

WOMEN OF COLOR: IN SEARCH OF GENDER

Sharon Elise
Women's Studies Program
California State University, Fresno

Recent criticisms of feminist theory have demonstrated conclusively, in our view, that universal generalizations about women are almost certain to be false; that different groups of women experience subordination in very different ways--and that some may not even be conscious of or concerned about subordination at all; that some women exercise power over others--as well as over some men; that what appear to be the most urgent issues facing feminism vary according to social perspective and historic moment; and that there is no uniquely privileged standpoint from which a final or authoritative feminist theory may be constructed. (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1993:113.)

Women of color, particularly Black women, have been active participants in Western movements for women's equality since their inception. However, as demonstrated in the eloquent "ain't I a woman?" speech of Sojourner Truth, we have always realized that we had to "bend" the claims and goals articulated by the dominant thrust of the feminist movement--white middle class women--in order to "fit" our needs and goals. And often, our race and class concerns have been viewed as divisive to the struggle for women's rights, just as our gender concerns have been decried as divisive to the liberation struggles of people of color.

Feminist women of color have been aware of the personal and collective costs of our participation in predominantly white feminist organizations. Besides having been racist and exclusionary, such organizations have led to the underdevelopment of our own feminist analyses, leading more often to the refinement of analyses of racism. This occurs because, even when we participate in feminist organizations because of our gender concerns, we find ourselves immediately embroiled in struggles for race and class equality within feminist organizations. If we, as feminist women of color, are to develop our own discourse on the nature of our sexual oppression, we must change the context of that

discourse by ceasing to address an audience of white women. Another way of explaining our task is to say, we must de-center white feminism, recognizing that there are many feminisms, and focus our analyses on what Johnetta Cole calls the "commonalities and differences" of privilege and oppression in the lives of women. This would result in an understanding of both the diversity of the sexual oppression of women and of differential power relationships among women. In addition, we must develop the resources to build institutions which will confront sexism and homophobia within our own racial/ethnic communities.

"Racism is a slippery subject, one which evades confrontation, yet one which overshadows every aspect of our lives. And because so few (white) people are directly and honestly talking about it, we...have once again had to take on the task. Making others 'uncomfortable' in their Racism is one way of 'encouraging' them to take a stance against it." (Anzaldua, 1990: xix.).

I remember my first women's studies class in college. There were no books or articles on women of color in the women's history course I took. Worse yet, I didn't complain, though I recall feeling not quite connected to the class--certainly not as "jazzed" about it as my white colleagues. That was in 1972. In 1982 I took my first graduate level course in feminist theory. Once again, there were no articles on women of color—certainly no books. After I and some white working class and lesbian allies complained, an article was included, entitled: "A Schism in Sisterhood"!!! The women that I studied under in college and in graduate school are renowned for advancing feminist scholarship. But can scholarship be said to be "feminist" when it echoes the same exclusivity it decries? According to Barbara Smith, it cannot:

Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism, but merely female

self-aggrandizement. (Smith, IN Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981:61).

In the past fifteen years the Euro-American feminist community has faced an onslaught of criticism from feminist women of color, who charged that predominantly white feminist groups had been exclusionary in theory and practice (cf Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981; Hull et al, 1983; hooks, 1984). Acclaimed white feminists had produced a new body of knowledge but it was based largely on the experience and perspectives of a select group of Euro-American women. Such an epistemology, it was charged, could not re-vision society in terms of all women, nor even of all "white" women when it didn't acknowledge the existence of women of color or of both white working class women and lesbians. Feminism, as articulated and practiced by its mainstream--white middle class heterosexual women--was attacked as racist. Furthermore, women of color were tired of explaining, as symbolized in the poetry of Pat Parker, "sister, your foot may be smaller but it's still on my neck."

