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Resisting the Machine:
Toward a Theory of Transnational Feminist Anti-Capitalism

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Africana Studies Senior Thesis
Professor Johnson
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Introduction

The Changing Tide, The Sinking Ships

Though the spread of global capitalism has been taking place for hundreds of years and is therefore not a new phenomenon, the last few decades has seen an increase in the desperation and intense poverty it has created for billions of the world's people. At the global as well as the individual nation-state level, the wealth gap between the rich and the poor has widened to unbelievable extremes. In 1995, the net wealth of Bill Gates¹ alone was greater than the combined net worth of the poorest 40 percent of Americans. That is, Bill Gates' sole net worth was more than nearly 106 million peoples' combined. By the late 1990s in the U.S., the average income of the top 20 percent of families rose to thirteen times the income earned by the bottom 20 percent. This was an increase from the 1970s, where the top 20 percent of families held ten times the income as the bottom twenty percent. As the World Bank has reported, half of the world's population (more than 2.8 billion people) survives on less than two dollars a day, 1.2 billion of those people on less than a dollar. Twenty years ago, in 1991, 85 percent of the world's population received only 15 percent of the world's income. And the situation has only worsened today, as three hundred and fifty-eight people own the combined wealth of 2.5 billion people. That is, three hundred and fifty-eight people together have as much wealth as nearly half of the world's entire population.² This is the reality that the spread of global capitalism has produced. While the majority of the world's people are forced to participate in the race to the bottom in order to "have lunch or be lunch,"³ superprofits are made off their backs, transforming the wealthy into the extremely wealthy.

¹ Bill Gates is an American business tycoon, most well-known for being the Chairman of Microsoft. From 1995-2009 he was consistently ranked as the wealthiest person in the world.

² Aguilar, "Introduction," in *Women and Globalization*, 13.

³ Ibid.

What all of these harrowing statistics of world poverty make obvious to us is that the spread of global capitalism is a grave problem the world faces. Therefore, anti-globalization is a key component of any feminist, decolonizing agenda, as the spread of global capitalism relies on the maintenance of racism and sexism in the most explicit of terms. As Delia Aguilar notes, “In the era of globalized economics where a race to the bottom is critical for superprofits, it is primarily the labor power of “Third World” women [...] that is the cheapest of all.”⁴ Therefore, when modern globalization is discussed as “based less on the proliferation of computers than on the proliferation of proletarians,”⁵ who exactly the proletariat is must be defined: women of the so-called Third World.

Toward a Theory of Transnational Feminist Anti-Capitalism

This thesis attempts to work toward the creation of a theory of transnational feminist anti-capitalism by synthesizing transnational and anti-capitalist black feminism and Africanist theories of decolonization. Global capitalism has constituted the re-colonization of the Third World, placing Third World women⁶ at the center of a matrix of domination. Therefore, both Africanist decolonization theories, specifically Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, as

⁴ Ibid. 16

⁵ Ibid. 15

⁶ The decision to use the term “Third World” is a loaded one. It has been deemed a contentious term by many different scholars because of the way it implies a global hierarchy which is not only insulting, and can serve to further marginalize the world’s poor people of color, but also because it is falsely universalizing. To speak of an entire country as First World or Third World neglects the complex economic dynamics within a nation state. For example, to refer to the United States as a First World country implies that the entire country, that is, all of its citizens, are wealthy. Obviously this is not the case, as the United States has one of the largest wealth gaps in the world. Despite the misleading and potentially derogatory connotations of this term, I will use it for two reasons: for one, I believe current discourse lacks a term to name so-called Third World countries that is not considered contentious. The same debates which I have mentioned can be re-hashed in a debate over whether the terms “global north” and “global south” are appropriate. Though I do not deny the power of language and the power of naming, I argue that there is power in the way semantics have been shifted to imbue the term “Third World” with different, strategic meaning. For Chandra Talpade Mohanty, the term use can “designate geographical location and sociohistorical conjunctures.” Thus, it is inclusive of so-called people of color within the geographical borders of the U.S. and other western countries. In this respect, “Third World” can be used strategically to describe the conditional links between poor people of color on every continent, in every country.

well as anti-capitalist black feminism and transnational feminism must be synthesized together in order to create a transnational feminist theory of resistance. Though this solidarity must also exist in the theoretical realms of scholarship, I will also ground this work in the lived experiences of feminist anti-capitalist activists currently working on the grassroots level. In particular, I will focus on the work of one such group, Radical Women (RW), which is a socialist feminist group that has been in existence since 1967. This new theory of resistance will be produced through a series of engagements with and disidentifications from both anti-capitalist black feminism and Fanon's theory of decolonization as well as the lived experiences of Third World women and their current resistance to global capitalism.

Though global capitalism (also known as globalization) is not a new phenomenon, its multifaceted processes and their effects on Third World people⁷ have yet to be adequately addressed in either Fanon's decolonization theory or mainstream (read: western) feminist theory. Building off the work of numerous transnational feminist and black anti-capitalist feminist scholars who have challenged western (often imperialist) feminism, I will explore the ways in which the spread of global capitalism relies on and reinforces racist, sexist and imperialist paradigms in order to function. This has been made explicitly clear by numerous U.S. black feminists who have incorporated an anti-capitalist critique in their work, and therefore the work of scholars and activists such as Frances Beale and Claudia Jones are crucial to my work. Because of the lived experiences of Third World women under global capitalism, I argue global capitalism is an issue that concerns both Africanists and feminists, and therefore the creation of a theory which recognizes the important contributions of both schools of thought needs to be developed. This thesis will attempt to formulate this new theory of resistance.

I also argue that this new theory, as a synthesis of anti-capitalist black feminism, transnational feminism and Fanon's decolonization theory, must grasp the ways in which capitalism has changed the old feminist paradigm of the 'local' versus the 'global' by penetrating spaces that have previously been understood as discretely bound, such as the nation-state. Global capitalism has not respected the political borders of the nation-state, to the point where there is a Third World within the First. In doing so, the reality of global capitalism not only demands a re-orientation of feminist paradigms and pedagogies, but also offers up new potential sites for feminist struggle. This theory is rooted in the experiences of Third World women, as they are the ones who suffer the most under the crushing boot of global capitalism and therefore hold the ability to demystify the complex system that is capitalism. I argue that Third World women must not only be the vanguard of a transnational feminist anti-capitalist movement, but also that through doing so we must expand on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's use of Benedict Anderson's idea of creating "imagined communities," or feminist communities that are based on political commitments rather than identity politics.

Because global capitalism has created a matrix of domination which places Third World women of color at the very center, I would like to explore the important contributions that anti-capitalist black feminists have made in the way of theorizing intersectionality in a transnational context. Theorizing from this position has created a dialectic between Third World women's lived experiences of oppression and resistance to that oppression, and therefore I will argue that it is this very position which allows for the opportunity to demystify global capitalism. As previously stated, it is the work of anti-capitalist black feminists such as Frances Beale and Claudia Jones which, I argue, must be incorporated into a transnational anti-capitalist dialogue of resistance.

In a similar fashion, much of the seminal Africanist theories of decolonization, such as the work of Frantz Fanon, are extremely androcentric. By ignoring the role that sexism plays in the functioning of racism as well as global capitalism, I argue that these theories do not provide adequate and all-encompassing analysis of these systems. Likewise, while RW practices many aspects of transnational anti-capitalism that I argue are crucial to building a mass movement, I think the group also falls slightly short in its ideological goals of creating transformative change, as the group's theoretical standpoint borders on dogmatic in its embrace of Marxist ideology. However, through a series of engagements and disidentifications⁸ with the aforementioned theories (feminist and Africanist), I hope to create a theoretical political space, or an 'imagined community',⁹ that takes into account intersectional oppressions. I believe that the theoretical work produced by both Africanists and transnational feminists, as well as a centering of the anti-capitalist resistance being undertaken by RW at this current time are needed in order to demystify global capitalism.

Though I take issue with RW's sometimes dogmatic embrace of socialist politics, I find the group very useful as they are one of the only radical socialist feminist groups that have built their organization on an explicitly multi-issue platform. I find their understanding of the interconnectedness of all oppressions and the necessity of dismantling capitalism second to none.

⁸ This idea of disidentification is taken from the work of Jose Esteban Munoz. Disidentifying is a complex series of varying strategies that have to do with identity formations, both social and political. For the purposes of this thesis, I use Munoz's idea of disidentifying in the respect that it allows one to identify with a particular ideology without accepting said ideology in totality. This is the method I use to build this new theory, because, as I argue, Fanon's decolonization narrative does not address the special condition of Third World women, just as RW tends to embrace socialist ideology too dogmatically. By disidentifying, one does not have to reject Fanon or RW's politics wholesale. Rather, one is able to take the parts that are most useful and applicable to one's life and is free to supplement it with other theoretical work that can fill in the gaps left by the first. For more on disidentifications, see Jose Esteban Munoz's complete book, *Disidentifications*.

⁹ Mohanty speaks at length on Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined communities," and it is her expansion of this important idea that I will use in my thesis. Mohanty's work posits that in order to build transnational feminist solidarity we must build these imagined communities that are based on political commitments as opposed to shared experiences of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. In other words, the suffering is not the link between us, but rather what we are willing to do for one another.

Beyond their political ideologies, however, I incorporate them into my work because I believe their actual activism on numerous issues embodies some of the theory that I wish to set forth in this paper. Before using their work as examples, however, I find it pertinent to introduce the group and provide a bit of history.

Radical Women: Resisting the Machine

RW was founded in Seattle in 1967 by Gloria Martin (a lifelong communist and civil rights activist) and Clara Fraser (a member of the Freedom Socialist Party) as well as a few other socialist feminists. Today, RW has six different offices located in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, WA, New York City, Puerto Rico, and Australia. RW's member base is incredibly diverse. The organization is comprised of Latinas, Chicanas, African Americans, whites, students, workers, unemployed; straight and queer, old and young, and middle class and poor. What is unique about RW (and still sets them apart from other liberation groups), is that they understood from their inception the importance of intersectionality. Living through the sexism that was rampant in the 1960's and 70's various people of color liberation movements, as well as the racism that plagued the feminist movement, RW formed their organization with the core understanding that race, class, and gender oppression work in and through to reinforce one another, and therefore, that in order to achieve liberation from any form of oppression, all forms must be dismantled. This understanding of intersectionality is crucial for building transnational solidarity. It is not enough to develop a movement that focuses on eradicating one form of oppression. Rather, resistance to any injustice must understand the complex ways in which said injustice intersects with and relies on other forms of oppression. If this is not done, there is no hope of transnational liberation from any type of oppression.

The word “radical” as it is used in a political arena has been distorted by the far right as well as mainstream media to connote “crazy” individuals and groups who are unreasonable, who don’t want dialogue, and who often support the use of violence in attaining their political goals. However, the actual meaning of radical is change that goes to the *root*. As far as RW is concerned, they are radical because their political philosophy is that the root of all the numerous forms of oppression we suffer today is the capitalist system, and therefore that system must be dismantled completely. As the RW manifesto explains,

Nowhere in the world are the contradictions more acute between what is humane and what is economically dictated than in the United States, because it is there that capitalism is most technologically advanced and most dependent on the cheap labor of women and people of color to sustain its profits.¹⁰

Racism and sexism are not simply by-products of capitalism. Rather, these forms of oppression are what *prop-up* capitalism. The continued propagation of these forms of oppression is absolutely *necessary* in order for the capitalist system to be maintained. This political philosophy was derived from the work of Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, and Friedrich Engels and relies on Marx’s historical materialism to explain itself.¹¹

RW are followers of both Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky's theories of socialism. Trotsky, who was a co-leader of the Russian Revolution and a staunch opposer of Stalin's brutal regime, (and actually was exiled and later killed by Stalin's government) stood for democracy, international socialism, and full human rights. Therefore, as Trotskyists, RW support socialist movements that have (and are) taking place across the world. This transnational support is rooted in Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution. According to Trotsky, it is impossible for a socialist revolution that takes place within one nation-state, but that lacks further international support, to sustain

¹⁰ *Radical Women Manifesto*, 31.

