UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Toward a Psychosocial Theory of Feminist Ethnic Studies Insurgent Knowledge: Writing Practices, Teaching and Learning, and Contemplative-Critical Epistemologies

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requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

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The dissertation of Kimberly B. George is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Elizabeth Suzanne Delaney Hess, 1976–2019.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Toward a Psychosocial Theory of Feminist Ethnic Studies Insurgent Knowledge: Writing Practices, Teaching and Learning, and Contemplative-Critical Epistemologies

by

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This project locates feminist ethnic studies writing, teaching, and learning practices as an archive of psychosocial theory holding insurgent knowledge. Psychosocial theory is defined as an analytic and a reading practice linking structural, historical, and material conditions to intra- psychic- and intersubjective realities. Insurgent knowledges analyze and transform

structures of material, psychic, and epistemic violence through nurturing creative power and fostering the collectivities and coalitions that unleash personal and collective transformations. Especially highlighted in this study are the forms of labor—affective, psychic, intellectual, and spiritual— entwined within such revolutionary knowledge in feminist ethnic studies histories. Archives ofpsychosocial theory analyzed include U.S. Black feminist theory, with attention to the works of Hortense Spillers, Patricia J. Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Smith, and Barbara Christian. The texts are read through considering historical changes over time within the development of the field of U.S. Black women's studies. Gloria Anzaldúa's body of work is also taken up through examining how her writing methods and spiritual practices infused her theories of the psyche, identity, a decolonized sensorium, and trauma. Chicana psychosocial theories of identity, including those by Norma Alarcón, are integrated alongside the analysis of Anzaldúa's work.

Additionally, the psychosocial contributions to learning, teaching, and writing of transnational feminists, namely Chandra Talpade Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander, are placed in conversation with feminist psychoanalytic clinicians Deborah Britzman and Lynne Layton, as well as Indigenous studies epistemologies, including work on education by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Sandy Grande, Sandra Styres, and Eve Tuck. Finally, the array of psychosocial theories in this project are used to develop the concept of "contemplative-critical" writing practices that explore "theory in the flesh" (Moraga, 1981) and "threshold identities" (Keating, 1996) in education practices. This dissertation is meant to collaborate in conversations on transformative education practices across several fields including ethnic studies; women's, gender, and sexuality studies; trauma studies; writing studies; and contemplative studies.

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Feminist Ethnic Studies Intellectual History as Archives of Psychosocial Theory

Part I:

In this dissertation, I formulate and practice what I call feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory. By this term, I mean an analytic and an archive of thought that links structural, historical, and material conditions to intra-psychic- and intersubjective realities.[1] I argue for how the category of the psychosocial helps us read the manifold labors and revolutionary contributions within feminist ethnic studies intellectual history. More specifically, I center in this project feminist ethnic studies writing practices, as well as learning and teaching methods, as archives of psychosocial theory that make epistemic claims on the practices of "insurgent knowledge" (Spillers, 1987; Mohanty, 2003). I borrow the phrase "insurgent knowledge" from the foundational works of Black feminist Hortense Spillers and transnational/Third World[2] feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (as analyzed in Chapters 2 and 4, respectively). I also extend the term to read the psychosocial theory I locate in an array of feminist ethnic studies texts.

There are many possible paths into assembling insurgent knowledge and psychosocial theory within feminist ethnic studies histories. My sites of analysis in this dissertation are

[1] Psychosocial studies is also an emerging interdisciplinary, cross-professional area of inquiry in the U.K. I was first alerted to the cross-disciplinary potential of using psychosocial methods for ethnic studies concerns when attending a talk at Simmons College in 2014, titled "Race and Racism in Clinic and Culture," in which feminist relational psychoanalyst Lynne Layton chaired a panel that included Lisa Lowe in dialogue with M. Fakhry Davids (British psychoanalyst), Usha Tummala-Nara (psychodynamic psychotherapist), and Johnnie Hamilton-Mason (Professor of Social Work) to talk about race, racism, and processes of racialization.

[2] For a reading of the uses and limits of the term "Third World" feminism, see Chandra Talpade Mohanty's introduction "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism" in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (1991). I discuss the limits and uses of the term in Chapter 3.

focused on U.S. Black feminist theory in Chapter 2, including performing close readings of the work of Hortense Spillers, Patricia J. Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Smith, and Barbara Christian, with attention to how the forms of their writing and knowledge-making practices contest heteropatriarchy, whiteness, and neoliberalism. I center Gloria Anzaldúa's body of work in Chapter 3, which I read through examining how her spiritual practices infused her theories of the psyche, identity, writing, decolonized senses, and trauma. I also foreground Norma Alarcón's psychosocial contributions as I consider Chicana theories of identity. In Chapter 4, I focus on the psychosocial contributions to teaching, writing, and learning of transnational feminists, namely Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander, whose work on rememory I also place in dialogue with feminist psychoanalytic clinicians Deborah Britzman and Lynne Layton, as well as Indigenous studies epistemologies, including work on education by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg); Sandy Grande (Quechua), Sandra Styres (Kanien'kehá:ka), and Eve Tuck (Unangax̂). In Chapter 4, I also suggest methods for what I call "contemplative-critical" writing practices. Finally, in Chapter 5, I conclude with performing my own contemplative-critical writing methods by examining what AnaLouise Keating calls "threshold identities" (1996) through a reading of my own "between Arab and white" (Gualtieri, 2009) experiences and generational histories.

Through these different lenses and lineages, I track how psychosocial theory is part of the methods of insurgent knowledge, especially as practiced in writing, teaching, and learning methods. I especially aim to develop reading practices for naming the manifold forms of labor (affective, psychic, intellectual, and spiritual) entwined within such revolutionary knowledge. Imani Perry has argued that gender liberation is a critical reading practice—not a set of dogmas— and its method is to read for the layers of gendered forms of domination (2019, p. 9).

My project is to read the psychosocial labors of feminist ethnic studies writers who developed insurgent knowledge in the context of layered systems of domination. I hope to be able to use my research to contribute to supporting students, educators, scholars, artists, activists, and writers who might benefit from these psychosocial frameworks as they live and create insurgent knowledge in their own communities, collectivities, and coalitions.

This chapter has the following path: I begin the next section, Part II, by defining and contextualizing my key terms, methods, timeframes, and archives, with attention to how I understand the lineage of feminist ethnic studies intellectual history. I discuss connections amongst coalition building practices, embodied epistemology, and theory, and why it is that I see writing (and theories of writing) as a rich archive of psychosocial theory. Finally, I describe my own position and relationship to my work as a feminist ethnic studies scholar.

