary Afro-Caribbean women's resistance, specifically with regard to sex work, public performance, and Caribbean popular culture, is not new.

Slavery

Some of these African women transported to the Caribbean were already accustomed to resisting the oppressive forces they experienced in West African traditional societies, and "acts of insurrection and defiance were part of their social behavioral patterns" (Beckles 1989, 154). As such, "collective political behavior was not unfamiliar to the West African women in the 17th and 18th centuries" (Beckles 1989, 154). Some revolts included overthrowing guards on ships where enslaved Africans significantly outnumbered European slave traders. One account was of women being taken out of their chains while days away from Barbados and realizing that the musket chest was unlocked. They killed the white men and unchained the African men but were unable to steer the ship back to Africa, so they drifted for forty-two days before they were discovered and attacked by a British warship (Beckles 1989). Once on the plantation, anti-slavery sentiments did not dissipate, but rather the objectives of the women's resistance and its forms changed over time according to their position within the social relations of the slave system (Beckles 1989). The strategies that women deployed depended on their objectives and goals. Because women had various roles and complicated integration within the slave system, their goals were not monolithic (Beckles 1989). Women were central participants in resistance efforts.

The British slave trade officially ended in 1807, but slavery was not abolished in the Anglophone Caribbean until 1834, where it was followed by a four-year period of apprenticeship. France abolished slavery in the Francophone Caribbean by 1848. The Netherlands ended the slave trade in 1814 and abolished slavery in 1863. Spain abolished slavery in the last Hispanophone colonies in 1886. It must be noted that even after abolition the conditions of the formerly enslaved did not immediately change, and as such these newly freed people continued to resist their maltreatment post slavery.

Emancipation

The period between 1834 and 1838 in the Anglophone Caribbean was known as the apprenticeship period. After slavery was abolished in the Caribbean, technically, the enslaved were no longer free laborers, yet they were not free citizens nor considered fully human. Many Black men and women in Barbados continued to work for their former masters because they did not have anywhere else to go due to the flat topography and limited land resources. However, the topography differed in Jamaica, so the formerly enslaved refused to work in the same conditions and moved off the plantations, resulting in a shortage of available labor and the importation of many indentured servants from East India and China. The Indian and Chinese population throughout the Caribbean in contemporary society is evidence of the migration of indentured servants to the Caribbean after emancipation.

Contemporary Society

The era of slavery established the Black woman as both Other and beneath the white woman. In the establishment of the Other, enslaved Black women in the Caribbean were able to live by other rules. Green (2006) quotes Mohanty (1991) in saying that this ascribed identity formed a dual purpose as both imprisoning yet liberating in the context of relationality. The historical literature on the Caribbean about Afro-Caribbean enslaved peoples has been limited to their lack of rights to their own bodies and the ways in which they resisted: but to what extent have Afro-Caribbean women chosen to liberate themselves by (re)claiming their own bodies and doing as they please on their own terms and conditions? Many Afro-Caribbean women have chosen to "ditch" European respectability politics and use their sexuality and participation in public performance and Caribbean popular culture as a form of opposition to respectability.

Afro-Caribbean Women's Sexuality

Drawing from Marshall (2011), who used Vance's (1984) and Mohammed's (1992) definitions of sexuality, I refer to *sexuality* as the "sexual identities, feelings, and pleasures that are culturally constructed and reinforced by gendered, class, racialized and ethnic power relations" (61). I use the term *sexuality* to refer to the capacity for sexual feelings, expressions, identities, and pleasures, not a person's sexual orientation or preference. The suppression of Afro-Caribbean women's sexuality and agency has been at the hands of white men during and after slavery, as well as by Afro-Caribbean men during the postemancipation era.

Respectability

Green (2006) asserts that respectability and its principles are Euro-centric and are based on norms and values "embedded in class-color systems of stratification and promoted by white churches, European marriage and a colonial educational system" (9). On the other hand, Green (2006) asserts that "reputation is based on Afro-centric principles supported by egalitarian kinship and property institutions, grassroots Afro-Christian cults, as well as popular expressive culture, peer networks and anti-establishment values and activities" (9). Respectability is the central concern of the "high class," whereas reputation is the central concern for the poorer "other class." The latter means that being respected is more about reputation, rather than the act or presentation of being respectable.

According to Eurocentric respectability, women were the bearers of respectability, whereas men were the generators of an Afro-centric-based reputation. Some Black women tried to adopt the white woman's respectability but were still unable to achieve a "respectable status." With regard to Black people, only the men were viewed as being able to obtain a good reputation. This is not to say that Black men had or have good reputations in general but that in the eyes of the Black community, Black men were able to achieve

a good reputation, while a Black woman would be hard-pressed to achieve the same. As such, it appeared that Black women were unable to be fully respected by whites, even after adopting Victorian respectability, and were unable to establish a "good reputation" in the Black community. Black women had to create their own positive and accepting spaces, and using their sexuality was one way to accomplish this.

Sexuality

Sharpe and Pinto (2006) state that sexuality in the Caribbean has been a taboo topic because of the fear of reproducing the stereotype of Black women's hypersexuality that emerged from slavery and colonialism. This chapter began with a quote from Black feminist Hortense Spillers, which was inspired by her observation that the perception of Black female sexuality in the United States also holds true for the Caribbean: "Black women are the beached whales of the sexual universe, unvoiced, misseen, not doing, awaiting *their* verb" (Sharpe and Pinto 2006, 247). In the Dutch and Francophone Caribbean, specifically in St. Maarten and St. Martin, respectively, there are brothels where women dance, similar to strip clubs in the United States, and offer sexual services. Specifically, women from the Dominican Republic would travel to different countries in the west as mail-order brides and escorts (Sharpe and Pinto 2006). In Jamaica it is somewhat acceptable for a Black woman to engage in sex work to support her family as long as she maintains a public face of respectability. This respectability was adopted by a class of formerly enslaved people who hoped to achieve social mobility through moral character (Sharpe and Pinto 2006).

Scholarship on sexuality in the Caribbean has generally been limited to a colonial history that influences current views on sexuality and how it is represented in the Caribbean, as well as how Caribbean countries address homosexuality. Kempadoo's (2004) work offers an alternate perspective on Caribbean hypersexuality. She proposes that we not consider hypersexuality as a fabrication of the European

imagination but as a lived reality. Sharpe and Pinto (2006) quote both Kempadoo (1999) and Brennan (2004), whose work reveals that Afro-Caribbean women "see their sex work as a legitimate way to raise money for purchasing a home for their families or sending their children to private schools" (249). Kempadoo (1999) and Brennan (2004) show how both men and women who inhabit marginal sexual spaces assume an active agency over their sex lives, sometimes rebelling against narrowly defined sexual regimes. Kempadoo (1999) and Brennan (2004) also demonstrate that the current conditions of transnationalism and globalization have contributed to a greater visibility and urgency with regard to sexual issues.

With the increase in tourism in the Caribbean, the exchange of sexual services for money has become embedded within both the tourist economy and Caribbean society. This has been most evident in the Dominican Republic (Kempadoo 1999). Because women perform sex work as a means of income to support their families, they are not afforded the protection that they need and that they would have in a "legitimate" job. The issues and backlash against sex work in the Caribbean cannot be easily traced to any particular event in history, but European colonization and slavery are factors that have limited the scope in which Afro-Caribbean women perform and express their sexuality through sex work (Kempadoo 1999). While sex work is a form of resistance for women, men who engage in sex work are neither condemned nor ridiculed. As discussed earlier, respectability was a European concept that was forced on Black women and was the standard by which they were judged.

Female Sexual Agency

As Black women in the Caribbean are using their agency to perform sex work, they are able, states Hope (2013), to move more freely than their male counterparts up the contemporary socioeconomic ladder by utilizing multigendered openings that have been created in a free market, capitalist society. For example, she further states that "female sexuality has remained a tradeable and saleable commod-

ity over time" and "women are therefore placed in a position where they can and do reap significant economic benefits by using their sexuality" (46). Though women have this advantage, they are still ridiculed for their choices in performing sex work.

A study completed about women and sex work in Guyana reported that Guyanese female sex workers have greater agency over their work (Sharpe and Pinto 2006). The activist research group the Red Thread Women's Development Programme (1999) was able to "strike a balance between endorsing sex workers' desires for financial stability and recognizing the obstacles they face" (252). The researchers reported that the women in their study were active negotiators in the terms of exchange and the rules of the game. In a different study on Caribbean sexuality conducted by Barry Chevannes, quoted in Kempadoo (2003), he concluded that a woman did not have the freedom to be in different forms of sexual relationships. Beyond casual relationships, the Afro-Caribbean woman was stigmatized as a whore, prostitute, *jamet/jammette*,[2] and mattress and as loose (Kempadoo 2003). A man was not a real man unless he was sexually active, and a woman was not a woman unless she was in a monogamous relationship and giving birth to babies.

Kempadoo (2003) explains that sociologist and anthropologist Edith Clarke (1957) documented how Jamaican Black women's sexual agency went beyond the stereotype of the Black working-class embodiment of unrestrained sexuality. Clarke (1957) observed that in Jamaica, Black women's sexuality was exclusively heterosexual and women who lived independently on family land or single women who lived near the sugar industry were able to act and fulfill their needs outside of the masculine power structure (Kempadoo 2003). The rural Black woman could have multiple lovers with whom she bore children, but without the men joining *her* household. And because she *owned* the home, she dictated when the man could come and leave as *she* pleased. This control allowed Afro-Caribbean women to choose the type of sexual relations they engaged in. As such, this agency benefitted Afro-Caribbean women through economic security.

Reasons for Sex Work

Green (2006) states that after emancipation, white and mulatto women in West Indian society scored the few "respectable female-typed jobs in the economy, effectively shutting out Black women from the middle-class female occupational and labor market" (13). Kempadoo (2004) focuses on the significance of sexual-economic relationships such as prostitution and transactional sex. According to Kempadoo, while transactional sex is not an exchange of money but of gifts and relationships, prostitution has been and continues to be a form of income that is easily accessible. It is also an alternative to low-wage jobs. Women who choose this line of work not only have the agency to do so but can set their prices to be what they want. In a study on young women ages fifteen to twenty-four in Jamaica, Kempadoo (2004) found that the first reason these Afro-Caribbean girls engaged in sexual activity was for money and the second was for enjoyment. Sex work, although not considered as such, is a job like any other, in which one must use their hands, feet, or voice. People who have "legitimate" jobs can say that they enjoy their job without being questioned, but women in sex work cannot possibly "enjoy" what they do without feeling *cheap* or *degraded*. Kempadoo (2004) argues that the latter is possible. Women also engaged in sex work in order to give their children a better life. This type of work, although it has risks, could help working-class Afro-Caribbean women afford a better life for themselves and their children.

Since the 1990s, the definitions of prostitution have changed to mirror the changing views on prostitution. Formerly, according to Kempadoo (2004), prostitution meant "sexual acts, including those which do not actually involve copulation, habitually performed by individuals with other individuals of their own or opposite sex, for a consideration which is non-sexual" (59). Beginning in the 1990s, prostitution was considered explicitly as an income-generating activity and labor (59). Most of the scholarship on sex work in the Caribbean tends to obscure the sexual agency and subjectivity, the

role as mothers or providers, and the hopes and aspirations of female prostitutes in the region. Kempadoo (2004) states that this obfuscation in social studies of the actors' own experiences and involvement in prostitution is strange, given that within the Caribbean arts (that is, literature, theater, and music, and everyday storytelling and anecdotes) prostitutes are portrayed as an integral part of Caribbean society.

Sex Work as Resistance

As previously stated, the definition of resistance used in this chapter is Kempadoo's (2004) definition: "Politics and practices that are lodged in material conditions of everyday life that work to subvert, contest, or transform relations of dominance" (192). Sex work is a form of resistance for Afro-Caribbean women sex workers because it is a part of their everyday lives in a society that has historically tried to strip women of their sexual agency and limit sex to reproduction. Just as Beckles (1989) called Afro-Caribbean women "rebels," I too call them rebels: individuals who engage in "individual or collective acts that overtly defy and disobey established order, standards, and authority" (Kempadoo 2004, 192).

Sexual Liberation in Caribbean Popular Culture

Green (2006) endorses Cooper's (1995) suggestion "that working-class African-Jamaican women are able to claim (real, not just imaginary) spaces where they can engage in an innocently transgressive celebration of freedom from sin and law (unselfconsciously inverting the sign of the Black Whore)" (7). Writing about the modern-day culture of the dancehall, she notes, "Liberated from the repressive respectability of a conservative gender ideology of female property and propriety, these women lay proper claim to the control of their own bodies" (7). Cooper believes that Afro-Caribbean women are liberated from repressive respectability. Cooper (1995) redefines *slackness*, which is a Jamaican term for lacking morals, and claims

that it occurs among Afro-Caribbean women who participate in dancehall music and culture as an oppositional position to hegemonic standards of decency and piety. As such, this redefinition signals a potentially subversive and transformative character of female sexuality in popular culture. Women, in their independent participation in dancehall, are continuously seen as victims of the historical male gaze upon the Black sexed female body. Kempadoo (2004) explains that other Caribbean popular cultural expressions in dance and music have been considered performances that at once produce an image of the sexually liberated woman and reaffirm the deeply heterosexist character of gender relations in Caribbean society. While important to note, this argument works to shift the focus from Afro-Caribbean women's agency. Using the examples of Afro-Caribbean women such as Carlene the Dancehall Queen, Denise "Saucy Wow" Belfon, and Calypso Rose, I demonstrate how these women helped make and solidify a space for women in dancehall, soca, and calypso. In addition, I show how internationally known Afro-Caribbean pop artist Robyn Rihanna Fenty has also challenged both Caribbean and American societies' dominant perspective on female sexuality.

Dancehall in Jamaica

According to dancehall researcher Donna Hope (2013), it is not well known where the term *dancehall* originated from, but the performance itself originated in the early 1980s after much political upheaval in Jamaica. It began in spaces where people gathered to dance and enjoy music: places where Jamaicans could go to find legitimacy and acceptance that were denied and continue to be denied them in wider traditional Jamaican society (Hope 2013).

> Dancehall music and culture, as the most contemporary manifestation of what is deemed Jamaican low culture, actively created and recreated symbolic manifestations of the tensions that operate in society. The play across the field

of popular culture, where the dancehall, as inner-city and lower-working-class culture, works to both produce varied and competing forms of personhood in Jamaica. (Hope 2013, 9)

The dancehall space is where those from the inner cities can go to "exert confidence and positive self-images of themselves" (Hope 2013, 21). However, I argue that though this is a space for confidence and positive self-image creation, Afro-Caribbean women have had to fight more than men for their rightful place "inna di dancehall."

The gender discourse within dancehall is represented in the lyrics of the songs. They mainly consist of men flaunting their conquering power to get the "pum pum" or "punaany"—which are two of the many references to female genitalia—and the number of women that they can get "by any means and at all costs" (Hope 2013, 50). These lyrics, when consciously analyzed and separated from the catchy beats and rhythms, objectify and disrespect women. Through this form the men are suggesting that all they are willing to offer a woman is sex, not a commitment (Manuel 1998). Take, for example, two lines from Beenie Man's hit song "Slam" (Sex): "Gi mi di gyal dem wid di wickedest slam, di kind ah gyal who know how to love up shi man" (Give me the girls/women with the best sex, the kind of girl/woman who knows how to love up her man) (Hope 2013, 40). This is one mildly worded example of a dancehall song referencing a woman and what she can give a man. Women began to make their own dancehall songs to show a different perspective from what the men were talking about in their songs and to emphasize that men cannot "get it" just like that.

In 1996, almost twenty years after the creation of dancehall, Tanya Stephens released her song "Yuh Nuh Ready fi Dis Yet," dismissing male sexual superiority (Hope 2013, 51). The chorus is "Yuh nuh ready fi dis yet, bwoy." Her use of the term *bwoy* "disses and denigrates the manliness that is encoded in the adult posture, profile and performance of the male's sexualized lyrics" (Hope 2013, 51). Songs like this by women serve as an important form of resistance.

This resistance comes in the form of lyrics contradicting what the popular male lyrics are stating, as well as creating a place in the dancehall for Afro-Caribbean women to dance to music that is uplifting them at the same time. Even when women wine up (dance) to misogynistic lyrics, they can still dance to the song and feel liberated by dancing because they know other men in the dancehall are "wanting" them and that it may or may not lead to anything physical.

In the same vein, Manuel (1998) states that when it comes to sexism in the lyrics of the songs in Caribbean popular culture, dancehall, calypso, reggae, Latin music, and so on, it is important to understand and contextualize the lyrics and understand that the lyrics do not translate into real-world gender relations and attitudes. Though this is a great perspective to keep in mind—and it is important to refrain from "overgeneralizing from unrepresentative samples"— we must also remember that many of the lyrics in the songs in Caribbean popular culture are derived from real-life experiences, and if they are not, they are definitely derived from real-life feelings. Take the example of calypso, which was created to express personal and public issues to the greater society. These public performances should be viewed as acts; for we all perform our various roles in life as parents, caretakers/givers, partners, employees, and the like.

Calypso in Trinidad

Calypso is a type of public performance and musical expression that originated in Trinidad. Overall, calypso is a performance that brings political issues to the forefront. It is a way to make the personal, political. Historically, men were the calypsonians who created songs to sing about whatever issues they wanted to discuss, such as problems with their women and grievances with the government. Interestingly enough, women composed most of the audience at these public performances (Smith 2004). The first women to make a big impact in the calypso arena were women who performed songs about the issues affecting their lives and the lives of

other women (Smith 2004). Initially, there was backlash from men because they perceived this expression as "crying" and "wining" on the women's part. However, in any job or performance, both private and public, one must play their part. The women had to perform in a way that demanded and retained the attention of their audience, regardless of gender. As women like Singing Francine and Singing Dianne paved the way for other women to enter the calypso arena, men began to change how they wrote their lyrics when referencing women. Smith (2004) agrees that as a result of this change in men's lyrics, the respectability and reputation of women improved. For example, men would write songs about issues affecting women because they believed that what the songs said were true and, as such, would have a woman perform the song because the audience would not take kindly to a man singing about the "protests of women" (Smith 2014, 45). From the beginning of the calypso era to contemporary calypso, many changes have been made favoring the inclusion of women and changing the attitudes of some men. One of these changes includes the adaptation of calypso music to the art form of soca music.

Soca

Soca was created from calypso to include East Indian rhythms and music. The main difference is in the sound and the fact that soca utilizes steel instruments. Similar to the criticisms used against dancehall and calypso, soca music has also been condemned for its slackness. Jennifer Thornington Springer (2008), a Caribbean popular culture theorist who uses the terms *calypso* and *soca* interchangeably to demonstrate the similarities, makes the point that soca music and performances empower Afro-Caribbean women. She uses the example of internationally acclaimed "Queen of Soca," Alison Hinds, to illustrate this. Springer (2008) states that Hinds:

> (Re)claims calypso and its dance forms to empower women cross-culturally. She subverts traditional representations of

womanhood in her songs and performance, thereby expanding existing definition of womanhood. … She recovers/reinvents the female body. … She validates the "wuk up" as an art form intrinsic to Caribbean culture … and challenges colonial ideologies that conceptualize "wukking up" as inappropriate or disrespectful. (93)

Alison Hinds has been on the regional calypso scene highlighting Barbadian calypso for over twenty years (Springer 2008). The careers of some Barbadian female calypsonians are cut short once they become wives and mothers and they decide to no longer participate in public performance (Springer 2008). However, when Hinds became a wife and mother in 2004, she continued and went on to pursue a solo act, topping charts with her hit song "Roll It Gal" and releasing her first solo album, *Soca Queen*, in 2007 (Springer 2008).

From a different perspective, Kevin Frank (2007) suggests that Caribbean women cannot be fully and truly liberated while they continue to be fetishized by the male gaze. I argue that women are not responsible for the male gaze and that it is men's issue. Women are not responsible for the acts of men. The liberation that is found within sex work and Caribbean popular culture allows women to be themselves unapologetically, however they decide to dress, whether they wear makeup or more or less clothing. That is *their* prerogative. Recording artist, performer, actress, and entrepreneur Rihanna is a real example of using her agency in sexual liberation, especially in her songs.

Rihanna

Rihanna's international image has raised more questions than it will ever be able to answer (Bascomb 2014). From the beginning of her career her image morphed from "bubblegum teen pop" to hard rock and continues to evolve as she invites critiques of hypersexuality, violence, and misrepresentation of the Caribbean region and young

women. In analyzing Rihanna's video for "Rude Boy," from her 2009 *Rated R* album, Bascomb (2014) asserts that Rihanna highlights rudeness in its allusions to violence and sexuality. She does so by drawing on a Caribbean movement vocabulary that is associated with Jamaican dancehalls and by making transgressive visual and lyrical plays on power. Her gendered performances of power in the "Rude Boy" video speak to the changing discourses of Caribbean femininity and "woman power."

Visually, Rihanna centers herself as the focus of the video. This is a play on the long history of women's bodies being objectified by cameras and the male gaze in images of the Caribbean and in music videos. Though the camera dissects her body for visual consumption with close-ups of her lips and breasts, the role that the men play in the video gives a subversive perspective on Rihanna's body (Bascomb 2014). The men rarely look at her, instead appearing as props, one of her many accessories, or part of a dancehall tableau, barely more animate than the speakers they lean against. There is a violence to her sexuality as she bites a stuffed cobra and repeatedly uses Caribbean movements such as wining and the bogle while pointing her hands like a gun toward the camera.

Lyrically, Rihanna remixes patriarchal power. With the lyrics "Show me what you got" and "Come here rude boy, boy, can you get it up? … Is you big enough?" she continues a centuries-old tradition that asks Caribbean masculinity to prove itself sexually (Bascomb 2014). There is power in doing this because, as stated earlier with Tanya Stephen's song "Yuh Nuh Ready fi Dis Yet," these women are questioning men and telling them to prove themselves, or not, on women's terms. These lyrics contrast the traditional songs in which men are telling the women what they are going to do to their bodies and how the men will get pleasure. Through the lyrics "Take it, take it, love me, love me," Rihanna offers herself as a sexual object, but unapologetically on her own terms. By announcing "I'ma let you be the captain," she allows her male listener to take control, but ultimately the power is hers to cede. Bascomb (2014) states that Rihanna's public performance of sexuality and sexual power falls

below the level of middle-class Caribbean respectability and that this is an iteration of modern *jamet/jammette* aesthetics. Rihanna's genre of pop music and her use of Jamaican dancehall forms include this kind of public performance of sexuality in her videos, and her success as a pop artist leaves little room for apology. Rihanna's sexuality, music, lyrics, and aesthetic demonstrate her unapologetic challenge toward Caribbean images of the Afro-Caribbean woman.

Conclusion

Historically, sex work has been an avenue used by Afro-Caribbean women to (re)claim their bodies. Today, Afro-Caribbean women continue to actively participate in this work for various personal and socioeconomic reasons. I cannot overgeneralize or be overly optimistic in saying that in performing sex work, Afro-Caribbean women are happy and satisfied. Though some may enjoy what they do, again, it is a performance as well as a means to an end, and the ends can vary. I have demonstrated the inhumane treatment of and conditions in which, historically, Afro-Caribbean women have had to endure as well as persevere in the West Indies. (Re)claiming their bodies and their agency has allowed them to engage in sex work as their choice and on their terms. Likewise, Afro-Caribbean entertainers and dancers who have been "queens" of the dancehall, well-known calypso and soca dancers and artists, and Afro-Caribbean music artists have been and are (re)claiming their bodies and their agency through these art forms and are simultaneously resisting respectability, thus saying, "My pussy, my prerogative." Many Afro-Caribbean women have created a platform in Caribbean popular culture that has challenged and continues to challenge the mainstream view of Afro-Caribbean women.

I have discussed how Afro-Caribbean women's bodies have been and continue to be depicted throughout history and in contemporary times in sex work, public performances, and Caribbean popular culture. I have stated that women are using their agency and have liberated themselves sexually from Victorian respectability and

the male gaze in songs written by men and in dances and performances that are considered low culture, but what are these women actually saying with their bodies? In a conversation with the award-winning Jamaican poet, novelist, performance artist, and educator Opal Palmer Adisa, Elisa Serna Martínez informs Adisa of how she "ended up loving [wining]" and simultaneously acknowledges that "one of the commonest comments from female and male friends here in Europe would be they couldn't help seeing this dancing as a way to undermine women, to make them sexual objects" (Adisa and Martínez 2016, 211). Adisa responded by stating that:

> I think what dancehall women have done is like saying "Do you want our bodies? Do you think of our ass or our tits or whatever? We will give it to you. But we are going to give it to you the way we want to give it to you; we are going to explore the foreground of our sexual selves and you are just going to be a voyeur: you can look, but you can't touch. We will tantalize you and tease you, but that's about it, 'coz we own it. This is fully our bodies," you see, it's a way of turning it around. What dancehall has done for women is to give them permission to have good sex, to truly enjoy their bodies, and understand that they have a right to be satisfied, not by a man who thinks just because he comes you are satisfied. (Adisa and Martínez, 211)

I apply Adisa's response to sex work, public performance, and Caribbean popular culture, in which the positivity derived from these acts are forms of sexual liberation, where women are in charge of *their* bodies. Most importantly, such sexual liberation practices have given *all* women, even those in the middle-class still practicing Victorian respectability, "a way to demand sexual satisfaction" (Adisa and Martínez 2016, 211) because it is their pussy and their prerogative.

References

Adisa, Opal Palmer, and Elisa Serna Martínez. 2016. "Rewriting the Caribbean Female Body: A Conversation with Opal Palmer Adisa." *Atlantis* 38, no. 1 (June): 203–20.

Bascomb, Lia T. 2014. "Rude Girl, Big Woman: Power and Play in Representations of Caribbean Women." *Palimpest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International* 3 (1): 191–213.

Beckford, George L. 1972. *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beckles, Hilary McD. 1989. *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Brennan, Denise. 2004. *What's Love Got to Do with It? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bush, Barbara. 1990. *Slave Women in Caribbean Society,1650–1838.* Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers (Caribbean).

Clarke, Edith. 1957. *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A Study of Families in Three Selected Communities of Jamaica.* Kingston: The University Press of the West Indies.

Collins, Patricia H. 2004. *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism.* New York: Routledge.

Cooper, Carolyn. 1995. *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender, and the "Vulgar" Body of Jamaican Popular Culture.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Edmondson, Belinda. 2003. "Public Spectacles: Caribbean Women and the Politics of Public Performance." *Small Axe* 13 7, no. 1 (March): 1–16.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Frank, Kevin. 2007. "Female Agency and Oppression in Caribbean Bacchanalian Culture: Soca, Carnival, and Dancehall." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1/2 (Spring–Summer): 172–90.

Green, Cecilia A. 2006. "Between Respectability and Self-Respect: Framing Afro-Caribbean Women's Labour History." *Social and Economic Studies* 55 (3): 1–31.

Hope, Donna P. 2013. *Inna di Dancehall: Popular Culture and the Politics of Identity*. Kingston: University of West Indies Press.

Kempadoo, Kamala, ed. 1999. *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean.* New York: Routledge.

———. 2003. "Sexuality in the Caribbean: Theory and Research (With an Emphasis on the Anglophone Caribbean)." *Social and Economic Studies* 52 (1): 59–88.

———. 2004. *Sexing the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor.* New York: Routledge.

Knight, Franklin W. 1973. Review of *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World*, by George L. Beckford. *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 53 (3): 547–48.

Manuel, Peter. 1998. "Gender Politics in Caribbean Popular Music: Consumer Perspectives and Academic Interpretation." *Popular Music and Society* 22 (2): 11–29.

Marshall, Annecka. 2011. "Reclaiming the Erotic Power of Black Women." *Social and Economic Studies* 60 (1): 61–90.

Mohammed, Patricia. 1992. *Ruminations on Sexuality*. Jamaica: Women And Development Studies Programme.

Mohanty, Chandra Tapalde. 1991. "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo, and L. Torres, 1–47. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Morrissey, Marietta. 1989. *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Red Thread Women's Development Programme. 1999. "'Givin' Lil' Bit fuh Lil' Bit': Women and Sex Work in Guyana." Cited in Kempadoo 1999, 263–90.

Ryer, Paul. 2010. "The Hyphen-Nation of Cuban-Educated Africans:

Rethinking the '1.5 Generation' Paradigm." *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 2 (1/2): 74–87.

Safa, Helen. 1995. *The Myth of the Male Breadwinner: Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Sharpe, Jenny, and Samantha Pinto. 2006. "The Sweetest Taboo: Studies of Caribbean Sexualities; A Review Essay." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32 (1): 247–74.

Shaw, Andrea Elizabeth. 2006. *The Embodiment of Disobedience: Fat Black Women's Unruly Political Bodies.* New York: Lexington Books.

Smith, Hope Munro. 2004. "Performing Gender in the Trinidad Calypso." *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 25, no. 1 (Spring–Summer): 32–56.

Springer, Jennifer Thorington. 2008. "'Roll It Gal': Alison Hinds, Female Empowerment, and Calypso" in "Representin': Women, Hip-Hop, and Popular Music," edited by Janell Hobson and R. Dianne Bartlow, special issue. *Meridians* 8 (1): 93–129. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40014540.

Steady, Filomina C., ed. 1981. *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally.* Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company.

Vance, Carole. S., ed. 1984. *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation–An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337.

Notes

1. I understand that there are historical differences regarding how enslaved peoples were treated on different islands, and some of these differences will be addressed in the section discussing slave laws.

2. The name for an Afro-Trinidadian woman in the urban "underclass," which became synonymous with prostitute during the early twentieth century. A *jamet/jammette* was an "unruly" Caribbean woman.

4. Till Death Do Us Part

Marriage as a Site of Subjugation for Women in Africa

DANIELLE NOUMBOUWO

Strong, DeVault, and Cohen (2011) define marriage[1] as a legally, culturally, and socially recognized union between two or more people, generally a man and a woman. Said union is regarded as permanent and establishes rights and obligations between spouses. The characteristics of wedlock fluctuate according to culture, religion, and geographical location. Because of the cultural and geographical differences that influence marital values, I find it important to focus this research on a specific location: the African continent. While I understand that this location is still very wide and diverse, I chose it with the understanding that the institution of marriage on the continent has more similarities than differences. In this chapter I am particularly interested in examining matrimonial relationships as sites of oppression for African women in patrilineal societies. In order to do this, I question whether the institution of marriage as a marker of respectable womanhood in African societies is a source of oppression for women. Wedlock in patrilineal African societies is viewed as the single unstigmatized path to motherhood and also as a source of respectability for women. But I contend that it comes at a price—one that women are willing to pay because the rewards (respect and motherhood) are seemingly worth it.