¹¹ For a full account of Radical Women’s historical materialist approach to discussing origins of different oppressions, see the *Radical Women Manifesto*.

itself. Therefore, socialist revolutions must take place simultaneously around the world, with the world's workers supporting one another in throwing off the shackles of capitalism.¹²

With specific respect to the role of women in the socialist movement, RW sees women as the vanguards for the revolution. To quote the RW Manifesto, " ...the exploitation of women has created a specially oppressed sex whose potential for revolt and capacity for leadership are second to none."¹³ RW believes that poor women of color, as triply exploited people (and sometimes more, given one's sexual orientation, age, ability, etc.) have nothing to lose and everything to gain from revolution. As people who live at multiple intersections of oppression, their lived-experiences and the political thoughts that stem from them must be central to the program. For these women, engagement in anti-capitalist work is not just an intellectual choice; it's tempered by their "actual victimization in life."¹⁴

I completed an internship with RW during the summer of 2010. After spending two months with the group, I decided to become a member and have been active within the L.A. chapter ever since. Because of this intimate involvement with and investment in RW as well as my background as a white, middle class college-educated woman, questions of the legitimacy of my voice and my ability to ethically engage in a critique of Western (middle class, white) feminism are raised. Similarly, because I am exploring questions of building transnational feminist solidarity, I must acknowledge the politics of my location, un-packing my own privileges and therefore biases I bring to this discussion.

¹² Leon Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*.

¹³ *Radical Women Manifesto*

¹⁴ Ibid.

Acknowledging the Politics of Location:

The 'I' in the 'We'

My ability to articulate a legitimate transnational anti-capitalist theory of resistance is wrought with conditions and predications. The legitimacy of my thoughts, ideas and interventions is only available to me under the condition that I understand the “politics of [my] location”¹⁵ – that is, that I am able to implicate myself in the structures of the oppressions I am trying to combat. I must account for the ‘I’ within the ‘we’, and give credence to the inherent problem with these pronouns in the first place: that “there is no liberation that only knows how to say ‘I’”. There is [also] no collective movement that speaks for each of us all the way through. And so even ordinary pronouns become a political problem.”¹⁶ But in order to account for my own politics of location, I must always be conscientious of the lens I am seeing through, understand what privileges it is tainted with, and how my personal identities create a tendency toward selective understanding. Thus, my inclusion and the legitimacy of the space I carve out as an activist, student, critic, and Westerner within transnational feminist dialogue, is predicated on my ability to hold both the “politics of [my] location”¹⁷ and the “politics of engagement”¹⁸ simultaneously in my consciousness. I must understand and explain where the place I am starting from *is*, and why I cannot stay there.

It is essential that I implicate myself, that I center myself in my own history, consciously choosing reality over obfuscation when explaining my place in the world and in transnational feminist discourse. This begins with the naming of my privilege. I am white, American, middle class and educated, and the culmination of these identities has allowed me to access numerous sites of privilege. The only limit to this privileged status is my sexual orientation. In order to

¹⁵ Rich, “Notes Toward a Politics of Location.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 92.

receive the full scope of my white, middle class, American privilege, I would have to deny this part of myself. Thus, I can see the privilege I could potentially have (indeed I know what it would taste like, look like, and smell like, because I lived there, in the closet, passing as a straight woman, until college) and at the same time I know it would come at a high price: the self-denial of my full capacity to love and be loved.

This choice, to live where I live, willfully in a margin, is a step towards a politics of engagement. My queerness is what I experience “most immediately as the limitation imposed on [me] by my family, culture, race, and class”¹⁹ and thus is a “political motivation as well as a personal experience.”²⁰ To live this experience of queerness, to seek my own equal rights without working against other types of oppression that I do not personally experience but that exist nonetheless, would be to misunderstand the layers and intersections of my own oppression. Homophobia will not be eradicated if sexism remains. Sexism will not be eradicated if racism persists. This knowledge has given me the political and ethical resolve to push myself outside of the safety of “home”; the places of self-centered comfort, and towards the difficult but necessary task of building bridges. Keeping this in mind, I must be aware of the lack of uniformity in all my identities. My queer experience is not necessarily shared by all others, and thus my goals might not be the same, even within my communities of belonging. Home is not a safe place. There is much work to be done in these spaces as well.

I cling to this thought of intersecting oppressions when I am trying to find connections between myself and others whose lives look so different. Again here, it is sometimes a challenge to resist from drawing parallels and detailed congruencies that ultimately will not hold up. My lived experience is so different from so many other women’s, and I should not fear this. Instead,

¹⁹ Ibid. 97

²⁰ Ibid.

I recognize that the connection we share “cannot be the enemy [...] it is not who you are, in other words, but what we can do for each other that will determine the connection.”²¹ This is the language I use to link myself to others. Differences must be accounted for, but “it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence.”²²

Each day I do work in transnational feminism, I must be conscientious enough to go through a meticulous process. It is also a slow process, and it is necessary that I repeat it constantly. First, I acknowledge the place I speak from. Then I reach a place beyond listening, to hearing, where I can begin to “unlearn”²³ the way I have been taught to speak about others’ lives. The ‘unlearning’ process, particularly, is a “gradual chipping away of [my] assumed, often ethnocentric centers of self/other definitions”²⁴ which requires the constant ‘checking’ and examination of my own thoughts. I must ask myself, “*Who am I really talking about here?*” I must then relearn a new language, adopt a new lens that will allow me to see and speak differently, in a more productive way. Once I have gone through these rigors I can work towards a politics of engagement, pushing myself to my own limits. I can begin to build bridges not necessarily because of shared oppressions, but because there is a mutual need among myself and others, and because my ability to do so will determine the survival of others as well as my own.

Keeping the politics of my location in mind, an understanding of the ways in which globalization is a gendered and racialized process is integral to this new theory of resistance.. The dominant Western discourse surrounding ‘development’ in the Third World – how these narratives are used to reify and naturalize sexual and racial stereotypes of Third World women –

²¹ Jordan, “Report from the Bahamas,” 444.

²² Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,” 44.

²³ Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” 32.

²⁴ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 119.

must be examined. This is a key place to start, as it will illuminate not only why anti-globalization should be a feminist issue, but also how these narratives inhibit achieving “global solidarity” against capitalism.

Making Global Capitalism a Feminist Issue

Examining Discourse: The Sexual and Racial Politics of Globalization

There are two dominant, repeating, and intertwined narratives imbedded in globalization discourse which serve to explain why Third World women are recruited for the lowest wage-earning and most easily-exploited jobs in the new global economy. The *development narrative* and the *naturalization narrative* cannot function independently while upholding the status quo that capitalism requires in order to thrive. The *development narrative* provides the basis for most Third World ‘development’ projects employed by the West in the past few decades. The development narrative operates under a number of assumptions about capitalism (for example, that its rising tide will raise all ships) and Third World peoples in general. The *naturalization narrative*, which is imbedded in the development narrative, seeks to naturalize Third World women’s exploitation at the hands of capitalism by reifying sexual and racial stereotypes. Within these interlocking narratives we can locate Third World women and identify the ways in which they are represented in dominant Western development discourse.

The Development Narrative

The whole of the development narrative is based on the assumption that capitalism is just, fair, and the most equitable system of human economic interactions available. The reality, of course, is that capitalism, by its very nature, requires that someone be at the bottom of the ladder so that someone else can be at the top. Capitalism is an inherently unequal system, predicated on competition, and whose success relies on the upholding of racial and sexual privileges and

oppressions. The assumption that “Third World women suffer only from ‘insufficient participation in an otherwise benevolent process of growth and development’”²⁵ neglects not only to take account of the unequal power relations between the First and Third Worlds as a result of colonial legacy, but it also constructs a narrative in which it becomes ‘logical’ and easy to blame Third World women for their own economic failures. Refusing to examine the system of capitalism and its inherent inequalities allows the West to construct a narrative that is predicated on individualism and the power of individual agency. The myth becomes that one’s social and economic situation is fluid, and that upwards mobility is possible with hard work. When these neo-liberal reforms, such as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), fail, as they almost always do, the blame is transferred onto the receivers of the aid. The Third World peoples who were the object of Western aid are pathologized as backwards, incapable, and lazy.

Neo-Liberal Reforms: A Quick Overview of Debt and Structural Adjustment

When most of Asia, Africa and Latin America transformed from colonies to post-colonial, independent states in the 1960s and 1970s, they found themselves entering a world market where Western capitalism reigned supreme, and Western corporate monopolies had a strangle-hold on manufacturing and the distribution of key resources. Though these nation-states had become independent in name, the colonial control over Third World economies and natural resources remained the same. Stimulated by the radical thoughts of Frantz Fanon in Algeria, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, who were among the political leaders and activists calling for a “new world order” in which Third World countries had sovereignty over their

²⁵ Chang, “Globalization in Living Color...” 232.

resources and were not forced to enter into exploitative Western economic practices, many Third World countries attempted to band together to protect their economic interests. Unfortunately, centuries of economic exploitation through colonialism had made Western companies too powerful for these fledgling Third World countries to combat.²⁶ Third World countries could do little but watch as the price of goods imported from the West crept steadily upwards while the prices they received from their own exports either stayed the same or dropped. Nyerere referred to this grave injustice as “constantly riding the downward escalator.”²⁷

In order to protect Western economic interests, while at the same time appeasing Third World governments enough to keep them on the ‘right side’ of the battle between Western capitalist countries and the Eastern, socialist Soviet bloc, private banks and institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, made thousands of dubious loans to Third World countries throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.²⁸ The majority of this loan money went toward lining the pockets of corrupt government officials in the Third World, or toward militarization, often against its own people. The case of Argentina illustrates the nature of these foolish loans. From 1976 to 1983, the Argentinean military dictatorship run by Jorge Rafael Videla borrowed over \$40 billion to fund its infamous Dirty War against political subversives within the country. In the seven-year reign of terror, between nine thousand and thirty thousand Argentines were killed or “disappeared.” In the aftermath of the war, it has become apparent that the destination of 80 percent of the borrowed money was undocumented. However, there is sufficient evidence that the IMF not only knew the majority of the loans being made to Videla’s regime were being used to purchase weapons from Western arms dealers, but that the

²⁶ Ellwood, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*, 42-58.

²⁷ Ibid. 45

²⁸ Ibid. 50

organization actively connived to cover up the paper trail.²⁹ Though the Dirty War ended, Argentineans were saddled with the accrument of the debt – the overwhelming burden of which effectively caused a complete economic collapse in 2001.

Argentina was just one country which found itself unable to pay back loans in the 1980s and 1990s. What is more, most of the increase in debt during this time period occurred because these Third World countries struggled just to pay the interest on existing loans. In six of the eight years from 1990 to 1997, for example, “developing countries paid out more in debt service (interest plus repayments) than they received in new loans – a total transfer from the poor South to the rich North of \$77 billion.”³⁰ One by one, Third World countries began to default on their loan payments, to the point that the IMF had to step in and intervene with an alternate solution. The IMF concluded that the debt problem Third World countries faced were due to “excessive demand” in their domestic economies. The response was to devalue the currency and cut government spending. In countries that already lacked basic services, this proved incredibly detrimental. If countries refused to take the steps perscribed by the IMF, they were denied the ‘seal of approval’ they needed in order to participate in the global economy.³¹

The IMF set up it’s first Structural Adjustment Facility in 1986. The World Bank followed suit and compiled lists of ‘adjustments’ Third World countries would have to make to the structures of their economies in order to continue receiving Western aid. The Bank’s adjustment reinforced the perscriptions set up by the IMF, calling for the ‘liberalization’ of Third World economies and the privatization of public sectors which were meant to provide basic services to people. This neo-liberal approach to Third World debt management has proven a tremendous failure for Third World countries, as poverty in these countries has only increased

²⁹ Ibid. 49

³⁰ Ibid. 50

³¹ Ibid. 51

since the implementation of these SAPs. The situation today, unfortunately, remains largely the same. The IMF and World Bank have ignored the widespread call for complete debt forgiveness, and Third World countries continue to suffer because of it. In 1999, a study by the U.S. group, Development Gap, analyzed the impact of SAPs on over 70 Asian and African countries, concluding that “the longer a country operates under structural adjustment the worse its debt burden becomes. SAPs are likely to push countries into a tragic circle of debt, adjustment, a weakened domestic economy, heightened vulnerability and greater debt.”³²

SAPs, as well as the hundreds of neo-liberal reforms enacted throughout the Third World, have not only overwhelmingly failed, but in many cases have made economic and social conditions much worse for nations. This rationale, that all are free to participate equally in the system of capitalism, is behind almost every major development plan implemented in the Third World. What is more, these projects, as part of a larger development paradigm, also operate under a number of assumptions and have served to pathologize Third World women. One such assumption, is that the free market is actually ‘free’ and therefore fair. The notion of the ‘free market’ is fundamental to the capitalist system. Under this paradigm, sustaining legacies of colonialism (such as racism) are erased, and an equal playing field is assumed for all participants in the capitalist system. Another assumption is that competition between people and markets is the most equitable and profitable way for economies to function.