In Part III, I then turn to a dialogue between bell hooks and Stuart Hall, which models how psychosocial theory is relationally practiced and also raises questions regarding learning practices and the unconscious, identity, and writing. Layering from my close reading of their dialogue, I continue to introduce key concepts in my project—namely, psychic labor, defense mechanisms and disavowal, contemplative knowledge, grief labor, and trauma.

In Part IV, I then position my use of the category of the psychosocial within a larger historical discussion of how ethnic studies as a field has engaged classical Freudian, Lacanian, and objects relations psychoanalysis. While the remainder of my project turns to feminist ethnic studies writing and teaching/learning practices as my archive for psychosocial theory, I show how ethnic studies engagement of psychoanalysis illuminates a history of suturing conceptual gaps, connecting disciplines, and writing through disavowals, which I locate as methods informing my own project and selection of archives.

Part II: Key Terms, Methods, Timeframes, and Archives

In my claim that feminist ethnic studies is an archive of psychosocial theory, the central method of this dissertation is reading for how the epistemologies, practices, and texts of insurgent knowledge contest the psychic and material violence embedded within colonial, heteropatriarchal, and white supremacist formations of knowledge production. But just as significantly, I argue that the epistemologies of insurgent knowledge hold psychosocial expertise in nurturing creative power and fostering the feminist community and coalitions that unleash personal and collective transformations. The power being theorized in these archives I read is thus not only coercive power in a Foucauldian sense; power in feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory is also theorized as creative, healing, integrating (Lorde, 1977, 1978, 1984; Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015) and collective (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002; Mohanty, 2003; Lugones, 2003; Alexander, 2006; Simpson, 2017).

For these reasons, I will often refer to relations of power either as abusive/coercive *or* creative—and while I recognize there are limits to a binary representation, I also think the distinction I am assessing is important enough in feminist ethnic studies epistemologies and writing practices that it needs to be marked in my language around power. I also want to center and support that in feminist ethnic studies epistemologies, creative power is as important as critique and critique is a vibrant practice of creativity.

Furthermore, while I will read Black, women of color, and Indigenous feminism in this project[3] as an archive of psychosocial theory for what it means to create transformative

[3] While I don't want to collapse the different lineages amongst Black, women of color, and Indigenous feminisms, I do argue for recognizing a linking theme: these histories hold psychosocial expertise for how to negotiate and confront multiple scales of abusive power—including epistemic, psychic, curricular, material, and structural power.

knowledge amidst psychic, structural, interpersonal, and historical violence, I also want to situate my approach with a caution: I want to resist the representation of Black women, women of color, and Indigenous women as transhistorical, essential objects of violence or trauma, a representation that re-inscribes gendered, colonial, sexualized, and settler colonial violence. But I do want to bring more language to the psychic, relational, and material conditions of making insurgent knowledge within systems violent towards one's body, as well as violent towards one's relationships with the land, water, and ancestral connection. I want to use psychosocial theory to illuminate how the psychic life of abusive power is part of systemic violence, and that there is labor being done by particular subjects vis-à-vis psychic disavowals and other defensive processes of coercive power.

Some of that labor is what I name as grief labor, a concept throughout this project because I persistently saw that labor represented in my archives. Grief labor connects the particularity of lived experiences to the structural and historical harms. It is a process of birthing new (and old) possibilities through naming embodied experience, mourning injustices, building community power, and working toward a different world. Grief labor is also a creative process linked to healing epistemic violence, re-integrating different aspects of the self, and finding interconnection to others. Unleashing creative power within feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory is so essential because it is the work of the imagination that opens possibilities for a more flourishing world (Hong, 2015).

Important to my understanding of ethnic studies as a field, my psychosocial lens is attentive to how revolutionary knowledge within Black, women of color, and Indigenous feminist knowledge are rooted in sites of production not contained within either institutional or nation-state borders. Said another way, feminist ethnic studies intellectual history and the

psychosocial theory I locate within its archive is sometimes produced in relationship to or within the university, but it is also knowledge that extends and is created in sites beyond. As Chela Sandoval shows in her landmark *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000), the "alliance consciousness" within "U.S. Third World Feminism," were rooted in global women-of-color networks that were in dialogue with North American academic knowledge formations but were not beholden to institutions or the dominant white and patriarchal epistemologies. Insurgent knowledge making of feminist ethnic studies intellectual history also does not adhere to hierarchies that places the white settler academy as the most important site of knowledge making (Grande, 2004; Simpson, 2014)—but, simultaneously, feminist ethnic studies intellectual history has also labored to disrupt the dominant academic system and has worked within to create change and new fields of study (Christian, 1987, 1989, 1996; Smith, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Simpson, 2014; Anzaldúa, 2015). This revolutionary knowledge is also connected to student activism challenging the university in the foundational social movements of the 60s, and includes the on-going student activist labors still very much alive in the historical moment of my writing this dissertation (Ferguson, 2012, 2017).

As Roderick Ferguson explains of this legacy, the insurgent knowledges are "in" the university but not "of" (2012), a position that means that the methods and outcomes of that knowledge hold an archive of psychosocial theory that challenge the epistemic, psychic, and material violence part of many institutional processes. These texts testify to successfully putting pressure on dominant white, patriarchal educational practices, creating a dynamic change process within the western university.

Many of the texts I explore helped establish new fields of thought—for instance, in Chapter 2, I will consider Barbara Smith's 1977 "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," and also

the 1977[4] Combahee River Statement, which was the fruit of a collective process of meeting since 1974, but authored by Smith, Demita Frazier, and Beverly Smith. Both texts were produced before processes of institutionalization of Black women's studies, so they are helpful to read alongside texts like Barbara Christian's 1989 "But What Do We Think We're Doing Anyway: The State of Black Feminist Criticism(s) or My Version of a Little Bit of History," which historicizes the institutionalization of Black feminist knowledge and points back to foundational practices of the 1970s. I also connect the epistemological commitments to particular sets of knowledge-making and writing practices in contemporary innovations in scholarship (Gumbs 2016, 2018; Haley, 2016; Hartman, 2019), which I see as expressions of a long legacy of Black feminist insurgent knowledge. As I will show, this knowledge holds psychosocial expertise in naming the effects of coercive power, while practicing insurgent epistemologies.

I also situate these histories within the body of ethnic studies scholarship that has critiqued the forms of abusive power enacted within white settler, patriarchal, institutional, and neoliberal education. To be clear, there isn't one monolithic university—there are many sites of the university—but the critical scholarship speaks to certain dominant trends. For instance, many scholars have considered how multiculturalism of the 1980s emerged as a way to manage "difference" and thus contain the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s that had used difference as a location of creation power and had successfully challenging the core frameworks of the university (Thompson & Tyagi, 1993; Ferguson, 2012; Melamed, 2011).