I examine the ways in which women in African societies are defined by their relationship to the institution of marriage, with a focus on patrilineal societies. In addition, I explore how this institution, based on traditional African norms of mothering and motherhood, works to subordinate both married and unmarried women by limiting their choices. I also examine how, despite this subor-

dination, women in African societies still aspire to be married and how this desire works to reinforce their subjugation, effectively tying their societal worth to their ability to be good mothers and wives. This chapter critically analyzes how women's opportunities can become affected when their happiness, well-being, and social status are contingent upon their inordinate participation in their marriage. For example, married women are traditionally the ones expected to provide care for partners, children, and extended kin; accept polygamous relationships; and endure in-lawism. In-lawism is a term coined by Chikwenye Ogunyemi and represents one of what she calls "the African peculiarities" that African womanists need to address (1996, 114). In *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), Adichie interrogates in-lawism and highlights a situation in which married wives belong to their husband's family, which disempowers and subordinates the married women; this is a clear representation of in-lawism.

When marriage is accepted as the only respected way women in African societies can fulfill their ambitions of becoming mothers, then women themselves become the concierges of this institution. They learn to accept and defend whatever conditions come with marriage even when their lives and well-being are at risk. However, some African women today are turning away from what might be considered the oppressive, traditional understanding of the institution and educating their daughters to stand on their own.

The chapter is divided in three parts. In the first section I discuss the theories I use to dissect marriage in Africa: Bourdieu's habitus and Ogunyemi's African womanism. In the second section, I examine the systems used in African societies that are oppressive to married women. In the last section, I look at actual attempts of resistance against matrimonial subjugation through my own personal narrative and the shared stories of my mother and her mother. As an African myself and a woman, my story brings a lived experience of resistance to this chapter. While I am in no way advocating for this experience to be replicated, I believe there is value in sharing this personal experience to examine the ways in which African women

push back against institutions used by African society to lessen their authority over their bodies.

Theoretical Background

The entanglement of colonialism and patriarchy has produced variations in matrimonial patterns throughout the globe that allow patrilineal dominance to impact everyday marital expectations. Although a traditional institution, marriage is still highly desirable in contemporary society. Despite this persistence, changes made to modern mating arrangements, such as cohabitation, childbearing outside of wedlock, or same-sex marriages, have led to what sociologist Charles Cherlin (2004) conceptualized as the "deinstitutionalization of marriage." He described it as "the weakening of social norms that define people's behavior in a social institution such as marriage" (848). Cherlin argues that deinstitutionalization occurs because of a growing acceptance for same-sex marriage and cohabitation, as those practices stand against what were traditionally accepted as marital values. If we are to look at an increase in cohabitation or same-sex marriages as weakening former marital norms and as confirming the deinstitutionalization of marriage, then by Cherlin's standards marriages in Africa are not at risk of deinstitutionalization. South Africa is the only country on the continent that does not criminalize same-sex marriages, and cohabitating couples have yet to be formalized and lawfully recognized in most African countries.

I argue that most African marriages fit a specific categorization which is detrimental to women, and I use Bourdieu's habitus to make this argument. Bourdieu (1984) uses the concept of habitus to stigmatize an internalized system of schemas[2] used to make sense of the geographic space and culture that we live in and, in turn, to respond in a way that embodies said schemas. In short, we all, through our lived experiences from childhood, learn values that we assume and which are then turned into our own ways of life. In the 1920s Jean Piaget used the word *schemata* (which Bourdieu then

transformed into *schemas*) to describe the structure organizing our individual thoughts. In line with Piaget theory of how our thoughts are organized, most new situations do not require a conscious processing. Instead, a learnt structure is used to decipher new experiences so we may act accordingly. According to Bourdieu's theory, our habitus defines the ways in which we understand new events and respond to them.

As Bourdieu explains, "Habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and also, importantly, that condition our very perceptions of these" (Bourdieu 1984, 170). Habitus is consequently structured by previous experiences at the same time as it is also structuring new experiences. One personal example of how habitus works in relation to the focus of this paper is that as a little girl I observed my mother's marital environment, and my own marital habitus was already being structured from that experience. Later on, as a married woman–a new actual involvement–my marital habitus, informed by my childhood observations, began to develop. Through habitus, African women navigate their social environments without critically reflecting on their experiences. While my habitus structures this new experience, I have no conscious knowledge of it.

Through habitus, marriages, with their latent oppression, are ingrained in both girls and boys through perpetual socialization. We legitimize "a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction" (Bourdieu 1991, 23). The concept of habitus provides a framework to comprehend why change cannot simply be brought about by the willingness to change. There needs to be more intentionality regarding how we go about change, such as by examining the strategies African feminists have used to reshape their lives and to transcend patriarchal gender roles in marital relationships. In exploring ways of resistance, I focus on Ogunyemi's African womanism.

Since the mid-1900s, Black women around the globe have fought

for women's liberation and an end to patriarchy. Whether they refer to themselves as Black feminists (Collins 1990), transnational feminists (Adams and Thomas 2018), African feminists (Ogunyemi 1985), or otherwise, their ongoing fight for both gender and racial equality was and is crucial to women's continued progress. The ability to define themselves is important for Black women. As Morrison (1987, 190) writes: "Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined." However, defining ourselves stems from a specific ideological space and geographic positionality and from our particular standpoint (Collins 1990). Oppression is something that women experience differently depending on their intersecting identities (Crenshaw 1989). Because this chapter focuses on African women's oppression, their identities and ways of life are the standpoints from which I write. Consequently, I focus on ideas of resistance originating from the African continent as well.

In 1983 Alice Walker coined the term *womanism*. She defined a womanist as a Black feminist who sexually or nonsexually loves other women and appreciates women's culture. The womanist commits to the survival of both men and women. This term was later taken up by Black women around the globe. Clenora Hudson-Weems coined the term *Africana womanism* in 1987 to distinguish herself from Walker, who did not see much difference between womanism and feminism, just a slightly deeper shade.[3] An Africana womanist, according to Hudson-Weems (2006), grounds herself in African culture, which helps her focus on the struggles, needs, desires, and experiences of African women. She argues that Africana womanism is rooted in African culture, and I have found Ogunyemi's terminology to better align not only with my interests but with the continent's culture as well.

The term *womanism* was taken up and modified by Chikwenye Ogunyemi (1985). Ogunyemi stresses that African womanists must deal with "interethnic skirmishes and cleansing, religious fundamentalism, the language issue, gerontocracy and in-lawism" (Ogunyemi 1997, 4). According to Ogunyemi, "She will recognize that, along with her consciousness of sexual issues, she must incorporate

racial, cultural, national, economic, and political considerations into her philosophy" (Ogunyemi 1985, 64). Ogunyemi is selective in who gets to use this theory and maintains that an African feminist has to be African first in order to demarcate African feminism from white feminism and Black feminism/womanism (Ogunyemi 1996, 114).

Combining these theories concerning habitus and African womanism allows me to explore a specific geographic space and focus on African marital experiences and African ways of resisting this habitus. To summarize this section, I have to reiterate that habitus is not a conscious learning experience and it is not an ideological or cultural imposition either. It is acquired through lived repetition, but at the same time it is never articulated as conscious knowledge. In this sense, the social subject is a passive subject. Coupling this deeply entrenched behavior with Ogunyemi's African womanism allows a sense of agency to the women under study.

The Institutionalization of Power in Marriage Relationships in Africa

In this section, I address types of matrimonial oppression married women in Africa are forced to endure. Firstly, I discuss polygyny, mostly referred to as *polygamy*, and its effect on women. Secondly, I turn toward in-lawism through specific cases such as bridewealth and the levirate.[4] To conclude the section, I discuss mothering as an additional source of coercion and its impact on women's status in Africa. African marriages are complex and generally have different stages. Each stage requires a specific performance, with the families of the bride-to-be and groom-to-be at the center of it all. At the first stage there is the official presentation of the man and his family to the woman's parents and close family. This presentation represents an official engagement from both parties, since it would not happen without the consent of the parents of the bride-to-be. Following this meeting is the bridewealth ceremony, which entails the transfer of some form of material wealth from the lineage of

the husband to the lineage of the wife. This exchange is typical in African societies (Isiugo-Abanihe 1987), as well as in many Asian countries. The bridewealth ceremony is also called the traditional wedding. The bride is then allowed to leave her parental household for her husband's house. This practice is predominant in patrilineal societies, with a few cases in which the new couple establishes a household separate from their families.

Postcolonial Africa has seen marriage evolve from this customary union (bridewealth ceremony or dowry) into two additional wedding arrangements which are now celebrated as well: religious and civil marriages. The ethnographic literature of sub-Saharan Africa shows very diverse traditional wedding practices, but the dowry ceremony is very much typical. Both within and between ethnic groups, routines vary from polygynous unions to child betrothals and unions. Traditional marriages have not been replaced but are now followed by civil and/or religious marriages.

Polygyny/Polygamy

There are two main types of marital unions in Africa: monogamy (one man marries a woman) and polygyny (one man marries multiple women).[5] During a civil wedding, the husband is asked whether he chooses a monogamous or polygamous union, and the wife is then socially required to accept whichever choice her spouse makes. Polygamy is customary throughout West Africa. In precolonial Africa, polygamy was valued because of its multiple social and cultural functions. According to Mwambene (2017), polygamy was useful in cases of wives' sterility, menopause,[6] or a ratio imbalance between men and women.[7] Polygamy was also considered beneficial as an alternative to the husband since pregnant and/or nursing wives are culturally considered unfit to have sex. Additionally, it was a tool to take care of widows, protect single women from being considered witches,[8] and provide men enough hands to work in the fields (each wife and her offspring were allocated a specific field to work). Although current statistics show that polygynous mar-

riages are on the decline, they are still very frequent and accepted throughout the continent (NPC and ICF International 2014). According to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 35.2 percent of marriages in Senegal are polygamous, not accounting for rural unions (United Nations 2015). In Nigeria 33 percent of married couples are polygynous (NPC and ICF International 2014). Six West African countries have civil codes that formally prohibit polygamy (Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria), but legal restrictions are rarely enforced, and polygamy thrives in these states just like in most other African countries.

According to Katherine Frank (1987, 18), "Polygamy … is the most glaring inequitable and sexist feature of traditional African society."[9] To describe the inequitable characteristics of polygamous unions, I use *So Long a Letter* (1981), the acclaimed Senegalese novel by Mariama Bâ. Mariama Bâ was a Francophone African woman writer. Those three characteristics have informed and oriented her positionality. She merges issues of race, sex, and colonization in a nonbinary manner. In *So Long a Letter* (1981), Bâ places feminine characters at the center of the stage, which was unheard of at the time. The novel is set in a time of turmoil in Africa: the 1960s is a political gray area for Africans, with most countries receiving their independence or fighting for it. Ramatoulaye, the main protagonist, is similarly in personal turmoil, having just lost her husband of thirty years. She is a middle-aged woman going through an introspective analysis after her husband's death. She is being secluded, which is a customary Muslim practice required for widows, and decides to write a letter recounting her married life to Aïssatou, her divorced friend who is working at the Senegalese embassy in Washington, DC. Bâ's strategy subverts dualisms by implying that even when binaries exist, they can be flexible and relational rather than strictly at odds. For example, she invalidates the idea of age groups as homogeneous groups. Just as Ramatoulaye's now deceased husband had done, Aïssatou's husband had married a second wife, but unlike the main protagonist, Aïssatou decided to end her marriage

and move to the United States. Ramatoulaye's daughter Daba had urged her mother to do the same and to leave her father, but Ramatoulaye lacked the courage and stayed in her marriage, sharing her husband with Binetou, her daughter's classmate. Ramatoulaye and Aïssatou are of the same age group and are both western educated, just as Daba and Binetou are part of the same younger generation, but Daba stands against polygamy. Bâ also discusses the unethical system of levirate and, most importantly, of the polygamic institution, which she does not condemn but shows how, as a customary practice, it affects Ramatoulaye's well-being and also pits women against one another. Binetou and Ramatoulaye, while on speaking terms at the beginning of the novel, become co-wives and are set at odds, just as Daba and Binetou, the former classmates, now have to build a different relationship.

Polygamy in urban African areas can be formal or informal. A formal polygamous union would be officiated traditionally and/or in front of civil authorities. Informal unions[10] can be defined as domestic and sexual unions between a monogamously married man and other women. Whether formal or informal, polygynous marriages affect women in many ways. Most subsequent marriages are achieved without the wives' consent, as is the case for the characters in Bâ's novel. Tradition and religion both encourage polygamy in Senegal, but both tradition and religion require the first wife's approval and participation for any subsequent marriage. In the novel, Modou's first wife, Ramatoulaye, is not aware that a wedding ceremony has taken place until her family-in-law comes to her home and lets her know that her husband has now moved himself and his new wife (Binetou) into a new house. Ramatoulaye is "left" to fend for herself and her twelve children. Binetou, who is only seventeen years old, is pushed into marrying Modou because of her family's economic status. Being married to a wealthy older man is imperative because he will bring her family out of poverty. Oppression happens at multiple levels to women in developing countries. While patriarchy is certainly part of the extent of polygynous marriages, class is also an important factor to consider.

By pitting women against one another, polygamy does not allow for sisterhood to develop. Building a bond between women is important in resisting patriarchal oppression. But married women are unable to maintain a solid bond with other women for fear of these other women's ability to derail their marital status. In the case of Binetou and Daba, they used to be friends at school until Modou (Daba's father) decided to marry Binetou. This new experience will now shape Binetou's upcoming marital habitus and hurt her ability to trust women in the future. Because of this uncertainty looming about the marriage and the need for marriage due to her family's economic needs, Binetou will forego being friends with another woman (in this case Daba) rather than not get married.

To some African feminists polygamy is not the problem, or at least to them it does not oppress African women. In the book chapter titled "Feminism and African Womanhood," Zulu Sofola (1998) defends polygamy and insists that educated African women have lost themselves in Eurocentric notions of monogamous marriages. She argues that polygamy was never meant to ostracize women but instead to liberate and allow them to do more with their lives. Sofola explains, "The more he is shared, the less central he becomes in the wife's life and the more central the mother/child dynamic becomes" (63). Essentially, she is saying that if a woman's husband has other wives, she can focus on being a mother. In this way, motherhood seems to be the ultimate goal behind getting married, not companionship.

My mother's first marital advice reinforced this notion of competition. She said that I should avoid having female friends or female family stay overnight because of their potential interest in my partner. This advice raises the question as to why wives are responsible for their husbands' mishaps. When that "mistake" does happen, the man is rarely blamed; instead it falls on the wife and/or her friends. The experiences that African women come to internalize while growing up affect their actions when they become part of the marital field, often reproducing what they have previously seen.

In-Lawism: Bridewealth and Levirate

This section looks at bridewealth, levirate, and the wife's family-in-law as domineering forces within in-lawism. As stated previously, Ogunyemi (1996, 114) discusses in-lawism as an oppressive system in African womanism. African marriages are a collective institution. While we see more marriages for the benefit of companionship, marriages were never only about the couple but first and foremost their families (Chouala 2008). In this specific context, it follows that families would keep this right to intervene in the couple's life. Chouala (2008) uses the case of Cameroon, where the woman, once married, is not only her husband's wife but his family's bride. She owes his family submission as she takes on this new role. Oyèrónké shares this bride poem, which Nigerian women sing during their marital ceremony in hopes of a lenient family in law.

> That my would-be father in law
> May not be my slanderer;
> That my would-be mother in law
> May not be my undoing
> That the co-wife that I shall meet
> May not be an antagonist.
> (Oyèrónké 2016, 174)

Marriage and family are key factors of women's subjugation in Africa. Chouala (2008) argues that we should take into consideration the acts of domestic violence which are trivialized because they are enacted by the wife's family-in-law. He argues that wives are not considered victims because rural laws allow the husband's family rights over his wife. As such, they are able to repudiate or violently correct the wife if they feel as though she is not acting according to their wishes. He adds that random fights between co-wives in polygamic marriages are a regular occurrence. Such fights have been banalized, as they are expected in these contexts.

   With marital unions at the behest of family, it has been conventional in many places to marry daughters very young and have them

moved in with their families-in-law as early as possible after the bridewealth is paid. In those cases, the mother-in-law is able to control her son's wife much more easily, as she is one of the women who raised her. As Goody (1999) pointed out, "When one is attempting to control marriage, it is important to control courtship too" (13). Thus, in such a situation, the tendency is to restrict sexual intercourse before marriage. This encourages the practice of betrothing girls into marital unions while very young. Traditionally, promised girls were moved into their mother-in-law's compound prior to puberty and were "raised" with their in-laws. Mariama Bâ very eloquently discusses this moment post-dowry.

> The moment dreaded by every Senegalese woman, the moment when she sacrifices her possessions as gifts to her family-in-law; and, worse still, beyond her possessions she gives up her personality, her dignity, becoming a thing in the service of the man who has married her, his grandfather, his grandmother, his father, his mother, his brother, his sister, his uncle, his aunt, his male and female cousins, his friends. (Bâ 1981, 4)

In terms of ownership, the bride is officially part of her family-in-law following payment of the bridewealth. Ogbu (1978) recognizes four functions to bridewealth: it legitimates marriages, it confers conjugal rights, it confirms the children affiliation in a patriarchal society, and it keeps marriages stable.[11] Maher (1981) discusses the process of bridewealth in Morocco. By paying his wife's bridewealth, the husband is now what Maher calls a full guardian. He is able to control her "relations with her family of origin whom she will only be able to see rarely if at all" (72). And she contrasts that to the reality of a poor man who is unable to pay bridewealth. This one would not be able to control his wife's movements as much. Bridewealth is an essential part of the marital habitus, and most African girls are raised understanding that a man worthy of marriage will be able to afford their bridewealth.

   If the husband were to die prematurely, the levirate is a practice

that makes sure the bride stays with her family-in-law. One of the late husband's brothers is to continue procreating with the widow (Beswick 2001). In the Bamileke culture in Cameroon, the dead husband's heir is the one destined to marry his father's widow. His mother is also now considered his wife, even if they are not allowed to procreate. In the case of my own family, my grandmother married her then twenty-year-old stepson and had three kids with him. They were never formally married, but it was customary, and still is, that wives are inherited after the husband's death. As a young girl, my mother's experience and marital habitus was one of property. Her mother was "owned" by her late grandfather, and her father inherited her mother. There was never a discussion of love or questions about how they ended up together; such would be a luxury.

Motherhood and Infertility

In this section, I explore the ways in which motherhood, deemed sacred in African societies, can also be a source of oppression for married women. There is a discrepancy between the global discourse of fertility in Africa and the hushed lived realities of childlessness, which, more often than not, are socially acknowledged as a disruption of relationships between man, woman, and spirits (Kielman 1998, 140). Because the focus in population studies has been on excessive fertility, infertile women are denied a voice and, consequently, an optional biomedical response to their issue. Motherhood and the inability to become a mother leads to alienation of the women on African soil.

The African woman is required to marry young and is strongly expected to conceive within the first year of marriage or she will be deemed infertile (Kielman 1998). Kielman interviewed twenty-five infertile married women in the community of Pemba in Tanzania. She concludes that married women without children are deemed useless and treated with contempt by their family-in-law. The husbands are only considered infertile in cases of erectile dysfunction. In any other case, the childless marriage is blamed on the woman.

Namulundah (2013) uses Kenyan folktales to dive into issues of fertility in African spaces with the understanding that most folktales are credible because they are loosely based on realities or at least perceived realities in each culture. She takes the example of Muyoka, who "failed to conceive despite her marital status, [and] Kenyan society views barren African women as people 'without purpose or worth'" (Namulundah 2013, 380). Muyoka appears in the Bukusu[12] folktale "The Barren Woman." A new bride, Muyoka works hard and is left by her family and husband to fend for herself because of her inability to conceive. She is nice to a stranger and takes that person in her hut during a storm, and said stranger ends up having the magical ability to help Muyoka conceive. The stranger blesses her with seven children; however, Muyoka can only conceive once, and she proves herself worthy of kids through her moral character. The husband's biological role or moral character is never questioned.

While a childless married woman loses social status, a married mother is almost equally forced to refrain from any other productive role in society outside of being a mother. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta narrates the illusory vision consistent in African societies of the emotional satisfaction brought about by motherhood. Nnu Ego, the main character, expresses this at the end of the novel: "God, when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage? ... Yes, I have many children, but what do I have to feed them on? ... I have to give them my all. And if I am lucky enough to die in peace, I even have to give them my soul" (210). This cry comes from a married woman drowning in her motherly obligations but also in the abandonment of paternal obligations by her husband.

"Western feminist accounts of motherhood reduce it to a gender category. As such, a mother is represented as a woman first and foremost, a category that is perceived to be subordinated, disadvantaged, and oppressed because women are subordinate to males, who are the privileged group" (Oyěwùmí 2015, 214). Through gendering motherhood, western feminism is able to patriarchize what

Oyěwùmí considers a genderless institution. She argues that in western feminism the only reason motherhood is limited is because of capitalist societies, in which currency symbolizes success and achievement. Mothering in Africa is a community endeavor. This is what Oyěwùmí means when she writes that mothering has no gender. It is at odds with the western understanding of being a mother, because in a western geopolitical space, being a mother holds back capitalist success. Because men are unable to reproduce, they are deemed better able to serve capitalism, getting better jobs and better wages. Labor is divided along gender lines in productive labor and reproductive labor, and only the labor that is deemed productive will be monetarily rewarded and held in high capitalist esteem. Hence the western feminist critique of motherhood is specific to a lived reality which is at odds with Oyěwùmí's idea of African mothering.

My point is not that there is no such thing as a sexual division of labor in African societies. As Mackintosh (1981, 3) states, women undertake most, if not all, the domestic work, which is socially undervalued and restricts women's abilities to participate in cash-earning activities. However, the main difference is that African maternal ideologies are communal. As such, a child does not belong to a person or even to a nuclear family but to a community. In other words, mothering responsibilities that would, in western societies, fall on the woman alone are stretched to her community. Motherhood in African contexts and Black contexts at large is not a biological feat but instead a collectivist endeavor. A mother in this sense is not just the one who gives birth. Any elder has the right to use children for his or her needs (fetching water and such), but that elder also has the responsibility to feed those children or send them to school if their parents are unable to do so. Whereas mothering in the western sense is very nuclear based, in Africa it opens up to all.

Children in western societies and even increasingly in middle- to upper-class African households are seen as the responsibility of only their birth parents (particularly mothers), but they are, according to Oyěwùmí (2015), a collective good. In societies in which even

water is a luxury, who better than a child who enjoys running around outside to go fetch water with his or her friends in the neighborhood for the community? Household chores that fell on the married woman can now be shared with her children. I am introducing the concept of class here to show that instead of moving closer to this communal child-raising, with the addition of wealth, African parents tend to revert to a more nuclear-based way of life, which we see as the wife going through the motions of mothering alone.

Attempts at Resistance

Married women find ways to resist by teaching their children differently than the way they were taught. Through their hurdles, they recognize their oppression and try their best to lead their girls away from such subjugation. There is one piece of advice that the women I call mothers had in common: strive for professional accomplishments and not marriage. I wish they had gone a couple of steps further. I wish they were able to teach their sons differently as well, and not only focus on the daughters. African girls see marriage in a totally different light than their western counterparts not only because of the additional burdens put upon them but also because of sexism.

In *So Long a Letter*, Ramatoulaye's best friend, Aïssatou (after whom she named her second daughter), also finds herself in a polygynous union; but instead of staying in a condition that she did not choose for herself, she decides to leave and divorce her husband. She then moves to the US and starts corresponding with Ramatoulaye through a long letter. The two characters share a similar upbringing and marital habitus, but they have different reactions to these new experiences. I contend that, while they both knew it would be a possibility that their husbands would have additional wives (Senegalese marriages have a high polygynous rate), habitus is not enough on its own to lead to a specific schema.

African womanism is not calling for a complete overhaul of traditional marriage systems but insists on making married women's lives

more bearable. For example, a new wave of young women actually do not want to be in monogamous marriages. They prefer marrying into polygamous households because they do not want to become oppressed, as their mothers and grandmothers were. In this sense, marrying into polygamy becomes a choice instead of an imposition. However, it is still a choice that follows the realization that marriage as offered to them nowadays is unacceptable. These women want children but also want to keep their independence. With these new arrangements, the younger "wife" does not owe housework to her husband or his family.

Ogunyemi, commenting about these new marriage arrangements, states, "I do not call that feminism because if you are a feminist of any branch, I do not think you want to marry somebody who is already married and has no intention of divorcing his wife" (Arndt 2000, 717). My position is a bit more nuanced than Ogunyemi, as I believe that the larger issue is not only about the individual choices available to young women but the fact that these choices are informed by their economic needs and the pressure of living in a patrilineal society in which marriage and motherhood are prized. These young women decide on their own volition to have children with married men because they see some personal benefit in doing so; there is a level of agency in this decision making. That their choices might negatively impact the wives of these married men, much like Ramatoulaye from Mariama Bâ's novel, is a symptom of the larger problems within a patrilineal society which restrict women's choices.

Conclusion

I have strived throughout this chapter to show how valued motherhood is in Africa as long as it is contrived within a marital field. It appears in stark contrast with matrilineal societies (such as the Ghanaian Akan society), in which children belong to their mother's lineage; the mother's brother functions as the guardian, or "social" father, of her children; and there is little need to control the pre-

marital sexual behavior of females. Even if a woman gives birth before she is married, the child will enjoy regular membership in the mother's lineage, just like other children who are born within marriage. In patrilineal societies, on the other hand, children generally belong to the lineage of the man who paid the bridewealth, making marriage more important in patrilineal societies. While matrilineal societies do not put less emphasis on marriage, they present significant advantages to African women.

Women make the necessary adjustments to be pretty, to cook for two or more, and to do better in school just so they can get the reward of marriage and motherhood. When they become mothers, they teach their daughters to revere the man they will one day marry, but they neglect to teach their sons to honor their future wives. Women's roles in African society are seen as traditional, and any woman unable to fit a role she is predestined to fit is castigated. I wish my mother had allowed me to dream outside of her habitus.

However, I also see motherhood as a form of resistance. Mothering allows women a latitude in what they teach and do not teach the children under their care. Through their mothers, young daughters and sons develop the habitus of how women are to be treated in the marital field. As Oyěwùmí stresses, "The challenge then is how to convince society that motherhood should not be the responsibility of just one woman or just one nuclear family but should be the bedrock on which society is built and the way in which we organize our lives" (Oyěwùmí 2015, 220).

This chapter stands on the shoulders of my mother, who pled for me to finish my doctorate degree so that she could show her sisters-in-law that, despite not going past a high school diploma, she was able to educate her own children. While I see my mother as a hero, all that she sees is her inability to further her education (because her father was against her doing so) and the mistreatment from her family-in-law because she never went further than eleventh grade. It stands on the shoulders of my grandmother, whom I never met but who I know was forced to marry my great-grandfather at fifteen; and after he died, she was passed on to his

son, my grandfather, and bore him three kids, my mom being one of them. I stand on their shoulders and see my womanism through their eyes as well as mine.

I do not write solely on feminism from an African or American perspective but from a place of the in-between. None of those spaces really belong to me, but each one of them has made an imprint on me and the way I reflect. Motherhood in African culture is something that a woman is born to do. But motherhood could be used in ways that would change things. In order to do this, we first need to recognize the oppressive habitus our African society is breeding. This chapter is the product of the oppression I have seen and felt. The oppression that women before me warned me about through their experiences, the oppression that made my mother force a promise out of me when I was nine: to always look at my job as my first husband—"The man is secondary," she said. I promised, but I did not understand. I was ready to go to middle school, and the fairy tales made me believe in eternal love, and then the Harlequins in eternal lust for one person. This chapter strives to articulate the realities that my mother was never able to state coherently outside of a promise not to put my destiny into the hands of a husband.

The African marital habitus is slowly disintegrating through a blending of African and Eurocentric views of marriage. African womanism may provide an opportunity to redefine the concept of marriage, with the genders negotiating their spaces. To acquire a sense of balance between traditional and modern trends of marriage will definitely result in a redefinition of masculinity in the African marital context. The only way to affirm inclusion of all genders within the African womanist theoretical framework is if all are willing to do their part in eliminating female subjugation.

References

Adams, Melinda, and Gwynn Thomas. 2018. "Transnational Feminist Activism and Globalizing Women's Movements." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.* Accessed June 30, 2019.

https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-490.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2003. *Purple Hibiscus*: *A Novel*. Chapel
Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Arndt, Susan. 2000. "African Gender Trouble and African Womanism: An Interview with Chikwenye Ogunyemi and Wanjira
Muthoni." *Signs* 25 (3): 709–26.

Bâ, Mariama. 1981. *Une si longue lettre*. Senegal: Heinemann.

Beswick, Stephanie. 2001. "'We Are Bought Like Clothes': The War
over Polygyny and Levirate Marriage in South Sudan." *Northeast
African Studies New Series* 8 (2): 35–61.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cherlin, A. J. 2004. "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4): 848–61.
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/
j.0022-2445.2004.00058.x.

Chouala, Yves-Alexandre. 2008. "La « belle famille » et « la famille
élargie »: Acteurs des violences conjugales et domestiques dans
les foyers Camerounais." *Bulletin de l'APAD* 27–28: 1–11.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of
Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination
Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of
Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (8): 139–67.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought*: *Knowledge*, *Consciousness*, *and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin
Hyman.

Emecheta, Buchi. 1979. *The Joys of Motherhood*. Harlow: Heinemann.

Frank, K. 1987. "Women without Men: The Feminist Novel in Africa."
In *Women in African Literature Today*, edited by E. D. Jones, E.
Palmer, and M. Jones, 14–34. Trenton, NJ: African World Press.

Garoiu, Monica. 2014. "Ecrire la femme Africaine: Le discours feminin dans une si longue lettre de Mariama Bâ et tu t'appeleras
Tanga de Calixthe Beyala." *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 4
(2): 313–24.