Western institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, have attempted to address the global wealth gap not by examining the system of globalization and inherent inequality of capitalism itself, but rather by implementing neo-liberal reforms such as SAPs. Third World

³² “Conditioning Debt Relief on Adjustment: Creating Conditions for More Indebtedness,” Development Gap, Washington, 1999. Cited in Ellwood, 55-6.

women have been forced to bear the brunt of this neo-imperialist exploitation. Because many SAPs 'adjust' Third World economies by slashing wages, social services, and forcing governments to privatize industries, many Third World women have had to adjust family budgets to compensate a loss of income, which has a negative impact on the nutrition and health of them and their children. Additionally, because schools are almost always privatized, most families cannot afford to send all of their children and young girls are the first to be held out. Women cannot afford privatized pre-natal care and other medical attention; therefore ordinary women are forced to assume the role of doctors and nurses. The detriments are numerous and far-reaching, especially when it comes to food production. In India for example, "lands formerly used to produce rice have been rapidly converted to shrimp farms and orange orchards. While rice has always been a staple for local consumption, shrimp is purely a cash crop for export to Japan, and oranges for export to the United States for orange juice."³³ In Cameroon, village fields that were once used to grow cocoa yams and maize were converted into corporate cocoa plantations. Instead of growing food crops to feed their families, village women were forced to grow and harvest the cocoa, a 60 kg (132 lbs) bag of which sold on the world market for the equivalent of \$2. It is realities such as these that illuminate 'development' not so much as for the benefit of the people it affects, but rather as a continued colonization of the Third World by opening already vulnerable people and economies up to Western exploitation.

The development narrative is teleological in nature. Western institutions (such as Western-style education systems, 'modern' workforce, etc.) are often implemented as part of these development projects as well, despite the cultural clashes they cause or social incompatibilities. The operators of these projects are only faintly concerned with this, and if they are, the solution is often to attempt to supplant local values with those of the West. The

³³ Ibid. 235

compatibility of these Western institutions with the culture and location into which they will be introduced seems to be largely unimportant. The postulation, therefore, seems to be that the Third World people at whom the development project is aimed will have to adjust. The Western way of ‘developing’ is thus centered, and any alternative model developed in the Third World is assumed inadequate or simply unworthy of regard. This becomes evident when one takes stock of the language used to delineate the differences in economic development from nation-state to nation-state, and from region to region. Nation states of the Third World are ‘developing,’ as if they are in the process of achieving something viable, but are not there yet. Western countries are ‘developed,’ as they have already attained what the ‘developing’ countries have not. The hypothesis, therefore, is that Western countries and economies are the measure by which the rest of the world should compare its progress. The state of Western progress is the goal for the rest of the world. Western institutions are centered, normalized, un-questioned, and assumed to be just and functioning in a collective best interest.

The Naturalization Narrative

The development projects that make women’s participation in global capitalism a target, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), operate under the supposition that women’s poverty under globalization is simply the result of exclusion from participation and not symptomatic of a poisonous system.³⁴ Therefore, Third World women’s inclusion in the global economy becomes a benevolent gesture from the West. However, Third World women are purposefully recruited for the most easily exploitable, lowest paying jobs in the market. Racial and sexual stereotypes intersect to create the rationale for what constitutes Third World women’s

³⁴ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2008-2011.
<http://www.undp.org/women/docs/Gender-Equality-Strategy-2008-2011.pdf>

work. In *The Global Assembly Line* (1986), when multiple sweatshop managers were asked why the preference for female workers, their responses immediately evoked sexual and racial stereotypes. In the Philippines, the managers spoke of the “docility” of the Asian women workers as a positive attribute. This comment speaks to a controlling image of Asian women as acquiescence and docility have long been stereotypes attached to them. This Western-constructed stereotype is upheld by false Western statements about Asian culture.³⁵ The idea that Asian culture shapes women to be docile and submissive makes them not only easily exploitable, but the exploitation (be it sexual or economic) becomes natural and therefore acceptable. Asian women become ideal sweatshop workers because they are *naturally* docile and patient. In both the Philippines and Mexico, the managers explained that women had “nimble fingers” and the “patience” such meticulous work required. During my time in Cameroon, when I asked why all the field workers in the tea plantation were women, I received an identical answer from a Cameroonian professor: because women have nimble fingers and are patient enough to do this type of menial work.

As black studies and postcolonial scholarship alike have noted,

“Defining people of color as [...] more “natural” denies African and Asian peoples subjectivity and supports the political economy of domination that characterized slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Domination always involves attempts to objectify the subordinate group.”³⁶

This objectification, as Patricia Hill Collins explains, is central to Western binary thinking, which lays out human difference in oppositional terms only. Within this conception of difference, one is not merely different from something else but is constituted as directly opposed to its counterpart. The two parts are seen as separately functioning entities. For example, male

³⁵ Certainly, Asia is not a monolithic place and to speak of “Asian culture” is a gross reduction to say the least, but I would argue that most Westerners and Western discourse surrounding Asia make no effort to delineate the differences, be them cultural, geopolitical, or otherwise. I use this term as I perceive it to exist in Western discourse as valid.

³⁶ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 78.

and female, straight and gay, black and white are not merely corresponding – rather, they are fundamentally different and only related through their identification as opposites. Oppositional difference is directly related to the objectification of certain people in society precisely because within binary thinking, one entity is objectified as Other.

The binary categories that exist within society (black/white, straight/gay, male/female, etc.) also come with subordinate and dominant statuses attached. Therefore, issues of subjectivity and objectivity become salient. As bell hooks notes, “As objects, one’s reality is defined by others, one’s identity created by others, one’s history named only in ways that define one’s relationship to those who are its subject.”³⁷ Conversely, subjects are able to be the architects of their own identities and realities.

This paradigm of subjectivity/objectivity and dominance/subordination that Collins and hooks demystify can be directly applied to the condition of colonization. Therefore, it can expose some of the necessary conditions for decolonization. As Frantz Fanon notes in his work, *Wretched of the Earth*, “The colonist is right when he says he “knows” [the colonized]. It is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject. The colonist derives his validity, i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system.”³⁸ As Fanon suggests, the subject/object relationship does a great deal more than establish identities and perspectives. Rather, it necessitates dominant/subordinate political and economic relationships, such as those found within a colonial system. This is certainly the case with the previous example of Cameroonian tea plantation workers. Stripped of their subjectivity, the workers are objectified and therefore defined by those who have the power to economically and politically dominate them. They are spoken of as ‘naturally’ nimble and patient, and therefore this line of work suits them as a group.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 2.

This objectification of black women can also be seen in the U.S. context, specifically with the case of domestic workers. As Collins declares, making black women work as if they were “mules uh de world”, along with multiple different signs of deference such as calling workers “girls” enabled employers to infantilize them.³⁹

Yet another way in which the objectification of U.S. black women has aided sociopolitical and economical dominance can be seen through the ways in which these controlling images of black women has impacted social institutions. In discussions of black women’s sexuality, for example, (specifically AIDS and teenage pregnancy discourse) the image of the jezebel⁴⁰ has had a considerable influence. In AIDS research scholarship black female adolescent sexuality is given an inordinate amount of attention. While the purported aim is to change ‘risky’ sexual practices, the solution the government offers up frequently is to coerce young women of color into taking marginal birth control, such as Depo Provera. Black, young, urban women are much more likely to be coerced into taking these and other forms of birth control than their white, middle class, suburban counterparts.⁴¹ The ‘social problem’ that this kind of research supports, therefore, is not that these young girls are at risk themselves, but rather that they are engaging in sex outside of marriage.⁴² Because of the ways in which globalization is a racialized and gendered project, resistance to global capitalism is not only a feminist concern, but also a decolonizing concern.

³⁹ Collins *ibid.*

⁴⁰ The jezebel is a part of the nexus of controlling images that seek to dominate black womanhood. Jezebels, or “hochies”, as Collins explains, “represent a deviant black female sexuality.” (89) Originating under slavery, the legitimization of the jezebel as the sexually voracious black woman provided an excuse for the rampant sexual assaults and rapes committed against black women by white men. Collins discusses the affects of this image on contemporary culture (as well as the jezebel’s relative, the modern-day “hoochie”) in depth in *Black Feminist Thought*. See this text for a more thorough analysis of controlling images.

⁴¹ Roberts, 1997. Cited in Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 94.

⁴² Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 93.

Making Global Capitalism a Decolonizing Issue

Global capitalism as we know it today is inextricably bound up with other histories of domination and oppression. In fact, it is these very histories and legacies that have created the conditions that allow the rise of global poverty to continue year after year. The spread of global capitalism would not be possible without the free labor provided by African slaves in America for over 400 years, nor would it be possible if not for the European ravaging of the African continent, Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia and South Asia via colonialism. Colonialism has not ended, but simply transformed. Global capitalism, specifically neoliberal reforms operating under the guise of ‘development’, constitutes the continued colonization of the Third World. Colonization (and therefore the need for decolonization) is still a material condition for Third World people.

Spike Lee’s *When the Levees Broke* speaks to this truth by illuminating the ways in which African Americans are still treated as colonial subjects in the U.S. Both Fanon and Lee paint vivid pictures of the colonial reality. Lee’s telling of the story of hurricane Katrina completely dissolves any sense of racial equality in the U.S., rendering any claims of significant progress false and symbolic only. The images of African Americans in the lower ninth-ward literally drowning and starving to death, going for weeks without aid or help from their government or countrymen parallels Fanon’s passage in *The Wretched of the Earth* in which he describes the material differences between the colonizer and the colonized:

The colonists sector is a sector built to last, of stone and steel. It’s a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, un-dreamed of leftovers. [...] The colonized’s sector [...] is a disreputable place, inhabited by disreputable people. You are born any where, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. [...] The colonized’s sector is a famished sector, hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal and light.⁴³

⁴³ Fanon, Frantz. *Wretched of the Earth*. 2004 (4)

Both Fanon and Lee depict the colonizer's use of force against the colonized. Fanon writes of the unparalleled power of the colonizer's military – how even the very threat of overt force, of annihilation is often enough to keep the colonized in their place.⁴⁴ This reality, as a contemporary one for African Americans, is made apparent by the narratives Lee strings together about the militarization of New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina, with the expressed intent of disallowing (black) American citizens from fleeing the disaster. Both the subjects Fanon writes about and the subjects of Lee's documentary are 'Othered' in their own land.

And in the midst of this racist colonial domination, there is tremendous resistance which manifests itself in many different ways. For Fanon, this resistance can come in many forms, but in order to achieve true liberation, the people must use violence against their colonizer. He tells us, "Colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with good reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence."⁴⁵ Robin D.G. Kelley's analysis of African American working class resistance offers a slightly different, highly-dynamic view of anti-colonialism. He analyzes both the subtleties and overt nature of resistance, using both examples of "stealing" and "wiggling", as well as labor organizing to highlight the complexities at play.⁴⁶ Lee also shows African American resistance to domination by playing on the idea of "looting"; the word chosen by the American media in the wake of Katrina to describe African American citizens breaking into stores and taking basic goods to ensure their survival – something the American government had overwhelmingly failed to do.

Together, Lee, Fanon and Kelley present transnational and trans-generational views of colonialism that look remarkably similar to one another. Lee poignantly makes the case for

⁴⁴ Ibid. 25

⁴⁵ Ibid. 23.

