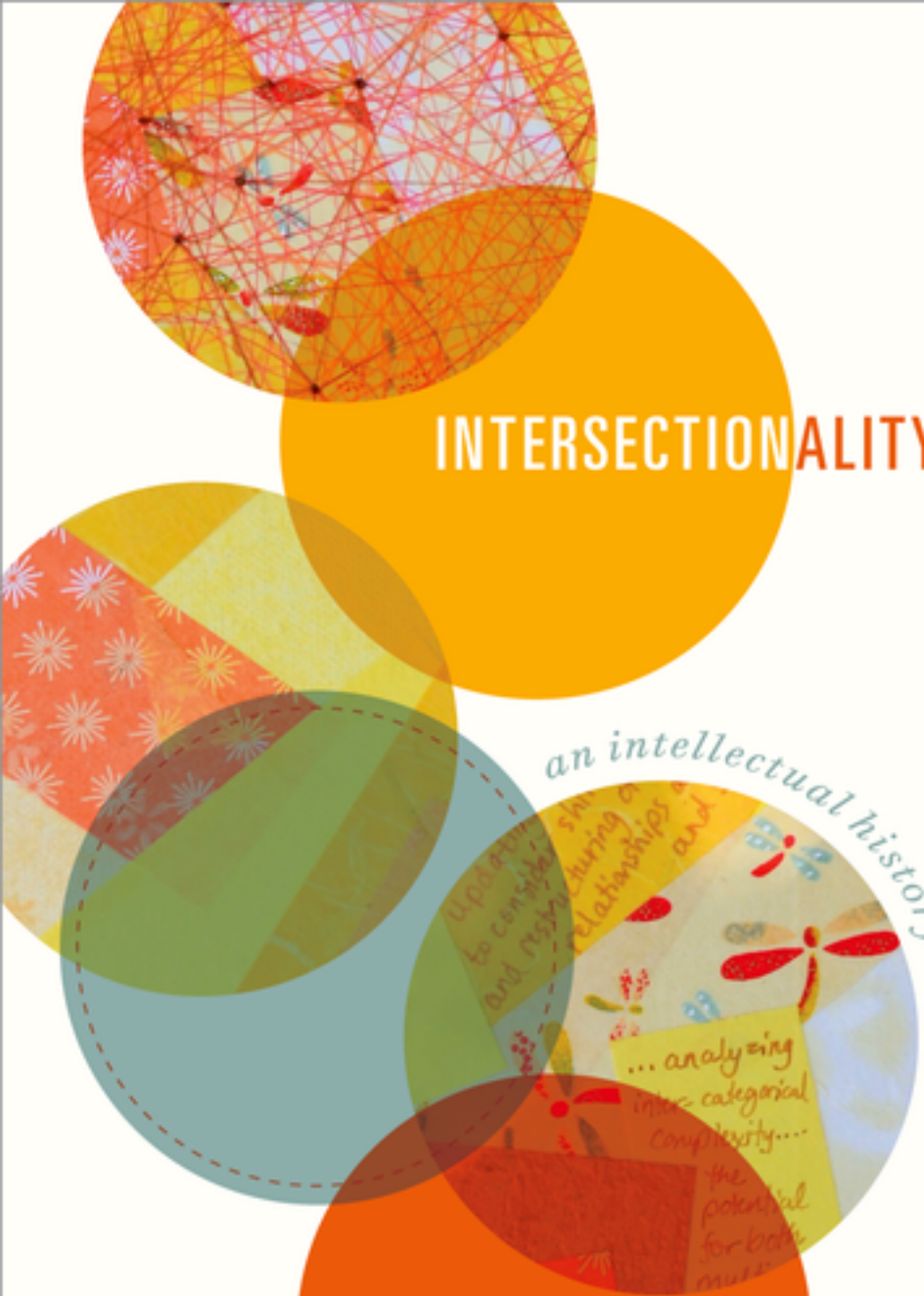
INTERSECTIONALITY

an intellectual history



ANGE-MARIE HANCOCK

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This book is dedicated to
My father, Dr. Charles R. Hancock (1940–2012)

and

My mentor, Dr. Michael B. Preston (1933–2014),
the best academics and fathers to daughters
I've ever known.

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Finally, this book is dedicated to my late father, Dr. Charles R. Hancock, and my late mentor, Dr. Michael B. Preston, two classic southern gentlemen. Together they provided the inspiration and remembering all that they both taught me reminded me to be gracious but clear in disagreements, committed to intellectual excellence, and prayerful about any outcome in every aspect of my life. I carry them now in the silence of my heart but their many words of comfort and encouragement will forever remain fresh in my mind.

INTERSECTIONALITY

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Intellectual Property or Meme?

> We are committed to a continual examination of our politics as they develop through criticism and self-criticism as an essential aspect of our practice. . . . As Black feminists and lesbians we know that we have a very definite revolutionary task to perform and we are ready for the lifetime of work and struggle before us.
>
> —COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE (*In Smith 1983, 281)*

> For groups contained by historical injury, the challenge is to engage with the past without being consumed by it.
>
> —HEATHER LOVE (*Quoted in Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 33)*

IT HAD EASILY BEEN FIFTEEN years or more since we'd sat in graduate seminars together at the University of North Carolina. Now I was a discussant on a panel organized by an "Intersectionality" program section of the Western Political Science Association (WPSA) that I had cofounded a few years earlier.[1] Traveling from her native Germany, my Feminist colleague was a panel presenter of a paper that would later be published.

One of the friendly critiques I made about the paper regarded its engagement with intersectionality theory, specifically its use of Michel Foucault's conceptualization of power instead of Patricia Hill Collins's articulation from *Black Feminist Thought*.

My claim was twofold: if the author intended to meaningfully engage issues of diversity and feminist thought in an intersectional way, then using the work of a leading Black Feminist theorist's formulation of intersectional power would make sense. Second, it was not clear to me that the reliance on Foucault could meaningfully contribute to advancing intersectionality scholarship specifically, given the distinctions I saw between the intellectual projects of postmodernism and intersectionality.[2] While recent scholarship afforded Foucault, Judith Butler, and other European poststructuralist scholars a prominent role in the genealogy of intersectionality in Europe (see Lykke 2011), as Vivian May helpfully articulates, "Citational practices . . . offer a way to mark collectivity, delineate historical precedence, and claim legacies of struggle" (2015, 55). How are we to engage work that explicitly "lifts up" nonintersectional scholarship as an important contribution to intersectional scholarship? Moreover, what, in fact, do we mean by this distinction between intersectional and nonintersectional scholarship?

After the panel my colleague and I chatted briefly and amicably. When our reminiscing reminded me that we'd both read *Black Feminist Thought* in our Critical Social Theory seminar, my former classmate smiled wanly and said, "I *prefer* Foucault" (emphasis mine). What are we to make of this preference, particularly when asserted as part of a claim to be doing feminist theory and intersectional work? Certainly political theory has a long history of "guerilla readings" of scholars who would not necessarily identify with the commitments of a particular theory.[3]

That said, what are we to make of a claim of "preference," rather than a defensible argument regarding such a choice? Moreover, how, as theorists of power and identity, are we able to ethically ignore the way in which these choices involve complicated understandings of whose work is worthy of rigorous intellectual engagement as well as what constitutes "genius," which

are located in a nexus of four positionalities—a dead French male philosopher, a US Black Feminist theorist who is very much alive and well, a white German female Feminist theorist, and a Creole Black American intersectionality theorist?

The complex questions raised by this collegial exchange are at the heart of this book. That the exchange occurred between two feminists of different races and national identities is perhaps the most easily identifiable subtext, one closely associated with general knowledge of intersectionality theory. Indeed a number of scholars have identified a troubling citation politics that leads to a very narrow, positivistic understanding of intersectionality (Alexander-Floyd 2012), an erasure of Black women as quintessential subjects of intersectionality (Jordan-Zachery 2013), a theoretically bankrupt practice of name-checking intersectionality (Knapp 2005),[4] and the whitening of intersectionality (Bilge 2013). These arguments fit comfortably into a long history of feminist and women's studies narratives about tense racial relations between privileged white women and disadvantaged women of color.

But this is clearly not the only set of questions raised by this intellectual exchange between former classmates. The panel was part of what is now called the "Gender, Race, and Intersectionality" section of the WPSA, the first political science association to adopt such a section, in recognition of intersectionality's increased institutionalization in the field.[5] Yet the name of the section was changed from "Intersectionality" to "Gender, Race and Intersectionality,"[6] even as the section exists alongside well-established sections titled "Race, Ethnicity and Politics" and "Women and Politics." Moreover, since its creation the intersectionality section of the WPSA has been joined by "(Im)migration and Citizenship" and "Politics and Sexuality" sections.[7] What does this flowering of program sections illustrate more broadly about how intersectionality has been "institutionalized"?

One way of thinking about institutionalization is that the ongoing project of intersectionality's border crossing (or travels, as others put it) is always incomplete and shot through with politics. Even as numerous scholars acknowledge the development of intersectionality from an idea into a field of study (see Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; May 2015), the word "intersectionality" triggers use, misuse, and critique in ways that reinscribe the very political relations intersectionality scholarship critiques and seeks to transform (see Alexander-Floyd 2012; Cho 2013; Jordan-Zachery 2013; May 2015). In their introduction to *The Intersectional Approach*, Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz contend that intersectionality has become a social literacy: "to be an informed social theorist or methodologist in many fields of inquiry . . . one must grapple with the implications of intersectionality" (2009, 7). As much as we might like it to be, however, social literacy is not a purely academic enterprise. Two examples from different contexts are illustrative of this phenomenon.

Over the past thirty years of social movements, a diverse set of NGOs and nonprofits like Asian Women Immigrant Advocates (United States), Ka-Mer (the Kurdish Women's Center, Turkey), the National Domestic Workers' Alliance (NDWA, United States), Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW, Canada), Southall Black[8] Sisters (Britain), and GAMA (Afro-Uruguayan Women's Support Group, Uruguay) have all used explicitly intersectional strategies as part of their organizing toolbox in their respective spaces (see Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin 2013; Al-Rebholz in Wilson 2013; Townsend-Bell in Wilson 2013).[9] This very brief list illustrates the vast geographic travels of intersectionality both beyond academe (in a reciprocal relationship with activism) and across national borders (again in reciprocity among scholars and activists situated in a variety of locales). The role of activism in intersectionality's intellectual history is the focus of chapter 2.

The second travel route of intersectionality, which I take up here in some detail, occurs virtually; a wide variety of definitions and conceptualizations of intersectionality is available on the Internet. What Google and Wikipedia lack in gravitas among academics is eclipsed by their sheer ubiquity among those with smartphone or computer access to the Internet. As well, Google Scholar provides free access to academic work with a keyword of "intersectionality," and Wikipedia provides open-source access to reach a vast audience of lay people and academics alike who are seeking twenty-first-century tools to analyze (and address) complex questions of inequality and injustice. As a result intersectionality as an analytical framework is in the process of reaching maximal salience across academe, the nonprofit sector (including global philanthropy), and politics.

Intersectionality's impact upon the popular lexicon is evident in two interesting ways. First, it has become a shorthand for a certain kind of failure in popular culture and on social media. For example, in accepting the 2015 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress,[10] white US actress Patricia Arquette's support of gender equity in compensation was grounded in a demand for solidarity from groups that had previously been supported in pursuit of their group's rights: "To every woman who gave birth, to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for everybody else's equal rights. It's our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America." Arquette's comments were immediately criticized on the basis of claims about diversity within movements and charges that her comments render women of color invisible; "Patricia Arquette's Spectacular Intersectionality Fail," read one headline. Here intersectionality stands in for one particular claim—that broad generalizations about women's "sacrifice" ignore important differences among women.

The usage of intersectionality as a marker of public failure has been joined by a version of "ornamental" intersectionality

as a response to an "epic fail." US First Lady Michelle Obama threatened to leave a 2013 Democratic National Committee fundraiser when a heckler from LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights group Get Equal spoke up. Following the episode, feminist antiwar group CodePink tweeted that Mrs. Obama should have smiled and been more polite than she was. CodePink's critique was deeply problematic for two reasons. First, the group suggested a norm of feminine "politeness" that has been challenged by feminists for over a century. Second, that norm of "politeness" was not understood in the context of Mrs. Obama's longstanding social construction as a racialized, gendered, and classed body; instead she was publicly disciplined through the tweet as another "angry Black woman" who needed to be instructed how to behave. The group's failure to understand and act from a place deeply cognizant of the multicategory dynamics of power at play immediately produced a hailstorm of criticism on social media, including tweets from academics and musicians like singer Alicia Keys. CodePink's apologetic tweet in reply stated "We have respect for intersectionality" and that the group would go back and look at its own practices. Instead of being a marker of failure, CodePink used intersectionality to express its mea culpa and commitment to charting a path forward. Intersectionality in this vein becomes an aspirational ideal with little concrete specificity regarding substantive organizational transformation.

While many scholars eschew these signposts of popular use, it is important to note that the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) has implicitly accepted the power of tools like Wikipedia; in May 2015 it launched an NWSA Wikipedia Initiative with one goal: "Make information available about women's studies and feminist topics on Wikipedia as complete and accurate as possible."[11] Thus it is critical to note that in the twenty-first century intersectionality is both an analytical framework and a complex of social practices, including

solidarity and collective contestation (see May 2015, 48). The ramifications of using a reductive version of intersectionality to criticize a celebrity, or the 566,000 hits a recent Google keyword "intersectionality" search generated, however, produce a third set of questions regarding the aspects and ambivalences of intersectionality's current institutionalization that are vitally relevant to this book. Is intersectionality simply the latest feminist buzzword, destined to go the way of "No Means No,"[12] ubiquitous in its familiarity but devoid of tangible political impact?

Last, more evidence of intersectionality's institutionalized academic reach concerns the number of fields preparing and disseminating research through conferences and special journals throughout the world. From a 2006 special issue of the *European Journal of Women's Studies* through two companion special issues of *Signs* and *Du Bois Review* in 2013, the connections between symposia, conferences, and special edited journals and/or anthologies are strong.[13] The first global intersectionality conference was hosted in Vancouver, Canada, in 2014 and explicitly included scholars from Europe, the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as Asia.

In their introduction to the *Signs* special issue on intersectionality, Sumi K. Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall identify three overlapping "sets of engagements" in intersectionality studies: applications of an intersectional framework; discursive debates about the scope of intersectionality as a theoretical paradigm; and political interventions that deploy an intersectional lens (2013, 785). They contend that the time seems right to now think of intersectionality as more of a "field of intersectionality studies" than a singular concept or method. In so doing, the authors sidestep a swirling debate about whether scholars can "fix" a specific definition of intersectionality to be applied in a measuring stick fashion to new work that purports to be "intersectional."

Many readers might easily agree that with all of this evidence of maximal salience, suggesting that "allowing" anything to be called intersectionality might be the wrong conversation to have in a context where there is so much scholarly interest and engagement that one can no longer think of it as one homogeneous theory—much like postmodernism or democratic theory, the varieties have emerged to constitute a new field in and of itself. Yet the questions that arise in the context of our two former classmates are not so easily answered by labeling intersectionality a tripartite field of study or reading snarky comments posted to an online article about an "epic intersectionality fail." For what lies at the heart of intersectionality theory's critique—complexity, identity, and power—still works to privilege certain interlocutors and logics, while rendering others invisible. One specific tension raised by this episode is the mobilization of the word "prefer." What does it mean to "prefer" a certain theorist in a context of discursive hegemony? More to the point, what does this mean for a project like this one, which ambitiously seeks to craft an intellectual history?

AN (NOT *THE*) INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

In response to a 2012 symposium entitled "The Present and Future of American Intellectual History," historian David Wickberg identifies two key aspirations that are critical to the inspiration for this project. First, Wickberg supports a way of engaging texts that is at the heart of political theory. According to Leslie Butler, the role of intellectual history is "to counter glib assumptions of continuity and genealogy by offering close, careful readings of ideas as they emerged, moved about and worked

in history" (quoted in Wicksberg 2012). Two facets of intersectionality's conceptualization of itself as a field of study currently fall into what Butler might call a "glib genealogy." First, whether stated by a founding author or a much younger scholar, most intersectionality scholarship dates the beginning of the field to around 1988, when Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw delivered the paper that would become "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" to the University of Chicago Legal Forum.[14] While one might expect this dating to come from other legal scholars (see e.g., Carbado 2013; Cho 2013; Spade 2013), it is more surprising to see an approximation of it from a person who could be considered another founder of the field. Bonnie Thornton Dill, whose "Race, Class and Gender: Prospects for an All-Inclusive Sisterhood" (1983) is an important part of intersectionality's sociological roots, intimates, "I never imagined that the description we provided of our work . . . would energize debate and discourse for three decades" (Dill in Grzanka 2014, 341). Berger and Guidroz (2009, 3) and Jennifer Nash (2008) similarly locate intersectionality's moment of founding as the late 1980s.[15] Where did these ideas come from prior to 1989, such that Crenshaw and Collins use such similar language despite their locations in distinct fields?

If we operate from the premise that Crenshaw and Collins simultaneously (but not collaboratively) founded intersectionality, we might trace the "shared sources" between them and arrive at Foucault, which could justify my former classmate's "preference" for "the original" (Foucault) over the "derivative" (Collins). One especially problematic ramification of this genealogical strategy is how it compounds the politics of translation, which generates "its own celebrity system and status hierarchies . . . [which] are created when one establishes whose texts are deemed foundational" (Bilge 2013, 410), among a plethora of other consequences. In other words, indirectly attributing intersectionality's formulation of power to Foucault, to feminism, or even just to

Collins and Crenshaw does little to disturb the politics of knowledge production that is at the heart of intersectionality's critique.

Using two different processes, Bilge and Alexander-Floyd agree: whitening of intersectionality remains a threat to a vibrant intersectionality field. Both scholars' considerations are relevant to the classmate reunion at the WPSA. For Bilge, arguments that claim "intersectionality is the brainchild of feminism" and those that contend "we need to broaden the genealogy of intersectionality" both create space for the use of that word, "preference," *for* Foucault's framework, compounding the privilege this theorist's work receives. For Alexander-Floyd, a "post-black feminist" turn in intersectionality[16] can create a space for a preference to systematically ignore Patricia Hill Collins's framework in this context. Noting the paucity of attention to several Black Feminist scholars who "have fashioned an impressive array of knowledge production on intersectionality" in history, psychology, sociology, and legal studies (Alexander-Floyd 2012, 6), Alexander-Floyd contends that the most recent intersectionality scholarship reprises knowledge practices critiqued by Crenshaw as "disappearing" Black women (9).[17] These twin preferences—*for* a hegemonic scholar and *against* an intersectionality scholar in the conduct of intersectionality research—speak to one key intellectual project of intersectionality: making women of color in general, but the intersectionally disadvantaged in particular, a visible and legible part of public discourse with an eye toward getting their policy needs met.

Despite such daunting circumstances one can certainly still read texts for their assumptions, meanings, and purposes (what Wickberg calls "reading a text as an intellectual history document"), and their role as connectors between and among ideas. But tracing the idea(s) of intersectionality carries with it an ethical obligation as well. Clearly we can consider half a million Google results (in multiple languages), activists' embrace of

intersectionality as relevant to their struggles on multiple continents, and the presence of #Intersectionality on social media evidence of the global reach of the subject. But in what way must scholars of intersectionality engage with this "lay" approach to intersectionality?

Two recent book-length overviews of the field tackle this question differently. For Vivian May, the abundant uses and misuses of the term intersectionality require scholarly engagement that builds from two assertions: that intersectionality "*does have a historical trajectory* that needs to be accounted for meaningfully *and a set of commitments* that, likewise, need to be engaged substantively (not nominally or via empty gestures)" (2015, 12; emphasis mine). Alternatively, Nina Lykke proceeds with her review by presenting "situated nodal points" without canonization or universalization (2011, 49) in exploring the recent history of intersectionality scholarship in Europe. May clearly takes a political stand—subsections of her chapters declaratively state, "Intersectionality Is . . . ," while Lykke reveals her own standpoint but ignores the politics of positioning certain "nodal points" as especially relevant to current European debates. For the purposes of this intellectual history, two related inquiries arise: defining the interpretive community and the ethics of stewardship versus ownership.

DEFINING INTERSECTIONALITY'S INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

For the past four years I've been traveling to conferences and publicly grappling with the idea of whether intersectionality can be the intellectual property of a single demographic group or whether it is in fact a meme. Sirma Bilge illustrates the power dynamics at work in identifying intersectionality's interpretive community as she examines "disciplinary feminism's" attempts

to claim white feminist authors as historical antecedents of intersectionality: "Similar to other 'traveling theories,' . . . that move across disciplines and geographies, intersectionality falls prey to widespread misrepresentation, tokenization, displacement and disarticulation. . . . [Such] debates about intersectionality also reflect power struggles, opportunity structures and turf wars internal to specific disciplines and fields" (2013, 410). However, if we are to interrogate a preference for Foucault, or an "intersectionality star system," or the desire to produce knowledge that empowers those without power (as opposed to producing knowledge for one's own recompense), we must situate intersectionality in an interpretive community that can lay out the parameters of what constitutes the universe of reasonable questions that intersectionality is capable of answering (Fish 1980; Collins 1990).

As I noted above, there is a vocal segment of intersectionality's interpretive community that is deeply invested in rigorous enactment of what I am loosely defining as the "visibility project" of intersectionality. Amidst scholarship (primarily in Europe) that seeks to broaden the genealogy of intersectionality by claiming it as a product of mainstream feminism, there is a set of scholars (Knapp 2005; Alexander-Floyd 2012; Jordan-Zachery 2013, 2014; Bilge 2013) who see intersectionality's travels (both geographic and disciplinary) as replicating the very hegemonic politics that intersectionality was created to fight against (Alexander-Floyd 2012; Bilge 2013; May 2015). The threats posed by these moves are twofold. First, intersectionality as a field of study loses its analytical (ibid.) and rhetorical (Jordan-Zachery 2007, 2014) power when it is not centered on the daily experiences of US Black women who are presumed to be the originators and original subjects of intersectionality theory. Second, the roots of intersectionality in Black Feminist theorizing matters philosophically, politically, and materially (May 2015, viii).

On the other hand, Jasbir Puah suggests US Black women "dominate" the genealogy of intersectionality in a way that ironically "others" women of color who are not Black and American (2012, 52). Though Puah's provocative accusation should not be confused with the hegemonic practices identified by Alexander-Floyd and Bilge, at issue are two broad concerns. First, Crenshaw (2009, in Berger and Guidroz 2009) and others express concerns about stepping away from commitments to eradicating inequality and injustice that produced intersectionality's trenchant critique and which they believe are deeply imbricated with race as a central analytic element that cannot be jettisoned without inflicting fatal violence on the integrity of intersectionality's intellectual project.[18] Second, the appropriation of intersectionality by lay practitioners and scholars outside of critical theory approaches continues to incorrectly conceptualize and execute intersectional analyses based on their prior ontological and epistemological frameworks (Carbado and Gulati 2013; Hancock 2013), which increases the risk of intersectionality's cooptation as a tool for reform at the margins, rather than its being a framework with the potential to radically reform our structures of government and public policies, as well as to make other changes.

The subject matter and concept of intersectionality have made a considerable journey across the Internet via Google and Wikipedia, which have had an impact in shaping the general understanding of the field several orders of magnitude greater than that of any single academic. By way of illustration, Crenshaw's two seminal articles (1989, 1991) have been cited a combined total of 9,948 times by fellow scholars across a range of fields since their publication in 1989 and 1991 (over a period of twenty-four to twenty-six years). Similarly, Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* has been cited 12,002 times since its publication in 1990 (a twenty-five-year span). These citation figures, in the realm of theory (whether legal or social),

catapult both women into the rarefied air of "rock star academics." On the other hand, Wikipedia's "Intersectionality" page has been viewed 86,734 times in the first quarter of 2015 *alone*.

Thus what Google and Wikipedia might lack among academics in intellectual gravitas is eclipsed by their sheer ubiquity among those with access to the Internet via smartphone or computer. As well, despite haughty attempts to deny such tools legitimacy in the conduct of academic research itself (save as a subject of research), the analytics of scholarship provided by Google Scholar and the open-source access to update Wikipedia pages also enable academic papers about intersectionality to reach a vast audience of lay and academic alike who are looking for twenty-first-century tools to address complex questions of inequality and injustice.

The Wikipedia[19] entry for intersectionality has an interesting presentation of the theory, which of course can change at any given time once additional information is submitted by a user and then verified.[20] What matters most for this project of examining intersectionality theory is the framing of the entry, the disciplinary and cross-disciplinary claims made within it, and Wikipedia's powerful ability to shape the first exposure to intersectionality for many who simply enter "intersectionality" in some language into their Google search engines.

The "Intersectionality" Wikipedia entry is currently organized into five substantive sections, along with references and helpful links.[21] The definition names intersectionality as a "feminist sociological theory"[22] with no mention of "race" or "Black feminist" as additional descriptors, lending support to the allegation that race is disappearing from intersectionality as an analytical element.[23] Though the entry identifies Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw as the person who first "highlighted" the concept, the remaining frame of the article depends on Leslie McCall's respected 2005 *Signs* article. McCall articulates one quite cogent approach to understanding intersectionality.

However, Crenshaw articulates quite another way to understand intersectionality, which is missing from the Wikipedia entry.

Moreover, Wikipedia's framing of McCall's articulation—a specific, sociological articulation—leads to the characterization of intersectionality as a theory located solely in sociology, and done only in the acceptable ways published in *Signs*. Other disciplines "apply" intersectionality, on these Wikipedia authors' reading of the literature. This renders the multidisciplinary history of intersectionality nearly invisible. Even within sociology, work by Bonnie Thornton Dill ([1983] 2009) and Maxine Baca Zinn are excluded from this "origin narrative."

There is thus evidence in the Wikipedia entry to support the claims of Crenshaw, Alexander-Floyd, Jordan-Zachery, and Bilge, given the omission of Crenshaw's approach and the privileging of McCall's approach. The point is not that McCall isn't an outstanding scholar; it is that she is framed as a "leading intersectionality theorist," while "founding theorists" like Crenshaw, Collins, and other Black Feminists are subordinated or completely overlooked. According to these scholars, Crenshaw (and Black feminism more generally) is made nearly invisible by this entry and throughout contemporary intersectionality scholarship.

Yet there is support for Puah's position as well. A review of the footnotes and selected bibliography for this entry reveals close to 50 percent of the citations are authored by Black females, clustered in the "early" period of intersectionality's history, the 1980s. In contrast, three Spanish surnames and one Indian surname also appear in the notes and bibliography on Wikipedia's page.

It is clear at this point that the representation of intersectionality on Wikipedia does not capture the full complexity of the history or the interpretive community surrounding it. Perhaps Wikipedia's flaws are to be expected. Yet it's not clear to me at all that this must necessarily be the case. More

to the point: what are we to make of scholarly intersectionality research that seems to suffer from similar flaws? In this book I want to examine the emergence of intersectionality as a path-breaking analytical framework for understanding questions of inequality and injustice.

DOES INTERSECTIONALITY = BLACK FEMINISM? DEFINING THE INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

Both literary scholar Stanley Fish (1982) and social theorist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) contend that the interpretive community plays a critical role in revealing and expanding the complexities of knowledge production. For Collins, not only must claims of knowledge be consistent with what the interpretive community accepts as true (1990, 204–205), but the dialogic process emphasizes community connection as part of the knowledge validation process (212–213). While Fish posits a more Western adversarial process of knowledge validation (1982, 350), he contends that different literary strategies, which are akin to different analytical approaches to reading theoretical texts, do not dictate wholesale acceptance of the approach: "It is acceptable not because everyone accepts it but because those who do not are now obliged to argue against it" (350). It is this level of salience that led Berger and Guidroz to characterize intersectionality as a "social literacy." Here, however, I want to focus on the constitution of the interpretive community itself. In addition to the fact of an interpretive community, we can now see how a particular process shapes the ways such communities think and rethink the boundaries and content of their common cause. This book is designed to shed light on the extant debates in the service of sparking such a dialogic process rather than resolving a debate once and for all.[24]

How do intersectionality scholars find a middle ground between an impossible conceptualization of intersectionality as intellectual property, and a destructive conceptualization of intersectionality as meme, which shape-shifts so much as to no longer be recognizable as anything other than a meme gone viral? In this section I lay out two poles of the debate, then suggest in the following section a middle path forward, which itself is the result of a dialogic process.

The World Intellectual Property Organization, an agency of the United Nations, defines intellectual property as: "the legal rights which result from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields" (2004, 3–4). While I am using intellectual property more as an evocative metaphor than as a legal term, the agency goes on to suggest why such a connection could be made: "intellectual property law aims at safeguarding creators and other producers of intellectual goods and services by granting them certain time-limited rights to control the use made of those productions. Those rights do not apply to the physical object in which the creation may be embodied but instead to the intellectual creation as such" (3–4). In the scholarly arguments I associate with this position, there is an explicit desire to "safeguard" creators and other producers of intersectionality that is consistent with the visibility or inclusion project.[25] While intersectionality is an idea and not an artistic commodity, there is an assertion of quasi-rights as well.

The intersectionality as intellectual property position I associate with the previously enumerated claims of Alexander-Floyd, Bilge and Jordan-Zachery is not homogeneous.[26] Alexander-Floyd, for example, articulates intersectionality's "political project" as one "undertaken by women of color in general and black women in particular to address the political plight of nonwhite women" (2012, 9). At a minimum, the move from a Collins-Crenshaw Black Feminist positionality to a woman-of-color formulation suggests that some interpretive

autonomy be granted to contemporary interlocutors, including Alexander-Floyd herself. This interpretation thus preserves space for dialogue between Alexander-Floyd's position and Puah's accusation. Thus one ongoing conversation worth interrogating is whether the visibility project for Black women or women of color must necessarily be one that when seeking to make women of color visible simultaneously keeps others out of sight.

The tension I identified earlier between scholars who believe US Black women are not given enough credit or attention for intersectionality and those who believe Black women have been given too much power in this domain is emblematic of a larger question about intersectionality: should we think of it as a form of intellectual property owned by some demographic groups, or should we think of it as a meme among scholars who are committed to the visibility and inclusion-oriented aspects of intersectionality's intellectual project? That one aspect of the debate within the interpretive community of intersectionality scholars, however, should not obscure a general conversation regarding whether intersectionality is an intellectual property in need of conservation or a meme that has gone viral.

The Wikipedia approach to defining intersectionality is consistent with what is conventionally defined as a *meme*. First coined by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, memes are units of cultural transmission. The *Oxford English Dictionary* concurs with the twentieth-century origin of the word "meme" and distinguishes its transmission process from that associated with genes. Whereas genetic transmission involves a direct copy from one parent to an offspring (e.g., all three of my father's daughters inherited his slightly crooked index finger), memes are translated more loosely. Their definitions highlight the central challenges of intersectionality theory today: the transmission process from one individual to

another is by imitation[27] and the ramifications of the transmission process—copied and spread rapidly with slight variation. For example, sociologists Choo and Ferree's understanding of intersectionality is emblematic of this more mimetic approach:

> three dimensions of theorizing that have become part of what "intersectionality" signifies: the importance of including the perspectives of multiply-marginalized people, especially women of color; an analytic shift from addition of multiple independent strands of inequality toward a multiplication and thus transformation of their main effects into interactions; and a focus on seeing multiple institutions as overlapping in their co-determination of inequalities to produce complex configurations from the start, rather than "extra" interactive processes that are added onto main effects. (Choo and Ferree 2010, 131)

This position involves the "translation" or "application" of intersectionality in manners consistent with well-established, epistemological, and methodological frameworks like positivism. Citing Lykke (2011), Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall suggest that the "intersectionality as meme" position has been present "since the beginning," characterizing intersectionality "more as a nodal point than as a closed system" (2013, 788), which appears to support this position explicitly.

Certainly this definition of a meme and its close association with the practice of imitation only raises the previously enumerated stakes of knowledge production even higher; Knapp acknowledges that "knowledge and reflexive competencies have turned into highly valued commodities" as well (2005, 252). In their assessment of what they call a "field of intersectionality studies," Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall also highlight the limits of this mimetic approach for moving the field ahead: "our sense is that some of what circulates as critical debate about what intersectionality is or does reflects a lack of engagement with both

originating and contemporary literatures on intersectionality" (2013, 788; see also Cho 2013; Bilge 2013). Thus, again we are compelled to interrogate the ramifications of this position. One tension that emerges specifically from the elucidation of this position is connected to what I identify as the second part of intersectionality's intellectual project: reshaping the ontological relationships between categories of difference. In other words, so-called categories of difference like race and gender cannot meaningfully exist apart from each other because they mutually construct each other. This second intellectual project constitutes a second key contribution to understanding identity, inequality, and justice attributable to intersectionality (Hancock 2007, 2011; Choo and Ferree 2010). As translation into more empirical projects has emerged, however, ambivalence has ensued regarding just how far this idea of mutually constitutive categories should be incorporated into preexisting research designs and methodologies. Carbado and Gulati articulate the dilemma cogently:

> One can read intersectionality to mean that personhood (or identity) can be separated out into discrete social parts. For example, race can be separated from gender. This is because the notion that two things "intersect" brings readily to mind a Venn diagram within which each thing exists both inside and outside of the intersection. Indeed, this is the conception of intersectionality that our students often articulate. . . . The diagram invites us to imagine social circumstances in which race and gender exist apart from each other as "pure" identities. Although the metaphor of intersectionality conveys this idea, the fuller theory of intersectionality, and Crenshaw's conceptualization of this theory, rejects it. Fundamental to Intersectionality Theory [*sic*] is the understanding that race and gender are interconnected, and as a result, they do not exist as disaggregated identities. In other words, there are no nonintersecting areas in the diagram. (Carbado and Gulati 2013, 71)

The kind of "fusion" of intersectional premises with positivistic social science conceptualizations of relationships between "variables" like race and gender that Carbado and Gulati debunk is one popular translation of intersectionality (Weldon 2008; Dubrow 2008; Hernández 2006; Choo and Ferree 2010; Best et al. 2011; Hughes 2011), despite its incorrect operationalization of intersectionality's core insight (see also Hancock 2013). Conceptualizing intersectionality as a meme suggests a normative position of toleration or acceptance of nearly any alteration to the original insights of intersectionality, to the degree they are discernable and specifiable. Limited engagement, as Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall rightly note, contributes to a myopic or impoverished engagement; ironically reproducing an occlusion of the original insights of the theory (see May 2015). This occlusion occurs in two main ways—a reduction of intersectionality to the need to focus on multiple categories and the privileging of the visibility project at the expense of the project of reshaping ontological relationships.

Clearly, such nonchalance risks serious damage to a theory that has challenged scholars and activists alike to partake in an analytic shift that transforms the questions to be asked, the evidence to be considered, and the methods with which we analyze it. I have elsewhere characterized this shift as a paradigmatic shift (Hancock 2007, 2011, 2013). How are we to meaningfully adjudicate among competing visions of quality scholarship and knowledge production?

STEWARDSHIP OF INTERSECTIONALITY: ONE APPROACH

At the first International Intersectionality Conference, psychologist Elizabeth Cole responded in part to my musings about

intellectual properties and memes to suggest as an interpretive community we might instead walk away from a debate grounded in consumerist terms like "ownership" and instead think in terms of stewardship, a term with deep resonance in US Black religious communities, as well as in domains as diverse as environmental justice and philanthropy. Her notion of stewardship, in my mind, preserves the boundaries lightly and self-reflectively, while also obligating us to a standard best elucidated by Patricia Hill Collins as I completed this book: "write it *right*."[28]

There is a robust literature in corporate management and leadership on the value of stewardship to ethical corporate governance. In this sector, stewardship theory is based on a "model of man," whose behavior is proorganizational and collective (Davis et al. 1997). Proposed by sociologists and psychologists to counter the neoliberal economic man, whose behavior is driven by "rational" self-interest, stewards are thought to be more prevalent among collectivist cultures and more egalitarian cultures. The notion of stewardship proposed in this sector is explicitly interested in the common good of the firm or organization.

Returning to Berger's characterization of intersectionality as a social literacy helps us connect with a notion of stewardship more consistent with intersectionality's normative commitments. Based on her work with Dakelh elders in British Columbia, Canada, Alanna Frost identified the term "literacy steward" as applying to "any individual who demonstrates persistent dedication to the practice or promotion of a literacy considered traditionally important to his or her community (2011, 56). This kind of stewardship seemed incredibly relevant to the kind of interpretive community engaging with intersectionality theory. Beyond a pure identity politics kinship with intersectionality (the term is grounded in practices of indigenous women, i.e., women of color, in Canada),

literacy stewards navigate "complex negotiations between traditional and dominant literacies [and most often undertake these negotiations] with limited resources" (56). The dynamic and complex aspects of literacy stewarding provide a complementary advantage in thinking clearly about what is necessary for effective (and collective) stewardship of intersectionality. Importantly, literacy stewardship is also consistent with both dimensions of intersectionality's intellectual project—a commitment to visibility or inclusion and a reconstitution of relationships among categories of difference.[29] In this sense, framing intersectionality as a "social literacy" and its interpretive community members as "literacy stewards" seems consistent with the ideas Cole expressed so eloquently in Vancouver. Moreover, it envisions the process as a shared endeavor rather than one guarded by sentries at a gate entitled "intersectionality."

The notion of an interpretive community being entrusted with the care of such a precious and complicated phenomenon like intersectionality is the best way of describing my current intellectual position. If we think of a steward as someone entrusted with caring for valuables that she does not herself own, then my role is to not only disavow ownership of intersectionality, but to remember that while I am permitted to use it, I must do so ethically, which entails producing projects that hopefully leave intersectionality scholars better equipped to engage in knowledge production projects in intersectionality studies. Using the motivations of intellectual history to trace how certain ideas traveled prior to 1988, I hope to provide, as the earlier subtitle suggested, *an* intellectual history rather than *the* intellectual history. That said, there is a distinction to be made between the literacy steward approach I am taking and an uncritical "multiple origin stories" approach that often (re)produces legitimate anxieties about replicating the very hierarchies intersectionality was founded to contest.[30]

My goal in writing *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* is to broaden and deepen our knowledge of intersectionality in three key ways.

First, I lengthen the historical arc of intersectionality, by tracing what I call "intersectionality-like thought" to 1831 and a free Black woman in Boston named Maria Stewart. While Crenshaw, Collins, hooks, Guy-Sheftall, and others have alluded to the contributions of Sojourner Truth,[31] there are many steps and claims in the 150-plus years connecting Stewart's work and that of Black Feminists in the late 1980s like Crenshaw and Collins. Tracing key elements of intersectionality-like thought, like the acknowledgment of multiple axes or formations of difference, leads the way here.[32] I look not only to the nineteenth century but to the early twentieth century as a connector with the activism and theorizing of the 1960s so as to ensure a fuller understanding of both Crenshaw's and Collins's places in the historical and theoretical emergence of intersectionality theory. While the book is organized thematically rather than chronologically, within each chapter authors are loosely organized chronologically from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century whenever feasible, with greatest attention to the two decades immediately prior to and immediately after the "watershed moment" of 1989–1990.

In addition to lengthening the historical arc of intersectionality-like thought across eras, I attempt to sketch an interdisciplinary history of intersectionality-like thought. To its credit, Wikipedia also gestures toward interdisciplinarity in its entry on intersectionality, with three disciplines discussed in the "Applications" section: "Social Work," "Intersectionality and Psychology," and "Intersectionality and the Labor Market." Yet each of the three is written using the perspective of a single discipline—sociology. Psychologists actually working on intersectional analysis, like Elizabeth Cole, Ronnie Greenwood, and others, are not cited, nor are psychological concepts accurately represented in a way

that would constitute an interdisciplinary representation of the relevant questions or relevant intellectual advances for intersectional analyses in psychology. Unsurprisingly, this book aspires to do a better job of engaging in interdisciplinarity.

However, this book should not be construed as a "reception study" in the cultural studies tradition. For example, I will not chronicle every trail of citations to see whether Crenshaw cited Collins or vice versa, except where there is a glaring omission or surprising connection. For example, *Conditions V, the Black Woman's Issue*, was heartily received by Latina feminists (see Moraga and Anzaldúa [1981] 1983). Instead, I try to draw from theoretical work in ten academic disciplines (in alphabetical order): American studies, English or literary studies, ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, history, legal studies (particularly critical race theory and human rights advocacy), feminist philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. It is clear, of course, that even with the limitation of ten fields, sufficient attention to depth will be limited by both space concerns and narrative coherence.

One of the challenges of engaging in these two practices of stewardship regards the complexities of founders and founding moments. In correspondence with an intellectual history orientation that tracks ideas instead of people or events, I err on the side of including more authors rather than attempting to crown one or two royal founders of the field. This move specifically counters intersectionality's own tendency toward ahistoricity (see May 2015) and also its tendency to locate the field's founding in a single year, field, and/or person.[33] I also rely on anthologies as a source of these writers, particularly from groups that are underrepresented as contributors to intersectionality-like thought: Asian Americans, Latinas, Native Americans in the United States, as well as women scholars and activists from around the world (but especially the Global South). Wherever possible, I attend to narrative in order to capture shifting

elements of intersectionality's intellectual projects. Many cited authors will be identified by their races or ethnicities, along with their sexualities and fields of study, if relevant to the discussion. Again, my point here is not to privilege race, but to illustrate concisely the vast racial and ethnic diversity of intersectionality's foremothers. It was only after making these stewardship-oriented decisions that I returned to the landmark *This Bridge Called My Back* and found Moraga and Anzaldúa's goal neatly paralleled my own: "We, women of color, are not without plans. This is exactly the kind of service we wish for the anthology to provide. It is a catalyst, not a definitive statement on 'Third World Feminism in the U.S.'" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xxvi).