[4] The article was written in 1977 in pamphlet form but published in 1979 in Zillah Eisenstein's *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*. Eisenstein had originally asked the collective to write an article for the book, given the Combahee Collective's expertise in feminist socialist anti-racist analysis. Like so much of Smith's work, this is also another example of her commitments to building coalitions across difference, as Eisenstein's formations come out of a context of the radical Jewish left.

Ferguson highlights that just as the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the birth of Black studies, women's studies, and Chicana studies, the 1980s university not only innovated neoliberal strategies for containing difference, but also turned toward an alliance with state and global capital that sought to extract profit from incorporating "difference" while refusing the call of these social movements for redistribution. In *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*, Jodi Melamed situates the state's origin of engagement with anti-racist discourse in the 1940s. She marks the turn to a liberal recognition of racial inequality, which gets absorbed by market individualism and nationalism. She then argues for a new formation of "neoliberal multiculturalism" in the 1970-1990s that would make anti-racist discourse productive for capitalism (2011). In Asian American Studies, Lisa Lowe's scholarship in the 1990s articulated the psychic impact of neoliberal multiculturalism in the classroom, as she interrogated canon formation and how national group identity positioned racialized immigrant students to undergo identification processes based on "painful suppression of differences" (1996, p. 56). Ferguson, Melamed, and Lowe's insights speak to ongoing, if still shifting, neoliberal processes.

My project links these histories to an understanding of psychic processes that are part of resisting dominant epistemologies. Here, I am indebted to Grace Kyungwon Hong's extensive research in *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*, in which she centers "women of color feminists of the 1980s as an alternative mode of memory that contests the epistemological formulations of contemporary neoliberal power" (2015, p. 66). As I take up in Chapter 4, Hong defines neoliberalism as "an epistemological structure of disavowal" (p. 7) that affirms certain modes of racialized, gendered, sexualized life, particularly through a politics of reproduction, in order to 'disavow' its exacerbated production of premature death (p. 7). Just as

Hong centers Black feminist and women of color feminism as an archive of affect studies (before the "affective turn" of the mid 1990s), my project considers what has been called affect through a psychosocial lens.

Hong is concerned with mobilizing alternative queer modes of reproduction (p. 129), as I am, in the memory work that is feminist ethnic studies scholarship. Her archives point to the profound cost of Black and women of color knowledge being used and co-opted by a neoliberal university as that university simultaneously disregards the epistemologies, and thus the embodied lives, of those producing revolutionary knowledge. Seeking to "incorporate" their knowledge and labor, but not reckoning with their revolutionary epistemologies, thus reproduced the violence of white, capitalist patriarchy on Black women and women of color. At the same time, Hong also gives persistent attention to the "work of imagination," or what she calls the "clear leap" borrowing from the language of the Combahee River Collective, that believes a different future is possible (p. 145). I seek to inhabit a similar reading practice, giving attention to conditions of violence but also pointing toward the manifold labors of leaping.

Part of the tension of my project is that, writing in 2020, I am benefiting from and inheriting the fruits of a tremendous amount of labor that opened new fields and abundant resources in feminist ethnic studies; at the same time, an increasing amount of research is revealing the costs to those who went before. Furthermore, while I have received my education within the university, as rooted in these revolutionary changes, I also don't wish to re-center the university as the preeminent site of education.

Indeed, the cost is high within academic settler institutions. Lee Maracle's short story, "Goodbye, Snauq," depicts the sterile sensory experiences of teaching on Indigenous histories and rights inside Canadian settler institutions to white, blank faces (2004). The story's narrative

arc points toward transformations, including for settler students' new understandings. But it is also clear upon whose body and psyche that transformation is carried out: the unnamed, first person Indigenous narrator (Squamish First Nation), who is a Teaching Assistant and graduate student in the story.

Leanne Simpson's article "Land as Pedagogy" gives another point of reference for analyzing institutional change: She writes that between 1960 and 1990, individual costs for Indigenous women trying to decolonize the Universe was enormously high— one of many reasons Simpson articulates de-centering the university within decolonial educational practices, instead centering non-University contexts for prioritizing Indigenous relationship to land and water, and honoring the knowledges of elders and emplaced memory (2014). As one example of such an intervention, in *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education*, Alex Wilson describes the necessary of designing a specifically land-based Ph.D. program for educators (Wilson & Laing, 2019, p. 138) as a response to request of community members. The university truly reckoning with Indigenous intellectual systems would also mean—in action and allocation of resources—financially compensating the labor of Indigenous writers, artists, and elders (Simpson, p. 22). Finally, as Simpson explains, it means the academy making "a conscious decision to become a decolonizing force in the intellectual lives of Indigenous peoples by joining us in dismantling settler colonialism and actively protecting the source of our knowledge – Indigenous *land*," an action steps she sees no evidence of (p. 22).

While this question of how to create institutional change within academia is not a question this dissertation pursues as its central goal, I do seek to turn toward knowledge making practices and psychosocial labors both within and beyond the university that have inhabited insurgent knowledge. To that end, a theme of my project is that one key element of those

practices and labors is that these knowledges are created in the context of kinship structures that contest the framing heteropatriarchal structures of nation-states. Transnational feminists (Mohanty, 2003; Grewal, 2005; Alexander, 2006) and Native American and Indigenous scholars and writers (Chrystos, 1988, 1995; Gunn Allen, 1986; Denetdale & Goeman, 2009; Morgensen, 2011; Simpson, 2013; Goeman, 2014; Wilson, 2008; Hunt & Holmes, 2015) have shown how analysis of heteropatriachy within a resurgent project requires a critique of the nation-state and a centering of alternative kinship histories and possibilities. Linked to such a critique is the epistemological commitment that insurgent knowledge requires feminist, queer, and two-spirit (Wilson, 1996; 2008; Laing, 2008; Driskill, 2011; Wilson & Laing, 2019, Hunt & Holmes, 2015) community practices that do not seek "recognition" (Coultard, 2014) from the heteropatriarchal norms of the settler nation-state but instead build intimacies and collectivities that empower collective change (Lugones, 2003).

In my project's scope, I focus my archives on knowledge making and kinship practices in Black feminist history (Chapter 2); Chicana and women of color coalitions (Chapter 3); and Third World/transitional feminist frameworks, which I read in conversation with feminist psychoanalytic contributions and Indigenous frameworks on education. While I want to acknowledge that many different kinds of coalition based practices have catalyzed shifts in power and historical change processes, the feminist ethnic studies writers I turn to for psychosocial theory have especially emphasized that the heteropatriarchal nationalist formations that structured so many anti-imperial movements of the 20th-century will not hold the kinship practices to sustain liberation. Said another way, these writers understand the layered workings of abusive power must be addressed—at structural, interpersonal, and intra-psychic levels. They

also understand that such a framework compels different ways of practicing relationships, intimate life, and coalitions than offered by masculinist models.