⁴⁶ Kelley, Robin D.G. "Shiftless of the World Unite!" 1994.

further decolonization, illuminating the colonized subjects within the colonizer's house, while Fanon's psychological and revolutionary insights are still remarkably pertinent in 2011.

Fanon for Our Times

Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (*WE*) has been criticized at length by many scholars for its overly-universalizing tone. These critiques have largely taken issue with the ways in which his universalized discussion of the colonized subject is an accurate picture of the African colonial subject but fails to account for the special circumstances of other colonized peoples, such as those in Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. Though it is true that the colonial condition Fanon presents cannot perhaps be readily applied to all colonized peoples everywhere, without alteration, his universalizing and generalizing is largely the reason *WE* is viewed as the "Bible of decolonization", as Stuart Hall has remarked. It is precisely because *WE* lacks significant specificity that it has been able to be used by so many revolutionaries all over the world.⁴⁷

What both Fanon and these critics miss is not only the ways in which *WE*'s generalizations obscure the precise realities of colonized peoples in Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, but also the ways in which Fanon fails to account for the special oppression suffered by colonized women. Though Fanon's work continues to be foundational for decolonization theory and social revolutions on an international scale some sixty years after its publication, there are some limitations to it. Primarily, these limitations pertain to the scope of his argument, insofar as his discussion of psychological colonization is extremely male-centered.

⁴⁷ In Bhabha's excellent Foreword to *WE*, he mentions other revolutionary leaders and groups who passed around Fanon's work and were profoundly impacted by his words. Among these groups were Bobby Seale and Huey Newton of the Black Panthers, South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko, IRA leader Bobby Sands, and members of the Iranian Shiite revival of the 1960s and '70s. See pages xxviii-xxx.

Though Fanon discusses how race and class work in and through one another to produce a (potentially) revolutionary class of people, his argument would be strengthened if he also acknowledged the role gender plays in the systems of domination he discusses. A black woman's experience of colonization (as we now know, thanks to quite a bit of scholarship in the past forty years) is vastly different, as it is black women who live at the intersection of the sexist and racist oppression that colonization creates. Nowhere in *WE* does he mention the colonized woman's endurance of and resistance to the matrix of domination she lives at the center of daily.

Fanon's lack of gender analysis in colonization/decolonization is apparent when he discusses decolonization as a unification based on nation and race:

The colonial context, as we have said, is characterized by the dichotomy it inflicts on the world. Decolonization unifies this world by a radical decision to remove its heterogeneity, by unifying it on the ground of nation and sometimes race.⁴⁸

Decolonization must not only include a unification that is based solely on race or nation – difference is greater than these two elements. What is more, as global capitalism has comprised the continued colonization of the Third World, and as the system relies on more than national and racial oppression (such as gender and sexuality), decolonization must consist of more than racial and national liberation. After all, in the context of a globalized world, the lines of a nation and those oppressed by global capitalism – indeed, those who are colonized – are not confined to a discretely bounded geographical space. Both the world's richest and the world's poorest can be found existing simultaneously within almost any nation-state. Solidarity based on national identity, therefore, is a tenuous possibility at best.

Similarly, one of Fanon's primary critiques of colonization is that it denies a man his right to be a man.⁴⁹ While this is true, the problem with colonization is not that it denies the

⁴⁸ Ibid. 20

black man his right to masculinity and male privilege, but rather that it denies both men and women their right to human intelligibility. By using this male-centered language and conceptions of the colonized's reality, Fanon misses the potential opportunity to include an entire half of the population of colonized peoples in his theoretical framework of both colonization and liberation. Fanon's work would be incredibly strong if it were to include a gendered analysis. Hence, his work gains even more importance today by supplementing it with the ground-breaking work of black feminists who have discussed anti-capitalism through a feminist lens.

Despite this historical and contemporary objectification of people of color, specifically black women, resistance has been as commonplace as the controlling images themselves. This dialectical relationship between oppression and resistance can be traced throughout history and therefore suggests a strong, collective black female consciousness. Maria Stewart, perhaps one of the first black women to publically declare black women's resistance to extreme oppression, declared in an 1831 speech, "No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourself. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties."⁵⁰ Black women's resistance to a sexist and racist world has been multifaceted, but has remained a constant part of black women's collective narrative. As Bonnie Thornton Dill's work⁵¹ with black domestic workers demonstrates, women refused to allow their white employers to push them around. One of Dill's interviewees stated:

When I went out to work...my mother told me, 'Don't let anybody take advantage of you. Speak up for your rights, but do the work right. If they don't give you your rights, you demand that they treat you right. And if they don't, you quit.'⁵²

⁴⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 78, and throughout the text. This idea is also very prevalent all throughout *WE*, such as on pages 10 and 16.

⁵⁰ Maria Stewart, "Daughters of Africa," 1831.

⁵¹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 107.

⁵² *Ibid.*

This quote illustrates the speaker's desire and drive to claim self-articulation, to define her own reality and identity, and to demand acknowledgement as a human being in the face of a sexist and racist white patriarchy. By speaking up for herself when she is degraded and 'denied her rights' by her white employers, she is actively rejecting the controlling image that expects black domestic workers to be docile and obedient.⁵³ Additionally, the fact that the speaker frames her reaction to racism and sexism on the job as advice given by her mother is significant, as it places these and other acts of black women's resistance on a trans-generational trajectory. Advice on how to survive and speak-up for oneself is passed down from mother to child.

Fanon also highlights the colonized subject's awareness and outright rejection of controlling images that white society tries to confer upon them. The colonized, when described by the colonizer, is "reduced to the state of an animal",⁵⁴ but at the same time they are aware of the absurdity of these claims "For they know they are not animals. And at the very moment when they discover their humanity, they begin to sharpen their weapons."⁵⁵ The relationship between the colonized's oppression and resistance, then, is dialectical. As long as the colonized are subordinated within intersecting forms of oppression of race, gender, class and nation, an active response to that oppression is needed. Any form of this resistance, then, is a movement toward decolonization.

Though Fanon means "sharpen their weapons" quite literally, as he makes explicit in his text that violence is necessary to achieve decolonization,⁵⁶ I suggest that it can be used metaphorically. That is to say, violence is not the only weapon necessary for the colonized to wield in order to achieve decolonization, and self-definition is one of them. An additional

⁵³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 79.

⁵⁴ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 7.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See Fanon's chapter, "On Violence," pages 1-62.

weapon that could be wielded – and one that is very much related to the counter-hegemonic weapon of self-definition – is the reclamation of language. Ngugi wa Thiong’o has written extensively on the necessity of African writers writing in their mothertongues, as “the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.”⁵⁷ Language, therefore, plays a crucial part in one’s ability to self-define, to reject objectivity in order to claim one’s subjectivity. The social mythologies constructed by the colonizer must be substituted resoundingly with the colonized’s own articulation of self. Objectivity must be denounced in favor of subjectivities.

These controlling images and development narratives that objectify people of color (specifically women) are hegemonic, but will only remain so as long as they are invested in. The commentary by the factory managers in *The Global Assembly Line* was juxtaposed not only by some factory women’s anti-globalization activism, but also by the fact that these women are highly discouraged from forming or participating in worker’s unions. Obviously, if Third World women were docile in nature, they would not be agitating for their rights, organizing against these giant multinational corporations, or forming workers’ unions. Third World women workers have challenged these narratives in ways that not only question their hegemony, but in a way that also implores us to take notice of the power of Third World women’s resistance to globalization. Globalization, and the attendant anti-globalization movement, therefore, is indubitably a feminist, decolonizing issue. The discourse surrounding globalization must continue to be analyzed, as well as the processes of this system which mark it as a racialized and gendered project. Additionally, it is crucial that this new theory of anti-capitalist, decolonizing resistance

⁵⁷ wa Thiong’o, “The Language of African Literature,” 4.

be rooted in the experiences and voices of Third World women, as they are the ones who suffer the most under the crushing boot of capitalism and therefore hold the ability to demystify the complex system.

Difference as Dynamism and the Vanguard Role

What most Western feminist pedagogies fail to account for is the ways in which Third World women, both within and outside of a geographical Western context, resist global capitalism. By centering the experiences of Third World women, highlighting both their experiences of and resistance to capitalist domination, we can create an epistemology of transnational feminist anti-capitalist struggle. Rooting a transnational feminist critique of anti-globalization in the social location and experiences of Third World women offers up the chance to demystify capitalist exploitation while also providing the opportunity to create dynamic, multi-faceted resistance.

The ways in which feminists all over the world experience gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality and global capitalism constitutes differences, but it is these very differences that can be used within an anti-capitalist framework as sources of power. Audre Lorde, in her essay, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”, says:

Too often, we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable barriers, or that they do not exist at all. This results in a voluntary isolation, or false and treacherous connections. Either way, we do not develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Lorde “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference.”

Differences are vital to a discussion of anti-capitalist organization and struggle, but they should not be perceived as gaps. Rather, they should be perceived as contact points from which dynamism and powerful movement can be created – movement that has the potential to strengthen our transnational anti-capitalist struggles. By using differences instead of negating or diminishing them, capitalist oppression can be attacked from many different angles, with a broad understanding of the range of exploitation it visits on women all over the world. This understanding and utilization of difference can make an approach to liberation from a capitalist system more comprehensive, inclusive, and vibrant.

Third World women living and speaking from within the First World occupy “an important, even crucial place for feminist analysis; it is precisely the epistemic privilege of these communities of women that opens up the space for demystifying capitalism and for envisioning transborder social and economic justice.”⁵⁹ Because of the radical positionality of Third World women with respect to globalization, Third World women must be the vanguard of the transnational anti-capitalist feminist movement we are attempting to build. Because of the social and economic location that Third World women occupy in the world, their capacity for theorization, action, and leadership in anti-globalization movements is second to none. By nature of the multiplicity of their oppressions under a racist, patriarchal global capitalist system, Third World women have the least to lose and the most to gain from the dismantling of the capitalist system. For Third World women, anti-capitalist struggle is not an intellectual choice as it is for white Western feminists, but rather, it is necessary for survival. If Third World women occupy the vanguard role of this transnational anti-capitalist feminist movement, their theorizations of global capitalism can provide a radical and revolutionary perspective on multiple systems of oppression.

⁵⁹ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 250.

Globalization is an assault on the ability of Third World women to survive, and results in losses of status, education, freedom, safety, and access to basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. This system greatly impedes Third World women's ability to provide for and sustain their families, and often forces them to leave their families all together in order to migrate to the West.⁶⁰ Capitalism is a threat to the dignity of these women and attempts to render them as faceless producers: replaceable, expendable, and barely human. Because of this reality, Third World women occupy a potentially radical position for change. By nature of their super-exploitation, the positionality of Third World women includes a dialectic of experience and resistance. While western feminist theory⁶¹ has done many progressive things for the world, it has ironically reproduced imperialist structures when attempting to engage in transnational dialogue. The experiences and voices of Third World women must therefore be centered. Many transnational feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Obioma Nnaemeka and Gayatri Spivak, have undertaken the project of decolonizing feminism. It is from this body of work that I build this new theory of resistance.

Decolonizing Feminism

“Like women everywhere, African women *have* problems. More important, they have provided solutions to these problems. We are the only ones who can set our priorities and agenda. Anyone who wishes to participate in our struggles must do so in the context of our agenda.”

-ObiomaNnaemeka⁶²

⁶⁰ Chang, “Globalization in Living Color...” 231.

⁶¹ Western feminist theory is a very broad category, and should not be understood as a monolithic body of work. I use this term throughout this thesis to designate the numerous feminist works that center and normalize the experiences of white, middle class women. I am not suggesting that *all* feminist work coming from the West (understood as a geographical location) centers and normalizes the lives of white, middle-class women, however, there is a considerable amount and it is this work that still makes up the core of the feminist canon. Because one does not have to be physically from the West in order to write from a middle-class, white-centered perspective, my use of the term Western feminists/ism is not a geographical designation, but rather a sociopolitical one.

⁶² Nnaemeka, “Bringing African Women into the Classroom,” 57.