The failure to explicitly acknowledge the existence of the "other" women led to the development of a mainstream feminist epistemology which: (1) Marginalizes those women whose experience has been hidden to elite feminists; (2) Betrays the deficiency of feminist theories in explaining the full dynamics of women's lives and; (3) Is unable to move into the realm of a feminist practice which would be emancipatory for all women.

As hooks (1984:3) explains:

Like Friedan before them, white women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women's reality is true to the lived experiences of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the extent to which their perspectives reflect race and class biases, although there has been a greater awareness of biases in recent years. Racism abounds in the writings of white feminists, reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries.

The critique developed by Smith, hooks, and other women of color led to the generation of a series of expositions on "race and gender"; but by and large these have been devoted, as though falling only upon the ears of white women, to explicating the experiences of women of color due to race and class oppression in society. However, by raising the fact, as did Frances Beale (in Cade, 1970), that Black and other women of color faced a "double jeopardy" of race and gender, validity was given to the complaints being raised across the country. The tasks which remain for women of color are to:

(1) Confront homophobia in our communities which prevents the large-scale explication of sexism; (2) Address women of color not only in terms of race and class but in terms of gender--in other words vis' men of color, not merely vis' white women; and (3) Begin seriously to give equal balance to sexism, empirically and in our generation of race, class and gender theory.

Mainstream white feminism has been carrying on a love affair with its contemplation of itself. In other words, there has been little attempt to move beyond the "female self-aggrandizement" Smith spoke of. According to hooks (1984:3), "Feminism has its party line and women who feel a need for a different strategy, a different foundation, often find themselves ostracized and silenced." The title of one work, "All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave," bespeaks the place of Black women in particular and women of color in general, within feminist theory and its activist aspect--what women of color commonly refer to as the "white women's movement" (Hull et al, 1982). In short, women of color complain of their invisibility: when we examine theories of racial stratification we find they are gender-blind, failing to explore gender differences in racial structures; when we examine feminist theories of gender stratification we find they are blind to the way in which gender is racially constructed. Thus, there is a tremendous void in explanations and analyses of women of color. This is not surprising,

and should be viewed as a reflection of the status women of color hold in American society. In short, women of color hold least property, earn the lowest incomes, have unemployment on par with men of color or higher, are concentrated in occupations with low pay and low prestige, support the largest number of children, and have the least voice in decision-making on a societal scale.

In the U.S., a dual movement has existed to address feminist concerns. The first aspect of the dual movement is concentrated on the struggle for the inclusion or integration of women into the system--expressed as the suffragist movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and as the movement for passage of the ERA in the 20th century. This movement expresses the "liberal feminist" politics of the mainstream western feminist movement. The second aspect has been concentrated on securing the liberation of women from all aspects of sexual oppression, and has been more apt to highlight the struggles of white lesbians, expressing the "radical feminist" aspect of the western feminist movement. Significant to both movements and to their expressions in the development of feminist theory has been the epistemological and organizational exclusion of women of color. Therefore, it is not surprising that neither these movements nor the body of ideas generated on their behalf have been wholly advantageous to women of color or to the development of a race- and class-conscious feminism. Though such movements and the theories they generated do lend support to examinations of gender in racial/ethnic communities, they also tend to delegitimize the efforts of women of color to develop parallel but discrete movements and theories which would, in part, be critical of the racial privilege which accrues to white women.

In fact, the class bias within the feminist movement, often criticized by both women of color and by working class and poor white women, has abetted racism as well. Had the feminist movement addressed, from its onset, the problems faced by working class and

poor women, it would have raised many issues relevant to women of color who are, of course, predominantly poor and/or working class.

The major impact of the critique by women of color--notably Black feminists--was to solidify the ranks of women marginalized by the feminist movement because of our concerns for racial equity. Even while being shut out of the movement, women of color, particular Black women, have embraced, at the very least, the premise of feminism, that there is something problematic about the organization of gender in society, and that women should have equality with men. Gerda Lerner (1993:248) says:

According to a New York Times poll conducted June 20-25, 1989, eighty-five percent of African-American women questioned supported the women's movement, compared to only sixty-seven percent of white women.