Goody, Jack. 1999. *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, Anne M. O. 1999. *Gendering Culture: Towards a Plural Perspective on Bakwena Women's Rights*. Toronto: Faculty of Law, University of Toronto.

Hudson-Weems, Clenora. 2006. "Clenora Hudson Weems's Africana Womanism." In *The*

Womanist Reader, edited by Layli Phillips, 37–54. New York: Routledge.

Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. 1987. "High Bridewealth and Age at Marriage in Igboland." In *Proceedings of the Ife Conference on the Cultural Roots of African Fertility Regimes*, edited by E. Van de Walle and J. Ebigbola, 1–15. Philadelphia: Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania.

Kielman, K. 1998. "Barren Ground: Contesting Identities of Infertile Women in Pemba, Tanzania." In *Pragmatic Women and Body Politics*, edited by M. Lock and P. A. Kaufert, 127–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mackintosh, Maureen. 1981. "Gender and Economics: The Sexual Division of Labour and the Subordination of Women." In *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*, edited by Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, and Roslyn McCullagh, 1–15. London: CSE Books.

Maher, V. 1981. "Work, Consumption and Authority within the Household: A Moroccan Case." In *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*, edited by Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, and Roslyn McCullagh, 69–87. London: CSE Books.

Meekers, Dominique. 1992. "The Process of Marriage in African Societies: A Multiple Indicator Approach." *Population and Development Review* 18 (1): 61–78.

Morrison, Toni. 1987. *Beloved.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Mouzakitis, Angelos. 2017. "Modernity and the Idea of

Progress." *Frontiers in Sociology* 2. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2017.00003.

Mwambene, Lea. 2017. "What Is the Future of Polygyny (Polygamy) in Africa." *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal* 20: 1–33.

Namulundah, Florence. 2013. "Bukusu (Kenya) Folktales: How Women Perpetuate Patriarchy." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15 (3): 370–90.

National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF International. 2014. *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013*. Abuja, Nigeria: NPC and ICF International. http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR293/FR293.pdf.

Nnaemeka, Obioma. 1998. "Introduction Reading the Rainbow." In *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, edited by Obioma Nnaemeka, 1–38. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Ogbu, J. U. 1978. "African Bridewealth and Women's Status." *American Ethnologist* 5 (May): 241–62.

Ogunyemi, Chikwenye. 1985. "Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11: 63–80.

–––. 1996. *Africa Wo/Man Palava: The Nigerian Novel by Women*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. 2015. *What Gender Is Motherhood? Changing Yorùbá Ideals of Power, Procreation, and Identity in the Age of Modernity*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reay, Diane. 2004. "'It's All Becoming a Habitus': Beyond the Habitual Use of Habitus in Educational Research." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25 (4): 431–44.

Sofola, Zulu. 1998. "Feminism and African Womanhood." In *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, edited by Obioma Nnaemeka, 51–64. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Strong, B., C. DeVault, and T. F. Cohen (2011). *The Marriage and Family Experience: Intimate Relationships in a Changing Society*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.

2015. "The Human Rights Council Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice." April 17, 2015. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15862&LangID=E.

Walker, Alice. 1983. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Wells, Julia. 1998. "Maternal Politics in Organizing Black South African Women: The Historical Lessons." In *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, edited by Obioma Nnaemeka, 251–62. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Notes

1. Also referred to as *matrimony* or *wedlock*.
2. *Schemas* are also called *schemes* in Bourdieu's work.
3. Following Walker's characterization of womanists to feminists as purple is to lavender.
4. Levirate marriage is an ancient custom which stipulates that in case of the husband's death, the parents of the dead man have the right to choose one of his brothers to bear children with the widow in her dead husband's name (Beswick 2001, 37).
5. Frequently referred to as *polygamy*, and I will do the same in this chapter.
6. The cultural belief at the time was that women would not engage in sex after menopause but men would always be sexual beings.
7. Studies have offered as reason for the imbalance the fact that women were married young to older men, which created a chronological imbalance, with most young girls married before puberty or already promised for marriage.
8. Witchcraft used to be associated with single women.
9. Most authors refer to *polygyny* as *polygamy* because polyandry is quite inexistent.
10. Called de facto polygamy.
11. The wife will not be able to return to her family if they are unable to pay the bridewealth back. In case she wanted to divorce her husband, having the capacity to pay the bridewealth back is a necessity before leaving her marriage.
12. Kenyan tribe.

5. Black Feminisms, Deep Space, and Syndemic Segregation in the United States and South Africa

DAVON WOODARD

One doesn't have to operate with great malice to do great harm. The
absence of empathy and understanding are sufficient.
—Charles Blow, 2012

Using the metaphor of the canary in the coal mine, following Guinier and Torres, Melissa Harris-Perry adeptly posits that "the political and economic realities of marginal populations indicate the democratic and economic health of the nation" and that "vulnerable communities of black and brown Americans foreshadow the underlying problems likely to poison the US system" (Harris-Perry 2011, 16).

As on the national level, the local political, economic, and social realities of Black and Brown people similarly signify the overall well-being of cities. In this light, essential to the creation of the reflective, representative, and responsive cities for which urban planners and urbanists strive, the full citizenship of Black and Brown people, situated in their lived urban experiences, must be recognized within contemporaneous urban, social, and political contestations. In order to accomplish this, certain goals must be fulfilled. First, there must be an acknowledgement that these lived experiences are not shaped by or are occurring in the "modern city" but within the palimpsest city—in which the residual forms and functions of past racialized cities are legible and ever present in contemporary interactions. Second, there must also be an admission that the historicity of these

racialized cities rests not solely in distant social wrongs and is not solely followed by naturalized, self-ordering residential preference, but within the daily reification of a transnational ontology of Black subjugation.

Necessary to realizing the potential of the city, the profession of planning must engage and reconcile its role in localizing and operationalizing this ontology in order to fully unwind the persistent, interwoven consequences of this intended, and unintended, stigmatizing harm. As such, one additional goal of this work is to push out the monolithic boundaries of representation and inclusivity within urban planning theory and history, creating a new analytic framework rooted in Black feminist theory through which to engage in co-creative urban processes.

Palimpsest City

In Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006) she recovers the undocumented experiences surrounding the slave auction block in the town center of Green Hill, Virginia. Through this recovery the auction block is simultaneously the material object itself, as well as, and more critically, the symbolic, imaginary realization of the racialized and sexualized oppression across time and space and of the social collapsed into the singular. For those who move in its shadow daily, the auction block is at once a representation of the economic and transactional processes which occurred upon it. But it is also the visual representation of the often unseen broad and systemic racial subjugation and bodily dispossession that those who were auctioned suffered under the hands of the white hegemony (McKittrick 2006, 65).

A palimpsest is a manuscript on which the original content has been erased and new text written; however, remnants of the original remain present. In this way, the palimpsest city is the contemporary urban form on which the historical racialized forms and functions remain visible and socially and institutionally legible. In understanding the racialized palimpsest city, the critical aspect lies not in the

visibility of the original racialized form but in its insufficient era-
sure such that its legibility alters or undermines new discursive
contexts and content. Couched within McKittrick's simultaneously
material and symbolic recasting of the auction block, the racialized
palimpsest city, reconstituted daily, is both the visibly segregated
urban form as well as the unseen interwoven systems, policies, and
programs of marginalization and dislocation of urban function, syn-
demic segregation—discussed below.

Despite being nearly sixty and thirty years removed from segre-
gation and apartheid, respectively, the physical landscapes as well
as social and economic contestations of the contemporary urban
United States and South Africa are emblazoned with the remnants
of historically state-mandated and state-sanctioned racial subjuga-
tion. As examples of racialized palimpsest cities, Chicago, Illinois,
and Johannesburg, South Africa, both have well-documented histo-
ries of racialized policies shaping the local urban landscape. While
these municipalities operate within differing national governance
and political structures, they also have operationalized hegemonic
stratifications differently and exhibit similar spatial patterns of seg-
regation with regard to their Black[1] residents.

Wynter and the Archipelago of Man and Other

Archipelago and Deep Space

Sylvia Wynter, in synthesizing Winant, Quijano, and Foucault, posi-
tions the "[European] Renaissance humanists' epochal redescription
of the human outside the terms of the then theocentric … concep-
tion … of the human" as the "Big Bang" for the creation of Man 1,
which served to "reground its secularizing own on a newly projected
human/subhuman distinction" (Wynter 2003, 263–64). In other
words, in this transitional moment, man's redefinition of self was
disconnected from an irremediable subjugation to the supranatural.
Instead, Man 1 was self-evidenced in the natural, and rational, of

which Man was the master, with the ability and inalienable right to manipulate the earth to meet Man's own needs and whims. Central to this redefinition of Man 1, and the supplanting of Man's theocentric-based recognition, the definition of Human was imbued by its recognition from the European political nation-state, while those external to this boundary were designated as subhuman and Other (Wynter 2003).

The second redefinition, from Man 1 to Man 2, coincides with scientific advancements to understand and control the natural world. Fallaciously attached to second "enlightenment" achievements, the ersatz scientific discovery of the "innate biological" delineations of race further legitimized the social and legal discrimination of Otherness. These pseudoscientific categorizations of race would indelibly designate Blackness, globally, as racially inferior and different (Wynter 2003).

Wynter's archipelago of Man and Other was exported through what Neil Smith elucidates as the concept of deep space, "[the contemporaneous] physical extent fused with social intent," using Doreen Massey's metaphor "[where] different layers of life and social landscape are sedimented onto and into each other" (Smith 2008, 214). In this geographical space-time, deep space (the production of material and metaphoric space) is when phenomena synchronously projects from the local scale into and onto the global scale. That phenomena then reconverges on and catalyzes the reconfiguration of disparate localities. In other words, deep space is the transformative power of a phenomenon in one distinct local space to shift social, political, and economic understandings through global space, leading to the reconfiguration of distant local physical and social spaces.

This delineation of Man within the European state, coupled with European globalist and colonialist expansion, which increased both the volume and variety of interactions with non-Europeans, hardened the boundaries between Man and Other and overrepresented this Man as the definition of human. Exacerbating this delineation was the fact that "official" global records have traditionally relied

upon European accounts. In this way the indigenous peoples of Africa, America, and Asia would be designated into Wynter's archipelago as the subaltern Other, nonhuman. This designation as nonhuman Other facilitated the global "systemic stigmatization, social inferiorization, and dynamically produced material deprivation" (Wynter 2003, 267) of these peoples.

Operationalization of Otherness

Black otherness. While grounded in the same archipelago of Otherness, the operationalization of Blackness as inferior and/or different is rooted in distinct yet overlapping philosophies of racism and racialism. Racism is rooted in a "natural" superior-inferior dichotomy in which "members of one racial group, usually whites, dominat[e] members of a different racial group, for material or expressive reasons" (MacDonald 2006, 6), whereas racialism operates from racial difference, as racialists "do not necessarily claim that one people is better than another; they are content to claim that one people is different from another" (MacDonald 2006, 6). Whether grounded in racist or racialist ideology, the operationalization of comprehensive and interwoven systems and practices was designed solely to reinforce white dominance over Black people in both the United States and South Africa.

In the United States the subjugation of Black peoples originated as slavery during British colonization, with the first Africans arriving in 1619 not ending until their descendant's emancipation on June 19, 1865. Following slavery, the comprehensive marginalization of Blacks persisted through de facto and de jure segregation, instituted through "separate, but equal" legislation from the end of the nineteenth century through *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. However, legal, state-sanctioned, residential segregation would not end until the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

In South Africa, hegemonic white supremacy began with Dutch colonization in 1652. While enslavement in South Africa was coterminous with the slave trade, ending in 1808, Black segregation con-

tinued under British rule until the end of World War II. In the transition from British rule, and in their own designation of Otherness, discussed below, white South Africans through the Nationalist Party, instituted apartheid, which lasted until 1994 (MacDonald 2006).

Mixed-raced otherness. By the nineteenth century, while the "classification of human communities through hardening constructs of … the science of race and gender served as a basis for denying full and equal participation in the state" (Harris-Perry 2011, 57), skin pigment, blackness and whiteness, became the most accessible shorthand delineator for the conveyance of rights and recognitions in political, economic, and social spheres. Within Black-white demarcations of Wynter's archipelago, those who occupied the interstitial spaces, both in the United States and South Africa, were subjected to geographically differentiated definitions of identity and lived experience.

Despite different geographic recognition, many of the descendants of mixed-race lineages arise from a shared historicity of the Black woman as a racialized and sexualized Other. Black women in the United States and South Africa occupied a distinct lived experience as both object and subject. One false narrative foisted upon women in this object-subject duality was rooted in the physicality of Black South African women, specifically the KhoiKhoi, as Hottentot Venuses—sexually lascivious with a voracious sexual appetite. This objectification as Hottentot Venuses subjected Black women in both geographies to the same forms of sexual exploitation and acts of bodily crimes by white men.

While consent cannot be qualified between all Black women and white men, all acts of miscegenation occurred under a system of structural race-based power differentials. In the United States mixed-race children of these couplings were classified solely using their Black lineage, following hypodescent, commonly known as the "one-drop rule," dating to a 1662 Virginia statute (Wilkinson 2019, 593).

In South Africa, categorization of mixed-race individuals aligned

with features of the European caste system. The descendants of these unions were classified as a third racially and socially distinct group, along with the in-migrated indentured Indian laborers between the 1830s and 1860s, when "white agriculturalists demanded cheap labor," and the seven thousand Chinese workers in 1906 who were encouraged to come in order to undermine African workers (MacDonald 2006, 95). As a separate group, these individuals would occupy distinct yet still subjugated political, social, and economic positions, apart from Black Africans.

Afrikaners and otherness. In locating additional positions of Otherness, it is necessary to recall that the original boundaries of Wynter's archipelago were not situated within racial whiteness but within identities recognized by European nation-states, nation-states which, coincidentally, were white and male. This boundary specification provides contexts to the histories of white immigrants in the United States and South Africa. In the United States the subjugation of white Americans to British colonial rule was the prelude to the American Revolution and eventual US independence.

Within the South African context, the archipelago of Man and Other grounded the history between Afrikaners and the British, which from the Afrikaner perspective would pose the "first race question" in South Africa. Following initial colonization by the Dutch and subsequent sociocultural shifts, a distinct Afrikaner (white South African) identity evolved. Beginning in 1707, South African "Freeburghers [Dutch explorers] thought of themselves as Afrikaners, different from the VOC [Dutch East India Company] officials and servants who were European" (Beck 2000, 30). While Dutch was the shared language between the Freeburghers and VOC officials, the African Dutch evolved into a distinct language, Afrikaans.

As with the United States, Afrikaner resistance to colonial rule was rooted in economic concerns, but it was also uniquely rooted in a sociocultural protectionists' effort against the domination of English over Afrikaans. Despite Afrikaner socio-cultural and political resistance to their own designation as Other, Afrikaner rule in

South Africa was entrenched in the maintenance of the Black South African Other.

Urban Space and Planning

The technological and manufacturing advancements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries propelled the Industrial Revolution. Globally, the Industrial Revolution transformed not only the economic characters of nation-states but would seismically alter subnational demography, specifically through in-country migrations and historical urban agglomeration. This urbanization was in part due to the migration of Black American and Black South African workers to regions of economic growth and development. In South Africa this migration was from rural areas to mining cities, such as Johannesburg. In the United States this migration was from the rural south to northern industrial cities, including Chicago.

As migration shifted the balance of populations of all races toward urban cores, the lack of centralized and coordinated growth devolved cities, once the inspiration for utopian imaginaries of cohesion and culture, into unruly and unhealthy dystopian cesspools. By the end of the nineteenth century, the educated and elite across political spectrums were in consensus that the "physical environment was inextricably connected to the physical and spiritual health of the populace" (Stach 1991, 207). Seeded by the grand urban plans of Le Corbusier, Howard, and Wright, the foundations of urban planning were "inspired by the prospect that radical reconstruction of the cities would solve not only the urban crisis of their time, but the social crisis as well" (Fishman 2016, 23).

The rapid technological advancement during this period provided Man with an unwavering self-sophistic belief that through linear, perhaps even exponential, achievement and scientific discovery, one could not only conquer the natural world but also comprehensively transform it to fit one's whims. While the radical re-creation of envisioned urban centers would never fully materialize, the political and governance mechanisms with which to manage cities, and

their populace, coalesced in the formation of urban planning and its profession around four central themes: "urban utopias, the development of the police power, sanitation and sewer, and public works and urban management" (Stach 1991, 208). These powers, exercised to the extremes of social control and environmental management, would be designated as high modernism.

Racialized High Modernism

High modernism sought to bring technological efficiency and prowess into every aspect of society. This school of thought was driven to implement a particularly "sweeping vision of how the benefits of technical and scientific progress might be applied—usually through the state—to every field of human activity" (Scott 2016, 77). Central in the application of this high modernistic ideal was explicit, state-coordinated social control and ordering. While social change was seen as inevitable, high modernists sought not to halt the flux but to "design a shape to social life that would minimize the friction of progress" (Scott 2016, 80).

In the US context complete authoritarian high modernism was never implemented on the national and subnational levels, in part due to the struggles between state control and American individualism, as well as shifting influences surrounding economic geographies of production. High modernism projects did, however, influence both modern urban form and function, as well as the profession of planning—it was under this umbrella that projects such as New York's Crosstown Parkway, Boston's West End gentrification, and other grand urban renewal efforts were undertaken.

In order to connect the notion of deep space with the local spatial and social forms of Chicago and Johannesburg, high modernism must be revisited. Scott discussed the explicit aims of high modernism being rooted in its "claim to speak about the improvement of the human condition with authority," also stating that "the elites who elaborate such plans implicitly represent themselves as exemplars of the learning and progressive views to which their compatri-

ots might aspire" (Scott 2016, 81). Beyond elites, Stach, summarizing Shultz, notes that while "we [urban residents] demand that [public power] be used, we individually prefer that it be used against someone other than ourselves" (Scott 2016, 209).

It is through this willingness to apply public and police powers to the lives of others (which Scott acknowledges) that South Africa's apartheid state became one of high modernism's "great state-sponsored calamities of the twentieth century" (Scott 2016, 77). The execution of apartheid as high modernist urban planning is rooted in the power of the state to control the urban system for the improvement of the "human" condition. Interpreting South African high modernism through Wynter's archipelago of Man and Other, it is evident that its application was solely for the betterment of (white) Man, not the Other.

Pathologizing of Urban Blackness

The political and social legitimacy of racial inequality is central to the overrepresentation of Man as Human. Exported through deep space, this inequality would "make black people themselves into a constant problem that has been observed, analyzed and solved" (Harris-Perry 2011, 110), thus justifying the subjugation of Black populations to racialized authoritarian high modernist planning and policies—for the benefit of Man. As the profession of urban planning expanded to eight urban subsystems, so did the power of the local state to police and regulate the bodily, residential, mobility-oriented, and economic freedoms of Black individuals in response to the continuous racialist and racist "pathologies" of the Black communities

The coalescing of the profession of urban planning in both the United States and South Africa was catalyzed around the themes of public health and sanitation, and operationalized through zoning laws and slum removal. The influx of rural Black and white workers to urban cores in both the United States and South Africa was sufficient to energize the hegemony to address the "urban crisis." While

the primary stated catalyst for early urban spatial form centered on public health, the primary racialist catalyst for these policies was the protection of the poor white populace. Poor whites were most likely to live and interact with Blacks due to economic limitations and therefore supposedly needed protection from "pathologized" behaviors such as crime, violence, and the aggressive sexuality of Black individuals, particularly the Hottentot women.

In the United States, Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, pathologized Blackness in a fashion similar to the pseudo race sciences of a century prior. Moynihan's report specifically pathologized the cause of Black underachievement and crime, linking it to the Black woman's "irrational desire to control black men, families and communities" (Harris-Perry 2011, 95). However, the pathologies posited by the Moynihan Report, as with the race sciences used in public health planning near the turn of the nineteenth century, were not new creations but simply the recodifications of the existing racist and racialist apparatuses arising from the archipelago of Man and Other.

In the case of Cape Town, South Africa, at the turn of the last century, the "black urban settlements were equated with a public health hazard" (Miraftab 2012, 13). Following unionization of South Africa, one of the "bedrock legislation" series included the Natives Land Act of 1913, which nationalized colonial racialist land policies first implemented in South Africa's Natal region during British rule. The Natives Land Act allocated a mere 7 percent of the land to Africans' reserves, despite Black Africans composing 67 percent of the total population. This act "demarcated large areas as African Reserves and relocated [Africans] to them" and subjected them to indirect rule "whereby local chiefs retained authority over their own people according to African laws and customs, but were answerable to colonial officials" (Beck 2000, 69).

In the United States, while race-based zoning laws were deemed "unenforceable" by the US Supreme Court in 1917, land-use zoning laws were not. This led to differential zoning between predominantly Black and white areas. White neighborhoods were zoned for

single-family residential use, with minimum acreage and maximum per capita limits. Conversely, predominantly Black areas were zoned as multiuse, including heavy industry, with higher per capita limits (Gotham 2000). However, the "segregation discourse changed over time from a hygiene based one to one that was ... naturalized on race" (Gotham 2000, 13).

Following the 1917 ruling, the United States underwent, and the government intentionally administered, a significant increase and entrenchment of residential segregation. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA), charged with invigorating the US housing market, also sought to ensure residential, racial, and community harmony. Explicit throughout this economic and social engineering program was the belief that "blacks [were considered] 'adverse influences' on property values." Under the guise of national racial harmony, and the good of Man, FHA practices were premised on not insuring mortgages on homes unless they were in "racially homogenized neighborhoods" (Gotham 2000, 626), thereby preemptively precluding black residential choice and access to predominantly white neighborhoods.

By 1939, supported by the FHA, which provided over one-third of new residential mortgages, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) had created new residential zoning maps which would provide shorthand delineators for the surging mortgage industry (Terry Gross 2017). These maps color-coded "high risk" neighborhoods red if, for example, the home was within a floodplain, the structures were in ill-repair and deemed "construction hazards," or if it was "detrimentally affected by occupant Negro families" (Gotham 2000, 621). This coupling of local planning, federal policy, and corporate practices heavily disincentivized or outright prohibited lenders from providing mortgages to Black families despite economic qualifications.

The eradication of Black individual's choice to reside in predominantly non-Black neighborhoods, coupled with discriminatory funding practices within Black neighborhoods, depressed Black homeownership rates and intergenerational wealth transfers. The

forced geographical isolation of Black communities also facilitated the expansion of other racialist and racist urban planning policies aimed to restrict the rights of Black individuals. These restrictions included the regulation of Black mobility through "influx controls" such as the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in South Africa (1923) and local "sundown" provisions in local jurisdictions across the US. Taken together the policies and practices guaranteed that "urban areas … [were] the white man's preserve and that the black man was there only as a unit of labor" (Beck, 2000, 113).

Recognition, Shame, and Exclusion

(Mis)recognition

Defining recognition, and more importantly, misrecognition in the processes of democracy, Harris-Perry derives her recognition scholarship from the central Hegelian philosophical concept of Anerkennung—that is, "mutually affirming recognition that allows citizens to operate as equals within the confines of the social contract." For Harris-Perry, the interlocked concepts of misrecognition and stigmatizing shame are central to the state's revocation of the Black citizenship.

She explains shame as a socially enforced, individually felt, emotion that induces a global self-identity reevaluation, which can be used positively or negatively to enforce group norms and values. The extension of this, stigmatizing shame, is consciously rooted in the "select[ion] of certain groups, marking them as 'abnormal' and demanding they blush at what and who they are" (Nussbaum 2004, 174).

The Hegelian view of democracy assumes that subordinated groups, through stigmatizing shame, are primarily harmed by "a ubiquitous and deep-seated form of injustice, called 'misrecognition,' which consists of the failure, whether out of malice or out of ignorance, to extend to people the respect or esteem that is due to

them in virtue of who they are" (Harris-Perry 2011, 41). Misrecognition is a matter of "institutionalized patterns of cultural value in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life" (Harris-Perry 2011, 42).

Most importantly, stigmatizing shame creates barriers to full recognition in the democratic process. When this shame is perpetuated through state mandate it "violates the foundational social contract of liberal democracies" (Harris-Perry 2011, 108), which, through "misrecognition[,] subverts the possibility of equal democratic participation" (Harris-Perry 2011, 96). The stigmatization of Blackness is purposefully crafted to ensure participation in, yet unequal full participatory access to, social, political, and economic freedoms granted by the nation.

The sole purpose of segregation and apartheid arising from Wynter's delineation between Man and Other was, and continued to be, the concomitant elimination of Black recognition in social, political and economic arenas. The operationalization of political misrecognition in the United States was evidenced through restriction and removal of voting rights through poll taxes and literacy tests denied recognition of Black Americans between 1864 and 1965. In South Africa, prior to apartheid, the continual removal of African and Coloured voter registration rolls produced the same outcome. Additionally, through comprehensive resettlements under apartheid, the South African government not only limited access to voting but removed fully the state's recognition of Black South Africans. Black South Africans had no claim to representation, voice, or recognition under the South African State (MacDonald 2006, 50), similar to Blacks in the United States between the Dred Scott decision and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. The state recognized Black South Africans solely in their Bantustans, or "homelands," which were wholly distinct territories from the nation of South Africa, a system which has some paralleled with the US Native American reservation system.

Syndemically Segregated City

The Theil entropy score (H-score), "the spatial distribution of different groups among units in a metropolitan area" (Bureau 2019) ranges between zero, complete integration, and one, complete segregation. Using this measure, overall racial evenness has increased across all racial groups in the Chicago metropolitan region: between 1980 and 1990, the multigroup H-score was 0.549 and 0.496, respectively. However, while the evenness between Black and white residents improved during the same time period, the measure of evenness was still significantly greater compared to the whole, measuring at 0.751 and 0.687 (Bureau 2019). In Johannesburg, the largest and least segregated metropolitan region in South Africa, received an H-score of 0.570 (StatsSA 2019).

Urban spatial segregation, as seen in Johannesburg and Chicago, is emblematic of the complex, and, like the palimpsest auction block, often unseen, temporally layered and holistic marginalization and dispossession of Black people. In order to more accurately convey this segregation as both cause and effect of the interwoven and compounded misrecognition of the Black lived experiences, I borrow the concept of syndemics, from the field of public health. Syndemics is defined as "communities experiencing co-occurring epidemics that additively increase negative health consequences" (Singer 2009, 73). Syndemic segregation represents the systemic, compounding, and intergenerational direct and indirect physical, mental, economic, social, and health harms levied on Black individuals, families, and communities, grounded in stigmatizing shame and misrecognition. In the racialized palimpsest city, syndemic segregation is the multitude of ways in which the legibility of historically racist and racialist urban forms and functions alter contemporary contestations of urban place and space, while imposing increasingly damaging multiscalar economic, political, and social marginalization and dislocation on the lived experiences of Black and Brown peoples.

In the United States, for example, unemployment figures for

white and Hispanic communities are 3.3 and 4.3 percent, respectively, but 7 percent for Black Americans. In additional economic terms, syndemic segregation is an economic liability for the contemporary, and future, city. The 2017 Metropolitan Planning Council Report, *The Cost of Segregation*, estimates that in Chicago alone segregation in its current state precludes $2,982 of income for every Black adult, costing the region $4.4 billion annually. The same report calculates that reduced segregation in 2010 would have decreased the homicide rate by 30 percent, saving 167 lives, $65 million in policing, and $218 million in corrections costs, as well as boosting the real estate economy by $6 billion (Acs et al. 2017).

In Johannesburg, syndemic segregation and social marginalization in urban forms and functions are pronounced to an even greater degree. Nationally, the 2018 fourth quarter unemployment rate was 25.1 percent for all South Africans. However, Black and white South Africans stand in sharp contrast: unemployment was 30.4 and 7.6 percent, respectively (Stats SA 2019). Similarly, a 2016 study on wealth and income distribution in South Africa noted that racial disparities in wealth and income between Black and white South Africans remained a "legacy of the system of apartheid" and calculated that the top 1 percent of South Africans control half of the wealth and that the top 10 percent control 90 to 95 percent of the wealth (Orthofer 2016).

With regard to urban contestations, when individuals are misrecognized and excluded, from hegemonic economic, social, and political network structures through factors such as race, those individuals will create separate networks to fulfill individual and collective needs. Black Americans and Black South Africans, as a result of syndemic segregation, are excluded from the social, political, and economic hegemonic networks which connect other citizens and neighborhoods. As a result, the social networks of Black American and Black South African communities, and their respective social capital—that is, their "investment in social relations with expected returns" (Lin 2001, 3)—reflect differing discursive interactions with municipalities, translating into similarly differenced com-

munity mechanisms of urban transformation. When applied to the provision of goods and services, research found a negative inverse relationship in the United States between segregation and local public expenditures on "roads, law enforcement, welfare, housing and community development" (Trounstine 2016, 29). As segregation increased, regardless of minority population, the predicted direct general expenditure decreased between $344 and $941 per capita (Trounstine 2016, 29).

Collectively, the direct and indirect costs extracted from Black American and Black South African communities, coupled with the stigmatization and misrecognition of Blackness, are translated into the local urban context as exclusionary social capital–the marginalization of Blackness from central networks used for the transmission of economic, social, and political voice. Relegation to the periphery of urban networks limits the civic participation of Black American and Black South African citizens in local governance: "neighborhoods [and the networks within them] are important municipal actors in local politics" through which the "spatial and economic allocations of investment, goods and services" are often discussed and acted upon (Trounstine 2016, 20).

As outlined, apartheid and segregation are grounded in stigmatizing shame and misrecognition, as the explicit, and intended, outcome of the deep space transference of Wynter's archipelago operationalized through the high modernist urban planning interventions to specifically "channel the inevitable political consequences of [economic integration] in the interest of the whites" (Heribert 1971, 8). While the legal statutes and state mandates have officially ended, both the United States and South Africa are left with syndemic segregation, which continues to be legible through the palimpsest city in institutional and social contemporaneous contestations of urban place.

Conclusion

The broad aim of this work is to connect theory to practice in

understanding how urban planning and its profession was, and continues to be, used to operationalize, through deep space, the transnational archipelago of Man and Other into the localized subjugation, marginalization, and exclusion of Black Americans and Black South Africans in contemporary political, social, and physical urban form and function. However, through temporally and syndemically resituating the experiences of Black and Brown people in contemporary urban contestations, this work is intended to contribute to the discourse necessary to move beyond redressing superficial symptoms of segregation and apartheid to uncover the hidden systems and structures which preclude the full and equal recognition of all citizens.