Western feminist interest in Third World gender relations has grown. Along with the increasing prevalence of questions surrounding identity politics, difference and the politically-charged notion of “global sisterhood” has entered many mainstream (read: white, Western) feminist discourses. All too often, however, these conversations are had without self-reflexivity, and without the un-packing of national, cultural and racial privileges within Western feminism. Many Western feminists who have engaged in this cross-cultural analyses have ironically re-created systems of dominance and oppression analogous to those found problematic within Western patriarchy.

Egyptian transnational feminist activist and scholar Nawal El Saadawi, provides an example of this reproduction with an exchange she had with a U.S. feminist in 1993. Discussing issues of poverty in Africa, the U.S. feminist cited the high birth rates in African countries as one of the primary causes of poverty on the continent; another reason for the suffering being the prevalence of African dictators and bad government. When El Saadawi asked her, “Do you think that women and children are the cause and not colonialism or neo-colonialism?” her counterpart responded, “Oh my god, why do you blame others? Why blame the United States and not the local dictatorship or African governments?”⁶³ The perceptions of the U.S. feminist in this story seems to be that poverty in Africa is exclusively an African problem; that is to say, Africans have created the problem themselves by indulging in irresponsible family planning and tolerating greedy governments. Her inability to draw connections between colonialism and neo-colonialism (or ‘development’) reinforces Western imperialism by refusing to acknowledge its existence when it is staring her in the face. By blaming Third World peoples and governments for widespread social and economic ails, a history of imperialist domination that carries right into

⁶³ El Saadawi, “Women in the South in Relation to Women in the North,” 22.

the present is completely ignored. Poet Susan Griffin, also a U.S. feminist does acknowledge the connections between colonial policies and present-day suffering in Africa:

When the white colonists came to Africa they uprooted the millet and substituted other crops such as wheat. When the weather conditions changed, as the tribal societies that had lived there for centuries understood would happen, the wheat could not withstand the dry spells, and hence a famine was created. Seasons of drought would not have had such a devastating effect on millet, but because of the planting of wheat, terrible starvation resulted. This pattern has been repeated over and over again and is still being repeated. Today, now not in the name of colonialism but in the name of development.⁶⁴

This U.S. feminist is not alone in failing to draw these connections between colonialism and the current imperialism of Western countries and institutions, but this failure does (and has) led to a reproduction of hegemonic and imperial systems of knowledge. Among feminists specifically, the failure to draw these connections constitutes missed opportunities to build transnational solidarity.

In order to conceive of transnational political solidarity, we must center the voices of those feminists who have contributed to the project of decolonizing feminism. The ways in which certain scholars and activists⁶⁵ have deconstructed many of the falsely universal claims made by Western feminists is important in multiple ways: not only have their words and actions challenged dominant feminist discourse in a way that demands a re-orientation of problematic paradigms and pedagogies, but it has also centered the agency and power of Third World women's experiences. These decolonizing efforts are essential to building a theory of transnational feminist solidarity, as they remind us of all that we must take stock of when attempting to build cross-cultural bridges.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 23

⁶⁵ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Obioma Nnaemeka, Marnia Lazreg, June Jordan, Angela Davis, and Gayatri Spivak, among others.

The feminists who have undertaken the project of decolonizing feminism have produced quite a few outstanding critiques of the ethical and analytical problems that arise when Western feminism is exported and imposed on women of another culture. African feminists, such as Nawal El Saadawi and Obioma Nnaemeka, for example, have highlighted the ways in which this exportation of Western feminism has served to Other and silence African women. Muslim feminists, such as Nima Naghibi and Tanisha Ramachandran, have also addressed the problem of Othering within Western feminist discourse.

Creating the Other

The process of Othering has been prevalent in Western academic fields since scholars began endeavoring to study ‘difference’ among people. Fields such as anthropology were indeed created for this very reason: to study that which was “unknown” to the Western mind. Recently however, Western feminists have begun to discuss difference among women, turning their attention to the plight of women of color within and outside of the geographical U.S. Indeed, many women of color feminists have been very critical of the way white feminists have distorted and misrepresented their lived experiences, re-creating the structures of racism and cultural imperialism that oppress them in mainstream society.⁶⁶

In order to render someone as “different” (read: Other) some group’s lived experiences have to be centred and normalized as a base of comparison. Herein lays the root of the problem of Othering in Western analyses: the experiences of (white) Western feminists are centered, relegating those of anyone else to the margins of analysis, to be compared and almost always

⁶⁶ Though there are countless examples of feminists who have done such work, the foundational text, *This Bridge Called My Back*, is rich in this kind of critique of white-centeredness in feminist theorizing and organizing. Hazel V. Carvey’s “White Woman Listen!” also provides another key example of black women “talking back” to white-centered feminism.

rendered inferior to dominant Western culture. Marnia Lazreg gives an example of this white-centeredness of analysis by discussing the use of the term “women of color.” As with all words and phrases, this phrase is meaningless until someone legitimizes it by investing in the language. In the case of “women of color”, “it is not “women of color” who have the authority to impose the language of race but the women who implicitly claim to have no color.”⁶⁷ By making this implicit claim, white women are asserting themselves as the standard for measuring difference. Their lived experiences are taken as givens, normalized, and anything that falls outside of their understanding of the world needs to be deliberately named in order to demarcate the difference.

This discussion of difference can become a fixation for Western feminists once they engage with Third World women. This obsession, which is a form of exoticizing, facilitates misrepresentations of culture and women’s lived experiences. During my time abroad in Cameroon, for example, my program travelled to Maroua in the Far North Region. After our first full day in the market we settled in at the hotel to have a group discussion on the cultural differences between the north and the south. Even though Muslims are the minority in the northern regions, I found that for the duration of the conversation we were almost exclusively talking about Muslim culture (specifically gender roles). While in the market that day, I did not see a single woman in a *burqa*, though I did see a few who were covered head to toe in clothing. Despite this reality, some students in the group were obsessed with talking about the one woman they saw with a *hijab*, as if she was representative of the entire culture of the area. What is more, that woman in the *hijab* was spoken of (and for) by the Westerners as though she was automatically oppressed. By taking the veil of a Muslim woman as an automatic and universal sign of oppression, the wearer of the *hijab* is automatically disempowered and stripped of her agency under the Western gaze. In addition to this problematic assumption that a veiled woman

⁶⁷ Lazreg, “Decolonizing Feminisms.”

is an oppressed woman, the group of Western students had searched out the most uncouth, most exaggerated example of oppression; an example that was then construed as indicative of Cameroonians and their culture. What is more, within the discussion there was a refusal to see 'oppressive' gender relations as caused by patriarchy. Rather, the group continued to talk about Islam as the oppressive force in these women's lives, which only served to Other them in the context of a mostly Christian/Atheist group of Western students.

As my anecdote illustrates, Othering also reinforces, in the Westerner's mind, one's own cultural superiority and can lead one to feel that they should 'save' those Third World women who are not as fortunate to live in a 'progressive' society. Lazreg touches on this Western arrogance when she says:

The double standard that American academic feminism brings to the study of other cultures is apparent when we contrast this with how they see their own culture. For [Americans...] their culture is not rejected wholesale but presented as perfectible. In contrast, by focusing on the sensational and uncouth in other cultures, they render them irredeemable.⁶⁸

In fact, this very focus on cultural difference conceals the systems that underlie practices such as veiling and unveiling. Instead of discussing patriarchy, culture and cultural difference is framed as the culprit that inflicts violence on the bodies of Third World women. Third World feminists such as Tanisha Ramachandran have responded to the Western desire (expressed through both discourse and actual policy changes)⁶⁹ to unveil the Muslim woman by deconstructing the discourse of multiculturalism and liberalism that surrounds the debate. Just as the students of the group in Cameroon did, most Westerners who argue for the banning of the veil in various countries do so on the grounds that it is a symbol of Muslim women's oppression. The veil is taken as a manifestation of Muslim culture's oppressive treatment of women.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 69

⁶⁹ Ramachandran, "No Woman Left Uncovered," 33.

Therefore, an unveiled Muslim woman is a ‘free’ woman, a modern woman, a *Western* woman. Culture, Ramachandran notes, “also serves as a way to speak about race without discussing biology.”⁷⁰ By framing Muslim culture as the problem, Western feminists (among others) are engaging in cultural racism, which does not repudiate biology or the unfair treatment people receive because of their skin color. Rather, cultural racism adds to it and reframes the discrimination on the grounds of cultural difference. As Ramachandran explains,

This serves two purposes: first, it establishes a civilized norm –in this case embodied by Christian Eurocentric culture – and secondly, it provides a basis for discrimination which no longer overtly identifies skin color as the cause for unequal treatment. By using cultural difference as the demarcation, racism is evacuated from the discussion...⁷¹

While Ramachandran is just one Muslim feminist to respond to this cultural racism through scholarship, those women who are not in academia but suffer from this racism nonetheless have found other ways to challenge the Western attempt to ‘save’ them from their culture. On April 11, 2011, a ban on the *burqa*, *niqab*, and all types of veiling went into effect in France despite the fact that only around two thousand women actually wear these items of clothing in the country. The same day the ban went into effect, however, Muslim women protested at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Nineteen veiled women were arrested at the scene. One protestor, Kenza Drider of Avignon told reporters: “I will, under no circumstances, stop wearing my veil. If I am warned verbally, and must appear before the local prosecutor, I will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.”⁷²

As Muslim feminist writer Nima Naghibi discusses in her book, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran*, unveiling and veiling the Muslim woman has been a preoccupation of both the West and countries where Islam dominates the political and cultural

⁷⁰ Ibid. 35

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² GlobalPost, “France Burqa Ban Begins” April 11, 2011 7:17 a.m

climate for centuries. Focusing on the case of Iran, Naghibi notes that at times the veiling of women was promoted as a statement of anti-imperialism, as a protest against the West, as was the case in 1983; while at other times unveiling was enforced as a way for Iran to show its allegiance to the ‘modern’ Western world, as was the case with the 1936 legislation enacted by then-ruler, Reza Shah Pahlavi.⁷³ Naghibi posits that both bans served the same basic function in relation to Muslim women’s bodies and identities. By mandating either veiling or unveiling, the Muslim woman’s body became the site where particular forms of nationalism were played out and signified. Also, the desire at the heart of both mandates, Naghibi writes, was “to possess and to control the figure behind the veil.”⁷⁴ Despite the on-going flip-flop of the veil’s symbolism both in the West as well as in countries such as Iran, one constant has been Muslim women’s resistance to their bodies being used to signify national agendas and xenophobic anxieties alike. Just as French Muslim women protested outside of Notre Dame Cathedral in 2011, Muslim women protested in 1936 when they were forced to unveil themselves in the streets of Tehran.⁷⁵

The Western feminist “discourse of sisterhood” that often calls for the ‘saving’ of the Muslim woman from her oppressive culture has unfortunately led to “a merging of interests between liberal feminism and a xenophobic nationalism.”⁷⁶ This merging is quite dangerous, as these ‘feminist’ interests have already been co-opted by Western leaders interested in using them as a façade for an imperialist agenda. For example, the Bush administration took great pains to highlight the sexist oppression suffered by Iraqi women and girls, using it as a pretense to garner popular support from the American people to invade Iraq. This appeal worked, as three out of

⁷³ Wiegand, “Unveiling Muslim Feminism.”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

every four Americans supported the invasion of Iraq at the beginning of the war in 2003.⁷⁷

Though the motivation for the Iraq war is now widely understood as more about oil and economics than it was about the promulgation of a feminist agenda, the Bush administration effectively shrouded their imperialist, capitalist mission by using the very rhetoric that Western feminists had when discussing the plight of the Iraqi woman. The reality, then, is that capitalism (manifested in this context as the West's relentless thirst for oil) relied on the silencing of the voices of Muslim feminists.

Close attention must be paid to the ways in which capitalism relies on the silencing of the most oppressed groups of people and can thrive on the ignorance of Western feminists who claim to 'know' the oppression suffered by others. These are questions of voice in a world where voice is visibility and visibility is power; who is listened to when they speak and who is ignored. These political questions of voice and inclusion are directly related to how knowledge about women is disseminated and gathered. We must question, therefore, whose voices are being obscured and which conditions must change in order to have these women speak and be heard on their own terms.