The third and final practice of stewardship I engage in regards the global reach of intersectionality. Vrushali Patil notes that intersectionality applications are predominantly focused on the Global North and local domestic issues rather than transnational questions and cross-border dynamics (2013, 853). In writing this intellectual history I have consistently been surprised by where intersectionality and the women of color feminism from which it emerges get taken up. For example, Al-Rebholz's interviews with Kurdish women in Turkey called out the racism and ethnocentrism of their Turkish counterparts, who translated white American and British feminists for local engagement but omitted Black Feminist thought, which turned out to have the greatest resonance for Kurdish women activists (in Wilson 2013, 122–123). In order to best capture a vast range of transnational, international, and domestic texts that feature intersectionality-like thinking, I use a singular political issue that also allows me to embrace the role(s) of narrative that emerge from many scholarly and activist locations (see Smith 1983; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Wing 1997; García 1997).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I selected violence against women, a scourge of our humanity that has been with us for as long as we can remember. While it is the subject of Crenshaw's landmark second article, "Mapping the Margins," where she identifies three dimensions of intersectionality, I actually selected the issue because violence against women is simultaneously pervasive and highly specific in its enactment, as G. Chezia Carraway remarked in 1993. In the past few years alone we have seen media attention veer from story to story around the world. Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai survived a 2012 assassination attempt in Pakistan due to her public support for girls' education. In 2014, US NFL player Ray Rice was captured on video knocking his fiancée unconscious. In the interim, the Twitter feed "Everyday Sexism" has garnered hundreds of thousands of followers who publicize British women's endurance of daily sexual assault and harassment in public spaces, along with coverage of gang rapes in India and the kidnapping of 219 schoolgirls in Nigeria by Islamist militant group Boko Haram. This tactic facilitates narrative coherence without sacrificing the extension of intersectionality's historical arc, a commitment to interdisciplinarity, or attention to intersectionality-like thought in the Global South as well as in the Global North. Moreover, the issue speaks directly to the dual intellectual projects I have alluded to above and turn to below.

BLACK FEMINISM ≠ INTERSECTIONALITY: INTELLECTUAL PROJECTS

Distinguishing Black feminism and intersectionality involves questions concerning the positionality of US Black women as subjects and interlocutors, as well as interdisciplinary and

international sites of knowledge. Jennifer Nash contends that the proper conceptual relationship between Black feminism and intersectionality is generative: "intersectionality is a *product* of black feminism, rather than a *synonym* for black feminism" (2011, 445; emphasis mine). The challenge, however, of labeling intersectionality as a product of Black feminism is that it does not fundamentally resolve the quandaries raised by the "intellectual property versus meme" debate. Black Feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins was joined by a multiracial generation of feminist sociologists that includes Bonnie Thornton Dill, Ruth Enid Zambrana, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Lynn Weber (a trained psychologist who migrated to sociology). As Dill alludes to in a recent article,[34] these women formed an intellectual community that began to talk about intersecting or interlocking structures of oppression as they investigated women's engagement with low-income occupational sectors, as well as their family lives since the 1970s, long before the publication of *Black Feminist Thought*.

In a similar vein, Crenshaw was joined in the legal academy by Mari Matsuda, Adrien Katherine Wing, Margaret Montoya, and Trina Grillo, who were all thinking about a variety of legal domains (both domestic and international), with attention to evidentiary questions (which produced an often-overlooked call to revalue narrative forms of testimony at trial) and broad questions of access to representation, services, and rights awareness. Both intellectual communities seemed to fundamentally formulate a concept of intersecting or interlocking oppressions simultaneously but separately, but it is clear from *the work* of these many scholars (not simply their identities) that intersectionality's intellectual history is more racially and ethnically diverse, making it unlikely to be a mere "product" of Black feminism. In other words, while the path of influence runs in both directions, but Black feminism is not the only path connected to intersectionality.

Thus Collins and Crenshaw were likely preparing specifically Black Feminist analyses using very similar intersectional logic simultaneously (the years 1988–1990). Thus perhaps the best way to frame this "moment of naming" is as a moment that is occurring nearly simultaneously in legal studies and sociology. What is also worth noting is that in 1980, Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa interviewed Black Feminist twins Barbara and Beverly Smith, and began with the following question: "In your experience how do class and race issues *intersect* in the [women's] movement?" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa [1980] 1983, 113; emphasis mine). What are we obligated to say about the "moment of naming" with this additional information? Can we convincingly argue that Moraga, Anzaldúa, Crenshaw, and Collins all mean the same thing by the use of this nomenclature?

Clearly, familiarity with the disciplinary origins of the term "intersectionality" and the Black Feminist political commitments of the early coiners of the nomenclature will enable us to more critically trace the trajectory of intersectionality's development as a theory with worldwide appeal. However, it does not insulate us from having to seriously consider the positionality of Black women as intersectional subjects and interlocutors. Unraveling the connections is a critical element of this intellectual history of intersectionality. The intersectional turn investigated by *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* features two general types of intellectual project. The first project, a "visibility" or "inclusion" project, was certainly part of Crenshaw's intended outcome.[35] Productive intellectual communities in history, English, political science, and elsewhere also sought to revalue Black women as historical actors, literary figures, and political agents.[36] This "inclusion" project, as it has been named by a number of different scholars,[37] also continues to be an important part of the Black Feminist project.

The claims that are commonly attributed to "intersectionality" emerge from a larger historical narrative about race and

gender that dates to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the United States (Harris 2009) and to the 1960s efforts that culminated in the 1976 United Nations' Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the international context (see Yuval-Davis and Hancock 2011). Some who are steeped in Black women's studies trace the idea of simultaneously attending to race and gender oppression to Anna Julia Cooper's 1892 publication *A Voice from the South* (see, e.g., Jordan-Zachery 2007; Simien 2007). Fewer scholars of intersectionality are familiar with Maria Miller Stewart's 1830 *Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality*, a collection of writings about the "unique" challenges facing Black women, or Harriet Jacobs, author of the 1860 slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. All three of these authors—Cooper, Stewart, and Jacobs—wrote in voices that were focused on the political ideal of self-determination and grounded in the life experiences of Black women.[38]

Thus Crenshaw's and Collins's decidedly Black Feminist interventions in the late 1980s were without a doubt part of a Black female intellectual and sociopolitical tradition. That tradition included activists like the Combahee River Collective and the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), who articulated a race-gender analysis that meaningfully included sexuality (Brah and Phoenix 2004; Harris 2009) and class (inclusion of the latter was also due to the efforts of the National Welfare Rights Organization, NWRO). These important interventions into the narratives and agendas initially used language like "double bind" or "multiple jeopardies" to explain the sociopolitical location and challenges facing Black women in the United States, in the absence of mainstream conceptual language that spoke to their situation.

This need and desire to develop new conceptual lenses to better account for the pragmatic (e.g., in the implementation of litigation or international development strategies) and

theoretical challenges facing women of color during a period of intellectual ferment that again sought to adequately theorize what could be considered a very specific set of Black women's experiences. In cultural studies, bell hooks produced two books—*Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981) and *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984). The metaphor used by hooks and other Black Feminists like Jill Joseph of a center and margins was, in fact, the central metaphorical influence for Black Feminist theory (and much multicultural feminist theory) prior to the intersectional turn. Though not all of these scholars were doctrinaire standpoint theorists,[39] the response to their work focused on who can speak for, and who must step back in order to bring into the center, those on the margins of movement(s).

This language and logic expressed what was conventionally thought of as unique to Black women. However, women of color feminists contending with postcolonial gender and ethnic politics in the context of international development were similarly struggling with the notion of whether a single category movement could meaningfully empower them to have autonomy over their lives. While not grounded in the US Black female traditions per se, similar contentions with narrative logic and agenda setting emerged in the United States among Asian American women (Min-Ha 1989; Yamada, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983); in Britain (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 1992); and in west Africa (Thiam [1978] 1986) and the Middle East (El Sadaawi 1980). For some (e.g., Ogundipe-Leslie 1994), the gender analysis in "feminism" was so steeped in white Western womanhood that a new concept was necessary ("stiwanism"), stemming from concerns akin to those that led to the emergence of Alice Walker's "womanism" in the US context. While the works cited here emerged from social movement activism and scholarship, it is just as critical to note that these intersectional arguments appear to have much in

common with literary theory arguments made by postcolonial feminists like Gayatri Spivak ("Can the Subaltern Speak?") and Chandra Talpade Mohanty ("Under Western Eyes"). That these intellectual communities spoke more within themselves than across disciplinary boundaries as the ideas emerged makes it all the more remarkable that the concerns and ideas were so similar.[40]

All of these scholars are part of a larger discourse about analytical relationships among categories of difference. This second intellectual project is conceptually distinct from a project of visibility or inclusion. Moving from a center-margin frame to one of intersections is most closely associated with a conceptualization of intersectionality as a mode of analysis or approach to understanding the world. While this move first occurred in specific disciplines, the concept has traveled far and wide throughout a variety of disciplines in the years since. Even as early as Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's landmark article "Mapping the Margins," intersectional analysis is represented as "an approach" (1991, 1242) and a "way of framing interactions" (1296) rather than simply an assertion of relevant identity content.[41] Collins also uses the word "analysis" in her definition of intersectionality, located in in the glossary of her tenth-anniversary edition of *Black Feminist Thought*: "*analysis* claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women" (2000, 299; emphasis mine). More recently, intersectionality has been defined as an analytical framework for social justice (Hancock 2011) and a political orientation, epistemological practice, and ontological framework (May 2015, 48).

The implications of the shift from a metaphor of center-margin to a metaphor of intersecting oppressions have not been widely interrogated, but I think they are key to understanding

the shift in both intellectual tradition and logic that intersectionality represents.[42] The distinction between the margin-center metaphor and the intersectional metaphor is also critical to understanding the relationship between the Black and multicultural Feminist history that motivated the intersectional turn and continued travel along a new trajectory. Much scholarship that uses the keyword "intersectionality" reflects a failure to distinguish between multicultural feminist formulations and intersectional ones.

Intersectionality's intellectual project is thus twofold: an analytical approach to understanding between-category relationships *and* a project to render visible and remediable previously invisible, unaddressed material effects of the sociopolitical location of Black women or women of color. *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* seeks to explore the relationship of both parts of the intellectual project to a history of intersectionality theory that is more fully global and interdisciplinary than in prior intersectionality scholarship, and to do so using the ethic of literacy stewardship.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

How do scholars who closely identify with gender studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, or any combination thereof contend with the challenges of preserving the core commitments of intersectionality as a normative theory of social justice? In this book I want to examine the history of intersectionality in a way that meets the goals of both intellectual projects—the visibility or inclusion project and the project of rethinking the analytical relationships between categories. Though work that now calls itself "intersectionality" emanates from many different disciplinary locations, comprehensive interdisciplinary production of scholarship lags. Whether one contends that intersectionality

is a vague "buzzword," "intellectual property," or a "meme," ongoing challenges linger: (1) the focus on intersectionality as a decontextualized, present condition of marginalized people only; (2) a limited understanding of the geographical currents producing intersectional work; and (3) the myopic discipline-bound understandings of intersectionality. Moreover, if we accept Berger and Guidroz's characterization of intersectionality's impact—that it has become a social literacy—and Cole's call for stewardship of that literacy, the question is less whether intersectionality is intellectual property or meme and more a matter of how we contend with transformations that cannot be fully contained.

This chapter, "Intersectionality: Intellectual Property or Meme?," has outlined the key debates and anxieties that have emerged in the literature over the past twenty years, as intersectionality has exploded in popularity. It identifies two intellectual projects within the intersectionality discourse: (1) an inclusionary project designed to remedy specific instances of intersectional stigma or invisibility, and (2) an analytical project designed to reshape how categories of difference are conceptually related to each other. Both projects are frequently but not always committed to a normative social justice outcome, generating some amount of tension with authors who claim intersectionality as an approach or paradigm. If we conceptualize intersectionality as a field of study, we can examine a broader set of texts that fit into the two intellectual projects I've described.[43]

Chapter 2, "The Activist Roots of Intersectionality," examines the dynamic relationship between activism and intersectionality theory in two specific ways. First, it blends a wealth of historical sources from around the world to examine the role of prior centuries' activist movements in the spread of intersectionality as a theoretical construct in the academy, particularly in the struggles to end violence against women around the globe. The academy remains indebted to prior activists who

formulated much of the experiential language and concepts that persuaded early scholars of intersectionality to conceptualize the theory as qualitatively different from a margin-center approach. Second, I examine the reconceptualization of power that emerged from the dynamic relationships between activists and scholars. Ultimately, the chapter contends that the relationship between intersectionality theory and activism continues to run both ways, as strategies like "transformative organizing" emerge as best practices for a vast majority of social justice issues. As it is increasingly taught in the academy and made available on the Internet, intersectionality gains legitimacy among young activists entering social movements.

Chapter 3, "The Multicultural Epistemology of Intersectionality," focuses on uncovering the interdisciplinary, multiracial ontological and epistemological tenets of intersectionality theory. Two distinct features of this effort are (1) serious and significant attention to power and privilege, and (2) attention to ambivalence in earlier intersectionality-like thought about the project of reconceptualizing categorical relationships. This chapter excavates a distinct set of ontological and epistemological tenets that embrace contingency and reflexivity in ways that bring together the complexities of power and identity that intersectionality is known for (see Cho 2013).

Chapter 4, "Bridges, Interstices, and Intersections," examines the role that experiences of difference play in both of intersectionality's intellectual projects: the (in)visibility project and the project of rethinking categorical relationships. It also identifies an intellectual difference between women of color feminism and intersectionality theory regarding how each engages the implications of experiences of difference. This chapter also attends to the charge that current global examinations of intersectionality problematically erase race or other elements of the US approach in ways that are contrary to intersectionality's aspirational social justice ideals.

Chapter 5, "We Are Named by Others and We Are Named by Ourselves," explores the sympathies and distinctions between constructivism and intersectionality-like thinking. Specifically, this chapter builds upon Crenshaw's concept of representational intersectionality, Collins's controlling images, and Sandoval's differential consciousness to further examine growing distinctions between women of color feminism and intersectionality theory in the late 1990s and 2000s. Narrative plays a big role in this chapter, both as a part of the normative commitment to letting intersectionality's interlocutors speak for themselves and as a path to understanding another piece of the radical challenge intersectionality presents to evidentiary standards and cultural production.

Chapter 6, "Whither Intersectionality?," seeks to reconsider the questions posed at the start of the book. The "case for intersectionality" for our usage in twenty-first-century scholarship and activism can be made successfully only when there is a vibrant field of intersectionality studies engaged in multiple types of work that is fully engaged with the originating and contemporary literatures of intersectionality theory (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; May 2015). It is hoped that field will be enriched by the broad historicizing contributions this book aspires to offer.

THE ACTIVIST ROOTS OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Any white woman's group that does not have an anti-imperialist and antiracist ideology has absolutely nothing in common with the Black woman's struggle.

—FRANCES M. BEALE (*In Morgan 1970, 350)*

The accepted practice of wife burning in India, the epidemic of wife beatings and murders in Brazil, the maiming and murder of children in the Angolan war for independence, the wholesale prostitution of women and children in the Philippines as a means of familial economic survival, the bombings of reproductive health clinics in the United States, and the failure to develop coalitions that address the needs of women of color all continue to reflect the belief that violence against women is culturally acceptable, and therefore not a human rights abuse. Our struggle must be a collective struggle . . . in order to have any formidable impact on violence in the lives of women.

—CARRAWAY (*1993, 1308)*

It has been very important to me to have an international perspective on women's liberation. It is only when we understand the connections and uncover how women around the world have been used and pitted against each other that we can begin to stand in solidarity and stand up for each other.

—TAN (*In Shah 1997, 210*)

> I do feel very strongly that I would not have been given this, the physical disability, the learning disability, being Jewish and Arab, being a lesbian, and dealing with that whole coming out and sexuality stuff. That is a gift, I think, for me and I know that I am supposed to do something with that, not to further myself, but to be a bridge.
>
> ACTIVIST LISA WEINER-MAHFUZ, *quoted in Doetsch-Kidder (2012, 27)*

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE nineteenth century, activists have offered important insights into the twin intellectual projects of intersectionality—the visibility project and the project of reconceptualizing categorical relationships. Specifically, their experimentation with integrating instead of compartmentalizing their diverse experiences offered new ways of thinking about power and transformed what it means to organize with others to advocate for policy change. One specific transformative change involved understanding power as simultaneously pervasive and startlingly specific. In 1979, Audre Lorde's open letter alluded to this historical legacy for the present: "The oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those boundaries. Nor do the reservoirs of our ancient power know these boundaries, either. To deal with one without even alluding to the other is to distort our commonality as well as our difference" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa [1979] 1983, 97). Twelve years later, G. Chezia Carraway concurred; the epigraph clearly denotes violence against women as one of those sites of oppression (1993, 1308), uniquely positioning it for an intersectional analysis. Evidence persists regarding the pervasiveness of violence against women: even countries that otherwise score highly on objective measures of gender equality (like the nations of northern Europe) still face serious problems of violence against women (Montoya 2013, 7).

Moreover, the vast diversity of the practices within the problem presents a significant challenge for those who would eradicate violence against women. Exploring both the pervasiveness and specificity is thus critical to understanding the historical development of intersectionality-like thinking. In addition to the countries Carraway lists, Mexico, South Africa, Italy, Australia, Japan, and Iceland are also members of a long list of states contending with the complex reality of violence. The efforts of advocates and like-minded policy makers focus on protection, prosecution, and prevention (Montoya 2013, 8), but there remains a tension between the responsiveness of government in terms of new laws and policy initiatives and the on-the-ground effectiveness of such efforts (Weldon 2002; Montoya, 2013).

The broad goals of the movement to combat violence against women are "to transform power structures that perpetuate violence against women and to build power among women" (Annanya Bhattacharjee, in Shah 1997, 43). Activism is defined broadly in this chapter to include most forms of public advocacy, including but not limited to protest, community organizing, direct service provision, and legal advocacy. Contemporary intersectionality scholars have defined intersectional activism in different ways. Doetsch-Kidder defines it as "activism that addresses more than one structure of oppression or form of discrimination (racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, nationalism, etc.)" (2012, 3; see also Isoke 2013). Intersectional activism, however, is related to but distinct from making "explicitly intersectional demands" (Townsend-Bell, in Wilson 2013, 43), because such demands needn't come from a stereotypically intersectional identified activist. Finally, those who engage in intersectional activism are not solely women of color (Doetsch-Kidder 2012; Wilson 2013).

While intersectionality-like thinking has emerged from a dispersed engagement of activists' focus on a vast number of policy issues (Hankivsky 2014), in this chapter I trace its emergence from

the multiple and overlapping movements to end violence against women, particularly over the last forty years. This thematic trend facilitates the inclusion of a vast range of international and interdisciplinary considerations. In a book dedicated solely to the social movements pushing to eradicate violence against women, each segment of an advocacy landscape (NGOs, service providers, government agencies, and international organizations) would deserve a chapter in its own right. However, for the purposes of this intellectual history of intersectionality I focus instead on the common intersectionality-like threads across these different sectors so as to glean their role in the evolution of intersectionality as a paradigm. I first trace the impact on the visibility and categorical reconceptualization dimensions of intersectionality's overall intellectual project, which I defined in chapter 1. Then I introduce several additional contributions that emerge distinctly from the activism domain, including a reconceptualization of power in response to what are often called "particular" or "unique" experiences with marginalization.[1] Annanya Bhattacharjee offers one illustration of this perspective: "Women of color have added to this perspective by introducing the particular ways they are oppressed, and their goal is to build power among women of color. The special powerlessness created by the economic servitude of women also leads to a recognition of the need to build power among poor, working class women" (in Shah 1997, 43). All four intellectual contributions to intersectionality have been shapers of and reciprocally informed by the strategies activists have chosen to use over time in their advocacy against violence, broadly defined.

DEMANDS TO BE SEEN THROUGH VISIONARY EYES

Naming violence carries its own particular history of overcoming invisibility. Though she critiqued slavery in broad terms,

nineteenth-century orator Maria Stewart made the moral wrong of sexual violence during slavery explicitly political thirty years before the better-known Harriet Jacobs published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), one of the few slave narratives written by women. It is Stewart who links the desire for liberty to the "whoredoms" imposed upon and endured by Black women (in Richardson 1987, 39). "[B]ut we will tell you that our souls are fired with the same love of liberty and independence with which your souls are fired. We will tell you that too much of your blood flows in our veins, too much of your color in our skins, for us not to possess your spirits" (40). Stewart's public condemnation of her group's struggle with visibility contains several seeds of future claims among a wide variety of activists and their projects discussed in this chapter. Maria Stewart also became part of the intellectual history of Third World feminism, as she was mentioned in Hattie Gossett's poem submission for *This Bridge Called My Back*, a poem that was written in 1980. Despite another mention in 1995's *Words of Fire* anthology, somehow she fell out of conversations about women of color and intersectionality, a phenomenon that has befallen several aspects of intersectionality-like thought as well.

The political implications of rape in the slavery economy Stewart alludes to presages later interventions like Incite! Women of Color Against Violence—who explicitly link "domestic violence" against women within communities and "state-sponsored or -sanctioned" violence directed against communities that include women of color (2006, 1–2)—and the National Federation of Dalit Women (see Brueck 2012, 226). Specifically, for activists in the anti-violence against women movement the visibility project of intersectionality featured three elements. First, it sought to remedy the invisibility of the diversity within communities struggling for justice. At the same time these activists recognized that both the invisibility and their responses were part of a larger

narrative about marginalized groups full of distortions, both in the mainstream and in marginalized communities themselves. Thus the second element of the visibility project involved crafting arguments that walked a narrow line between holding perpetrators of violence accountable and not inviting the state to further oppress their communities. The interaction between these two political challenges produced the third element of the visibility project: the strategic use of both visibility and invisibility to fight for systemic change.

Dill and Zambrana (2009) identify the project of addressing diversity within groups as a "hallmark" of intersectional analysis (cited in Montoya 2013, 13).[2] Despite vastly different histories and engagements with imperialism, the fight for visibility of the struggle against state-sponsored violence against women persisted across several populations in a variety of ways. Acknowledging this diversity of engagement with the state can provide an important corrective to the kind of organizing needed to simultaneously eradicate state-sponsored and interpersonal violence against women (Smith, in Incite! 2006, 67).

Activism against state-sponsored and state-sanctioned violence has long been a concern for women of color, from Ida B. Wells in the 1890s to a young Japanese American woman who "stood up to contest the constitutionality of the Evacuation Order of 1942" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 71). This activism persists today in the context of the #blacklivesmatter movement, cofounded by three queer women of color in 2014 to address rampant police violence and the murders of Blacks in the United States. This larger history of activism and critique of state-sponsored violence has retained, however, aspects of invisibility regarding women of color as the targets of such violence. Writing in the early 1970s, Elizabeth Martínez, the Black Women's Liberation Group, and Mirta Vidal each connected the lack of visibility and attention to such violence as an additional assertion of power that had to be revealed and addressed.

The frame of these state actions as problematic were not simply racial nor simply gendered; they were constructed as race-gendered, a key antecedent of intersectionality-like thought.

For Martínez and the Black Women's Liberation Group, respectively, violence was a cross-border phenomenon facing women, but their conceptualization of the connections preserved meaningful differences rather than erased them. Recovering a history of sexual violence situates twentieth-century racist and sexual oppression in a context of state-sanctioned violence:

> Our roots lie in the act of rape: the rape of the women, the rape of an entire continent and its people. . . . Inside the borders of the United States the women of La Raza lived first under Spanish rule, then Mexican rule, and beginning in 1848 under U.S. imperialist rule. That year the process of rape was resumed. The Chicana was raped by the invading gringo both in the literal, physical sense as well as in the sense of those forms of oppression imposed on all our people, both men and women. (Martínez 1970; in García 1997, 32)

Here the structure at stake is the state, but the impact included physical acts of rape by "invading gringo[s]" as well as the political oppressions of all those living in the territory "won" with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo in 1848. An open letter by the Black Women's Liberation Group, published in the 1970 anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful*, takes on motherhood as part of the antiviolence struggle: "For us, birth control is the freedom to fight genocide of black women and children. Like the Vietnamese have decided to fight genocide, the South American poor are beginning to fight back, and the African poor will fight back, too. Poor black women in the United States have to fight back too" (in Morgan 1970, 360–361).

Both the Black Women's Liberation Group and Mirta Vidal (1971, in García, 1997) linked the struggle to intragroup

gender politics, suggesting that visibility is more than mere sight; instead it is a matter of being seen in a way that also understands, as the Black Women's Liberation Group argues: "But we don't think you're going to understand us because you are a bunch of little middle-class people and we are poor black women. The middle class never understands the poor because they always need to use them as you want to use poor black women's children to gain power for yourself" (in Morgan 1970, 361).[3] Mirta Vidal suggested a similar struggle among Chicanas and their brothers in the struggle. Even as they shared a common commitment to economic justice, sexism persisted. She reports two examples from Sacramento, California, and Castroville, Texas. In Sacramento, women voted to become the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional and adopted a resolution that read: "The effort of Chicana/Mexican women in the Chicano movement is generally obscured because women are not accepted as community leaders by the Chicano movement or by the Anglo establishment" (Vidal 1971; in García 1997, 22). In Castroville, the women's caucus of the Castroville United Farm Workers (UFW) warned their male labor organizer counterparts about the divisive impact of sexist invisibility on the struggle for justice (22). This attention to economic justice continued into the 1980s, as Moraga built out the generative aspects of difference, and connected them to a larger history of violence due to slavery and colonialism, as well as current immigration status and economic privilege (in Moraga and Anzaldúa [1981] 1983, 105). Sandoval (1991, 2000) also attends to the matter of economic justice in her critiques of capitalism. While more recent intersectionality scholarship has been criticized for neglecting class, the more complicated history of intersectionality suggests that it has instead fallen out of the discussion of intersectionality among the interpretive community, a different dilemma worth wrangling with on its own terms.

In addition to debates among scholars regarding strategies to end state-sponsored and sanctioned acts of violence, the state itself often plays a role in adjudicating among acts of interpersonal violence. In this context the warped visibility of women of color victims crosses borders. Southall Black[4] Sisters in Britain, a group of activists committed to freeing two South Asian women convicted of murdering their abusive partners in 1989 and 1993, respectively, found that differential outcomes in shortening their respective sentences on appeal were attributable to the dynamic interaction between the women's different class statuses and the primary narratives about South Asian women in Britain. The woman with the most desirable outcome was not simply middle class, but fit into a narrative of "rescuing" South Asian women with roots in British imperialism that produced a "squeaky clean" representation for judges and juries. Unfortunately the ability to fit into this narrative, an exercise in strategic visibility, is available to precious few women caught up in the criminal justice system: "The majority of women who come into conflict with the law are not 'squeaky clean,' yet they too have a history of violence and abuse that in some way contributed to their incarceration" (Sudbury, in Incite! 2006, 19).[5]

Southall Black Sisters' efforts in Britain were paralleled by SAKHI, a US-based South Asian anti-domestic-violence group founded in 1989. SAKHI also refused to accept invisibility: "We [Asian American anti-domestic-violence organizations] have asserted the existence of Asian women and refused to be statistically invisible" (Bhattacharjee, in Shah 1997, 37). Asian American women have been organizing around violence against women in the United States since the early 1980s (Zia, in Shah 1997, 64; see also Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin 2013). SAKHI's concomitant commitment to expanding the definition of immigrants and people of color to include Asians also brings different strategies from India and China that may be worthy of

consideration in the United States if not for their invisibility, a theme I address directly in the last sections of this chapter.[6]

The claims of activists that I've reviewed so far are consistent with Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's widely cited article "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color" (1991), which chronicles the perils of ignoring within-group differences in the violence against women of color advocacy space. It is also important to situate this landmark article in a broader intellectual context that includes Sandoval's publication of "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World" (1991), although it is not explicitly focused on violence against women. Crenshaw notes how feminist advocates against domestic violence have pushed for changes that limit the ability of policy makers and law enforcement to appropriately address domestic violence in solidarity with women of color at both the federal level with the Immigration and Nationality Act (1991, 359, 364) and locally in Los Angeles and New York (360, 365–366). Bhattacharjee offers an example of this phenomenon from the 1990s: the time-honored strategy of survivor confidentiality creates a barrier to wider collective action, which again leaves certain collective tactics off the table for any population, when they might be effective in some communities (in Shah 1997, 36). More to the point, survivor confidentiality creates an overdependence on the legal system and law enforcement, about which Bhattacharjee concurs with Crenshaw: "[the U.S. legal system and law enforcement] have been known to be sexist, racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-poor. The fight comes down to having a good lawyer. Along with this strategy comes a fear of reprisals from the legal system if one engages in unconventional strategies . . . the idea that this is a fight in which strategies must be developed to counter precisely those fears which keep in place oppressive power-wielders is rarely entertained" (36). That

said, it's not clear every legal system must function in this way; Sharon Doetsch-Kidder's interview with Sarah Reed suggests that tribal governments in the United States are not obligated to a Western framework, which opens up a variety of policy options.[7] Whether conceptualized by activists or theorists (and recognizing that boundary as permeable), diversity within is an important element in the shift in logic intersectionality represents because it can also open space for creative solutions to persistent and pervasive problems.

Sudbury (in Incite! 2006) and Sandoval (2000) alert readers to the ongoing challenges of invisibility in a more global context. For Sudbury, mainstream activism against violence against women has progressed beyond Crenshaw's articulation of rendering women of color's experiences invisible to outright complicity in a "law and order" agenda that has criminalized poor communities of color and created "a transnational prison industrial complex" (in Incite! 2006, 19). Sandoval more generally attributes reproductions of invisibility against people of color and queer people in the 1990s to late capitalist conditions of the twentieth century (1991, 2000). The connection to capitalism, an axis that divides the Global North and the Global South, was also an underlying factor in accusations of "dominating attitudes displayed by U.S. African American activists at the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR)" (Falcon 2008, 15; see also Crooms 2003). Falcon's 2008 interviews with Afro-Peruvian activists revealed a fissure grounded in the refusal of US Black activists to see any connection between capitalism and racism: "For example, a North American Black can't even imagine the reality of life for an Afro-Peruvian community in Yapatera, who has to sustain constant aggression" (Falcon 2008, 16). Thus the thread of invisibility, of not being seen at all as a racialized, gendered, and classed person embedded in domestic and transnational politics, emerges out of women of color activism in a particular way that

contributes to intersectionality-like thinking. Specifically, these works illustrate how relative visibility or invisibility influences the conceptualizations of the policy problem and which policies are considered legitimate options, up to and including charges of complicity and cooptation among mainstream women's groups fighting violence against women that receive state funding and advocate for specific reformist policy options in response.

If we take seriously the idea that visibility is more than mere sight; instead it is a matter of being seen in a way that also substantively attends to what comes into view, we must contend with the reality of occlusions due to within-group power dynamics that distort the reality of women of color's lives and demand their silence as a price for racial and ethnic loyalty. As with the quest for acknowledgment of diversity within, contending with distortion also has a significant history prior to Crenshaw's 1991 article. In a 1976 issue of *Caracol*, Anna Nieto-Gómez connects invisibility of issues to distortions of Chicanas. In her discussion of the case of Inez García, she states:

> For the last year there have been issues of [rape] in which women have defended themselves. These were Third World women—for example, Inéz García, who suffered from rape and who retaliated. Who supported her? She was sent to jail. Where was the Chicano movement? There were people in the Chicano movement who said that Inéz García deserved it, that everybody knows that women really want to be raped, that she can enjoy it, and that rape doesn't justify the taking of human life. This is an example of a confusion in our community response to an important issue. . . . Rape is an act of violent aggression, and it's something we have the right to defend ourselves against. (in García 1997, 56)[8]

Nieto-Gómez's illustration of distortion of women themselves complements another distortion uncovered by activists

using intersectionality-like thinking to combat violence against women. This second distortion could be characterized as one of intersectional privilege in a larger context of disadvantage. Antiracism activists have given so much attention to the narrative of Black men being falsely accused that it has completely crowded out any attention to women of color as victims of domestic violence and rape, even among women of color themselves (Crenshaw 1991, 371; see also Incite! 2006, 1). The distorted weight of these narratives of both false accusations and police interventions produce a "more generalized community ethic against public intervention" (Crenshaw 1991, 362). The material effects of such invisibility include lower levels of reporting, prosecution, and conviction of those accused of domestic violence and rape when the person attacked is a woman of color (374; see also 375). In a 1997 conversation with her fellow Asian American women activists, Helen Zia notes similar community loyalty's impact on the visibility project:

> We have nothing to gain from being silent, from keeping a culture of invisibility. That includes the generational issue of keeping our communities' problems to ourselves. Something that I've heard many times over is that when sexual harassment occurs to Asian women by Asian men, Asian women feel like they cannot come forward. The community pressure is so great—it would look like they were trying to betray the community. Asian American women are being asked to sacrifice and not seek justice. Those are things that we need to bring some light to [*sic*]. (Zia, in Shah 1997, 66)

Contestations of distorted narratives also travel across continents as part of the visibility project for intersectionality-like thinking. The inability to "imagine the reality of life," as Falcon's Afro-Peruvian informant Monica puts it, is not limited to international conferences or spaces of like-minded activists.

A routine trip to pay the water bill in 2001 for one of Falcon's other informants, Sofia, turns into a confrontation with the "stupidities" still carried around in Peruvian men's heads, when a customer service representative of the water company alludes to Afro-Peruvian women's "distinct" sexual nature: "Sofia knows . . . that he is referring to Black female sexuality. . . . She sees this view as a relic from the colonial period when enslaved Black women had no choice but to be raped at the discretion of their owners/masters" (Falcon 2008, 8).[9] In both contexts—among activists who claim to pursue similar agendas and in the tasks of daily life—women of color are subjected to dominating behavior based on intersectional axes of power. The distortion Sofia experiences—the inability or refusal of the service representative to see Sofia as who she truly is—is a third part of intersectionality's visibility project.[10] Writing in 1990, Patricia Hill Collins notes that "U.S. Black women's experiences as well as those of women of African descent transnationally have been routinely distorted within or excluded from what counts as knowledge" (201). At almost exactly the same time in history, Crenshaw also identifies such narrative distortions as problematic with regard to the issue of violence against women: "Tokenistic, objectifying, voyeuristic inclusion is at least as disempowering as complete exclusion. The effort to politicize violence against women will do little to address Black and other minority women if their images are retained simply to magnify the problem rather than to humanize their experiences. Similarly, the antiracist agenda will not be advanced significantly by forcibly suppressing the reality of battering in minority communities" (1991, 364).

Similar struggles with dominant cultural narratives reflect not simply what it means to be first- or second-generation Indian American but what it means to be active in addressing violence against women. Purvi Shah recalled the controversy over participation in the 1995 India Day parade in New York City and the exclusions of both SAKHI and the South Asian

Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA) by the Federation of Indian Association (FIA), because the groups did not represent traditional Indian values (quoted in Shah 1997, 47).[11] When SAKHI was allowed to participate in the Pakistan Day Parade a week later,[12] it was publicly announced as a group that performs "social work," rather than as an anti-domestic-violence advocacy or activist group (50). This distortion of SAKHI's purpose was virtually a price paid for inclusion. It is also, as Rita Dhamoon argues separately in an analysis of Canadian multiculturalism's failings, an assertion of power (2009, 12).[13] In a 1990s' context of difference, where Islamophobia shapes Indian American and Pakistani American responses to how SAKHI presents itself, there are two distortions: the distortion of SAKHI and the distortion of the cultural communities as free from female oppression via domestic violence (see P. Shah, in Shah 1997, 48 and 54).

This struggle with visibility should not be taken to imply that women of color contending with controlling images or distortions were powerless. In an earlier era (the 1970s and early 1980s), Nawal El Sadaawi emerged as an international example of what one might call strategic visibility, particularly but not exclusively along the North-South axis of difference. El Sadaawi, an Egyptian medical doctor and activist, held a number of prominent positions with the United Nations (Amirah 2000, 218–219). In a context of limited Western access to activists of Arab descent, the widespread availability of English-language interviews of El Sadaawi led to English translations of her books, which were also reviewed in media outlets like the *New York Times* (218–219). El Sadaawi used this platform to great effect in publicizing the needs of Arab and African women around the world, particularly following the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979. Amal Amirah characterizes El Sadaawi as navigating Western interpretations of her work in both accommodating and resistant ways (219), based

on her own political calculus. In particular, El Sadaawi struggled with Western feminists' tendency to reduce her activism against female genital mutilation (FGM) to a singular example of barbaric gender oppression, and to abstract her overall critique from the economic implications of Western imperialism's impact (230–231).[14]

During the same decade of the 1970s in the United States, Latinas were also organizing and strategically stepping out for visibility. Virdal notes the women of Crystal City, Texas, who, fed up with the creation by the exclusively male decision-making body Ciudadanos Unidos (United Citizens) of a women's auxiliary named Ciudadanas Unidas, stormed the male meeting and demanded to be recognized as members on an equal basis, winning by a close vote (Virdal 1971, in García 1997, 22).

As the El Sadaawi and Ciudadanas Unidas cases suggest, although the challenge of invisibility was significant and multifaceted, it also brought tremendous benefit: "These constantly speaking differences stand at the crux of another, mutant unity, for this unity does not occur in the name of all 'women,' nor in the name of race, class, culture, or 'humanity' in general. Instead, as many U.S. third world feminists have pointed out, it is unity mobilized in a location heretofore unrecognized" (Sandoval 1991, 17; see also Lorde 1982, in Byrd, Cole and Guy-Sheftall 2009). Later in the 1990s, Elaine H. Kim reminds us that despite the distorted portrayals of SAKHI and other groups, Asian American women took some of the formation of women's auxiliaries and "transformed that auxiliary stuff into very cutting-edge social movements. For example, the drive against homophobia in Asian American communities has really been led by Asian American women. Women have redefined violence to be more encompassing and are paying attention to social class, as in the various efforts to organize workers" (Kim, in Shah 1997, 65). These are particular engagements with experience among "Third World feminists" in a manner distinct

from the many debates about "experience" that were common in the 1980s and 1990s.[15]

Myths like "the model minority" among Asian Americans similarly perpetuated the invisibility of economic disparities (Nowrojee and Silliman, in Shah 1997, 73), producing intra-community debates about "respectable" Indian American identity in ways that facilitate continued violence against women. The founders of SNEHA, a Hindi word for "loving relationship," stated it this way:

> Our model of activism transcends the racial, ethnic and class dichotomies that appear to affect many other organizations. Our presence is a reminder that not all women of color share the experience of economic marginality. We share black feminists' ambivalence about making public the issues of the community, because there is real ongoing concern that these dysfunctional images will be used to describe the normal life of the entire group. . . . Our presence testifies to the need for a more nuanced understanding of political activism. (Purkayashta, Raman, and Bhide, in Shah 1997, 106–107)

In so doing, SNEHA connected three visibility challenges: diversity within communities, distortions in the mainstream culture that require debunking, and political activism geared in the direction of systemic change. The complexity of invisibility is materially reflected in the presumed (in)validity of women of color's survival narratives and their impact on legal outcomes in particular. As noted in the case of British activists Southall Black Sisters, the ability to successfully claim self-defense is one area of difference among women that persists across decades.[16] Nieto-Gómez linked such struggles across racial groups in the 1970s, noting: "Chai Lao's an Asian woman; she was arrested by a police officer. He said, 'I'll tell you what. I won't take you in if you submit to me.' She said no. He raped

her; she killed him. Joanne Little is the most nationally publicized example of this. She was a woman, a prisoner. The guard said, 'Do me a little favor, honey, and I might do one for you.' She said no. He raped her; she killed him" (1976, in García 1997, 56). Black lesbian feminist Barbara Smith concurred in the 1980s: "Black women who are battered and who physically defend themselves are treated differently than white women by the courts. It's seen differently by the courts when a white middle class woman murders her husband. Then it's so-called self-defense. I was just reading a case involving a Black woman in Michigan where the Black woman was sold down the river obviously because she was Black. A negative image of Black men and women got her fate delivered" (Smith and Smith 1980, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 122). Thus even when crimes are reported—when women of color take the risk of reporting—the outcomes are substantively similar to or worse than remaining silent.

Thus a significant part of activists' contribution to the visibility project is threefold: making the needs of women experiencing violence salient (or public) in a way that attracts resources and public support for meaningful remedies; debunking distortions that seek to discredit the claims of women of color enduring the violence; and transforming a justice system that is simultaneously willing to overlook women of color as victims and see young men of color as all-too-easy prey for incarceration. In the twenty-first century, activism surrounding violence committed against transgender people also focuses on increased visibility. Vietnamese American trans activist Irena Bui credits a significant part of her own courage to transition to "seeing that others seemed comfortable," which led to the realization that she too "could be comfortable in her multiple identities and choices" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 58). For Latina trans activist Ruby Corrado, the need for a "trans presence" was catalyzed by her increasing awareness of the disrespectful treatment trans people experiencing violence received from police, and by the death

of her friend Bella Evangelista (55). In response, she decided to organize trans women to attend any proceeding or event where a Latina trans presence was important. The demand for visibility in this context became an important demand for political inclusion and participation.

Speaking out remains important, as Leti and Avelynn, LGBT activists, articulate in different ways. It's equally important, however to recognize that the dialogue is not predetermined. It won't necessarily proceed according to rational and dispassionate standards of democratic deliberation, even when everyone shares one or more identities and political commitments, as Leti discovered in her work on the National Lesbian Conference: " 'This is all lesbians, right? And having the working class lesbians say, "Why do you think that you could speak for me? And why do you think I can't do it?" ' Leti realized that 'This is the first opportunity, even though it's amongst lesbians, to have a voice and be heard, and sometimes when that happens, the pain comes out. Someone's willing to listen to you, and the pain comes out or the anger' " (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 115). Avelynn notes the critical importance of dialogue: "in the beginning the desire to make us visible or to be political was there, but you can't have a movement unless people are talking to each other, unless there's dialogue. . . . Queer Asian women just need to talk about their experiences or how they feel or who they are . . . in a language that they're familiar with" (99). While a classical liberalism approach from the situation that Leti faced would produce the conclusion that humans are all different, and identity should be eschewed in favor of another mode of belonging, intersectionality instead operates from distinct premises that foregrounds power relationships and their transformation in response to the situation in a way that accepts and incorporates more nuanced politics of visibility and identities. I discuss this kind of logic in chapter 3.