Within the profession, this article was written in response to the call by the critical urban planning anthology of Leonie Sandercock to "revisit planning history and to re-present it, both as a story and interpretation of events" (Sandercock 1998, 1). It is this history from which "the planning profession is always engaged in molding its members' understanding of past struggles and triumphs and simultaneously creating a contemporary professional culture around those memories" (Sandercock 1998, 1). In this light, the intent of this work is to push out the monolithic boundaries of representation and inclusion in urban planning's history toward one of polyvocality—thereby recentering the canon of the profession in order to explicitly engage with its racialized history. Without purposeful acknowledgement and reconciliation of the racialized profession of planning, we can never fully untie the syndemic knots of segregation, marginalization, and misrecognition which further inhibit the realization of just and inclusive twenty-first-century cities.

References

Acs, Gregory, Rolf Pendall, Mark Treskon, and Amy Khare. 2017. *The Cost of Segregation: National Trends and the Case of Chicago, 1990–2010*. N.p.: Urban Institute.

Beck, Roger B. 2000. *The History of South Africa*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Blow, Charles M. "I Know Why the Caged Bird Shrieks," *New York Times*, September 19, 2012, https://campaign-stops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/19/blow-i-know-why-the-caged-bird-shrieks/.

Bureau, US Census. 2019. "Multi-Group Entropy Index." Census.gov. https://www.census.gov/topics/housing/housing-patterns/about/multi-group-entropy-index.html.

Fishman, Robert. 2016. "Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century." In *Readings in Planning Theory*, edited by S. Fainstein and J. Defillippis, 4th ed., 23–49. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Gotham, K. F. 2000. "Urban Space, Restrictive Covenants and the Origins of Racial Residential Segregation in a US City, 1900–50." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (3): 616–33.

Gross, Terry. 2017. "A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America." NPR, May 3, 2017. https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america.

Harris-Perry, Melissa V. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Heribert, Adam. 1971. *Modernizing Racial Domination: The Dynamics of South African Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lin, N. 2001. *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

MacDonald, Michael. 2006. *Why Race Matters in South Africa*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McKittrick, K. 2006. "The Authenticity of This Story Has Not Been Documented: Auction Blocks." In *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, 65–90. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Miraftab, F. 2012. "Colonial Present: Legacies of the Past in Con-

temporary Practices in Cape Town, South Africa." *Journal of Planning History* 11 (4): 283–307.

Nussbaum, Martha. 2004. *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Orthofer, A. 2016. "Wealth Inequality in South Africa: Insights from Survey and Tax Data." REDI3x3. Working paper 15: 1–50. http://www.redi3x3.org/sites/default/files/Orthofer%202016%20REDI3x3%20Working%20Paper%2015%20-%20Wealth%20inequality.pdf.

Sandercock, Leonie. 1998. "Introduction." In *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*, edited by Leonie Sandercock, 1–36. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scott, James C. 2016. "Authoritarian High Modernism." In *Readings in Planning Theory*, edited by S. Fainstein and J. Defillippis, 4th ed., 75–90. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Singer, Merrill. 2009. *Introduction to Syndemics: A Critical Systems Approach to Public and Community Health*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Smith, Neil. 2008. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*. 3rd ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.

Stach, Patricia Burgess. 1991. "Preparing for the Urban Future: The Theory and Practice of City Planning." *Journal of Urban History* 17 (2): 207–13.

Stats SA. 2019. *Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 4: 2018*. Pretoria: Stats SA. http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2018.pdf.

Thomas, June Manning. 1998. "Racial Inequity and Empowerment: Necessary Theoretical Constructs for Understanding U.S. Planning History." In *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*, edited by Leonie Sandercock, 198–208. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Trounstine, Jessica. 2016. "Segregation and Inequality in Public Goods." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (3): 709–25.

Wegener, M. 2004. "Overview of Land Use Transport Models." In

Handbook of Transport Geography and Spatial Systems, edited by David A. Hensher, Kenneth J. Button, Kingsley E. Haynes, and Peter R. Stopher, 5th ed., 127–46. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

Wilkinson, A. B. 2019. "People of Mixed Ancestry in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake: Freedom, Bondage, and the Rise of Hypodescent Ideology." *Journal of Social History* 52 (3): 593–618.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being / Power / Truth / Freedom." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337.

Notes

1. With regard to definitions of Black and Blackness: I am employing *Black* and *Blackness* to collectively identify both African Americans and Black South Africans. I note that while systemic and structural oppressions of Blacks and Coloureds in South Africa share theoretical foundations, they are sufficiently divergent to require separate explorations.

BLACK GEOGRAPHIES AND ACTIVIST FUTURES

6. Movements, Not Moments

Wynterian Analysis of Emergent Anti-Pipeline Resistance and Extant Legacies of Brutality

JORDAN FALLON

In this chapter I examine political and social opposition to the ongoing pipeline projects under development in southwestern Virginia. After identifying and problematizing a tendency within anti-pipeline discourse, which I refer to as a "narrower" form of politics, I offer a theoretical framework informed by Black feminist thinkers which I believe can offer broader and deeper options for contemporary political projects oriented toward a more liberated world.

In October 2015 Mountain Valley Pipeline unveiled a new proposal for a natural gas pipeline system which would extend "approximately 303 miles from northwestern West Virginia to southern Virginia" (Mountain Valley Pipeline). At the onset of this new plan, much of the proposed territory for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) was made up of private property, so in October of 2017 a legal suit was brought against landowners as a way to successfully activate eminent domain (Adams 2017). Eminent domain is the legal principle which allows for the state to appropriate private lands with just compensation in order to support projects for public use. The degree to which a massive fossil fuel energy project carried out in the service of a private company constitutes "public use" has been a fervent subject of contestation in southwestern Virginia. As the editorial board for a regional paper, the *Danville Register and Bee*, notes: "It's one thing, for example, for a state to exercise eminent domain to take private land for needed highway safety improvements. It's quite another for a state to allow a private, for-profit company to exercise that power against private property owners. Is it legal? Yes. Is it ethical or good for a company's image? That's

debatable. Is it good public policy? That, too, is up for debate" (Editorial Board 2018).

The MVP has been met with resistance efforts since its initial formulation, and this trend has only intensified with increasing progress of construction. As early as February 2018 citizens and activists have engaged in "tree sits" (Hammack 2018b) by occupying trees along the proposed construction path, chaining themselves to construction equipment, and putting forth legal campaigns in attempt to slow and stop the pipeline's development. While the pipeline's construction still threatens to proceed, the viral campaign of resistance has suspended, delayed, and interrupted the project repeatedly throughout 2018 and 2019. Still, the MVP continues to move forward and enjoys the support of the state–in the sense that local municipalities broadly lack the legislative power to cease or reject the project. In addition, the project has the full support of Virginia's governor, Ralph Northam, which has led the Protect Our Water Heritage Rights Coalition to remark: "Governor Northam and his Environmental Chief have now laid waste to any notion this administration and its agencies are capable of doing anything but advancing the business of the fracked gas industry" (Hammack 2018a). An alliance of state power and private capital bolsters the MVP's path forward; however, the popular resistance put forth so far by grassroots groups, local politicians, and everyday people has showcased an inspiring political will.

While the pipeline project's future development still seems likely, the popular responses to both the state and the interests of private capital also present an opportunity for political reflection. I am sympathetic to the cause of the pipeline opposition, yet I am worried that a crucial opportunity for cultivating an emancipatory and substantial political movement might pass us by if only a narrower form of politics is allowed to emerge from this resistance. In what follows, I elaborate on the narrower form of pipeline resistance, identify two main contradictions which it overlooks, and following the work of Sylvia Wynter, consider the possibilities for a more holistic political praxis. In short, I explore how the moment of pipeline

resistance might be expanded into an emancipatory movement for political transformation.

Narrower Politics: Locke, Jefferson, and Two Contradictions

The concern that this essay explores refers to the articulation of pipeline resistance that uncritically appeals to private property rights at the expense of larger political considerations, historical experiences, and more holistic theoretical frameworks. This section explores two central contradictions that will help animate the limits of political discourse centered on property rights. The rhetoric of narrower politics I am exploring has certainly been voiced by formal journalistic sources, politicians, policy makers, and so on; however, this discourse also importantly emanates from folk and popular culture, particularly within white America. Thus, while I have chosen several pieces of printed work to use in demonstrating this narrower political discourse, it should be understood that this work is also informed by the many conversations, comment sections, and signs that I have interacted with in the course of my long-term residency in southwestern Virginia.

The following editorial comment from a local newspaper highlights this tendency toward narrow political discourse and reveals a less-than-critical approach to two very relevant figures in US history. This statement, best quoted at length, helps to demonstrate my argument:

> Thomas Jefferson leaned more explicitly on the writings of political and economic philosopher John Locke, declaring we all possessed the "unalienable" rights of "life, liberty and property." ... Two major infrastructure projects in Virginia–the Mountain Valley and the Atlantic Coast pipelines–have brought the issue of private property rights into sharp focus as the giant energy companies pushing construction of these natural gas pipelines have turned to

the weapon of last resort to obtain the easements and rights of way needed before construction can begin: eminent domain. (Editorial Board 2018)

I agree with the prior statement in that the MVP has brought the issue of private property rights sharply into popular conversation. However, I worry that this focus becomes overdetermined to the point that it precludes a wider conceptualization of politics. The editorial board's opening paragraph also presents two important figures in western political history, John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, which helps to situate two major paradoxes.

Moving to another printed opinion piece, Ronald Fraser, author of *America, Democracy and You: Where Have All the Citizens Gone?* comments that aside from ecological risks and threats to clean water, "there is another, even more fundamental, reason for ending the oil and gas pipeline industry's dependence on eminent domain. In America, governments are bound to protect, not abuse, the rights of private property owners. Taking private property to support a corporate activity that is harmful to the public welfare is un-American" (2017). While Fraser's concerns cohere more so around the constitutional infringement enacted on property-owning citizens, Lee Francis underscores the environmental dangers while still highlighting private-property concerns: "Corporations should not be able to seize private land, build unnecessary fossil fuel infrastructure, charge us for it, and contaminate our drinking water in the process" (2018).

From these glimpses of discourse, it is my intention to build an analysis of what I call a narrower form of politics without delegitimizing or reductively presenting pipeline resistance as a whole. The tendency toward myopic politics is by no means the only or even the most dominant tendency within pipeline resistance, but it is worth pausing to understand what forms of politics, history, and praxis might extend from statements such as these. It is also important to highlight two major paradoxes that seem to follow the politics and discourse of pipeline construction. The figures of Locke and Jeffer-

son conjured by the *Danville Register and Bee*'s editorial statement correspond with the following two major contradictions.

The first of these paradoxes draws attention to the *processes* by which a population of mostly white, middle-class individuals and families have come to own the contested property which eminent domain threatens to appropriate. The central enabling condition for the contemporary private-property rights of descendants of a white settler colony was mass colonial violence and the perpetration of genocidal human rights abuses against indigenous populations. John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, as the editorial board's statement points out, underwrites the American valorization of private property. Locke writes: "Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property" (1689). Locke importantly only recognizes the labor of European agriculturalists in cultivating ownership of property, and his theory of private property, as John Quiggin notes, "requires the erasure (mentally and usually in brutal reality) of the people already living beyond the frontier and drawing their sustenance from the land in question" (2015). The brutal history of state violence against Indigenous Americans–who were denied access to the category of legitimate property owner–alongside the self-serving philosophical justifications provided by European liberal philosophers, should give pause to enthusiastic exclamations that trampling one's rights is "un-American." It seems clear that the very possibility of an American state and civil society required the disavowal of the indigenous presence, labor, and humanity that preceded European arrival.

The second major paradox that animates this essay's analytical concerns derives from conversations around the illegitimate extraction of energy–which the MVP's fossil fuel project certainly seems to constitute. Recalling Lee Francis's disavowal of "unnecessary" fossil fuel projects helps situate this line of thinking. However, the resistance discourse that voices and centers a need to protect against violent energy extraction seems to fail to reckon with a sec-

ond enabling condition of the US settler colony. The political economy of the United States was founded on violent energy extractive operations in the form of chattel slavery. How many of the contested areas of private property were formerly plantations? John Locke's theorizations of private property produce several explicit justifications of slavery, such as the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, which offers: "Every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves" (1669). Further, Locke's theory of private property violently *excluded* Indigenous people from the category of viable landowners—despite their presence and labor on the land—and violently *included* Black enslaved people within the category of property. Further, this inclusion made possible the proliferation of a political-economic system that relied upon the brutal extractive energy provided by chattel slavery.

In linking Thomas Jefferson, himself a Virginian slave-owning presider over private property, with John Locke and presenting both as liberatory figures, a certain dissonance is produced. While Jefferson's unpleasant social legacy of slaveholding, abuse, and sexual assault has long been known, in recent years Jefferson's legacy has reemerged as a site of literal battle. In July and August of 2017 white supremacist groups marched through the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia, and through the grounds of Jefferson's University of Virginia, ostensibly to protest the removal of Confederate statues. While an honest analysis of Virginian racism would contextualize the KKK rally on July 8 and the notorious "Unite the Right" rally on August 12 within a long, continuous history of racial terror and violence, the symbolic legacy of Thomas Jefferson within white supremacist movements is also of particular importance. It is also difficult to tell the story of Charlottesville's deadly August rally without noting that several of the key white supremacist organizers received education at the University of Virginia (Bartholomew and Goddard). Thomas Jefferson's lingering presence within white supremacist discourse, ideology, and practice serves as another warning about the potential costs of failing to adequately account for historical legacies of white violence. Instead, a mode of historical

truth-telling that recognizes the violent legacies of founding American political figures presents an analytic lens to help recognize and resist contemporary assemblages of violence, state power, and energy extraction, such as the MVP.

To summarize thus far, I have located a style of anti-pipeline discourse that centers on appeals to private property. I refer to the politics that emanates from this type of appeal as narrower, as I see it uncritically reproducing an ahistorical and distorted set of analytic sensibilities. I believe that two contradictions or paradoxes animate the limits of this type of politics. The two enabling conditions of indigenous genocide and chattel slavery formed the political foundations for the very same state now pursuing and aiding in destructive projects such as the MVP. One might object to the pipeline for a variety of reasons: the environmental risks seem clear, public resources are being converted into corporate profit, and capitalist extractive energy regimes seem to be inextricably tied to other forms of political dominance, such as patriarchy and white supremacy. However, one cannot accurately object to pipeline projects because they are "un-American," as they stand in continuity with a long tradition of racialized violence, extractive energy, and land appropriation in this country. Instead, we require a reckoning with the violent histories which have produced and sustained our liberal quasi-democratic experiment. We should object to the pipeline because it represents a violent continuity with so much of the destructive and violent behavior which has characterized the American project throughout its history.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I explore the work of Sylvia Wynter, alongside Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, in an attempt to articulate a theoretical framework that better contextualizes the pipeline projects while avoiding a reproduction of the ahistoricism and white-centric missteps of the two paradoxes outlined above. Through Wynter's framework, I attempt to recast the issue of pipelines in a manner

which emphasizes a sense of both the intersectionality of power relations and the interdependence of social politics.

In Sylvia Wynter's "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument" (2003), Wynter outlines a genealogical account of European colonial notions of the normative human, which Wynter articulates as the figure of Man. Wynter's tracking of Man's development, transformation, and continuity through modern coloniality and into our contemporary moment of neoliberal hegemony serves as a central site through which to think through the nexuses of white supremacy, patriarchy, and western political power. Wynter's project is also attentive to the importance of epistemology in developing this figure of Man and in sustaining the material power operations associated with colonial modernity. One of Wynter's central claims is that a certain "overrepresentation" has generated a hegemonic notion that white European Man is synonymous with the human itself. Within European philosophical, cultural, and scientific traditions, Man's overrepresentation can be observed, and legacies of colonialism, genocide, and social oppression have undergirded and protected the project of Man's overrepresentation.

Wynter importantly narrates the metamorphosis of "descriptive statements" formulated within western European intellectual history, informing the basis for articulating and delimiting the boundaries of humanity. In a passage that emphasizes the importance of Man in conceiving of western political power, Wynter writes: "Instead it was a constitutive part of the new order of adaptive truth—for that had begun to be put in place with the rise to hegemony of the modern state, based on the new descriptive statement of the human, Man" (2003, 300). Wynter's conceptual work here is crucial in illuminating the ongoing presence of Man's symbolic systems and the violent and extractive political projects which emanate from them.

Within her genealogy of Man, Wynter identifies two major shifts, which she casts as Man 1 and Man 2, respectively. Given that the

space allotted in this chapter precludes a full recounting of Wynter's genealogical account, my analysis will largely be restricted to an engagement with Man 2. It is worth noting that Man 1 comes about as the result of an epistemic rupture provided amidst the (so-called) Enlightenment (2003, 276). Man 1 is the redescription of the human as a political subject of the state, rather than a theocentric subject under divine rule mediated through church authority. An important outcome of this transmutation is that the category of race, rather than religion, comes to define who is considered "other" even as forms of religious thinking do not entirely wither away.

Wynter's narrative emphasizes the hybrid nature of this new Man. Traces of the previous religio-centric mode of description are still present, and the main set of descriptive criteria for who counts as human shifts to an account of rationality-subrationality, rather than appeals to good and evil, to accompany the new emphasis on racial thinking. In short, the human (meaning white European man) is now configured as a rational agent, and those who fall outside of its normative bounds are considered subrational. Eventually, Man 1 comes to be recast as Man 2, a fundamentally economic creature. As Wynter writes: "Man 2 is now defined as a jobholding Breadwinner, and even more optimally, as a successful 'masterer of natural scarcity' (Investor, capital accumulator)" (2003, 321).

As each new description of Man takes hold, there is also a dialectic move which describes those who do not align with Man's normative white, European, bourgeois character as "Other" within the new frame of Man. Wynter notes: "The new descriptive statement of the human will call for its archipelago of Human Otherness to be peopled by a new category, one now comprised of the jobless, the homeless, the poor, the systematically made jobless and criminalized ... rather than before as the politically condemned" (2003, 321). While Man 2 represents that which is closest to our contemporary moment of neoliberal global hegemony, it again must be underscored that all of the various logics that Man's elaboration has deployed linger as traces of the genealogical project of Man. Throughout the shifts in descriptive statements and ontological

elaborations of Man, a common thread of anti-Black othering sustains each new redescription of the human within the terms of Man.

While Wynter offers a much longer, more nuanced, and detailed history, I am attempting here to briefly muse over some of her central arguments in order to formulate a better understanding of anti-pipeline resistance. Thus far, Wynter's usage of Man as a figure to describe the normative power operations of western European society has lent a language and historical understanding of descriptive statements. From here, a focus on Wynter's notion of genre is further instructive in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the manner in which contemporary struggles are linked to the historical elaboration of Man. In a passage which crucially informs this chapter's holistic assessment of politics, Wynter remarks: "The argument proposes that the struggle of our new millennium will be one between the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself, and that of securing the well-being, and therefore the full cognitive and behavior autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves" (2003, 260).

This statement nicely encapsulates the broad movements between various descriptions of Man as I have briefly outlined them. Wynter later casts this specific Eurocentric conception of humanity within the terms of "genre" (2003, 269), acting as a holistic concept through which to think about the intersecting forms of identity and power that constitute individuals as subjects. Further, Wynter attaches a material account of political power and social struggles to her normative, abstract figure of Man. Wynter writes: "The correlated hypothesis here is that all our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over the environment, global warming, severe climate change, the sharply unequal distribution of the earth's resources ... these are all differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle" (2003, 261).

Wynter's framing is very useful in understanding the imbalance

of contemporary political power as well as the disproportionate forms and degrees of oppression placed upon those who fall outside of Man's normative framework. Wynter's project can be seen as doing intersectional work, recognizing the layers and differentiations in white supremacist, patriarchal, and classist orientations which dominant formulations of genre take on. Wynter's concept of genre does depart in some significant ways from other forms of Black feminist thought in that it seems to collapse social identities such as race, gender, class, and so on *into* genre.

Some within feminist circles have critiqued Wynter and charged her with failing or refusing to offer a more substantial concept of gender. However, what must be understood in Wynter's account is that she does not neglect considerations of gender but rather generates an understanding that genre sits as ontologically prior to sex and gender. Differently put, if we were to dismantle restrictive or oppressive conceptions of gender but left Man intact, it would not amount to significant or truly emancipatory politics. As Wynter's argument illuminates with meticulous detail, Man has sustained several world-shifting ruptures and transformations in epistemic organization yet has sustained a fundamental gaze which renders people of color as Other. Wynter's scope and level of urgency (as intermittently underscored by her usage of capital letters) require a much larger framework, which the conceptual work of genre allows her to access. Still it must be understood that gender is one of the central operating mechanisms of genre. In an interview with Greg Thomas, Wynter says: "I am trying to insist that 'race' is really a code-word for 'genre.' Our issue is not the issue of 'race.' Our issue is the issue of the genre of 'Man.' It is this issue of the 'genre' of 'Man' that causes all the '–isms.' ... Now when I speak at a feminist gathering and I come up with 'genre' and say 'gender' is a function of 'genre,' they don't want to hear that" (2006).

Genre is also helpful for Wynter's analysis in allowing her to attend to, but not crudely equivalate, the different experiences of those cast outside of Man's normative range. This is particularly helpful in thinking about the related yet distinct histories of violence

and mistreatment which Africans and Indigenous Americans were respectively subjected to at the hands of European coloniality. The experiences of Africans during the Middle Passage and chattel slavery and the violent genocide and land appropriation of Indigenous Americans can be linked in their mutual status as enabling conditions of European colonial modernity and contemporary American social life. However, it would be inappropriate to read them as homogenous events. Wynter sustains a dialectic descriptive character throughout her piece, emphasizing continuity while recognizing the important historical experiences and distinctions which European modernity proliferated. Wynter writes: "While 'indios' and 'negros,' Indians and Negros, were both made into the Caliban-type referents of Human Otherness to the new rational self-conception of the West, there was also (as Poliakov notes) a marked differential in the degrees of subrationality and of not-quite human-ness, to which each group was to be relegated within the classificatory logic of the West's ethnocultural field" (2003, 301). Genre's nontotalizing or homogenizing frame of reference provides a useful lens for linking disparate political struggles and offers possibility for coalition building.

Wynter's analysis of genre importantly ties to a story about who is included and excluded from the category of humanity. Genre, as described by Man, does not just enunciate who gets to be privileged by contingent political or social systems and realities but rather offers a topology of a human and nonhuman binary. It is worth noting that in Wynter's analysis, genre presents a particularly attractive conceptual vehicle, as it is fluid enough to account for Man's tendencies toward both stasis (that is, descriptive statements always valorize white, male, European, bourgeois personhood and retain an anti-Black sensibility) as well as change (the various new descriptive statements and logics).

Genre also allows for us to see the manner in which race, class, gender, and so on, are interlocking forms of identity-making and how they mutually constitute each other. Man's operating logic of oppression does not, for instance, "begin" from race and then

extend its stratifying gaze. Instead, it begins from a position of weighing together identities comprehensively, even as some identities (such as race) have taken on enhanced historical emphasis during different periods and iterations of descriptive statements. For instance, while Man's overrepresentation clearly relies on white supremacy, it also would exclude and other poor whites. It is crucial to note here that while poor whites would not be considered "Man proper," they are still interpellated into the ideological framings of Man's genre by way of the racial emphasis on whiteness. This sentiment corresponds with W. E. B. Dubois's famous notion of "wages of whiteness." Man's overrepresentation rests on patriarchal thinking, but it would not extend full manhood to Black men or other men of color. Genre operates by *degrees* of deviance and an interlocking structure which privileges Man's normative characteristics as a holistic structure. This point is worth elaborating because it outlines the normative preferences of a particularly small minority of the world (Man) responsible for structuring colonial modernity's global hegemony and for underscoring the sense of violence and political, social, and economic oppression undergirding Man's contemporary overrepresentation. Wynter is best quoted in summarizing some of the pertinent consequences which accompany Man's overrepresentation into the modern era:

> It is this new master code, one that would now come to function at all levels of the social order—including that of class, gender, sexual orientation, superior/inferior ethnicities, and that of the Investor/Breadwinners versus the criminalized jobless Poor (Nas's "Black and Latino faces") and Welfare Moms antithesis, and most totally between the represented-to-be superior and inferior races and cultures. ... This had been that of enabling a U.S. bourgeoisie, rapidly growing more affluent, to dampen class conflict by inducing their own working class to see themselves, even where not selected by Evolution in class terms, as being compensatorily, altruistically bonded with their dominant middle classes

by the fact of their having all been selected by Evolution in terms of race. (2003, 323)

While there is much to unpack here, it should be clear that even though working-class whites are not materially included in Man's ideal normative category, the degree by which they are excluded (and the corresponding levels of violence and oppression they face) is significantly less severe than for people of color. This sentiment becomes especially important when thinking through the contemporary politics of Virginia's anti-pipeline resistance. While some of the property owners along the MVP's route are affluent and middle-class, there is a substantial bloc of white people in the region who do not enjoy such class privilege yet still *might* be tempted to adhere to ideological narratives which sustain Man's power. This dynamic does not in any way describe working-class whites in the region as a whole. A set of vociferous activist campaigns continue to resist the MVP in the region, but many still support pipeline projects, often with appeals to the expected (and likely illusory) economic benefits which they might bring to the region. Even though the valorization of property rights barely applies (if at all) to their lived conditions, many might still strongly identify with this valorization given its situatedness within liberal European political philosophical projects as well as contemporary American civic culture. Sometimes this participation in ideology is animated by desire.

Perhaps the cultural valorization of property rights plays a similar role as it did during the Civil War, when countless ignorant and poor white men eagerly walked (many without shoes, proper clothing, etc.) off to war to support the Confederacy's genocidal aspirations for a white-supremacist aristocratic state and to defend the Southern elite's property rights, all while thinking that one day they too might own slaves and plantations. Either way, Wynter's account tells an important story about ideology and the manner in which whiteness still operates as a powerful fiction which can occlude class interests or egalitarian sensibilities. This is important because many "stop" at property rights valorization and fail to comprehend the

historical forces which conjured up destructive projects such as the MVP. This resultant narrower form of politics helps sustain the ideological fiction of the white exclusive group mentality and aids in the consolidation of bourgeois—and we might add corporate in the case of the MVP—power.

Apart from revealing the role of ideology in motivating otherwise class-excluded whites to uphold Man's overrepresentation, Wynter's account demonstrates that a primary manner in which the power of descriptive statements operates is by hiding the contingency and arbitrariness by which these statements are formed. Wynter refers to the mode in which descriptive statements proceed as "repressing recognition that our present descriptive statement of the human is a descriptive statement" (2003, 326). This passage is important in denaturalizing Man's overrepresentation, which has been sustained so often by the philosophical work of western intellectuals who have positioned Man's rule as necessary. This descriptive work of naturalizing Man's overrepresentation and colonization of the human category is, as Wynter's genealogy demonstrates, deeply ingrained into western societal norms. Thus, a problem is presented in understanding how we might move *beyond* Man's overrepresentation. Wynter notes that as long as Man's epistemological system is in place, we can only "echo" the forms of description that Man's hegemony offers (2003, 329).

While genre informs a nuanced system of contingent degrees of deviance, Wynter is clear in articulating the vastly disproportionate histories of suffering and brutality which have come as a result of Man's overrepresentation. Wynter describes the role of the prison industrial complex as a particularly important site of Man's contemporary operation of power, and she links this process to a global arrangement in which "the Third and Fourth Worlds" suffer and bear "the major costs paid for the ongoing production, realization, and reproduction of our present ethnoclass genre of the human"(2003, 329). It is clear from Wynter's account that Man cannot continue to remain intact if a more emancipatory world should be made possible. Wynter's piece closes with a reference to Frantz

Fanon's famous call for a new kind of "invention" (2003, 331)–one which does not reproduce the vicious logics, cultures, and practices of European coloniality. Fanon writes: "But if we want to take humanity one step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, then we must innovate, we must be pioneers. … We must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man" (Fanon 1961, 239). What Wynter's new human might look like remains an open question, but Wynter's account of Man's overrepresentation provides, as it did for Fanon, an instructive example of what *not* to do.

In summary, Wynter's formulation of genre allows for a flexible, comprehensive, and multiplicitous analytic vehicle through which to understand political domination and social stratification in our contemporary world. Wynter provides something of a psychology for Man, which is quite instructive in regard to contextualizing contemporary pipeline struggles. Wynter thoroughly accounts for the two operating conditions for private property. The manner in which Wynter's text recounts the forms of subrationality that characterized indigenous peoples in the eyes of Europeans helps us to understand how and why John Locke's labor theory of property was able to exclude a group of people who clearly resided on the land which Europeans sought to occupy. Further, extending subrationality to Africans justified their position within chattel slavery as brutalized laborers given the same level of humanity as one might attribute to property. While Wynter's account also demonstrates how the specific criteria for exclusion has migrated from a previous binary account of rational-irrational to more economic valences, she reminds us that, like the palimpsest, residues of historical legacies echo in our contemporary thinking.

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's work is valuable in connecting contemporary practices of police violence to economic stratification as well. Her book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (2016) offers an illuminating analysis of contemporary politics that provides an account of current Black freedom movements. Taylor's work situates the events of Michael Brown's murder in Ferguson,

Missouri, in a wider sociopolitical context and discusses the long-standing historical implications of racialized police violence in the US.

For instance, Taylor illustrates Malcolm X's vivid descriptions of the interlinked issues of substandard housing options, disparities in costs of living, and social degradation (2016, 37) to outline a hegemonic political economy complimentary to the unchecked domestic terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan and police violence in the South. These musings are helpful in orienting the problems of contemporary racism within an interlocking set of systems, practices, and institutions which correspond to Wynter's elaboration of genre under the context of economic Man 2. Similar to Wynter, Taylor also articulates the need for a radical overhauling of the present system (which Wynter calls Man). For Taylor, the class dynamics of Ferguson provide important context for the forms of social critique and political uprising which emanated after Michael Brown's death. Taylor notes: "The battle in the Ferguson streets was also fueled by the deep grievances of the town's young people, whose future was being stolen by the never-ending cycle of fines, fees, warrants, and arrests" (2016, 159). Paired with this recognition, Taylor advocates for a serious transformation of both the systems of policing and the systems of capitalist enterprise, or in other words, an end to Man.