Moreover, women of color who are politically active are even more apt than white women, because they are seldom benefitted by the current social system, to be wholly critical of the existing class, race and gender arrangement. Another result of the confrontation within feminist circles between women of color and white women has been the emergence of a new field associated largely with feminist social scientists called "the intersection of race and gender." In addition, we have the generation of a series of parallel fields which seek to elucidate the particular oppression of racial/ethnic women, e.g., Black Women's Studies, Chicana Studies, Asian/Pacific Women's Studies, American Indian Women's Studies. These fields are defined by distinct worldviews and epistemologies derived from the historical experience and cultures of women within specific racial/ethnic communities. Unlike the "general" field of women's studies, characteristic of these fields is the tendency to particularize gender arrangements given the particular racial and cultural context in which they are found. The notion of "women" is swept aside; we cannot speak of women "in general" in a racially formed class society. Rather, we must situate women in the

context of their race, class and culture because, gender is constructed differently according to these contexts.

The Intersection of Race and Gender

Like one aspect of the women's movement above, the "intersection of race and gender" seeks the inclusion of women of color--expressed as issues of race and gender confronting women of color--into mainstream feminist epistemology. This scholarly task mirrors attempts by both racial/ethnic women and progressive white women to incorporate women of color and our concerns into feminist organizations which fall, currently, under the hegemony of white women. It is further argued that if we focus scholarship on women of color we make the curriculum more inclusive and, thereby, increase the likelihood of social transformation (Andersen, 1988).

Ironically, this new field which purports to focus on the intersection of race and gender structures of oppression ignores, to a great extent, the racial privilege of white women and the gender privilege of men of color. In other words, it fails to address the polemics of race for white women or of gender for men of color. This is a difficult task given the dire dimensions of oppression which both those groups experience. For example, I recently conducted a series of interviews with African American, European American, and Native American teenage mothers. I found it very difficult to understand how a white fifteen-year-old teenage mother who was destitute and who had been sexually abused since her childhood was racially privileged. While it is difficult to measure, in such a case, the individual benefits of white skin privilege, examinations at the level of the community and of society yield different results. White adolescent girls are able to draw on the resources of their communities--who have more to offer, generally, than racial/ethnic communities. They also do not experience the same high levels of discrimination and oppression which are present for racial/ethnic teenage mothers. When

they go to draw on the public assistance available from a variety of agencies, they are more apt to be served by members of their group, from whom they are less apt to reserve the wide-scale social condemnation that Black teenage mothers felt.

Similarly, how do I look at the unemployed Black teenage father and see his male privilege manifested? How do I assess the choices he makes when he is considering his involvement in that domestic situation with the teenage mother and his obligations toward their child? This is what we need to do--analyze both privilege and oppression to truly apprehend what should be meant by "the intersection of race and gender." In the case of the teenaged father, he receives far less social condemnation for abandoning his child and its mother than would the mother who took that route. In other words, he has a choice of whether or not to be involved with his child. Often, privilege is manifested as a greater range of choices/options; oppression by the absence of choice and presence of greater constraints.

One reason why the race and gender intersection school has not been able to further advance the quest of women of color to understand and confront our specific gender issues is related to the underdevelopment of the field. In part this has resulted from the failure of white women "to really see the relevancy of the dynamics of race, class and gender to their own work or how they might benefit from incorporating varied perspectives in to their own work" (Uttal, 1990:43). As a result, only women of color are viewed as "the intersection of race and gender."

This race, class and gender scholarship is also underdeveloped because of white hegemony--male and female--over academic institutions including schools, professional organizations, funding for scholarly activities, and professional journals. This white hegemony is reflected in so-called feminist organizations as well. For example, Zinn et al (1990:31) say:

Despite white, middle-class feminists' frequent expressions of interest and concern over the plight of minority and working-class women, those holding the gatekeeping positions at these journals are as white as are those at any mainstream social science or humanities publication.