Finally, attention to visibility and inclusion requires a brief notation regarding categories often cited in meta-critiques and analyses of intersectionality. Examining the documents of the 1970s and 1980s along with a more global reach enables us to reveal that critiques of capitalism and imperialism have previously been part of intersectionality-like thought, but these critiques have *dropped out* in important ways, as opposed to having been missing in the first place. Importantly, this ebb and flow of attention to certain kinds of categories is generally unaccounted for by scholars who make this critique,[17] perhaps because of the absence of significant attention to the intellectual history of intersectionality (see Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013). Frances Beale (in Morgan 1970, 345–346), Anna Nieto-Gómez (1976, in García 1997, 57), and Chela Sandoval (1991, 2000) all produce incisive critiques of capitalism, and El Sadaawi (1980) fuses critiques of capitalism with anticolonial rhetoric that gets explicitly subsumed as part of anti-FGM activism focused solely on gender.

ACTING FROM A MULTIPLY IDENTIFIED CENTER

The title of this section is a play on the contemporary activist practice of "acting from center" and signifies the shift from language featuring margins and centers toward metaphors of intersections. Activists who recognized or experienced invisibility or marginality also understood that false unity under a single category of difference suppressed the material needs of women of color; specifically women of color navigating violence committed against them. The marginalization perpetrated by purveyors of racial or ethnic solidarity, sisterhood, or the rise of the proletariat continues as a thread throughout

the twentieth century, creating an impetus and opportunity for activists to engage in intersectionality-like critique. The visual language of obscurity reveals ongoing aspects of intersectionality-like thinking—the need to render the invisible visible. While this particular commitment to addressing invisibility is unique to intersectionality, it is not unique to a single interlocutor or group involved in shaping intersectionality into what it is today.

Maria Stewart's "Farewell Address to Her Friends in the City of Boston" was far more direct in its accusations and lamentations about the failures of unity based on a single identity. Using both the Bible and "Sketches of the Fair Sex" as her references, Stewart chronicles the consistently visible role of women in history, confronting the issue of sexism in the Black community:

> What if such women as are here described should rise among our sable race? And it is not impossible. For it is not the color of the skin that makes the man or the woman, but the principle formed in the soul.
>
> . . .
>
> I find it is no use for me as an individual to try to make myself useful among my color in this city. . . . Had experience more plainly shown me that it was the nature of man to crush his fellow, I should not have thought it so hard . . . let us no longer talk of prejudice, till prejudice becomes extinct at home. Let us no longer talk of opposition, till we cease to oppose our own. (In Richardson 1987, 70–71)

Stewart's understanding here that sexism is simultaneously a threat as racism and, as importantly, a threat to the cause of "racial uplift" in terms of Black progress is a hallmark of intersectionality's second intellectual project.

Writing in 1977, the Combahee River Collective begins its famous statement with the genesis of its Black feminism

in a way that fundamentally challenges the notion of a single margin-center metaphor:

> Black, other Third World, and working women have been involved in the feminist movement from its start, but both outside reactionary forces and racism and elitism within the movement itself have served to obscure our participation. . . . It was our experience and disillusionment within these [Black] liberation movements, as well as experience on the periphery of the white male left that led to the need to develop a politics that was antiracist, unlike those of white women, and antisexist, unlike those of Black and white men. ([1977] 1993, 14)

Just three years later, collective member Beverly Smith directly critiqued the concept of ontological primacy for one category, and specifically framed it in activist terms: "Some separatists believe that although women are racist, when men disappear and no longer rule, racism will not be a problem. It's very analogous to people who are Marxists who say 'Well, when class oppression and racism end, definitely the oppression of women and lesbians will end.' What lesbian separatists are saying is that when we get rid of men, sexism and racism will end too" (Beverly Smith 1980, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 122–123).[18]

As has been true elsewhere in this chapter, the critique of a unitary margin-center understanding of power is not limited to the United States context. Senegalese activist Awa Thiam's 1978 publication *Black Sisters Speak Out!* raises the question often asked of women of color activists: which group solidarity is more important? Thiam frames her rhetorical question in a way that makes clear the two analytical categories share ontological primacy: "Therefore she is exploited not only as a Black, but also because she is a woman. But which of these come first?" (1978, 116).[19] Thiam's question suggests a desire for a context in which this question is no longer applicable. We can gain a

sense of what that would look like from Cherríe Moraga, who describes a particular panel on racism in San Francisco, and how both her participation in the conversation and the presence of five sister Latinas heartened her: "For once, I didn't have to choose between being a lesbian and being Chicana; between being a feminist and having family" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xvii–xviii).

The second ramification that emerges from this reshaping of ontological relationships consists of the mutually constitutive relationships between categories. Nieto-Gómez uses a rhetorical or literary strategy of combining and recombining sexism and racism, alternating between the terms "sexistracism" and "racistsexism" in her 1974 article "La Feminista" (in García 1997). Cheryl Clarke extended this logic in her article "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance": "While the black man may consider racism his primary oppression, he is hard-put to recognize that sexism is inextricably bound up with the racism the black woman must suffer, nor can he see that no women (or men for that matter) will be liberated from the original 'master-slave' relationship, viz. that between men and women, until we are all liberated from the false premise of heterosexual superiority" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 132).[20]

Drawing on these Third World feminists and others, Sandoval brings a process-oriented lens to the multiple categories of difference analyses that are the hallmark of intersectionality in 1990–1991. Writing in the journal *Genders*, Sandoval creates a topography that suggests "no [categorical] enactment is privileged over any other, and the recognition that each [categorical] site is as potentially effective in opposition as any other makes possible another mode of consciousness which is particularly effective under late capitalist and post-modern cultural conditions in the United States. I call this mode of consciousness 'differential'—it is the ideological mode enacted by U.S. third world feminists over the last thirty years" (1991, 12).

The consciousness is produced through a process of self-conscious recognition by the inhabitants of certain social locations in a way that transforms these social locations into sites of resistance to the current organization of power (11). Sandoval terms an overview of these locations a "topography," consistent with the usage of spatial metaphors, and argues that it can be attentive to historical contingency while remaining distinct from historical determinism.

What is more interesting, however, is the way in which Sandoval forces an ontological equality of gender, race/ethnicity, and class rather than subordinate positions for one or more of them, which is attributable to US feminists of color activism from 1968 to 1990: "Differential consciousness represents a strategy . . . [whose] powers can be thought of as mobile—not nomadic, but rather cinematographic; a kinetic motion that maneuvers politically transfigures, and orchestrates while demanding alienation, perversion, and reformation in both spectators and practitioners" (Sandoval 2000, 44; see also Sandoval 1991, 12). The shift forced social movements to rethink their previous notions of oppositional group consciousness. This ontological shift that emanates from activists' unwillingness to subsume their contestation of multiple oppressions under a single axis of marginalization—and a more expansive list of said categories—has a very specific ramification for intersectionality. The attention to a more holistic understanding of how oppression (not simply identity, but oppression) functions leads some authors to push back against the dominant notion of zero-sum politics,[21] which will eventually become (and remains) one of the central insights of intersectionality theory. Frances Beale offers an early comment in this vein:

> it is a gross distortion of fact to state that black women have oppressed black men. . . .

> It must also be pointed out at this time, that black women are not resentful of the rise to power of black men. We welcome it. We see in it the eventual liberation of all black people from this oppressive System of capitalism. Nevertheless, this does not mean that you have to negate one for the other. This kind of thinking is a product of miseducation; that it's either *X* or it's *Y*. It is fallacious reasoning that in order for the black man to be strong, the black woman has to be weak.
>
> Those who are exerting their "manhood" by telling black women to step back into a submissive role are assuming a counterrevolutionary position. (In Morgan 1970, 343–344)

Together, Beale and Sandoval form a multidisciplinary, multiracial historical foundation for the second intellectual project of intersectionality: reshaping the ontological relationships between analytical categories of difference. Intersectionality here represents a much more fundamental shift in understanding how the world works, a point I take up in greater detail in chapter 3.

During the two decades prior to Crenshaw's and Collins's watershed publications, a tremendous amount of activist work was invested in reshaping the fundamental quality of the relationships between social movements and the oppressions they sought to resolve. One of the key distinctions that emerged in later decades between women of color feminism and intersectionality occurred within the context of this intellectual project. As arguments for "both/and" formulations took shape, an uninterrogated set of claims emerged that took divergent paths. However, this mutually constitutive understanding of between-category relationships coexisted in this era with a both/and formulation of conceptually distinct categories. The latter formulation led to an additive logic in practice that produced competitions among differently situated activists for the role of "most oppressed"[22] based on a high number of marginalized

identities or experiences of multiple oppressions. I explore this ambivalence in greater depth in chapters 3, 4, and 5, but note its presence here among activists, not simply intersectionality scholars. Ultimately the idea connects to whether or not there is conceptual space for a race-only (or gender-only) kind of understanding of how categories of difference relate. Activist contributors to anthologies like *This Bridge* equivocated by referring to racial violence as its own unique conceptual logic:

> I spent a part of my childhood feeling great sadness and helplessness about how it seemed that Indians were open game for the white people, to kill, maim, beat up, insult, rape, cheat, or whatever atrocity the white people wanted to play with. There was also a rage and frustration that has not died. . . . Death was so common on the reservation that I did not understand the implications of the high death rate until after I moved away and was surprised to learn that I've seen more dead bodies than my friends will probably ever see in their lifetime.
>
> Because of experiencing racial violence, I sometimes panic when I'm the only non-white in a roomful of whites, even if they are my closest friends; I wonder if I'll leave the room alive. (Barbara Cameron, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 47)

The location of Cameron's visceral racialized pain in a context of near eradication of Indian peoples in the United States is conceptually distinct from Moraga, Nieto-Gómez, and a host of others who were creating a small space for race-gender analysis that became, eventually, intersectionality-like thought. Many contributors to *This Bridge Called My Back, Home Girls, Chicana Feminist Thought*, and *Sisterhood is Powerful* refused to engage in political analysis without attention to multiple categories while the lack of full incorporation of racism into feminist theory or practice produced powerful protests by women of color (cf. Sargent, 1981, quoted in Sandoval 1991, 7),

Together these two moments—Cameron's pain and Moraga's reconceptualization—preserved a different space for scholars trained in positivist social science research to use intersectionality as a testable explanation (fitting intersectionality into a set of existing assumptions rather than taking intersectionality fully into account and changing, as I noted above, how the very problems are conceptualized in the first place). As I noted in chapter 1, this practice remains a matter of debate in the field even through the time of publication.[23] It is most important for our purposes to note that this ambivalence about precisely how far to carry the reshaping of ontological relationships exists in the founding narratives of intersectionality studies, and is not simply the product of contemporary scholars' sloppy engagement with these works.

RESPONSES TO POWER

Activists from the nineteenth century forward have struggled across axes of difference to collaborate effectively for positive social change. Despite their optimism that the world can and should look different from the way it does in the political moment, power hierarchies remain a part of everyone's reality and must be confronted. How has this fact of everyone's reality shaped the twin intellectual projects of intersectionality?

Multiple strategies from activists in the anti-violence against women community have emerged for confronting and reconceptualizing power in a more complex way. Their experience with the vagaries of political activism—specifically when solidarity (whether presumed by virtue of shared identity or forged through politics) fails—creates a dilemma: how does one address both the problematic action as well as the power relations that contributed to the failure in the first place?

Though pessimistic about the possibility of gaining visibility and recognition from white Americans (in Richardson 1987, 61), Maria Stewart doggedly points out the power differentials among women on the basis of racial disparities and Blacks on the basis of gender disparities (37). While confronting nineteenth-century power in Boston might be more daunting than a progressive political protest in twenty-first-century San Francisco, Stewart illustrates the failure of solidarity among Black and non-Black women: "I have asked several individuals of my sex, who transact business for themselves, if providing our girls were to give them the most satisfactory references, they would not be willing to grant them an equal opportunity with others? Their reply has been—for their own part, they had no objection; but as it was not the custom, were they to take them into their employ, they would be in danger of losing the public patronage" (45).[24] One hundred and fifty years later, Moraga illustrates the exact same dynamics as an illustration of failed solidarity between Third World and white middle class women in the United States:

> As Third World Women we clearly have a different relationship to racism than white women, but all of us are born into an environment where racism exists. . . .
>
> Racism is societal and institutional. It implies the power to implement racist ideology. Women of color do not have such power, but white women are born with it and the greater their economic privilege, the greater their power. This is how white middle class women emerge among feminist ranks as the greatest propagators of racism in the movement. Rather than using the privilege they have to crumble the institutions that house the source of their own oppression—sexism, along with racism—they oftentimes deny their privilege in the form of "downward mobility," or keep it intact in the form of guilt. Guilt is *not* a feeling. It is an intellectual mask to a feeling. Fear is a feeling—fear of losing one's power, fear of being accused, fear of a loss of status,

> control, knowledge. Fear is real. Possibly this is the emotional, non-theoretical place from which serious anti-racist work among white feminists can begin. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 62; emphasis in original).

These rejections of gender-based solidarity, combined with the aforementioned rejection of a racial solidarity in reporting domestic violence, leaves women like Stewart and Moraga in a quandary: with whom can we build a base of political power that can be trusted?

Consistent with the idea that activism is motivated by a deep sense that something is wrong in the world and needs to be set right, responses to failed solidarity in the anti-violence against women space involve rethinking and reengagement rather than disengagement and withdrawal. Moraga suggests activists are obligated to confront the difficult questions if only to create a space where others can also be challenged: "We do not experience racism, whether directed at ourselves or others, theoretically. . . . How does one then emotionally come to terms with racism? None of us in this book can challenge others to confront questions that we ourselves have not confronted" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 62). These experiences with failed solidarity actually spark Moraga's rethinking of the liberal notion of hyperindividualistic, atomized power:

> If we could make this connection in our heart of hearts, that if we are serious about a revolution—better—if we seriously believe there should be joy in our lives (real joy, not just "good times"), then we need one another. We women need each other. Because my/your solitary, self-asserting "go-for-the-throat-of-fear" power is not enough. The real power, as you and I well know, is collective. I can't afford to be afraid of you, nor you of me. If it takes head-on collisions, let's do it: this polite timidity is killing us. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 34).

While these painful instances of solidarity help us rethink power as collective and reveal power systems as complex in terms of both their (in)visibility and mutual construction, it is clear the pain remains. But, as Doetsch-Kidder (2012) notes, activism can emerge as a productive response to such pain when combined with love as a multidimensional motivation. I turn next to an analysis of organizing in this space.

ORGANIZING THE INTERSECTIONAL WAY: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ANTI-VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MOVEMENT

Bhattacharjee offers a helpful articulation of organizing as a specific form of political activism: "Organizing exploited and powerless peoples . . . more accurately means developing a sense of power among these peoples . . . organizing of exploited peoples does not simply mean achieving their presence in an organization in any capacity. Organizing is successful when the leadership is drawn from exploited people, who then make decisions for themselves and the organization" (in Shah 1997, 43). This definition is no longer unique to the anti-violence against women sector, if in fact it ever was. That said, the concepts and strategies generated by intersectional activism, particularly in the international arena, were grounded in work done by women of color as "women's issues" that eventually highlighted even greater opportunities for bottom-up empowerment.

The shift from a model of international development, for example, to one of "empowerment," is an important illustration of this phenomenon. Doetsch-Kidder defines empowerment as "an activist strategy [which] recognizes that meaningful social

change relies on people's beliefs about what is possible and seeks to expand these beliefs" (2012, 83). Elaine Kim gives an example of this from the 1990s: "What is interesting . . . many Asian American women work on transnational issues, like the maquiladoras over the San Diego Tijuana border. It is interesting to see that although their organizing efforts might have started out as something some of the men would dismiss as 'just' women's issues or women's causes, women have transformed them into the most pressing issues" (in Shah 1997, 65). This definition of empowerment, however, is distinct from transversal politics discussed by Nira Yuval-Davis in *Gender and Nation*. For Yuval-Davis, empowerment remains locked into assumptions of the homogeneity and essentialist constructions of groups, and building on Collins, Barkley Brown, and Italian feminist activists, she proposes transversal politics as a mode of praxis that embraces universality in diversity (1997, 125).

While intersectionality and transversal politics share an interest in engaging and contending with difference in meaningful ways, intersectionality-like thought has a different understanding of contingency and complexity from transversal politics that is complementary rather than competitive. Thus the tactics discussed below are reflective of intersectionality-like thinking and based on an understanding of empowerment with Yuval-Davis's critiques in mind. In the implementation of organizing strategies that centered empowerment, two ways of executing tactics emerged from an "organizing toolbox" for intersectional activists: self-care that integrates pain as motivation and contingent participation in coalition politics. Both are important extensions of the strategic use of visibility and invisibility discussed above.

Intersectionality-like thinking in the anti-violence against women space provides a useful tactic of self-care: the *integration* of rather than the denial or eradication of profound pain. Across a span of twenty years, intersectional activists Chezia

Carraway and Shiva illustrate specifically how the integration of their pain transforms their organizing. For both women, survivor status produces a specific kind of engagement with anti-violence against women work. Writing in 1993, Carraway suggested integrating her pain as a shared spiritual practice:

> As an incest survivor, I am very aware that the earlier the onset of violence, the greater the impact on the spirit. We must acknowledge our own personal herstories and collective experiences. We must identify the violence perpetrated against us. We must learn to practice spiritual healing with the same diligence as we do physical healing. Consistent spiritual cleansings are an essential part of good mental health. Our psyches are being attacked every day, and we must always be on guard and aware. The burden is bearable only if we bear it together. (Carraway 1993, 1308–1309)

Shiva (a South Asian American queer feminist activist), on the other hand, is far less spiritual in her language but cues a very similar concept:

> Reflecting on her mother's death and the sexual abuse Shiva suffered at the hands of her grandfather, she says,
>
> It was very painful for me that [my mother] died when I was twenty-two, but on the other hand it helped me grow and become who I am today, right? . . . My life would have been easier if my grandfather hadn't existed. But on the other hand, I do believe in that old saying that pain hollows you out, and hopefully if you understand the role of pain, it allows you to hold more. (In Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 36)

These two practitioners of integrative self-care are directly from the anti-violence against women movement who engage in intersectional activism. However the roots of the practice are grounded in a broader understanding of vulnerability as a pathway to strength articulated by both Gloria Anzaldúa and

Luisa Teish in the 1980s. Anzaldúa articulates it in the following way: "Words are not enough. We must perform visible and public acts that may make us more vulnerable to the very oppressions we are fighting against. But, our vulnerability *can* be the source of our power—**if we use it**" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 195; emphasis in original). Self-care in general has emerged among activists who embrace transformative organizing in response to the many cases of serious illness, burnout, and even early death they observed.[25]

Sandoval identifies a second organizing tactic used by Third World feminists that speaks to a strategic use of visibility/invisibility: contingent coalition politics. Amirah's presentation of El Sadaawi suggests she was a practitioner of this tactic.[26] The changes El Sadaawi makes in terms of her accessibility and visibility are incredibly important for both representation of agency and as an acknowledgment of multiple audiences to collaborate with. Typical analyses of coalition politics frame contingency as a matter of agreement or disagreement regarding the issue at hand. But Sandoval suggests a different formulation of contingency: a "dropping in/dropping out" practice that may not always reflect the spectrum of consensus:

> U.S. feminists of color, insofar as they involved themselves with the 1970s white women's liberation movement, were also enacting one or more of the ideological positionings [*sic*] just outlined, but rarely for long, and rarely adopting the kind of fervid belief systems and identity politics that tend to accompany their construction under hegemonic understanding. This unusual affiliation with the movement was variously interpreted as disloyalty, betrayal, absence, or lack. . . . They were the mobile (yet ever present in their "absence") members of this particular liberation movement. It is precisely the significance of this mobility which most inventories of oppositional ideology cannot register. (Sandoval 1991, 13–14)

Sandoval uses the metaphor of an automobile's clutch and its attendant gear shifts based on driving conditions to explain how contingent coalition politics function (1991, 14). In later work she links "this process of taking and using whatever is necessary and available in order to negotiate, confront, or speak to power—and then moving on to new forms, expressions, and ethos when necessary" as a method for survival (2000, 29).

Throughout this chapter I have highlighted how intersectionality-like thinking has reciprocal roots in political activism. Not only were several key figures writing in the late twentieth century as intellectuals and activists, the emphasis they placed on complex understandings of visibility and invisibility, along with complex categorical relationships, is evident. Visibility in the most unlikely places need not look like traditional activism (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 124).[27] As well, strategic visibility is not just for issues of personal interest to the organizer, it can also work as a practice of solidarity. Beale (1970) illustrates the importance of a global understanding in the examples of reproductive violence she highlights, connecting men in India with women in Puerto Rico.[28] Recent examples of such solidarity include DREAM activists in California, who used their successful push to gain rights for undocumented young people through the California State Senate to advocate for a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights that was vetoed by the governor (see Hancock 2014). These young adult advocates also explicitly refer to intersectionality as a motivation for their political organizing. This different approach to solidarity and to the coalition politics that emerge from it is part of what to expect from attention to the diversity within and between groups[29] that is a hallmark of intersectionality-like thought for both the decades immediately prior to and after the 1989–1990 interventions of Crenshaw and Collins in the US context.

Equally if not more important (given its prior hidden status), the shaping of intersectionality by activists against violence against women during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries includes significant attention to the second intellectual project of intersectionality, "ontological complexity." The idea that analytical categories like "race," "gender," "class," and the hegemonic practices associated with them (racism, sexism, classism, to which imperialism and homophobia certainly could be added) are mutually constitutive, not conceptually distinct, is one that has yet to receive as much scholarly attention as the visibility project of intersectionality. Yet despite the hegemony of "single-axis" thinking (May 2015, 80), activists in the 1830s as well as the 1990s understood that the construction of such categories as mutually exclusive fundamentally distorted both their lived experience and the reality of the world as it exists.

This shift from a unitary standpoint grounded in material experiences to one that is not simply multiple but intersectional is deeply imbricated with this second intellectual project. Intersectionality-like thought and transversal politics share a common interest in engaging difference without reproducing homogeneity and a theoretical foundation in standpoint theory. Intersectionality's complicated relationship with standpoint theory is explored in the next chapter, as I set out ontological and epistemological tenets for intersectionality that are grounded in a detailed history of intersectionality-like thought that continues to be attentive to interdisciplinarity, global trends, and literacy stewardship.

3

THE MULTICULTURAL EPISTEMOLOGY OF INTERSECTIONALITY

> O, America, America! Thou land of my birth! I love and admire thy virtues as much as I abhor and detest thy vices; and I am in hopes that thy stains will soon be wiped away, and thy cruelties forgotten.
>
> —MARIA MILLER STEWART, *"Cause for Encouragement" (1832)*

> She is no longer the silent one
> Because she has cast off the shawl of the past to show her face
>
> —ANA MONTES, *"La Nueva Chicana" (1971)*

> The theme echoing throughout most of these stories is our refusal of the easy explanation to the conditions we live in.
>
> —CHERRÍE MORAGA (*in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 23)*

IN *WORDS OF FIRE: AN Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, editor Beverly Guy-Sheftall contends that the erasure of Black women from histories of abolition and women's suffrage movements was readily apparent in the nineteenth century to Black women themselves (1995, 24), including Maria Miller Stewart and Anna Julia Cooper. Stewart, who lectured in public twelve years before Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech and published

in William Garrison's *The Liberator* newspaper ten years before Frederick Douglass, specifically called upon the "Daughters of Africa" to "Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties" (Richardson 1987, 30). Stewart's calls for greater visibility of Black women in Boston's activist community were met with attempts by Black ministers to remove her from the public sphere, which contributed to her departure from Boston and from public life. Like many who are cited in this book, Maria Stewart remains largely invisible to this day to many scholars more familiar with Truth or Douglass. In this chapter I uncover a multicultural epistemology for intersectionality by tracing a diverse set of intersectionality-like theoretical arguments for greater visibility and the concomitant analytical shifts in the relationships among categories of difference that logically follow.

A protégé of the far better-known David Walker, whose *Appeal* has long been part of the canon of African American political thought, Maria Stewart was a widow whose public career lasted three short years. Stewart exhorted her fellow Black women through the time-honored rhetorical strategy of the Jeremiad.[1] Stewart's manuscripts suggest that her invisibility as part of intersectionality's intellectual history was as complicated in the nineteenth century as it is today. Though she was published several times in early editions of *The Liberator*, Stewart's highly political tracts were relegated to the "Ladies' Department" of the paper. This location, though customary for all women's writing in the nineteenth century, makes Stewart's brief public career all the more likely to be invisible unless one specifically studies Black women or Black Feminist thought. We must look with the intention of finding her.

Over a century later, Chicana poet Ana Montes exhorts us to see with intentionality as well; to not to forget the "Bareheaded girl fighting for equality," reminding us that "Wherever you turn /

Wherever you look / You'll see her" (1971, in García 1997, 19). Who or what do we see if we look with intentionality in the directions Montes urges?

For some theorists the call for visibility is a straightforward response to decades or centuries of invisibility. Here I am alluding to the kind of invisibility analogous to that which occurs behind what W. E. B. Du Bois might call "the veil of race," where an entire people lives their lives in plain sight. In this vein the theorists discussed here seek to remedy multiple kinds of invisibility—that of mainstream societies and of the subaltern communities they are simultaneously located within. In an effort to make such a case among Chicano nationalists, Adelaida del Castillo explains the reason for an academic journal dedicated to Chicanas in a 1974 issue of *La Gente*:[2] "[*Encuentro Femenil*] is the first Chicana feminist journal ever published. . . . You can't obtain this kind of information anywhere else because nobody has bothered to organize and publish material dealing with the Chicana. . . . If we don't have journals which delineate the problems of Chicana women, how are people going to know that Chicana women have problems?" (in García 1997, 45–46). Without specific attention to multiply identified populations in Britain, concurred British and Israeli scholars Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Sisterhood can be misleading" (1983, 62). We can connect these earlier kinds of arguments for visibility with that of Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, who developed the metaphor of intersecting streets that is most commonly connected with the commitment to visibility: "Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling" (Crenshaw 1991, 1242).[3] Del Castillo, Anthias, Yuval-Davis, and Crenshaw all ground their theoretical arguments in applied or activist contexts, some of which were covered in chapter 2.

On both sides of the Atlantic, across race, nationality, and class lines, the recognition that visibility is an important part of the work to be done also fits within common understandings of twentieth-century feminist theories like standpoint theory, multicultural feminist thought, and intersectionality. In her now famous 1984 article "Under Western Eyes," Chandra Talpade Mohanty details the ways in which universalizing analytical tendencies enacted by Western feminists—specifically the impact of the shibboleth "women's oppression is a global phenomenon"—result in decontextualized, monolithic images and understandings of "third world women" (in Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991, 349).[4] The impact of these universalizing tendencies obligates us, Uma Narayan argues, to account for them in our epistemology: "Feminist epistemology, like these other enterprises, must attempt to balance the assertion of the value of a different culture or experience against the dangers of romanticizing it to the extent that the limitations and oppressions it confers on its subjects are ignored" (1989, 257). This brief survey of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals one response to invisibility that is a hallmark of intersectionality-like thinking.

However, the political understanding of what it means to render the invisible visible gets far more complicated in light of a more comprehensive intellectual history. Consider Winnifred Eaton, a Eurasian novelist of Chinese and British descent in the early twentieth century. Under the Japanese pen name Onoto Watanna, Eaton created characters that appeared to display surface traits of Asian female stereotypes while in fact they subverted those stereotypes (Ling 1989, 317). Her novels *The Honorable Miss Moonlight* (1912) and *Cattle* (1924) provide ample evidence that the author "worked to sabotage the foundations of [marginalization] from within" (318).

Eaton's older sister, Elizabeth, took a different literary path, under the Cantonese pen name Sui Sin Far. Elizabeth's 1912

story collection *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* uses irony to subtly critique the implications of a white female friend's invitation to a presentation entitled "America the Protector of China" and her Chinese husband's opinion on equality between the sexes, as this thinly veiled letter Mrs. Fragrance sends to her husband demonstrates:

> It was most exhilarating, and the effect of so much expression of benevolence leads me to beg of you to forget to remember that the barber charges you one dollar for a shave while he humbly submits to the American man a bill of fifteen cents. And murmur no more because your honored elder brother, on a visit to this country, is detained under the roof-tree of this great Government instead of under your own humble roof. Console him with the reflection that he is protected under the wing of the Eagle, the Emblem of Liberty. What is the loss of ten hundred years or ten thousand times ten dollars compared with the happiness of knowing oneself so securely sheltered? All of this I have learned from Mrs. Samuel Smith, who is as brilliant and great of mind as one of your own superior sex. (Far 1912; quoted in Ling 1989, 315)

For Elizabeth Eaton, the casual racism of Mrs. Fragrance's friend and the casual sexism of her husband both merit decorous derision. Ling situates the author against a genre of white contemporaries, contending that Eaton provides multidimensional Chinese and white characters instead of cardboard missionary stories of whites saving Chinese people or whites in need of protection from a nefarious "Yellow Peril" (Ling 1989, 315–316). What are we to make of these early twentieth-century efforts to identify the twin evils of racism and sexism through literary devices that involve reappropriating racist and sexist beliefs?

Moreover, these two sisters embrace very different strategies to reveal the invisible. Winnifred disappears into an

arguably "more acceptable" Asian identity (before the Second World War) by adopting a Japanese pen name, while Elizabeth remains outspokenly critical of racism and sexism by directing even greater attention to her Chinese female heritage. How authors and activists make political choices about visibility and invisibility is often overlooked in scholarly engagements with intersectionality; enhanced visibility is presumed to be salutary under any and all conditions.[5] Speaking in an entirely different context, poet and activist Audre Lorde also attests to the complexity of visibility in her keynote speech to the National Third World Gay and Lesbian Conference in 1979:

> Some are absent because they cannot be here because of external constraints and for our sisters and brothers in prison, in mental institutions, in the grip of incapacitating handicaps and illnesses, I ask your attention and concern, which is another word for love.
>
> But others are not here because they have lived a life so full of fear and isolation that they are no longer even able to reach out. They have lost their vision, they have lost their hope. And for every one of us here tonight, as we all know, there are many lesbians and gay men trapped by their fear into silence and invisibility and they exist in a dim valley of terror wearing nooses of conformity. And for them, also, I ask your understanding. For as we know, conformity is seductive as it is destructive, and can also be a terrible and painful prison. (In Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall [1979] 2009, 208)

While the closet is indeed a site of invisibility, like Winnifred's adoption of a Japanese pen name, the closet is more complex than mere false consciousness or internalized oppression, as Barvosa notes in *Wealth of Selves* (2008). Lorde is most often celebrated for her 1978 paper "The Transformation of Silence

into Language and Action," which includes most famously the sentence: "Your silence will not protect you."[6] A more comprehensive intellectual history of intersectionality, which includes authors from diverse racial or ethnic boundaries, geographic boundaries, and intellectual disciplines, calls into question the notion that intersectionality is committed to a singular vision of rendering the invisible visible, as some authors might suggest (see Alexander-Floyd 2012). The notion that the pursuit of visibility is a fraught process that can include the (perhaps tortured) choice of strategic (in)visibility, as I mentioned in chapter 2 regarding Nawal El Sadaawi, illustrates the value of reading more broadly within the oeuvre of authors traditionally included as contributors to intersectionality (like Lorde) as well.[7]

Moreover, reading more broadly also allows for connections between the visibility project and questions of epistemology. For example, Lorde again marshals the visual in her speech "When Will the Ignorance End?" by connecting it to action and knowledge: "The ignorance will end when each one of us begins to seek out and trust the knowledge deep inside of us, when we dare to go into that chaos which exists before understanding and come back with new tools for action and for change. For it is from within that deep knowledge that our visions are fueled, and it is our vision which lays the groundwork for our actions, and for our future" (Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall [1979] 2009, 207). For Lorde, visibility also includes two new acts of sight: (1) seeing difference and diversity as creative and not divisive, and (2) seeing those who insist on remaining invisible on some level with compassion.[8]

While Lorde spoke specifically about sexuality, other axes of difference might also benefit from more light than dark, like gender presentation and so-called hidden disabilities. Canadian intersectionality theorist Rita Dhamoon, however, suggests that the benefits of visibility for Canadians who are deaf turns on a

distinction that to hear is "normal" and to be deaf is "abnormal" (2009, 94). Thus, additional visibility gains deaf communities little relief from the erasure of deaf ways of being (2009, 96), unless the "intricate links between racialized experiences of European colonialism and Eurocentric constructions of Deaf cultures as immature and uncivilized" are part of the analysis in a way that is "precise about when and how oralist meanings are constituted through discourses of racialization" (95).

What makes these particular manuscripts early contributions to "intersectionality-like" thought? Certainly their emphasis on making the needs of the invisible visible and recognizing where there has been passing or "covering"[9] on the part of others is one key element of their place in the intellectual history of intersectionality. But their contributions go beyond this need to see things previously left hidden or deliberately obscured. Consistent with my contention that intersectionality has a two-pronged intellectual project, theorists analyzed in this chapter came to understand intersectionality as more than an argument for inclusion of previously excluded agenda items or target populations.

Among her speeches, Maria Stewart spoke of both structural and individual racism, as well as structural and individual sexism. Writing in 1972, Elizabeth Martínez similarly addressed multiple oppression, demanding simultaneous ontological roles for all of them: "For the Chicana, all three types of oppression cannot be separated. They are all a part of the same system, they are three faces of the same enemy. They must all be fought with all our courage and strength" (in García 1997, 34). Thus, like many of the theorists we encounter in this chapter, these authors articulated an early version of a race-gender-class analysis[10] one can identify as "intersectionality-like" thinking. Both Guy-Sheftall (1995) and García (1997, 5) suggest that the core elements of mid-twentieth-century Black and Chicana Feminist thought conceptualized the struggle as multivalent: against

racism in the larger society and against sexism in the civil rights and Chicano movements, respectively. Although intersectionality has emerged as an interpretive framework that reconstitutes how we analyze puzzles of injustice, epistemological distinctions between intersectionality, multicultural feminist thought, and standpoint theory are rarely examined. This intellectual history allows us to foreground the ontological and epistemological claims that start to reconceptualize the analytical relationships between categories of difference.

As codeveloping frameworks, standpoint theory, multicultural feminist thought, and intersectionality all claim to provide space for group-level analysis of difference. Here we will trace how standpoint theory, multicultural feminist thought, and intersectionality emerge from similar origins and then diverge into conceptually distinct intellectual projects, largely based on distinctions regarding the analytical relationships between categories of difference. As I discussed in chapter 1, this divergence is the subject of wide debate and anxiety as to its ramifications. Nevertheless, the divergence itself can no longer be ignored.

RETHINKING THE BINARY BETWEEN OPPRESSOR AND OPPRESSED

Scholar and educator Anna Julia Cooper was certainly no stranger to the kinds of invisibility discussed thus far. Several historians claim that scholar activist W. E. B. Du Bois appropriated Cooper's ideas and presented them without attribution. Specifically, Du Bois's idea of a psychological wage of whiteness, chronicled in *Black Reconstruction* (1935), is anticipated by Cooper's 1902 article "The Ethics of the Negro Question" (May 2007, 55).

Sixty years after Maria Stewart alerted the Daughters of Africa to the economic dimensions of racism and sexism, Anna Julia Cooper's *A Voice from the South* (1892) articulated a particular standpoint for Black women in the United States. Cooper's analysis continued to assert visibility in a context of invisibility: "The colored woman of today occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" ([1892] 1988, 134). Cooper, a philosopher as well as an educator, demystified "widely accepted philosophical norms to show how racism and sexism infiltrate ostensibly neutral knowledge practices" (May 2007, 6).[11] Her analyses continue to be a largely overlooked contribution to feminist epistemology and standpoint theory.

For mid-twentieth-century feminists of color in the United States, the idea of enhanced "visibility" included two claims. First, their social location, "the margins," was invisible to the naked eyes of both their subaltern communities and to mainstream society. Such invisibility had legal (Crenshaw 1989, 1991) as well as other material ramifications. Consistent with the visibility theme, the ethnic feminist accounts I examine reveal that identifying "the oppressor" is more complicated than a single category analysis can handle. Rather than a single margin-center metaphor, feminists of color initially suggest a framework of multiple margins and centers. In her analysis of novelist Toni Cade Bambara, bell hooks[12] notes "Sexist role patterning was as much the norm in black communities as in any other American community. It was an accepted fact among black people that the leaders who were most revered and respected were men" (1981, 4–5). Similarly, cultural constructions of Chicanas were predicated

upon the valuation of "silent strength" as a virtue that could extend to complete sheltering of young Latinas (Sanchez 1977, in García 1997, 66).

One of the first breaks between mainstream feminist standpoint theorists and intersectionality theorists was a dissatisfaction with the conceptual arrangement of margins versus centers. This break produced a conceptual marker of distinction between feminist standpoint theory, women of color feminist thought, and intersectionality: a shift in the analytical framework of categories from one of centers and margins to a conceptualization of "interlocking" (or "interacting") categories of difference. This more complicated view of oppression and privilege represents an ontological shift that remains an important part of intersectionality's intellectual history.

The second claim extends the implications of living in the intersections (Combahee River Collective 1977; Crenshaw 1989).[13] Specifically, if we shift from a reality of one or more margin-center frameworks to a frame of intersections, we must also shift how analytical relationships between and within categories are conceptualized. Conceptualizing reality in a way that takes the politics of subaltern communities as seriously as the politics of mainstream society means that one can no longer self-locate as *either* on a margin *or* in a center. More to the point, one is neither purely an oppressor nor purely oppressed. Both *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981; 2nd ed. 1983) and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983) specifically take up this dilemma of internalized oppression and learned bias. I explore these personal narratives more fully in chapters 4 and 5.

Conceptually shifting in this way includes moving away from additive models of inequality and injustice, which is not without its tradeoffs or difficulties. Indeed, as we will see in this chapter, those who seek to make the transition to intersectionality-like thinking display contradictions and

ambivalences about walking away from zero-sum language and thought. This section will focus on the transition in metaphors and the divergent epistemological paths standpoint and women of color feminist theories took. The late 1960s to the 1980s was a period of intellectual ferment that featured numerous attempts to theorize what has historically been considered a specific set of women's experiences (e.g., the "particular" experiences of African American or South Asian women).

For "traditional" feminist standpoint theorists, the idea that all knowledge is situated and located fosters a visionary capacity that reveals "the perversions of both life and thought" (Hartsock [1983] 1997, 466).[14] One of the classic articulations of feminist standpoint theory, Nancy Hartsock's "The Feminist Standpoint" (1983), sought to challenge Marx's inattention to "the woman question" by taking his "fruitful strategy" of binary opposition and applying it to the matter of gender equality ([1983] 1997, 228). Specifically, Hartsock drew upon Marx's historical materialism to contend that the sexual division of labor affords women a particularly necessary standpoint, which must be revealed as substantively relevant and worthy of visibility, even to one like Marx himself: "While on the one hand Marx remarked that the very first division of labor occurred in sexual intercourse, he argues that the division of labor only becomes 'truly such' when the division of mental and manual labor appears. Thus, he dismisses the sexual division of labor as of no analytic importance" (467). Hartsock continued by suggesting that the engaged vision produced by a specifically feminist standpoint analysis can lead to a liberatory reality (466–467).

The idea of a revelatory "objective account" is premised upon the idea that one can conceptually distinguish between the account of the oppressors and the account of the oppressed. Building on Lukács and Sandra Harding, Hartsock relies on

"strong objectivity" as a standard for claim-making, which is predicated upon ideas of forming more general conclusions:[15]

> A standpoint is not an empiricist appeal to or by the oppressed but a cognitive, psychological and political tool for more adequate knowledge judged by the nonessentialist, historically contingent, situated standards of strong objectivity. Such a standpoint is the always fraught but necessary fruit of the practice of oppositional and differential consciousness. A feminist standpoint is a practical technology rooted in yearning, not an abstract philosophical foundation. ([1983] 1997, 236)

Hartsock's 1983 definition of a standpoint is premised upon the identification of a binary that divides a monolithic oppressor from a monolithic oppressed group. While Hartsock herself admits to overlooking diversity in "The Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited" (1997), her revisions preserve the relationship between different categories of difference: race or ethnicity remains ontologically subordinate to gender as the primary axis of oppression.[16] Such moves are perfectly suited to a worldview where gender inequality is considered the primary axis of oppression experienced by individuals and structured by daily life. Indeed such practices persist in Nina Lykke's *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*, where her primary focus is "how to theorize intersections between gender/sex and other power differentials based on class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geopolitical positioning, age, disability and so on" (2011, 9).

Hartsock's approach to a standpoint accurately replicates Marx's but is distinct ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically from multicultural feminists and later intersectionality theorists. According to Hartsock herself, her idea of creating a feminist standpoint theory emerged in 1978 (1997, 227). It emerged, however, in isolation from the challenges to the margin-center framework put forth by the authors discussed

above, from earlier in the twentieth century up to and including the 1970s. It is thus important to note that Hartsock's theoretical intervention occurred *after* the publication of works by Cooper, Nieto-Gómez, Martínez, and others, who characterized the pursuit of justice as one that must involve multiple centers, multiple margins, and later interlocking or intersecting axes of power. Hartsock's theoretical response—to add diversity through minimal strategic citation—mirrors 1980s and 1990s Western activists who sought to reshape the center to become more diverse through selective embraces of "diverse" women. As I noted in chapter 2, this navigation reproduced invisibility of women of color rather than empowering them.