Taylor's work is instructive and resonates with Wynter's in important ways. Further, Taylor translates her lucid account of the constellation of political and historical events that inform the Ferguson uprising into a generative account of how movements can come to be catalyzed by flashpoints, or moments, such as Ferguson. Taylor's illustration provides a powerful organizing goal by insisting on the necessity of translating localized events into coalitional continuity. This sensibility animates Taylor's central claim that what is required for dismantling Man's overrepresentation is a movement, not a moment (2016, 153). What does this look like? For Taylor, it requires the forging of deeper connections and relationships with organized labor (2016, 185); she concludes with an invocation that

"there must be more organization and coordination in the move from protest to movement" (2016, 190).

Conclusion

On February 26, 2016, eighteen-year-old Kionte Spencer was killed by police in Roanoke, Virginia, while wearing headphones and walking along the roadside. A man passing by called the police, reporting that Spencer was armed, acting erratically, and threatening motor vehicles with a weapon. Roanoke County police arrived on scene and shortly afterward, with little evidence that he had been brandishing a weapon, shot and killed Spencer, who had only a plastic BB gun. Despite a small, yet vigorous, campaign to secure justice for Spencer, Roanoke County police professed no wrongdoing and declared Spencer's case closed (Friedenberger 2016).

The Roanoke County Police Department that killed Kionte Spencer would, just a few years later, serve (as it currently does) as a protective security force for the MVP's development. As the pipeline has progressed and met with a corresponding uptick in resistance activism, the state's repression has intensified as well. Arrests of protestors, threats of legal action, and intimidation have all been carried out against those resisting the pipeline construction (Hammack 2018c). The same security agents who enforced Man's racial sensibilities (white supremacy) in murdering Spencer are currently serving Man's domineering practices toward the environment and endless pursuit of capital profit. As a small microcosm, this should illustrate the continuity of Man's operations as well as the mediating presence of genre and its disproportionate effects: Black people are killed, while white people are arrested on minor charges for protesting. The case of pipeline construction and abuse and the longstanding legacies of violence against people of color are linked in a nonhomogenous, nonequivalent manner which should underscore Wynter's thesis that the various linked issues of our time all cohere around the struggle against Man's overrepresentation.

The continuity between the MVP and Kionte Spencer's death also

reveals a site of disproportionate interest. When Spencer was killed, certain members of Roanoke's NAACP and of grassroots groups and a local politician or two showed up to do the work of demanding and securing justice. But with such negligible numbers, the state was easily able to sweep his murder under the rug. The anti-pipeline campaign has enjoyed popular support (even if some portion of this corresponds to the narrower form of politics) and attracted national attention. While other elements may be at play as well, this disproportionality speaks to a greater tendency within white civil society to be ambivalent about state violence, corporate greed, and energy abuse (all of which have been wreaking havoc on nonwhite people for several centuries) until it affects them directly.

Kionte Spencer does not derive from the same genre as many within the region who are invested in pipeline resistance. Even those who would wish him no harm seem to lack a vital politics of care which would connect his murder to the state's ongoing energy extraction projects, all within the logic of Man. To elaborate a new form of politics capable of transforming American society and dismantling Man, connections must be drawn, as Taylor illustrates, across demographic lines to forge solidarity between differing points on Wynter's condemned archipelagos. This work will require a serious restructuring of white affective economies, which only respond with urgency when white people's own well-being or material interests are at stake. This trend simply cannot persist, as it does so much of the demobilizing work of Man and preserves the pernicious operations of a fundamentally unjust and violent world. We require a more holistic analytic framework, such as Wynter provides, to be put in service of material political praxis.

Angela Davis is helpful in identifying what a politics of coalitional solidarity can look like across different vantage points on Wynter's global archipelago. In *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle* (2016), Davis notes that during the Ferguson uprising, many noticed that police deployed similar military technologies of control in Missouri as are typically used by Israeli police and military against Palestinian activists. This sense of continuity again reinforces the linked opera-

tions of Man at a global level. Specifically, among other continuities, identical tear gas canisters were identified, and Palestinian activists tweeted technical advice pertaining to dealing with the chemical agents (Davis 2016, 139). Davis reflects on this point of solidarity as exemplary of these broader connections: "I'm trying to suggest that there are connections between the militarization of the police in the US, which provides a different context for us to analyze the continuing, ongoing proliferation of racist police violence, and the continuous assault on people in occupied Palestine" (2016, 140). Davis's instructive emphasis on the way in which we can shift the context of our theorizations provides a helpful link in understanding the analytic potency of Wynter's genre framework.

In moving discussions of the MVP away from (centering) concerns of private-property ownership for those who may only lightly be excluded from Man's highest normative arena, we can disrupt an analytic context whose incomplete sense of history, impoverished image of solidarity, and narrow political sensibilities help to sustain Man's overrepresentation. As the discourse around the business of extractive energy pipelines signals, environmental concerns underscore this overrepresentation as an increasingly urgent invitation to planetary catastrophe. However, we also know that when ecological consequences undermine human life, those who inhabit Wynter's archipelago, not those closest to Man, suffer most dramatically and most violently. Current struggles being organized around the harmful effects of locating a compression station (in service of the MVP's cousin, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline) in the predominantly nonwhite, economically stratified area of Union Hill (Richmond, Virginia) speak to this disproportionality as well and to the need to cast the moment of pipeline resistance within a larger movement to dismantle Man's overrepresentation.

References

Adams, Duncan. 2017. "Mountain Valley Sues Landowners to Gain Pipeline Easements and Access through Eminent Domain." *Roanoke*

Times, October 27, 2017. https://www.roanoke.com/business/ news/mountain-valley-sues-landowners-to-gain-pipeline-easements-and-access/article_abff5d87-1aee-5a50-b3c2-b3ee0c812e44.html.

Davis, Angela. 2016. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Editorial Board. 2018. "The Quagmire of Eminent Domain and Pipelines." *Danville Register and Bee*, February 18, 2018. https://www.godanriver.com/opinion/editorials/the-quagmire-of-eminent-domain-and-pipelines/article_8f494634-135f-11e8-a3d1-d3ab9251e0bd.html.

Fanon, Frantz. (1961) 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth.* Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.

Fraser, Ronald. 2017. "Fraser: How Oil and Gas Pipelines Abuse Private Property Owners." *Roanoke Times*, October 19, 2017. https://www.roanoke.com/opinion/commentary/fraser-how-oil-and-gas-pipelines-abuse-private-property-owners/article_944e4f45-36ba-5994-a9b9-de86e2d16cc8.html.

Francis, Lee. 2018. "Environmental Groups Applaud Legislation to Strengthen Pipeline Oversight in Virginia." Virginia League of Conservation Voters, January 11, 2018. https://valcv.org/environmental-groups-applaud-legislation-to-strengthen-pipeline-oversight-in-virginia/.

Friedenberger, Amy. 2016. "Roanoke County Officers Will Not Face Charges in Shooting Death of Kionte Spencer." *Roanoke Times*, May 25, 2016. https://www.roanoke.com/news/crime/roanoke-county-officers-will-not-face-charges-in-shooting-death/article_947ee071-80de-501c-98a9-a768bc562f3b.html.

Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina. 1669. The Avalon Project. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/nc05.asp.

Hammack, Laurence. 2018a. "Advisory Council Asks Northam to Stop Pipeline Work, but Governor Passes." *Roanoke Times*, October 17, 2018. https://www.roanoke.com/business/news/advisory-council-asks-northam-to-stop-pipeline-work-but-governor/article_e4243b18-d631-5201-99b0-83966292f4be.html.

———. 2018b. "Pipeline Protestors Are Sitting in Trees Along Its Route in an Effort to Stop Construction." *Roanoke Times*, February 28, 2018. https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/giles_county/pipeline-protesters-are-sitting-in-trees-along-its-route-in/article_6c6fd37f-b0e8-54bd-9ecb-eae7b8c650f4.html.

———. 2018c. "Police Make Arrests as Protests of the Mountain Valley Pipeline Intensify." *Roanoke Times*, April 11, 2018. https://www.roanoke.com/news/local/police-make-arrests-as-protests-of-the-mountain-valley-pipeline/article_c9bf1b11-024b-522a-a03e-cbc2891481e9.html.

Locke, John. 1689. *Second Treatise on Government*. Section 27. Constitution Society. http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr05.htm.

Montana State Constitution. Article IX. https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/CONSTITUTION/IX/1.htm.

"Overview." n.d. Mountain Valley Pipeline. https://www.mountainvalleypipeline.info/overview.

Quiggin, John. 2015. "John Locke Against Freedom." *Jacobin*, June 28, 2015. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/locke-treatise-slavery-private-property/.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/ Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall): 257–337.

———. 2006. "*Proud Flesh* Inter/Views: Sylvia Wynter." *ProudFlesh: A New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* 4.

7. Toward Supportive Political Action

An Autoethnographic Approach to Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism

PHILIP RAY

On March 30, 2019, Twitter user @rapturelekeith posted a video of the traditional African Dance of the Casamance, "a celebratory dance of togetherness & community led by the Kumpo" (Le'Keith 2019). The video included the frenetic movements of the Kumpo, a twirling mass of "thin, dried palm leaves which are beige in color" (AccessGambia 2019). Shortly thereafter, Africanfuturist Nigerian writer Nnedi Okorafor retweeted it. When pressed by her followers to explain how the effect was made, she refused to answer, later tweeting, "I think a lot of people need to learn the fine art of 'shut up and listen' when encountering cultures unfamiliar to them" (Okorafor 2019). She went on to state that many aspects of cultures should not be explained, but rather absorbed by those who are not aware of what they truly represent. She expressed that curiosity was a valuable attribute, but it should be accompanied by reverence and awareness that "some things are not yours to know" (Okorafor 2019).

I argue that this desire to understand the effect of the Kumpo's dance by observers in western society is based in positivist approaches to knowledge gathering, which, according to Patricia Hill Collins, "aim to create scientific descriptions of reality by producing objective generalizations" (2000, 255). These approaches are problematic, as a positivist understanding of this communal dance practice, rooted in the traditions and mythologies of the Jola people, dilutes the cultural impact and meaning. This effectively reduces the knowledges therein to an object of the colonizer's gaze, separate

from the culture's truths to the point of misrepresentation. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my same propensity to cast the colonizer's gaze on cultures that differ from my own, in addition to the fact that I am being trained in sociology, an academic discipline largely rooted in positivism. My experience reading Afrofuturist and Africanfuturist literature is emblematic of these positivist approaches.

Afrofuturism is a genre of science fiction, a political movement, and a cultural aesthetic that presents positive and hopeful futures for Black identities, cultures, and communities (Dery 1993). It is rooted deeply in the cultural traditions of both the African continent as well as the diaspora throughout the world and "combines elements of science fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentricity, and magic realism with non-Western beliefs" (Womack 2013, 6). My introduction to Afrofuturism as a genre of science fiction resembles the aforementioned error in approaches to knowledge gathering. In 2013 I attempted to read Octavia Butler, a science fiction author whose work is largely considered a forerunner to Afrofuturist literature. Much like western audiences seeking to understand the Kumpo dance, my decision to engage with such literature, in this case Butler's novel *Dawn* (1987), came from a colonizer's positionality. During that period, I was writing a Black woman character in a science fiction manuscript and wanted to ensure my representation of a Black woman's identity and experience was authentic. I put *Dawn* down on page eighty-two, utterly confused by the novel's abstract and by what I, at the time, interpreted as a "weird" narrative aesthetic. I was, ultimately, unwilling and unable to approach the text's meanings openly.

In this chapter, I seek to present my personal experiences exploring Afrofuturistic literature with a view to expand my understanding of what Donna Haraway terms "situated knowledges," or a form of feminist praxis that considers knowledges as located within the lived experiences of cultures, groups, and peoples (Haraway 1988: Collins 2000). To do this, I employ an autoethnographic approach, engaging in self-reflection to connect my experiences and growth

as a white male ally to a greater cultural intervention on how engaging deeply with Black cultural and art forms is necessary if white people are to be in solidarity with Black feminists as they work toward achieving justice. A crucial component of this approach is in paying close attention to one's positionality and to "shut up and listen," so to speak. This is particularly important to me as both a sociological scholar and a science fiction writer who seeks to appreciate Black culture while being careful not to appropriate it or misrepresent it in my own interpretations and representations. My role here is not to speak for the Afrofuturist, nor to assume I am even capable of truly understanding the messages in the literature. My role is to ask hard questions of my own positionality in order to better understand my relation to Afrofuturism as a genre and an aesthetic movement. To achieve this goal, this chapter examines primarily Afrofuturist works from three critical perspectives: culture, history, and hierarchy.

Culture[1] is a powerful component in Afrofuturism, because it is one of the primary modes of conveying themes and presenting a hopeful future for Black communities and nations. The expression of art has been a significant part of African culture, and it is this element that has maintained the diaspora throughout American history. Colonizers and slave traders invaded African spaces, uprooting hundreds of thousands of African peoples and forcing them to serve white people (Sharpe 2016). Yet, as history has shown, African culture has thrived, evolving into a location of resistance as a means of liberation. I explore my understanding of Africanfuturist Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon* (2014) in the broader context of Black feminist thought and walk through my thought processes as I read it. Following an exploration of culture, the chapter will then turn to deconstructing the use of history in Afrofuturism as a means through which futures can be imagined and resistance can be achieved. I look at Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) and Rivers Solomon's *An Unkindness of Ghosts* (2017b). Engaging a Black feminist lens, I examine how history is used as a means of constructing Afrofuturist themes and futures, which will then be framed through three short

stories from N. K. Jemisin's *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* (2018). Lastly, hierarchy is a fundamental component of society that contributes to racism throughout history. As history demonstrates, groups with the most power construct hierarchical societies in order to place certain groups above others. This phenomenon is best described in Octavia Butler's *Dawn*.

    Before I read these works of Afrofuturist literature, I knew I must ask myself hard questions to ascertain my relationship as a white man to these stories centered on Black identities. Setting out to write this chapter, I was concerned that my voice as a white man would appropriate Black voices, no matter how diligently I tried to avoid it. Consulting with editors was an important part of building this piece, and I determined my direction and approach at their recommendation. My reasoning for pursuing this topic comes from an avid interest in Afrofuturism as a movement, genre, and aesthetic. As both a writer of science fiction and as a social scientist, I am interested in exploring the major themes of the genre as well as the messages they convey. My return to *Dawn* in 2019 came when my experiences reading Black feminist literature led me to a place of more significant engagement with feminist ideas and praxis. Much of my male-centric and white-centric social location was challenged by the works of bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and the members of the Combahee River Collective. Concurrently, I developed an interest in studying social movements, particularly the history of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the Black Arts Movement, the Black Liberation Movement, and more recently, Black Lives Matter and the Black Youth Project (BYP100). My positionality as a white man may give me the opportunity to urge other white men to challenge their approaches to knowledge gathering. But wouldn't a Black voice be best suited to author this chapter and its content? Even my history as a social movement scholar is insufficient as an answer to that question, for Black activists have invested more in collective action throughout American history. My desire to become a social movement scholar was inspired by the aforementioned social move-

ments, led by Charlene Carruthers, DeRay McKesson, and Barbara Smith. I believe my role in this chapter is to show other white male activists that engaging with the works of Afrofuturist and African-futurist writers is one step toward establishing solidarity with marginalized and oppressed voices so that we can ally with and support those activist voices without appropriating them.

An Autoethnographic Approach

A former professor of mine once told me that when researchers start a project, they should ask themselves, "Am I the right person for this project?" I asked the same question when submitting an abstract for this book, and I continue to ponder the issue. I met with one of the editors, concerned that my contribution as a white male to a book on Black feminisms would appropriate Black voices or center the white male gaze. She already knew that I had an interest in Afrofuturism and encouraged me to use an autoethnographic approach to really dig into what it means to be a white male reading Afrofuturist literature. Throughout the process, she pushed me to "keep asking why until there are no more whys to ask." So, why is an autoethnographic approach the best way to reflect on history, culture, and hierarchy in Afrofuturism?

Before I begin my autoethnography of understanding how I engage Afrofuturist literatures, it is important to understand the uses of autoethnography and the extent to which it is implemented in this analysis of the literature. Ellis and Bochner define autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (2000, 739). They explain that researchers using autoethnographies look inward to their own personal experiences, reflecting on how those experiences interact with and relate to the broader cultural context in which the subject rests. Autoethnography itself can be a research methodology that involves written art forms such as poetry and short stories (Ellis and Bochner 2000). This element of the methodology lends itself

well to the current project, in which I examine cultural artifacts through personal reflection. When it comes to examining Afrofuturism through a Black feminist lens, autoethnography becomes invaluable to exploring the economic, political, and ideological dimensions of Black feminist thought. Since Black feminism is a dialectical theory, it is a valuable theoretical framework to understand the message of resistance to oppression and imagining positive futures in Afrofuturism (Collins 2000). An autoethnography will aid in the process of listening to these messages.

Though I could not find any examples in the literature of researchers using an autoethnographic approach to examine Afrofuturism, I did find examples of autoethnography being conducted within Black communities for the purposes of understanding Black identity and the experiences of Black women. Renata Ferdinand used an autoethnography to examine Black women's experiences in environments of domination. Identifying herself as a member of the diaspora, she relates her experience as a Black woman, saying, "This writing is a sort of collective remembering of the Black woman's experience, a way of narrating life-worlds and cultural experiences that have been discarded, and worse, retold from those in power. As a postcolonial subject, I am responsible for giving voice to their experience, to 'delve *into* the wound'" (Ferdinand 2018, 58). Ferdinand's work is a perfect example of a Black woman identifying with the Black communities that she is studying; however, her work does not justify the use of autoethnography by a white man to appreciate Afrofuturism. For that, we can look at examples of white approaches to the genre.

Lisa Yaszek, a white female professor of science fiction, examined Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* through an Afrofuturist lens. Yaszek discusses the deeper meanings behind Ellison's work, speaking specifically to the messages he is conveying with the narratives. She then ties these messages in with the greater cultural mores of the time and examines what the story has to say about contemporary issues in addition to historical realities of the Black experience. She makes note that *Invisible Man* was not written explicitly as a piece

of Afrofuturist literature, nor does it imagine hopeful futures for Black and African peoples. She uses her knowledge of Afrofuturism to posit that *Invisible Man* fits into the greater themes of Afrofuturism, in that its narrative presents metaphors that are consistent with science fiction as a whole. The premise that the novel is representative of the Black experience feeds into a much deeper and complex narrative substructure that looks back on Black history in order to imagine contemporary futures (Yaszek 2005).

The term *Afrofuturism* was coined by Mark Dery, a white man who specializes in the study of Black technoculture. In his piece "Black to the Future," he interviewed three Black social thinkers—science fiction writer Samuel R. Delany, cultural critic Greg Tate, and then New York University assistant professor of African studies Tricia Rose (Dery 1993). Dery discusses white science fiction, like William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, to position Afrofuturism as concurrent with cyberpunk presentations. Dery wrestles with his own ideas of how Black people are represented in *Neuromancer* and asks Delaney to comment on what is currently considered a racist depiction of Black communities in the novel. Delaney responds by correcting Dery's conceptualization of that representation, urging Dery to look deeper into science fictions that present a better view of Black communities than the few pages which reference Black people in *Neuromancer*. Delaney says, "Frankly, if you're going to go to *white* writers for your science fiction template for thinking about the problems Blacks have in America, I'd rather see a serious discussion of Robert Heinlein's appallingly fascist 1964 novel, *Farnham's Freehold*" (Dery 1993, 195). Dery's conversation with Tricia Rose looks at the origins of Afrofuturist music in artists like Sun Ra and moves on to discuss the problematic nature of many science fiction narratives that feature cyborgs and robots. She laments that if more science fiction narratives were guided by women, our understandings of technology in both fiction and reality would not be so masculine (Dery 1993). This argument underlines the importance of engaging with literatures, such as Afrofuturism, that offer perspectives with more agency and creative prosperity in how they reflect real-world prob-

lems. This is key to developing an autoethnographic approach that will explore the ways in which white men can listen to Black voices and support Black social justice.

Culture in Africanfuturism

The opening pages of Nnedi Okorafor's *Lagoon* show the mind of a swordfish, alive and writhing in the waters off the coast of Lagos, Nigeria. The swordfish is fully aware of a new presence in the coastal waters; it is something new and life-giving. Aliens delve deep into the ocean, depositing an ethereal effect that enhances the sea creatures both physically and mentally. The narrator describes the swordfish's new enhancements, stating, "She's always loved her gray-blue skin, but now it is impenetrable, its new color golden like the light the New People give off. The color reminds her of another life when she could both enjoy the water and endure the sun and air" (Okorafor 2014, 6). The swordfish, in addition to a multitude of other sea creatures, is renewed and healed from the damage human activity has done to the ocean.

This is a common thread throughout the novel: animals, depicted as sentient beings, reacting to the alien presence that has arrived on Earth. While the story follows four human characters as they navigate the societal chaos that accompanies the alien invasion, the story occasionally jumps to the perspective of creatures such as spiders and bats, who have their own unique experiences with the alien beings. As the novel reaches its climax, the non-human perspectives shift to beings from African mythology that begin to take physical forms and literally rise out of the ground in response to the societal chaos. Okorafor uses these mythologies to display the narrative's otherworldly quality, digging deeper into the cultures that form the identity of the African peoples (Brooks 2016). The Igbo and Yoruba are represented by their own entities and deities, and the revelation that the events in Nigeria were orchestrated by the Igbo trickster spider, Udide Okwanda, a masterful weaver of tales and stories, acts as a thematic coda to the events of the novel. Yoruba trickster

god, Papa Legba, also makes an appearance to cause his own brand of chaos within the story's events. In addition to these deities, Okorafor fashions one of her own, a being called The Bone Collector, a sentient stretch of the deadly Lagos-Benin Express way that comes to life to attack the humans causing the civil unrest throughout the city (Brooks 2016).

Prior to writing *Lagoon*, Okorafor gave an interview with science fiction writer John Scalzi and explained, "In West African culture, spiders tend to represent creativity and storytelling." She dips into her own personal anecdote of a spider that kept appearing in her bedroom while she wrote her critically acclaimed science fantasy novel, *Who Fears Death* (2010b). She wondered aloud if that spider was the Ghanian storytelling spider named Anansi, or Udide Okwanda. She stated, "Maybe Udide Okwanka had gifts to impart to me, writing tools, perhaps. Sounds like magical realist mumbo jumbo, doesn't it? Imagine that! But see, this is my Big Idea—The Story" (Okorafor 2010a). Okorafor's blending of science fiction with mythologies in African cultures presents realities in which technological machinations intertwine with the essence of cultural life as it exists in Africa. Okorafor's Nigerian futures do not see postcapitalist societies that run on the hierarchical nature of mankind, but rather on a seamless amalgamation of cyborg-ian existence in which the technology and the mythology of the society become a single entity that pushes humankind to utopic futures (O'Connell 2016).

Lagoon was my substantive introduction to Afrofuturist and Africanfuturist literature. In the summer of 2018 I read through the novel, not specifically for its narrative aesthetic but because I had previously discovered Nnedi Okorafor on Twitter and wanted to read her work. I dove into the pages, admittedly expecting a straightforward alien invasion story, and discovered something that was a significant and welcome departure from most western presentations of alien invasion narratives. Following my read of this novel, I learned that Okorafor wrote it as a direct response to the film *District 9* (2009), which presented another Africa-located alien invasion story but was told with a more white-centered, colonizer's

gaze. She felt the film depicted Nigerians in a negative light and produced *Lagoon* a number of years later to rectify the representation (Tubosun 2013). When I learned this, I initially balked. *District* 9 was one of my favorite science fiction films specifically because of what I saw as its unflinching commentary on South African apartheid. To hear that its representation of Africans was not only misguided but actively harmful sent a surge of conviction through me. I had been complicit in the misrepresentation of Africans, and it took Okorafor's words to accurately identify the colonizer's gaze in me. Understanding Okorafor's perspective required setting aside that gaze and shifting my perspective, not to other or romanticize Okorafor's social position but to engage with her views in a more intimate and respectful manner. In light of this change of perspective and a repeat viewing of the film, I came to perceive certain problematic aspects of *District* 9 and now appreciate *Lagoon* as a more authentic representation of Nigerian social life and identity.

Lagoon was also the most difficult read of the literature discussed in this chapter. This fact is primarily due to my ignorance of African cultures and customs. I researched aspects of Igbo and Yoruba mythology in order to understand the roles some of the deities and characters played throughout the story. I also struggled to follow much of the Pidgin English many of the characters spoke, though Okorafor provided a Pidgin English guide in the back of the book. I found this guide to be very helpful, and my gratitude for its placement in the book struck me, for I was unsure of the distinct purpose of the guide. Did Okorafor put it in the book for my sake? It led me to wonder for whom this guide was included. In the acknowledgments section of the book, she implies that she was unsure if she should include so much Pidgin English in the first place and cited her UK editor for convincing her to not only keep the guide but maintain the Pidgin English in dialogue. Would that mean the guide is placed for the white reader who may be as ignorant of African culture as I? Or is it a request for solidarity from Black communities in America, who may have generationally fallen out of the diaspora and who may not be familiar with this language? Seemingly in

service to the latter, the novel has a short epilogue, after the Pidgin English guide, that shows a group of Black students at the University of Illinois at Chicago campus hearing the news of the alien invasion. The characters express some frustration, and the character named Nature says, "Man, I don't care about no uppity Africans anyway. What's Africa ever done for me?" (Okorafor 2014, 303). Okorafor includes this scene as, what I interpret, commentary on the connections between African Americans and African culture. Yet it is highly likely that my interpretation is based on a colonizer's gaze and is white-centered. The desire to shut up and listen remains central to my goals in understanding this piece of Afrofuturist literature.

When discussing the role of culture in our science fiction stories, it is important to properly identify the writers of these stories. Okorafor regards herself not as an Afrofuturist, but an Africanfuturist. Consistent with the shut-up-and-listen framing, she tweeted in November of 2018, "I am an Africanfuturist. Before you start asking for or debating it's meaning, please call me the name first" (2018). This tweet was in response to a write-up of the summit at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in which Okorafor was labeled as an Afrofuturist. When people replied to her tweet asking her to explain Africanfuturism, she refused, citing the importance of correct naming over taking control of the conversation. This is a particularly important component of culture because how we name ourselves is critical in developing our cultural identity and thus how we present ourselves when we engage politically (Harris-Perry 2011). In Melissa Harris-Perry's *Sister Citizen*, she writes about the deliberate misrecognition of the Black community through American history. This misrecognition fuels the systematic devaluation of Black identity and Black culture. Yet it is proper recognition that allows collective engagement in the political process as "political action requires demanding recognition" (Harris-Perry 2011, 122). Based on this literature, it appears to me that in the context of Okorafor's work, misrecognition as an Afrofuturist rather than an Africanfuturist undermines the cultural identity she is conveying and thus inter-

feres with her engagement in the political process through cultural resistance. So, should we consider cultural resistance to be the first step toward engaging in the political realm? Research into identity and social movements illustrates how the deployment of identity is a critical strategy when fighting for social change (Bernstein and Olsen 2009). What better way to push for social change than to deploy a cultural identity through narrative?

History in Afrofuturism

Katherine McKittrick states that Black spaces have long been marginalized (2006). Throughout history, the political, social, temporal, and physical locations of Blackness have been grounded in this forced marginalization. Not only do political and social policies contribute to the continued domination of Black communities, but the very histories and geographies of the world build upon that marginalization, further disadvantaging the racially minoritized (Wynter 2003). We see this in our own nation's history of colonialism, slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow, and continued structures of systemic racism that led and lead to whites physically dominating Black space. The US criminal justice system regulates Black bodies through mass incarceration and mandatory minimum sentences, forcing those bodies to spaces of imprisonment (Richie 2012). Redlining limits access to resources for low-income and disproportionately Black neighborhoods while forcing Black bodies into areas where industry pollutes the environment (Carruthers 2018; McKittrick 2006). It is through Afrofuturist movements and literature that Black voices have risen to be heard and pushed back against structures of oppression. In *Demonic Grounds*, McKittrick states, "Blackness becomes a site of radical possibility, supernatural travels, and difficult epistemological returns to the past and present" (McKittrick 2006, 1). Afrofuturism as a subgenre of science fiction typically looks forward to the future, so what can we learn from Afrofuturism about the history of Black spatiality and temporality? Rivers Solomon's *An Unkindness of Ghosts* (2017b) presents a look into this question.

An Unkindness of Ghosts frames the history of the antebellum South through a futuristic lens. The main character, Aster, is a nurse aboard the *Matilda*, a generation starship two hundred years into its voyage to colonize a new planet. By this point in the voyage, the society aboard the ship has devolved into an extremely hierarchical system. In this system the ship's Black population is relegated to the ship's lower decks, where it is cold and dirty, and they are forced to perform labor to serve the primarily white populations in the upper decks. The novel uses elements of history to inform futures. In an interview with the *Rumpus*, Solomon says, "Visions of the future often leave out the ways the past persists into the present. I set out to write a story that resisted that inclination and actively engaged history: its styles, social mores, technologies, so on" (Solomon 2017a). Solomon describes her intent behind the construction and design of the *Matilda*, noting its representative nature of the African diaspora, displaced and moving far away from home toward a mythical Promised Land. Aster becomes the focal point for resistance against the racist regime, using her knowledge of the ship's systems and the help of "lower-deckers" to incite a targeted revolt against the regime in power. Solomon's novel challenges the historical systems of oppression that persist in the future and imagines the possibilities of resistance from Black women (2017b).

I found Solomon's novel to be an interesting juxtaposition to Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), an arguably Afrofuturist story that examines the antebellum South by looking at the past rather than the future. In *Kindred* the character of Dana is thrown backwards in time to the antebellum South on multiple occasions to save the life of a white slave owner. Butler uses the past to comment on the future, while Solomon uses the future to comment on the past. Dana's experiences in the past are directly related to her future existence, as she soon realizes that the white slave owner she continually saves from death is her ancestor. It is appropriate then that McKittrick (2006) uses Butler's *Kindred* as an artifact through which to examine spatiality and temporality in Black lives. By discussing the loss of Dana's arm, McKittrick shows there is a physical and psy-

chic connection between our present and our past in which "Blackness becomes a site of radical possibility, supernatural travels, and difficult epistemological returns to the past and present" (2006, 1–2).