These feminist discourses which have sought to challenge and decolonize Western feminist theory, though counter-hegemonic, should not be read merely as reactionary. Black feminists, for example, have not only "talked back" to white-centered feminism, but have also built a distinct anti-capitalist, internationalist narrative. I argue that it is from this body of work, put forth by activists such as Claudia Jones and Frances Beale, that an epistemology of transnational, anti-capitalist resistance should be built.

⁷⁷ Schneider, "Support For the Iraq War Deteriorates."

Disidentifying with Fanon:*Black Feminist Anti-Capitalism as Epistemology*

“Not equality, but degradation and super exploitation: this is the actual lot of Negro women!”⁷⁸

- **Claudia Jones, 1949**

Claudia Jones, in her 1949 essay, “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!” expressed the far left and Communist movement’s refusal to acknowledge black women’s super exploitation and therefore unparalleled potential for anti-capitalist radicalism as a grave mistake. Recognizing black women as (at least) triply exploited as black, woman, and worker, she draws significant connections to the reality of this matrix of domination and the ways in which a white, racist capitalist system relies on it in order to thrive. At the time of her writing, two out of every five black women were working, comprising (as a group) the majority of breadwinners among the black race in the U.S. Despite this fact, she notes that black women earn less than half the pay of white women and are almost solely relegated to the domestic sector of the economy.

Accompanying this trend of unequal pay, high un-employment and availability of only the most menial and degrading jobs for black women, Jones writes of the “ideological campaign to make domestic work palatable. Daily newspaper advertisements [...] base their arguments on the claim that most domestic workers [...] “prefer this type of work to work in industry.”⁷⁹ Jones recognizes this propagandizing of the “virtues” of domestic work as the design of white, racist America to tell the black women where her place ought to be in society: catering to others for next-to-no pay, excluded from unionized support, acting as a good “mammy” who is obedient and non-confrontational.⁸⁰ Because of black women’s integral role in supporting a racist,

⁷⁸ Jones, “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!” 109

⁷⁹ Ibid. 111

⁸⁰ Ibid.

capitalist American system, therefore, their involvement in Communist politics would serve as a tremendous blow to the system that oppresses.

Jones' articulation of intersectionality is groundbreaking in and of itself and serves to place her as a foremother on the trajectory of black feminist, anti-capitalist consciousness. But what is perhaps even more remarkable about her work is her acute awareness of the necessity of fostering international anti-capitalist resistance among black women. She writes,

It will be very fruitful to bring to our country a consciousness of the magnificent struggles of women in North Africa, who, though lacking in the most elementary material needs, have organized a strong movement for peace and thus stand united against a Third World war, with 81 million women in 57 nations, in the Women's International Democratic Federation.⁸¹

This call for transnational solidarity among black women is a recognition on Jones' part of not only the similarities of the struggles faced by women of color in an international context, but also the possibility of creating cross-national coalitions. The reality Jones saw in 1949 is only truer today, as globalization has increased both poverty amongst black women internationally as well as the possibilities of connecting with one another through tremendous technological breakthroughs. Never before has the possibility for transnational anti-capitalist solidarity more palpable.

Frances Beale, a black feminist founder of SNCC's Black Women's Liberation Committee, also wrote of the necessity of anti-capitalist struggle. Similar to Jones, Beale, writing her pioneering essay "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" in 1970, also links black women's intersectional experiences of racism and sexism to this anti-capitalist struggle. Beale also importantly addresses the (white) feminist movement, stating that "any white group that does not have an anti-imperialist and antiracist ideology has absolutely nothing in common with

⁸¹ Ibid. 122

the black woman's struggle."⁸² Pushing her white feminist counterparts further, she implores them to realize that sexist oppression is not due merely to male chauvinism, but rather that it is tied up with the very system of racist capitalism that most black women are forced to endure daily. She decisively argues that if white feminist groups cannot understand the connection, and that they must combat capitalist and racist oppression at the same time that they are concerned with sexism, then multiracial coalitions will not be possible. Beale's words have been echoed by many women of color feminists, both before and since her essay was published, and yet the need for feminists to attack capitalism has never been more pressing, especially in the face of globalization.

Jones and Beale are by no means the only black feminists who have articulated the importance of intersectionality and international anti-capitalist solidarity. However, their work paired together does provide a glimpse of the ways in which black feminist anti-capitalism can be fruitful ground upon which to form an epistemology of transnational feminist anti-capitalist resistance. What these two black feminist scholars and activists have articulated in writing is what RW has in part put in to practice. Third World women should be the vanguard of a transnational anti-capitalist movement, precisely because their lived experiences of oppression create a dialectic that mandates their resistance. Fanon, similar to Marx, RW, Jones and Beale, advocates revolution from the proletariat:

But it is obvious that in colonial countries only the peasantry is revolutionary. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain. The underprivileged and starving peasant is the exploited who very soon discovers that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possibility of concession.⁸³

⁸² Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female."

⁸³ Fanon, *WE*, 23

What Jones, Beale and RW add to Fanon's articulation is that the proletariat is not a homogenous body of people and experiences. Rather, digging deeper into the proletariat we find multiple intersections of oppressions, and therefore people who live in a matrix of domination, suffering many oppressions at once that are related to colonialism and serve to maintain this system and an exploitative capitalist one as well. Both the articulation of and resistance to this domination are crucial steps toward building a transnational movement.

Acknowledging Difference, Finding Connections

Obioma Nnaemeka writes of the possibility of acknowledging difference without neglecting connections and intersections when they occur. That is to say, feminists must be able to identify when and where our 'homes' intersect with others'. We also must be able to recognize how these intersections can be a source of power. She writes,

Sisterhood is not an abstraction which all women can claim simply on the basis of commonality of sex; it flourishes only through hard work. True sisterhood is a political act, a commonality rooted in knowledge, understanding, and mutual respect. [...] These points of intersection and convergence constitute sites of energy, power, and agency, sites where we can name ourselves or refuse to be named as we center our marginality.⁸⁴

These places of convergence – or intersecting homes – do not have to be sites of disenfranchisement or loss of power. Rather, they can be places to gain strength and become empowered, armed with intersecting knowledge that can fully dismantle oppressive systems that affect multiple lives. This is not to say that differences are forgotten, or that they are not named where they exist. Both to ignore and overemphasize differences are equally unproductive and harmful. However, just because the differences that exist between feminists might be vast does not mean that there are no intersections in experiences from which a shared power can be

⁸⁴ Nnaemeka, "Bringing African Women into the Classroom," 63.

derived. The connection that is shared “cannot be the enemy [...] it is not who you are, in other words, but what we can do for each other that will determine the connection.”⁸⁵ Differences must be accounted for, but “it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence.”⁸⁶

With this new knowledge Western feminism must re-think feminist epistemologies, namely the “weapon of theory”⁸⁷ that is being wielded in the West. We must remember that theory is also built with specific social and historical conditions, and therefore can never be assumed completely exempt from the hegemonic structures that taint its ideology. One way to apply this skepticism of feminist theory and epistemologies is to regard the politics of publishing feminist work. *How many published works each year are disproportionately produced by white, Western feminists? And when Third World women’s work is published, how is it edited and by whom?* These are important questions that are central to a discussion of the privilege of cultural production and its relationship to capitalism.

The Monsters on Our Backs: Difference and the Need Between Us⁸⁸

In order to move towards a theory and practice of transnational feminist solidarity, women’s differential experiences of global capitalism must be confronted. Indeed, many Western women have had beneficial experiences with globalization. For white, Western women with class privilege, globalization has not meant the convergence of racial and sexual stereotypes, a drastic increase in poverty, or an acute decrease in social services and human rights. In fact, white Western women with class privilege have reaped the benefits of the exploited labor and extreme poverty of Third World women through a decrease in the cost of

⁸⁵ Jordan, “Report from the Bahamas,” 444.

⁸⁶ Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,” 44.

⁸⁷ Nnaemeka, “Bringing African Women into the Classroom,” 53.

⁸⁸ The title of this section is a nod to June Jordan’s “Report From the Bahamas.”

material goods we surround ourselves with daily: clothing, food, electronic goods – all of these things and more are enjoyed on a daily basis with hardly a nod to the hands that made them, the female bodies of the human beings attached to those hands, and the working conditions those women are made to endure every day. Thus, though globalization may not feel like the enemy for many Western women, though it may not feel like a manifestation of gender oppression, a practice of transnational feminist solidarity must acknowledge the ways in which Western women, in a global context, are often the monsters on the backs of Third World women. The goal is not to invoke guilt in Western women for participating in the capitalist exploitation of Third World would-be sisters in struggle, but rather to change practices – to create the imagined community Mohanty described – predicated on political commitment that recognizes the interconnectedness of our actions, how they affect the lives of others, and challenges each of our every day practices as they relate to the expansion of global capitalism. Perhaps the best example of this is illustrated by the increased migration of Third World women to the West and their participation in domestic labor.

Global capitalism has caused an unprecedented migration of women workers from Third World countries to wealthier countries of the First World. This migration is largely the result of the dysfunction of the aforementioned SAPs, which force Third World women deeper into poverty in their home countries. Unable to provide for their families through low-wage labor, they are forced to migrate to First World countries in search of work that is just as demeaning, but could potentially reap more monetary benefits. Most of these women who migrate to the West are channeled into low-wage service jobs, typically as servants, maids, childcare providers, sex workers, or a combination of several of these. As Chang notes, we must understand how these neo-liberal economic interventions such as SAPs work in concert with policies pertaining

to social services in the First World. In fact, welfare, labor and immigration policies of the North “facilitate the extraction of resources, especially labor or people, from the Third World and [thus facilitate] a trade route or traffic in migrant women workers and their exploitation at both ends of the “trade route.””⁸⁹

A good example of this is the U.S. domestic forms of structural adjustment. Cuts in healthcare and the vast lack of accessible childcare which adversely affects millions of Americans creates a need for the importation of cheap labor into the country. The periodic slashing of benefits and social services within the U.S. “helps to guarantee that this demand is met by a pool of migrant women readily available to serve as cheap labor.”⁹⁰ The lack of benefits and assistance provided to immigrants once they have arrived in the U.S. solidify this exploitation by ensuring that these women receive only minimum access to assistance. Therefore, migrant women workers are “kept pliable not only by the dependence of their families on remittances sent home but also by [...] immigration policies in First World countries explicitly designed to recruit migrant women as contract laborers or temporary workers, yet deny them any of the protections and rights afforded to citizens.”⁹¹ As a result, neo-liberal economic interventions into Third World countries work in tandem with First World immigration policies to ensure that there is a steady available stream of Third World women who will take service jobs, work in poor conditions and will work with little to no protections, because they have no other choice. This situation is fundamental to a transnational feminist critique of globalization, as it squarely places the First World women who hire or reap the benefits of the labor these Third World women migrants provide. Through the phenomenon of forced migration of millions of Third World women to First World countries, globalization has created a context in which First

⁸⁹ Chang, “Globalization in Living Color,” 241.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 242.

⁹¹ Ibid.

and Third World women are not only often face-to-face, but enter into a relationship of employer-employee, or rather, exploiter-exploited in a extremely vivid and tangible way.

Though this relationship dramatically reveals the complex power relationships between First World and Third World women, I argue that it is fruitful ground for articulating the potential expanse of transnational feminist resistance of capitalist exploitation. However, the problematic nature of these relationships must be acknowledged in order for this to happen. Also, Western feminists must debunk the arguments that attempt to paint domestic work and sex work performed by migrant women as legitimate work. Though I do not wish to meld these two types of work together, as they function very differently as mechanisms of control over Third World women's movements, bodies and labor power, we must understand both of them as coercive types of work. The argument put forth by multiple Western feminists that these types of work are just like any other type of work fails to acknowledge the forced nature of them, migrant women's lack of choices, and how neo-liberal reforms and domestic welfare and immigration policies of Western countries work in tandem to channel and keep these women in low-wage, easily exploitable positions in the global economy. This argument also allows Western feminists themselves to evade responsibility for their participation in the exploitation of Third World women. Though we did not create the conditions that allow Western women to leave the home, enter the labor market and therefore need childcare and domestic help, just as we did not create the economic conditions responsible for forcing mass migration of Third World women, we are responsible for our complicity in the system that continues to oppress both First and Third World women. In order to move toward a transnational feminist solidarity predicated on anti-capitalist struggle, this complicity must be acknowledged and every day practices must be changed.