Hartsock's approach to revising standpoint theory thus accurately replicates Marx's approach but has two limitations. First, it does not necessarily eradicate the existence of a margin or periphery. Second, and more importantly for our purposes, it illustrates the boundaries of standpoint theory, where the most conceptual stretching that can occur is the addition of "diversity" to a preexisting center that does nothing to eradicate the center-margin binary or fundamentally reconstitute it. Diversification of the center is ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically distinct from the theoretical turns made by intersectionality theorists.

Women of color feminists writing in the 1970s instead apply Marxian insights differently to focus on the specificity of their social location. Chicana feminist Mirta Vidal draws upon the history of groups like Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc in a 1971 article in the *International Socialist Review* that also seeks to apply Marxist methodologies to the specific struggles of Chicana/Mexican women [*sic*]: "They are denying . . . Raza women, who are triply oppressed, the right to struggle around their specific, real, and immediate needs. . . . Opposition to the struggles of women to break the chains of their oppression is not in the interests of the oppressed only

but only in the interest of the oppressor. And that is the logic of the arguments of those who say that Chicanas do not want to or need to be liberated" (in García 1997, 23–24). Six years later, the Combahee River Collective's theoretical engagement with Marx suggested that Black women were not adequately represented by his analysis in a manner consistent with feminist standpoint theory as articulated by Hartsock: "Although we are in essential agreement with Marx's theory as it applied to the very specific economic relationships he analyzed, we know that this analysis must be extended further in order for us to understand our specific economic situation as Black women" (Combahee River Collective [1977] 1993, 17). Like Virdal's Chicana feminist analysis, the collective's Black Feminist approach similarly implies that a specific Black women's standpoint would reveal liberatory information and a more truthful account. Unlike Hartsock, the collective does not seek to merely replicate Marx's methodology on another question (gender equality) or population (Black women), because they seek not to *replace* a class analysis with a race or a gender analysis, but instead to *reformulate* the analysis itself (13; emphasis mine), a point I return to in greater detail below to illustrate the limits or incompatibility of standpoint theory with intersectionality's ontological position.

The analysis of feminist standpoint theory here suggests two different approaches to analyzing gender. For Hartsock, feminist standpoint theory reconsiders or reappropriates Marx's analysis for gender, and suggests a "pluralization" of gender to "include" race or ethnicity as a shaper of gendered experiences in particular. It preserves the bright line between oppressed and oppressor. This approach, as Lorde articulates in 1979, has clear flaws:

> To read this program is to assume that lesbian and black women have nothing to say to existentialism, the erotic, women's culture and silence, developing feminist theory, or heterosexuality and

> power. And what does it mean in personal and political terms when even the two black women who did present here were literally found at the last hour? What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 98)

The second approach, embraced by Black Feminists, Chicana feminists, and feminists not based in the United States, uses historical materialism pioneered by Marx in conjunction with consciousness raising and other methods to reconceptualize the relationship between the "oppressed" and "oppressor" as multivalent and contingent. I elaborate on the multidirectionality of this oppression relation in chapter 4.

Although some of the theorists cited so far have been previously "invisible" in the history of intersectionality, even later, more prominent theorists echoed these sentiments regarding specificity. Cherríe Moraga's words in *This Bridge Called My Back* continue to resonate as part of a larger pushback against objectivity in the 1990s as part and parcel of false universalism: "The danger lies in failing to acknowledge the specificity of the oppression" (quoted in García 1997, 7). The trend toward greater specificity thus varies among women of color feminists and standpoint theorists.

That said, both kinds of feminist engagements with standpoint theory still suggest a more accessible truth following the process of standpoint discovery or revelation.[17] The Combahee River Collective (CRC) suggests explicitly that it expects to engage in reflection and perhaps change its mind, though it expects such a move will occur under conditions of progress only: "We are committed to a continual examination of our politics as they develop through criticism and self-criticism as an essential aspect of our practice" ([1977] 1993, 21–22). Moraga concurs: "And, I am involved in this book [*This Bridge Called My Back*] because more than anything else I need to feel enlivened

again in a movement that can, as my friend Amber Hollibaugh states, finally ask the right questions and admit to not having all the answers" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xiv–xv). This "reflexivity" is key to Sandra Harding's concept of strong objectivity in 1993.[18] Their point is well worth consideration as we shape an epistemology for intersectionality, particularly as it connects to the contingency understanding of evidence and knowledge.

Two challenges to the margin-center metaphor have thus emerged so far. First was the metaphor's use in a singular form. Another equally important problem with its conceptualization was its binary understanding of "oppressed" versus "oppressor." The next section briefly connects various women of color epistemologies to larger epistemological debates. The final section of this chapter then develops a specifically intersectional epistemology grounded in presupposition theory and postpositivism.

RECONCEPTUALIZING POWER

> Now that I am 26, I find that I've gone as far into my exploration of the white world as I want. It doesn't mean that I'm going to run off to live in a tipi. It simply means that I'm not interested in pursuing a society that uses analysis, research, and experimentation to concretize their vision of cruel destinies for those who are not bastards of the Pilgrims; a society with arrogance rising, moon in oppression, and sun in destruction.
>
> —BARBARA CAMERON (*in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 48–49)*

Lakota author Barbara Cameron specifically rejects the purpose, as much as the process, by which white Western knowledge validation occurs, suggesting a broader recognition that such knowledge practices are rife with hierarchical power relations. Rethinking the binary between oppressed and

oppressor obligates us to reconceptualize power more broadly. Another resounding distinction between the inclusion or additive approach[19] proposed by Hartsock and others was a revised understanding of power. As I noted earlier, Elizabeth Martínez's 1972 article suggested three connected "faces of the same enemy" (in García 1997, 34), as did Chicana lesbian feminist Cherríe Moraga in 1981: "My lesbianism is the avenue through which I have learned the most about silence and oppression. . . . In this country, lesbianism is a poverty—as is being brown, as is being a woman, as is just being plain poor" (1972, in García 1997, 7). These struggles for recognition of a three- and four-faced enemy was a claim distinct from the production of a more "objectively truthful" account.[20] Writing in very distinct contexts at approximately the same time, Uma Narayan (1989) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990) illustrate how power relations function in ways that not only complicate our understanding of oppressor and oppressed but shift our epistemology as well.

Patricia Hill Collins defines epistemology as "the study of the philosophical problems in concepts of knowledge and truth" (1990, 202). Following partially in the footsteps of the theorists discussed in the previous section, Collins dedicated an entire chapter of *Black Feminist Thought*[21] to elucidating a specific Black Feminist epistemology predicated upon the convergence of both Afrocentric and feminist epistemologies in a way uniquely suited to Black women. In a similar vein, Indian scholar Uma Narayan drew a parallel between feminist epistemology and recovery attempts made by "third world writers and historians to document the wealth and complexity of local economic and social structures that existed prior to colonialism" (1989, 257). Narayan and Collins both depend on feminist philosopher Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism* (1986) as a grounding for their arguments about power and how it operates in epistemological frameworks, connecting to

standpoint theory while simultaneously providing a foundation for an intersectional epistemology.

One of the primary points of departure for feminist epistemology has been a fundamental reconstitution of what counts as knowledge and how it is defined (Hawkesworth 2006). This reconstitution emerged out of an unmet need. As a result, two different approaches emerge, both from multicultural feminist thought. In an article entitled "Race, Class and Gender: Prospects for an All-Inclusive Sisterhood," sociologist Bonnie Thornton Dill proposes an approach that is closer to what we might call intersectional than Hartsock's, though both articles were published in 1983: "I would ask: How might these frameworks be revised if they took full account of black women's position in the home, family, and marketplace at various historical moments? In other words, the analysis of the interaction of race, gender, and class must not be stretched to fit the proscrustean [*sic*] bed of any other burgeoning set of theories" ([1983] 2009, 31; see also Collins 2000, 252–253). Narayan concurs in explaining feminist epistemology's contribution: "Feminist epistemology suggests that integrating women's contribution into the domain of science and knowledge . . . will not merely widen the canvas but result in a shift of perspective enabling us to see a very different picture . . . it will change the very nature of these activities and their self-understanding" (1989, 256). For both Dill and Narayan, the vision project of feminist epistemology provides more than an increasingly comprehensive picture, as Hartsock had sought, and more than the pursuit of making the invisible visible, as Crenshaw had sought. Like the Chicana feminists and CRC of the 1970s, they sought a reconstitution of the analysis itself.

Similarly, a specific social location that grounds a potential standpoint remains a crucial dimension of knowledge for Dill, Narayan, and Collins alike. This line of multicultural feminist thought follows in the longer tradition of Anna Julia Cooper's

long-forgotten but now famous words: "Only the Black woman can say when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood." That is, they remain connected to the 1970s' and early 1980s' understanding of a Marxian standpoint. Collins specifically details her quest in terms of an ongoing unmet need:

> Investigating the subjugated knowledge of subordinate groups—in this case a Black women's standpoint and Black feminist thought—requires more ingenuity than that needed to examine the standpoints and thought of dominant groups. I found my training as a social scientist inadequate to the task of studying the subjugated knowledge of a Black women's standpoint. This is because subordinate groups have long had to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations and to rearticulate them through their own specialists. Like other subordinate groups, African-American women have not only developed a distinctive Black women's standpoint, but have done so by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge. (Collins 1990, 202)[22]

As Montes urges us in her poem quoted in the epigraph, we need to see differently, with intentionality. This intentionality of sight has two implications. First, such visibility emerges from a different methodology than Hartsock's mapping of Marxist method onto gender questions (see Collins 1990, 202; 2000, 254). Karin Aguilar-San Juan makes a similar point regarding Asian American feminism, attributing specifically Asian American cultural and political reference points: "This paradigm should not be referred to as an 'addendum' to Asian American politics or as a 'variant' of white feminism because those terms force Asian American feminism into the margins of other political frameworks. A point that bears repeating is that Asian American feminism, like other movements initiated

by women of color, does not depend on a mechanical process of adding up oppressions" (in Shah 1997, x). Though Narayan and Collins appear to concur about the reconstitutive vision project of feminist epistemology, Narayan is suspicious enough of the logical ends of standpoint theory to caution against an additive understanding of oppression, which she calls "double vision." Specifically, Narayan questions whether inhabiting "two contexts critically" (1989, 266) confers relative epistemic advantage for those whose social location is at the intersection of multiple oppressions: "Feminist theory must be temperate in the use it makes of this doctrine of 'double vision'—the claim that oppressed groups have an epistemic advantage and access to greater critical conceptual space" (267).[23] This caution is worthy of ongoing attention from intersectionality's interpretive community.

Narayan's concern about epistemic advantage also appears to be consistent with Anthias and Yuval-Davis's concerns regarding analyses of British feminist contexts: "The relation between the two contexts the individual inhabits may not be simple or straightforward. The individual subject is seldom in a position to carry out a perfect 'dialectical synthesis' that preserves all the advantages of both contexts and transcends all their problems. There may be a number of different 'syntheses,' each of which avoids a different subset of the problems and preserves a different subset of the benefits" (Narayan 1989, 267). As sociologists, Anthias and Yuval-Davis struggled with how to pragmatically address "various political and theoretical inadequacies in feminist and social analyses" which persist (1983, 62). In doing so, however, they offer a cautionary response to US Black Feminists' ideas of the interrelationship between race, gender, and class: to reinforce a de facto binary between Black/non-Black perpetuates the invisibility problem they and Hartsock have attributed to Marxist analyses (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 63; see also Hartsock [1983] 1997, 467). Narayan helps us understand this

may be an artifact of the complexity of the ontological challenge as well as an assertion of power.

Beyond methodology, this expressed vision of women's reality suggests an ontological shift in the conceptualization of what can be known and under what conditions because power is at stake. Although power is also an important part of standpoint theory in the 1970s and 1980s, multicultural feminists take it up in a different way. For example, Collins acknowledges epistemology and ontology themselves are sites of power struggles:

> Given that the general culture shaping the taken-for-granted knowledge of the community of experts is permeated by widespread notions of Black and female inferiority, new knowledge clams that seem to violate these fundamental assumptions are likely to be viewed as anomalies . . . . Moreover, specialized thoughts challenging notions of Black and female inferiority is unlikely to be generated from within a white-controlled academic community because both the kinds of questions that could be asked and the explanations that would be found satisfying would necessarily reflect a basic lack of familiarity with Black women's reality. (1990, 203)[24]

That said, in a manner more similar to Hartsock's replication of Marx's analysis, Anthias and Yuval-Davis claim the phrase "ethnic divisions" instead of "black/white division" can "provide for a more comprehensive conceptual category" (1983, 63). These kinds of moves are precisely the ones that give Alexander-Floyd, Jordan-Zachery, and Bilge tremendous pause, as I discussed in greater detail in chapter 1. Their mobilization of the phrase "ethnic divisions" provides us with one way to explore the question of citation politics and ambivalence about the primacy of certain "original trios" of categories, especially race. Anthias and Yuval-Davis are not alone in this era of feminist analysis. Puah's later critique of Black women's hegemonic

hold over intersectionality also finds supportive evidence. For example, what does it mean in the quest for visibility when the CRC asserts: "As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that *all women of color face*" (Combahee River Collective 1977, 13; emphasis mine), while they reserve the entire focus of the statement to themselves as specifically Black women?[25] For all of these authors, feminist epistemology extends beyond a literalist engagement with Marx or their individual experiences with oppression. That commonality, however, does not supplant the complexity of the visibility project or the mixed evidence regarding mutually constitutive ontological relationships among categories of difference.

Earlier I discussed the idea that Hartsock's doctrinaire standpoint theory, like Marx's historical materialism before it, focused on a single oppressor-oppressed axis and women of color feminist theorists' identification of the need to attend to multiple margins and centers. Intersectionality is often characterized as shifting from a single-category analysis to a multiple-category analysis and little else, when it is much more. Chapter 2 focused on activists' contribution to reshaping conceptualizations of the political reality; in this chapter we see that the orientation toward the simultaneity of race, gender, and class oppression in a specific formulation breaks with both conventional standpoint theory and twentieth-century multicultural feminist thought. Here my focus is less on the number of categories of difference (and which categories, something I've addressed elsewhere[26]) that are included and more on the often unseen distinction between multicultural feminist thought and intersectionality-like thinking.

This chapter reveals an additional, equally important ontological shift in understanding reality—multiple categories' equal but not identical status as shapers of life outcomes in twentieth-century multicultural feminist thought. This reformulation,

rather than inclusion or diversification approach, persisted among women of color. However, the knotty process of divestiture from the zero-sum, additive model of reality was a case of two steps forward and two steps back, and persists today. The idea that there can be an "objective" reality connected epistemologically to truth grounded in a single binary of proletariat/bourgeoisie *or* man/woman serves to privilege that binary (and the concomitant homogeneity on either side of that divide, which logically extends from its assertion) is contested by both these ethnic feminist and intersectionality theory accounts.[27] The next section explores two key ambivalences about intersectionality's visibility project and suggests an epistemological break between multicultural feminist thought and intersectionality. This break has roots in the 1980s, but emerges more clearly post-2000.

VEXED VISIONS: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AMBIVALENCES IN WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINIST THOUGHT

What might disagreements about the ontological status of multiple categories mean for the trajectory of intersectionality-like thought in the 183 years since Maria Stewart's publications and the thirty since Hartsock's? Feminist of color accounts allude to an understanding of power that cannot so easily distinguish between oppressor and oppressed. The vexed relationship between these two understandings of how power is organized and the ontological ramifications of moving from margin(s)-center(s) metaphors to interlocking, analytically equal but not identical roles for oppressive power relations like racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism persisted into the 1990s, as feminists of color theory diverged from standpoint theory (as

we have already discussed) but remained in an uneasy, largely unexplored relationship with intersectionality-like thinking.

Hewing closely to doctrinaire Marxist theory, Chicana feminist theorists in the 1970s and the CRC alike signaled the start of a transition to the language of multiple relationships of power. Among Chicana feminists in particular, the revelatory account could produce a radicalized consciousness and enhanced visibility that was distinct from Chicanos or white women. Elena García connected radicalized consciousness to Chicano recognition in a 1973 edited volume published in Mexico: "Chicana consciousness is an integral part of the new breed, the Chicano movement, chicanismo. Chicana consciousness defined is not a white woman's liberation movement nor a [Chicano nationalist] ladies' auxiliary. . . . Chicanas: Actualize your potential. Chicanos: Recognize and respect this potential for the betterment of us all" (García in García 1997, 39–40). Further, Chicana feminists writing in magazines like *Regeneracíon*, a Chicano nationalist publication, also articulated a more complicated view of oppression and privilege and their relevance to political analysis. Anna Nieto-Gómez's 1974 article "La Feminista" echoes Maria Stewart's critiques of multiple movements by repositioning multiple oppressions linguistically: "These feministas are speaking out against the sexual racist oppression that they as Chicana women must contend with [*sic*]. . . . It is perpetuated by nationalists who demand that women must always be traditional and maintain the culture, in spite of their socio-economically oppressive conditions. Sexist racism is [also] manifested by those who consider and recognize only the needs of the single, Anglo, and middle class women" (Nieto-Gómez, in García 1997, 86–87). With the term "sexist racism," she positioned sexism and racism as equally relevant to the lives of Chicanas.

While the CRC appears to echo Nieto-Gómez in particular, the manifesto itself tacks back and forth between

intersectionality-like thinking and an additive approach: "We are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking" (Combahee River Collective 1977, 13). They goes on later in the same manifesto to suggest a different understanding: "The sanctions in the Black and white communities against Black women thinkers are comparatively much higher than those against white women, particularly ones from the educated middle and upper classes" (17). This kind of claim appears to be consistent with the additive notion associated with having multiple centers of power that marginalize them. It turns on the notion that the greatest analytical value of oppression is in its revelation, or, to use the language of this book, its visibility, without concomitant attention to the doctrine of double vision's susceptibility to reification (Narayan 1989, 268). This is precisely the conversation rejected by Dill ([1983] 2009), Narayan (1989), and Collins (1990). Audre Lorde calls this kind of logic the "hierarchy of oppressions" (1982) and Elizabeth Martínez (1993) later terms it the "Oppression Olympics."

This ambivalence was also clear in 1980, when Moraga and Anzaldúa sent interview questions to sisters and fellow activists Barbara and Beverly Smith. In response to the question "How do race and class *intersect* in the women's movement?" (emphasis mine) both women articulate a conceptualization of the relationships between categories that, as Sandoval (1991) later suggests, includes a radical shift to ontological equality among the axes of difference. Two pages later, however, each sister urges a privileged uniqueness for race and class ("poverty"), respectively:

> BAR[BARA]: Another thing when you talk about experiencing racial oppression and class oppression from the very beginning, if indeed you are a recipient

of those oppressions what is happening to you is from moderately bad to horrible. In other words, being Black in this country there is very little about it that is mild. The oppression is extreme. Probably the only Black people where oppression is somewhat mitigated are those who have class privilege and that is certainly not the majority of Black people here. Likewise if you are a recipient of class oppression, that means that you are poor, you are working class and therefore day to day survival is almost the only thing you can focus on. The thing that's different about women's oppression is that you can be white and middle class and female and live a so-called "nice" life up until a certain point, then you begin to notice these "clicks," but I think the quality of life for the upper or middle class white woman is so far ahead of the quality of life for the Black person, the Black child, the working class child or the poor child.

BEV[ERLY]: I want to attempt to make comparisons between different types of oppressions. When I think of poverty, I think of constant physical and material oppression. You know, you aren't poor one day and well-to-do the next. If you're poor it's a constant thing, everyday, everyday. In some ways it's almost more constant than race because, say you're middle class and you're a Black person who is of course subject to racism, you don't necessarily experience it every single day in the same intensity, or to the same degree. Whereas, poverty is just something you experience constantly. So what I was trying to come up with is—Is there any oppression that

women experience that is that total, in other words literally affects their physical well-being on a day to day basis?

BAR[BARA]: Can I make a joke, Bev?

BEV[ERLY]: What?

BAR[BARA]: Heterosexuality. Well, moving right along . . . (Smith and Smith, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 115)

These theoretical tensions continue to emerge among other women of color feminists as well. Though it was published in 1997, well after Crenshaw's 1988 intersecting streets intervention, as well as Nieto-Gómez's 1974 coining of the term "sexist racism," Sonia Shah's edited volume *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire* also features this tension. In the introduction, Shah makes largely the same two moves that the CRC made in 1977, claiming an ontological primacy for race and a sense that racism, sexism, and US imperialism are ontologically on a par with each other. In a discussion of whiteness, Shah contends, "*More than their shared language, ethnic heritage or class*, their whiteness determines who they live with, who they go to school with, what kind of jobs they get, how much money they make and with whom they start families" (1997, xii; emphasis mine). The implication that race privilege drives white social location and access is clear—and allows a theoretical space for the possibility that under some circumstances race trumps everything else. Yet later on the same page, Shah argues that race, gender, and imperialism simultaneously shape Asian American women's life experiences: Asian American women see a set of unified experiences

> because we all share the same rung on the racial hierarchy and the gender hierarchy. It is not that our lives are so similar in substance but that our lives are all monumentally shaped by three major

> driving forces in US society: racism and patriarchy *most immediately, and ultimately,* imperial aggression against Asia as well. As long as those systems of distributing and exercising power continue to exist, it will continue to make sense to talk about Asian American women as a group (as well as other racial and gender groups). (1997, xii; emphasis mine)

Even as she discusses "three major driving forces," Shah's undoubtedly feminist argument again allows us to draw a distinction between multicultural feminist thought and intersectionality-like thinking that is apparent throughout much of the 1970s through the1990s.

On the one hand, Shah's claims appear to replicate the tension we saw in the CRC manifesto. On the other, it's important to acknowledge that Shah seems to be describing two distinct ontological realities—one for whites and one for Asian American women. One telling distinction between multicultural feminist thought and intersectional thought by the 1990s was the complete shift to an ontological equality for multiple categories of difference among intersectionality theorists[28] in a way that did not emerge from an additive approach (e.g., white women have one marginalized category, while Asian American women have three marginalized categories) to oppression. For these reasons, Shah's work appears to hew more closely to multicultural feminism than it does to intersectionality.

Interpretation of additive arguments as intersectional arguments has been roundly rejected by theorists (Carbado and Gulati 2013; Hancock 2013; Crenshaw, Fine, and Yuval-Davis, in Berger and Guidroz 2009). Part of why additive organizations of power are incompletely intersectionality-like thinking is because they retain an idea of the severability of race from gender and from other categories of difference. However, an examination of the intellectual history suggests a second ambivalence

within multicultural feminist thought and the emergence of two distinct interpretations of those ambivalences.

Earlier sections of this chapter have alluded to the "both/and" idea's roots as far back as the 1830s in the United States and, as we will see in the final section, perhaps even earlier in other communities. In her 1979 dissertation, Bonnie Thornton Dill talks about "intersecting structures of race, gender and class," a phrase she repeats in her [1983] 2009 *Feminist Studies* article. Crenshaw's famous "both/and" metaphor of intersecting streets to explain the lack of legal remedies for women of color, despite decades of antidiscrimination policies and case law, was first presented at the Chicago Legal Symposium in 1988 and published in 1989. Collins later calls such both/and experiences "convergences" in her 1990 *Black Feminist Thought*, and perhaps unsurprisingly following the reception of her work uses the word "intersections" more frequently in the second edition (Collins 2000). Karin Aguilar-San Juan also reinforces the idea of a "both/and" existence in her introduction to Shah's *Dragon Ladies*: "Instead, Asian American feminism is an articulation of the necessary *overlap* of many social and historical process of hierarchy and injustice. This *overlap* is necessary in the sense that Asian American feminists must think, write and act from their particular gendered and racialized contexts. . . . Although in theory we can isolate one dimension of social life . . . from another . . . in fact such a one-dimensional moment never exists" (in Shah 1997, x–xi; emphasis mine).

Though all of these authors make different semantic choices, they are referring to the life experiences of women of color at specific marginalized social locations conditioned by both race and gender (among other categories). Most of the prior debate among feminist theorists regarding the more prominent ethnic feminist accounts I engage here have focused on charges of essentialism, in the spirit of interventions like Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes" (Mohanty 1991).[29] Here my

focus is different; it explores the multiple interpretations that have emerged due to distinct epistemological orientations of the interlocutors.

First, if one is grounded in binary modes of thought like early standpoint theory, one common way to approach intersections or convergences is to think of them as oppositional sites. In this regard, the "fact" of a both/and construction logically dictates the possibility of a "neither/nor" oppositional location. While many feminist scholars have embraced the replacement of a margin-center metaphor with intersections, convergences, overlaps, and so on, the binary orientation hasn't been fully jettisoned. The impact of this incomplete embrace of what it means to engage in intersectional thought has been widespread and varied.

For our purposes in this chapter, the combination of a new metaphor with old binary cognitive frameworks produces an ambiguity about the analytical severability of gender, race, class, and sexuality as distinct categories of difference or vectors of power. *Black Feminist Thought* provides support for such a possibility stemming from the analytical distinctions between race and gender: "Because U.S. Black women have access to the experiences that accrue to being both Black and female, an alternative epistemology used to rearticulate a Black women's standpoint should reflect the convergence of both sets of experiences. *Race and gender may be analytically distinct*, but in Black women's everyday lives, they work together" (Collins 2000, 268–269; emphasis mine). Like the ambivalence between those wedded to an additive versus those embracing an ontological shift in modes of thought, there are divergent trajectories here that allow us to distinguish between what in the 1980s and 1990s was called "Race-Gender-Class" studies and intersectionality-like thinking.

Among feminist empiricists working in more positivist approaches, one particularly popular understanding of this ambivalence is mired in positivist epistemology. This approach

underestimates the ontological, epistemological, and methodological changes required to conduct intersectionality-driven research studies. For example, feminist empiricists like Laurel Weldon (2008) and Leslie McCall (2005) read this literature from the perspective of positivist epistemology. In seeking to render intersectionality more compatible with empirical work, both scholars contend that at least three possible arrangements of power are logically possible in a given context. According to Weldon, it is empirically possible that social locations are not structured by race or gender (or class, sexuality, etc.). This would be the null finding, which corresponds to the "neither/nor" option above.

The second possible organization of power suggested separately by McCall and Weldon is that diversity of social location could exist within a particular category of difference. This option builds on Hartsock's revised standpoint theory (1997), which asserts a vision of tremendous diversity within the gender binary of male oppressor and female oppressed. While this decidedly feminist possibility can account for other categories like sexuality, class, and race, it does not shift out of a binary framework, which has two ramifications. First, it is located on the additive side of the first ambivalence I identified above because the binary in question, gender (for Hartsock, McCall, Weldon), retains ontological primacy in framing the entire discourse. Second, the ontological primacy afforded by the binary reinforces the notion of analytical severability among sexuality, gender, class, and race. Both ramifications make these positivistic approaches more feminist than intersectional.

The broader intellectual history in this book recognizes a larger ontological shift that extends past the assertion that race, class, or sexuality is subsumable into gender (or vice versa), which is essentially the account of reality put forth by this understanding of diversity within as a quasi-intersectional arrangement of power. Equating intersectionality with the inclusionary strategy of diversity within a more ontologically

compelling category—the racial diversity within gender or the class diversity within race, for example, essentially avoids incorporating changes in the ontological relationship between categories. As Narayan so helpfully alluded to earlier, this move is fraught with problematic epistemological ramifications.

The third possible arrangement of power—complexity between categories—identified by Martínez, Nieto-Gómez, Crenshaw, Collins, and Shah—is labeled "intersecting vectors" by Weldon and "inter-categorical complexity" by McCall. That this is located as one possible reality relegitimizes the null possibility as equally viable, if not equally likely (in the most charitable formulation of the implications of this arrangement). Traditionally, this possibility of reality has only been applicable to the multiply marginalized and not applied equally to the multiply privileged (see Choo and Ferree 2010). Further, the constellation of power arrangements offered here as empirical (or quasi-empirical) possibilities position intersectionality as a testable hypothesis.

The incomplete movement from margins-centers metaphors to a full enactment of intersectionality theory includes ambivalences about additive models of thought that produce hierarchies of oppression combinations and about the analytical value of the severability of categories. These two key ambivalences in multicultural feminist thought mark an area of divergence between standpoint theories or multicultural feminist thought and intersectionality theory. It may be the case that severability is a mere artifact of our common disciplinary socializations, much of which emerged from silo forms of activism that rendered more intersectional activism invisible, like the movements that institutionalized academic departments for African American, Asian American, Chicano, Caribbean, Latino, Native American, queer, and women's or gender studies.[30] It is also entirely possible that severability may be too strategically or instrumentally valuable, based on its embeddedness in bureaucratic structures that provide academic legitimacy and high proportions of funding.

But if we are to be transparent in the history we must recognize retention of analytical severability within intersectionality's interpretive community to be a choice that is distinct from the full embrace of intersectionality theory.

Another possibility is that intersectionality has received precious little systematic ontological engagement as it has gained currency as a so-called buzzword. In other words, there is much style and cachet to dropping it into the title of a course or a publication, but little thorough engagement (see Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; May 2015). The retention of severability and additive models in this context would be less a strategic choice and more a function of "doing what we've always done given how we were trained." The next section attempts to address both possibilities by laying out a formal set of intersectional ontological and epistemological premises.

INTERSECTIONALITY: ONTOLOGICAL TENETS

Consider the following occurrence in the early 2000s. One of the most highly regarded Black female quantitative methodologists, a full professor in her mid-thirties with tenure at the most elite institution in the United States, gives a presentation at the second most elite institution in the United States. Her intellectual interests have turned from voting behavior to understanding patterns of race-based housing discrimination. Following what everyone agrees is a compelling and well-documented talk, a similarly situated (same age, tenure status, discipline) white male professor politely raises his hand and thanks her for her talk. His comment? "In order for any of your account to be true, don't you have to *assume* that racism exists?" (emphasis mine).[31]

This real-world situation and the question posed can help us to understand how and why intersectionality is more than one of three possible versions of complexity, or a testable hypothesis in the mode of whether sunlight and rain together, as opposed to sunlight alone or rain alone, will help plants grow. Intersectionality possesses a distinct account of reality (a.k.a. "ontology") and thus it requires its own epistemological tenets to adjudicate among knowledge claims. In this section I sketch the ontological and epistemological aspects of intersectionality, in an attempt to provide a path forward from the ambivalences outlined in the previous section.

As we noted above, the ambivalences about both the conceptual severability of race, gender, sexuality, class, and other categories, as well as the equal-but-not-identical orientation of between-category relationships suggest sympathetic but distinct worldviews that have significant ramifications for how we (1) conceptualize reality, and (2) seek to obtain and assess knowledge of reality (such as it is possible). If we define ontology as an account of reality (Hawkesworth 2006, 22),[32] then feminists of color (and those who study "race-gender-class") differ in important ways from intersectionality theorists regarding their accounts of reality, despite many similar origins and political commitments. I attempt to draw some clarity from the ambivalences outlined in the previous section. Here I focus on making distinctions I read between women of color feminist thought and intersectionality theory, both of which emerge from the "ethnic feminist" accounts I've explored so far, along with several contemporary interlocutors.

Intersectionality's First-Order Question

The ontological suppositions of intersectionality shift significantly from other forms of inquiry. The first element of this ontology emerges from the project of feminist epistemology

but involves what philosophers of social science might call "changing the first-order question." As we saw in the exchange between the two high-powered professors, each had a different account of reality and subsequent understandings of how to explore it. Our Black female professor's account of reality starts from a premise that racism exists, while our white male professor's account of reality starts from a premise that racism is an exception. By changing the first-order question, intersectional ontology deexceptionalizes the processes and structures of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, imperialism, nativism, ableism, and a host of other stratifications.[33] In this vein it is consistent with feminist inquiry's characterization of these phenomena as "constitutive of human relationships and relations between individuals and institutions," challenging "the Cartesian idea of 'evident knowledge,' which strategically uses doubt with the effect that practices that are hallmarks of various biases/categories of difference in use and or millennia in the making continue to be treated as anomalies" (Hawkesworth 2006, 30; see also Crenshaw et al. 1995; Wing 1997).

Intersectional Conceptions of Power

Returning to our unfailingly polite professors, the situation our faculty presenter found herself in is not unique to the twenty-first century. The account of intersectional reality suggests that relational power structures lived experiences, the shape of social locations within which people function and interact, and the discursive norms that shape how they understand and interpret the stimuli they encounter. Both Narayan and Collins allude to just such occurrences. Unlike other theories of relational power like doctrinaire standpoint theory and multicultural feminist theory, intersectionality jettisons zero-sum conceptualizations of power in an attempt to resolve the two ambivalences

discussed in the previous section—analytical severability of categories of difference and additive models that rank order oppressions, whether implicitly or explicitly enacted.

Intersectional ontology emerges from a distinctly feminist understanding of power and its connection to knowledge. In her critique of Habermasian "ideal speech situations," Narayan notes that academe is but one space of interaction where procedural and structural norms of equality and rationality fail to overcome condescending treatment of female academics by their male colleagues (1989, 261). Collins concurs, but suggests epistemological differences also serve as justification for ignoring knowledge produced by and about Black women (1990, 204; 2000, 254; see also Jordan-Zachery 2013; Alexander-Floyd 2012). Ultimately, these justifications represent assertions of power, as Collins notes: "Two political criteria influence knowledge validation processes. First, knowledge claims are evaluated by a group of experts whose members bring with them a host of sedimented experiences that reflect their group location in intersecting oppressions. *No scholar can avoid cultural ideas and his or her placement in the intersecting oppressions of race, gender, class, sexuality and nation*" (2000, 253; emphasis mine).

If we take Collins's words seriously, we cannot simply reserve them as related to epistemology without evaluating them for their ontological implications. If no scholar (and presumably, no individual) can avoid their placement in what she elsewhere calls the "matrix of domination," then the account of reality demanded by such an impossibility of extrication must also shift, not simply how we know what we know about an otherwise binary-oriented, standpoint theory framed world.

More recently, the popular book *Presumed Innocent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2013) collected over forty accounts of women of color faculty, continuing the standard visibility project of intersectionality.[34] To Narayan's and Collins's points, the revealing texts engage with micro and

macro aggressions that routinely occur—confrontations with condescension, de jure neutrality that produces de facto disparate outcomes, and so on. Our liberal white male professor might, in the standard story of the social sciences, accept the accounts in *Presumed Innocent* as legitimate claims but, through the kinds of procedural and structural understandings of (academic) reality, consider them exceptional reports that require reformist forms of documentation and redress. If we frame intersectionality as one possible explanation, as Weldon, McCall, or others might have us do,[35] these women authors could be faced with two possible questions. Is forty really a representative sample? Can you ever really be sure this is sexist racism, to use Nieto-Gómez's term?

That is certainly the impasse that Du Bois chronicles in *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), in consideration of the failure of his positivistic, social scientific efforts to mitigate racial prejudice by empirically demonstrating Black humanity and equality. Moreover, Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism* leaves us with the same kind of dilemma. In the "Gender and Science" chapter, Harding ably debunks the notion that the scientific methods deployed in physics as a "natural science" should somehow be the generalized standard for scientific exploration. Harding specifically debunks the following claim made by scientists: if feminists can't prove that Newton's law of gravity or Einstein's theory of relativity is gendered, then nothing else can possibly be gendered in physics. Of course we know this isn't true under any circumstances. But Du Bois's articulated experience remains instructive: the earnest effort to take scientists on their own terms and the calm destruction of each one of their reasons why gender isn't relevant ignores the notion of power. In other words, what is to keep these scientists from either (1) continuing to stonewall, or (2) simply agreeing that the point is true but then moving the goalposts in terms of the standard of proof?

I think the two questions are both ontological and epistemological. If we think about power as a relational commodity, the first question isn't simply how you know what you know, but presumes an idea of reality where "it's definitively sexist racism" is understood as being A, and where "it's not sexist racism" is understood as being Not A. This frame of the debate fundamentally looks at the sexist racism as an intervention that occurs episodically rather than being woven into the very logic of how the world is organized.[36] The danger in this logic, one might argue, is that everything is indistinguishable from everything else. How can we jettison the A/Not A formulation for intersectional sexist racism, or other combinations? Won't we simply be saying the entire world is sexist racist? In a word, *yes*, we would. But it does not follow that distinctions are impossible. The third and final ontological tenet of intersectionality is contingency.

Contingency

> These are not settled issues. That is why this work feels so risky to me. It continues to be discovery. It has brought me into contact with women who invariably know a hell of a lot more than I do about racism, as experienced in the flesh, as revealed in the flesh of their writing.
>
> —CHERRÍE MORAGA, *in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, 34)*

While much of feminist theory has engaged in decades of fraught conversations about the role of identity and experiences grounded in identity, intersectionality theory instead relies on situational contingency to acknowledge and incorporate the permeability of the binary between oppressed and oppressor. Intersectional contingency is distinct from the notion both that "context matters" and that individual identity is all that matters. Using the situation as a lens does not reify personal experience,

for individuals can experience a situation in question in very different ways. Nor does it reify the structural aspects that shape such situations, assisting in holding individuals responsible for their actions in a situation.

Uma Narayan (1989), Karin Aguilar-San Juan (in Shah 1997), and Edwina Barvosa (2008) all help us understand the notion of situational contingency. Narayan posits a complex relation between liberalism and positivism that can vary situationally:

> Nonwestern feminists may find themselves in a curious bind when confronting the interrelations between positivism and political liberalism. As colonized people, we are well aware of the facts that many political concepts of liberalism are both suspicious and confused and that the practice of liberalism in the colonies was marked by brutalities unaccounted for by its theory. However, as feminists, we often find some of its concepts, such as individual rights, very useful in our attempts to fight problems rooted in our traditional cultures. (Narayan 1989, 260)

For Narayan, the embrace of liberalism and its potential utility in postcolonial contexts cannot be supplanted by Western feminist epistemology or activism grounded in what Dhamoon (2009) and others refer to as a "settler colonialism" context of North America. This usage of contingency closely resembles the contingent coalition politics I discussed in chapter 2.

If we were to focus on the shared multiple identities of Narayan, a first-generation Indian American, and Karin Aguilar-San Juan, a second-generation Filipina, we might assume that their understanding of imperialism and postcolonial contexts might converge, given their shared identities and shared feminist politics. A traditional feminist engagement with the incomplete incorporation of intersectionality might focus on the commonality of experiences the two had,

declaring intersectionality to be "absent" if no commonalities were found. Yet while Aguilar-San Juan shares the feminist understanding of empire and colonialism that Narayan discusses, situationally, the case of Asian American women's struggles is distinct from that of the fight against problems rooted in traditional cultures: "As America's perpetual foreigner, Asian Americans have a complicated relationship to the idea of 'home,' particularly to the extent that home indicates nationhood or nationality. . . . For Asian Americans, the inscription of gender on the body is prefigured by the colonial relationship of the Orient to the West. Protecting women's bodies in this scenario cannot be fully accomplished by an appeal to personal control over one's health or desires" (in Shah 1997, xi). My point here is that the contingency of the situation (not the identity of Asian American women in the United States or women living in postcolonial contexts nor the experiences of the interlocutor) is what the different utility of liberalism and its positivist premises turn on.[37]

If we were to stop there, we would be left with the assertion that "context matters." Intersectionality, however, does not end there. Barvosa notes the role of agency in contexts of so-called identity conflict, where multiply identified individuals face choices about how to confront demands that they cover or pass for straight in situations where an important aspect of their personal identity is demeaned: "the project of linking together identities that have been socially constructed as mutually exclusive is very much a part of the project of self-integration of multiple identities. In that project, the goal is not to create a unitary self that is without contradiction, but rather to create an integrated but diverse and mulitiplicitous subjectivity that can draw creatively from whatever contradictions it retains" (Barvosa 2008, 149; see also Dhamoon 2009, 60–61). Barvosa cites the experiences of Christian Park, a Korean-American cis male interviewed for the documentary *Between Two Worlds*, and

Maria Lugones, who chronicles her navigation of a homophobic Chicano family culture in particular. Barvosa's understanding of Lugones's reactions when her family acts heteronormatively is particularly illustrative of intersectionality's reliance on situational contingency because the notion that outside forces seek to pit these identities against each other does not force the individuals to live their lives that way by definition. In other words, the quotidian choices between analytically distinct multiple identities does not necessarily signify two warring souls, as Du Bois might put it; nor should we assume warring souls underlie a decision not to fight in a given situation. It could in fact reflect the consistency of an integrated identity, not an analytically fractured multiple category identity. Here this element of contingency continues the second intellectual project of intersectionality, where the ontological relationships between categories are mutually constitutive.

Another useful way of thinking about this notion of situational contingency is to think about the construction of a "legal class," which is assembled quite consciously as a group particularly affected by a particular situation that requires a remedy, such as homeowners affected by the mortgage practices of large banks in the past ten years. Individuals may be differently situated in different neighborhoods around the United States, but the actions of large banks and the chosen responses of underwater homeowners (within a circumscribed universe of choices) can both be accounted for in this framework. Also notable about situational contingency in this particular example is the role of agency for each individual. Classes are often constructed with no agency required of each member save an opt-out, or exit option. This option is, as I already mentioned, less dependent on identity or identical experiences[38]—for example, that one person sought a mortgage modification and the other didn't—does not negate the membership in the class of underwater homeowners.

Situational contingency as a source of evidence enables intersectionality theorists to acknowledge the permeability of the binary between oppressed and oppressor. First, it allows intersectionality theorists to expand the notion of social location to include both situations where analytically distinct sources of bias or discrimination cannot be determined (e.g., is one experiencing discrimination due to one's disability, gender, *or* race?). Moreover, this understanding of situational contingency also returns to the notion of strategic invisibility alluded to by Lorde (1979, in Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall 2009) as a politically legitimate response in a situation, thus justifying "attention and concern, which is another word for love." More importantly, it successfully integrates attention to the roles of structure and agency by considering the situation as a time-delimited phenomenon, which brings us to the second dimension of contingency in an intersectional ontology and epistemology.