Both *Kindred* and *An Unkindness of Ghosts* present and legitimize travels through time. This temporal mobility grounds me in the realities of the past and the fictions of the future, each complementing one another in how they provide thematic comparisons between the historical reality and the imagined future. Traveling through these fictive and historical realities presented me with questions about my positionality in relation to these stories. Given my social location as a white male, I came into these stories seeing my likeness represented as villainous. There were one or two white-presenting characters who helped the main characters, but for the most part, the position of the white male was as an antagonist. I found these elements of the story quite condemnatory, as my relationship to these histories is defined by my identity as an educated white man. If educated white men of my age during the antebellum South were participants in the systems of oppression, then it is reasonable to believe that I would have also been a participant at the time, however unpleasant that fact may seem to me now. After all, histories and geographies have been socially constructed and defined by white men, as McKittrick teaches (2006). What then is my responsibility as a white male reader of these stories? Is my responsibility one of tacit support, or rather a clearly defined call to shut up and listen? Perhaps both. Dana has the support of her white husband, while Aster receives support from the ship's surgeon general, a man of mixed race but who passes as white. Both of these men, in the context of their temporality, serve as authorities with the power to protect the Black women protagonists, but their agency never takes precedence over the Black women. There is no white savior narrative here. These men are supporters, and in some cases just onlookers, who use their observations to subtly influence the powerful white men around them. It seems to me that direct

action is the goal, but not to an extent that agency is stripped away from Black women.

I reason that this travel across historiographies and geographies offers me a purpose. Surely, Butler and Solomon wrote their novels knowing that white men could engage with these narrative journeys. Afrofuturism is meant to communicate to the reader a future worth looking forward to, when the very structures that cause systemic oppressions are resisted or removed. The deconstruction of these systems is a necessary act in order to bring equality for all groups in society, and it is the identities and locations of Black women that become the main geographies of that resistance. The *Combahee River Collective Statement* maintains, "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (1986, 7). These two novels present a history and future of resistance. Afrofuturist writer N. K. Jemisin does the same thing, as three of her short stories in *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* use history as a means of showing resistance (Jemisin 2018). In "Red Dirt Witch" an oppressed Black woman is given a magical opportunity to view the future. She sees a Black man as president of the United States, Black men and women as legislators, and Black men and women in space. The visions inspire her to resist the white witch who continues to accost her family, and to raise her children with the hope of the future. In "The Effluent Engine" a Black woman comes to preindustrial New Orleans to develop a new clean energy contraption that she can take back to Haiti to ensure its liberation. And Hurricane Katrina is revisited in "Sinners, Saints, Dragons, and Haints, in the City Beneath the Still Waters." Set right after the skies have cleared in flooded New Orleans, the story follows a Black man who struggles to find his way out of the city in the midst of an ancient battle between New Orleans's lizard protectors and an Eldritch Horror that ravages the city every few hundred years (Jemisin 2018). These short stories provide a thematic connection between science fiction and history, continuing the work of Butler and Solomon.

Kindred and *An Unkindness of Ghosts* present two takes on historical resistance rooted in the temporal and spatial locations where forced subjugation has occurred and is imagined to occur. The resistance is a complex reflection of the histories of Black communities in which civil rights leaders resisted racist power structures. Currently, social movements such as Black Lives Matter and the BYP100 use what came before to inform their own resistance against institutions that marginalize racial minorities. Dana is transported to the past, where she uses her knowledge of the present to determine her interactions with the power regime, as evidenced by seeking out information about the antebellum South at her local library between time jumps (Butler 1979). Aster's circumstance is a thematic representation of history taking place in future societies (Solomon 2017b). These stories offer me the opportunity to reflect on past instances of collective action in order to support current social movements with similar goals. My introduction to Afrofuturism via social movements was the start of a desire to support Black movements, and that support includes working toward the dismantling of the system of oppression within our society, and that act requires understanding the hierarchical societal structures that built those systems in the first place.

Hierarchy in Afrofuturism

Afrofuturism has shown how Black futures can be imagined through the use of culture and reflections of history, yet the oppressive regimes that have permeated our history and cultures are established through the use of hierarchical structures. It is this hierarchy that categorizes and rates human beings according to often arbitrary attributes related to physical appearance, ability, economic status, or gender. Black feminist scholar Sylvia Wynter purports that this hierarchy was established in major societies centuries ago, when the theocentric understanding of Man saw humankind as subordinate to God or gods. From there, the idea of the hierarchy was established and continued to be developed over the course of

human history (Wynter 2003). Humankind then saw the evolution of this hierarchy in the form of Man 1 and Man 2, two assessments of human ranking based on socially constructed ideas of the norm. Man 1, a secular understanding of Man based in rationalism and reason, was used to justify the appropriation of land from "Native Others" (Wynter 2003, 266) during the colonial period. Afterward, Man 2 became an understanding of Man based in Darwinian conceptions in which hierarchies were understood as "objective fact," being based on biological "Truths," which always mean "white and male." This understanding flourished despite the fact that race is socially constructed (Wynter 2003).

Octavia Butler explores the truths of humankind's social hierarchies in her novel *Dawn*, the first in her Xenogenesis series. In this novel, humanity has nearly destroyed itself through war, but an alien race called the Oankali rescues a large portion of the human race and holds them in suspended animation. Two hundred and fifty years later, the protagonist, Lilith, is awoken and given a mission by the Oankali: to train and lead a group of humans in order to return to Earth. The Oankali have made significant genetic alterations to the flora and fauna left on Earth because, in return for saving humankind, the Oankali expect the human race to allow for a genetic "rebirthing" so the Oankali can propagate their species through a unique form of reproduction. The Oankali routinely express to Lilith their frustration with human beings and their propensity to create a hierarchical society when left to their own devices. The main Oankali who trains Lilith, Jdahya, says: "You are hierarchal. That's the older and more entrenched characteristic. We saw it in your closest animal relatives and in your most distant ones. It's a terrestrial characteristic. When human intelligence served it instead of guided it, when human intelligence did not even acknowledge it as a problem, but took pride in it or didn't notice it at all … that was like ignoring cancer. I think your people did not realize what a dangerous thing they were doing" (Butler 1987, 37).

In this passage, Jdahya is explaining to Lilith how human beings' tendency to create social hierarchies has been one of the leading

causes of conflict and destruction in human society. As Lilith trains her group of forty humans, they begin, unprompted, to form coalitions; some back Lilith, and others supporting a rival who wishes to overthrow Lilith. And despite the Oankali's efforts to avoid encouraging the construction of social hierarchies, their inaction when Lilith begins to have trouble allows space for the problem to worsen. Lilith becomes angry with the Oankali for their refusal to intervene and complains that they too create hierarchies because of their emotional distance. After the eventual dissolution of the group of forty humans, Lilith and the Oankali discuss how to find hope for the future, a future in which hierarchies do not lead to the destruction of humankind. Another Oankali, Nikanj, says, "Our children will be better than either of us. We will moderate your hierarchal problems and you will lessen our physical limitations" (Butler 1987, 247). It appears that Butler does envision a positive human existence for the future; however, it requires significant genetic and cultural change to create a literal new hybrid species of human and Oankali.

As I mentioned previously, I attempted to read *Dawn* back in 2013 in order to assist with the "authentic" representation of a Black woman I was writing in a science fiction novel. At this time, the endeavor was a desire for diversity in my stories. Literary agents were looking for diverse stories with more inclusivity, and I was eager to change my writing style to avoid sticking with straight white male characters. I found those types of characters boring and not very fun to write, as I had difficulty making them interesting. I soon discovered that it was even more difficult to write a character whose identity did not match my own, as understanding the cultural positions and nuances of identity are difficult if one has not taken the time to "shut up and listen." Trying to write a character with a different identity also presents the dangerous possibility of poorly representing a given identity or culture. In writing a Black woman, it was my ultimate goal to ensure that the character was not a negative stereotype of Black women, so I thought that reading a novel written by a Black woman with a Black woman as the protagonist would help with that endeavor. Ultimately, I do not believe

I was committed to the project, as I struggled to remain engaged with *Dawn* and found it too "weird" for my tastes at the time. Most of my experiences with science fiction involving aliens were limited to Klingons and Wookiees. *Dawn*'s Oankali are otherworldly, strange creatures covered in thin hair-like tentacles that move to indicate attention or emotion. *Dawn* also includes lots of discussion of gender, as there are three genders in the Oankali species (Butler 1987). Yet, it could have also been my difficulty engaging with the protagonist that led me to put down the book before I had read more than eighty pages.

After I'd started my Ph.D. program and began my dissertation research into social movements, I returned to *Dawn*. This also occurred after my knowledge of the histories and geographies of Black identity and culture had begun to develop, as it continues to develop. Throughout my second reading, I recognized themes consistent with principles of Black feminism such as hierarchy, liberation, and gender and race relations. This challenged me to think critically about the experiences and struggles of the main character and her efforts toward liberation from hierarchy. I confronted the reasons for originally setting down the novel. In the first attempt, I sought to "use" the text for my personal gain and then abandoned it when it did not meet my needs. My second read was undertaken in the spirit of shutting up and listening to the novel's message and thus trying to understand the situated knowledges within the text.

Afrofuturist fiction seeks to challenge systems of oppression by deconstructing the components of society that are caused by forced hierarchies. Sylvia Wynter's position that race is socially constructed contributes to collective action. This position redefines how race is viewed by a white-male-dominated society that institutes these hierarchies. The race construct "would enable the now globally expanding West to replace the earlier mortal/immortal, natural/supernatural, human/the ancestors, the gods/God distinction as the one on whose basis all human groups had millennially ground their descriptive statement/prescriptive statements of what it is to be human, and to reground its secularizing own on

a newly projected human/subhuman distinction instead (Wynter 2003, 264)."

Wynter's assessment of these hierarchies is consistent with the narratives constructed by Afrofuturism. In order to present hopeful futures for Black communities, hierarchies that distinguish between the human and subhuman must be dismantled. Afrofuturist fiction presents Black characters who take charge of their agency to undo these dehumanizing distinctions. I found that reading *Dawn* showed me Lilith's attempts to reconstruct society without these hierarchies. Since the individuals she had "awoken" to be part of her new human society on Earth had already lived within those hierarchies, it was difficult for her to overcome them.

In reality, my positionality as a white man provides certain advantages that prevent me from seeing how the established hierarchies disadvantage the racially minoritized. I now find myself frustrated with white science fiction that presents dystopias in which those hierarchies have been enhanced so they affect white groups as well. For many racially minoritized folks in this nation and around the world, the dystopia is already here, and I believe it is disingenuous for white science fiction to pretend it is not. That is why it is important for white men to connect to those realities and recognize that true efforts to deconstruct hierarchies requires supporting Black communities when they engage in collective political action. Afrofuturist fiction is a form of this political action, because it challenges the reader to reflect on the positionality of marginalized peoples and their cultures.

Conclusion

I met Afrofuturist science fiction and fantasy writer N. K. Jemisin in February of 2016 on the JoCo Cruise. At the time, I had never heard of her, but I was immediately engaged by her imagination and passion for science fiction and fantasy. During a Q&A, I asked her how to write marginalized voices as a white, cisgendered, and heterosexual man. In her answer, she stressed the importance of first valu-

ing the voices of marginalized identities outside of fiction before attempting to write from the perspective of one. When it comes to creating stories featuring perspectives of others, being mindful of their realities is of the utmost importance, as those realities are what stick with the reader. She explained to me that a narrative is a special conduit through which voices can resonate with readers of all backgrounds and experiences.

I feel that Afrofuturism is one of those conduits toward empathizing with identities that do not match my own as white a man, specifically Black identities and communities. I have read this literature with the intention of understanding my positionality in relation to Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Black feminist thought. I came to the understanding that my position of privilege made it very dangerous that my efforts could result in speaking over Black voices from that position of privilege. I hope I have been able to avoid that appropriation, but I cannot say for certain without the input of the people who read this chapter. I have also tried to ask myself hard questions to determine how I see Afrofuturist literature as related to cultural themes outside of and within the narratives. Culture, history, and hierarchy are part of white societal structural engineering. This engineering has and continues to negatively impact the real-life experiences of Black women and to benefit white people. Afrofuturism seems, to me, to be a means of unraveling these injustices by connecting different historical and cultural experiences. It has been my goal to listen rather than talk, though I admit this chapter has included a lot of talking. But I do believe that my understandings of Afrofuturist literature have value. In Yaszek's analysis of *Invisible Man*, she says, "Afrofuturist artists automatically create new audiences for their stories: those primarily young, white, Western and middle-class men who comprise the majority of science fiction fans and who may never otherwise learn much about the history of their country save what they haphazardly pick up in the high school classroom" (Yaszek 2005, 300).

Yaszek's words seem to coincide with Jemisin's meaning in her answer to me on that cruise. Afrofuturism engages the privileged

white male science fiction fan to view reality from a different perspective; it encourages us to see the world from the perspective of the marginalized, disadvantaged, and oppressed. Perhaps through this engagement, white men can come to better understand how to support the Black community in their efforts to dismantle hierarchies without taking control of the conversation and appropriating Black voices. Seeking out Afrofuturist imaginations can connect white men to Africanfuturist writers like Nnedi Okorafor, who ask that we "shut up and listen" to Black voices. And since Afrofuturism calls upon Black cultural, historical, and geographical realities in its formation of world-building and themes, Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism can also open up a world of Black feminist scholarship that proposes and strategizes methods of collective political action in an effort to "dismantle the Master's house" (Lorde 1979).

Yaszek shows that looking back on Black literature through an Afrofuturist lens can illuminate new ideas and messages, as Black feminist scholarship in the past has also used literature by Black women to comment on the real experience of Black women outside of fiction. McKittrick is one example of this, but other Black feminist scholars, such as Melissa Harris-Perry and Andrea Elizabeth Shaw, also use literature to express the experience Black women faced throughout history and continue to face now. In *Sister Citizen*, Harris-Perry uses Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* to examine the relation of Black women to the experience of oppression. Andrea Elizabeth Shaw's *The Embodiment of Disobedience* looks at novels such as *The Wind Done Gone*, by Alice Randall; *Romance*, by Joan Riley; and *Nervous Conditions*, by Tsitsi Dangarembga (Shaw 2006). These explications and descriptions of novels serve to develop the experience of Black women and relate that experience to what is happening now.

White men like me have the opportunity to use the messages in Afrofuturist and Africanfuturist literature to understand how to support Black communities, and specifically Black women, in fighting hierarchies. *Lagoon* shows that a people's culture can manifest itself in ways that are resistive and disruptive to the status quo

(Okorafor 2014). *Kindred* and *An Unkindness of Ghosts* present history as a lesson and as a means of building positive futures for marginalized communities (Butler 1979; Solomon 2017b). *Dawn* approaches hierarchy by looking at both an outsider's perspective and an insider's perspective, and then displaying methods of resistance that challenge those hierarchies (Butler 1987). As someone who identifies as a scholar-activist, reading these works has revealed how narrative can become an arena for collective action toward social change. The resistive actions of the stories' main characters showed me the power of Black voices in overcoming structures of oppression, and it is the responsibility of white men to use their privilege to support those voices and efforts.

References

AccessGambia. 2019. "Kumpo Dance Masquerade." http://www.accessgambia.com/information/kumpo-mask.html.

Bernstein, Mary, and Kristine A. Olsen. 2009. "Identity Deployment and Social Change: Understanding Identity as a Social Movement and Organization Strategy." *Sociology Compass* 3 (6): 871–83.

Brooks, Kinitra. 2016. "The Multiple Pasts, Presents, and Futures of Nnedi Okorafor's Literary Nigeria." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, April 13, 2016. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-multiple-pasts-presents-and-futures-of-nnedi-okorafors-literary-nigeria/.

Butler, Octavia. 1979. *Kindred.* Boston: Beacon Press.

–––. 1987. *Dawn.* New York: Aspect Science Fiction.

Carruthers, Charlene A. 2018. *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Collective, Combahee River. 1986. *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties.* Freedom Organizing Series. Albany, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Dery, Mark. 1993. "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94 (4).

Ellis, Carolyn, and Arthur P. Bochner. 2000. "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 733–68. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ferdinand, Renata. 2018. "Remember, Me: An Interlocking Narrative of Black Women's Past and Present." *Cultural Studies* 18 (1): 52–60.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–599.

Hall, Stuart. 1980. "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms." *Media, Culture and Society* 2:57–72.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Jemisin, N. K. 2018. *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* New York: Orbit.

Le'Keith (@rapturelekeith). 2019. Twitter. March 30, 2019.

Lorde, Audre. 1979. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Second Sex Conference, New York.

McKittrick, Katherine. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

O'Connell, Hugh Charles. 2016. "'We Are Change': The Novum as Event in Nnedi Okorafor's Lagoon." *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 3 (3): 291–312.

Okorafor, Nnedi. 2010a. "The Big Idea: Nnedi Okorafor." *Whatever* (blog), June 17, 2010. https://whatever.scalzi.com/2010/06/17/the-big-idea-nnedi-okorafor/.

———. 2010b. *Who Fears Death?* New York: DAW Books.

———. 2014. *Lagoon*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

——— (@Nnedi). 2019. Twitter. March 31, 2019.

Richie, Beth E. 2012. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: New York University Press.

Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Shaw, Andrea Elizabeth. 2006. *The Embodiment of Disobedience: Fat Black Women's Unruly Political Bodies*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Solomon, Rivers. 2017a. "Magical Systems and Fusion Reactors: Rivers Solomon Discusses *An Unkindness of Ghosts*." Edited by Claire Vaye Watkins. *The Rumpus* (blog), September 26, 2017. https://therumpus.net/2017/09/the-rumpus-interview-with-rivers-solomon/.

———. 2017b. *An Unkindness of Ghosts*. Brooklyn: Akashic Books.

Tubosun, Kola. 2013. "Nigeria: When Aliens Took Lagos." *Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/07/nigeria-nnedi-okorafor-book.

Womack, Ytasha L. 2013. *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337.

Yaszek, Lisa. 2005. "An Afrofuturist Reading of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*." *Rethinking History* 9 (2/3): 297–313.

Notes

1. Culture, in this case, is in reference to Stuart Hall's conceptualization of culture as a "terrain of struggle" (Hall 1980, 69), wherein marginalized ideologies and beliefs fight for legitimation among the more dominant ideologies and beliefs.

8. Black Love, Black Loving, Loving Blackness

KIMBERLY WILLIAMS AND ANDREA N. BALDWIN

As Black feminists we are aware that current "American Grammar" (Spillers 1987) marks and (mis)names Black women as unfeminine, nonhuman, and by extension unlovable. Black women exist in a society in which their proximity to hardship, death, and dehumanization is unlike any other group of people in the United States. We recognize the ways in which Black women are consistently misrecognized and traumatized by society, including by state surveillance apparatuses, by the Black community, and by Black men in particular (Ritchie 2012). This multifold attack results in us having a particular intimacy with grief that leaves most of us feeling unloved and unworthy of love (Cooper 2018). This proximity to grief encourages Black women to protect themselves and love small (Morrison 1987, 162). Loving small is a protective mechanism Black women use to survive within the viciousness of a system that views them as mere flesh (Spillers 1987); a system where Black feminist knowledges, experiences, and maps remain subordinate and are seen as unreliable (McKittrick 2006); and a system which "places prejudice under the cover of an appeal of its eradication" (Moten 2018, xi). To exist as Black women in this system is to be perpetually open to loss and displacement.

In this chapter we ask the following questions: Is there such a thing as Black love, and if so, what is it? Is it a healing intercession, a laying on of hands (Shange 1976)? And how can we use it to move beyond a position of (non)survival in this world? Does existing within this colonialist, patriarchal system prevent Black women from truly finding and feeling radical love—from being able to love big? How can Black women really love each other when they are always so close to trauma, loss, and death, and how is Black love tied

up in grieving? What are the limits of Black feminist love—does it include loving those who hurt us? Is there a symbiotic relationship between how Black women love and how they process their own humanity? How can we love radically if we are not free? As Black feminists should we be invested in something as complex and seemingly impossible as Black love? How can we be intentional about loving as a radical political act?

These questions are crucial in a time of continued oppression and redaction of Black life, which wears on the Black woman's body to confine how she moves, laughs, dances, loves, and lives. And yet, to be confined in this way both reifies and rejects this oppression, as Black folks continue to create, live, and love in spite of and in "the Wake" (Sharpe 2016) of Black suffering. Loving Black life, which is seen as absent, outside, and incapable of love or being loved, is defiant and rebellious. Such loving defies plantation antiblack logics that place Blackness at the nadir of humanity (Wynter 2003) and affirms and rewrites "black life, from the perspective of the ex-slave archipelagoes" (McKittrick 2018, 81).

Black love, therefore, is inherently political! As stated by the Combahee River Collective, "Our politics [must] evolve from a healthy love for ourselves, our sisters and our community which allows us to continue our struggle and work" (1983, 270). As reiterated more recently by Black feminist Brittney Cooper, our job as "Black feminist[s] is to love Black women and girls. Period" (2018, 35). The possibility of being allowed to do this is world-making and, according to Cooper, "is about the world Black women and girls can build, if all the haters would raise up and let us get to work" (Cooper 2018, 35). This is the potential of a love based in radical Black feminism, of loving Blackness and Black women.

To demonstrate how we have been able to do this political work of loving ourselves, each other, other Black women, and the Black community at Virginia Tech, we provide, later in this chapter, examples of the "love work" that we have done during the 2018–19 academic year. Herein we describe how we were both hesitant and deliberate in our "process of creating blackness anew within the

context of antiblackness" (McKittrick 2016, 85). We did so by shifting our focus from what we could not do because of our lack of allotted resources to the abundance that exists in our communities and the possibilities of tapping into this abundance to (re)create Black culture. If, as McKittrick writes, the "creation of culture through black inventions animates liberation as praxis of rebellious subversion" (87), then this work was nothing short of freeing. We watched students, faculty, and staff dedicate their time and energies to exclaim their love for Blackness through their art, poetry, and music, as well as intellectually engage with a Black radical feminist tradition. This subversive work, while difficult and often unrecognized, brought much joy to us and to our communities because "Black love is nothing if it is not simultaneously a conduit to Black joy" (Cooper, 245).

The Struggle with Loving Blackness

In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Paul D reflects on how enslaved Africans were forced to love small. How they

> picked the tiniest stars out of the sky to own; lay down with head twisted in order to see the loved one over the rim of the trench before you slept. Stole shy glances at her between the trees at chain-up. Grass blades, salamanders, spiders, wood-peckers, beetles, a kingdom of ants. Anything bigger wouldn't do. A woman, a child, a brother—a big love like that would split you wide open … to get to a place where you could love anything you chose—not to need permission for desire—well, now, that was freedom. (Morrison 1987, 162)

Paul D's thoughts provide us with insight into how the history of Black fugitivity and fungibility (Hartman 2007)[1] is connected to Black folks' ability to love and the possibilities of Black love in a "plantation context [which] required the impossibility of black humanity" (McKittrick 2016, 82).

The system of colonial capitalism including racial slavery was

based on the "profitable 'atomizing' of the captive body," which, according to Hortense Spillers, resulted in practices based on complete and "total objectification, as the entire captive community … [became] a living laboratory" (1987, 68). According to Kathrine McKittrick, this system "calcified … [Black] nonpersonhood and nonbeing" through what Sylvia Wynter describes as "practices of 'nigger-breaking'" (2018, 82). According to McKittrick's reading of Wynter, the practices of racism and narratives of antiblackness within this colonial system "not only permeate how we collectively understand one another but also inform negative physiological and neurobiological responses to blackness[—that is,] … how psychic and affective negative feelings about blackness … are implicit to a symbolic belief system of which antiblackness is constitutive" (83). Such a system therefore affects not only how others "feel" about Blackness but also how Black people themselves do. It normalizes a "sensing and knowing antiblackness as a normal way of life … black-as-worthless" (83). As such, enslaved Black people were denied the chance to feel otherwise about Blackness, to see each other as worthy, and hence to love in a system in which Blackness was constituted as unlovable and conditions were set up to make Black loving virtually impossible.

The brutality of Euro-American plantation logics[2] is also seen in the ways they negated Blackness through a misnaming of Black women that signifies them, according to Spillers, as "property plus" (65). As property, Black women were subjected to stereotypes such as the mammy and the jezebel. These stereotypes rendered them as unlovable, unrapable, insatiable, and sexually animalistic (Collins 2000) units of labor used to produce other units of property for the sole purpose of white male use, pleasure, and plantation profitability. Therefore, Black folks, according to Paul D, had to develop a protective layer to survive what Christina Sharpe describes as "the Wake"—a place of annotation and redaction (2016, 114)—of the plantation.

The plantation logics of the past, with their "detached optics, and brutal architectures" (Sharpe 2016, 114), still exist today in what

Saidiya Hartman calls the "afterlife of slavery," in that Black folks still experience the enduring presence of slavery's racialized violence (Hartman 2007, 6). Black peoples' lived experiences are felt through what Spillers calls the "hieroglyphics of the flesh"–the "phenomenon of marking and branding [that] actually 'transfers' from one generation to another, finding its various symbolic substitutions in an efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments" of captivity (Spillers 1987, 67). In this present iteration of capitalism, this afterlife of slavery, Black people, and Black women in particular, continue to labor under conditions that exploit them via "nigger breaking"–"racial displacement … forced exile, homelessness, rented and owned dwellings, poverty, integration, segregation, political sites, professionalization, community gathering and locales, nationalism(s), activism, and globalization" (McKittrick 2006, 12). The spatiotemporal baggage of the flesh that exists in our palimpsestic past-present spaces ties Black life to "black placelessness, black labor and a black population that submissively stays in place" (McKittrick 2006, 9) through a controlling of those deemed flesh, a suppression of not only the physical but also of the emotional.

Flesh, in the sense of "before the 'body' there is the 'flesh' … seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship's hole, fallen, or 'escaped' overboard" (Spillers 1987, 67), is the consequence of a historical experimentation that has fashioned Black bodies as simply unworthy of care, concern, compassion–of love. To be made and remade flesh is to be placed "on a rung of the ladder lower than that of all humans" (Wynter 2003, 301) and to be always in a state of fungibility through misrecognition, fugitivity, and capture. In the afterlife of slavery Black women, for example, are not only still living in the shadow of the stereotypes developed under slavery but are also now grappling with new stereotypes such as the welfare queen, the matriarch, and the "Sapphire," which together paint them as lazy, emasculating, unfeminine (Harris-Perry 2012), and responsible for all of the problems experienced in the Black community. These stereotypes result in a misrecognition of Black women that

has consequences on how they are treated and seen as (un)worthy of care, both at the institutional and community level and within their intimate relationships. For how can people care for and love women whom they do not really know or are foreclosed from knowing as anything but devalued, distorted, and confined bodies? It should therefore come as no surprise that both cis- and transgender Black women and girls in America experience disproportionate rates of violence. This violence must be seen as a direct consequence of these stereotypes (Ritchie 2017). Blackness that is adversely shaped by negation of humanity results in Black women's bodies being beaten, brutalized, torn apart—treated as mere flesh. Being constructed as flesh, as unworthy of love, has even deeper consequences for finding and giving love at a time when the rates of Black male incarceration, employment, and education as well as homophobia and transphobia in the Black community are increasingly shaping partnering options for cis and trans Black women.

Experiencing these refusals of Black humanity (McKittrick 2016), Black folks, then and now, have seen kinfolks sold away, been beaten and murdered, endured rape and mutilation, and now continue to experience the pain and suffering of present-day state-sanctioned police killing, surveillance, and detention (Ritchie 2017; Ritchie 2012; Davis 2016). These experiences have implications for how Black people feel and the capacity for and potential of Black life. According to Sharpe, to exist in the Wake is to exist in a place of "deep hurt and of deep knowledge" (27), recognizing "the ways that we are constituted through and by continued vulnerability to overwhelming force though not *only* known to ourselves and to each other *by* that force" (16). Important to Black survival is that the Wake is also a place of knowledge because we recognize that held within the long history of oppression is also a long history of resistance, of "imagining blackness and Black selves otherwise, in excess of the containment of the long and brutal history of the violent annotations of Black being" (Sharpe 2016, 115).

While we understand that Blackness is adversely shaped by history and spatiality, forged in disruption and fugitivity, we also

understand that the mechanisms of racist capitalism–stolen, sold, and confined bodies, a history lost and redacted, an anxious anticipation of loss–do not foreclose knowing, longing, and desire. This desire animates Black folks to "speak a truer word concerning [one]self, ... strip down through layers of attenuated meanings, made in excess over time, assigned by a particular historical order, and there await whatever marvels of [one's] own inventiveness" (Spillers 1987, 65). In fact, the racial order we experience today, which materialized together with brutal plantation practices that negated Black humanity, "also produced the conditions to reinvent and reorder black life ... [and] new and different ways to pronounce black life [with a] rebellious impulse to indict and overturn the dominant values that engender and profit from black nonbeing and nonpersonhood" (McKittrick 2016, 84). Black life and love therefore emerge within and against long-standing antiblack practices and antiblack logics.

Black Love Prevails

In the preceding section, we argued that Black love–for oneself, communities, and Blackness–is part of a Black worldview that emerged alongside and in relation to racist colonial capitalism and western systems of knowledge. Therefore, if "the total negation of blackness ... is always written as analytically relational to a series of rebellions that affirm black life," and if the "Middle Passage and plantation systems produced the conditions to reinvent new forms of human life" (McKittrick 2016, 84), then by living in the afterlife of slavery and the denial of Black love throughout a history of capture and suffering, we are capable of consistently generating ways of Blackness that defy Euro-American logics and beget new possibilities for Black love.