In addition, they note that even when there are inclusionary strategies on the part of white feminists, women of color are often rejected because they speak in a different voice, often critical of established strains of feminist ideology. This, in turn has a cost, because women of color who wish and need to have their works published must change their voice to find acceptance:

Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups. (Collins, 1990:xiii).

The context, in other words, establishes a white audience to which the race and gender field is directed. Just as Andersen suggests that we put women of color at our focus for classroom curricula, we must also place women of color in the audience--but not just mentally! Until women of color are placed in positions materially strategic to feminist organizations and, therefore, the construction of feminist knowledge, we will all--regardless of race--continue to address ourselves to white women.

Building Black Feminism

What is happening in the community of Black feminists? It is very interesting that it has been primarily the community of poets and literary critics who have been persistent in delineating the sexism in our community and the various manifestations of sexual oppression. Writers such as Audre Lorde (1984), Pat Parker (in Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981) and Barbara Smith (Hull et al, 1983) have really pushed the issues that we need to

address regarding sexuality within our communities while maintaining critical dialogues with white feminists and feminists in other racial/ethnic communities. However, there are far fewer references on the part of Black feminist social scientists to the sexism which Black women experience at the hands of Black men. Many times, Black feminists end up emphasizing our class and race differences from white women instead of focusing within our communities on our class differences with each other and how those are "played out;" and dealing with the gender differences and oppression Black women experience within our communities. Important exceptions include, among others, Gloria Joseph (with Jill Lewis, 1981) and the recent work by Patricia Hill Collins (1990), where they address the particular dynamics of race and gender for Black women in comparison to both Black men and white women. Yet these analyses still extend the black/white dichotomy of Eurocentric reasoning. While Higginbotham (1983) and Dill (1988) extend their analyses of work and family to comparisons among women of color, they omit consideration of women indigenous to North America.

Another problem plaguing Black feminists results from the fact that Black heterosexual feminists have been extremely reticent to address lesbians and lesbianism--or, generally, the issue of sexual options-- because of the Black communities' heterosexism. This is coupled with a failure to discuss sexism in terms of sexuality, sexual abuse and patriarchal dominance within our own Black institutions in lieu of an exclusive focus on race and class.

There is no series of articles or books, for example on the sexual abuse which Black girls and women face primarily from Black men. It's been very unconstructive, in the long run then, to address a nodding audience of white feminists on the racism and classism which we have experienced in white feminist organizations. It has not advanced Black feminist theory or practice. I feel that we need to stop addressing ourselves to an audience

of white feminists.

To whom should we, as Black feminists, address ourselves? We need to create an audience of each other. If we are to even parallel what white feminists have done to address sexism within their communities, we need to begin--as they did--by sending everyone else from the room. You'll note that, for the most part, white feminists have stopped addressing themselves to white men. They know the evidence is out on their oppression so they have sent white men out to discuss, amongst themselves, how they would confront that oppression. It's time now for Black feminists to send white women out of the room so that we can talk to each other. Only by doing so can we move beyond a focus on race and class; then we can truly begin our search for an understanding of the full dynamic of gender oppression within our own communities. An excellent example is found in Audre Lorde's Sister Outsider (1984) article on "Eye to Eye: Black Women and Anger," where she asks why Black women save their worst criticism for each other. Gloria Yamato's piece (in Cochrane et al, 1988) on internalized oppression is yet another important work which insists upon the pervasiveness of racism and the need for people of color to "Resist the pull to give out the 'people of color seal of approval' to aspiring white allies." Only when we face our fears of dealing with ourselves and those most like us can we begin to strip down the many layers of oppression which bind us, to speak in our many voices of the myriad results of those oppressions.