Ferguson has argued, for example, that Black and feminist of color theorizing "innovated understandings of coalitions," challenging alliances based on "nationalist alliances against imperialist domination" (2004, p. 133) and "radically revis[ing]" practices of coalitions (p. 133). To be clear, nationalist formations are the opposite of Indigenous nation-building and resurgence practices (Simpson, 2014). By nationalist formations, Ferguson is describing norms borrowed from the violence of heteropatriarchal models of nation-states that shore up abusive power, are hierarchical, and repress alternative modes of collectivities.

I suggest we link this coalitionary intervention Ferguson points toward to understanding the specific contributions of feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory: namely, the knowledge practices of situating oneself as a subject within history and contemplating the many layers of identity formations. These practices write into intersections of race, gender, sexuality, disability, and class within the self's conscious and unconscious processes. These knowledge-making practices navigate difference within the self and difference within community as a site not of exclusion and hierarchy but rather creative power (Lorde, 1984). These practices have also required feminist ethnic studies epistemologies that write "theory in the flesh" (Moraga, 1981), linking the personal to the political, and moving toward coalitions (Alexander, 2006; Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015). The practices are also what Hortense Spillers calls the contemplative work of the "interior intersubjective" (1996) in her reframing of psychoanalysis, a term I unpack at length in Part IV of this chapter, given its central role in this dissertation.

My project emphasizes how these knowledges required untold relational, psychic, emotional, and spiritual labors as part of the intellectual labor. I both center the expertise of these

traditions of knowledge, and yet don't wish to romanticize this history. As I describe in Chapter 3, Anzaldúa speaks to the risks to her health of building coalitions amongst white women and women of color, specifically situating her diabetes as rooted in these stresses. The foundational feminist of color text *This Bridge Called My Back* speaks to the tremendous fears and risks of writing about difference within women of color experiences, including different points of proximity to whiteness. Or, consider the activist legacy of Barbara Smith: Her work has long held space for white women to grow and join anti-racist efforts and Black men to grow and join feminist efforts; *and*, in the introduction to her landmark 1982 text *Home Girls*, she quotes Bernice Johnson Reagon's contribution in the book that names these vulnerable realities: "You don't go into coalition because you just *like* it. The only reason you would consider trying to team up with somebody who could possibly kill you, is because that's the only you can figure you can stay alive…Most of the time, you feel threatened to the core and if you don't you're not really doing no coalescing" (p. xxxv). More recently, Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes, writing about decolonial possibilities of allyship in "Everyday Decolonization" (2015), also turn back to Reagon's insights from 1982. I am suggesting that feminist coalitions have been a powerful practice to changing relations of abusive power and redistributing resources, but also these kinds of coalitions are vulnerable and labor intensive.

Coalitions demand a particular self-reflective psychic and relational work (Smith, 2000; Anzaldúa, 2015; Minnie Bruce Pratt, 1984; Mohanty, 2003; Lorde, 1984) in which one is willing to recognize the layers of one's formation as a subject within history. I describe such self- reflection as feminist ethnic studies contemplative practice, and I situate these practices as important to psychosocial theory. "Contemplative studies" is a growing within the field of education (Barbezat & Bush; 2013; Barbezat & Pingree, 2012; Bush, 2013; Zajonc & Palmer,

2010), with literatures often emphasizing mind-body connection and attention to inner life. In my approach, though, I am more attentive to subjective and intra-subjective formations within material histories and both coercive and creative relations of power. In centering a feminist ethnic studies lineage, I show how contemplative knowledge-making practices reclaim and invite integrations as a method for contesting the fragmentations of abusive power and dominant epistemologies (Rendón, 2009; Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015; Willams, 1991; Simpson, 2014). Said another way, it is a feminist insurgent practice to integrate subconscious and conscious knowing; the mind and the body; the senses and the cognitive; the self and others (including other than human kin); the personal and political; and the past and the present.

Central to my project's focus, these knowledge practices need language to inhabit grief labor and cultivate imagination for otherwise possibilities. These contemplative practices also have a great deal to do with what forms of writing, learning, and teaching can hold the investigation of dissonance and contradictions of one's own identity (Anzaldúa, 2003), including moving between understanding the felt experience of oppression and, simultaneously, analyzing how one participates in oppressing others (Lorde, 1984). These writing practices that are infused with contemplative knowledge also explore difference within the self, recognizing such self-reflective work is tied to understanding difference within and across community, thus empowering coalitions, transformations, and collective liberation (Mohanty, 2003).

One of my key claims is that these ways of knowing also perform psychosocial expertise through connecting form and content of the writing to psychic and material realities. For example, as I explore in Chapters 3 and 4, because feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory challenges how "identity" is coerced by dominant systems to collapse felt experience of dynamic multiplicity within the subject, the insurgent writing practices must counter that norm in genre

and form. I show how writing practices that are based in Third World feminist coalitions understood the multiplicity of the subject and have long practiced multiple genres to make theory (Christian 1987, 1994, 1996).

As Fatima El-Tayeb has argued, as feminist of color anthologies in the 1970s and 1980s theorized queer diasporic identities not bound to rigid nationalist memory-making (20011), they chose poetry and creative texts as the best vehicles. El-Tayeb also suggests that intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) further provided an epistemological revolution in articulations of identity as multiple. Jennifer Nash's work on intersectionality has made a similar point, connecting its epistemology back toward writing practices: "The black feminist archive of what is witnesses often takes on forms that challenge and upend the neutral and detaches demands of academic writing, including forms like memoir, narrative, autobiography, and 'alchemical' writing (often while carving out space for the privacy and sanctity of black women's interiority" (2019[5], p. 119). She turns to methods within feminist critical race legal studies for "jam[ming] the fictions of objectivity and neutrality" (123) within the law's discourse, centering the writing of Patricia J. Williams (as I also do in Chapter 2).

Indeed, the explicit connections of the political and the personal in Black feminist and feminist of color writing reveals the degree to which white male theory and philosophy uses its racial, classed, and gendered authority to masquerade as "objective" —a pretense to universality which is actually a neglect of the kinds of psychosocial rigor, including what I will examine as grief labor, needed for writing into the interactions of power, knowledge, identity, memory, and subjectivity. As I will show throughout this project, feminist ethnic studies writers performed

[5] I note this observation was also included in her 2008 article on intersectionality, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality" in *Feminist Review* (89), then was further developed in her 2019 *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality.*

epistemic interventions by using forms of writing that touched and named subconscious and unconscious process, sensory experience, affective labors, and embodied realities. These psychosocial methods hold a range of expertise and labors connecting inter-psychic, intra-psychic, and structural phenomena.