Time contingency is a second aspect of an intersectional ontology, upon which Narayan and Dhamoon agree across a twenty-year window, contributing to an understanding of how the limitations of culture are deeply tied up with the time continuum. While it is not unique to intersectional epistemology on its own, its integration with other elements is critical. The Combahee River Collective notes the contingency of time in a manner that expands beyond traditional notions of historical contingency that are frequently raised by many disciplines. This formulation acknowledges a pathway to simultaneous privilege and disadvantage in a way that represents a break from ethnic feminist accounts that focus solely on the oppressed dimensions of categories of difference and a move toward a more complicated understanding of the self as a time-contingent member of a group. In connecting racism and sexism to an economic system, the collective explicitly notes structures that can capriciously bestow privilege and just as capriciously take it away:

> We have arrived at the necessity for developing an understanding of class relationships that takes into account the specific class position of Black women who are generally marginal in the labor force, *while at this particular time some of us are temporarily viewed as doubly desirable tokens* at white-collar and professional levels. We need to articulate the real class situations of persons who are not merely raceless, sexless workers but for whom racial and sexual oppression are significant determinants in their working, economic lives. (Combahee River Collective [1977] 1993, 16–17; emphasis mine)

It would be easy to think of this quotation solely in historical materialist terms, especially given the ideological commitments of the collective's membership. But the notion here of contingency is not simply that we are focused on a singular moment or era in historical time, but that within the moment, the opportunity structures and options for agency are shifting and changing due to the idea that privilege itself is contingent. The Combahee River Collective's use of time thus marshals the continuities of structures of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia while noting episodic interventions that may change in particular Black women's positionality and opportunity structure in their reference to "temporarily class-privileged Black women." The recognition of contingent privilege is particularly prescient during an era more suited to sweeping generalizations and movement hyperbole (García 1997). I return to this point in subsequent chapters.

This acknowledgment of time contingency forwards the idea that oppressors and oppressed may have time-specific infusions of privilege without jettisoning these particular Black women from the category of "Black women" who can no longer be oppressed in particular situations. In this example from the CRC the acknowledgement accounts for the inclusion of both

situational and time-oriented aspects of contingency in intersectional accounts of reality.

The claim to ongoing membership is more than an idle assumption, as threatened loss of membership in the group was used as a disciplinary force among Chicanas, who appropriately labeled it as an assertion of boundary-drawing power designed to deflect critiques of sexism among Chicano activists. Moreover, the notion of time contingency, like that of situational contingency, builds greater fluidity into concepts of resistance to domination, providing an important corrective to Marxist constructions of power that underestimate the value of everyday acts of resistance.[39] Sister (Sor) Teresita Basso discusses how Mexican American women religious (nuns) have faced "existential conflicts of identity" that force a reevaluation (1971, in García 1997, 58–59). For Sor Basso, the identity conflict between being a Chicana and remaining an acculturated Mexican American is framed as a binary dilemma, with few extant resources prior to a more formal intersectional ontology that attend to time contingency. Thirty-seven years later, Edwina Barvosa reads in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Maria Lugones in particular a creative, productive, and restorative role for such identity conflicts, proposing that one can turn on a dime, making a decision for today about how to respond to family homophobia, for example, without having that decision rule out an oppositional or alternative response one day or even one minute later (Barvosa 2008, 152–153).

This intersectional understanding of time contingency further complicates the binary between oppressor and oppressed that is a common feature of doctrinaire standpoint theory. The second tenet of Hartsock's feminist standpoint theory contends: "If material life is structured in fundamentally opposing ways for two different groups, one can expect that the understanding of each will represent an inversion of the other, and

in systems of domination the understanding available to the ruling group will be both partial and perverse" (Hartsock 1997, 229). Even with a very charitable reformulation,[40] the presumption of fundamental opposing material life isn't intersectional, as Barvosa contends in her well-historicized introduction to multiple and intersectional approaches to theories of the self (2008).

The notions of situational and time-based contingency are part of an intersectional ontology that is distinctive. Specifically, an intersectional ontology embraces contingency in a way that allows the deexceptionalization process to exist alongside specificity and relational theories of power. These aspects of an intersectional ontology, while grounded in intersectionality's intellectual history, have largely sat uninterrogated or unrecognized by contemporary scholars. Instead, several have turned to later theorists like Foucault or Deleuze for resources that, as Sandoval (2000) argued, were already present among women of color feminists of the 1960s and 1970s. Anzaldúa urges us to stick with our intuitions despite internalized fears that send us away from our own knowledge systems. As we'll see in the next section, the integration of knowledge systems is far greater than the sum of its parts.

INTERSECTIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

> I have not yet unlearned the esoteric bullshit and pseudo-intellectualizing that school brainwashed into my writing. How to begin again. How to approximate the intimacy and immediacy I want. What form? A letter of course.
>
> —GLORIA ANZALDÚA, *in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, 165)*

> Sometimes for me "that deep place of knowledge" Audre [Lorde] refers to seems like an endless reservoir of pain, where I must

> continually unravel the damage done to me. It is a calculated system of damage, intended to ensure our separation from other women, but particularly those we learned to see as most different from ourselves and therefore, most fearful. The women whose pain we do not want to see as our own. Call it racism, class oppression, men, or dyke-baiting, the system thrives.
>
> —CHERRÍE MORAGA, *in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, xvi)*

> Intersectionality challenges us to question how we know, how our experience affects our beliefs and emotional responses to ideas: what feels right can reflect what I'm used to or comfortable with. Setting aside my responses and giving authority to those "who occupy the interstices" is crucial for feminists and others committed to democracy.
>
> —DOETSCH-KIDDER *(2012, 155)*

> For us to move forward in the exploration of Indigenous ideas and to actually see other views of the world there is first a call for the suspension of currently held thought patterns, particularly around knowledge, science and reality.
>
> —MEYER *(2013, 98)*

Intersectionality epistemology emerges from feminist epistemology. In her discussion of postpositivism and presupposition theories, Hawkesworth notes, "We live within theories that structure our perceptions" (2006, 43–44). The epistemology associated with intersectionality theory is consistent with but distinct from the larger subfields of postpositivism and feminist epistemology. Like feminist epistemology, intersectionality conceptualizes power relationally, but not in a binary fashion. Intersectionality's conviction that one understands power as a relational commodity that shapes not simply our perceptions, as much of feminist epistemology has revealed, but even our presuppositions that shape the very questions we seek to ask.[41]

The ontological distinctions discussed above similarly obligate us to a distinct, intersectional epistemology (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006, 187). Native Hawaiian philosopher

Manulani Aluli Meyer traces an ontologically distinct conceptualization of "Indigenous knowing" that is not predicated upon the universality of particulars (common denominator) held in common, like most of Western thought. In addition to its rejection of the universality standard, it similarly is not reliant on an atomization approach that seeks to reduce phenomena to its smallest analytical components. Last but not least, this epistemology is not reliant on an Aristotelian levels of analysis approach, where each level of analysis offers something objectively relevant to understanding the organism or phenomenon in question.[42] The trilogy of knowledge systems presented by Meyer occur simultaneously but not at different levels in the sense of specific to general, micro to macro. Given the ambivalences about the severability of categories of difference in particular as well as the emphasis on avoiding binaries, "holographic epistemology," as Meyer calls it, holds great promise for its compatibility with intersectional ontologies.

Like the feminist empiricists whose work was distinguished from a complete intersectionality ontological approach in the previous section, Patricia Hill Collins and other feminists working in epistemology provide important resources for our understanding of the multicultural feminist roots of intersectional ontology and epistemology. However, it is similarly important to elucidate a full-bodied theory of privilege and disadvantage distributed unequally in historically and structurally contingent ways. And to achieve that purpose we must craft a distinctly intersectional epistemology.

While Collins suggests that Black Feminist thought and other similar feminist thought are subjugated knowledge, Meyer characterizes the holographic epistemology she recovers from a vast variety of sources as enduring knowledge, transforming the power dynamic among sources into a nonadditive relation that incorporates time contingency. Moreover, while

Collins frames women of color feminist epistemologies as alternative (2000, 256), Meyer views indigenous knowing as integrative. "Indigenous is not simply a synonym for that which has endured. . . . It is a way of behaving that offers us older ways to view the world. It is not meant to operate in lieu of but rather to synergize with classical views of science and now with a quantum world already dreamed of, debated and woven into art forms of function, reliability and beauty" (Meyer 2013, 98). The integrative approach, which is marked as distinct from systems operating "in lieu of," also more fully captures the potential of intersectionality to supplant zero-sum conceptualizations of power.

Meyer proposes a "holographic epistemology" that perhaps best captures intersectionality-like thought today.[43] Though she suggests a trilogy of systems that contribute to this epistemology—the objective, physical world; the inside subjective world; and the quantum world of intersections—she is clear that one is not privileged over the other:[44] "The challenge is not to see this trilogy as linear sequence, rather as an event happening simultaneously and holographically" (2013, 94). In her footnote to this sentence she explains the difference between a normal photograph, where each snippet contains one piece of a picture, much like a jigsaw puzzle, and a hologram:

> The three-dimensionality of such images is not the only remarkable characteristic of holograms. If a hologram of a rose is cut in half and then illuminated by a laser, each half will still be found to contain the entire image of the rose. Indeed, even if the halves are divided again, each snippet of film will always be found to contain a smaller but intact version of the original image. Unlike normal photographs, *every part of a hologram contains all the information possessed by the whole*. (Meyer 2013, 100; emphasis in the original)[45]

Meyer's epistemology clearly emerges from a perspective that has a distinct position on the severability of categories—there is clearly no possibility of atomization precisely because reality is constructed as a whole rather than the sum of its parts. Second, because holographic epistemology has a notion of contingency that is deeply contextual, it names and situates the positivist and postpositivist moments we currently live in as part of a longer continuum:

> Science, the process to understand our natural world, is not a new idea; it is old. How it now unfolds within a mathematical, technical, capitalistic and positivistic structure is relatively new. Engagement and meaning-making with our world is an evolutionary process, always present, that accelerates or expands with mature, conscious, and rigorous *reflection*. The opposite is also true: the understanding of our world remains static without reflection in a field of reference that mirrors itself with itself eventually pulling away from direct experience into a self-justifying loop. This is our current situation in my own field of philosophy, and I sense even in Science. We then begin to name events in isolation from others, defying contextual comprehension born through the ages and understood by those who have witnessed them, remembered them, and sung their lessons in the life exchanged. (Meyer 2013, 98; emphasis original)

Meyer's allusion to "engagement and meaning-making" in our world parallels Rita Dhamoon's embrace of meaning making (2009), which originated in anthropology, as a fruitful resource for developing intersectional analytical strategies.

One of the most significant contributions of earlier intersectionality-like thinking to intersectional epistemology is emblematic of Anzaldúa's words above—to foster and preserve a deep trust of oneself, one's connection to knowledge, and the worthiness of that knowledge in the face of

devaluation (Collins 1990, 2000; Doetsch-Kidder 2012; hooks 1992; Lorde 1979, in Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall 2009; Sandoval 2000). This faith in oneself needn't be religious in orientation (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 85), but can be (Basso, in García 1997). When analyzing the precious few intersectionality theorists with famous reputations, many interlocutors have focused solely upon linking intersectionality with prior debates about experience, rather than acknowledging the epistemological (knowledge) and ontological (reality) ramifications of the intersectional framework. The intention of this chapter has been to bring all three into conversation with each other, thereby illustrating the full complement of challenge intersectionality presents to our single-axis, predominantly positivistic world of scholarship.

As well, this chapter has focused to a large degree on the second intellectual project of intersectionality, one that has been largely neglected in the literature: how intersectionality demands a rearticulation of the relationships between what are traditionally perceived as conceptually distinct analytical categories of difference. Lorde (in Moraga and Anzaldua 1983) characterizes the relationships as interdependent rather than mutually exclusive, a conviction followed thirty years later by Manulani Meyer (2013) in her conceptualization of a holographic epistemology. If we take seriously this second project, we must acknowledge that certain methodologies are incapable of fully meeting that promise, a provocative assertion that I leave for future debate among intersectionality's interpretive community.

That said, chapter 2 has foregrounded the visibility project, and this chapter the ontological relationships project. Both projects contribute to the subject of chapter 4, which distinguishes intersectionality's engagement with experience from prior women of color feminist engagements with experience and, as importantly, mainstream feminists' readings of women of color feminist engagements with experience. In particular,

the role of difference and experience is explored. The connection to experience, Lorde reminds us, is through our differences rather than "the pathetic pretense that they do not exist" (Lorde, in Moraga and Anzaldúa [1981] 1983, 99). In chapter 4 I look at how feminists and intersectionality theorists begin to diverge as to the constitution and role for lived experience.

4

BRIDGES, INTERSTICES, AND INTERSECTIONS

Experience(s) and Narrative(s) as Tools of Revolution

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience: . . .

This is how our theory develops. We are interested in pursuing a society that uses flesh and blood experiences to concretize a vision that can begin to heal our "wounded knee" (Chrystos).

—CHERRÍE MORAGA, *in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, 23)*

I do more translating
Than the Gawdamn U.N.
. . .
I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness
. . .
I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
On behalf of your better selves
. . .

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses
I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful

Donna Kate Rushin, in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, xxi)

> The praxis of U.S. third world feminism represented by the differential form of oppositional consciousness is threaded throughout the experience of social marginality. As such it is also being woven into the fabric of experiences belonging to more and more citizens who are caught in the crisis of late capitalist conditions and expressed in the cultural angst most often referred to as the postmodern dilemma.
>
> —SANDOVAL (1991, *13*)

IN HER 1988 BOOK *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, philosopher Elizabeth V. Spelman takes an epigraph from Beverly Smith to begin her chapter, entitled "Woman: The One and The Many." Beverly Smith, twin sister of the more prolific Barbara Smith, articulates a notion of being two identifications simultaneously that is grounded in lived experience: "Women don't lead their lives like, 'Well this part is race, and this is class, and this part has to do with women's identities," an ontological position Spelman also endorses for herself as a white female (quoted in Spelman 1988, 133–134). Chapter 3 explored the ontological and epistemological implications of this assertion.

This notion of "both/and," a hallmark of Third World feminist thought, serves as a foundation for both of intersectionality's intellectual projects: the (in)visibility project and the rethinking categorical relationships project. The epigraph Spelman selected is drawn from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, which is one of the most celebrated anthologies of women of color feminist thought published in the United States. Coeditors Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa selected Black Feminist poet Donna Kate Rushin's "The Bridge Poem" as a preface to their volume. The above excerpt from Rushin's poem captures the challenges discussed in this chapter—how to connect with one's experience away from and in relationship to others in the world.

Chela Sandoval (1991) suggests that the metaphors used by women of color to highlight their experiences were encoded in the very titles of their anthologies:

> These signs of a lived experience of difference from white female experience in the United States repeatedly appear throughout U.S. third world feminist writings. Such expressions imply the existence of at least one other category of gender which is reflected in the very titles of books written by U.S. feminists of color such as *All the Blacks are Men, All the Women are White But Some of us are Brave* or *This Bridge Called My Back*, titles which imply that women of color somehow exist in the interstices between the legitimated categories of the social order. (Sandoval 1991, 4)

Sandoval's metaphor of "interstices," which joins bridges and intersections as part of the title to this chapter, is part of a long list of images and metaphors used to describe intersectionality-like concepts, experiences, and analyses (see Crenshaw 1989; Collins 1990; Dhamoon 2011; Mason 2011). Sandoval then takes this insight and infuses intersectionality-like thinking with attention to the dynamic nature of these forces, a

key distinction from more doctrinaire feminist thought of the time, a move that is consistent with the ideas of contingency articulated in chapters two and three.[1] As May notes, "Intersectionality also invites us to pry open and contest these asymmetries, enter the 'cracks' . . . and remember that the spaces between or alongside systems of power can also be sites of knowledge and resistance" (2015, 29). That point regarding contingent interstices will continue in chapter 4, especially in relationship to safe spaces and their role in social movements.

In this chapter I also start to examine the space that begins to emerge between women of color feminism and intersectionality, starting with how each camp engages experiences of difference. Specifically, I argue that the later 1980s and 1990s start to feature feminist thought's focus on the significance and implications of different experiences (a deconstructive register), while intersectionality engages the aftermath of such diverse experiences (a reconstructive register).[2] As I discussed in chapter 3, experience is an important element of feminist epistemology; however, the holographic epistemology most consistent with intersectionality's ontological tenets posits a more inclusive approach to what counts as evidence precisely to avoid reification of experience.

G. Chezia Carraway gives an early example of combining personal professional experience and traditional empirical data:

> During my fifteen years of experience working with issues of violence, I have seen that the victims are most frequently women, with poor women and women of color disproportionately represented. The few statistics that exist on this subject support my observations. In 1987, the rape victimization rate for women of color, 330 for every 100,000 people, was considerably higher than that for white women, which stood at 90 for every 100,000. And while 8 percent of all women age 12 or older can expect to be raped in their lifetimes, this figure goes up to 11 percent if a woman is black. (Carraway 1991, 1303)

In the previous chapter, I noted the distinct ontological and epistemological shifts required to include experience and narrative as valid sources of evidence for claim making, and its distinct role in confronting the "view from nowhere" implicit in Western, positivist approaches to understanding social problems. Narrative emerges from multiple disciplines as an especially useful discursive product, for it simultaneously empowers communication of specific intersectionality-like thought and serves as a strategy for acknowledging, understanding, and fixing failed solidarity. Moraga's introduction to *This Bridge Called My Back* also discusses the power of personal narrative as a tool for self-preservation and revolution.[3]

But the anthology is not unique in this vein. Alexander-Floyd similarly notes narrative's particular value to the visibility project of Black Feminist versions of intersectionality. She adds that it has the ability to both disentangle "myriad forces that work to maintain hegemonic understandings of politics and culture" and present Black women's lives in their full complexity (2012, 20).

The literature on critical race theory also suggests that narrative is an important tool for grounding scholarly voices "in the material, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual experiences of people of color" (Crenshaw et al. 1995, 314; see also Williams 1992, 11; Wing 2001, 821). Specifically, Mari Matsuda asks, "What does a consciousness of the experience of life under patriarchy and racial hierarchy bring to jurisprudence?" (Matsuda 1988, 8). Moreover, this discursive practice simultaneously confronts and challenges the hegemony of mainstream legal analysis based on the belief "that a culture constructs its own social reality in its own self-interest" (Wing 1997, 3). Wing later elaborates on the value of narrative, contending that it continues an oral tradition where "stories were crucial in carrying notions of justice across generations." Moreover, stories allow us to reach a wider audience, who may lack technical

legal knowledge but still seek to understand (Wing 2001, 821).[4] The narratives to be analyzed in this chapter will be marked with italics for readers' ease of identification.

In addition to the focus on experiences as articulated through narratives, the challenges presented by translation across difference and strategies for engaging in such projects comprise the third and final section of this chapter. Rushin and Wing, for example, have contrasting experiences of translation. Rushin's poem expresses frustration with feeling obligated to "translate" between the multiple groups she bridges, and ultimately she refuses to translate for others until she is able to be "the bridge to my own power" (Rushin, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xxi). On the other hand, Wing heartily embraces the mission of translation (2001, 818) as a definition of what it means to embrace global critical race feminism. Whereas chapter 2 created a space that highlighted critiques of capitalism and the role of class more broadly, this chapter highlights linguistic oppression. Chapter 5 will take up religion and disability in a similar manner. The point in doing so is to ensure that the historical engagements with categories besides race and gender (which are all too often presumed to represent the entirety of intersectional work) are attended to in the book.

AUTHENTICALLY CONTINGENT (IN)VISIBILITY

In chapter 2, I defined antiviolence activists' critiques of distorted narratives about violence against women of color as a demand to be seen with visionary eyes. The personal narratives I explore here speak directly about experience in a way that is consistent with this part of intersectionality's visibility project. Like the antiviolence activists, these personal narratives describe the failure to have one's authentic, contingent self recognized

by majority group counterparts. Anzaldúa chronicles failed solidarity in response to the question, "why don't Third World Women come to the Feminist Writers' Group?": "What I mind is the pseudo-liberal ones who suffer from the white women's burden. Like the monkey in the Sufi story, who upon seeing a fish in the water rushes to rescue it from drowning by carrying it up into the branches of a tree" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 206).

While many of the feminist and intersectionality theorists agree on the problem, they do not all agree concerning the path forward beyond such different experiences. Sandoval (1991) contends that socialist feminists' admission that their theory is incomplete without Third World feminists' experiences is a radically insufficient response. Indeed, in Sandoval's world, Third World feminists' experiences are so different they justify "a new category of social identity" (9). On the other hand, Elizabeth Spelman adopts Adrienne Rich's 1979 concept of "white solipsism," a "tunnel vision which simply does not see nonwhite experience or existence as precious or significant, unless in spasmodic, impotent guilt reflexes" (quoted in Spelman 1988, 116), to understand the failures of white feminist theory to incorporate the experiences of women of color.[5] Despite agreeing with Sandoval that feminist theory is exclusionary, Spelman is far more optimistic about an integrative approach that uses embodiment as both an experience and an institution that recognizes that different meanings are attached to different places, times, and people, affecting the lives people lead (129). This distinction, I argue, is emblematic of the distinctions between intersectionality-like thought and feminist theory. In this section I explore the connection between the visibility project of intersectionality, the multidirectionality of lived experiences, and the contingency of safe spaces as a solution in order to begin to distinguish between women of color feminism and intersectionality-like thinking.

Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* discusses sexual violence she endured from her master as a teen. The lack of recourse she articulates here is consistent with some of the outcomes discussed in chapter 2, which occurred over a century later:

> *But I now entered on my fifteenth year—a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt. The master's age, my extreme youth, and the fear that his conduct would be reported to my grandmother, made me bear this treatment for many months. He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue. Of the two, I preferred his stormy moods, although they left me trembling. He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him—where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage. The degradation, the wrongs, the vices, that grow out of slavery, are more than I can describe.* (1861, 44–45)

The pain communicated by Jacobs is palpable. Her narrative of rape as invisible, as not worthy of the term by either the law

or within the domestic context by "the mistress, who ought to protect the victim," is mirrored by Mitsuye Yamada in her discussion of an entirely different topic.

In her essay "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster," Mitsuye Yamada weaves a connection between familial and structural invisibility she experienced in the 1940s as a Japanese-born student:

> *In an attempt to make my father understand me, I argued that even if I didn't marry* [her white antiwar boyfriend], *I'd still be a pacifist, but my father reassured me that it was "all right" for me to be a pacifist because as a Japanese national and a "girl,"* it didn't make any difference to anyone. . . . *When they were finally convinced I was not going to marry "my pacifist," the subject was dropped and we never discussed it again.*
>
> *As if to confirm my father's assessment of the harmlessness of my opinions, my brother Mike, an American citizen, was suddenly expelled from the University of Cincinnati while I, "an enemy alien," was permitted to stay. We assumed that his stand as a pacifist, although he was classified a 4-F because of his health, contributed to his expulsion. We were told the Air Force was conducting sensitive wartime research on campus and requested his removal, but they apparently felt my presence on campus was not as threatening.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 38; emphasis in original)

Yamada's articulation of the pain of invisibility in plain sight, as her gender status continues to structure whether she is perceived as a threat to either her nuclear family's honor or US national security, is an illustration of invisibility similar to that articulated by Jacobs in terms of its connection to intersectionality-like thinking (specifically the visibility project). For the purposes of this chapter I turn to the "mainstream feminist debates of experience" and the "intersectionality" use of these narratives to illustrate how the two formally begin to diverge in the 1990s and beyond.

For mainstream feminist theory, questions of experience center upon the ethics of commensurability traditionally assigned to notions of global or universal sisterhood. When Jacobs and Yamada express the pain of being devalued, the question for mainstream feminist theorists of many races emphasized "crucial theoretical/political questions of how and with whom we should work" (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125). There are questions of feminine subjectivity: Can we speak as women? Must there always be some qualification or recognition of difference? Both are questions addressed by theorists like Iris Marion Young (1997) and Linda Zerilli (2005). Philosopher Naomi Zack attributes the theoretical paralysis such questions produced among mainstream feminist theorists to intersectionality. Her book *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality* (2005) seeks to reclaim third wave feminism from women of color, because their theory of intersectionality has all but destroyed any way to talk about commonality among women, which Zack takes to be the primary route to liberation:

> Intersectionality is believed to be democratic because women of color now have the authority, demanded by them and sanctioned by white feminists, to create their own feminisms. But, as a theory of women's identity, intersectionality is not inclusive insofar as members of specific intersections of race and class can create only their own feminisms. The purpose of this book is to develop a new theory in third wave feminism that will be inclusive. Everyone will be understood to be able to work on the same general project, although they will retain their specific concerns. (2005, 2)[6]

Zack's understanding of intersectionality is distinct from Jasbir Puah's later accusation of intersectionality as exclusionary. While Puah situates her critique within the visibility project of intersectionality Zack, which leads her to the

conclusion that intersectionality is exclusionary; Zack sees no way other than commonality to bridge the spaces between women, even going so far as to declare an "essence of women": "The advantage of positing such a relational essence of women is that it holds for all women in a universal sense. Poor or nonwhite women are not excluded, and the commonality posited does not impose the values of white middle-class European and American women on other groups" (Zack 2005, 8). Zack's valuing of commonality as the path for feminism over the productive engagement with difference elaborated by women of color feminists and intersectionality theorists is a genuine difference of opinion. In this sense Zack represents the universalism side of the universalism-relativism debate in feminist theory.

Postmodern feminist theorists, as portrayed by both McCall (2005), who describes their position as "anti-categorical," and Yuval-Davis (1997), arrive instead at the conclusion that the experiences articulated by these narratives constitute incommensurable radical difference, leading Italian feminists and Yuval-Davis to embrace the practice of transversal politics, which seeks unity in diversity (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125–126). Transversal politics features boundaries that are contingent and semipermeable, and dialogic practices that seek to obviate the trenchant universalism-relativism debates as an alternative to identity politics. Emphasis here is placed on the *doing* of feminist politics rather than the *being* of feminist identity (see also Zerilli 2005).

For both sets of mainstream feminist theorists, however, this diversity within is a train stop on the way to a destination of political and/or coalitional unity. In contrast, for Audre Lorde (1982) and others, who are part of the intellectual history of intersectionality, difference is the home, the ontological reality from which all experiences and, more importantly, their aftermaths are dealt with in a way that does not rely on

the eradication of categories. Moraga locates the generative aspects of difference not in situated positionalities that avoid "self-decentering," as Black Feminist Elsa Barkley Brown and British Israeli feminist Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, 129) advocate, but in the interstices, in the spaces between such positions. Moraga contends, "For it is between these seemingly irreconcilable lines—the class lines, the politically correct lines, the daily lines we run down to each other to keep difference and desire at a distance—that the truth of our connection lies" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 106).[7]

Menominee Nation poet Chrystos's experience in a women's collective illustrates the pain associated with having one's work devalued. In this passage it is clear that the communal aspects of Chrystos's efforts, which represented her own attribution of the value to her work, were completely devalued by a class-privileged lesbian in a particularly painful way. In her admission of having "dreams of crossing barriers," Chrystos reflects the idea that her hopes and dreams for the outcome of such a collective are neither precious nor significant, to use Rich's terms, and the pain of the "terrifying and useless struggle to be accepted" ultimately led to her departure from the women's movement.

> *I worked so hard as part of a local women's coffeeshop & bookstore, harder than I've ever worked I ordered for the kitchen, & the art shows, did shifts, brought flowers, cleaned, met the pest man & phone man, did entertainment, washed a million coffee cups Recently someone told me that a young lesbian whose parents have given her a law practice, commented that she remembered me I didn't work she said all I did was talk to people I remember her too she was one of the thousands of women whose names & faces I memorized & tried to understand only to have them disappear after 3 months or whenever they found a lover After 3½ years I had so little left of myself so many bitter memories of women who disrespected me & others A woman who called herself a communist but supported capitalist*

> *enterprises of women, rather than our brave collective worker-owned effort The lies, pretensions, the snobbery & cliquishness The racism which bled through every moment at every level The terrifying & useless struggle to be accepted The awful gossip, bitchiness, backbiting & jealousy The gross lack of love I left the women's movement utterly drained I have no interest in returning My dreams of crossing barriers to true understanding were false Most of the white women I thought I was close to want nothing to do with me now.* (Chrystos, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 69)

Christos's pain, and its ultimate invisibility to those with race and class privilege, is shared by Japanese poet Mitsuye Yamada, who describes an interaction after one of her readings:

> [*A*] *woman in the audience said she was deeply moved by my "beautifully tragic but not bitter camp poems which were apparently written long ago," but she was distressed to hear my poem "To A Lady." "Why are you, at this late date, so angry, and why are you taking it so personally?" she said. "We need to look to the future and stop wallowing in the past so much." I responded that this poem* is not *at all about the past. I am talking about what is happening to us right now, about our nonsupport of each other, about our noncaring about each other, about not seeing connections between racism and sexism in our lives. As a child of immigrant parents, as a woman of color in a white society and as a woman in a patriarchal society, what is personal to me* is *political.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 74; emphasis in original)

For both Yamada and Chrystos, the desire to be fully seen as one's authentic, contingent self is thwarted completely in these contexts, and linked to "not seeing connections between racism and sexism in our lives." We will return to the connection aspect, which I continue to characterize as "both/and," in later sections of this chapter.

While Yamada persists in the movement, Chrystos ends up leaving the movement entirely. Doris Davenport, however, suggests a third way: engagement in "safe spaces" exclusively for women of color:

> *On the other hand, my experiences with white feminists prevent me from seeing dialogue as anything but a naive beginning. I honestly see our trying to "break into" the white feminist movement as almost equivalent to the old, outdated philosophy of integration and assimilation. It is time we stopped this approach. We* ***know*** *we have no desire to be white.* [*On*] *the other hand, we know we have some valid concerns and goals that white feminists overlook. By now, in fact, a few of their organizations are as rigid and stagnant as any other "established" institution, with racism included in the by-laws.*
>
> *So sisters, we might as well give up on them, except in rare and individual cases where the person or group is deliberately and obviously more evolved mentally and spiritually. This is, un-racist. We should stop wasting our time and energy, until these wimmin evolve. Meanwhile, we can re-channel our energies toward ourselves.* (Davenport, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 89; emphasis in original)

Barbara Smith's edited volume *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, features a strong condemnation of such separatism from Bernice Johnson Reagon, who contends:

> *We've pretty much come to the end of a time when you can have a space that is "yours only"—just for the people you want to be there. . . . The fault is not necessarily with the organizers of the gathering. To a large extent it's because we have just finished with that kind of isolating. There is no hiding place. There is nowhere you can go and only be with people who are like you. It's over. Give it up.* (Reagon, in Smith 1983, 357)

The contrasting voices of Davenport and Reagon suggest clear differences of significant political import and signal an important site requiring clarification between Black Feminist theory and intersectionality in particular.

Barbara and Beverly Smith argue that safe spaces can indeed be safe, but contingently so: "There are definitely separatist aspects emerging among the Black and Third World feminist community and that is fine. But ultimately, any kind of separatism is a dead end. It's good for forging identity and gathering strength, but I do feel that the strongest politics are coalition politics that cover a broad base of issues" (Smith and Smith, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 126).

Orthogonally positioned to the claims of Alexander-Floyd, Jordan-Zachery, and Bilge, Jennifer Nash contends that intersectionality is doomed by a problematic theoretical reliance on Black women's experiences: "The problems with a theoretical reliance on black women's experiences are twofold. First, while seeking to underscore problems of exclusion within feminist and anti-racist theory, black women are treated as a unitary and monolithic entity. That is, differences between black women, including class and sexuality, are obscured in the service of presenting 'black women' as a category that opposes both 'whites' and black men" (Nash 2008, 8–9). The contentions of intersectionality as ontologically and epistemologically distinct from feminist theory that I discussed in chapter 3 also shape the discussion here. Relying mostly on Crenshaw's 1991 piece, Nash contends that intersectionality "recycles black feminism without demonstrating what new tools it brings to black feminism to help it fashion a more complex theory of identity. . . . If, in fact, intersectionality purports to theorize identity in a way that departs from or adds to black feminism, a more explicit engagement with the nature (and distinctiveness) of its theoretical contribution would be useful." (8–9). Indeed,

Nash asks, what is left of Black Feminist theory if in fact it is reduced solely to intersectionality?

As I've illustrated elsewhere, this attention to contingency is not reserved for Black feminism's role in intersectionality-like thinking. The narratives about the contingencies of sites that are typically constructed as "safe" lend further credence to a conceptual distinction between feminist theory and intersectionality-like thinking. Naomi Littlebear Morena contends that her safe space is limited temporally as well as in its communicative medium:

> I need to feel in control of my own life—violence has on some deep level rendered me helpless and given me a deep fear of being powerless—*our language being stripped from us creates similar fears. I need to figure out what is closest to me. I have done some work in exorcising the demons of communication.*
>
> . . .
>
> *I got real turned around when i got involved with leftist politics. I am now trying to piece my life together, discard the violence & humiliations, accept that i am a complete person with nothing lacking.*
>
> . . .
>
> *For once in my life i have to let myself deserve a home, food on the table, and a handful of loving friends—this is a time of healing and taking the blame of the rapes and attempted rapes, the child beatings i received, taking all that pain off my shoulders and giving it back to who it belongs.*
>
> *I want you to accept me as i accept you. Be an amiga, not a comrade to me. I will send you more words if you like but right now the hurts all around me and i feel like flying away. I will fight back with music but don't ask me to fight with words.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 158; emphasis in original)

Both Littlebear Morena and Anita Valerio discuss the need to retreat to a safer space than the presumed safe

space they experienced to begin with. For Valerio, the closet becomes a barrier to being fully seen by her family, clearly causes pain:

> *But today, my lesbianism has become a barrier between myself and my people. What to say when my grandmother or aunt asks if I've met a boyfriend. The perennial lesbian problem—how to tell the folks and what to tell them.*
>
> *It is hard to be around other people talking about their lives and not be able to talk about your own in the same way. It causes a false and painful separateness—which I'll have to live with and ignore until I know how and what to do otherwise.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 44).

What is interesting, however, about Valerio's narrative is that it is framed contingently and optimistically, when she says, "which I'll have to live with and ignore until I know how and what to do otherwise." Again this contingency is very similar to the reflexive praxis expressed by the Combahee River Collective in its manifesto, which I discussed in chapter 3 as emblematic of intersectionality-like thinking.

Safe spaces in this vein are experienced as safe only when one is willing to be viewed semi-, rather than fully, authentically. Most useful for our purposes is Barbara Smith's formulation—which suggests a restorative and contingent utility for such spaces that is consistent with intersectionality-like thinking—which she mentioned in *This Bridge Called My Back*, but elaborates in the introduction to *Home Girls*:

> Autonomy and separatism are fundamentally different. Whereas autonomy comes from a position of strength, separatism comes from a position of fear. When we're truly autonomous we can deal with other kinds of people, a multiplicity of issues, and with difference, because we have formed a solid base of strength with those with whom we share identity and/or political commitment. . . .

> As for other Third World women usurping "our" movement, *understand that movements are not owned and that ethnocentrism is ethnocentrism no matter whose face it wears*. (Smith 1983, xl–xli; emphasis in original)

This contingent utility for such spaces is also consistent with the contingent coalition politics I discussed in chapter 2.

This Bridge Called My Back and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* differ from the Combahee River Collective's manifesto in their increased focus on the everyday ways in which invisibility is multidirectional, not simply among the second wave of the women's movement or the civil rights movement. This focus logically connects to Moraga's (and later Sandoval's) claims that the interstices, rather than the subjugated standpoints themselves are the focus of intersectionality-like thinking. Failed solidarity among those who share the same combinations of identities in many ways pushed the analysis to this point. Lakota feminist Barbara Cameron describes the sinking feeling Asian and Native Gay activists felt at the 1979 Third World Gay Conference:

> *Our representation and leadership had minimal input which resulted in a skimpy educational process about our struggles. The conference glaringly pointed out to us the narrow definition held by some people that third world means black people only. It was a depressing experience to sit in the lobby of Harambee House with other Native Americans and Asians, feeling removed from other third world groups with whom there is supposed to be this automatic solidarity and empathy. The Indian group sat in my motel room discussing and exchanging our experiences within the third world context. We didn't spend much time in workshops conducted by other third world people because of feeling unwelcomed at the conference and demoralized by having an invisible presence. What's worse than being invisible among your own kind?* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 50)

In a similar vein, Puerto Rican feminists Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales argue separately that internalized sexism among their fellow Puerto Rican women militates against their continued participation in solidarity. Aurora Levins Morales puts it this way:

> *How many times has a Latin woman stood up for me in private, then stabbed me in the back when the moment comes for the support that counts. . . . You have forced me to turn out of my own culture to find allies worthy of the name; you have forced me into a room full of Anglo women who nod sympathetically and say: "Latin men are sooo much worse than Anglo men . . . Why the last time I was in Mexico . . . " And not to betray you in the face of their racism, I betray myself . . . by not saying: It's not the men who exile me . . . it's the women. I don't trust the women.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 54; see also Rosario Morales in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 91)

Here the experiences many would assume to be identical, that many would assume would produce the same political views and activism, instead emerge as failed solidarity. Thus intersectionality-like thinking is distinct from pure identity politics as well. Through elements of contingency intersectionality-like thinking can account for these experiences in a way that a "pure" identity politics cannot.[8]

Both Rosario and Aurora Levins Morales's comments also reveal the final element of multidirectionality in the visibility project that stems from these personal narratives: internalized oppression and its impact. Barbara Cameron and Gloria Anzaldúa both reveal the results of their own upbringing in the United States as a site of multivalent racism and ethnocentrism. For Cameron, immersion in her own Lakota culture as well as the broader US culture contributed to this struggle:

> *Racism is not easy for me to write about because of my own racism toward other people of color, and because of a complex set*

> *of "racisms" within the Indian community. At times animosity exists between half-breed, full-blood, light-skinned Indians, dark-skinned Indians, and non-Indians who attempt to pass as Indians. The U.S. government has practiced for many years its divisiveness in the Indian community by instilling and perpetuating these Indian vs. Indian tactics. Native Americans are the foremost group of people who continuously fight against pre-meditated cultural genocide.*
>
> *I've grown up with misconceptions about Blacks, Chicanos, and Asians. I'm still in the process of trying to eliminate my racist pictures of other people of color. I know most of* my *images of other races come from television, books, movies, newspapers, and magazines. Who can pinpoint exactly where racism comes from? There are certain political dogmas that are excellent in their "analysis" of racism and how it feeds the capitalist system. To intellectually understand that it is wrong or politically incorrect to be racist leaves me cold. . . . We are* all *continually pumped with gross and inaccurate images of everyone else and we* all *pump it out. I don't think there are any easy answers or formulas.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 49; emphasis in original)

Anzaldúa also attributes her bias to her bicultural origins and lists herself as an actual accomplice:

> *It is difficult for me to break free of the Chicano cultural bias into which I was born and raised, and the cultural bias of the Anglo culture that I was brainwashed into adopting. It is easier to repeat the racial patterns and attitudes, especially those of fear and prejudice, that we have inherited than to resist them.*
>
> *Like a favorite old shoe that no longer fits we do not let go of our comfortable old selves so that the new self can be worn. We fear our power, fear our feminine selves, fear the strong woman within, especially the black Kali aspect, dark and awesome. Thus we pay homage not to the power inside us but to the power outside us, masculine power, external power.*

> *I see Third World peoples and women not as oppressors but as accomplices to oppression by our unwittingly passing on to our children and our friends the oppressor's ideologies. I cannot discount the role I play as accomplice, that we all play as accomplices, for we are not screaming loud enough in protest.*
>
> *The disease of powerlessness thrives in my body, not just out there in society.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 207)

There are two interesting intersectionality-like features in Anzaldúa's and Cameron's comments. First, as I mentioned above, these comments reflect the idea of reflexivity that was embodied in the theoretical praxis of the Combahee River Collective. For every quotation like this by Barbara Smith:

> *What white lesbians have against lesbians of color is that they accuse us of being "male-identified" because we are concerned with issues that affect our whole race. They express anger at us for not seeing the light. That is another aspect of how they carry on their racism. They are so narrow and adamant about that that they dismiss lesbians of color and women of color who aren't lesbians because we have some concern about what happens to the men of our race. And it's not like we like their sexism or even want to sleep with them. You can certainly be concerned as we are living here this summer for Boston when one man after another ends up dead.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 121–122)

there were also admissions like:

> *I carry a shell a white and crisp voiced shell to hide my brown golden soft spanish voiced inner self to pass to hide my puertoricanness [sic]*
>
> *I carry a pole 18 inches long to hold me at the correct distance from black-skinned people*
>
> *I carry hard metal armor with spikes with shooting weapons in every joint with fire breathing from every hole to protect me to*

> *prepare me to assault any man from 13 to 89* (Rosario Morales, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 92)

Moreover, there is a commitment to contingency as praxis—to trying to do things differently by admitting how wrongly (and how easy it is to act wrongly) they have acted in the past. This second element of intersectionality-like thinking speaks directly to the permeable boundaries between the oppressed and oppressor that are at the heart of reconceptualizing ontological relationships between analytical categories of difference.

How did mainstream feminist theory engage these experiential narratives of difference? Grounded in the qualitatively different experiences of women of color (both Western and postcolonial) and white women, difference in this sense is designed to "subvert the unity and meaning of the term 'woman' and 'race' in order to transcend classifications and propose alternative subject formulations" (Maynard 2001, 128). The result produced by both women of color feminist theory and mainstream feminist theory in the 1980s and early 1990s emphasized identity and experience formulation as the single most politically relevant domain for politics.