   Paul D's thoughts in *Beloved*, mentioned above, were in response to Sethe's sharing about her capacity to love after escaping slavery. She says:

It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing about before. It felt good. Good and right. I was big, Paul D, and deep and wide and when I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. I was that wide. Look like I loved em more after I got here. Or maybe I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off that wagon–there wasn't nobody in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to. You know what I mean? (Morrison 1987, 162)

Sethe's sentiments illustrate for us the power and potential of the Wake for Black people. The "brutal and racist imperative to totally negate black peoples in slave and postslave eras is undone by … a range of black rebellions: marronages, mutinies, funerals, carnivals, dramas, visual arts, fictions, poems, fights, dances, music making and listening, revolts, periodic uprisings and . . . the ongoing creation of culture" (McKittrick 2016, 83) and by Black people's ability to love Blackness. The Wake is the place of a Black imagination of freedom, generational freedom, that "just won't act right no matter how much the power of judgement tries to make it 'well behaved'" (Moten 2018, 1). It shows up in the irregular and the refusal. Our history gives us ways of loving we have been able to see, an "affirmation in and through negation … that critical celebration of tumultuous derangement, of the constitutive force of dehiscence of the improvisations of imagining things, is written in the name of blackness, on and under its skin" (Moten 2018, xii). As McKittrick writes, "The negation of black humanity within the plantation context provided new and different ways to pronounce black life … axiomatically situate[d] black life *outside* plantocratic conceptions of humanity and, in so doing, reinvent[ed] black selfhood-community-life anew" (2016, 84). To exist in the afterlife of slavery and in the Wake is to acknowledge that we exist in a place of deep knowledge, understanding that this knowledge as marginalized people requires that we become undisciplined (Sharpe 2016, 13) since the activation of such knowl-

edges means that we engage in new methods of being in community, of loving.

Black love formed in adversity, grit, and swag is a humanizing project, and therefore the fundamental purpose of Black love is to affirm our humanity. As such, Black love is also a radical act, resisting denial and reimagining Blackness: Black resilience illuminates this. Black love is like Black geographies, which "are located within and outside the boundaries … expose the limitations … locate and speak back … illustrate the ways in which the raced, classed, gendered, and sexual body is often an indicator of spatial options." Black love as inhabiting a place of "political denial and resistance [is] fragmented, subjective, connective, invisible, visible, acknowledged, and conspicuously positioned … described as, among other things, rhizomorphic, a piece of the way, diasporic, blues terrains, spiritual" (McKittrick 2006, 7).

Black people had to learn a different way to love, a way that is not confined to Euro-American logics, because the "way we love each other, or fail to, is a life-and-death situation" (Cooper 2018, 242). What does this way look like? Black love looks like magic, an alchemy that is capable of creative and revolutionary possibilities in everyday acts. It looks like loving on either side of prison bars; doing the other mothering work that Black women do in Black communities; being in sisterhood as Black feminists; being unapologetic about "lov[ing] Black women and girls. Period" (Cooper 2018, 35). It looks like "acknowledging that we need each other, committing to showing up for each other, and committing to radical honesty and realness with each other" (Cooper 2018, 242). Black love looks like "the preparation of a table, or a piano. It can't be sung alone" (Moten 2018, xii); it looks like radical social movements such as #Blacklivesmatter, #sayhername, and #metoo. Black love looks like the Black faces we know, and the ones we don't, but trust and love anyway. Black love is living the fullness of ourselves for each other as libation to our ancestors.

Libations for the Ancestors: A Celebration of Black Love

Understanding the intentionality that is a part of living and loving Blackness is important to how we do our work within our spheres of influence. We (Kimberly and Andrea) truly believe that "cognitive schemas, modes of being human that refuse antiblackness ... restructure our existing system of knowledge" (McKittrick 2016, 81). As Black women who work in the sanctioned place of knowledge and who love Black people, we are committed to such a restructuring "as coconspirators in a project of black love ... [that] center[s] a justice practice as a love language" at the same time that we are "commit[ted] to being intimately and relationally just with one another" (Cooper 2018, 244). As Ntozake Shange wrote, working together, we found God in ourselves and in each other and we loved her fiercely (1976).

We see the work we do as libations to our ancestors. By engaging in activities based in Black rebellious love, rebellious activities, and honoring black life, we acknowledge that we are a part of a Black heredity that, even while enduring brutality, had the "*impulse* to resist, the *impulse* to produce oppositional narratives, the mind *feeling* theory, a profound *enthusiasm* for black culture, and longings *felt* in the flesh" (McKittrick quoting Wynter 2016, 89). We have felt a commitment to continue the creative life-giving work, literal and figurative, of this lineage. In doing so, we have continually asked ourselves, How do we do work that pays tribute to those Black people who came before us, who mentored and loved us and taught us how to love and center Blackness, in a space where logic and reason are constructed as antithetical to Black culture, which is "logically stigmatized because it resides outside normative, respectable, cultural codes" (McKittrick 2016, 87)? Such a commitment means that we are invested in doing the Wake work "of attending to Black life and Black suffering" (Sharpe 2016, 22) and in being stretched and changed by said work. It also means that we pay attention to the "alienated-reality status" and draw our "attention to black diaspora

activities as geopolitical responses that unsettle antiblackness and objectification" (McKittrick 2016, 85). This is work that attends to the needs of the over one thousand Black students at Virginia Tech (Virginia Tech 2019), who exist in a university climate that, like most universities in the United States, is struggling to address issues of racial equity and Black belonging (Harper and Simmons 2019).

Doing this unsettling work—that is, doing work that unsettles the academic spaces we inhabit and the normalized perceptions of those who inhabit these spaces—is a way to generate our own "bio-centric belief system that shapes how we collectively feel and know and affectively negotiate the world" (McKittrick 2016, 89) and our campus. This work is crucial to our vision of loving Blackness in the academy. In fact, when we think back about our work together over the last year as Black women, as feminists, we think about the sources we drew from and about Audre Lorde's theorizing of the erotic as a "source of power and information in our lives" (Lorde 1984, 53). It is because of this deep care for one another and our students that we, together and separately, engaged in acts of love as an "affirmation of black life [that] includes, ... adaptive social innovations ... requires practices (African and non-African, black and non-black) within a system that axiomatically situates black life *outside* plantocratic conceptions of humanity and, in so doing, reinvents black selfhood-community-life anew" (McKittrick 2016, 85).

Black Love, Black Loving, Loving Blackness: Doing Love Together

In August 2018, I (Andrea) started a tenure-track position at Virginia Tech. I was arriving in Blacksburg scarred from the traumatic experience of my former institution. At that institution, where I worked as untenured faculty, presumptions of my nonhumanness as a Black woman led to the exploitation of my labor and eventual departure when I was no longer considered a good fit for the Gender and Women's Studies Department. The trauma, which came in part

because of having to deal with the administration's refusal to listen to student protest, as well as my betrayal by white feminists who I thought were allies, was a lot to endure, especially while on the job market. However, I was able to persevere due to the love and care shown to me by a handful of Black women faculty with whom I had built community.

Before Andrea's arrival to campus, I (Kimberly), as the director of the Black Cultural Center (BCC), reached out and provided a plethora of resources, introduced Andrea to the Black faculty and staff network, and offered my own time and energy to help her and her family relocate and get settled in Blacksburg. This occurred while I was still reeling from the events of the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally one year earlier, which I attended to counter protest, and was questioning my role as the BCC director and my complicity as such in upholding a university culture that predicated itself on racist practices and origins.

Our meeting in the summer of 2018 was the beginning of a Black love relationship that came to exist alongside our own individual anxieties about the possibilities and vulnerabilities of loving while Black. Over the last academic year we have learned to explore and even embrace these anxieties as we came to rely on each other. I (Kimberly) helped Andrea navigate the university, assisted her in her foray into Blacksburg, taught her unspoken rules, and included her in the BCC's events aimed at educating and cultivating Black student community.

I (Andrea), after hearing about the work Kimberly had done prior to my arrival at Virginia Tech and then witnessing the amazing work she was doing, was enamored, and her transparency helped me to let down my guard in her presence. Kimberly's ideas for how we could work together to educate and empower our community over the past year resulted in me giving presentations, including on Black women's labor, for the BCC Black Liberation Talk Series. I also utilized the BCC to hold classes and invited her to my class to give a presentation on the history of Black student activism at Tech.

We became each other's go-to person. We have shared many

a raucous laugh and cried lots of tears (Andrea mostly) over the past year, sometimes both at the same time. We have become what Black women refer to as sisterfriends. Being a sisterfriend is to love (an)other Black woman in the way that Alice Walker wrote about, to appreciate "women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength" (1983, xi). Our bond was also cemented in the love we have for our community, and over the 2019 spring semester we became integral to each other's projects, two of which we write about here.

Loving Blackness through Trauma: Kimberly's Narrative

I entered Frank B. Wilderson's work on Afro-Pessimism through Black violence—more specifically, shortly before the summer of 2017 and during the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally. As a counterrally attendee, I became obsessed with finding theories that could explain the contemporary sociopolitical mourning that was increasingly tethered to my work, my identity, and grassroots organizing. At the protest, I was surrounded by death in its fleshed form of right-wing agitators in hoods, khakis, suits, and sundresses. After engaging with Wilderson's work, I became simultaneously enthralled and crestfallen at his rhetoric of Black identity being defined by "social death" as a result of the haunting ills of slavery: "Blackness is unique, is coterminous with Slaveness, and is synonymous with social death, and that for slaves there was never a prior meta-moment of plenitude, a moment of equilibrium, or a moment of social life" (Wilderson 2017). I gathered his renowned text *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (2010), collected journal articles, and began delving into other theorists who questioned familiar concepts like hope, time, and language, including Hortense Spillers, Calvin Warren, and Jared Sexton.

This theory informed a new life, but without the situated context of reinvention, Afro-Pessimism offers no salve to the wound, just

resignation to "burn it all down." Thereafter, I questioned every theorist, every social justice or pedagogical practice, and moved into the personal and political by questioning and doubting the very concept of *love.* I engaged with professors, colleagues, and mentors on the subject: How could love exist within a vacuum of antiblackness and white supremacy that is the very bloodline of global libidinal and financial economy? I became fearful that love was impossible for Black people because death is sutured to the rising sun of Black life while grace is ignorant and elusive to Black lineage. As Hortense Spillers asks (2018), What is Black touch and intimacy when slavery reoriented Black flesh to be gored? If love and its implications of touch and sound are harvested from white supremacist placement, can love sustain Black culture and Black people authentically?

Black people remained synonymous with death, harassment, and trauma across social media and news outlets. I could see and feel Afro-Pessimism's linkage through the alleged safety of my home, through the oxymoron of the lexicon of *safety* and *home* to Black people. After grieving my orientation around love for months, a friend encouraged me to check out the documentary by Arthur Jafa, *Dreams Are Colder Than Death* (2014). In it, "contemporary thinkers and artists in black studies and black arts engage in a meditation on the ontology of blackness and its relationship to life, death, and the concept of the human in the context of the 'afterlife of slavery.' Ultimately, through the word of Fred Moten, the film poses the question of the possibility to *love* black people as well as what it might mean to commit to blackness against fantasies of flight" (liquid blackness 2017).

While researching the film, I soon discovered its footprint was integrated into a project at Georgia State University called liquid blackness—a print journal, a research group, and a theoretical concept that "focuses on blackness as an aesthetic mode, one that emphasizes multiplicity and experimentation" (liquid blackness 2017). I found a previous issue titled "Black Ontology and the Love of Blackness" (2016), where theorists, poets, and artists discuss love

and Black identity through processing *Dreams Are Colder Than Death.* In this issue, I reengaged with the aftercare vitally necessary to balance Afro-Pessimism, with the same aforementioned theorists who complicated and reassured the necessity of Black love, Black care, and Black faith. Moreover, I began my foray into Fred Moten's work in addition to also rereading Wilderson's take on Afro-Pessimism to find the disjointed space where reimagination dares to begin. As Moten asks in *Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)* (2013), "Can there be an aesthetic sociology or a social poetics of nothingness?" If the answer is yes, perhaps there is a beautiful recklessness with Blackness positioned as nothingness—a reimagination of love with new sensations and language. I believe the apocalypse of fleshed antiblackness is found in the creation of Black love.

This newfound work of unraveling love informed my work, where previously I was largely informed through the student developmental model and critical race theory, with the awareness that the university relies on antiblackness for its economy of deficit, isolation, and imposter syndrome for the Black student. My very position is intentionally situated without resources, staffing, and support, effectively bolstering what Sarah Ahmed deems the "strategic inefficacy" of the university (2018). This *inefficiency* of my job and by extension my Black identity is necessary for antiblackness to thrive maliciously and quietly in the white academy (Ahmed 2018). Furthermore, Ahmed discusses how contemporary notions of diversity are related to public relations and image control, and she negates the supposedly intended role of "diversity" in pushing systematic change or, even at best, retaining underrepresented students. "Universities often treat whiteness as an image problem rather than an institutional problem, to change the whiteness of an image (for example by creating brochures showing smiling colourful faces) is how they do not modify the whiteness of the institution: *change the image, keep the thing*" (Ahmed 2019). This means "diversity" becomes a superficial adhesive—a sticker, a magnet, a defined focus on aesthetics rather than shifting the actual culture through policy.

In my third year of personal research and inquiry, and after inte-

grating Afro-Pessimism as a genesis for critique and dismantling, I began to reimagine my role at the university. Could I rest my head from banging against the immovable brick wall (Ahmed 2012) of university whiteness and solely focus on creating an atmosphere of love and care for Black students? *Should* I rest my head? How do I reimagine love as a practice, project, and collaboration across the university? *Could* I create such a place? Morrison imagined such a place with far worse conditions in *Beloved*'s Clearing: "In the Clearing, Sethe found Baby's old preaching rock and remembered the smell of leaves simmering in the sun, thunderous feet and the shouts that ripped pods off the limbs of chestnuts. With Baby Suggs' heart in charge, the people let go" (111).

And so, with inspiration through Jafa's *Dreams Are Colder Than Death*, the *liquid blackness* journal, and Virginia Tech faculty members, we set out to create a multidisciplinary project on Black love. The project development included the following principles: communal vulnerability and creation by students and faculty, informal mentorship through faculty work, and student scholarship on love as reckless praxis. The Office of Inclusion and Diversity at Virginia Tech provided a faculty fellow for the Black Cultural Center in the person of Dr. Kwame Harrison from the Africana Studies Department—coeditor of this text—to collaborate on this project. For our first meeting, we brainstormed the aforementioned guiding principles and the actual project development. This included a gallery exhibit on Black love generated by the student body in addition to faculty members producing a piece on Black love with an accompanying image for the website, Virginia Tech Black Love Exhibit (2019). For the faculty exposition, we gathered nine creative pieces on said topic with varying genres, including flash nonfiction, creative essay, and poetry, with content about addiction, maternity, marriage, and kinship. The pieces were presented on a website where the public could access the material. Students were made curious and humble by their faculty mentors' courage and vulnerability. Virginia Tech faculty contributors included Nikki Giovanni, Andrea Baldwin, Kwame Harrison, Menah Pratt-Clarke, Brandy Faulkner,

Freddy Paige, Onwubiko Agozino, Lucinda Roy, Larry Jackson, and Letisha Brown. Their departmental areas of expertise included civil engineering, political science, women's studies, creative writing, computer engineering, and Africana studies. We were especially elated and surprised to receive a piece by the canonical Black Arts poet Nikki Giovanni.

I was hoping this exposure would influence students to consider breathing vulnerability into their own art submissions. Students were given close to six months to submit two pieces for the juried art exhibit *Black Love*, which would be installed at the Perspective Gallery at Virginia Tech in February 2019. Unfortunately, by the last week in November, we only had two submissions. I inquired through individual and group discussions about the hesitancy and lack of submissions and was given one or the other response: "Ms. Kim, I'm not in a relationship with anyone; I don't know about love" or "Ms. Kim, I'm not really an artist—I just do stuff for fun but not for serious entries." I countered their trepidation by referencing the faculty essays in which love was studied through mothers, children, melody, and other conduits deviating from romanticism. Students relayed that they would work on creations during the winter break session, but January came and we still only had three submissions for the student exhibit. With further questions and debate, I discovered students doubted their Black love and joy as situated in the gallery space—more specifically, that their interiority did not belong in a white, elite art environment. I could empathize with protecting the interiority, or the "expansive, voluptuous, creative; impulsive and dangerous" (Quashie 2012, 21). However, I wanted students to reimagine how their joy was art and worthy of framed celebration. Moreover, I needed to expand their conceptualizations of Black strength and gorgeousness as synonymous with quietness or vulnerability, but they remained vigilant in the idea that Black love was narrowed to a protest image or a prom photo (Quashie 2012, 21). Through conversations, I learned Black love was not only elusive but impractical in the current sociopolitical climate. Vulnerability was a rite for the soft-bellied or the fool—certainly not for Black

students caught in the otherworldly devastation of Black death and white life. The conversations I had with students were textured as we talked about examples of how white supremacy shows up in multiple ways, including in the very imagination of Black stillness as serene instead of synonymous with death. Moving forward, I am invested in researching healing practices in my curriculum, inclusion work, and counseling center initiatives.

After collaborating with a student organization for marketing and also linking them to Black photographers like Gordon Parks and Roy DeCarava, we heard our students exclaim, "Oh, I have pictures like that on my phone!" or, "I have photoshoots I could submit!" Notably, their pieces were juried by Black scholars Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke and Dr. Kwame Harrison. For many of them, it was the first time they had visited Virginia Tech's Perspective Gallery or the first time their work was deemed *art*. Additionally, Cultural and Community Center Senior Director Yolanda Avent suggested a sonic component so Virginia Tech University Libraries installed a sound booth for patrons to discuss the topic of love to play inside the gallery. The grand opening was alive with faculty and students viewing artwork and reading the faculty's Black Love pieces, which were also displayed in the gallery. There were student performances encompassing original hip-hop pieces and a cover of Etta James's iconic, soulful love song, "At Last." Visitors not only peered at each piece of artwork with a heavy smile but also took pictures with their fellow artists, talking with them about their artistic process. Students were flushed with joy and pride when asked to give an artist talk about their pieces or receiving compliments on their photography. The curatorial statement included the following:

> This exhibit is all about Black Love. In a time when Black existence is a threat—in a climate where police have been called because of Black people swimming, canvassing, singing, jump-roping or drinking coffee—being Black can be a reminder of suffering. Alternatively, Blackness is also love, resilience, and community and our love is legendary or as

Toni Morrison wrote: "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all." We love through romanticism, we love our religion, we love our families, we love our Greek organizations, our friends, and more. For this Virginia Tech student biennial art exhibit, all students were invited to explore and create a piece that evokes Black Love. (Kimberly Williams 2019)

The exhibit ran for a little over two months, and in that time Black students claimed the gallery as a source of respite; they visited the gallery multiple times to boast, in addition to reserving the gallery space for cyphers, meetings, and film screenings. The gallery became their space to claim and redress their Blackness and kinship. Gallery curator Robin Scully noted that this exhibit included some of the highest visitor numbers in the past few years.

The closing ceremony included the incorporation of water to invert the very genesis of anti-Blackness throughout the ceremony. Theater professor Brittany Harris led the guests in a wave life activity of confession and prayers. Students also organized a "wave check" competition, a cultural practice most popular in historically Black colleges and universities, where students compete for the best coif. Duston Scarborough from the Office of Inclusion and Diversity performed a spoken word poem that bridged the do-rag, Black curls, and the Atlantic Ocean into a poem about hair sensuality. In both ceremonies, students and faculty were entrenched in a space where they created a new rite of water and vulnerabilities. The ceremony ended with students being able to take their (now consecrated) framed pieces of hesitancy, love, doubt, and interiority home with them.

The opening program included the following:

Opening Remarks: Curator, Robin Scully

Introduction of Project: Director of the Black Cultural Center, Kimberly Williams

Judges' Remarks: Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke and Dr. Kwame Harrison

Student Performance: Jaylen Foskey (keyboard) and Abigail Wied (vocalist)

Student Performance: Cedrick "Mac" Ilo (poet/emcee)

Exhibit Artists: Tyler Frazier, *Out of the Night That Loves Me*; Camryn Taylor, *All Together*; Elysia Budu, *Midnight Thoughts about You*; Richard Randolph, *Love Language*; Gabriel Hailemichael, *Love Is Back* and *It's Black*; Troy Bryant Jr., *Timeless* and *'Till the Wheels Fall Off*; Erika Brittini Nelson, *Care Free Black Boy*; Jonathan Holloway, *Black Love* and *the Lovers*; Kameren Bluiett, *Can I Kick/Big Drip* and *Untitled*; Eyoel Fassil, *Love of Self* and *Empowerment of Self*; Doris Tinsley, *Cincy Love*; Michelle Ya Diul, *BOC! BOC! BOC!* and *The Sun Is in Love with Us*; Xavier Freeman, *The Father and the Son* and *Divine Union*; Rachel Kim, *Untitled*; Ebone Smith, *Water Comes Back*, *Still*, and *New Birth, New Story*; Tyrah Waters, *Power and Poise*; Devan Salters, *Hold Onto*, *Always*, and *Black Rise, Black Set*; Jariah Strozier, *Zhalhari*; Christopher Rosser, *Our Kin*; Taylor Baylor, *Girlfriends & Light*; Taylor Baylor, *Sweet Love*; Trichia Cadette, *Where There Is a Woman There Is Magic: A Tribute to Self Love*.

Doing the Work in Love: Andrea's Narrative

When Kimberly shared her vision for the Black Love project and asked me to be a part of it, I immediately said yes. As a Black feminist academic, I am wary of the normalized ways in which knowledge is currently produced in the academy and of how people who work within these Eurocentric institutions are positioned in relation to this production and the marginalizing consequences. Even after feminists of color have exposed the structure of the

academy as creating artificial, hierarchical, and peripheral boundaries, these structures remain wholly intact and work to keep certain constituencies—based on their identities, job titles, and descriptions—separate and to deter community by using a rhetoric of scarcity (Crawley 2018). This rhetoric of scarcity restricts the Black imagination and creativity in academia through a lack of investment. "This restriction of the imagination has to occur because the imagination is itself always involved in this project of liberation" (Hughes 2018, 165). For example, while universities and colleges tout increased diversity and inclusion, they operate from a deficit model which imagines Blackness and Black people as exterior to the university; therefore, when they are included, they are constantly reminded that they need to earn their place and assimilate to an already established university culture. Too often we have heard the rhetoric that there are not enough funds to provide sufficient resources to allow students of color to celebrate themselves and their cultures, to invent and create. Administrators are often quick to lament the lack of funds to hire faculty and staff who can guide and mentor Black students. The few that do exist are concentrated in powerless and often contingent positions and take on a considerable amount of invisible labor caring for these students. This lack of investment in faculty and programs eventually shows up in Black students suffering from imposter syndrome, unable to see or imagine themselves outside of this lack, and feeling placeless, stifling their possibilities.

Existing in academic spaces can therefore be very isolating and result in a constant struggle for survival for those who find themselves on the "periphery." To work against this, I utilize a praxis that centers an ethic of care and love that critiques the strict Eurocentric hierarchies which confine queer, Black, Brown, working-class, and immigrant bodies to their fabricated margins. This praxis seeks to respatialize academia, to trouble and rework academic borders to allow us to *see* and *experience* the many and concurrent dimensions of each other—despite our positionalities in the academe—as researcher and activist, teacher and student, mentor and partner.

This type of *vision* allows us to create a world of sorts, one that becomes a gathering place for change, and allows us to discover the possibilities of connection, collaboration, and coalition. Using this praxis, I seek to create scholar communities that, in contrast to the university's scarcity-mongering rhetoric and practices, are premised on the notion of abundance—a wealth of knowledge, abilities, creativity, and love—that exists in our communities. The project that Kimberly proposed—a project of Black love—is this praxis.

I contributed a poem on Black love and the vulnerability, fear, and sense of hope that comes with mothering a black son. This poem was included in the exhibit in the Perspective Gallery along with other poems, essays, photographs, and paintings. In fact, the cover of this book came from that exhibit, which for me was about more than Black creativity; it was a claim to habitation and of belonging (not simply of inclusion). As such, I invited the students in my Africana studies course into that space as I held class there, so they could experience the tenuousness, hesitations, and possibilities of Black love. As I watched in the closing ceremony as Black male students rebelliously brought the Blackest of Black culture into this academic, cultured (meaning Euro-American) gallery space in the form of durags and the wave check, my heart was full.

With regard to the wave check, it is also important to note here, however, that it occurred on April 1, traditionally celebrated as April Fools' Day. This date is significant because, while the wave check was an amazing scene of Black raucous abandon, when it was announced, there were students who immediately thought that the mere mention of the geographical audacity of Black men in durags owning the gallery space was a prank. That some Black students equated the inclusion of Black culture in this space to an April Fools' Day joke reinforces what being imagined as outside, being asked to assimilate, and receiving a lack of investment can do to students' imaginations. For a moment, the joy that came from the raucousness of our being in community on April 1 almost did not happen, as Kimberly communicated to me her insecurity with preceding in the face of overwhelming student disbelief. However, it is the fact

that this disbelief even existed that made it clear we need to protect our joy from strict Eurocentric academic logics, knowing the "only way to protect [this] joy is by practicing it" (Hughes 2018, 165). The acts produced by the Black love rebellion at Tech in the spring 2019 semester had to be memorialized. A Black feminist love praxis is premised on the belief that we are all capable of knowledge production. The Black Love project was Black knowledge at its finest, and I wanted to include it in this this anthology.

In the spring semester of 2019, I decided to engage the students in the Black feminisms graduate course I was teaching as knowledge producers and, thus, to produce this anthology. This anthology was formed in love–a love demonstrated by the coeditors who poured their time and intellectual labor into this work and by the students who challenged and pushed themselves to go beyond what any course should require. It is an "alternative order of consciousness [which] emerges from knotted and messy and awful plantocratic pasts" (McKittrick 2016, 89). It is a Black rebellion as "an intellectual breach" (McKittrick 2016, 86)–that is, it disrupts Eurocentric logics about how knowledge is made. This is a text that demands that we see Black women and their knowledges. It is one of our several "creative acts that unfold as reparative possibilities rooted in black intellectual activities" (McKittrick 2016, 90).

When I decided to coedit this anthology as a labor of love, it was immediately clear to me that Kimberly and I should write this chapter together. Writing this chapter with Kimberly was an act of rebellion based in love. It resists academic categorizations of faculty-staff distinctions. We wrote together as Black women who pay rapt attention to what these types of borders and boundaries do in upholding academic logics while simultaneously keeping us siloed. We wrote together in loving solidarity.

Conclusion

Black love relationships exist in and are touched and changed by the traumatic spatiotemporal moment that is the "past that is not yet

past" (Sharpe 2016, 73), a moment of continued and prolonged hurt and pain. It is therefore important to understand how the systems of oppression that exist in this moment, this afterlife of slavery, necessitate ways of knowing, doing, and being love(d). In this chapter we examined how Black love existing in the Wake and in the afterlife of slavery is radical, and to love our Black selves is a radical act that defies the spatiotemporal logics of the Euro-American racist academy and that celebrates Black life.

During the 2018–19 academic year, we found Black love within each other as we worked together in Black feminist sisterfriend solidarity. Our love and care for ourselves, each other, and our community led us to desire "reinvention of black life and community, and inventive rebellious practices, regardless of scale, [to] clearly demonstrate a revolt against an entire belief system, including a sanctioned order of consciousness, that negates black humanity" (McKittrick 2016, 87). The results were glorious. As we move forward in our collective and separate journeys, loving Blackness along the way, we hope to engage new "reinventions and inventions [to] transform an impossibility–black humanity–into an imaginable and valuable and expressive form of black life" (87).

References

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. "Strategic Inefficiency." *Feministkilljoys* (blog), December 20, 2018. https://feministkilljoys.com/2018/12/20/strategic-inefficiency/.

———. 2019. "Damage Limitation." *Feministkilljoys* (blog), February 15, 2019. https://feministkilljoys.com/2019/02/15/damage-limitation/.

"Black Ontology and the Love of Blackness." 2016. *liquid blackness* 3 (6).

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Con-*

sciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Combahee River Collective. 1983. "The Combahee River Collective Statement." In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Barbara Smith, 264–74. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press.

Cooper, Brittney. 2018. *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Crawley, Ashon. 2018. "Introduction to the Academy and What Can Be Done?" *Journal of Critical Ethnic Studies Association* 4 (1): 4–19.

Davis, Angela. 2016. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Gaunt, Kyra Danielle. 2006. *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop.* New York: New York University Press.

Hall, Kia M. Q. 2016. "A Transnational Black Feminist Framework: Rooting in Feminist Scholarship, Framing Contemporary Black Activism." *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 15 (1): 86–105.

Harper, S. R., and I. Simmons. 2019. *Black Students at Public Colleges and Universities: A 50-State Report Card.* Los Angeles: University of Southern California, Race and Equity Center.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hartman, Saidiya. 1997. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

–––. 2007. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Hughes, LeKeisha. 2018. "Robin D. G. Kelley and Fred Moten in Conversation Moderated by Afua Cooper and Rinaldo Walcott." *Journal of Critical Ethnic Studies Association* 4 (1): 154–72.

Jafa, Arthur. 2014. *Dreams Are Colder Than Death.* http://liquid-blackness.com/dreams-are-colder-than-death/.

liquid blackness. 2019. http://liquidblackness.com/about/.

Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider*. New York: Random House.

McKittrick, Katherine. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 2011. "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12 (8): 947–63.

———. 2016. "Rebellion/Invention/Groove." *Small Axe* 20, no. 1 (March): 79–91.

Morrison, Toni. 1987. *Beloved*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Moten, Fred. 2013. "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112 (4): 737–80.

———. 2018. *Stolen Life (Consent Not to Be a Single Being)*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Quashie, Kevin Everod. 2012. *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Ritchie, Andrea. 2017. *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ritchie, Beth. 2012. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: New York University Press.

Shange, Ntozake. 1976. *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf*. New York: Scribner Poetry.

Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Spillers, Hortense. 1987. "Mama's Baby. Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17 (2): 65–81.

———. 2018. "To the Bone: Some Speculations on the Problem of Touch." Kreeger Wolf Endowment Speaking Series. Lecture, Northwestern University, November 15, 2018, Chicago. https://www.gendersexuality.northwestern.edu/about/news/video-hortense-spillers-to-the-bone-some-speculations-on-the-problem-of-touch.html.

Van der Kolk, Bessel. 2015. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. London: Penguin Books.

Virginia Tech. n.d. "Undergraduate Enrollment by Gender and Ethnicity." Accessed May 24, 2019. https://eng.vt.edu/about/rankings-and-figures/undergraduate-enrollment-by-gender-and-ethnicity. html.