The psychosocial methods are found in feminist anthologies, essays, books, and many genres of theory-making, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, as feminist studies—including Black feminist literary studies, and feminist ethnic studies, Chicana, Indigenous Studies, and postcolonial traditions— were emerging as fields. I assemble and close read an array of feminist ethnic studies historical texts—many created inside the university, some created outside, some in overlapping spaces— as archives that testify to the necessity of multiple genres and ways of writing for arriving at and expressing insurgent knowledges. I show how the form and content of the writing necessarily challenge binary identifications and nationalist projects that rely on excising difference, both within the self and within communities. As these writers contested organizing discourses (like nationalism) or dominant language, cultural norms, or borders (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), they needed more genres to represent the intricate interactions within the self and within the relationships that ultimately construct the social and the political. As I especially center in Chapter 3, such feminist writing itself was conceived of as a profound personal and political exercise and portal for coming to understand how the plurality of the self connected to the complexities of systems and histories (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; 1990, 2000, 2015; Alarcón, 1994).

While I have chosen to focus on writing practices as an archive of psychosocial theory, I also recognize that the focus on written knowledge has limits and cautions as a method. For one, African Americans were denied by the law access to read and write under slavery and thus

created knowledge in many alternate forms. Or, as Patricia Monture-Angus describes in her collection of essays, *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*, "The dominant culture has sanctioned the truth and importance of the written word, such that Indigenous oral knowledges and laws were not counted as knowledges or laws (1995, p. 33). Leanne Simpson has also critiqued how settler practices within the university–including long hours spent writing on a computer—can divorce learning from kinetic, sensory, relational, and emplaced learning (2014). Postcolonial feminist writers, such as Mohanty, also navigate the tensions: for while the written word is used in "the basis of the exercise of power and domination" (2003, p. 78), it is also a way to fight back. Mohanty uses as her example how Israel took over land, destroyed archives, and sought to erase memory, such that written work on Palestinian childhoods is a form of remembering as political resistance (pp. 78-79.)

To question the privileging of the written word also needs an investigation of the relationship between class position and who has the structural resources of time and money to write and circulate knowledge in writing. In *Woman, Native, Other*, Minh-ha, turning to both Tillie Olson and Gloria Anzaldúa's reflections, writes that writing needs time but "the framework of industrial development, means a wage that admits of leisure and living conditions that do not require writing be incessantly interrupted" (1989, p. 7). Minh-ha writes that even when Third World women have a situation in which they have time to engage in writing as an occupation, they experience "guilt," in recognizing their "writing in such a context is always practiced at the coast of other women's labor" (p. 7). She argues this guilt begins as children, citing Anzaldúa reflections on "being stooped over the tomato fields bending, bending under the hot sun" as a child, wrestling with daring to "*feel* and *believe*" (italics original) she could become a writer when those around her did not have that privilege (p. 7). She also includes Toni Cade

Bambara's emotional journey of coming to embrace that a commitment to writing as one's primary life's labor is a legitimate way to participate in collective struggle. My point here is that the act of writing and publishing has not only been inaccessible to many women, but even for those who had access (or created access for themselves and others), emotional and intellectual complexities were ever being navigated that white, male, class-privileged authors did not face.

While focusing on the written word as my archive can certainly err on privileging written knowledge over other expressions and circulations of knowledge, I am arguing that the psychosocial theory I have assembled in this dissertation, moving through many moments, texts, geographies, and spaces, shows the production of written theory as one way feminist communities were contesting hegemonic modes of knowledge, connecting to the many dimensions of subjectivity, and creating new possibilities both within and beyond the university. I also want to suggest that a psychosocial analytic helps bring a lens to how Black women, women of color, and Indigenous women bear the multiple costs of not only writing transformative theory within difficult conditions, but also educating men and white feminist women on how their unconscious and conscious investments reproduce harm, the toll of which is well documented (hooks, 1984; 1994, 2003; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldú 1981; Ducille, 1997; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The kind of knowledge-making done within feminist ethnic studies traditions—whether that knowledge is expressed in writing, pedagogy, or coalition building—holds deep levels of psychic labor within the intellectual work.

As my archives show, the psychic labor within the experience of writing testifies to the labors of insurgent knowledge. I thus ask: How is attention to felt experiences of affect, intra-subjectivity, and intersubjectivity an under-recognized labor? What is the role of narrativizing

experience to feel affective realities in this making of theory? What connections can we draw between insurgent knowledge, writing practices, and psychosocial theory?

In my view, answers to these questions are quite explicitly found within the archives. As I curated my texts to close read in this project, I was continually struck by how, especially in the cultural and institutional changes of the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s—Black feminist and women of color feminist writers were consistently, rigorously theorizing power through not only writing theory but talking about their experiences of writing. They explored themes such as the interplay of different parts of the self, what can be written in the face of dominant discourse, the grief within the work, and how one rewrites the self when those dominant discourses have already violently written/projected upon their flesh. And, as I have emphasized, these epistemic practices and modes of psychosocial expertise were in service of nurturing the collectivities that held the power for creating change.

In my formulation of the specific psychosocial contributions of feminist ethnic studies intellectual history, I see my project as part of the impulse of critical ethnic studies to attend more carefully to multiple lineages. Critical ethnic studies, write the editors of *Critical Ethnic Studies: A Reader*, is not one site, but an "impulse emerging," the editors write, to attend to divergent lineages of ethnic studies (2016, p. 4). They begin their analysis by emphasizing that, on the one hand, while the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) is most often the origin story of the historical framework of the birth of ethnic studies, we also need to more carefully address how the narrative is collapsed into a mythic, radical totality and unity, that creates a dream of "solidarity" that eradicates realities of difference. They caution that such totalizing narratives won't be sufficient for sustaining insurgent knowledge on a global scale (p. 2).

More specifically, they explain: “Much of the critically incisive scholarship we understand to be centrally situated in black studies, queer studies, Native American studies, cultural studies, and gender studies, for example, has either rearticulated, radically disrupted, or transformed the generally (and often presumptively) coalition- and alliance-based intellectual infrastructures of ethnic studies” (p. 4). They go on to emphasize that the lived materialities and intellectual histories of Black studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, Chicana/o studies, Puerto Rican studies, Asian American studies, Latino/a studies, cannot be collapsed into “a unifying institutional regime or discrete scholarly rubric” (p. 4). I hear their framing as a call to be cautious about uncritically reproducing ethnic studies origin stories, and instead attend to specific formations, histories, and entwinements. Said another way, there are multiple intellectual genealogies, with different institutional iterations, and a more careful approach works collaboratively to attend to specific sites of thinking across ethnic studies histories. An important piece I see my research adding in the historicizing of the field is centering not only the epistemologies of feminist ethnic studies, but also more specifically, how Black, Chicana, Third World, and Indigenous feminisms contributed psychosocial theory that challenges how we write, learn, and teach both within and outside the university.