June Jordan's "Report from the Bahamas"⁹² speaks of this dilemma of building transnational feminist solidarity eloquently. Jordan, as a Black woman of West Indian descent living in Brooklyn, New York, visiting the Bahamas raises important questions about the politics of her geographic, social and economic location. Within the context of her U.S. 'home', she grapples with police violence, discrimination and poverty, while in the Bahamas (a place that should perhaps feel like 'home') she is "a rich woman."⁹³ In her interaction with black Bahamian women attempting to sell their crafts outside her hotel, she notices the fixed relations between these Black women and herself: "They sell and I buy or I don't. They risk not eating. I risk going broke on my first vacation afternoon. We are not particularly women anymore; we are parties to a transaction designed to set us against each other."⁹⁴ With this passage, Jordan articulates perfectly the dilemma involved in attempting to form transnational coalition based on perceived common identities. Jordan counters the notion that she and these Black Bahamian women are supposed to have some sort of natural solidarity based on race and gender by highlighting the ways in which these alliances become problematic as they are geographically, culturally and economically specific, subject to change if any one of these contexts is shifted. As a woman who feels the weight of racism and sexism daily in the U.S., a trip to the Bahamas (a physical shifting of positionality) illuminates what is most typically hidden in plain sight to us: that she is the monster on the backs of these women – the monster that, through her purchasing power, can decide whether or not they eat today.

Of course, even if Jordan did not take that trip to the Bahamas and have a face-to-face interaction with these women, she would still, through her economic decisions made in the U.S., be the monster on their backs. However, it is the power behind this face-to-face interaction and

⁹² Jordan, "Report from the Bahamas," 444.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Jordan's raw analysis of it that make clear to us the conflict that feminists live in today: that even though all of us "live inside a conflict that neither one of us created, and even though both of us therefore hurt inside that conflict, I may be one of the monsters she needs to eliminate from her universe, and in a sense, she may be one of the monsters in mine."⁹⁵ What this passage also illuminates is how the design of a system of global capitalism has changed relationships between women.

Paradoxically, global capitalism has created spaces and moments in which women are confronted intensely with the "conflict" expressed by Jordan; that is, with the extremity of globalization, while at the same time it has urged our participation in the depersonalization of global capitalist production. We are encouraged to look without seeing; to disregard the humanity of the human labor force behind what we consume. In the rare moments when we can acknowledge that our participation in this exploitative economic system do in fact affect the lives of other human beings, the most we can muster is to picture a faceless worker whom we know nothing about and whom we do not want to know anything about.

Building towards a theory and practice of transnational, feminist, anti-capitalist movement, we must resist the urge to look without seeing. We must stop giving into the narratives that encourage us to depersonalize one another. Also, we must resist the urge to attempt to build our transnational solidarity on a common enemy. As Jordan notes, it might very well be true that, in some contexts, we are each others' enemies. Rather, we need to recognize that we are only one another's enemies because a third party has made it such. As long as we are content to compete with one another within this system, we will all always lose. Global capitalism can only function as long as we continue to buy into vicious competition with one another, valuing monetary gain over each other's lives. We must keep in mind that we do not need to find a common enemy in

⁹⁵ Ibid.

order to achieve this solidarity and liberation, but that we do need the solidarity and the liberation. The ultimate connection between us, then, “must be the need that we find between us. It is not only who you are, in other words, but what we can do for each other that will determine the connection.”⁹⁶ A theory of transnational feminist anti-capitalist struggle must encourage the dissection of our varying relationships to globalization and theorize, how, through our political actions and commitments we can begin to fulfill this need between us.

Crossing Borders, Imagining Communities

Because women have not experienced globalization in the same way, anti-globalization resistance that is solely rooted in experience will not yield transnational solidarity. I echo Benedict Anderson and Mohanty’s call for the construction of imagined communities. Because “our relation to and centrality in particular struggles depend on our different, often conflictual, locations and histories,”⁹⁷ we can and must create space in which to build community through political commitments. Transnational feminist anti-capitalist struggle cannot be built solely on racial, national, or class lines. That is, we cannot build effective transnational solidarity on how we *experience* race, class, gender and nationality in the face of globalization, but rather on how we *talk about* race, class, gender and nationality.

This conception of the root of transnational struggle as political rather than based solely on identity politics holds the potential to cross borders, both political and cultural. Significant work has to be done on the part of all feminists in order for these imagined communities to come into existence and to be productive places for fostering anti-globalization struggle. Because these imagined communities, though defined through political commitments, will not erase the politics

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 77.

of difference between feminists in a transnational context, we must build an ethics of the politics of engagement⁹⁸ which we abide by when engaging in transnational, cross-cultural dialogue.

This community we are attempting to build “is the product of work, of struggle; it is inherently unstable, contextual; it has to be constantly re-evaluated in relation to critical political priorities; and it is the product of interpretation, interpretation based on an attention to history, to the concrete [...] to what Foucault (1980) has called subjugated knowledges.”⁹⁹ Feminists wishing to work towards transnational solidarity must become fluent in one another’s histories, in all their complexities and contradictions; the ways in which their ‘homes’ intersect. Also, they must “avoid two traps, the purely experiential and the theoretical oversight of personal and collective histories.”¹⁰⁰ Transnational theorizations of anti-capitalist resistance must include the lived experiences of those suffering the most at the hands of global capitalist exploitation as well as our collective histories of oppression and resistance. However, these theories cannot be solely rooted in lived experience, as it is necessary, in order to build a different world, to imagine a theoretically different world. To avoid the traps Mohanty speaks of, we need both of these elements – theoretical understandings and lived experiences – but cannot privilege one over the other.

The Third World Within the First

The increasing wealth of the rich and swelling masses of the world’s poor has not respected the political borders of nation-states. That is, global capitalism has also widened the

⁹⁸ I take this term from Mohanty’s work.

⁹⁹ Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 104. Foucault’s “subjugated knowledges” are ways of thinking and doing that have been eclipsed, devalued, or rendered invisible within the dominant apparatus of power and knowledge. Foucault rejected the idea that there is any such thing as a ‘fundamental’ or universal basis of truth. Rather, truth is produced by power and knowledge apparatus and therefore imply control, norms, and value judgements.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

wealth gap *within* nation-state boundaries, creating a Third World within the First. Global capitalism has permeated national borders, blurring the distinctions that demarcate the differences between ‘local’ and ‘global’, and thus has re-drawn potential sites for anti-capitalist struggle. Because of this reality, a call to transnationalism should be understood as requiring a grasp of this salience of political borders. A transnational feminist movement must understand the “interpenetrations that confound the boundness of national spaces and political markers of a nation-state.”¹⁰¹ Because global capitalism has penetrated this boundness, it has also re-drawn sites for potential transnational feminist struggle. By creating a context in which a Third World within the First is a reality, global capitalism has also created a potential dialectic of lived experience and resistance. In other words, a transnational anti-capitalist struggle does not have to be relegated to the Third World, understood as a geographical region, where capitalist oppression imposed by the West is most profound and devastating. Anti-capitalist resistance can take place anywhere, because capitalism and those suffering by its hand are everywhere. Feminist pedagogies, such as the aforementioned two, need to be re-oriented in order to not only build towards a more effective transnational solidarity, but also to acknowledge the reality and power of Third World women’s agency and resistance to global capitalism.

While it is important to theoretically conceive of the political spaces in which transnational anti-capitalist solidarity is possible, it is also crucial to identify working models where they exist. By way of providing a real life example of the way this theory can be put to practice, I find that RW’s commitment to immigration activism is useful for showing how these complex, transnational feminist relationships might be negotiated.

¹⁰¹ Das Gupta and Carty, “Solidarity Work in Transnational Feminism,” 101.

Border Wars: Issues of Labor, not National Security

Building Transnational Anti-Capitalist Solidarity

Immigration reform has resurfaced as a major American political issue in the past few years, particularly in the light of growing anxieties about the most recent economic recession. RW has always agitated for immigrant rights, attempting to re-frame the discussion not as a matter of national security, but rather as an issue of human rights and worker's rights. Taking a radical approach to this issue, RW's platform on this issue asserts that capitalism is the root of the problem. Not only have neo-liberal reforms enacted on the Mexican side of the border increased the poverty of Mexicans, thus forcing migration, but the U.S. thirst for cheap labor on the American side of the border provides incentive for the dangerous trek.

In their May 1, 2010 publication which was handed out at Los Angeles' annual May Day March, RW called for a shift in the national debate on immigration. Their Open Letter called for Americans to "build bridges between the peoples of the U.S. and Mexico instead of walls that segregate them [by ending] border militarization" as well as an end to Bracero-style guest worker programs and other forms of labor exploitation, asking that "the labor system made to benefit workers and their families, not corporations and agribusiness."¹⁰² But along with attending rallies, protests, and issuing addresses agitating for full citizenship for all immigrants, RW has also worked to build transnational coalitions with socialist revolutionary groups in Mexico and elsewhere.

On October 4, 2008, U.S. RW members met with members of the Socialist Worker's Party of Mexico (POS) – the leaders in the fight against NAFTA and overall U.S. corporate expansion in Mexico. Leyda Silva, a prominent leader of the POS, gave an address, "Apuntes

¹⁰² Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, "Immigrant Rights are Workers' Rights!" issued May, 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.radicalwomen.org/May%20Day%202010.pdf>

Desde la Realidad Femenina en Mexico,¹⁰³ in which she spoke of the detrimental affects NAFTA has had on women's ability to survive in Mexico. Citing increased militarization and NAFTA's driving down of wages as key problems, the meeting provided a moment in which an imagined community functioned for a common political goal. Though NAFTA may not be the monster on the backs of RW members on the U.S. side of the border, NAFTA does represent capitalist interests that are devastating the lives of Mexicans on the opposite side of the fence. Therefore, by RW agitating for the disbandment of NAFTA (as they do in their Open Letter, "Immigrant Rights are Workers' Rights!") from the U.S. side of the border, the Third World within the First becomes a space where anti-capitalist struggle is undertaken from within.

"The Interpenetrations that Confound the Boundness":

Re-Drawing Sites of Struggle

In order for feminism to be able to contribute to a transnational anti-capitalist critique, certain Western feminist pedagogies and perspectives must be altered and shifted to more accurately reflect not only people's experiences with capitalism, but also to create a more productive space in which a discussion of potential transnational solidarity can take place. One such Western feminist paradigm that the nature of global capitalism forces us to re-think is the 'local' vs. 'global' conception of the world. This paradigm still places us within a conception of two spaces that are separate and discretely bounded. It reifies the 'us' vs. 'them' mentality which is falsely exclusive, as it fails to recognize the interconnectedness of our collective existence as human beings. Also, this way of thinking fails to account for the fluidity of positionality, and

¹⁰³ Translation: "Notes on the Female Reality in Mexico." The text of these notes can be accessed online at: <http://www.radicalwomen.org/mujeres.pdf>

also has been used by Western feminists to support problematic pedagogies such as the feminist-as-tourist and feminist-as-explorer models that Mohanty addresses.¹⁰⁴

In the feminist-as-tourist model, the ‘local’ vs. ‘global’ paradigm is central as the model consists of “brief forays [...] into non-Euro-American cultures, and particular sexist cultural practices addressed from an otherwise Eurocentric women’s studies gaze.”¹⁰⁵ The anecdote I gave previously, about a discussion of Muslim women’s “oppression” due to the ways in which they are “made to dress” in northern Cameroon, and the professor’s directing the conversation in such a way is an example of the feminist-as-tourist model. Immediately, an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dichotomy is set up and ‘sexist’ practices that Muslim women are made to undergo are evaluated in comparison to Western cultural standards, evoking a Eurocentric women’s studies gaze. The consequence of this pedagogical model is a reification of Western imperialist attitudes towards Third World women and their cultures. In this respect, the feminist-as-tourist model is problematic because it does not create a space in which difference between women can be used for a productive purpose. Rather, it creates a false sense of ‘here’ vs. ‘there’; a profound disconnection that results in an overemphasis of difference between women’s experiences and realities.