Critiques of "difference feminism" ranged from those who cautioned against "difference" as impermissibly vague (see, e.g., Maynard 2001) to those who held it responsible for the paralysis experienced by feminist theorists in the late 1980s and 1990s (see, e.g., Zerilli 2005). The emphasis on the category of "woman," and all of the attendant limitations for feminist politics, produced an even greater pressure to turn to the localized. A vast array of work focused on the cases of women highlighted as "residing" at the intersections of race, class, and gender, contributing tremendously to the (in)visibility project but comparatively little to intersectionality's intellectual project of reconceptualizing categorical relationships. The previously enumerated critiques of intersectionality posited

by Zack and Puah[9] also focused on "presence" and "counting noses," hallmarks of the visibility side of intersectionality, paying little attention to the second intellectual project, perhaps because it is not as widely identified as an intellectual project of intersectionality.

Feminist legal theory also featured elements of this debate. Also drawing on Elizabeth Spelman, critical race feminist Angela Harris's "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory" (1990) brings a critical race lens to feminist theory. According to Harris, the way to incorporate the experiences of those rarely heard in the law is to first recognize that every individual has multiple "selves" who, through complex struggle and dialogue, form what Mari Matsuda (1988) has called "multiple consciousness" (Harris 1990, in Bartlett and Kennedy 1991, 238). In her examination of MacKinnon and Robin West, Harris challenges feminist legal theory to catch up with other fields in recognizing the gender essentialism inherent in their activism and advocacy, particularly around rape (248). Most important for the purposes of the preceding narrative analyses, the central features of multiple consciousness are complexity, disagreement, and processual mechanisms to facilitate consideration of how Black women (in Harris's account; women of color in Matsuda's account) experience the world (237). I would identify these elements of intersectionality-like thinking as evidence of an "ambivalence" similar to the one in the Combahee River Collective's manifesto that I raised in chapter 3. These ambivalences lend themselves to exactly the kinds of claims Nash (2008) concerns herself with in the absence of explicit conceptual distinctions between Black Feminist theory and intersectionality theory.

What is often overlooked in many feminist theory analyses of the "experience" debates of this time period (see, e.g., Zerilli 2005) and the critiques leveled by women of color

feminists toward their white counterparts is the degree to which women of color feminists were simultaneously grappling with their own complicity in the systems they were fighting against. This level of self-reflexivity, discussed briefly in the last chapter, takes center stage here. More to the point, these confrontations with their own cultural biases and prejudices—even among and between women of color—produced several restorative efforts, like the one described by Cherríe Moraga:

> *I first felt this the most acutely with Black women—Black dykes—who I felt ignored me, wrote me off because I looked white. And yet, the truth was that I didn't know Black women intimately (Barbara says "it's about who you can sit down to a meal with, who you can cry with, whose face you can touch"). I had such strong "colored hunches" about our potential connection, but was basically removed from the lives of most Black women. The ignorance. The painful, painful ignorance.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xvii)

The debates over experience, and whether women of color "experience" more or unique forms of gender inequality or discrimination, are a central historical moment where feminism and feminist theory continued to think about "experience" as a unitary, static phenomenon, whereas intersectionality-like thought interprets experience in more dynamic ways that presage the kinds of reflexivity and contingency I discussed in chapter 3. Part of that transition, I believe, was caused by attention to the notion of both/and identities.

THE BOTH/AND FORMULATION

The second intersectionality-like feature in the narratives we've examined so far concerns the degree to which US and

Third World feminism cross-pollinated each other. Whether via painful failed solidarity or collaboration, moments of sharing frameworks emerged create a significant challenge to the idea that any one person or group "invented" intersectionality-like thinking. For example, many scholars attribute intersectionality to Black Feminists exclusively, tracing it back to the Combahee River Collective, or to Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw or Patricia Hill Collins. As this book makes clear, the story is more complicated than that. Here, I want to focus on the experiential complications, as exemplified in this note from Cuban American feminist Mirtha Quintanales to Barbara Smith in 1980:

> *I wanted to tell you about my visit to San Francisco, about coming together with my Latina lesbian/feminist sisters. The joy and the pain of finding each other, of realizing how long we've "done without," of how difficult it's going to be to heal ourselves, to find our voices . . . I passed around all the literature you'd handed out at conferences—including Conditions 5. And the Latina sisters were amazed. . . . Many of our feelings given form, meaning. . . . Yes there is a lot we can learn from each other.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 150).[10]

In 1983, Smith calls the emergence of Third World feminists "the single most enlivening and hopeful development in the 1980s," and critiques Black women's complicity in invisibility:

> *Often, both Black and white women in the U.S. have equated the term "Third World" with "Afro-American." This collapsing of identities has created falseness in our own understandings and in those of white women, who are unable to make distinctions. Like Black women, Native American, Asian American, and Latina women are involved in autonomous organizing at the same time that we are beginning to find each other. . . . I think that more than any other*

> *single work,* This Bridge *has made the vision of Third World feminism real.* (Smith 1983, xlii)

As I noted above, in chapter 3 I discussed the role ambivalence about additivity played in the ontology and epistemology that undergirds intersectionality. Here we will see the results of that ambivalence in terms of intersectionality's intellectual project of rethinking categorical relationships. Extending through and beyond identity theory, formulations of political identity and analyses of oppression begin to diverge between women of color feminists and intersectionality theorists in this trajectory of intersectionality-like thought as well. Both adopt the both/and stance, but take different routes to understanding politics and opportunities for political change.

Both Rosario Morales and Merle Woo assert a both/and identity, the most common theoretical understanding of the formulation. For Woo,

> *Today, I am satisfied to call myself either an Asian American Feminist or Yellow Feminist. The two terms are inseparable because race and sex are an integral part of me. This means that I am working with others to realize pride in culture and women and heritage (the heritage that is the exploited yellow immigrant: Daddy and you). Being a Yellow Feminist means being a community activist and a humanist. It does not mean "separatism," either by cutting myself off from non-Asians or men. It does not mean retaining the same power structure and substituting women in positions of control held by men. It does mean fighting the whites and the men who abuse us, straight-jacket us and tape our mouths; it means changing the economic class system and psychological forces (sexism, racism, and homophobia) that really hurt all of us. And I do this, not in isolation, but in the community.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 142; see also 143 and 144)

So too does Rosario Morales insist upon being both Puerto Rican and American:

> *I am what I am and I am U.S. American I haven't wanted to say it because if I did you'd take away the Puerto Rican but now I say go to hell I am what I am and you can't take it away with all the words and sneers at your command I am what I am I am Puerto Rican I am U.S. American I am New York Manhattan and the Bronx I am what I am I'm not hiding under no stoop behind no curtain I am what I am I am Boricua as boricuas come from the isle of Manhattan and I croon Carlos Gardel tangoes in my sleep and Afro-Cuban beats in my blood and Xavier Cugat's lukewarm latin is so familiar and dear sneer dear but he's familiar and dear but not Carmen Miranda who's a joke because I never was a joke I was a bit of a sensation See! here's a real true honest-to-god Puerto Rican girl and she's in college Hey! Mary come here and look she's from right here a South Bronx girl and she's honest-to-god in college now Ain't that something who would believed it Ain't science wonderful or some such thing a wonder a wonder* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 14)

For Collins, embracing the both/and formulation also meant explicitly rejecting any one theoretical tradition as sufficiently comprehensive "to capture the interconnections of race, gender, and social class in Black women's lives and their effect on Black feminist thought" (1990, xiii).

Reflecting again some of the ambivalence, Sandoval takes these kinds of both/and formulations, grounded in experience, to ground an alternative consciousness that is dynamic and contextual but grounded in a shorthand of experiences with oppression. In 1991, Sandoval thought that Third World feminism was inextricably dependent upon the prior experiences of

women of color.[11] Her revised thinking (2000) reflects more of the shifts in intersectionality-like thinking to be conceptually distinct from women of color feminist theory's emphasis on the fact of incommensurable experiences instead of the spaces between them.

This line of thinking progresses in multiple ways, including in the Asian American community during the late 1990s, as Juliana Pegues demonstrates from the perspective of politics:

> The insular camaraderie based on common identity experience makes it difficult to challenge privilege within groups, and many identity-based groups that attempt to address issues of unequal power are destroyed through internal conflict . . . [however,] instead of looking at each model (political vs. identity-based) as antitheses of each other, instead look at them as exclusive but with elements worthy of incorporation: identity-based community organizing and an explicit political agenda can successfully complement each other. (In Shah 1997, 12–13)

Part of the transition that occurs in the 1980s and 1990s is a move away from identity-based intersectionality to thinking more creatively about the capacity of this formulation.

Intersectionality-like thinking involves a specific combination of attention to the diversity within specific groups (e.g., the diversity within the category of women) and how categories intersect (i.e., an emphasis on the spaces between the locations). This both/and formulation extends to identity, as Moraga, quoting the Smith sisters, asserts: "But we refuse to make a choice between our cultural identity and sexual identity, between our race and our femaleness. We are not turning our backs on our people nor on our selves" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 106). Most mainstream feminist theory acknowledges that formulation (e.g.,

Zack, Zerilli, Young, Maynard) but the intersectional both/and extends through political practices to also focus on responses by both others and the self to experiences, as Moraga wrote in 1979:

> This is the oppressor's nightmare, but it is not exclusive to him. We women have a similar nightmare, for each of us in some way has been both oppressed and the oppressor. We are afraid to look at how we have failed each other. We are afraid to see how we have taken the values of our oppressor into our hearts and turned them against ourselves and one another. We are afraid to admit how deeply "the man's" words have been ingrained in us.
>
> To assess the damage is a dangerous act. I think of how, even as a feminist lesbian, I have so wanted to ignore my own homophobia, my own hatred of myself for being queer. I have not wanted to admit that my deepest personal sense of myself has not quite "caught up" with my "woman-identified" politics. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 32–33)[12]

This attention to responses produces contingent acceptance of both safe spaces and coalitions as we work towards social transformation. In a similar vein, there is a distinction between writing about similar responses to experiences (as opposed to writing via the experiences themselves)—for intersectionality, the responses are *both* safe spaces *and* coalitions (not either/or, which is the feminist debate at the time). How do we think about walking the walk?

SELF-SHATTERING AND MEANING MAKING

> *How can we—this time—not use our bodies to be thrown over a river of tormented history to bridge the gap?* Barbara says last night: "A bridge gets walked over." Yes, over and over and over again.
>
> —CHERRÍE MORAGA, *in Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983, xv)*

Anzaldúa and Moraga have various pieces of advice for reconstituting our activism after the tragedy of failed solidarity. Anzaldúa quotes Moraga: " 'To assess the damage is a dangerous act,' writes Cherríe Moraga. To stop there is even more dangerous. It's too easy, blaming it all on the white man or white feminists or society or on our parents. What we say and what we do ultimately comes back to us, so let us own our responsibility, place it in our own hands and carry it with dignity and strength. No one's going to do my shitwork, I pick up after myself" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 171). In this section I attend to contemporary intersectional strategies that use experience differently.

This Bridge Called My Back features a number of personal narratives where language is stripped and replaced, forgotten and remembered. Anita Valerio remembers the complexity of language in memories of childhood and her mother's calls back to her family in Canada:

> *Being an Indian . . . I didn't even realize that's what I was—an Indian—in fact I jumped up and down in protest "I'm not an Indian—I'm not an Indian!" when my relatives would tell me I was. After all, Indians were the bad guys on T.V. and though we didn't have running water that year or even telephones—yes—we did have television. Apparently, there were also times when I'd scream "I'm an Indian, I'm an Indian" when my relatives would say I wasn't . . . Such has been life. Just what it is to be an "Indian"—Native American—a Skin . . . & more importantly how do I—half blood Indian and half Chicana relate to it all? Well sometimes I've made quite an occupation of thinking about it and sometimes, more recently, I'd rather not bother. Why bother? It seems too conceptual—and worse—too bound up with invectives. Yet—I cannot forget and I don't want to. It's in my blood, my face my mother's voice it's in my voice my speech rhythms my dreams and memories it's the shape of my legs and though I am light skinned it is my features—my eyes and face shape . . . it must even*

> *be the way I sweat! Why it's damn near everything! and I feel it's my yearning for wide spaces—for the flat and nude plains. Yes, I've been denied. What a shame not to speak Blackfoot. It was my mother's first language—she'd talk it over the phone long distance—she'd speak it when she went home (the blood reserve in Southern Alberta) she even spoke it in my dreams but I never learned. All that talking denied me.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 42)[13]

The notion of shifting and multiple identifications as productive if not beneficial follows from Anzaldúa's notion of *mestiza* consciousness, which concludes, contrary to psychological theories of social identity, that identity contradictions contribute to rather than detract from social transformation (Barvosa 2008, 56–57). Cristina Beltran's engagement with Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* and Shane Phelan's *Getting Specific* is another important intersectional interpretation: "Theorists of *mestizaje* must balance cultural specificity with the recognition that perhaps no one ever fully occupies her position as subject—and that some modern forms of the hybrid highlight this fact. Put another way, theorists of *mestizaje* must retain an attentiveness to historical specificity and inequality in tandem with an increased awareness that all human subjectivity is plural, contradictory, socially embedded and mutually constitutive" (Beltran 2004, 606). For both Barvosa and Beltran, Anzaldúa's formulation is less focused on the fact of what Harris calls the "antithetical" and "contradictory selves" shaped by bad experiences, and more on the creative political potential of such tensions.

Doetsch-Kidder (2012) locates another method of using experience differently in the work of Chela Sandoval and Gloria Anzaldúa:

> Loving across boundaries for Sandoval is not a process of identification but a process of self-shattering that may be experienced as

> painful and threatening. From the experience of fragmentation, one realizes the impossibility of knowing a unified self in a body mind that is inherently relational. This self-shattering enables individuals to develop multiple and shifting identifications, the revolutionary mestiza consciousness described by Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. From this loving form of consciousness, one can form meaningful alliances and act in social and political spheres to counter oppression and support the survival of marginalized people. (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 54)

In the 2000s, the spectrum of how productive and integrative this intersectional existence is continues to vary by interlocutor.

That said, experience can still be a catalyst for change, particularly as it connects to memory, which is of course one step removed from the experience itself. Moraga discusses a 1979 experience that brutally reminds her of how her language has been missing:

> *I went to a concert where Ntosake Shange was reading. There, everything exploded for me. . . . The reading was agitating. Made me uncomfortable. Threw me into a week-long terror of how deeply I was affected. I felt that I had to start all over again. . . .*
>
> *Sitting in that auditorium chair was the first time I had realized to the core of me that for years I had disowned the language I knew best—ignored the words and rhythms that were the closest to me. The sounds of my mother and aunts gossiping—half in English, half in Spanish—while drinking cerveza in the kitchen.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 31)

Moraga finds this experience so compelling that she suggests a similar move for those who desire to be allies:

> *He* [a white, gay, male friend] *must, first, emotionally come to terms with what it feels like to be a victim. If he—or anyone—were*

> *to truly do this, it would be impossible to discount the oppression of others, except by again forgetting how we have been hurt.*
>
> *And yet, oppressed groups are forgetting all the time. There are instances of this in the rising Black middle class, and certainly an obvious trend of such "unconsciousness" among white gay men. Because to remember may mean giving up whatever privileges we have managed to squeeze out of this society by virtue of our gender, race, class, or sexuality.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 30)

Barbara Smith concurs, and connects this remembering move to an intersectionality-like formulation based on a letter she wrote with Moraga, her sister Beverly, and Julia Perez to the *Gay Community News*:

> *As women of color, we feel it's essential to examine our own understanding about how oppression works in this country. It's often hard for us to believe that we can be both oppressed and oppressive at the same time. . . We don't have to be the same to have a movement but we do have to admit our fear and pain and be accountable for our ignorance.* (Smith 1983, xliii–xliv)

Shifting the reaction—from forgetting to remembering—is one way to move toward an analysis of response to experience rather than to reify the meaning of the experience itself (see Scott 1992).

The shift made by Smith, Moraga, and others also avoids the conflation of experience with identity, which contemporary intersectionality theorist Sharon Doetsch-Kidder contends is critical to the technology of "learn and adapt" in intersectional identity activism: "Even activists who share an identity with the group they are engaged with need to spend time learning how to communicate and work within the community" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 109). The diversity

of responses contained in this chapter alone among women of color suggests that not race, culture, language, nor sexuality identity stands in for an understanding of response to experience. While Doetsch-Kidder finds that Sandee, a trans activist who worked with Burmese migrants who survived the 2003 tsunami in Phuket, Thailand, can tap into her own experiences with fear and desire for safety and dignity, the key is in the response—not the assumption of similarity of experience (74).

How can one reconstruct the self after the shattering? Anzaldúa creates not only a self, but another world:

> *The mixture of bloods and affinities, rather than confusing or unbalancing me, has forced me to achieve a kind of equilibrium. Both cultures deny me a place in* their *universe. Between them and among others, I build my own universe,* El Mundo Zurdo. *I belong to myself and not to any one people.*
>
> *I walk the tightrope with ease and grace. I span abysses. Blindfolded in the blue air. The sword between my thighs, the blade warm with my flesh. I walk the rope—an acrobat in equipoise, expert at the Balancing Act.* (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 209; emphasis in original)

Barvosa brings Anzaldúa together with Lugones and Amelie Rorty to think about how a process of self-craft can restore the shattering described by Sandoval (and later by Doetsch-Kidder), but in a way that is intersectional in terms of its embrace of contingency and reflexivity.

What does this look like in advocacy practice? "[T]rusting communities and constituents often happens through a process of decentering the self—choosing to step aside from directing and to leave others space to do their own work—and increasing acceptance of others. Decentering the self often comes from self-awareness—of one's own journey, and the need for others to walk

their own paths, and/or an awareness of one's own limitations" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 100). While the 1980s and early 1990s revealed increasing distance between women of color feminism and intersectionality, some of the same ambivalences, about additivity and "special burdens" in particular, linger. Moraga and Anzaldúa put the question to the sisters Smith directly:

> Are Black women more vulnerable to homophobic attack?
>
> BAR[BARA]: Yes, Black women are more vulnerable to homophobic attack because we don't have white skin privilege, or class privilege to fall back on if somebody wants to start a smear campaign against us. As I said in my essay, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," it's [heterosexual privilege] always the last to go. We don't have any of the other privileges. . . . Somebody who is already dealing with multiple oppression is more vulnerable to another kind of attack upon her identity. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 125)

Barbara Smith's claim in *This Bridge Called My Back* is difficult to reconcile with her aforementioned claim that reconceptualizes the relationships between categories, shifting the binary between oppressed and oppressor in *Home Girls*, despite the fact that they were originally published less than two years apart (Smith 1983, xliii–xliv).

Yet Barbara Smith is not alone in her ambivalence. Anzaldúa also connects with this idea of particularly vulnerable locations:

> As Third World Women, we are especially vulnerable to the many-headed demon of oppression. We are the women on the bottom. Few oppressions pass over us. To work towards the freedom of our own skin and souls would, as Combahee states, ". . . mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom

> would necessitate the destruction of *all* systems of oppression." The love we have for our common maligned bodies and souls must burgeon out in *lucha*, in struggle. As Teish points out, we must work toward diminishing the possibility of being locked up in a padded cell, of being battered or raped. Our feelings of craziness and powerlessness that Combahee speaks of are induced by the shit society dumps on us rather than stemming from being born ugly or evil as the patriarchal shrinks would have us believe. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 195–196; emphasis in original)

Anzaldúa would later, in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), propose the *mestiza* consciousness to which Barvosa and Doetsch-Kidder attribute such creative intersectional power. I contend it is in this decade, the 1980s, that Third World feminism and intersectionality begin to diverge on this point. The transition, specifically, stems from the use of the word "particular." Intersectionality theory eventually takes "particular" to mean "specific," whereas Third World feminism preserves the previous usage of "particularly" in reference to oppressive sites like vulnerability to homophobic violence. The latter preserves space for additive and zero-sum understandings of oppression, while the former closes off such possibilities.

In her introduction to the final section of *This Bridge Called My Back*, Anzaldúa implores: "We must not believe the story *they* tell about us. We must recognize the effects that our external circumstances of sex, class, race and sexuality have on our perception of ourselves—even in our most private unspoken moments" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 196; emphasis in original). The struggle, however, is to figure out which of the two accounts of vulnerability and oppression diverges the most from the just-so stories of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. The ambivalence produced by the pain

expressed by Barbara Smith here, and by Donna Kate Rushin in "The Bridge Poem," carries over to political analysis as well. The familiar ambivalence about whether oppression is fundamentally additive, allowing claims that some women suffer the most, remains in *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Home Girls*, and occludes some of the analytical value intersectionality offers to both mainstream and women of color feminist theories. In chapter 5 I discuss the significant challenges facing women of color in the representational domain, including how very difficult it is to challenge such products of the hegemonic discursive domain.

"WE ARE NAMED BY OTHERS AND WE ARE NAMED BY OURSELVES"

Social Constructivism and Intersectionality-Like Thinking

> In attempting to analyze the situation of the black woman in America, one crashes abruptly into a solid wall of grave misconceptions, outright distortions of fact, and defensive attitudes on the part of many.
>
> —FRANCES M. BEALE *(in Morgan 1970, 340)*

> Gender divisions are ideological to the extent that they do not have a basis in reproduction, but reproduction is represented as their basis. However, the ideological nature of gender divisions does not mean they do not exist nor that they do not have social origins and social effects or involve material practices.
>
> —ANTHIAS AND YUVAL-DAVIS *(1983, 66)*

> Until we can all present ourselves to the world in our completeness, as fully and beautifully as we see ourselves naked in our bedrooms, we are not free.
>
> —MERLE WOO *(In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 141)*

> There had been books studying bisexuals like specimens . . . and there had never been a book that was coming out stories and personal life stories rather than more psychological scrutinizing, and a book that represented bisexuality as an

> ordinary, healthy identity rather than as some kind of peculiar minority marginalized aberration.
>
> —LORAINE HUTCHINS, *coeditor, Bi Any Other Name (quoted in Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 62)*

LAKOTA FEMINIST WRITER BARBARA CAMERON concludes her essay "Gee, You Don't Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation" with a linguistic list of racial epithets, the last of which is "illegal alien," a term that only in the twenty-first century has come under significant broad contestation in the United States. As she claims, "we are named by others and we are named by ourselves," she reframes who precisely is an illegal alien: "oh yes about them [illegal aliens], will the U.S. government recognize that the Founding Fathers (you know, George Washington and all those guys) are this country's first illegal aliens?" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 52). In doing so, Cameron confirms that such words are loaded with political and representational power that, as Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis suggest, involve material practices that shape the twin intellectual projects of intersectionality-like thinking.

Anzaldúa specifically harnesses that power by taking on the privilege and burden of writing back to power as a way to combat invisibility and domination: "Why am I compelled to write? Because the writing saves me from this complacency I fear. Because I have no choice. Because I must keep the spirit of my revolt and myself alive. Because the world I create in the writing compensates for what the real world does not give me" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 168–169). As I've articulated in earlier chapters, these contentions are multidirectional and intersectional rather than grounded in multiple, mutually exclusive centers and margins. Communication, Beverly Smith notes, is influenced by the person listening and their response

(inspirational or not). It is, in other words, a dynamic interaction between two parties:

> Bev[erly]: So I think that's one of the reasons that again, to use the phrase that was asked to us, they are able to "whitewash" us. Now, I don't think this is about acting white in a white context. It's about one, a lack of inspiration. Because the way you act with Black people is because they inspire the behavior. And I do mean inspire. And the other thing is that when you are in a white context, you think, "Well, why bother? Why waste your time?" If what you're trying to do is get things across and communicate and what-have-you, *you talk in your second language*. (Smith and Smith in Moraga and Anzaldúa [1980] 1983, 119; emphasis in original)

As I argued in chapter 4, *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Critical Race Feminism* (among others) are anthologies that reveal a strong amount of cross-pollination between racial and ethnic groups that further complicates a genealogy of intersectionality. That said words often connote specifically visual representations. Language and images combine in constructivism and in intersectionality, trafficking in discursive power.

All ten of the disciplines given significant attention in this book—sociology, political science, psychology, gender studies, ethnic studies, American studies, philosophy, legal studies, literary studies, and history—feature social constructivism scholarship that seeks to reshape how and within which frameworks claims are made and, more importantly, how groups and social movements contend with the opposition they face while convincing the polity to transform society. In this chapter I build upon the insights of chapters 3 and 4 to document the early intellectual bonds between intersectionality-like thought and social constructivism. Tracing the conversation

between social constructivism and intersectionality more generally ensures additional attention to controlling images and the politics of cultural representation discussed among the early literary and activist wings of intersectionality-like thought. Specifically I contend that intersectionality-like thinking about how power is relationally constituted predates and anticipates Michel Foucault's well-known arguments about power.

My assertion of this chronological relationship between intersectionality theory and a celebrated postmodern understanding of power might seem counterintuitive at first.[1] After all, three so-called "foundational" authors in intersectionality—Crenshaw, Collins, and Sandoval—all seem to draw upon postmodern theorists for their formulations of power dynamics. Crenshaw, for example, drew on Derrida to examine racist ideology as a purveyor of oppositional power dynamics (1989, 112–113). She later explicitly asserts that intersectionality is a "provisional concept" that links contemporary politics with postmodern theory ([1991] 1995, 378). Collins similarly draws upon Michel Foucault as a resource for her concept of the "matrix of domination," which she introduces in her 1990 edition of *Black Feminist Thought* (and further refines in the tenth-anniversary edition). So too does Sandoval (2000) rely on Derrida, Deleuze, Haraway, and Foucault in her *Methodology of the Oppressed*. If we locate intersectionality's moment of creation in 1989–1991 with these three authors alone, it is easy to conclude that intersectionality is indebted to postmodernism for its "original contribution" of introducing a complex understanding of power into gender studies, among other fields. This book argues, however, that intersectionality-like thought has a much broader history that begins far earlier than 1989. Thus this chapter examines these early works, finding that, when matched against a previously hidden history of

intersectionality-like thinking, intersectionality's debt to postmodernism is substantially transformed.

Sandoval herself suggests that this might be the case. In *Methodology of the Oppressed* she argues that Frederic Jameson's presentation of the citizen-subject's postmodern despair can be resolved through attention to the "survival skills and decolonizing oppositional practices" of decolonial movements (Sandoval 2000, 33) embraced and supported by Third World feminists in particular from previous cultural eras. The authors discussed from that era in this chapter predate Foucault's work and much of that of Derrida, Jameson, and Deleuze as well. Further, the evolution of intersectionality's approach or conceptualization of power that emerges from these works contrasts with the deconstructive modes of analysis that trace back to Wittgenstein's understanding of linguistic complexity that facilitated the postmodern turn. Wittgenstein's conceptualization of complexity as an amalgamation of simpler linguistic expressions conflicts directly with the "irreducible complexity" of the holographic intersectional ontology and epistemology I discussed in chapter 3.

The ambivalence about additivity that begins to transform the close relationship between women of color feminisms and intersectionality theory into two distinct schools of thought in the late twentieth century further supports the idea that intersectionality's nuanced articulation of power is explicitly orthogonal to the postmodern turn in two ways. First, as has been frequently and convincingly argued, it puts women of color at the center of the analysis (Alexander-Floyd 2012; Jordan-Zachery 2007, 2013). Second, it draws upon different sources of evidence and different engagements with those sources of evidence that preserves attention to the material practices of effects of oppression (as Anthias and Yuval-Davis put it), as an assertion of enumerable principles of domination.[2]

While chapter 4 explored how the mobilization of experience changed over time, so too did the engagement with the socially constructed visual representations known in sociology as "controlling images," which is the focus of this chapter.

CONTROLLING IMAGES: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS THAT BITE

In 1925, Elise Johnson McDougald, a journalist and teacher, revealed the impact of controlling images and the elusiveness of effective contestation of such images:

> [The Negro Woman] is conscious that what is left of chivalry is not directed toward her. She realizes that the ideals of beauty, built up in the fine arts, exclude her almost entirely. Instead, the grotesque Aunt Jemimas of the street-car advertisements proclaim only an ability to serve, without grace or loveliness. Nor does the drama catch her finest spirit. She is most often used to provoke the mirthless laugh of ridicule, or to portray feminine viciousness or vulgarity not peculiar to Negroes. . . . It cannot be denied that these are potent and detrimental influences, though not generally recognized because they are in the realm of the mental and spiritual. (In Guy-Sheftall 1995, 80–81).

The gesture McDougald makes toward Sojourner Truth's 1851 "Ain't I a Woman?" speech regarding the chivalry denied to Black women turns to a sense of invisibility via exclusion from aesthetic norms as well as misrepresentations whose impact cannot be denied yet are also not "recognized" due to their location in a discursive realm. The challenge of recognition and contestation within these realms was taken up again forty-five years after McDougald by civil rights activist Frances Beale, who directly cites Sojourner Truth's speech. Beale notes Black

women's invisibility in idealized models of motherhood that, through sociological studies conducted by E. Franklin Frazier and later Patrick Moynihan, infuses representations like the white middle-class mother with discursive power in the domain of public policy:[3]

> [I]t is idle dreaming to think of black women simply caring for their homes and children like the middle-class white model. Most black women have to work to help house, feed, and clothe their families. Black women make up a substantial percentage of the black working force and this is true for the poorest black family as well as the so-called "middle-class" family.
>
> Black women were never afforded any such phony luxuries. Though we have been browbeaten with this white image, the reality of the degrading and dehumanizing jobs that were relegated to us quickly dissipated this mirage of womanhood. (In Morgan 1970, 342).

It is critical to note that the images discussed by both McDougald and Beale originated from multiple locations. Specifically, Sojourner Truth's speech and Beale's contestation of the "white middle-class" model were used by Blacks and whites alike, albeit for different purposes.[4] Social theorist Collins later draws upon these social constructions in *Black Feminist Thought*, characterizing them as "controlling images"[5]: "Controlling images" are part of an ideology of domination that "are designed to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life" (Collins 1990, 68).

Controlling images can emerge from academic analyses of domestic sociopolitical situations, but they can also be revealed by activist understandings of cultural representations with cross-border effects. Writing in 1971, Bernice Rincón analyzed the "mala mujer" controlling image and its impact on Mexican and Mexican

American women alike. Rincón weaves together rural Mexican cultural images that comprise the social construction of the "mala mujer" with the transnational fluidity of movement across borders that is supposed to be the province of Mexican males:

> It is interesting to note that the image of the "mala mujer"—the "bad woman"—is also most always accompanied by the idea of aggressive activity. She is not passive like the "self-denying mother," the "waiting sweetheart," the "hermetic idol,"—she comes and goes, she looks for men and then leaves them. Her extreme mobility . . . renders her invulnerable. Her extreme mobility and immodesty unite to petrify her soul. . . . In her own way she also transcends her physiological weakness and closes herself off from the world. (In García 1997, 26)

Notably, Rincón and later Nieto-Gómez both offer a nuanced account of this controlling image and the dynamics of machismo in a manner that is simultaneously forthright about the blistering impact of these cultural practices and open to the resources they can provide for political action. Rincón demystifies machismo as an institution with both "positive and negative aspects" that are ripe for modification, contending that it allocates "rewards for those who function well within it. For those who do not it is a prison" (García 1997, 27). Rincón and Nieto-Gómez also agree about the impact of this image on Chicanas who seek to become politically active. Writing in 1976, Nieto-Gómez argued that women's political activism is associated with being a "mala mujer," and "in order to prove you're not, you have to live the life of a nun" (in García 1997, 57). The multidirectionality of intersectionality's visibility project—invisibility, hypervisibility, self-regulation, and agency within structures due to internalized perceptions of visibility—is part of these activist interventions in the politics of the early and mid-twentieth-century United States. Sandoval later takes up the mobility aspects identified by

Rincón and Nieto-Gómez as she reformulates technologies for the twenty-first century: "The formation and use of these ideological weapons depend on the semiotic reading and deconstruction of power through signs, [postmodernism's] utilizing the differential ability to cruise, cross, intersect, shift and 'low-ride' between such signs" (Sandoval 2000, 114).

Nor were social movements in the western hemisphere the only site of such contestations at this time. Writing in 1977, Senegalese activist Awa Thiam critiqued the misrepresentation of African women as a double-edged sword similar to that of Nieto-Gómez. For Thiam, the choices were to remain invisible and unrepresented by her fellow Black men, or to be psychoanalyzed according to the same racist-sexist controlling images of African women promulgated by whites:

> Black men who have been granted the possibility of writing about Black Africa, about African civilization, have either completely ignored the Black woman, or, at most, shown little concern for her. When these men did turn their attention to her, it was to praise her, to sing of her beauty, her "femininity," to set her up as a sexual object, a muse, a mother and drudge; or to analyze her relationship with the White Man or Black Man [*sic*] and to criticize her, relegating her to the ranks of the primitive savage. Her praises were sung by the poets of Negritude. She was partially psychoanalyzed in her relationship to the Whites and to her fellow Blacks—by Frantz Fanon, for example. . . . She was abused, condemned and/or misunderstood by colonials, neo-colonials and the majority of her fellow Black men? But what is the use of writing about Black women, if in so doing we do not learn what they are in reality? (Thiam 1978, 13–14)

Interestingly, neither these US authors nor Thiam, who is from what we now term the Global South, have found their way into

most intersectionality scholarship, despite very similar claims that are multidirectional critiques of controlling images.

All of these essays about the discursive power of multiple cultural constructions imposed upon and denied to them, either predate or are contemporaneous with Foucault's celebrated *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, which appears in the bibliographies of both Sandoval (2000) and Collins (1990), as well as his even more celebrated *History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish*, which appeared in the late 1970s and mid-1980s, respectively.[6] The critiques offered by McDougald, Beale, Nieto-Gómez, and Thiam also connect socially constructed representations to material outcomes in a way that anticipates Crenshaw and later Canadian scholar Sherene Razack's analyses of representational intersectionality.

As conceptualized by Crenshaw in the US legal context, representational intersectionality directly connects cultural constructions of women of color to their impact on material outcomes like whether they are reasonably considered "credible victims" in rape and domestic violence cases (Crenshaw 1991, 1252).[7] As with the sociological construct of controlling images, representational intersectionality has visual aspects that, as Razack notes, affect how men and women of the dominant group "see" subordinate women in interlocking ways in diverse contexts like courtrooms and classrooms (1998, 7). Representational intersectionality was taken up by other US legal scholars immediately following Crenshaw's publication. Regina Austin focused on how the terms of judicial procedure in libel cases like that of Ruby Clark, a Black woman who sued ABC News for broadcasting a television program that implied she was a prostitute. While Clark was a middle-class Black woman in the United States, the dilemma she faced in proving to the jury that she was not a prostitute was telling, illustrating the power of controlling images when an individual fits neither

of the available tropes. Clark, like the defendants supported by Southall Black Sisters in Britain, must "conform" in order to obtain the desired outcome: legal relief from the damage to her reputation. Noting that Clark was required to accept two explicit misrepresentations of Black women (either as asexual matrons or hypersexual sex workers) in order to prove that she was neither one of them, Austin focused her attention on the broader impact: failed solidarity among black women, which permits "white society's devaluation of black women's sexuality" to continue (Austin 1992, in Wing 1997, 240–241). Maria Ontiveros takes up the critique of so-called remedies to the racialized injustices of criminalization of immigrants, noting that the cultural defense's material impact "seem[s] to privilege the race of the defendant while simultaneously divesting the victim of her gender, [which] serves to excuse actions taken against women of color" in workplace harassment suits (Ontiveros 1993, in Wing 1997, 190).[8] Ontiveros' critique of the defense strategy is couched in an intersectional understanding that women of color plaintiffs are not disaggreable humans who can be divided into mutually exclusive race and gender identity components.

Whether we are using the psychological concept of stereotypes, the anthropological concept of scripts, or a cultural studies understanding of narrative or discourse, intersectionality-like thinking emerges from all these diverse arenas to contribute to both intersectionality's visibility project and its project of reshaping categorical relationships. Among both celebrated and relatively unknown analysts, intersectionality-like thought in the 1980s and 1990s is explicitly connected to the controlling images and representations sector of social constructivism at least as much as it is derivative of any "postmodern turn."

Attention to these earlier authors matters. The title of this chapter engages a tension between the open and permeable

borders of a theory whose time has come and the troublesome politics of citation raised by Knapp, Alexander-Floyd, and Jordan-Zachery. Further, this approach addresses two political problems within the reception of intersectionality theory itself. As I discussed in chapter 1, Bilge (2013) draws our attention to the politics of crafting genealogies and the power relations inherent to any such exercise, which not only reproduces hierarchies of power but also depoliticizes intersectionality's potential. Cho (2013) attends to the problematic politics of critique and suggests that while intersectionality can and should be critiqued, postmodern critiques of intersectionality in particular have misrepresented its intellectual project, instead constructing it as a quaint, pedestrian notion that requires white postmodern feminists or gay men of color postmodern legal theorists to rehabilitate it. For all authors the engagement (or lack of engagement) with the primarily women of color interlocutors of intersectionality is normatively problematic and, when attempted, often poorly implemented (Alexander-Floyd 2012; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; May 2015). Taking these earlier discussions seriously, how do the authors chronicled in this chapter navigate their intimate partnerships and their intellectual, political, and creative pursuits amidst the pervasiveness of such images? Perhaps most daunting of all, how are such representations contested?

BEING SEEN AS DESIRABLE INSTEAD OF FUCKABLE?

What kinds of challenges emerge in a context full of controlling images? Contending with such images and narratives—those that are externally imposed and the internal grappling with how to navigate such images—is central to the way in which social constructions of women of color integrate into the visibility project of intersectionality-like thought. Discursive

constructions of desire and embodiments of that desire are key sites of intersectionality-like engagement and reflexivity.

Poets Nellie Wong (1983) and Mary Hope Lee (1978) both articulate the challenge of feeling and pursuing sexual desire in a discursive context of controlling images about precisely who is desirable and thus eligible for bourgeois norms of protection, marriage, and what such sociopolitical institutions misleadingly symbolize: love. For Wong in "When I Was Growing Up," the importance of exceptionalism is belied by her interpersonal interactions:

> *when I was growing up, I read magazines*
> *and saw movies, blonde movie stars, white skin,*
> *sensuous lips and to be elevated, to become*
> *a woman, a desirable woman, I began to wear*
> *imaginary pale skin*
> *. . .*
> *when I was growing up and a white man wanted*
> *to take me out, I thought I was special,*
> *an exotic gardenia, anxious to fit*
> *the stereotype of an oriental chick*
>
> *when I was growing up, people would ask*
> *if I were Filipino, Polynesian, Portuguese.*
> *They named all colors except white, the shell*
> *of my soul, but not my dark, rough skin*
>
> (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 7–8).

In *This Bridge Called My Back* Wong's poem immediately precedes Lee's similar contention with sexual desire that is rendered invisible through racialized desire (to be "light" is alright):

> *. . .cuz she wasn dark enuf*
> *was smart enuf*
> *wasn rowdy enuf*

had a white girl friend
cuz none of them would be

beige or buff/ecru or chamois
jus wasn color/ed enuf
to get picked for the softball team
wasn sufficient protection
'gainst getting tripped in the shower
. . .
(the man she married/cuz he was the first one to ask/her bein afraid no body else would/said he thought he was gonna hafta marry hisself white cuz/he couldn find him no colored girl was/in-tel-li-gent e-nuff/but with her being the next best thing to white . . .

(In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 10–11).

Wong and Lee both suggest that controlling images and the cultural myths associated with them are not simply imposed from outside their bodies, but deeply internalized psychologically speaking. Norma Alarcón's examination of the Malinche or Malintzin cultural myth in Chicano culture echoes this sentiment and contends it persists even as the contradictions of the myth itself remain clear:

> Her almost half century of mythic existence, until recent times mostly in the oral traditions, had turned her into a handy reference point not only for controlling, interpreting or visualizing women, but also to wage a domestic battle of stifling proportions. . . .
>
> However, the male myth of Malintzin is made to see betrayal first of all in her very sexuality, which makes it nearly impossible at any given moment to go beyond the vagina as the supreme site of evil until proven innocent by way of virginity or virtue, the most pawnable commodities around.

> Because the myth of Malintzin pervades not only male thought but ours too as it seeps into our own consciousness in the cradle through their eyes as well as our mothers', who are entrusted with the transmission of culture, we may come to believe that indeed our very sexuality condemns us to enslavement. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 182–183)[9]

The heteronormative and patriarchal desire to be "picked"—to be selected by a male—is common to both these poems, while Malintzin is dangerous precisely because she used her heterosexuality to facilitate Spanish colonial conquest. In *ZAMI: A New Spelling of My Name*, poet Audre Lorde explores two unlikely sites of invisibility and distortion of her multiplicitous self—among the "progressive left" and among the lesbian community in 1950s' New York City. Speaking of a popular lesbian bar, the Bagatelle, Lorde described how racialized heteronormative beauty standards pervaded a decidedly nonheteronormative space:

> The Black women I usually saw around the Bag were into heavy roles, and it frightened me. This was partly the fear of my own Blackness mirrored, and partly the realities of the masquerade. . . . They were tough in a way I felt I could never be. Even if they were not, their self-protective instincts warned them to appear that way. By white america's [*sic*] racist distortions of beauty, Black women playing "femme" had very little chance in the Bag. There was constant competition among butches to have the most "gorgeous femme" on their arm. And "gorgeous" was defined by a white male world's standards. (Lorde 1982, 224)

Lorde's engagement with this racialized context and her positionality as "neither/nor," even as elsewhere in *ZAMI* she insists on both/and, is compelling: "in this plastic, anti-human society in which we live, there have never been too many people buying fat Black girls born almost blind and ambidextrous, gay or

straight. . . . If nobody's going to dig you too tough anyway, it really doesn't matter so much what you dare to explore" (Lorde 1982, 181).[10]

Yet despite Lorde's insistence on the both/and formulation that is the hallmark of Black feminism and intersectionality in this era, the ambivalence about additivity remains evident in the early 1980s. For Lorde, Black lesbian experiences at the Bag are "only slightly less hostile than the outer world which we had to deal with every day on the outside—that world which defined us as doubly nothing because we were Black and because we were Woman" (Lorde 1982, 225). In a conversation with her twin sister, Barbara Smith also expresses ambivalence about the coconstitutionality of oppression; implying that racism and sexism are conceptually distinct: "Women of color are very aware that racism is not gender specific and that it affects all people of color. We have experiences that have nothing to do with being female, but are nonetheless experiences of deep oppression . . . and even violence" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 121).[11]

Preparations for how to handle this context are complex, due to compulsory heterosexuality practices that exist as responses to social constructions that shape how women of color understand their social locations. Puerto Rican Jewish writer Aurora Levins Morales remembers the messages communicated to her by her adult relatives about how to negotiate her (presumed) heterosexuality:

> The point of terror, of denial, the point of hatred is the tight dress stretched across my grandmother's big breasts, the coquettish, well made-up smile: grandmother, aunt and greataunts all decked out in sex, talking about how I'm pretty, talking about how men are only good for one thing, hating sex and gloating over the hidden filthiness in everything, looking me over, in a hurry to find me a boyfriend, and in the same breath: "you can't travel alone! You don't know what men are like . . . *they only want*

> *one thing . . .*" Women teaching women our bodies are disgusting and dirty, our desires are obscene, men are all sick and want only one sickening thing from us. Saying, you've got to learn how to hold out on 'em just enough to get what you want . . . and when you have to deliver, lie down and grit your teeth and bear it, because there's no escape. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 53)

Morales's critique of this discourse is tempered by both her love and the practical information it contained: "I love these women for the bitch sessions that pool common knowledge and tell the young wife. . . . The cattiness is mixed with the information, tips. The misery is communal" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 54). Although the social constructions of Latinas as " 'hot' and readily available for sexual use" (Ontiveros 1992, in Wing 1997, 188–189) are part of the Puerto Rican community itself, open discussion across generations of how to navigate them personally is an important act of agency, despite the constraints faced when contesting such images.