Finally, as a feminist ethnic studies practice of knowledge-making, it is important to position my own intellectual and community histories in relation to my project, including how I came to my questions. My psychosocial methods are rooted in many years of cross-professional collaborations as an educator, both training psychodynamic practitioners (George, O’Connell, & Roslan, 2018) and K-12 teachers in feminist ethnic studies text. I also have worked as a writing coach since 2006 and taught contemplative practices in that context and beyond. While I have prioritized teaching outside the university and creating bridges, I have also prioritized being a

student within and studying with faculty across fields and institutions. Barbara Smith writes that interdisciplinary work is a feminist coalition building practice, and I have felt that way (2000).

My graduate studies have been in four fields the past 15 years: counseling psychology, U.S. religious history, gender studies, and now ethnic studies. While working with different methodologies over the years of my research, I have asked a consistent set of questions about how to connect analysis of the intra-subjective, intersubjective, and structural as we seek educational practices that transform historical systems of violence, including white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, settler colonialism, and Christian hegemony.[6] It was in turning toward feminist ethnic studies history that I located what seems to me to be incredibly transformative, exciting, and rigorous epistemologies for pursuing these questions.

My work also raises questions about how to be in right relationship with these texts and the relational labors of the knowledge from which I benefit. I do this work a cis woman and a settler writing her dissertation living on Lenape lands. In my approach to psychosocial theory and identity, I am concerned by how my own whiteness works at a psychic, intergenerational, and material level. For example, I have watched white settler colonialism be reproduced within my extended family, at every Thanksgiving table since the 1980s, with my uncles of French/German descent talking about whether oil would ever be found on the family farmland in North Dakota. Oil was found in 2009—which was also when I was first starting to study the texts of Indigenous scholars, as I was one of the few people in my family with the privilege of

[6] I take the phrase Christian hegemony from feminist, anti-racist activist Paul Kivel's work (2013). Thanks to Jonah Sampson Boyarin for the initial encouragement/accountability to develop critical reading practices for how whiteness and racial hierarchies are historically embedded in (patriarchal) Christian hegemony. Tisa Wenger's mentorship and scholarship (2017) has also been especially significant in my developing frameworks for linking ethnic studies and religious history in this project.

attending graduate school (and even more so, an Ivy League school). In 2016, the labor, community, and sacrifices of Standing Rock activists brought these issues of fracking and pipelines in the Dakotas to the world. My lens had been shaped by watching, at a familial level, the reproductions of white settler colonialism and dialoguing with my mother about family interventions to the status quo of reproducing settler theft.

Simultaneously to inhabiting whiteness, I also inhabit the psychosocial experiences of intergenerational racial change, mixed white/Arab-American identity, and racial ambiguity on my father's side and amongst my sisters. I come from shifting historical experiences of Catholic Lebanese identity that has looked very different for my grandfather, my father, myself and my sisters—including how racial identity in my family has been read by others verses how it has been self-narrated, and also how perceptions shift based on geography/location, community, age, and the racial frameworks of the person doing the reading of race.[7]

I know intimately—though often have had no words as an ethnic studies scholar—for how identity in mixed white/Arab-American families is not only a morphing historical phenomenon, but also the lived experiences elude easy categories to name experiences and therefore the experiences most often go unnamed. As I explore in Chapter 5, drawing on insights from Daphne Taylor-García (2018), given Jared Sexton's analysis of anti-Blackness within the very discourse of multiculturalism (2008), the use of the word multiracial is fraught in ethnic studies. In my case, my inhabiting both whiteness and Arab-American experiences in my family feels further challenging to analyze because of wanting to resist the ways whiteness itself functions to appropriate the experiences of Black people, people of color, and Indigenous people.

[7] With thanks to Mariko Cavey for being such a generous conversation partner with me on experiences of multi-racial identity, whiteness, educational practices, and feminist coalitions.

Still, what I have experienced with my students, and in my own psychic development, is that if you don't have a word to mark the lived multiracial experiences and the affective and psychic histories you carry inter-generationally within your experiences, then you can lose conscious access to very significant aspects of your own subject formation, kinship experiences, and knowledge about the world you exist in. As a scholar of feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods, I also believe there is a risk of losing precise historical methods for understanding change over time and how whiteness is formed and reproduced at a structural, psychic, and kinship levels, as I give further attention to in Chapter 5.

That being said, most of this project is not centered on questions of the multiracial (though, that's a potential future project); rather, it is centered on interrupting psychic mechanisms of whiteness within education. To that end, I understand my whiteness as access to sets of structural privileges that are produced vis-à-vis material and economic exploitation and ongoing racialized labor (including psychic and affective labor) exported onto nonwhite subjects. Whiteness produces the racism that is "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Gilmore, p. 28, 2007). I also understand whiteness as embedded in the Christian hegemony that fueled colonialism and settler colonialism within western European conquests and ongoing theft of Indigenous land and waterways.

What I am here most concerned by within my relationship to ethnic studies texts and histories is how to be in ethnical relationship to texts that were written to dismantle the violence and exploitations of whiteness. As a teacher, I also recognize that as student activists create more space for required ethnic studies class on campuses (Ferguson, 2017), who is in the room will shift (i.e. there will be more white students in the ethnic studies classroom)—and thus the

psychosocial conditions of the learning will shift and raise further questions about how to teach ethnic studies. I ask: What is the difference between centering and exploiting in my teaching of these texts? And how is this a critical question for a classroom? I believe we must center feminist ethnic studies in all education (K-12 and the university, as well as teaching sites that support people not inside institutions), but also, given the historical and ongoing exploitations, how to center these texts without re-enacting at psychic and material levels the white consumption of the life's labors in these texts, remains a serious question.

Anzaldúa, in her introduction to *Making Face, Making Soul*, perhaps offers helpful guidance here when she describes the issue of white people engaging Indigenous women and women of color's work as one of "appropriation" vs. "proliferation." She says, "The difference between appropriation and proliferation is that the first steals and harms; the second helps heal breaches of knowledge" (1990, p. xxi). So, what does "psychic" healing of knowledge mean in the context of such entwined psychic, spiritual, epistemic, material, social, and economic violence?

