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Undergraduate Journal of Gender and Women's Studies

Title

Introduction: To Beginnings and Everything that Brought Us Here

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1c17v3nw>

Journal

Undergraduate Journal of Gender and Women's Studies, 1(1)

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Publication Date

2012

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Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

Introduction: To Beginnings and Everything that Brought Us Here
by Catherine Murphy

*I choose the Earth
we choose the Earth
and the edge of each other's battles
the war is the same
if we lose
someday women's blood will congeal
on a dead planet
but if we win
if we win
there is no telling*

-Audre Lorde

I'm a feminist so I have to question what I've just done—opening this journal with a speech delivered by Audre Lorde. A little trite, isn't it? There's something about Lorde that makes her writing reducible to epigraphs—literary soundbites—in the eyes of feminists. Lorde herself critiqued this impulse in her now infamous letter to Mary Daly. “Did you ever read my words, or did you merely finger through them for quotations which you thought might valuably support an already conceived idea concerning some old and distorted connection between us?”

I quote Lorde not as a last ditch effort to include the voices of women of color nor to use her Black lesbian feminist warrior poet bona fides to legitimize the mission of this journal. I quote Lorde not because of her near mythic persona but because this speech, as delivered to the I am I Am Your Sister Conference two years prior to her death, offers hope of feminist futures with boundless possibilities. I must confess this hopefulness is a far cry from how I experience feminism emotionally. Typically, I'm caught in an endless cycle of self-critique of my own privilege followed by a critique of that self-critique. *Isn't the ability to waste time fretting over my privilege a function of that privilege? Wait, isn't labeling consideration my own privilege as privileged really just a privileged way of getting out of considering my own privilege? When does it end?*

The buck stops here. (Wait, that's kind of sexist.) The doe stops here. (Now I'm excluding non-binary folks.) The gender neutral deer stops here.

We did something. We published the first issue of the only (as far as we know) gender/women's/feminist studies undergraduate journal in the United States. We should celebrate that.

I say “we” because this was not the actions of five autonomous individuals meeting in coffee shops around campus. This journal results from the labor of our editing team, our authors, everyone who submitted an article, the Gender and Women's Studies department, and eScholarship. Even you had a role in this journal coming together. This moment—you reading this, me writing this—would not exist without the countless moments preceding it. For better or worse, this journal, this issue, this page, and this word are the culmination of everything that has ever happened.

There is blood on the ground. This journal was conceived on stolen land by students at a university that kept a man as a museum exhibit. Our pride in being the only gender studies journal in the nation must be tempered with the acknowledgement of what atrocities have been

and are being committed to establish and maintain the borders of that nation.

We must remember moments of domination alongside moments of resistance (and hope this moment falls among the latter). This journal is indebted to the years of student activism on this campus: the Free Speech Movement, the Rolling Quads, the third world Liberation Front, and Occupy Cal.

With that in mind, let's take a moment to celebrate our accomplishment, our successes, and our failures. Just one moment to imagine what could be if we win, because there truly is no telling.

Works Cited

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