Equally important is the recognition that these conversations are acceptable in this cultural context in part because they preserve the heterosexual norm. For Barbara Smith, continuities in the sexualization of Black women produce a different kind of conversation—one of silence and invisibility. She situates this mystification as part of a cultural response to social constructions of Black women: "Black women have traditionally been reluctant to talk about sex with their daughters. . . . At the very same time, all Black women have been viewed as sexual animals by the society as a whole and at times by Black men as well. In such a charged context, considering the dimensions of Lesbian sexuality has been totally taboo" (Smith 1983, xlv).

The diverse social constructions identified in this section emerge from intersectionality-like thinking published as early as 1925, in a variety of geographical and political contexts.

Importantly, the politics of desire that is reflected in poetry, memoir, activism, or cultural mythology is multifocal; culture, religion, and sexuality all not only join gender, race, and ethnicity in ways that demystify prior normative formulations but also join to reshape the ontological relationships of each category or formation to the other. The variously described material impacts provide two important interventions in the debates about the "origins" of intersectionality.

First, as with chapters 2, 3, and 4, this analysis illustrates the value of better historicization of intersectionality-type thinking without falling into the pitfalls of depoliticizing, whitening, or devaluing women of color's contributions to this burgeoning area of scholarship. Indeed the previous analysis allowed us to confirm that the notable and timely interventions of Crenshaw and Collins afforded this work a quantum leap in its accessibility and availability around the world in a way that was not possible in the time of Elise Johnson McDougald. That said, it is clear that the celebrated "originators" are actually part of an invisible history that in no way dismisses their seminal contributions. To the contrary, evidence that this history crosses geographical borders, historical eras, and intellectual specialties amplifies the power of their arguments.

Second, these select essays, representative of many more that could not be included, put to rest the notion that intersectionality could not exist without postmodern understandings of power. Here it is sufficient to note that while Foucault and others offer a compelling account of power's complexity in the postmodern tradition, intersectionality offers a systemic and structural analysis of both power's and identity's complexity (Cho 2013, 385). The claims in this section allow for broad engagements with intersectionality and social constructivism, broadly construed, without enduring factual inaccuracies that are the product of a truncated historical account or a myopic reading of the literature.[12]

These narratives suggest that women of color personally navigated representations of their race, gender, and sexuality that obscured their full selves as they went about their intimate relationships. Lorde's "biomythography" of 1950s' New York, specifically articulates a version of the self that eventually finds self-acceptance:

> Being women together was not enough. We were different. Being gay-girls together was not enough. We were different. Being Black together was not enough. We were different. Being Black women together was not enough. We were different. Being Black dykes together was not enough. We were different. . . .
>
> It was a while before we came to realize that our place was the very house of difference rather than the security of any one particular difference. (Lorde 1982, 226)

This literary description of resilience mirrors much later findings by psychologists Aida Hurtado and Mrinal Sinha, who identified a liminal space for intersectional understanding or analyses of Latino feminist masculinities (2008, 339) that emphasizes ongoing navigation of privilege and disadvantage rather than permanent quagmires. Of course, the challenge these representations present do not end at the bedroom door. In the next section I examine the role of controlling images over time among feminists as a way to explore discursive hegemony.

NAVIGATING TRANSNATIONAL CURRENTS

Each of the authors discussed in the previous section illustrates the value of conducting an analysis grounded in controlling images and representational intersectionality. Each suggests that specific discursive constructs influence how their presentations

of self are interpreted and rearticulated after being put through the sieve of controlling images and frameworks. In this way, their understanding of power is, like that of McDougald and Beale, not simply one of material harm but of discursive hegemony as well. One wins the individual battle, it seems, at the risk of continuing to lose an ever more complex discursive war. Despite these daunting odds, the spaces for agency are revealed by intersectional analyses that attend to simultaneous privilege and disadvantage in each context. In this section I explore the challenges controlling images present to women attempting to navigate their intimate partnerships, and their intellectual and creative pursuits, and perhaps most daunting of all, the challenge of contesting such representations.

Amirah's reception study of the work of Nawal El Sadaawi articulates a context where El Sadaawi's nuanced claims are heard through an Islamophobic filter that has conflicting benefits and costs. El Sadaawi's signature book, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, appeared in English on the heels of the 1978–1979 Iranian Revolution, making El Sadaawi a darling of multiple groups: Westerners interested in learning more about Islam and Westerners hostile to Islam (Amirah 2000, 221). Thus El Sadaawi stands out in a larger field of Egyptian political activists and critics precisely because she provides Western feminists with a story of female genital mutilation and sexist oppression that is consistent with the "savior frame" of Western white women.[13]

Although El Sadaawi became the darling of the West's movement against female genital mutilation (FGM), she was neither the only Egyptian feminist nor the only African woman writing publicly about FGM. Senegalese activist Awa Thiam criticizes the West's failure to substantively engage African women anti-FGM activists and women undergoing FGM in what is now called the Global South. Specifically, Thiam lambasts Annie de Villeneuve and Benoîte Groute for their ethnocentric

judgments of Somali culture (de Villeneuve) and Kenyan activism (Groute).[14] Thiam's book *Black Sisters Speak Out! Feminism and Oppression in Black Africa* was published in 1978 in French but was not translated into English until 1986. Despite its explicit work to get behind the controlling images of African women ("we can deduce from their own words what their actual relationship to men is, what it means to live their daily lives in their communities"; Thiam [1978] 1986, 15), the name of Thiam is far less known among those in anti-FGM activism. More to the point of this book, neither El Sadaawi nor Thiam is generally considered an interlocutor of intersectionality-like thought. For Thiam, in particular, the evidence of the invisibility project that is central to intersectionality-like thought is unmistakable ([1978] 1986, 114). For El Sadaawi, Western renown did not insulate her from facing social constructions that shaped her reception in the West.

El Sadaawi's Western reception conveniently overlooked or omitted altogether her Marxist sympathies and her critique of the Sadat administration, so as to make her visible and legible for a specific purpose. While she benefited from wide celebrity following *The Hidden Face of Eve*'s publication, she quickly learned the discursive power of such narratives, following her participation in the 1980 United Nations Copenhagen Conference, which commemorated the UN international decade of women (1975–1985). In her remarks El Sadaawi included calls for advancements in education, health, employment, and political rights for Third World women. However, the US media focused almost exclusively on clitoridectomy and female genital mutilation (Amirah 2000, 220) in a way that El Sadaawi specifically thought reified differences between First World and Third World women.

This troublesome path of communications and misunderstandings also occurred within the United States. Despite their location in the western hemisphere, Mitsuye Yamada and Audre Lorde

both illustrate the endurance of such controlling frames as shapers of interactions and behaviors with other feminists. Yamada suggests that the blithe reactions of her white audience members to her poetry that preserve the "passive, sweet, etc. stereotype of the 'Oriental' woman" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 71) are resistant: "We speak to audiences that sift out those parts of our speech (if what we say does not fit the image they have of us), come up to shake our hands with 'That was lovely my dear, just lovely,' and go home with the same mind set they come in with. No matter what we say or do, the stereotype still hangs on" (71). In an open letter to Australian feminist Mary Daly, Lorde identifies a similar phenomenon in what she characterizes as blatant misinterpretations of her intellectual and creative product:

> So the question arises in my mind, Mary, do you every really read the work of black women? Did you ever read my words, or did you merely finger through them for quotations which you thought might valuably support an already-conceived idea concerning some old and distorted connection between us? This is not a rhetorical question. To me this feels like another instance of the knowledge, crone-logy and work of women of color being ghettoized by a white woman dealing only out of a patriarchal, western-european [*sic*] frame of reference. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 95–96)

Both Lorde and Yamada consider these episodes of failed solidarity, to use a phrase from earlier chapters, but they locate the challenge as more than simply bad behavior.

Contesting controlling images is a Herculean task. The obstacles persist despite formal legal challenges to the material impacts of such constructions. Razack notes that even when those she characterizes as "subordinated women" are empowered to speak, their narratives turn into double-edged swords because they are heard through filters dominated by

centuries-old narratives, like "the white woman as savior of less fortunate women" (Razack 1998, 5). She finds that when subordinated women can present themselves in Canadian courts using testimony that leaves this narrative undisturbed, they are likely to gain relief: "Wrapped in a cloak of sensitivity to cultural differences and recognition of the consequences of colonization, the anthropologizing of sexual assault continues to have gendered overtones and to maintain white supremacy as securely as in days of more overt racism and sexism" (72).[15]

Historical moments, like what is now known as 9/11—a signification of the events that occurred in the United States on September 11, 2001—are ripe for representational intersectionality analysis in a transnational context that is subject to unanticipated cataclysmic change and contingency. Though the perceived and actual instability of the context might differ, two interpretations are factors in the ongoing reconstitution of a politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011, 89) that merits extended attention in this chapter. The politics of belonging shapes representations of immigrants as "strange and strangers" through a variety of complex processes that include national immigration laws (Dhamoon 2009, 69) and extralegal practices like extraordinary rendition that are explicitly transnational in their enactment.

Dhamoon situates the representations of immigrants to Canada both historically and in relationship to the complex positionality of a "settler state" that constructs itself as a tolerant and liberal host nation. Linking stereotypes of disability to liberal norms of rationality, Dhamoon notes Canada's historical constructions of desirable and nondesirable immigrants to the 1906 Immigration Act, which until 1976 rendered individuals with disabilities inadmissible "regardless of cost treatment, severity, whether the condition could be controlled or whether the state would be required to pay for treatment" (Dhamoon 2009, 79). Immigrants are subject to

discourses of ableism and racialization despite a legal challenge, *Thangarajan v. Canada* (1999) and sustained activism by organizations like the Council of Civilians with Disabilities (CCD) and the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped (COPOH) (Dhamoon 2009, 81–85). Despite the disappointing accounts of legal failures, failed solidarity, and tragically death, intersectional research from psychology shows some promise for addressing the "othering" political consciousness revealed by the separate analyses of Lorde, Yamada, Razack, and Dhamoon. Greenwood (2008; Greenwood and Christian 2008) has also had some success in priming what she calls "intersectional political consciousness" between white British and Muslim British women that directs respondents to rethink their understandings of the ontological relationships between categories.

Following 9/11 and the revelation of US torture practices at the Abu Ghraib prison, Jasbir Puah[16] traced the emergence of a rearticulation of Islamophobia that notably fits the issue frames of liberals and conservatives alike (2007, 139). Puah coins the term "homonationalism" as a shorthand for homonormative nationalism, which marks "arrangements of U.S. sexual exceptionalism explicitly in relation to the nation" (39). In juxtaposing the so-called advancement of the gay agenda in the *Lawrence-Garner v. Texas* [*sic*] decision with the foreign policies of torture and detention visited upon men designated as "Arab," "Muslim," or "Arab-Muslim," Puah demonstrates how parties as divergent as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Department of Defense debate policy on the grounds of a discursive construction of the terrorist body that is literally visible one day and "disappeared" the next. While Dhamoon focused on a national context, she too emphasized the historical continuities and the pervasiveness of the discursive hegemony that remains unchanged despite ongoing contestation.

Two things are particularly interesting about these transnational interventions among controlling images of immigrants and women of the Global South. First, across the decades, the pervasiveness of such representational intersectionality challenges combined with their national-level specificity is acutely similar to how violence against women is characterized in chapter 2. This provides further support for the idea that intersectionality as a comprehensive approach, with a specific ontology and epistemology, is well positioned to address persistent problems of this kind, that is, those problems which are simultaneously pervasive and specific. Second, the transnational "level of analysis" connects governments and political institutions to intersectionality-like thought in a way that a US-centric understanding of intersectionality cannot. While intersectionality in the US context attends to institutions, it is the transnational perspective that reveals the dynamic and mobile elements of intersectionality-like thinking, which enriches the understanding of contingency articulated in chapters 2, 3, and 4. This analysis should not, however, suggest that these daunting circumstances produce paralysis or despair. Despite legal and political setbacks, activists committed to contemporary contestations of controlling images and their material impact also continue to engage in discursive interventions as well.

FIGHTING BACK

And when our white sisters
radical friends see us
in the flesh
not as a picture they own
they are not quite as sure
if
they like us as much.

> We're not as happy as we look
> on
> their
> wall.
>
> JO CARILLO *(in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 63–64)*

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the complexity of contesting controlling images, as there is literally no image-free site or location where cultural products can be produced or consumed. Jo Carillo's poem "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You" is an evocative example of the disjuncture between images and seeing people "in the flesh." Writing in 1991, Sandoval notes the possibility of transforming of subjugated positions despite the forces of domination: "Any social order which is hierarchically organized into relations of domination and subordination creates particular subject positions within which the subordinated can legitimately function. These subject positions, once self-consciously recognized by their inhabitants, can become transformed into more effective sites of resistance to the current ordering of power relations" (Sandoval 1991, 11). When a critical mass collects in a particular location, such as Washington, DC, in the 1970s and early 1980s, political change is indirectly possible:

> [Papaya] refers to the late 1970s–early 1980s period in Washington, DC, as a "black gay renaissance" in which artists like poet Essex Hemphill, writer and filmmaker Michelle Parkerson, and photographer Sharon Farmer felt "empowered." She describes the community as "eclectic" and tolerant of difference. . . . Spaces such as the Coffeehouse enabled black LGBT folks to meet, explore, and develop a group identity that became the basis of Black Pride and black LGBT political organizations. In addition to fighting racial discrimination within the broader LGBT community, black lesbians and gays fought

> gender division between gay men and lesbians. (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 140)[17]

Fighting back, for those who came after Sandoval's intervention, can include an additional inspiration: fighting the images and representations also becomes a space to fight for an intersectional approach more broadly.[18]

Drawing on bell hooks's insightful article "Eating the Other," Lynn Lu suggests that subverting the status quo risks failure, but she also chronicles surprisingly successful subversive messages in the work of Jessica Hagedorn, who finds hope in the racist film *Year of the Dragon* by focusing on the subversive qualities of the Jade Cobra Gang girls, who, unlike the main female character, are not only defiant, but do not require rescue by the white protagonist. The impact, for Lu, is a process that "acknowledges the spectator as a conscious participant in a dialogue rather than a passive observer. An actively oppositional critical faculty can thus shift the terms of cultural representations and give them transgressive meaning" (in Shah 1997, 24). Fifteen years later, Doetsch-Kidder finds a similar thread in the scholarship of Celine Parrenas Shimuzu:

> Representations of Asian women as hypersexual—and the related material impacts in the form of discrimination, sexual exploitation, and violence against Asian/American women—affect the lives of women of Asian descent in the United States and around the world. Shimizu shows that the impact of these representations is not simple or unidirectional, however. As producers, consumers, and critics of representation, Asian/American women find "trauma, terror, and pain as well as joy, self-recognition, and alliance" in hypersexual representations and negotiate their own understandings of themselves and their power through and in relation to hypersexuality. Accepting the power that hegemonic representations have to create a screen of hypersexuality through

> which non-Asians view Asian women, Shimizu interrogates the pain and pleasure that Asian/American women find in hypersexuality, locating possibility in the complexity of representation. . . . Shimizu resists the reduction of human experience to fit a simplistic politics. She finds in the complexity of Asian/American women's representation the beauty of human struggle and imagination. Shimizu emphasizes the importance of accepting "unknowability" to leave space for possibilities of transformation. (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 37)

While cultural productions like the ones described above have the potential for mass education, political analysis, and popular entertainment (in Shah 1997, 25; see also Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 139), such subversive actions may do little more than cause a pause in a gushing gale of controlling images, particularly in a twenty-first-century context of information overload. Yet desire and the will to challenge cultural constructions persisted throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Scholars and activists converged upon the same realization: fighting back requires fighting smarter, not just harder. And that requires internal as much as external changes in consciousness.[19]

INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH POWER: REQUIRED CHANGES IN CONSCIOUSNESS

Chapter 2 discussed the pragmatic approaches to what organizers call "transformative organizing," which is designed to create sustained changes in how people relate to each other and how society is structured. Here in this chapter I want to attend to the more internal changes in consciousness required for intentional, self-reflexive engagements with power. These internal changes in consciousness are connected to intersectionality's

second intellectual project, which forces a reconsideration and rejection of binaries that is part and parcel of rethinking the ontological relationships between categories of difference.

Doetsch-Kidder locates this desire for a particular kind of counter stance to a long list of intersectionality-like thinkers: Anzaldúa, Lorde, and Leela Fernandes, among others (2012, 32). In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa seeks to develop a "mestiza consciousness" that attends to multiplicity of cultures as well as categories of difference, that is specifically grounded in a "tolerance for contradictions and ambiguity" (1987, 79),[20] and that can transcend duality (80). Both Anzaldúa and Lorde arrive at the conclusion that ignoring, reifying, or embracing one difference at the expense of other equally valid and important differences is not a viable solution. Instead, the emphasis turns on sinking into "the very house of difference" (Lorde 1982) while allowing the work "[to take] place underground—subconsciously" (Anzaldúa 1987, 79).

What precisely does *la consciencia de la mestiza* consist of in 2015? Sandoval calls the "differential consciousness" produced by Third World Feminism (of which *la consciencia de la mestiza* is a part) "a new subjectivity, a political revision that denies any one ideology as the final answer, while instead positing a tactical subjectivity with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted" (Sandoval 1991, 14). A mainstream feminist interpretation of this statement would link it exclusively with identity politics and the debates discussed in chapter 4. However, an intersectionality-like analysis sees that the formulation is situational and contingent in a way that builds on the mobility first articulated in this chapter by Rincón, both in metaphor and function: "In this sense the differential mode of consciousness operates like the clutch of an automobile: the mechanism that permits the driver to select, engage, and disengage gears in a system for the transmission of power" (14). Sandoval quotes Moraga explicitly as part of

her articulation of this contingency: "Cherríe Moraga defines U.S. third world feminism 'guerilla warfare' as a way of life: 'Our strategy is how we cope' on an everyday basis, she says, 'how we measure and weigh what is to be said and when what is to be done and how, and to whom . . . daily deciding/risking who it is we can call an ally, call a friend (whatever that person's skin, sex, or sexuality).' Feminists of color are 'women without a line.' We are women who contradict each other" (Sandoval 1991, 15).

Drawing upon these earlier understandings of changing consciousness, Edwina Barvosa articulates a process of selfcraft that is "intentional but forgiving" in its application, and identifies possible pitfalls, including encountering resistance and pushing past fears of loss of group membership. Specifically, Barvosa identifies three practices of selfcraft—inventory, discerning, and revisionary living—that are grounded in Anzaldúa's "mestiza way" (2008, 178). Combined with a loving embrace of the complex self[21] and the erotic, the selfcraft process articulated by Barvosa comprises an intersectional approach to reconstruction in the face of discursive hegemony, controlling images, and a commitment to social transformation that is deeply imbricated in intersectionality-like thought. Notably, it is not predicated on a fractured concept of discrete, "warring" souls or identities.

Love in the postmodern world is a body of knowledges, arts, practices, and procedures for re-forming the self and the world and builds on the work of Cornel West's notion of "prophetic vision" (Sandoval 2000, 4). For Sandoval, the key driver of love in the postmodern world is differential consciousness, which she draws from Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of the workings of the soul and Audre Lorde's sense of the erotic. It is in these locations that "our deepest knowledges are found" (Lorde 1982, 56; quoted in Sandoval 2000, 6). These contributions are part of a larger set of movements that are critical of global capitalism and its impact on women around the world.

As with those in chapters 2 and 4, the intersectionality-like thinkers chronicled here articulated a certain kind of inside-outside strategy that integrated both external cultural transformation and deeply internal rearticulations of the self and our own life projects. The travels of intersectionality within cultural representations suggest that the initial preference of my German colleague for Foucault, which I presented in chapter 1, might be somewhat misplaced, as it was grounded in the assumption that Foucault and Collins were substantively more or less similar, producing an opportunity for the choice to be mere preference. However, the relational constitution of power in all of its complexity is qualitatively distinct for intersectionality (Cho 2013). What does this mean for intersectionality going forward? I turn next to conclude with some thoughts on that question.

6

WHITHER INTERSECTIONALITY?

> It is a long way from a fast travelling mantra of "race-class-gender" to the theoretical challenge of intersectional analysis.
>
> —KNAPP *(2005, 261)*

> There are times when I look at what human history has been and I say Oh, OK there have always been people like us who get a momentum started and then it dies down and nothing becomes of it. And it's a hundred years or so before those thoughts are resurrected. But there's a little voice in my ears that insists I continue. It insists that something really important is happening here, something that is going to have an effect for years. Something that is going to make a significant change in the world.
>
> —LUISAH TEISH *(in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 223)*

I SINCERELY HOPE THAT LUISAH Teish is correct—that intersectionality is that "something really important" that will make a significant change in the world. In the twenty-seven years since the metaphor of intersecting streets was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, intersectionality has variously been framed as an approach (Collins 1990, 2000), a research paradigm (Hancock 2007), a social literacy (Berger and Guidroz 2009), an ideograph and an idea (Alexander-Floyd 2012), and a field of study (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013). Along with these various conceptualizations, the sheer volume

of lexical twists on intersectionality—from political, structural, and representational intersectionality (Crenshaw) to strategic intersectionality (Fraga et al. 2006; Bejarano 2013); intersectional stigma (Strolovitch 2007), and intersectional political consciousness (Greenwood 2008; Greenwood and Christian 2008)—might lead one to conclude that intersectionality is simply an "idea whose time has come." I began this book with multiple demonstrations of intersectionality's broad but superficial reach into areas of social media, popular culture, scholarly disciplines, and the public lexicon. The previous chapters have attempted to restore a robust history of intersectionality-like thought around the globe, across centuries, and especially across disciplines of expertise in order to put much of that global popularity in context.

In this concluding chapter, I return to the questions that animated this book: How does intersectionality, as a "theory whose time has come," benefit from an intellectual history that simultaneously takes seriously the need for contemporary scholars to expand their understanding of intersectionality without falling into a plethora of disciplinary traps that ultimately prevent intersectionality theory from being the radical reconstitution of our political world it was always intended to be? Drawing on Edward Said's notion of a traveling theory, Gudrun-Axeli Knapp suggests that we recognize that the conditions under which theories travel have been "deeply altered by a globalizing economy and culture, by revolutionary developments in the technical media of exchange and communication and by a growing body of transnational institutions, securing and restricting the conditions of possibility of exchange. People, goods, weapons, risks, information and ideas can move farther and faster than ever" (2005, 251). As I noted in chapter 1, the more pressing question is: How do we adjudicate among the plethora of transformations?

ENGAGING THE CRITIQUES

Amidst all this evidence of popular engagement there have also been a number of scholarly critiques of intersectionality. I have argued that adjudication requires us to be literacy stewards, attending to the multiethnic, global, and interdisciplinary trajectories of intersectionality scholarship. It is thus important to reiterate that those who read intersectionality with interpretive lenses that are driven solely by their own disciplinary socialization or personal identity commitments do so at the risk of underspecifying the radical intervention that intersectionality represents. This is not to say that one should not specialize in a particular population should one be so inclined. Instead, this claim speaks directly to the inquiries at the heart of this book and the motivations for writing it in the first place.

The institutionalization of intersectionality (both perceived and actual) has set up intersectionality as a site ripe for trenchant critiques that vary tremendously in their rigor and quality. For example, Cho convincingly argues that poorly executed critiques of intersectionality in legal theory not only fail on their own merits but also misinterpret intersectionality theory (2013, 388–390). This book has intended to broaden our understanding of the ideas that have contributed to intersectionality-like thinking, broadly construed. Critiques that emanate from ahistorical reading rather than an actual historical record of intersectionality-like thinking can hopefully be reconsidered in light of the broader evidence provided in this book.

Cho raises one particular example of this critique, terming it "the critique of intersectionality for categorical hegemony" (Cho 2013, 388). Though Cho focuses on legal theory, citing Peter Kwan and Darren Hutchinson as examples of

this phenomenon, other disciplines have also featured this critique. White (2007) and Wadsworth (2011) are two scholars in political science who have sought to "broaden" intersectionality to cover additional categories or dimensions of categories. The distinction between the two arguments makes clear the distinction between a fair criticism and ahistorical reading of the field.

White's work can be used to make a case for greater attention to whiteness and privileged identities, in particular in her contribution to a symposium on intersectionality published in *Politics and Gender*. The critique of intersectionality that emerges—that it focuses solely on the marginalized dimensions of varying identities—has been made in sociology as well as in political science. Choo and Ferree assert that the mere mention of "race-class-gender" produces a similarly problematic asymmetry—only women of color have race, gender, or class. They explain it in the following way: "While the theory calls for critical consideration of the normative cases as well as the excluded or marginalized, a methodological emphasis on inclusion sometimes fetishizes study of 'difference' without necessarily giving sufficient attention to its relation to unmarked categories, especially to how the more powerful are defined as normative standards" (Choo and Ferree 2010, 133). This particular critique has not necessarily been dislodged by the arguments contained in this book, as much of the contemporary scholarship interrogated that fits under either project of intersectionality—visibility or reconceptualizing categories—does repeat this oversight. Moreover, the elements of the categorical relationships intellectual project that "rethink the binary between oppressor and oppressed" provide conceptual space for the inclusion of that kind of scholarly focus without sliding into the problematic invisibilizing strategies Alexander-Floyd and Bilge caution us about. Thus the critique,

one of how we as an interpretive community carry out intersectionality studies within the very terms of intersectionality theory itself, seems valid.

On the other hand, Cho's articulation of Kwan's and Hutchinson's related claims that intersectionality predetermines which categories matter, and that some categories are thus by definition excluded from intersectional analyses, can be reevaluated in the context of new information contained in this book. Throughout the entire book, sexuality as a category of analysis was fully integrated into the intellectual history texts I explored. That said, reading sexuality as part of an intellectual history of intersectionality does not mean that every single identity that falls under sexuality was represented in this book. The limitations of the texts in terms of who is represented is not avoidable.

However, as I mentioned in chapter 5, the accusation that intersectionality does not "count every nose" is a separate charge that is closely aligned with the accusation that intersectionality is too closely tied with Black women (or, less frequently, too closely tied with women of color) for it to speak broadly.[1] I noted in chapter 1 that other scholars have addressed this critique, so I will not rehearse the full arguments here. But one of the features of this book that speaks in a new way to this debate is the promise of the second intellectual project of intersectionality: reshaping the relationships among and between categories of difference. First, even if an "intersectional identity" is not represented in the literature, it can certainly be included as part of this broader analytical arena. Second, as chapter 4 clarifies, intersectionality's engagement with the concept of "experience" is distinct from many mainstream engagements with experience in ways that distance it from the standard inclusionary arguments and assumptions of homogeneity associated with identity politics.

As I noted above, the categorical-hegemony critique is not unique to legal theory; it is the final element of Nash's 2008 critique and evident in Nancy Wadsworth's assertion that intersectionality scholarship has generally ignored religion as an axis of difference. Chapter 2 illuminated critiques of capitalism in a partial response to complaints that intersectional "race-class-gender" analyses often ignore class. Chapter 4 took up linguistic domination, and chapter 5 took up religion, disability, and national status as categories of difference often overlooked in the history of intersectionality.

The role of religion as an analytical category of difference has ebbed and flowed in intersectionality scholarship between 1831 and 2014. It is clear from this book's analysis that some of the earliest thinkers were not simply religiously inclined, but committed to a form of equality between the sexes based on their religious beliefs. From this position they critiqued patriarchal enactment of religion. Though resolutely evangelical, Stewart's curricular ideals illuminate a complex relationship with traditional Christian religions of the time. While the ideals included a very traditional "thirst for knowledge, the love of virtue, the abhorrence of vice and the cultivation of a pure heart" (Richardson 1987, 35) in her "Farewell Address to the City of Boston," Stewart chronicles women of faith from biblical times forward who pursued an education equal to their male counterparts and used that education for the benefit of society, taking on directly Saint Paul's admonitions toward female participation in church proceedings. In this way, Stewart's arguments are similar to the better-known Mary Wollstonecraft in her advocacy of equal education for girls and boys: a liberal reform of the preexisting system.

Writing in 1971, Sister Teresita Basso continued the positionality of critique from within religious institutions. Like Stewart, Basso is a woman of faith who embraces the "social feminist movement" making an impact on women religious

and remains well aware that both the Catholic church's "condescending paternalistic view of women" and the Mexican American culturally restrictive view of women as mothers continue to limit the progress women religious can make toward gender equality. Did this critical engagement with religion include a critique of its attitude toward sexuality? Yes, but in heteronormative terms.

There is also abundant evidence that intersectionality-like thinking thought of religion very broadly in the 1970s and 1980s. Anzaldúa's introduction to the section "El Mundo Zurdo," in *This Bridge Called My Back*, is another example:

> We, the women here, take a trip back into the self, travel to the deep core of our roots to discover and reclaim our colored souls, our rituals, our religion. We reach a spirituality that has been hidden in the hearts of oppressed people under layers of centuries of traditional god-worship. It emerges from under the veils of La Virgen de Guadalupe and unrolls from Yemaya's ocean waves whenever we need to be uplifted from or need the courage to face the tribulations of a racist patriarchal world where there is no relief. Our spirituality does not come from outside ourselves. It emerges when we listen to the "small still voice" (Teish) within us which can empower us to create actual change in the world. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 195)

So too did Luisah Teish complete studies that were very much in keeping with alternative spirituality in the 1970s and 1980s:

> Feminist spirituality had a real problem because most revolutionary circles have considered spirituality a no-go area. Because the male god and the institutionalized church has been so counter-revolutionary, there has been the temptation to say that there is nothing but the material world, and this is all we should deal with. Okay? So slowly but surely the people who are in tune with both the need for revolution and understanding of the spiritual

> world are beginning to say "Hey, these worlds are not diametrically opposed to each other. Look, these two can work together." (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 224)[2]

It is completely possible that categories that originally obtained significant attention have fallen out of favor for reasons that are not intellectually defensible. This is again an important insight worthy of engagement, but one that requires historicization. My point in illustrating where religion, class, or other "neglected" categories were in fact present in the history of intersectionality-like thinking is to encourage us as an interpretive community to do a better job of reading across disciplines and national boundaries so that we might move ahead in building out the field beyond adding additional categories, which a robust engagement with intersectionality theory can clearly accommodate. To Wadsworth's point, religion might indeed be one of those categories. However, this book has demonstrated that intersectionality's reach across multiple disciplines demands additional engagement prior to charges of "categorical hegemony."

Expanding the diversity of contributors to intersectionality-like thought was not intended to dislodge the role of Black women in creating intersectionality-like claims throughout history; the inclusion of Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Harriet Jacobs, and Frances Beale in greater depth than previously considered elsewhere, as well as attention to contemporary interlocutors like Nikol Alexander-Floyd and Julia Jordan-Zachery, was an important corrective to the notion that expanding the diversity of contributors by definition must decenter Black women. At the same time, the roles of Latinas like Anna Nieto-Gómez, Cherríe Moraga, and Chela Sandoval in the evolution of intersectionality-like thinking are enhanced by the analyses conducted in this book. Of course, additional attention to the historical Global South—Nawal El Sadaawi and

Awa Thiam—as well as significant attention to overlooked contributions of Asian Americans (Yamada, Matsuda, Cho, Puah) and Indo Canadians (Dhamoon, Razack), further illustrate the pervasiveness and specificity of intersectionality's reach, without suggesting that white scholars be excluded from consideration in a crude identity-politics divide. These are the kinds of balancing acts literacy stewards must attempt; it was important to accurately reflect the cross-pollination and similarity of ideas across continents and disciplines as well as races and ethnicities.

LITERACY STEWARDSHIP 2.0

Stewardship means drawing some boundaries while simultaneously relaxing into the ambiguities of newer formulations—a delicate feat. But accepting all definitions, all critiques, or all rehabilitations simply because they mention more than one category of difference in their text will indeed limit intersectionality studies from transforming the world in ways it was intended to. Raising awareness through the visibility project of intersectionality has long received most of the attention among scholars engaging with intersectionality. But the value of the second intellectual project, reconceptualizing relationships among categories (as well as the ambivalences they both generate), represents opportunities for significant interrogation fifteen years into the twenty-first century.

Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall identified two directions worth considering for intersectionality studies in the future. They suggest complementary centrifugal and centripetal foci for scholarship to come. Centrifugal work asks theoretical and methodological questions as intersectionality travels across disciplines in a more integrative mode (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013, 792), while centripetal work

takes intersectionality as its foundation and strikes out on the margins of various disciplines toward methodologies that would do justice to the interventions the normative tenets of intersectionality aspire to implement in order to transform the world we live in (793). I admit to a fondness for this latter mode of engagement with intersectionality, as it seems simultaneously oriented toward meaningful political change and being focused on the creative and visionary elements that I saw in the work of Maria Stewart upon first reading her speeches twenty years ago.

As intersectionality continues to emerge as an approach for understanding complex questions of inequality and justice, it will be important for scholars to institutionalize intersectionality in ethical ways. Chapter 5 illustrates both the promise and the daunting nature of the challenge that exists in transforming political and popular cultures around the world, and technological changes only make that challenge more difficult. *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* has by definition spent most of its attention looking backward rather than forward. In that spirit I return to Elizabeth Cole's comments, which are apropos both for the completion of this type of historical exploration and for the future of intersectionality: whether we choose the centrifugal or the centripetal mode of intersectionality studies going forward, we must respect the coherence of the theory and read, read, read across disciplines, across continents, and across communities of engagement so that we might engage in careful and responsible management of a burgeoning field of study that has been entrusted to our care for future generations.

APPENDIX

List of anthologies engaged in chapters 2–5

Anzaldúa, Gloria, ed. (1990). *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

Anzaldúa, Gloria, and Analouise Keating, eds. (2002). *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. New York: Routledge.

Bartlett, Katharine T., and Rosanne Kennedy, eds. (1991). *Feminist Legal Theory: Readings in Law and Gender*. San Francisco: Westview.

Berger, Michele Tracy, and Kathleen Guidroz, eds. (2009). *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy through Race, Class, and Gender.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds. (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement.* New York: New Press.

Dill, Bonnie Thornton, and Ruth Enid Zambrana, eds. (2009). *Emerging Intersections: Race, Class, and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

García, Alma, ed. (1997). *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*. New York: Routledge.

Grzanka, Patrick, ed. (2014). *Intersectionality: A Foundations and Frontiers Reader*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (2006). *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology*. Cambridge, MA: South End.

Moraga, Cherríe L., and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds. (1983). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 2nd ed. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color.

Morgan, Robin, ed. (1970). *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*. New York: Vintage.

Shah, Sonia, ed. (1997). *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire*. Boston: South End.

Smith, Barbara, ed. (1983). *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color.

Wilson, Angelia, ed. (2013). *Situating Intersectionality: Politics, Policy and Power*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wing, Adrien Katherine, ed. (1997). *Critical Race Feminism: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. I cofounded the "Intersectionality" section, which is now called the "Gender, Race & Intersectionality Section" of the WPSA with John Bretting of the University of Texas, El Paso.
2. I take up some of these differences in chapter 5 of this book.
3. Iris Marion Young, for example, reads Jean-Paul Sartre, someone whose gender politics would not classify him as a feminist, in the service of feminist theory. There is also a long line of feminist theorists who engage with the work of Hannah Arendt, who famously did not even think of herself as a woman when offered an award from a women and politics organization.
4. Sirma Bilge (2011, 2013) calls this practice "ornamental intersectionality."
5. This phenomenon is by no means unique to political science—there are a number of associations with sections organized around "race, class, and gender," and several scholars have chronicled intersectionality's institutionalization in academe: Jennifer Nash (2011), Gudrun-Axeli Knapp (2005), and Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz (2009) are but a few recent examples of this work.
6. In the interests of full disclosure, the reason articulated for the change was in fact a response to paper submissions that (1) lacked any substantive understanding of intersectionality, and (2) did not adequately engage in race and gender explicitly. I take up these tensions of privileging a single intersection below.

7. This intervention in the discipline of political science was preceded by approximately fifteen years by the establishment of a "Race, Gender, and Class" section of the American Sociological Association.
8. "Black" in Britain indicates a broad set of national identities, including Afro-Caribbean, Afro-British, Indo-British, and Pakistani British. I use the term Black elsewhere to indicate a US definition of Black identity, which separates African American, Caribbean, and Afro-Latino from South Asian identities, which fall in the US census categories under Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander.
9. For more information about NDWA and CRIAW, see: http://www.domesticworkers.org/ and http://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/, respectively.
10. Arquette won for her performance as a beleaguered but loving single mother in *Boyhood*.
11. This is quoted from an email blast sent to current and former NWSA members, including this author.
12. "No Means No" is a slogan from the U.S. women's movement against rape and sexual assault. During the twentieth century activists used the phrase to emphasize the role of consent in sexual interactions. Although it helped reform rape and sodomy laws in the 50 states, its ability to radically transform rape culture and to reshape the dialogue regarding violence against women is significantly curtailed by its now more frequently usage as the punchline to a joke in popular culture.
13. An abbreviated list of recent special issues include: *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2006), *Gender and Society* (2008), *Sex Roles* (2008), *Political Research Quarterly* (2011), *Du Bois Review* (2013), and *Signs* (2013) and *New Political Science* (2015). Specialist volumes include Lutz, Vivar, and Supik (2011), and Wilson (2013).
14. The paper was not published until 1989.
15. Nash changes her interpretation in Nash (2011), which characterizes this period as a "watershed moment."
16. Yet Alexander-Floyd elides a distinction between Black feminism, one of the "homes" for intersectionality, and intersectionality itself. Jennifer Nash (2008, 2011) argues that this slippage is more

problematic for the future of Black feminism than it is for intersectionality; I take these claims up in the next section.

17. Alexander-Floyd also claims this move reifies the very rhetorical practices Crenshaw critiques, which speaks to how intersectionality is enacted, a point I return to elsewhere in the book.
18. "Belief" is perhaps not quite the right word—these scholars' very ontology turns on the presence of racism and the racial formations that stem from it. I take this point up directly in chapter 3.
19. Wikipedia, according to its site, is a "free, collaboratively edited and multilingual Internet encyclopedia" that features twenty-two million articles, four million of which are in English. Though four million out of twenty-two million seems like a small percentage of English articles, note that this means other languages have an average of 63,380 articles per language. It has 100,000 regular contributors, but anyone with site access can contribute to an entry, which is then verified by Wikipedia staff using external citations. Editions of Wikipedia are available in 285 languages, and its accuracy level is considered comparable to the now-defunct *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a popular reference guide during the twentieth century. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia. Wikipedia's editorial accessibility corrects a major flaw of *Encyclopædia Britannica* and other hard-copy publications; often information between the covers was out of date by the date of publication.
20. As an open-source encyclopedia, Wikipedia provides a history of revisions for the "Intersectionality" entry dating to 2005. Users are invited to view prior versions of the entry, and to compare revisions by clicking on links.
21. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality. Last accessed May 21, 2015.
22. Though the entry can be altered at any time, this articulation of intersectionality has remained stable over the three-plus years of writing this book (March 2012 to May 2015).
23. The dropping "in" and "out" of particular categories of difference or axes of power is an important subtheme of this book. While no one category is a priori included in intersectional analyses, it is clear that some amount of attention is due to how authors historically have gone about foregrounding particular categories

and how they have faded out of use only to be resurrected. Where applicable I note such trends.

24. Two quick points are in order. First, I fully acknowledge that I am a part of this interpretive community and not an omniscient observer removed from the fray. Growing up in the 1970s and 1980s up and down the East Coast of the United States, I always knew I was Black and for as long as I can remember I always knew I was a feminist interested in global solidarity. For that reason I gave up all Nestlé's candy because the nuns came to mass and told us what Nestlé formula was doing to mothers and their children in Africa. My placement in the matrix of intersecting oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation has shifted and changed over time as my family moved from being educated working poor to solidly middle class, as we journeyed from college campus to college campus in service of my father's career, only to return to grinding poverty as a graduate student determined to finish a PhD with no student debt and parents unable to fund their daughter's graduate education, to now being a tenured faculty member at an elite private university.