Equally problematic, the feminist-as-explorer pedagogical model places the “foreign” woman as the object of study. Meanwhile, the subject of knowledge is completely internationalized, placed outside the U.S. context completely, implying that the study is completely outside of the Western feminists’ ‘home’ and therefore fails completely to grasp the intersections of their ‘home’ and that of others. The distance of one’s ‘home’ is crucial to both of these models and re-situates us in a paradigm that alienates the First World feminist from the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 240.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 239.

Third. These pedagogies convey a profound sense of separateness that quickly falls apart once we take stock of the ways in which global capitalism has dissolved the boundaries between one another's 'homes'. In reality, the current dissolution (or growing unimportance) of nation-state and political borders have created potentially productive sites for anti-capitalist struggle.

In order to provide an example of how these problematic Western pedagogical models could be shifted in order to privilege the voices of the world's most oppressed, I turn to RW's activism. RW is just one of a handful of radical organizations in the U.S. who has participated in Freedom Schools – a concept and practice that has been present in various U.S. cities since the Freedom Summer of 1964. The Schools provide a counter-hegemonic education to those whose lives and experiences are consistently marginalized and excluded from mainstream academia.

Radical Women's Freedom School:
Teaching Black and Chicana Feminisms

Freedom Schools were started during the Civil Rights movement as an alternative to the racist education system in the U.S. Though the concept of Freedom Schools had been utilized previously, the most well-known branch was opened by members of SNCC in Mississippi during the Freedom Summer of 1964. The schools were set-up as a response to the inequality of the American education system, both in monetary support and representation of culture and ideas. Despite the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Mississippi, along with many other states, continued to have segregated school systems and spend much less money on the education of black children than on white children. What is more, black culture, ideas and contributions to the American nation were not taught or respected in dominant curriculum. The mission of Freedom Schools, therefore, was for community members (usually social justice activists and teachers) to

provide the education to communities of color that they were not receiving in a public school system, but that they deserved nonetheless.

Freedom Schools Los Angeles was founded in 2010 by an eclectic group of students and community organizers and has run a wide variety of classes since its inception. The group lists the following as its goals:

Emphasize learning over memorization...Encourages critical thinking & political consciousness...Honors the value of manual skills and labor as equal to academic labor...Empowers participants to become active in their communities and struggle against social injustice...Connect our minds, our hearts, and our hands.¹⁰⁶

As is evident by these goals, Freedom Schools are not designed to give people education merely for the sake of education. Rather, it is understood that education is power, and that when you educate people you are providing them with resources that cannot be taken away by any amount of budget cutting. Also, because other community members are the leaders of the class, Freedom Schools help build a stronger sense of community accountability, self-reliance and self-determination.

RW participated in Freedom Schools by offering a class that lasted for several weeks. The course, “Black and Chicana Feminisms”, focused on uncovering the often-neglected stories of black and Chicana feminists who, by simultaneously grappling with racism in the 1960s-70s women’s liberation movement and sexism in the cultural nationalist movements, formed groups that understood oppressions as interlocking. The classes served more of a purpose than just to provide a corrective history, as there was a distinctly prescriptive tone to the seminars. This knowledge, in the hands of young community organizers and social justice workers has the potential to be used to create meaningful change within Los Angeles. Throughout the seminars

¹⁰⁶ Taken from the Freedom Schools Los Angeles Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Freedom-Schools-Los-Angeles/107498942630284?sk=info>

there were discussions about cultural nationalism, the relationship between black and Chicana feminisms and socialism, our individual relationships to capitalism and ways in which black and Chicana feminisms can inform our political ideologies and tactics of resistance.

Freedom Schools: Acts of Decolonization

Third World Within Resistance through Community Education

RW and the members of the Freedom Schools in general provide a good example of the Third World within the First. The RW headquarters, where the “Black and Chicana Feminisms” was taught, is located in West Adams, Los Angeles; one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. The rest of the Freedom Schools classes are taught in socioeconomically similar neighborhoods such as Bell, West Adams, Southgate and Huntington Park.¹⁰⁷ The unemployment rate as well as the number of people living below the poverty line is very high in these neighborhoods. For example, in West Adams, with a population of roughly 22,000 people, the median household income is \$38,209, with over 2,300 households earning just \$20,000 or less a year. Roughly 6,000 people have less than a high school degree, while a mere 686 people have a bachelor’s degree. In neighborhoods such as West Adams, class and race intersect to form (at least) a double oppression on its residents. 37% of residents of West Adams are foreign born, most typically hailing from Mexico (51.1%) and El Salvador (20.0%). The neighborhood is made up of 56.2% Latinos, 37.6% Black, 2.4% White and 1.7% Asian.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ “Mapping LA”, the source I consulted to determine socioeconomically similar neighborhoods, is part of an on-going project undertaken by the LA Times to provide a representation of Los Angeles County in a variety of areas including education, racial breakdown by neighborhoods, population density, crime rates, etc. The project can be accessed online, complete with interactive maps at:
<http://projects.latimes.com/mapping-la/neighborhoods/>

¹⁰⁸ All of these stats can be found on the LA Times Project, as cited above, at the following website:
<http://projects.latimes.com/mapping-la/neighborhoods/neighborhood/west-adams/>

Neighborhoods such as West Adams constitute the Third World within the First because, though geographically situated in a so-called First World country (the United States of America), they are living in comparably Third World conditions. Though capitalist exploitation has created this astronomical gap between Los Angeles' rich and poor, these communities are simultaneously resisting this oppression at the same time they are experiencing it. RW's involvement in Freedom Schools, therefore, is an act of decolonization for several different reasons. First, RW's class, "Black and Chicana Feminisms" contributed to the project of decolonizing feminism by re-orienting pedagogical models that still dominate feminist academic studies in the U.S. The class provided a corrective history of the late 1800s and early 1900s suffragist movement by highlighting the often-ignored role of radical socialist Chicanas such as Lucy Parsons. Similarly, the class discussed the tactics undertaken by black women within organizations such as SNCC to demand recognition of the intersectional oppressions they faced.

This corrective history parallels one of the purposes of Africana Studies as Manning Marable puts forth in his work, "Rethinking Black Studies." By engaging in the creation and reiteration of a corrective history of black and Chicana women's involvement in multiple liberation movements, RW's class provided a counter-hegemonic pedagogical model that allows contemporary women of color to place their lived experiences and resistance to oppression on a continuum of resistance. One aspect of truth that the class uncovered, for example, was that today's black and Chicana activists are not the first to have voiced a radical, anti-capitalist sentiment, but rather that they come from a long line of women of color radicals who have engaged in similar work. Being able to place oneself on a timeline which recognizes the contributions of one's race and gender is crucial to the formation of one's political subjectivity.

Similarly, RW's Freedom School class and its purpose parallel at least two Africanist principles of Nguzo Saba: Ujima (collective responsibility) and Kujichagulia (self-determination). By placing community members as teachers of Black and Chicana Feminisms and filling a classroom with members of that same community, the Freedom School classroom automatically becomes a space of community empowerment. What is more, the community becomes responsible for itself as each individual is beholden to others in that room and in the community at large to not only learn, but to put the lessons into action for the benefit of the community as a whole. Also, because the needs and interests of the community were the shaping force behind RW's class curriculum, the classroom became a space in which community members defined and named themselves and their relationship to the material. Both the act of learning and teaching in such a classroom setting was an act of decolonizing the mind; a rupture and a disengagement from the American education system which privileges the histories of certain people over others, and therefore strips certain groups of students¹⁰⁹ of the power of self-definition. An engagement with this type of education not only recognizes but emphasizes the contributions of people who are typically marginalized from the mainstream American education curriculum – in this case, black and Chicana feminists.

Conclusion

While RW's activism puts important aspects of anti-capitalist, feminist resistance into practice, this does not mean that the group's ideologies and practices should be accepted wholesale, without qualification. In a global political arena such as the one we live in, where the

¹⁰⁹ The students I am referring to here are students of color, who typically do not learn about the important contributions people of their race have made to the fabric of society; queer students, who hardly ever learn about the history of queer people in the world; and women, whose voices and struggles are still all but absent from public school curriculum.

choice is either between capitalism or socialism, the choice that is *not* capitalism is undoubtedly better. However, anti-capitalism should not necessarily have to mean pro-socialism. In the face of capitalist exploitation, it might be tempting to cling to an agenda that promises human dignity – something that capitalism has shown incapable of providing. It might even be tempting to cling to this agenda despite the fact that its analysis of society includes next to nothing about sexist and racist oppression without a capitalist system. Instead of embracing socialism dogmatically, it is possible to take the important, ‘useful’ parts of this complex theory and combine them with other theoretical work, such as that which has been done by anti-capitalist black feminists and Africanists focusing on decolonizing, such as Fanon. Fanon’s work, in particular, “reveals the poignant proximity of the incomplete project of decolonization to the dispossessed subjects of globalization,”¹¹⁰ making decolonization as relevant as ever for those suffering under global capitalism today.

Because global capitalism is both a feminist and a decolonizing issue, theoretical work from both must be utilized in order to dismantle this oppressive system. By understanding the connection between historical colonial domination and contemporary suffering under globalization, demystification of and resistance to this system is made possible. Colonization has been continued under the modern guise of globalization and ‘development’, and the capitalist system continues to thrive on racism and sexism in the most explicit of terms.

By way of building strategies to combat capitalism transnationally, those invested in anti-capitalism must understand the current salience of nation-state borders. Global capitalism has redrawn sites of struggle by creating a Third World within the First, a reality that has proven its capabilities as a site of transformation through the activism of groups such as RW. Black anti-capitalist feminists such as Frances Beale and Claudia Jones join RW in their articulation of the

¹¹⁰ Fanon, *WE*, xxviii.

necessity of placing Third World women as the vanguard of a transnational anti-capitalist movement, as their daily realities of oppression situate them in a matrix of domination that mandates a dialectic between lived experience and resistance. Their ability to resist global capitalism is second to none, because it is these women who have nothing more to lose and everything to gain. These voices must continue to be centered as feminist communities persist to work to demystify the complex system of global capitalism.

Transnational feminist anti-capitalist struggle cannot be built solely on racial, national, or class lines. That is, we cannot build effective transnational solidarity on how we *experience* race, class, gender and nationality in the face of globalization, but rather on how we *talk about* race, class, gender and nationality. This conception of the root of transnational struggle as political rather than based solely on identity politics holds the potential to cross borders, both political and cultural. By creating imagined communities, transnational struggle is predicated on political commitments. These political commitments will not erase difference between people, and so a politics of engagement which we abide by when engaging in transnational, cross-cultural dialogue is still needed.

When faced with a dichotomous choice, such as capitalism or socialism, it is perhaps natural to cling to the choice that offers the better represents our needs and experiences. What Fanon challenges us to do, however difficult it may be, is to create our own theories and ideologies that more accurately describe our lives and needs. Homi K. Bhabha has suggested that Fanon's theory of decolonization is a "project of futurity"¹¹¹ because he rejects the Western-imposed univocal choice between either capitalism or socialism. These two choices are what has been offered in a post-Cold War era to the Third World and does not necessarily account for all the needs of the Third World. Fanon explains:

¹¹¹ Ibid. xxvii

The basic confrontation which seemed to be colonialism versus anti-colonialism, indeed capitalism versus socialism, is already losing its importance. What matters today, the issue which blocks the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity will have to address this question, no matter how devastating the consequences may be.¹¹²

We must not be afraid to attempt to envision and develop new ways of thinking and interacting, be it economically or politically, with one another, as long as we hold the idea of justice foremost in our minds. What this paper has attempted to do is identify the important link between global capitalism, feminism and the need for decolonization, as well as begin to build an epistemology upon which to foster transnational anti-capitalist struggle. By simultaneously synthesizing and disidentifying with Fanon, black feminism and transnational feminism, as well as identifying how the Third World within the First can be used as a productive site of anti-capitalist struggle, I hope that we are even slightly closer to building the transnational solidarity that we all so desperately need.

¹¹² Ibid. 55

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