At a conference on women of color and the intersection of race and gender sponsored by the Memphis group in 1983, there was nothing said about patriarchy or patriarchal structures of oppression. A Black woman stood up and asked the women of color who headed the panel, "How come we're not talking about patriarchy?" The conference seemed, to us, to be organized with white women in mind, to present the dynamics of race and class oppression in the lives of women of color. We learned about

the dynamics of race and class oppression which structured our lives, including forced labor, colonial violence, cultural attacks, and denial of basic civil rights. There was no mention of gender oppression committed by men of color, or of the social cost for women of color to exercise their sexual options.

Similarly, at a meeting of what was then called the "Africana Women's Caucus" at NWSA several years ago the three white women who chose to sit in on the caucus meetings became the audience to whom a lengthy discussion was directed. Even though there were four Black women panelists, a roomful of Black women from all over the United States and some international African women, the comments were directed toward the questions of the three white women, explaining over and over why we needed to have our own caucus. As a participant who had come from Eugene, Oregon, I was incensed that--instead of making use of what, for many of us, was our only opportunity to dialogue with other sisters--**we allowed ourselves to subvert our needs and goals to the interests of white women.**

We need to stop. It's interesting because it is the racism of white women that has propelled us into a reactive mode. We are trying to push a Black feminist agenda but it is an agenda which has remained underdeveloped because we are in a racial/cultural setting which dominates our agendas.

This problem exists beyond the large-scale organizations such as NWSA, beyond the academic settings, and into the grassroots community organizations that were set up to provide services for women. In the mid 1980's I sat on the Board of Directors for the Rape Crises Network in Eugene--an agency which assists rape and incest survivors by providing counseling, advocates, support groups, and referral services. I agreed to serve on the Board, even as a token woman of color, because I was aware that women of color--though they experience more sexual oppression according to statistical reports--were not using the

services provided. In part, this resulted from the failure of the agency to demonstrate racial sensitivity to women of color by employing us as staff members. In part, it also was an effect of the homophobia with which women of color who need services viewed the presence of lesbians on the Board and the staff. Thus, we had a dual mission; to convince women of color that they should make use of the agency and to convince the agency that it should make use of women of color by changing its hiring practices.

Like the Black feminists which I criticize, those of us who were token women of color became primarily invested in confronting the racism of the agency through providing unlearning racism workshops, sitting on hiring boards, and trying to make the agency atmosphere physically comfortable for women of color. We did nothing to combat sexism, internalized sexism, or homophobia and heterosexism in the small community of people of color. We hired a mature Black lesbian, experienced in grassroots feminist and Black organizations and in program management to head the agency. Not surprisingly--as has been the case in more prominent feminist organizations--the power and authority typically invested in that position were gradually diminished and the credibility of the director was held in question. When she had the nerve to call the embezzlement of federal funds by a white staff person to the attention of the white-dominated Board, her action resulted in her alienation and further disempowerment. The Board excused the white staff member, nurtured her and gladly accepted the director's resignation, as well as those of we feminists of color on the Board. Too often this is what happens when we come into white-dominated feminist organizations. It is simply not constructive for us. Yet we are wooed by their size, prominence, and the fact that they have so many resources at their disposal. Perhaps we need to contend with our own scant resources and empower ourselves by creating and maintaining our own institutions, develop agendas with our own communities in mind, and promote social change within those particular communities. In

short, perhaps we should abandon the integrationist dream which, given its costs, has become a nightmare.

Often, though, the white, hierarchical feminist organization is the context in which we find ourselves and then we stay locked into that context and operate within its parameters. We need to understand that this context has been racially constructed and, as such, it distorts our inquiry into who we are and what our feminism should be.

Women of color face urgent crises in our communities. My own research on teenage mothers revealed that half of the Native American and African American women who talked to me had experienced child sexual abuse from male relatives (Elise, 1990). These are our own sisters, daughters, nieces, and grandchildren. They were unable to develop a proactive stance toward their own sexuality as a result. They are unable, then, to do what is necessary to protect themselves from the AID's virus. And they are often reliant on their mothers--who usually range in age from 30 to 45--to share their meager resources of time, space and income with them. We have an urgent need, for our mere survival, to confront the heterosexism and sexism which prevents us from addressing the needs of these young women. We won't be able to do it if we continue using all our energy, as we did at the recent NWSA conference, only addressing the racism of white women. We need to sit down and really start dialoguing with each other.