    The second point concerns the stake I have in this debate, which of course many of us have been grappling with around the world. The disagreements we as an interpretive community engage in recognize that "the facts," so often treasured in adversarial contexts, "only emerge in the context of some view" (Fish 1983, 338). It's therefore just as critical to note that while my previous work could be interpreted as taking the "meme" side of the debate we are about to review, my roles as a manuscript and journal editor have convinced me that one *can* and *must* locate intersectionality scholarship to some degree; that is, intersectionality is not a buzzword that has been taken to mean anything and as a result is apropos of nothing.
25. Although this position is consistent with the visibility project of intersectionality, it is by no means synonymous with it.
26. Vivian May's recent book *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* could also be included in this tradition, though her privileging of intersectionality's Black Feminist roots is deeply entangled with citation practices and philosophical engagement with Latina feminists in particular; a cursory citation

analysis of the foundational chapters of the book revealed roughly equal citation and engagement among Black Feminist theorists and non-Black Feminist theorists, with a few coauthored publications that included one Black Feminist theorist in a mixed pair.

27. The first *OED* definition suggests imitation is broadly construed and contrasted to genetic means of transmission.
28. Personal conversation, April 2014.
29. One way in which it achieves the latter, less well-attended dimension is by conceptualizing marginalized people as possessing resources to engage in what Frost calls a community's "hybridity of literacies" (2011, 58).
30. Grzanka's edited volume *Intersectionality: A Foundations and Frontiers Reader* traces "foundational moments" and "several origin stories" (2014, xiii), as does Lykke (2011). As I've mentioned throughout this chapter, scholars like Bilge take serious issue with this conceptualization. I aim to chart a middle ground by expanding the origin story that centers women of color in a more comprehensive and inclusive way than previous efforts.
31. Crenshaw explicitly alludes to Truth in her 1989 work via footnote.
32. I am aware of two articles (Nash 2011; Norman 2007) that have sought to better historicize intersectionality, but both were more interested in Black feminism's history than intersectionality's history, as is May's intention (2015). Neither sought to provide a comprehensive history of intersectionality from the nineteenth century to the present.
33. As I mentioned above, while the field has coronated Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, she herself situates her work in a longer historical tradition of Black Feminist advocacy and research.
34. Dill, "Frontiers," in Grzanka (2014, 341).
35. In an interview with Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz, Crenshaw states this clearly: "I was simply looking at the way all of these systems overlap. But more importantly, how in the process of that structural convergence rhetorical politics and identity politics—based on the idea that systems of subordination do not overlap—would abandon issues and causes and people who actually were affected by overlapping systems of subordination" (quoted in Berger and Guidroz 2009, 65: "An Interview with Founding Scholars of Intersectionality Kimberlé Crenshaw, Nira

Yuval-Davis and Michelle Fine").

36. Alexander-Floyd (2012) lists a cadre of Black female political scientists who also pursued their own inclusion projects (16), which she equates with doing intersectional work.
37. Choo and Ferree further characterize these studies: "most of the actual studies have concentrated more or less on micro-level analyses. The predominant perspective has been looking at how different categories interact in shaping subjective experiences, often experiences of discrimination, how they determine access to resources and options and how they are taken up in constructions of identity" (2010, 259).
38. This intellectual tradition had three hallmarks that continue to be part of the Black Feminist tradition:

    1. Goals of empowerment and liberation;
    2. Black women's experiences and knowledge (what Collins later termed "Black Feminist epistemology");
    3. Black women's self-determination—power over their political, economic, reproductive, and artistic lives as *Black women*, not a disaggregatable identity of Black + woman.

39. Standpoint theory, long a site of feminist engagement, is discussed in chapter 3, using the work of Nancy Hartsock, Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, and Nira Yuval-Davis.
40. By identifying the similarities, I do not intend to dump all of these very nuanced arguments into a single pot. However, there is enough overlap concerning questions of power, access, voice, and visibility that I think a relevant grouping is worthwhile. This is one of the key questions to be answered by this book.
41. Indeed Crenshaw laments this thin approach to intersectionality (quoted in Berger and Guidroz 2009, 70).
42. Here my intent is not to dislodge intersectionality from its history, nor to risk rendering Black women's contributions invisible, as Alexander-Floyd (2012) warns against, but instead to understand the intersectional turn as exactly that—a turning point onto a new road.
43. It is important to note that the two intellectual projects I describe in this book layer on top of rather than supplant the categories of intersectionality research identified by Cho, Crenshaw, and

McCall (2013, 785–786).

Chapter 2

1. I examine the role of "experience" in greater depth in chapter 4.
2. Bonnie Thornton Dill, one of the earliest sociologists to explicitly talk about intersections of race, gender, and class, discusses the historical evidence from the women's suffrage era: "The movement's early emphasis upon the oppression of women within the institution of marriage and the family, and upon educational and professional discrimination, reflected the concerns of middle-class white women . . . The statements of early women's rights groups do not reflect these concerns, and 'as a rigorous consummation of the consciousness of white middle-class women's dilemma, the (Seneca Falls) Declaration all but ignored the predicament of white working-class women, as it ignored the condition of Black women in the South and North alike'" (Dill [1983] 2009, 29).
3. Perhaps ironically, the letter was signed by an economically diverse group: two welfare recipients, two housewives, a domestic worker, a grandmother and a psychotherapist (Morgan 1970, 361).
4. "In Britain, the term 'Black' was adopted by the antiracist movement in the 1960s as a political designation for people of African, Asian and Caribbean descent. The term pointed to shared experiences of racism and common histories of anti-colonial struggle" (Sudbury, in Incite! 2006, 270). I preserve the distinction throughout the book: when referring to Britain, "Black" carries this precise definition; when referring to the United States, "Black" refers to any self-identified person who is a part of the African diaspora: African American, African (and any nation of the continent), Caribbean/West Indian, Afro-Latino, and people of mixed descent.
5. I return briefly to this case study in chapter 5 as a site ripe for what Crenshaw calls "representational intersectionality analysis."
6. In India, the connection between spousal abuse and alcoholism and general strike strategies proved successful during struggles against landlord injustices and performed collectively by wives facilitated communal community-based activism.

> In the U.S. we emphasize immediate separation from the violence itself. . . . The second thing we emphasize is confidentiality. . . . In China . . . they did not think that shelters were a solution . . . they were emphasizing public condemnation. . . . When a woman called the crisis line, they had the authority to call the police and to then call the block leader where the family lived. They had the authority to call for a block meeting, a neighborhood meeting, a meeting in a person's trade union . . . to confront him . . . Some of his vacation time might be taken away from him . . . Ultimately what they decided to do was to organize what they called "model husband award competition" . . . wives would nominate based on the good behavior of their spouses . . . They went through a seven-step process of interviewing in-laws, children, separate from the man himself. They got quite a bit of publicity, and the man would get an equivalent of a day's pay. (Bhattacharjee, in Shah 1997, 40)

7. Sarah Reed offers the example of finding alternatives to incarceration for native perpetrators:

> Traditionally, if somebody behaved in a way that hurt women and children, they were basically excluded from the community, sometimes permanently, sometimes for a period of years or months. Some folks are reinstating that. That's a way to not imprison more native men but to hold them accountable for their behavior and to make a statement as a community about what's tolerated and what's not.
>
> . . .
>
> The prison system doesn't seem to solve a lot of violence against women issues. And native people, there's no evidence any anthropologist or archaeologist has ever been able to find that there was anything like jails on this continent prior to Europeans coming, so there were ways that these problems were dealt with, and it's a matter of trying to bring those back or re-create them or think about those in a new but old way.
>
> Aware of the histories of harmful external intervention in tribes, Sarah offers support and ideas that can address tribal problems but she leaves it to the tribes to craft workable solutions. She specifically connects this need for tribes to do-it-themselves with their need for empowerment, even stronger after so many

> years of being told what they cannot do. (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 105–106)

In reference to another tribe she enjoys working with, " 'you don't have the constraints of the Western legal framework,' which enables more creative solutions to women's problems" (138).

8. In a similar vein, Elizabeth Martínez, in a 1971 issue of *El Grito del Norte*, contends that it is the anachronistic view of women as solely mothers and wives that is out of date:

> The fact is, nothing could be more truly Chicana than the Chicana who wants to be more than a wife, mother, housekeeper. That limited concept of women did not exist under our Indian ancestors for whom the woman was a creative person in the broadest sense and central to the cultural life of the tribe. Later in Mexican history, we find that the woman has played every possible role—including that of fighter on the front lines. Any people who live close to the land, who are subject to nature's forces, know that survival is impossible without both sexes working at it in every possible way. That is the true Raza tradition, a communal tradition. . . . So revolution means new ideas about relations between men and women, too. (in García 1997, 80–81)

9. Falcon quotes Sofia directly: "They don't analyze the colonial period when we were part of the property of the owner. And whenever the owner wanted, we had no voice, no vote [about being with him]. We were his property. And that resulted in many consequences. Many killed themselves. Many had abortions so that their children would not have the same fate" (2008, 8). Falcon classifies this experience as an instance of Du Boisian "double consciousness" (8).
10. Changing such experiences also involves sweeping cultural changes, which I address in chapter 5.
11. It is important to note that SAKHI had been permitted to march each of the previous five years; SALGA had never been permitted before 1995 (Purvi Shah, in Shah 1997, 48).
12. According to Shah, SALGA was banned from both parades in 1995.

13. Dhamoon traces twenty-first-century examples of these distortions in the Canadian context by noting that racialized gendering processes are relational and interactive and serve to politicize differences between groups of indigenous women as well as between Muslim women and non-Muslim women (2009, 128 and 136). I cover this in greater detail in chapter 5.
14. Amirah notes:

> What might appear as inconsistency in her work is in fact an expression of the dual project of the post-1967 Arab cultural critic, whose long-term goal was "to subvert simultaneously the existing social and political (neo) patriarchal system and the West's cultural hegemony" . . . In *Al-Wajh al-'ari lil-mar'a al-'arabiyyah* [the original Arabic version of *The Hidden Face of Eve*, which directly translates as "The Naked Face of the Arab Woman"] (1977) in particular, El Sadaawi carries out this subversive project by confronting head-on issues such as "the place and meaning of cultural heritage (*turath*); the relation of historicity, the question of religion, identity, and modernity." (Amirah 2000, 230–231)

15. I explore these differences in chapter 4.
16. One infamous contemporary case in the United States is that of Marisa Alexander, whose utilization of Florida's "Stand Your Ground" justification for self-defense failed as she sought to defend herself from an abusive partner. As of 2015 she is awaiting a new trial following a set aside conviction for attempted murder.
17. Arguments in this vein include Wadsworth (2011) and Patil (2013). I take this up directly in chapter 6.
18. There are often more examples that can be included in the text; in those situations I attempt to provide additional examples in the footnotes, like this brief statement from Elaine H. Kim: "Koreans in the 1980s, when protest movements were so strong, would say, 'well, feminist concerns need to be taken care of after we take care of reunification'" (in Shah 1997, 65).
19. Thiam's book was published in French in 1978 and translated into English in 1986.
20. Mitsuye Yamada gives another equally compelling statement in this vein: "The two are not at war with one another; we shouldn't

have to sign a 'loyalty oath' favoring one over the other. However, women of color are often made to feel that we must make a choice between the two. . . . I have thought of myself as a feminist first, but my ethnicity cannot be separated from my feminism" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 73).

21. May (2015) refers to a similar notion as "the hegemony of single-axis thinking," but the contention here is more comprehensive, as I elaborate in chapter 3.
22. The social location of "most oppressed" is also consistent with the reproduction of zero-sum logic, as linguistically "most" implies that there can only be one most oppressed person, group, or country.
23. Barbara Smith gives an example of this proposed severability: "the one thing about racism is that it doesn't play favorites. Look at the history of lynching in this country. And also look at how Black women have experienced violence that is definitely racial. When you read about Black women being lynched, they aren't thinking of us as females. The horrors that we have experienced have absolutely everything to do with them *not even viewing us as women*" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 122; emphasis in original). Carbado and Gulati (2013), Hancock (2013), and May (2015) all critique this kind of formulation, when done in the twenty-first century, as *not* intersectional; yet there is clear historical evidence of two frames of intercategorical ontological relationships that require engagement by intersectionality's contemporary interpretive community.
24. See also Stewart's request of "American" women: "O woman, woman! Upon you I call; for upon your exertions almost entirely depends whether the rising generation shall be anything more than we have been or not. O woman, woman! Your example is powerful, your influence great; it extends over your husbands and your children, and throughout the circle of your acquaintance. Then let me exhort you to cultivate among yourselves a spirit of Christian love and unity, having charity one for another" (Richardson 1987, 55).
25. Organizers of domestic workers (National Domestic Workers Alliance in the United States) and African American organizers across a range of sectors have also adopted somatic practices in recent years as well in recognition of both self-care's growing

presence among organizers as well the monumental breadth and size of social transformation that continues to be necessary.

26. Moreover, while she rejects Islamic obscurantism and the use of religion as a tool of oppression, she also fights against the Western (mis)understanding of Islam [*sic*].

    See note 14 for further information.

27. [Sarah Reed] offers the story of an Upiq Eskimo woman who started a shelter in her village in 1984 as one that gives her hope and sustains her in her work. The shelter is respected in the village as a "sacred" place, so that, even though there are no police in this village and everyone knows its location, the shelter has never had problems with batterers trying to harm people there. Sarah connects the shelter's safety with the personal power and effectiveness of the woman who runs it, saying, "she's the most traditional kind of conservative, very quiet woman and yet she has this sense of complete empowerment and strength, and I get to be part of her world." (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 124)

28. Beale writes:

> The United States has been sponsoring sterilization clinics in non-white countries, especially in India where already some three million young men and boys in and around New Delhi have been sterilized in makeshift operating rooms set up by the American Peace Corps workers. Under these circumstances, it is understandable why certain countries view the Peace Corps not as a benevolent project, not as evidence of America's concern for underdeveloped areas, but rather as a threat to their very existence. This program could more aptly be named the "Death Corps."
>
> The vasectomy, which is performed on males and takes only six or seven minutes, is a relatively simple operation. The sterilization of a woman, on the other hand, is admittedly major surgery. . . . This method of "birth control" [tubal ligation] is a common procedure in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has long been used by the colonialist exploiter, the United States, as a huge experimental laboratory for medical research before allowing certain practices to be imported and used here. When the birth-control pill was first being perfected, it was tried out on Puerto Rican women and selected black women (poor), as if they were

> guinea pigs to see what its effect would be and how efficient the Pill was.
>
> The salpingectomy has now become the commonest operation in Puerto Rico . . . It is so widespread that it is referred to simply as *la operación. On the Island, 20 percent of the women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five have already been sterilized.*
>
> . . .
>
> It is the poor black and Puerto Rican woman who is at the mercy of the local [abortion] butcher. . . . Nearly half of the child-bearing deaths in New York City are attributed to abortion alone and out of these, 79 percent are among non-whites and Puerto Rican women.
>
> We are not saying that black women should not practice birth control. . . . It is also her right and responsibility to determine when it is in *her own best interests* to have children, how many she will have, and how far apart. (In Morgan 1970, 347–348; emphasis in original)

29. As noted above, this can also be called "universality in diversity" (Yuval-Davis 1997, 125) and serves as the constitutive element of transversal politics.

Chapter 3

1. Indeed, in her speech "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on Which We Much Build," Stewart goes so far as to not simply utilize the Jeremiad structure but in fact quotes from the biblical book of Jeremiah itself (see Richardson 1987, 32). See also Moses (1982).
2. *La Gente* was a newspaper popular with Chicano student activists committed to Chicano nationalism.
3. Crenshaw's understanding of that metaphor persisted in the article focused on violence against women of color: "My objective there was to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black

women's lives in ways that cannot be captured by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (1991, 1244). This invisibility occurred despite US society's dependence on the labor of Black women (hooks 1984, ix).

4. Rita Dhamoon helpfully articulates the ongoing challenge for feminists and liberal multiculturalists alike:

> Yet the primacy assigned to culture, even if it is revised, does not altogether eliminate the slippery slope that produces essentialized depictions of difference. This is because the composition of a culture continues to require definition even when it is narratively (Benhabib) and dialogically (Tully) constituted in non-Eurocentric and self-directed ways. Although the conceptions of culture offered by Benhabib and Tully certainly expand its meaning, these revisions continue to assign primacy to one dimension of difference and to underestimate how discussions of culture sometimes constitute regulatory paradigms and sites of resistance. (2009, 46)

5. One notable exception is Puah (2007), who chronicles the post-9/11 US surveillance state.
6. Cheryl Clarke concurs, albeit in more ideological terms:

> As political lesbians, i.e. lesbians who are resisting the prevailing culture's attempts to keep us invisible and powerless, we must become more visible (particularly black and other lesbians of color) to our sisters hidden in their various closets, locked in prisons of self-hate and ambiguity, afraid to take the ancient act of woman-bonding beyond the sexual, the private, the personal. I am not trying to reify lesbianism or feminism. I am trying to point out that lesbian-feminism has the potential of reversing and transforming a major component in the system of women's oppression, viz. predatory heterosexuality. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa [1981] 1983, 134)

7. In this chapter in particular I am attuned to noting, where relevant, how authors have shifted and changed over time as well. For example, both Hartsock ([1983] 1997, 1997) and Collins (1990, 2000) are quoted from two different but substantively related sources over a fourteen- and ten-year period, respectively.

Wherever possible I try not to rely on a single source but to instead use multiple sources to illustrate such transformations.

8. I think this last point of Lorde's is important for both sexuality, as she refers to it, and things like gender presentation or identity and "hidden disabilities"—the "norming" motivation to not self-identify.
9. See Yoshino, Kenji (2002, 2006).
10. It is essential to note that these authors articulated one of many possible types of race, gender, and class analyses. This is to say that not all inclusions of race, gender, and class analyses are intersectional, neither are all intersectional analyses restricted to analyses of race, gender, and class (see Carbado and Gulati 2013; Hancock 2013; May 2015).
11. For a more extensive explication of Cooper's contributions to intersectionality theory, see May (2015).
12. Though bell hooks published *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* through South End Press, a Boston imprint, she did not cite the Black Feminist Combahee River Collective, which was based in Boston, as a source.
13. What most known as "intersections" are later also called "convergences" (Collins 1990), "overlaps" (Shah 1997), and/or interstices (Kim, in Shah 1997), along with a wealth of other cognate images and metaphors that, while not identical, share more in common for the purposes of this chapter on epistemology, than they vary.
14. While I focus on the connection between Marxist feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality here, Lykke focuses on the connection between postmodern feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality in her section on Donna Haraway and situated knowledges (2011, 5). The ramifications of Lykke's strategy are explored in chapters one, five and six.
15. As Sandra Harding provocatively stated in 1993: "The problem with the conventional conception of objectivity is not that it is too rigorous or too 'objectifying,' as some have argued, but that it is *not rigorous enough or objectifying enough*; it is too weak to accomplish even the goals for which it has been designed, let alone the more difficult projects called for by feminisms and other new social movements" (Harding, in Alcoff and Potter 1993, 50–51; emphasis

in original). Later in the same article she contends that thinking from the perspectives of marginalized lives by definition leads to questions about the adequacy of extant conceptual frameworks (63). She endorses strong objectivity, where subjects of knowledge (the "knowers") are placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge (the "known"), which is really a way of saying that "strong reflexivity" is equally required in this system (69). Puerto Rican writer Rosario Morales provides a justification for such reflexivity: "I want to be whole. I want to claim my self to be puertorican [*sic*], and U.S. American, working class & middle class, housewife and intellectual, feminist, marxist, and anti-imperialist. I want to claim my racism, especially that directed at myself, so I can struggle with it, so I can use my energy to be a woman, creative and revolutionary" (in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 91).

16. In other words, race or ethnicity is a source of diversity for how people experience gender rather than an analytical category of difference with equal ontological primacy. Hartsock states directly: "I want to both pluralize the idea [again, an add-on approach of inclusion, not transformational] and preserve its utility as an instrument of struggle against dominant groups. I believe that the tasks facing all theorists committed to social change is that of working to construct some theoretical bases for political solidarity" (1997, 239). Her solution in "The Feminist Standpoint Revisited" is to offer a survey of six "diverse" theorists in a three-page supplement at the end of the chapter, despite her claim: "I believe there is a great deal of work to be done to elaborate the connections between politics, epistemology and claims of epistemic privilege and to develop new understandings of engaged and accountable knowledge" (241).
17. See also Hekman (1997, 354), Hawkesworth (2006, 56).
18. Sandra Harding notes her agreement with an approach to standpoint theory like that of Hill Collins, but publishes it in 1993, after Collins had published *Black Feminist Thought*, in particular. Unfortunately, a full explication of standpoint theory's evolution between 1983 and 1993 is beyond the scope of this chapter, except as to illustrate the trajectory of intersectionality over the same time period.
19. I would include Hawkesworth's "standpoint theory analysis" (2006), which seeks to understand phenomena using multiple standpoints, as another more recent formulation of an inclusion-based approach.

20. Anzaldúa adds another illustration:

> Because white eyes do not want to know us, they do not bother to learn our language, the language which reflects us, our culture, our spirit. The schools we attended or didn't attend did not give us the skills for writing nor the confidence that we were correct in using our class and ethnic languages. I, for one, became adept at, and majored in English to spite, to show up, the arrogant racist teachers who thought all Chicano children were dumb and dirty. And Spanish was not taught in grade school. And Spanish was not required in High School. And though now I write my poems in Spanish as well as English I feel the rip-off of my native tongue. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 165–166)

21. This emphasis continues in the 2000 edition of *Black Feminist Thought*, though there are slight differences in the chapters, including an increased emphasis on the metaphor and language of "intersectionality" in the later edition.
22. See also Hawkesworth (2006) for a critique of positivism in particular and its impact on methodological decisions that have powerful ramifications about what is and isn't science.
23. With Hartsock as well this metaphor seems to presume that overlap may or may not exist (i.e., what this and the previously mentioned problematic reads of Combahee River Collective, Chicana Feminist Thought, and Patricia Hill Collins all fail to miss is the coconstitutive relationship among these structures. Both/and presumes a place of either/or, that is "*Not* Black feminist thought" (or "*Not* feminist thought," respectively). Hartsock uses the term "overlapping social structures" that become visible, and suggests that (following Harding) the damaging experiences of oppression that are disadvantageous "can be an advantage in terms of knowledge" (1997, 233).
24. Ten years later, Collins remains convinced of the role of power: "Epistemology constitutes an overarching theory of knowledge (Harding 1987). It investigates the standards used to assess knowledge or why we believe what we believe to be true. Far from being the apolitical study of truth, epistemology points to the ways in which power relations shape who is believed and why" (Collins 2000, 251–252).

25. Jasbir Puah (2007) makes a similar argument about intersectionality in general that I take up in chapters 5 and 6.
26. See Hancock (2011, 2013).
27. That said, in 1990 Collins remained deeply tied to the notion of the "outsider within" perspective as part of her larger embeddedness in standpoint theory. Twenty-first-century scholars who have continued in this vein, as part of the women of color feminist project, tend to privilege Crenshaw's understanding of intersectionality's visibility project and embrace analyses of the racing-gendering processes that still operate to keep women of color in particular (and their concomitant policy needs) invisible (see, e.g., Alexander-Floyd 2012; Jordan-Zachery 2013; Sampaio 2014). However, scholars involved in this visibility project are not always judicious about Collins's and Narayan's points of agreement, such as epistemic advantage. Between 1990 and 2000 Collins is remarkably consistent: "Ironically, by quantifying and ranking human oppressions, standpoint theorists invoke criteria for methodological adequacy characteristic of positivism. Although it is tempting to claim that Black women are more oppressed than everyone else and therefore have the best standpoint from which to understand the mechanisms, processes and effects of oppression, that simply may not be the case" (1990, 207). The precise sentences are later modified with no loss of identical content: "Ironically, by quantifying and ranking human oppressions, standpoint theorists invoke criteria for methodological adequacy that resemble those of positivism. Although it is tempting to claim that Black women are more oppressed than everyone else and therefore have the best standpoint from which to understand the mechanisms, processes and effects of oppression, this is not the case" (Collins 2000, 270).
28. See Sandoval (1991), among others.
29. Hartsock, for example, claims Harding says standpoint theory analyzes the essentialism sexism requires of femininity but does not itself require essentialism among women or the female gender.
30. Karin Aguilar-San Juan and Juliana Pegues both allude to this erasure in their respective contributions to Sonia Shah's *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire* (1997). See also Francille Rusan Wilson's *The Segregated Scholars* (2006), specifically chapter 5.

31. I personally observed this exchange.
32. Hawkesworth further notes that presupposition theory has not been sufficiently attentive to power. Intersectional epistemology seeks to bridge that gap. For example, implicit-bias theory above suggests that biases are, in fact, theoretical presuppositions that we learned before we could walk or talk. In this regard, returning to our unfailingly polite professors, the account of reality offered by presupposition theory and empirical evidence to support it provided by implicit-bias studies convincingly suggest that racism's existence isn't an assumption that may or may not be true, but a part of reality that not only merits investigation, but also structures lived experiences, the shape of social locations within which people function and interact, and how they understand and interpret the stimuli they are presented with. What the work on implicit bias has generally failed to do is to address the severability and additive ambivalences that continue to pervade our ideas and understandings of how the world works. Thus the intersectional approach to implicit bias would not simply include developing test batteries that would investigate different combinations of race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, religion, and infinite other categories of difference, it would reshape how we think about bias construction in both more specific as well as construction in what Manulani Meyer might call more "holographic" terms.
33. While this change is not unique to intersectionality and stems from its roots in critical race theory in particular, what follows from this change is distinctive to intersectionality theory (from both critical race and feminist theory in particular).
34. This book struck a collective nerve and has done well. It is also part of a much larger set of accounts that have identified through narratives the ongoing oppressions experienced by women of color through law. Adrien Katherine Wing's edited volume, *Critical Race Feminism* (1997), contains a section entitled "Outsiders in the Academy," and Patricia Williams' *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor* (1992), among others. On the literary side, *This Bridge Called My Back* and *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us are Brave* do similar work in revealing

invisibility as an intellectual project of intersectionality. Wing herself details her own personal experiences in her 2001 article, "Polygamy from Southern Africa to Black Britannia to Black America: Global Critical Race Feminism and Reform for the Twenty-First Century."

35. See, for example, Best et al. (2011).
36. I am inspired here by the arguments of both Charles Mills and Carole Pateman, who separately and collaboratively make persuasive cases against liberalism regarding race and sex, respectively, and race and sex together.
37. This is distinct from, say, Patricia Hill Collins, who locates Black Feminist thought in either positivist or "experiential, materialist" epistemologies (2000, 256).
38. As Hawkesworth notes: "The post-positivists conception of a 'fact' as a theoretically constituted entity calls into question such basic assumptions. It suggests that 'the noun, "experience," ' the verb, "to experience," and the adjective "empirical" are not univocal terms that can be transferred from one system to another without change of meaning. . . . Experience does not come labeled as "empirical," nor does it come self-certified as such. What we call experience depends upon assumptions hidden beyond scrutiny which define it and which in turn it supports' " (Vivas 1960, 76; quoted in Hawkesworth 2006, 45).
39. See Robin D. G. Kelley's *Race Rebels: Culture Politics, and the Black Working Class* (1994) and James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1987) for excellent non-intersectional case studies of "everyday resistance."
40. Here I mean sympathetic reformulations like that of Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) and a later article by Susan Hekman (1997), reconsidering standpoint theory and its responses in the journal *Signs*. As well, Hartsock retains a materialist notion of lived experience: "I was arguing that, like the lives of proletarians in Marxist theory, women's lives also contain possibilities for developing critiques of domination and visions of alternative social arrangements" (1997, 228).
41. Hawkesworth elaborates:

> Recognition of the manifold ways in which perceptions of reality are theoretically mediated raises a serious challenge to not only notions of "brute data" and the "givenness" of

> experience but also the possibility of falsification as a strategy for testing theories against an independent reality. For falsification to provide an adequate test of a scientific theory, it is necessary that there be a clear distinction between the theory being tested and the evidence adduced to support or refute the theory. . . . If, however, what is taken to be the "world," what is understood to be "brute data" is itself theoretically constituted (indeed, constituted by the same theory that is undergoing the test), then no conclusive disproof of a theory is likely. The independent evidence . . . is preconstituted by the same theoretical presuppositions as the scientific theory under scrutiny. (2006, 46)

42. Hawkesworth offers a useful explanation of the Aristotelian approach:

> According to Aristotle, empirical investigation can generate accurate accounts of all these dimensions of existence. Because each of these forms of explanation focuses on a different level of analysis, the accounts they generate are markedly different. The differences in these accounts do not imply, however, subjectivity in perception. On the contrary, each form of explanation generates objective information about a different aspect of the living organism. A comprehensive account encompassing all these modes of explanation is required to fully understand a particular organism. (2006, 24)

43. It is important to note in a North American context rife with "settler colonialism" and erasure of indigenous populations and knowledge that Meyer originally made this assertion herself through a thought-provoking presentation at the first-ever international intersectionality conference in Vancouver, Canada (April 2014). Her presentation of holographic epistemology visually linked the comments of the intersectionality theorists and activists selected as keynote speakers to the tenets of holographic epistemology. Thus I draw the connection here in a mode of agreement with rather than appropriation of Meyer's incredible work.
44. See also Doetsch-Kidder (2012, 84) for a similar kind of argument.
45. Hawkesworth's reference to Hume suggests that contingency predates intersectionality. "Hume, therefore, noted that empirical observation cannot provide an 'absolute ground' for

knowledge; no matter how much inductive evidence we have to support a generalization, it will never be enough to cover all past and future instances. Moreover, in a world of contingency, things can and do change" (Hawkesworth 2006, 34). I argue that it is intersectionality's combination of the enduring and the contingent rather than the binary that constitutes the epistemological contribution.

Chapter 4

1. That said, Sandoval remains "intersectionality-like," as there is still a dependence on experience elsewhere in her 1991 argument. The lack of full incorporation of racism into feminist theory or practice produced powerful protests by women of color (Sargent 1981, quoted in Sandoval 1991, 7). The ongoing struggle for visibility generated insights among women of color that "reinforced the common culture across difference comprised of the skills, values, and ethics generated by subordinated citizenry compelled to live within similar realms of marginality. During the 1970s, this common culture was reidentified and claimed by US feminists of color, who then came to recognize one another as country women—and men—of the same psychic terrain." Yet this "experience of unity," according to another Sandoval footnote, appears to understand the role of experience more differently than we have given her credit for:

> Here, US third-world feminism represents the political alliance made during the 1960s and 1970s between a generation of US feminists of color who were separated by culture, race, class or gender identifications but united through similar responses to the experience of race oppression. The theory and method of oppositional consciousness outlined in this essay is visible in the activities of the recent political unity various named "US third-world feminist," "feminist women of color," and "womanist."
>
> This unity has coalesced across differences in race, class, language, ideology, culture and color. . . . These constantly speaking differences stand at the crux of another, mutant unity, for this unity does not occur in the name of all "women," nor

> in the name of race, class, culture, or "humanity" in general. Instead, as many US third-world feminists have pointed out, it is unity mobilized in a location heretofore unrecognized. . . . [I]t is *between* these lines "that the truth of our connection lies." (Sandoval 1991, 18; emphasis in original)

2. All three of Crenshaw's most cited articles: "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment" (1988), "De-Marginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" (1989), and "Mapping the Margins" (1991) focus on analyzing the responses to racial and gender inequality in the United States. Crenshaw is quite clear that this focus should not be construed to mean she thinks these movement efforts are the only (or even the primary) sources of discrimination (in Crenshaw et al. 1995, 377). *This Bridge Called My Back*, as Cherríe and Gloria note, is similarly grounded in an attempt to understand heavy-handed, discriminatory responses as a starting place for their analysis (Moraga and Anzaldúa [1981] 1983, xxiii).

3. Most of the women appearing in this book are first-generation writers. Some of us do not see ourselves as writers, but pull the pen across the page anyway or speak with the power of poets.

   The selections in this anthology range from extemporaneous stream of consciousness journal entries to well thought-out theoretical statements; from intimate letters to friends to full-scale public addresses. In addition, the book includes poems and transcripts, personal conversations and interviews. The works combined reflect a diversity of perspectives, linguistic styles and cultural tongues.

   In editing the anthology, our primary commitment was to retaining this diversity, as well as each writer's especial voice and style. The book is intended to reflect our color loud and clear, not tone it down. As editors we sought out and believe we found, non-rhetorical, highly personal chronicles that present a political analysis in everyday terms. (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, xxiv)

4. Later work in both the United States (García Bedolla 2005) and Norway (Knudsen 2006) analyzed narratives using different evidence (in-depth interviews and discourse analysis of textbooks, respectively) to examine how power functions discursively. The

role of personal narrative is highlighted here in particular to illustrate how feminists of color and intersectionality-like thought begin to diverge in their understandings of the meaning of such accounts.

5. While Spelman commendably goes further than Nancy Hartsock, she still travels along the same spectrum of inclusion or integrative options, rather than reshaping the entire intellectual project.
6. This critique is similar to but distinct from Puah, who makes a far narrower claim about representation and power within the field of intersectionality studies rather than attacking the normative theoretical claims themselves. For more extensive engagements with recent critiques of intersectionality, see May (2015) and Cho (2013).
7. This notion of life "between the lines," (Moraga, quoted in Sandoval 1991, 17), is reprised later in intersectionality's intellectual history as a more identity-centered project by Barvosa (2008).
8. See chapter 3 for a more robust explication of intersectional contingency.
9. This characterization is not intended to reduce all of Puah's nuanced consideration of intersectionality logics to this singular point; I merely intend to draw a connection between Puah and Zack on this point.
10. *Conditions 5*, a 1979 issue dedicated to Black Women, coedited by Barbara Smith and Lorraine Bethel, formed the foundation of *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, which was published in 1983.

    As I noted in chapter 1, in 1980, Moraga and Anzaldúa sent off a list of interview questions to the Smith sisters, the first of which was: "In your experience, how do race and class *intersect* in the movement?" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 113; emphasis mine).
11. See note 1 in this chapter for the full quotation.
12. She goes on to talk about it in terms of sexuality and race in the rest of a long passage.
13. This remained relevant as recently as 2011 (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 99).

Chapter 5

1. Recent scholarship has focused on intersectionality's engagement with postmodernism (Cho 2013; see also Bilge 2013; McCall 2005), largely due to the reliance of celebrated intersectionality scholars like Crenshaw and Collins upon Foucauldian conceptions of power as intellectual resources in their seminal works.
2. Bilge (2013) contends this enumeration move was rejected by Foucault (414).
3. These normalized representations later produced ideological representations like the "welfare queen" that seek to lock women of color out of inclusion as "good mother."
4. Jonathan Scott Holloway (2013) deftly explains how racial and class aspirations for the "uplift" of Blacks in the United States produced narratives that repathologized poor Blacks and Black women in particular. See also Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust and the Public Identity of the "Welfare Queen"* (2004).
5. Crenshaw (1991) discusses representational intersectionality in a way that also alludes to the power of controlling images or stereotypes; however, Collins retains the lion's share of credit for this concept in particular according to current intersectional scholars.
6. The books were published first in French and later in English and other languages, which is why I provide a range of publication for each work.
7. Crenshaw articulates two other dimensions as well. Structural intersectionality is the contextual factors that produce inability to obtain legal remedies presumed to be available (1991, 1249) and political intersectionality, which highlighted the degree to which having a prototypical group member serve as the inspiration for an entire political agenda prevents the comprehensive expression, and by extension, remedy, of the obstacles created by inegalitarian traditions in the United States (1991, 1252).
8. I detailed Britain's Southall Black Sisters' experiences in a similar vein in chapter 2.
9. For Luisah Teish, the way in which Third World people have syncretically embraced Christianity is partly to blame for the kind

of phenomenon described by Alarcon (Teish, in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 229–230).

10. Lorde's experiences are echoed by Doetsch-Kidder's interview with "Monique[, who] also expresses a desire to help others realize their own power. She describes how difficult it has been for her to resist the 'barrage of images' and cultural messages denigrating bodies like hers—large, black, female, and queer. Racism, sexism, homophobia and fatphobia can make it difficult to maintain belief in one's own goodness. She finds 'so much power for us as women' in 'realizing that we actually are the stewards of our lives and bodies. We get to decide" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 91).
11. In an article entitled "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster," first published in 1979 (in an anthology named *Bridge: An Asian American Perspective*), Mitsuye Yamada offers more specific evidence of how this ambivalence influenced her behavior in her professional context.

> I like to think, in spite of my administrator's myopia, that the most stereotyped minority of them all, the Asian American woman, is just now emerging to become part of that group. It took forever. . . . [I]t took this long because we Asian American women have not admitted to ourselves that we *were* oppressed. We, the visible minority that is invisible.
>
> I say this because until a few years ago I have been an Asian American woman working among non-Asians in an educational institution where most of the decision-makers were men; an Asian American woman thriving under the smug illusion that I was *not* the stereotypic image of the Asian woman because I had a career teaching English in a community college. I did not think anything assertive was necessary to make my point. People who know me, I reasoned, the ones who count, know who I am and what I think. Thus, even when what I considered a veiled racist remark was made in a casual social setting, I would "let it go" because it was pointless to argue with people who didn't even know their remark was racist. I had supposed that I was practicing passive resistance while being stereotyped, but it was so passive no one noticed I was resisting;

> it was so much my expected role that it ultimately rendered me invisible.
>
> My experience leads me to believe that contrary to what I thought, I had actually been contributing to my own stereotyping. Like the hero in Ralph Ellison's novel *The Invisible Man*, I had become invisible to white Americans, and it clung to me like a bad habit. Like most bad habits, this one crept up on me because I took it in minute doses like Mithr[i]dates' poison and my mind and body adapted so well to it I hardly noticed it was there. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 36–37; emphasis in original)

12. Critiques located in a single discipline's interpretation of intersectionality are taken up directly in chapter 6.
13. As with other claims I've made, this is the case in other contexts; see Sudbury (in Incite! 2006) for a description of Britain's Black immigrant community and Brueck (2012) for an exploration of Dalit women's experiences with sexual violence.
14. These authors' approaches, characterized by Thiam as "anthropological" and divorced from the humanity of women in Kenya and Somalia, can be contrasted with what Adrien Wing calls "global critical race feminism," which follows a "critically pragmatic" methodology that says of polygamy, "It is my task to 'translate' this practice for an American legal audience in a way that is not sensationalist or essentialist but sensitive to the cultural and legal dynamics in the societies in which it originates. . . . Condemnation may also obfuscate the fact that the very same practices exist in the west" (Wing 2001, 813–814).
15. Sudbury (in Incite! 2006) reports a similar outcome in Britain.
16. It is important to note that Puah proposes "assemblages" as a replacement for logics of intersectionality. Her work remains, however, part of the intersectionality discourse.
17. Doetsch-Kidder's study specifically interrogates how activists manage to sustain their practices: "Even though speaking out is no guarantee of getting a response, [white trans journalist] Darby believes that feeling like one deserves respectful treatment is an important part of social change: 'once you see that something is what you deserve and something is how it should be, and that

you feel that you can actually help to make it be that way, then you're much more likely to do something about it' " (2012, 91).

18. I do not mean to imply an uncritical endorsement or advocacy that might produce reification of intersectionality (or one version) problematically; I simply contend that movements and activists can learn from their activism when engaged, reflexively and intentionally.
19. I mean these "internal" changes in a similar way to how I discussed them in chapters 2 and 4—not to burden those who are already burdened, but to sustain them instead.
20. Anzaldúa's essay in *This Bridge Called My Back* prepares the way for this new concept:

> You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web.
>
> Who me, confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me.
>
> . . .
>
> I have been terrified of writing this essay because I will have to own up to the fact that I do not exclude whites from the list of people I love, two of them happen to be gay males. For the politically correct stance we let color, class, and gender separate us from those who would be kindred spirits. So the walls grow higher, the gulfs between us wider, the silences more profound. There is an enormous contradiction in being a bridge. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 205–206)

21. "We have spent so much time hating ourselves. Time to love ourselves. And that, for all lesbians, as lovers, as comrades, as freedom fighters, is the final resistance" (Cheryl Clarke, "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance," in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, 137). Doetsch-Kidder gives a pragmatic extension of Clarke's assertion: *trust and accept* is what she terms a technology of empowerment: "Avelynn's refusal to deny queer Asian women's desire to talk about sex because of feminist critiques of representations of

hypersexual Asian women and queer people. This trust in people's ability to make choices for themselves reflects faith in people's basic goodness. By supporting individuals in determining what is best for themselves, activists rely on the intrinsic goodness in each person to change the world for the better" (Doetsch-Kidder 2012, 98).

Chapter 6

1. May (2015) offers a sound "debunking" of this critique, among others, in her chapter "Why are Intersectionality Critiques all the Rage?"
2. So too did Anzaldúa's coeditor, Cherríe Moraga:

> But what I really want to write about is faith. That without faith, I'd dare not expose myself to the potential betrayal, rejection, and failure that lives throughout the first and last gesture of connection.
>
> And yet, so often I have lost touch with the simple faith I know in my blood. My mother. On some very basic level, the woman cannot be shaken from the ground on which she walks. Once at a very critical point in my work on this book, where everything I loved—the people, the writing, the city—all began to cave in on me, feeling such utter despair and self-doubt, I received in the mail a card from my mother. A holy card of St. Anthony de Padua, her patron saint, her "special" saint, wrapped in an plastic cover. She wrote in it, "Dear Cherríe, I am sending you this prayer of St. Anthony. Pray to God to help you with this book." And a cry came up from inside me that I had been sitting on for months, cleaning me out—a faith healer. Her faith in this saint did actually once save her life. That day, it helped me continue the labor of this book.
>
> I am not talking here about some lazy faith, where we resign ourselves to the tragic splittings in our lives with an upward turn of the hands or a vicious beating of our breasts. I am talking about believing that we have the power to actually transform our experience, change our lives, save our lives. Otherwise,

why this book? It is the faith of activists I am talking about. (In Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983)

Doetsch-Kidder (2012) chronicles the relationship between faith and activism, focusing often on Buddhism. Jasmine Zine, El Sadaawi, and Dhamoon have focused previous intersectionality-like work on Islam.

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