To take this term "healing," for a moment: One of the significant problems with white mental health models understanding of "healing" is there is not a critique of the impacts of patriarchal and white supremacist theft of labor and the stealing of life's energy (Anzaldúa, 2003). This theft includes capitalist exploitation of wage and non-wage labor and the narcissistic absorption of land and waterways. It also includes the appropriation of revolutionary knowledges and the non-recognition of what I call grief labor. How, then, do we transform such historical theft and non-recognition is how we enact collective healing? I believe a focus on a neoliberal version of healing the "psyche" found in so much of western health models —to the exclusion of reckoning with the structures that press down on embodiment and psyches, earth and water—is

harmful. Ultimately, I see neoliberal psychic formations as an enactment of disavowing the revolutionary power of the collective, which I take up in Chapter 4's exploration of psychosocial theory and critical pedagogy.

In my assessment then, psychosocial healing must include how our psychic, intersubjective, and political transformations challenge wealth redistribution and interrupt capitalist norms, including recognizing assets and resources not in the form of money. For example: stealing/harming vs. healing breaches of knowledge is interconnected to economic justice and supporting the embodiment and communities of feminist elders who created these transformational ideas. I recently learned The Barbara Smith Caring Fund is a community driven fund for her retirement, which changed my view of how I ought to teach this text (i.e. I have begun encouraging the white middle and upper class adult students I teach not just to read the Combahee River Statement, but also to give to her fund after reading her co-written text). In teaching reading practices with these texts, I discuss needing to interrupt the consuming norms[8] of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983), for as Grace Hong has argued, Black feminist and women of color elders have absorbed the costs of producing revolutionary ideas. Or, as Leanne Simpson has articulated, Indigenous elders (in her case, she names Curve Lake Elder Doug Williams) have poured love, energy, and time into teaching Indigenous knowledges, and that labor is not compensated by how the university recognizes labor (2014).

I suggest that psychosocial theory might help these realities be made more visible and accounted for. I hope to be attentive to what material redistribution means in the context of a

[8] With thanks to Jason Craige Harris, a colleague in Black studies, ethics, and religious history who first encouraged me back in 2011 to center these concerns as key methodological questions in my dissertation work. Our conversations at Yale Divinity powerfully shaped the seeds of this research.

feminist ethnic studies history in which much of the knowledge was not funded by a university, and/or significant labor was being done within and outside the university and not fully compensated. I argue the psychosocial *is* about the material matters; it's about naming labor where that labor has been used and made invisible. The psychosocial is also about the embodied labor of naming—the long lineage of feminist ethnic studies writers putting language to systems in order to dismantle material, psychic, and discursive violence. So, if incorporation has been a capitalist, patriarchal, white supremacist development to keep extracting from these knowledges, then healing must include the redistribution required to be accountable to these knowledges. I see part of the responsibility of teaching these texts is to consider ways to help more people have access to learning, while generating resources that can support Black, Indigenous, and feminist of color elders, such that as I teach, there can be a disruption of capitalist consumption.

I have located and developed the concept of the psychosocial in this project not to disconnect the psychic from the material, the historical, and the economic. Rather, I hope to build bridges in our analysis and in our practical interventions. In this project, I also want to name the different forms of labor that are part of the work of personal, interpersonal, institutional, and political change, in order to best support that work as an educator. I also hope my teaching practices might support the activist movements upon us today. I believe feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory offers methods for imagination, rigor, coalition building, and more pleasure and joy— amidst the grief and labor of our collective transformation.

Part III: Practicing Psychosocial Theory

In Part II, I introduced my key methods, how I understand feminist ethnic studies intellectual history, and my relation to my project. In this next section, I turn to give an example

of psychosocial theory through a dialogue between Stuart Hall and bell hooks. It occurred in 1996, though was published in 2017 in *UnCut Funk: A Contemplative Dialogue*. It includes a discussion of intellectual life and writing practices; navigating patriarchy, race, and class; and the implications of psychoanalysis for the political sphere. I close read moments to argue that psychosocial theory is a relational and intra-subjective practice, as well as a contemplative method that informs writing and learning practices. I also build from their dialogue to introduce key concepts in my project including: the plurality of the subject (Alarcón, 1991); the relationship between psychic defense mechanisms and psychic labor; and a reformulation of trauma as somatic knowledge and labor.

Paul Gilroy writes in the book's introduction that hooks and Hall's exchange prompts a "more contemplative kind of reading," one that asks us to listen as closely to the text as Hall and hooks listen to one another as they dialogue across their differences (2017, p. xi). Gilroy names their attentive mode of discussion as a "pedagogical example" (p. xi), particularly highlighting that Black subjects are allowed to be represented (and to represent themselves) as "ontologically deep" with "unruly psychic forces at play," and express their needs for "varieties of psychotherapeutic support: spiritual as well as secular" (p. xii). As I discussed in the previous section, psychosocial theory embraces dynamic and emerging layers of subject formation.

The conversation that follows Gilroy's introduction is intimate and rigorous, serious and playful. It is also insightfully feminist in content and method. In both what is being said and *how* the interlocutors arrive at their insights, I pinpoint the practice of psychosocial theory. For example, like her critical pedagogy in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Community* (2003), hooks' critical theory examines intra-subjectivity and intersubjectivity as sites from which to theorize the political. In talking with Hall, she insists that feminist methods connecting

the personal to the political[9] mean reflecting on unconscious relational dynamics as part of feminism's political labor.

As hooks says to hall, expressing her enthusiasm for aspects of the psychodynamic and psychoanalytic project: "...we need the therapeutic content from the couch to be united with the political" (2017, p. 93). The context of that statement is hooks explaining that unless the unconscious life of men's resistance to feminism is interrogated, they will continue to play out in the public sphere internal, unexamined realities.[10] More specifically, she is talking to Hall about ways to understand Black male scholars' psychic resistance to feminism within traumatic legacies of slavery and colonialism, in which investments in the heteropatriarchal family might serve as a psychic strategy to fight the "emasculation" perpetrated by white supremacy. Even when men grab hold of the right feminist analysis, hooks shares from her lived experience inside U.S. academia, if they do not have on-going, honest relationships with feminist women[11] that call

[9] In *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, hooks offers a critique of how men and white women sometimes employ the personal as political in narcissistic ways that do not actually develop global, political analysis (1984, p. 24–25). For another discussion of how the personal is political as a feminist method might be employed in class-based ways that elide how the "private" sphere has been constructed for white, middle- and upper-class women, while state intervention has not allowed for women of color the privilege of a "private" sphere, see Aida Hurtado's "Relating to Privilege: Seduction and Rejection in the Subordination of White Women and Women of Color" (1989) as well as Mohanty's discussion of this text in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (1991, p. 9–11).