Walker, Alice. 1983. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Prose*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt.

Wilderson, Frank B. 2010. *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

–––. 2017. "Afro-Pessimism and the End of Redemption." Franklin Humanities Institute. https://humanitiesfutures.org/papers/afro-pessimism-end-redemption/.

Williams, Kimberly. 2019. "Black Love Opens." *Perspective Gallery* (blog), February 21, 2019. http://perspectiveg-allery.blogspot.com/2019/02/black-love-opens-22219.html.

Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrespresentation–An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (3): 257–337.

Notes

1. Hartman (1997) describes fungibility as "exploiting the vulnerability of the captive body as a vessel for the uses, thoughts, and feelings of others" (19).

2. The concept of Euro-American plantation logics is drawn from Mckittrick (2011), who explains that there are logical and lasting consequences of a global colonial system set up and justified by those who benefitted from the dehumanization of racial Others. These logics, cemented on/in the plantation during slavery, continue today, and "while differently articulated across time and place, … marked[/s] black working bodies as those 'without'" (948).

Silly Black Girl: Ode to *The Lady with the Magical Hair*

About the Cover Art

TRICHIA CADETTE

Silly Black girl
Your head in the clouds
Eyes to the moon
Back to the wall
Your legs entangled, planted on the cold, concrete floor
Your brush strokes color lines as
You create life in emptiness………

I wish I could say that I consciously wanted to create something profound when I painted the two art pieces—collectively titled *The Lady with the Magical Hair*—that grace the cover of this amazing publication. The truth is they were birthed from a daydream induced by deep stress. My mind was clouded; I could not produce any clear thoughts, nor could I focus on the mountain of tasks in my lap. In the midst of all the fog, the line "Where there is a woman, there is magic" floated through my thoughts. I became entranced by it and began to paint.

As I sat hunched over on the bedroom floor, I began to stroke my canvas, attempting to bring this woman to life. As my brush caressed the lines of her body, my obsession with her slowly turned into a spiritual love connection. I have always been fascinated by the Black woman's body. Its shape and movement, the way it finesses and eclipses its surroundings. I was aching to bring this magical woman who consumed my thoughts to life.

Though I do not think of myself as a visual artist, art has always been my safe space: I would daydream and paint whenever I needed an escape from the burdens of my reality. Many of my nights were spent crouched on my bedroom floor painting and escaping. The lady with the magical hair was my escape from months of stressful nights. I had drawn her figure many times in my notebooks, always with the same lines in my head: "*Where there is a woman there is magic. If there is a moon falling from her mouth, she is a woman who knows her magic, who can share or not share her powers. A woman with a moon falling from her mouth, roses between her legs and tiaras of Spanish moss, this woman is a consort of the spirits*" (Shange 1982, 9).

This quote from Ntozake Shange's 1982 novel, *Sassafrass*, *Cypress and Indigo*, epitomizes self-love and self-actualization. A love we, Black women, sometimes neglect or abandon. *The Lady with the Magical Hair* was my love. So often we choose to reject self-love while fighting to love everyone else. We live in a world which has for so long told us that our "Blackness" wasn't beautiful, that our rich, honey-kissed, dark chocolate skin was unattractive, undesired. My

two most profound childhood memories were, first, being teased by my younger, lighter-skinned siblings about my dark skin. "Don't go play outside in the sun," they would say to each other. "We don't want to get dark like Trichia." The second memory is of my mother saying to me, "You don't need anyone to tell you you're beautiful; just look in the mirror." Though my siblings introduced me to the harsh reality of colorism, my mother's words shaped my self-image. Black skin is beautiful no matter the shade, and the Black woman is God's most beautiful creation. I take great pleasure in capturing her beauty with my brush.

> Silly Black girl
> Stolen joy
> Love forsaken
> The world can't hurt you
> Chin up
> Eyes to the sun
> Smile to the heavens

Life has a way of stealing our magic or keeping us from discovering what truly exists within us. At that moment, the lady in the painting was my magic: I needed her to come alive to awaken me. I gave no thought to the outcome of the painting: I was entranced by the magic of the Black woman's love and the beauty of the Black woman's body. I wanted to capture her spirit, her love, her sense of self, her struggles for recognition and acceptance. Her battle for love and respect, from the men, the lovers, the fathers, the brothers, and the mothers. I wanted to capture her power. If she had a name it would be Eve, not as a representation of the first woman, but in fact the first love, my love. And if she was my Eve, then I was her creator, her Goddess, and she was me.

> Silly Black girl, you do too much,
> Feet tired,
> Arms heavy,
> You've walked for miles holding your crown

Working, praying, fighting
Waiting for your day to reign

A Black woman is a magical being, and her power becomes even stronger the moment she accepts who she is and recaptures her love of self. That power is her crown. Sometimes we work so hard loving others, we forget to love ourselves. We spend so much time being strong just to be good enough that we forget we are extraordinary. We forget our light—we give away our magic.

Silly Black girl, raise your head,
Eyes to the sun
Feet to the earth
You're going to rule the world one day
Little Black girl.

Afterword

Trichia Cadette writes: "I have always been fascinated by the Black woman's body. Its shape and movement, the way it finesses and eclipses its surroundings. I was aching to bring this magical woman who consumed my thoughts to life." Immediately, I was struck, asking myself: *Why does my heart open and clench at such a powerful, beautiful utterance? Is it a desire and deep love of the human body I identify with and, in particular, Cadette's stated love of the BLACK woman's body that makes emotion well? … sowing seeds of love … expressing one's own love of such desire that renders me mute and overcome with beauty? Cadette's own self-identification and self-love is perhaps what was so powerfully voiced, which in turn gives voice and substance to the beauty of the Black body—with all its hues and rich tones—without eroticization, violation, or the hurtful voyeuristic (white) gaze.* Seeking inspiration from the novelist Ntozake Shange, Cadette was drawn to that writer's images of self-love and self-actualization. They capture what Cadette envisions as the magical essence of feminine Black love and the Black body. Black paint fills in luscious curves and iridescent color dazzles the eye when taking in her figures' eye-catching hair. One *sees* their beauty in all their boldness. This is inspired self-representation and self-love. Language and drawn contours fully capture the beauty that is Black womanhood, Black powerfulness, and Black acceptance. Potent language. Potent concretization. Potent *visualities*. Potent futures … for little Black girls and grown Black women.

In Cadette's paintings and reflection, we find the praxis of giving voice to the silenced, the repressed, the "misseen" (Spillers, quoted in Murrell), and the invisible that Pratt-Clarke so aptly identified as a new, important Virginia Tech goal. With the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion, as an institution Virginia Tech has made an effort to foreground marginalized perspectives, voices, and experiences. Dr. Andrea Baldwin's spring 2019 Women's and Gender

Studies seminar inspired and guided love, care, rigorous thought, agency, and activism. In each chapter, these contributing scholars have impressively analyzed, interpreted, or studied dimensions of the Black experience through the lens of Black feminist thinkers and writers–boldly, unapologetically, and incisively. They offer us reflections and new directions that provide hope for going beyond hurtful narratives; painful histories; reductive, limiting stereotypes; and the weight of the history of Black enslavement. Celebration, knowledge, love, and care lead the way to enlighten and create this volume's productive, mind-opening analyses. Murrell argues that this is happening now with Afro-Caribbean woman who are reclaiming sex work, public dance hall performances, and Caribbean popular culture as positive acts and spaces where sexual liberation occurs because "women are in charge of *their* bodies."

The praxis of reimagining the Black self through digital self-representation was one call to arms that Islam proposed: to infuse American culture with new Black self-representations in order to eclipse the five stubborn stereotypes of Black women since slavery. Such an approach helps to undo three hurtful characterizations of Black women: they are "unfeminine," "nonhuman," and by extension "unlovable," which Williams and Baldwin identified in their chapter. This helps to undo Black women's "proximity to hardship, death, and dehumanization." Black feminist love and Black feminisms provide an opening-up to emotions, self-acceptance, self-love, and knowledges that resist the repercussions of prejudices and suffering that engender "grief," "loss," "trauma," "displacement," "misrecognition," and "loving small." Willams and Baldwin write that "Black love looks like magic, an alchemy that is capable of creative and revolutionary possibilities in everyday acts." We are taken back to Cadette's magical Black woman. Black feminist love and Black feminisms help to remove the mechanisms that Black women internalize to protect themselves and "to survive within the viciousness of a system that views them as mere flesh" (Spillers 1987, quoted in Williams and Baldwin). Mightily, Williams and Baldwin assert: "Black love existing in the Wake and in the afterlife of slavery is radical, and to love our

Black selves is a radical act that defies the spatiotemporal logics of the Euro-American racist academy and that celebrates Black life." For Black women, such bold words spark audacity, rebelliousness, life, vitality, and the desire to love hugely. One essential credo, rooted in radical Black feminisms, is to "lov[e] Blackness and Black women"! Simply stated, it is joyously welcomed and sublimely practiced. All of the authors of this edited edition engaged in this type of praxis–powerfully. Black peoples' humanity is affirmed, and Williams and Baldwin see the work they do as "libations to [their] ancestors."

Islam also called for all who publish in various venues to center "Black womanhood as an epistemological site in their work and [to create] knowledge about Black women's lived experiences." Moreover, she suggested for scholars and activists to "address the intersectional and historical roots of problems that cause Black female oppression. More specifically, by centering Black womanhood as an epistemological site, we can all challenge the mainstream assumptions of Black women by educating the public about the long-term and very real effects of controlling images on the Black community." Such practices emerged and gained exquisite validity with Black feminist pedagogy's foci and inspiration. Both Judith Lorber, in her *Paradoxes of Gender* (1999), and Kimberlée Crenshaw, in the "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (2016), spoke of the necessity for scholars to first make visible the discriminatory or limiting nature of issues related to gender, race, and identity. This must be done in order to then challenge, subvert, or eradicate unjust laws, representations, or cultural practices. As Baldwin and Reichelmann argue in their introduction, Black feminist pedagogy, which co-committedly is grounded in an ethics of self-care and love, "helps us develop and engage in strategies that move beyond mere survival and instead toward bettering the present and future. It allows the oppressed to 'move beyond victimhood [and survival] to embrace the notion of … educators, scholars, and activists as active agents … transforming the academy and/or society itself.'" This is a pedagogy that does not divorce scholarly work from affect, attachment, or one's own

emotional responses to what we write and the people for whom we write. All of these essays are written with the greatest commitment to scholarly excellence, inspired by the theoreticians, texts, and professorial guidance received in the spring of 2019. These research projects contribute to moving beyond predominately white, Anglo-American, or western European theoretical models by foregrounding Black feminists' theoretical frames of reference and the histories of the African/Black diaspora. Black lives, Black oppressions, Black thought, and Black culture represent core intellectual processes that hold a central place within knowledge making. This approach must continue to thrive and proliferate throughout the academy—nationally and internationally—and throughout societies in which discrimination, oppression, and injustice still prevail. Knowledge allows us to see past practices to try to rewrite the future—and many futures need reversals to occur.

Scaptura showed how historically, and during the 2016 election, white women chose their race over their gender. By making this choice throughout history, white women have subjugated Black women for their own self-interests, or more accurately, for white men's self-interest. Therefore, liberal and conservative white women must enlighten themselves and fight to reverse this social and political pattern of voting Republican so that a figure such as Trump is not reelected. More inclusionary practices need to be implemented in Women's and Gender Studies courses and in PhD reading lists to include Black feminist thought. Great vigilance by all is necessary to ward against Black bodies being used in malevolent ways, such as medical guinea pigs in scientific studies similar to those mentioned in Scaptura's work.

Fallon's chapter explored how Black feminist thought could help us to turn moments into movements regarding the sociopolitical struggles over the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) in southwest Virginia and the #BlackLivesMatter movement. For the first, Fallon lays out two ways that pipeline resistance could be expanded into "an emancipatory movement for political transformation"—how resistors of the MVP should be sensitive to their

own (white) rhetorical arguments. This presents a challenge for all. Moving from Wynter's framework, Fallon "recast[s] the issue of pipelines in a manner which emphasizes a sense of both the intersectionality of power relations and the interdependence of social politics." In Wynter's words, "the correlated hypothesis here is that all our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over the environment, global warming, severe climate change, the sharply unequal distribution of the earth's resources … these are all differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle" (Wynter 2003, 261, quoted in Fallon). In articulating the abuses of current MVP and state violence, it is incumbent on MVP resisters to broaden their critique to include all past transgressions regarding the colonization of lands: those of the Native Americans which were seized and developed and those of the cotton fields cultivated and labored in by enslaved Black people. White US citizenry appropriated and expanded their profits through such wrongs. For Fallon, it allows resistors to provide a more complete historiography of struggle and injustice when dissenting the MVP and Commonwealth of Virginia's current plan to take over lands through eminent domain. Hence, protesters and Wynter's project "can be seen as doing intersectional work, recognizing the layers and differentiations in white supremacist, patriarchal, and classist orientations which dominant formulations of genre take on." For the second, a similar historiography related to colonization practices must situate police and KKK violence against Blacks in order to understand the depth of the issues being contested and to dismantle structural injustices. He draws on Taylor's work because she provides a "lucid account of the constellation of political and historical events that inform the Ferguson uprising into a generative account of how movements can come to be catalyzed by flashpoints, or moments."

If scholars wish to analyze and envision new social patterns and practices related to African mores, Noumbouwo guides us to use two important theoretician's work. In order to first make African marriages and the concomitant institutions of polygamy, in-lawism,

and levirate understandable, she draws from Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to underscore how gendered roles are unconsciously assimilated and later passed on through cultural and social modeling in boys' and girls' upbringing. Convincingly, Ogunyemi's theorizations of African "womanism" lend themselves more aptly to that continent's historical and contemporary context rather than (white) American Feminisms. For Ogunyemi, the scholar "will recognize that along with her consciousness of sexual issues, she must incorporate racial, cultural, national, economic, and political considerations into her philosophy," an approach that in some of its components resembles Crenshaw's intersectional analyses. Noumbouwo also calls for broadening the sphere of motherhood so that women's work will have value in an African context. Lastly, to try to work against the oppressive and limiting components of marriage for African women, change must happen regarding how Africa raises its young boys and girls in order to shape new values communicated through mothers, fathers, in-laws, and community.

Ray offers a different kind of methodology, a reflexive autoethnography, toward a goal of supporting Black voices by elucidating how to engage with Black activism and explore ways white men may provide this support without appropriating the message and strategies of Black collective action. He dialogs with Haraway and Collins while exploring his own experiences with Afrofuturism—as a movement, genre, and aesthetic—because those theoreticians discuss "'situated knowledges,' or a form of feminist praxis that considers knowledges as located within the lived experiences of cultures, groups, and peoples." He suggests another way to engage with Afrofuturism: the deconstruction of the "use of history in Afrofuturism as a means through which futures can be imagined and resistance can be achieved." His analysis of how hierarchy contributes to racism is another major argument of his approach. As a professor of literature, culture, and language, I appreciate Ray's determination not only to acknowledge his subject position when approaching this culture-bound aesthetic but also his sensitivity in seeking to understand Afrofuturist texts on their own terms. These

approaches can be tools with which all "white male activists," and I would add all non-African scholars, could engage with works of Afrofuturist and Africanfuturist writers. For him and for many science fiction readers and scholars, it might be "one step toward establishing solidarity with marginalized and oppressed voices so that we can ally with and support those activist voices without appropriating them." Some literary cultural studies scholars who contextualize their texts by doing archival research historically situate the reception and original social context in which literary works are embedded and read—and this is precisely what Ray discovered in writing his book chapter. Afro- and Africanfuturist literature is one rich way to understand African problematics, social realities, and possible futures if those works are culturally placed within the contexts of time and place of a country or continent. Grasping actual social strife, systemic oppression, and social resistances to such ills allows one to more accurately and respectfully understand the fictitious representations of characters, their point of view, their positionality, and the narrative space. Many chapters in this edited edition have done just that.

Woodard brings great sophistication to his analyses of hierarchies in a range of social contexts that delineate dominant modalities that contrast with their dichotomous other—the "inferior," the marginalized, and the dispossessed. He begins his chapter with an epigraph by Charles Blow, who drives home the necessity of empathy and understanding in a society for it to be a place where harm and menace do not reign. With both empathy and understanding, all subjects could identify with and have compassion for the "Other." Subjects would recognize prejudices, discriminatory practices, and structural oppression that besiege Black and Brown individuals in the US, South Africa, or any other disadvantaged minority in a global locale. Moreover, the concept of palimpsest figuratively highlights how the layers of history of an urban center need to be envisaged when building new, nondiscriminatory urban environments. Such excavation was not done for high modernism in South Africa; Woodard submits that through interpreting that urbanist project through the

lens of Wynter's archipelago of Man and Other, "it is evident that its application was solely for the betterment of (white) Man, not the Other." Therefore, unearthing the historiography of time and place along with empathy and understanding help all to apprehend harmful sociocultural injustices and to visualize a society where all human beings equally enjoy the same rights, rewards, and civic responsibilities. This implies that all laws are fairly applied and opportunities equally prevail for all, economically, politically, and socially. In this manner, everyone can help deflect "additional positions of Otherness" and not racialize or pathologize the citizens of poor urban areas that Woodard discusses. They can rid society of "syndemic segregation," social marginalization, and what Hegel calls "misrecognition"—a democracy in which "subordinated groups, through stigmatizing shame, are primarily harmed by 'a ubiquitous and deep-seated form of injustice.'" These three concepts are indeed powerful when we set out to reimagine new built environments or a road towards greater social equity.

All of these book chapters engage with their subjects or aesthetics politically, in how Rancière and Tanke define both: "Rancière takes on an interventionist form: 'Politics consists of reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible that defines the common of a community, by introducing into it subjects and new objects, in rendering visible those who were not, and of making understood as speakers those who were only understood as noisy animals.' Art is political and politics artistic because both are practices of contesting the historical transcendental factors that delimit the social and ascribe to individuals a particular mode of subjectivity" (Tanke 2010, 6). The works in *Standpoints* alter readers' subjectivity and their ways of perceiving the problematics analyzed.

All of us are a part of the larger world that is humanity. As these scholarly chapters have elucidated, the future directions delineated are a call to action for all of us. Individually and collectively, we are encouraged and shown concrete ways to read, educate, and to agitate so that change can happen to lessen racism, oppression, and injustice. These striking encouragements also underscore how

Baldwin's seminar brought knowledge, Black feminism, and activism boldly together for her students. Their scholarship has opened up new pathways for thought and analysis. *Standpoints* has also created new lines of action to be undertaken by all. This is breathtaking pedagogy and inspirational scholarship!

<div align="right">

Sharon P. Johnson
Director of Women's and Gender Studies
Virginia Tech

</div>

References

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 2016. "The Urgency of Intersectionality." Filmed October 2016. TEDWomen video, 18:42. https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/transcript?language=en.

Lorber, Judith. 1994. *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Tanke, Joseph J. 2010. "Why Rancière Now?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44 (2): 1–17.

Contributors

Andrea N. Baldwin

Andrea N. Baldwin (*andreanb@vt.edu*) completed her doctoral studies at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill in Barbados in 2013. She is an attorney-at-law who also holds an MSc in international trade policy, and her research interests include Black and transnational feminist epistemology, theorizing pedagogy as a form of feminist activism, care in Black communities, and Caribbean cultural studies. Dr. Baldwin is an assistant professor of women's and gender studies and Africana studies in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. She has published several articles and book chapters and has written and narrated a short documentary film entitled *Self Care: A Radical Act*, which was screened at the Berlin Feminist Film Week in March 2018. Dr. Baldwin was born and raised on the small Caribbean island state of Barbados, considers herself an all-around Caribbean woman, and loves everything coconut and soca.

Trichia Cadette

Trichia Cadette (*trich758@vt.edu*) is a graduate student pursuing an MFA in arts leadership and a graduate certificate in women's and gender studies at Virginia Tech. She currently serves as a graduate assistant in community engagement and programming for the Moss Arts Center and is a Virginia Tech Diversity Scholar. Throughout her life she has been an enthusiast and lover of the arts (both performance and visual). However, she did not fully embrace her talent until her early adult years as a performer, creative writer, and creator of visual art. Her educational background in theatre arts and management propelled her to pursue a career as a teacher, which in turn ignited her passion for social work and transformation. A native of the West Indian island of St. Lucia, Cadette has used her knowledge and experiences to advocate for the empowerment and over-

all development of young women through the arts and specifically through pageantry. In 2017 she launched the "I Am a Queen" campaign, which used pageantry as a vehicle for social empowerment and the development of positive self-imagery of teenage girls on the island. Cadette believes in the healing, transformative power of the arts and aims to use them as a tool for social change.

Jordan Fallon

Jordan Fallon (*fjordan3@vt.edu*) is currently a master's student in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech. His research interests include contemporary United States' racial politics, violence, intersectional feminism, and social movements. Fallon's current research involves intersections of state violence with issues of race, class, and gender, and the liberatory political possibilities which Black feminist epistemology and praxis make viable.

Anthony Kwame Harrison

Anthony Kwame Harrison (*anharri5@vt.edu*) is the Gloria D. Smith Professor of Africana Studies at Virginia Tech. Holding a PhD in cultural anthropology, Dr. Harrison's research examines processes of racialization and knowledge creation surrounding hip-hop musical aesthetics, the racialized production of social space, and qualitative research methodologies. He is the author of two books—*Hip Hop Underground* (Temple University Press, 2009) and *Ethnography* (Oxford University Press, 2018)—and coedited *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Inaash Islam

Inaash Islam (*inaashi1@vt.edu*) is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. She completed her bachelor's in sociology at UL Lafayette in 2015 and her master's in sociology at Virginia Tech in 2017. Her research interests include race and racism, racialization, the Muslim experience in the west, identity, belonging, sub-

cultures, Muslim digital activism, and Muslim social media use. Her dissertation work looks at the intersection of race, religion, culture, and media and how this intersection unfolds in the digital work of Muslim female hijabi social media influencers. She uses postcolonial feminisms to understand how these women are adopted as feminist authorities on issues of femininity, modesty, and embodiment. She also focuses on how these social media influencers are icons of the subculture of modest fashion and play a large role in the global industry of modest fashion. By highlighting the lived experiences of Muslim women, her work seeks to subvert the stereotypes of "oppressed," "subjugated," and "in-agentic" as they have been imposed on Muslim women in visual media. Some of her other projects include studying the experience of Black Muslim-Americans in immigrant mosques and the identity-formation process of Muslim-Americans in a post-9/11 context.

Sharon Johnson

Sharon Johnson (*spjohnso@vt.edu*) is an associate professor of French and Francophone studies and the Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Virginia Tech. She is the author of *Boundaries of Acceptability*: *Flaubert, Maupassant, Cézanne, and Cassatt* (Peter Lang, 2000). Johnson has also published articles on the manner in which medical, political, and literary discourses constructed and conflated disease, immorality, and impropriety when depicting nineteenth-century Paris's urban problems and its working class. She has presented her work regularly at national and international conferences. Currently, she is working on a book tentatively titled *Bodies That Speak*: *Narrating and Interpreting Rape in Medicine, Law and the Penny Presses (canards sanglants) of Nineteenth-Century France.*

Gerlyn Murrell

Gerlyn Murrell (*gmurrell@vt.edu*) is an Afro-Caribbean, 1.5 genera-

tion immigrant (Ryer, Paul. 2014. "Immigration and Its Effects." *Latin American Research Review* 49 [3]: 279) from the island of St. Maarten. She attended the University of Southern Indiana and graduated with a bachelor of arts in international studies and a bachelor of science in anthropology. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in sociology, with a concentration in Africana studies and a certificate in women's and gender studies at Virginia Tech. Her interests include Black feminism, Caribbean feminism, transnational feminism, Black girlhood, and sex work in the Caribbean. She hopes to amplify the resonating stories and experiences of black women and girls in the west and the Global South.

Danielle Nora Noumbouwo

Danielle Nora Noumbouwo (*noraelle@vt.edu*) is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. Her doctoral research investigates traditional health providers for maternal healthcare in sub-Saharan Africa as a way to lower antenatal medical costs on already poor populations and, ultimately, save poor mothers and newborns lives. Her research interest is Black women and systemic oppression through time. More specifically, she examines the experiences of African women using a womanist framework. She has a keen interest in women, gender, and development but recognizes the importance of women's liberation in itself, and for itself, and not necessarily for a country's expansion. She takes a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses the fields of history, visual culture, political economy, gender, Black feminism, womanism, and postcolonial theories. She holds a master's degree in international development from New York University and has worked for nongovernmental organizations in Central Africa and the United States. She is from Cameroon and speaks French fluently. She is an enthusiastic research activist, until it is time to be a mother.

Menah Pratt-Clarke

Menah Pratt-Clarke (*mpc@vt.edu*) is the Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Diversity at Virginia Tech. She is also professor of education in the School of Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, with affiliations in Africana Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and the Department of Sociology.

She has more than twenty years of administrative, academic, and legal experience in higher education, with a focus on large-scale institutional transformation. Prior to joining Virginia Tech, she served for nine years as Associate Chancellor for Strategic Affairs and Associate Provost for Diversity at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. She was also the University Compliance Officer, Assistant Secretary of the University, and University Counsel at Vanderbilt University for eight years.

She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa with a major in English and minors in philosophy and African-American studies. She received her master's degree in literary studies from the University of Iowa and a master's degree in sociology from Vanderbilt University. In addition, she earned her PhD and JD from Vanderbilt University. While in Nashville, she also taught in the men's and women's maximum- and minimum-security prisons through American Baptist College and at Fisk University. She is licensed to practice law in Illinois and Tennessee.

Her research interests include transdisciplinary analysis of diversity issues in higher education. In addition to her first book, *Critical Race, Feminism, and Education: A Social Justice Model* (Palgrave, 2010), she recently released *A Black Woman's Journey from Cotton Picking to College Professor: Lessons about Race, Gender, and Class in America* (Peter Lang, 2018), which was awarded the American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Award for scholarship deemed to be outstanding in its field. Additional books include *Journeys of Social Justice: Women of Color Presidents in the Academy* (Peter Lang, 2017) and *Reflections on Race, Gender, and Culture in*

Cuba (Peter Lang, 2017). Forthcoming work includes *A Black Woman's Journey: An Autoethnography* (Peter Lang).

Philip Ray

Philip Ray (*pmray42@vt.edu*) is a third-year PhD student in the field of sociology at Virginia Tech. Philip received his master of social work in 2011 from the University of South Carolina and practiced social work for six years, focusing on foster care before pursuing a graduate degree in broader social contexts. Ray's primary research interests include social movements, youth activism, social protest, and identity, and he is doing his dissertation research on how members of youth-led social movements deploy their identities as a strategy of collective action. As a lifelong fan of science fiction, he is also interested in exploring the social characteristics and patterns within the genre and has made some contributions in short story and novel form. It is Ray's goal to be a social movement scholar, as well as to use his knowledge of social science to write good science fiction.

Ashley Reichelmann

Ashley Reichelmann (*avr@vt.edu*) is an assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Tech. She received her PhD from Northeastern University, her MSc from the University of Bristol (UK), and her BA from the College of New Jersey. Her research focuses on collective memory and past violence as a cause and consequence of contemporary violence and prejudice. Recent projects include the following: the impact of memorialization on local communities, the relationship between white racial identity and sociopolitical attitudes, and how racial identity and emotion affect how individuals interpret and represent historical violence. Ranging from hate crimes and school shootings to prejudice and genocide, her work sits at the crossroads of social psychology, race studies, and criminology, attempting to better understand how past violence impacts modern identity and

intergroup relations. Her work has been published in the *Journal for Homicide Studies*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, and *Social Psychology Quarterly*.

Maria Scaptura

Maria Scaptura (*scaptura@vt.edu*) is currently earning her master's degree in sociology at Virginia Tech. Her research interests are hegemonic masculinity, gender identity threat, and misogyny. These areas converge in her thesis project, "Plight of the Adolescent Male: Masculinity Threat, Misogyny, and the Celebration of Violence," in which she quantitatively looks at masculinity threat. For the thesis, she has created a survey with Dr. Kaitlin Boyle measuring attitudes towards guns, violence, and aggressive fantasies. Scaptura was motivated to study this connection when seeing how "incels" ("involuntary celibates") celebrated the violence and victimization of women. This group highlights the extreme display of toxic masculinity in response to the perceived threat of social liberalism, feminism, and more sexually active men ("Chads"). The thesis is set to be defended in spring of 2019 and presented at the annual Southern Sociological Society's conference in April.

Scaptura is also working on a research project with Dr. Boyle and doctoral candidate Leanna Ireland about sexual assault policies on college campuses. She has contributed to the literature review about online campus sexual assault policies and Clery Act compliance. As we move into a more digital era, college campuses are trying to make policy information accessible online for their students. However, there is a lack of consistency across university websites, leading to a discrepancy in availability.

Kimberly Williams

Kimberly Williams (*knwilliams@vt.edu*) is a doctoral student in the Department of English at the University of Florida, where her work encompasses Black love and sound studies across multimedia and

literature. She received her MFA in poetry at Cornell University, where she also became a Callaloo Oxford University fellow. Her thesis studied the sonic flight from the Stono Rebellion into contemporary dance and household rhythm. You can find her work in *Sounding Out!*, *Slate*, *Gulf Coast*, *Callaloo*, and more.

Davon Woodard

Davon Woodard (*davon@vt.edu*) is a PhD student in planning, governance, and globalization (PGG), and National Science Foundation Trainee Fellow in Urban Computing, at Virginia Tech. His dissertation focuses on the online and offline social networks of marginalized communities in the US and South Africa and how these network structures and practices can be leveraged in local civic participation. He currently serves as a graduate research assistant at the Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience (GFURR), where he analyzes fiscal resilience using longitudinal standardized municipal data. In addition, he led analytics projects on equitable urban housing and rural workforce development as a graduate fellow in the Data Science for the Public Good (DSPG) program in the Biocomplexity Institute of Virginia Tech, served as a graduate data analytics fellow with the City of Chicago, and worked as a client executive intern at IBM. Prior to VT, Woodard spent over a decade in funder relations, strategic planning, and strategic partnerships in the third sector and government sector in Washington, DC, and Chicago. Woodard earned an MS in economics and an MBA in analytics, both from DePaul University; a certificate in strategic planning from Stanford University; and a BS in public policy from Michigan State University.