NWSA 1990

I presented the above discussion for a "Black Feminist Thought" panel at the 1990 annual meetings of the NWSA. I was motivated by exhaustion; I was simply tired of explaining myself to everybody male and/or white (as Diana Kate Rushin says in her "Bridge Poem", Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981). I was frustrated by the inadequacy of existent social theory to explain the problems facing women of color.

In particular, my research activities propelled me with a sense of urgency to ferret

out the reasons why we--as Black feminists--had not further developed analyses of patriarchal oppression in our communities. If it is true that we have such a strong sense of our African American identity, then why are half of us turned on each other? What advantage do men within our communities gain from the sexual abuse of small children and women? Why has the African ethos heralded by advocates of Afrocentricity failed to subvert the effects of the patriarchal system imposed on us? Why are we headed for greater gender oppression even as we face the escalation of individual, institutional, and state-orchestrated attacks on our communities?

In the Native American context in which I participated there were similar burning questions voiced by community women. How could they fight the white community to preserve their traditions and, at the same time, attack those aspects of tradition which shielded elder men who had molested their children and grandchildren? How could they protect Indian children from white foster homes and, at the same time, withdraw them from clan structures which--while promoting their tribal traditions and identity--were a site of neglect and/or abuse?

These are "in-house" questions. And it is not at all clear to me that we can turn to traditional institutions for the answers. Black institutions--whether religious or political--are rigid in their sexual/moral conservatism and, therefore, loath to take on gender issues. The Native women I talked to when doing my field research on teenage mothers admitted facing the same problems.

We are, in turn, reluctant to take up these issues in the context of white feminist organizations. And, as I argued above, those organizations are unlikely to provide the context in which we can safely raise these issues. Our experience shows that weaknesses within our communities are generally exploited by predominantly white organizations who would profit from the legitimacy of our token, unequal, disempowered participation.

And too often, when we enter those organizations we find our personal agendas subverted. For example, the recent NWSA meetings erupted into chaos over the firing of an African American employee who was working in the national office. While my colleague and I, after several days travel by train, arrived eager to meet and network with women of color and Black feminists, we were immediately confronted with this issue--not by the Women of Color Caucus, but by the NWSA Director. My friend, Elaine, and I turned to each other and said "I guess we won't be going to explore the book exhibit!"--knowing/feeling our obligation was to meet with women of color.

Regardless of how other feminists feel about the ultimate decision women of color made--to either quit the organization or to stay in and work for greater inclusion--my thesis remains the same. Our needs, as women of color who work primarily in predominantly white settings, to meet with each other and discuss in-house questions in house were controverted by institutionalized racism. Though the issue was first apprehended as the firing of the African American employee, it became clear to many women that there were significant power and decision-making problems within an organization that purported to use feminist processes. When no one--not the Steering Committee, the Coordinating Council, or the Executive Director--would take responsibility for the resolution of personnel decisions, many became disgusted. Though, elsewhere, others have decried what they herald as unprincipled attacks on NWSA by women of color, this has the *deja vu* effect of reminding me of how men of color decry our efforts to discuss their sexism by saying that we are attacking our race. Furthermore, the transparent attempts to delegitimize the position that some of us, very painfully, took by referring to us as the "caucus"--as though we were not the real caucus simply further our alienation from the organization.

In contradiction to allegations made by NWSA spokeswomen in a recent (Fall,

1990) NWSAction report (which I had to borrow from a white woman who also walked out of the conference but continued to receive her subscription), all women of color were welcome to caucus meetings regardless of the positions they took. We agreed, collectively, not to allow our decisions regarding a predominantly white organization to separate us from each other. And members of the Lesbian Caucus, Working Class and Poor Women's Caucus, Jewish Women's Caucus and women not affiliated with any caucus sent us statements of support and walked out when we did.

The fact that other "other" women joined women of color who walked out shows that it isn't only women of color who are having difficulties developing their voice within a large-scale hierarchical feminist organization. And what the organization, like many others, fails to understand is that we are really not concerned with the survival of the organization. My understanding of feminist organizations has always been that they exist to serve our needs; it is our survival with which I am most concerned, not the survival of a hierarchical organization dominated by and catering to the interests of a small group of women.

For our very survival as women of color, as girls and women struggling within communities beset by a host of social, political and economic crises, we must come together to provide a voice and leadership for ourselves. As a Black woman I am very upset and concerned about the hostility heaped on Black girls and women by Black men and by the larger society. I have spent the last twelve years focused on racism--as a woman doing that searching to make sense of my racial oppression, but focusing on racism. I realize how little we know about the oppression facing young women in our communities. I want to search out gender oppression and I don't think we can do that when we're fighting white women to establish our legitimacy, keep solvent our racial identity, and struggle for equal power in organizations which dwarf us. Furthermore, my

concerns go beyond Black girls and women because, while Black girls continue becoming teenaged mothers at rates higher than other social groups, Black boys are killing each other in record numbers, Black people are being wiped out by crack and AIDs infection, and the Black infant mortality rate is soaring. Understanding how gender is "done" in a Black context at such a cost to individuals, how this is lodged in racist society, and what we can do about it is more significant to me, now, than "explaining" the urgency of my cause to white women.

REFERENCES

- Andersen, Margaret L. 1988. Moving our minds: Studying women of color and reconstructing sociology. *Teaching Sociology* 16: 123-32.
- Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins, Eds (1992). *Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria (ed.) 1990. *Making Face, Making Soul: HaciendoCaras*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation.
- Beale, Frances. 1970. Double jeopardy: to be Black and female. In Cade (ed.) *The Black Woman*. New York: Signet.
- Cole, Johnetta. 1986. Commonalities and differences. In Cole (ed.) *All American Women*. New York: Free Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill (1990). *Black Feminist Thought*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Dill, Bonnie Thornton (1988). Our mothers' grief: Racial ethnic women and the maintenance of families. *Journal of Family History* 13(4), 415-31.
- Elise, Sharon. 1990. *Routes to teenage motherhood: African, Native and European Americans*. Unpublished dissertation. Eugene: University of Oregon.
- Higgenbotham, Elizabeth Brooks. 1983. Laid bare by the system: Work and Survival for Black and Hispanic women. In *Class, Race and Sex: The Dynamics of Control*, eds. Amy Smerdlow and Hanna Lessinger. Boston: G.K. Hall: 200-215.
- Hooks, Bell. 1984. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End.
- Hull, Gloria, Barbara Smith, and Patricia Bell Scott. 1983. *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, but Some of Us are Brave*. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press.
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Paula S. Rothenberg. 1993. *Feminist Frameworks* (Third Edition). New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

- Joseph, Gloria I. and Jill Lewis. 1981. *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives*. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday.
- Lerner, Gerda. Reconceptualizing differences among women. In Jaggar and Rothenberg (eds.): 237-248.
- Lorde, Audre (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldua, eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Schweickart, Patsy. 1990. Reflections on NWSA '90. NWSAction 3(3) Fall: 3-4; 9-10.
- Uttal, Lynet (1990). Inclusion without influence: the continuing tokenism of women of color. In Anzaldua (ed.), 42-45.
- Yamato, Gloria (1988). Something about the subject makes it hard to name. In Cochrane et al (eds.), *Changing Our Power: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall-Hunt.
- Zinn, Maxine Baca, Lynn Weber Cannon, Elizabeth Higginbotham, and Bonnie Thornton Dill (1990). The costs of exclusionary practices in women's studies. In Anzaldua (ed.), 29-41.