[10] I will add that hooks, more than almost any feminist theorist I know of, has created rigorous yet highly accessible feminist theory designed to invite men into feminist labor and healing. See for example: *All About Lov*e; *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (2001), and *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004). She is not in any way a separatist as a feminist practitioner—quite the opposite. She invests in coalitions and in a feminism that is for everyone. But like her work building coalitions with white women, Black women, and women of color, she does not hesitate to address difficult interpersonal realities with men that are symptomatic of larger institutional, historical, and political conditions.

[11] I would add trans, nonbinary, and gender creative folks here, in addition to hooks' category of "women," while recognizing she was speaking within a different theoretical moment and lexicon in 1996.

them to reflect on how the personal meets the political, then male scholars' feminist intellectual analysis will still not change interpersonal dynamics or alter systems. In my reading, feminist psychosocial theory is as much an intra-psychic and relational practice as a scholarly practice.

In hooks' frameworks connecting the psyche to the political, there is no way to understand hegemonic masculinity within institutions without making links to racial, classed, and colonial processes that shape intersubjective and relational experiences. Her approach aligns with transnational, Third World, Black, women of color, Indigenous, and postcolonial feminist thinkers who articulate that patriarchies have plural, competing, and interacting material-historical and psychic formations.

This is an important point of emphasis because the method of connecting the personal to the political in the context of white feminist history has often (though certainly not always[12]) been used to conceptually position gender as *the* central axis of identity. Such a methodological error holds psychic disavowals that produce limited historical methods. For example, seeing gender as the primary axis of psychic formation disavows the role of settler colonialism in producing heteropatriarchal systems, as well as white women's role in the on-going violence, as Indigenous scholars have analyzed (Grande, 2004; Goeman & Denetdale; 2009; Wilson, 2008; Goeman, 2013; Simpson, 2011, 2014; Laing, 2018; Wilson & Laing, 2019). Or as Maria Lugones' theory of decolonial feminism articulates, if we do not historicize gender, "…we keep on centering our analysis on patriarchy, that is, on a binary, hierarchical, oppressive gender

[12] White feminists such as Mab Segrest, Adrienne Rich, Zillah Eisenstein, and Minnie Bruce Pratt, working in coalitions with Black feminists, Indigenous women, and women of color feminists, counter this kind of positioning of gender as *the* most important relation of power to interrogate. In my critiques of white feminist history, I am not suggesting white feminism is monolithic; to do so would erase the immense, long-term coalition building labors within feminist history.

formation that rest on male supremacy without any clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other" (2007, p. 187). I argue throughout this project that feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory— in offering a contemplative and critical reading practice for different sites of power— is making critical links amongst rigorous historical methods, epistemology, identity, and psychic formations. It is precisely these methods of theorizing interconnections, intersections, and pluralities that make feminist ethnic studies the most important site for knowledge production that connects the psychic and intersubjective to the material-historical.

At the same time, I suggest these methods have significant psychic, relational, and affective labor, and they also require different approaches to making theory, including narrativizing experience and subjectivity. For example, hooks asks Hall to contemplate how his racialized gender has a history and how he was navigating that history in his own conscious and unconscious learning. These lines of feminist psychosocial inquiry are not easy—intellectually, psychically, affectively, or relationally— but Hall follows hooks, collaborating by narrating and theorizing his own experiences.

He reveals a thoughtful curiosity about his unconscious processes of resistance to feminism. He analyzes how earlier in his career he created "sophisticated reasons" to ensure the curriculum being studied at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was focused on male writers (2017, p. 18), despite critiques from feminists. He says that most of us, looking back on history, want to forget our own unconscious resistances that were always part of the challenge of personal, social, and political change (2017, p. 18). Countering that forgetting, he shares that even when he arrived at being consciously committed to feminist politics, he still

used all kinds of "logical" arguments to block change in the Center because he had unconscious resistance (p. 18).

These "sophisticated reasons" and "logical" arguments have a name in the psychodynamic lexicon: intellectualization, sometimes called a "higher order" defense mechanism. It is often a very rigid defense, especially when paired with gendered, racial, or classed authority. Hall observes of himself that he had to learn he had investments in reserving power for a certain kind of "masculine formation" of knowledge (p. 19). This level is precisely the level at which power and authority daily operate, Hall interprets from analyzing his own psychic defenses. But, he says, it is precisely the level people do not want to talk about (p. 19).[13]

In theorizing subjectivity and power —and in deconstructing "objectivity" — hooks and Hall use narrative, contemplative reflection on their embodied, relational experiences to practice psychosocial theory. They also place their experiences within larger historical systems. Within their dialogue, and within feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods, it is not assumed that identity, subjectivity, and experience are transparent or pre-made realities easy to grasp.[14] It is quite the opposite, such that a range of knowledge making practices are needed to create theory.

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[13] He also gives credit to his longtime partner, the prolific scholar Catherine Hall, who, finding herself 14 years the junior of a celebrity cultural studies husband, did not accept the patriarchal situation of their marriage as it played out in raising their first child and pushed him to grow in daily feminist practice and reflection.

[14] In giving attention to histories of colonialism and slavery, hooks and Hall provided a framework for understanding patriarchy as a system that relies on embodied, felt hierarchies of masculinity and intersecting systems. As such, there are different access points to power, and different configurations of gendered power, including white women holding power over Black men and colonial subjects. We might extrapolate to consider how psychodynamic process within patriarchal structures is differently lived for Black men, white men, men of color, heterosexual and queer men, Indigenous men and men living under occupation, men who are doing the occupying, upper class men and those marginalized from capital and financial resources, men who enact dominant religions and those marginalized by them, disabled men and able-bodied men, trans men and cis men, etc.

To that end, my projects shows in different lineages how psychosocial methods often move between narrativizing experience and analysis because the methodological movement opens insight for connecting how intersubjective and subconscious (or unconscious) experiences are part of enacting larger systems.

I especially explore this dynamic sense of movement for how differences are lived and negotiated in Chapter 3 through centering of Norma Alarcón's theory of "multiply interpellated subjects" (1994) and "plurality of the self" (Alarcón, 1990). It is not just that the subject is fractured and multiple (as it is in poststructural theory), but more so that the subject is contending with historical-material systems within/upon their flesh and psyche as they create transformative knowledge. Similar to hooks, Alarcón links the psychic and the material conditions to subjectivity and epistemology: for instance, Alarcón argues that because women of color theorists (such as in the landmark anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*) know that "the psychic and material violences" are not just perpetrated by men but white colonizing women (Alarcón, 1990), they live an embodied location that produces feminist theory with a greater range of political analysis. Hooks' had also developed this precise argument in her early writing in Black feminism as compared to white feminism.[15]

Said another way, feminist psychosocial knowledge that recognizes the multiply interpellated subjects will resist theories of identity and subjectivity that represent terms like "gender" or "patriarchy" or the "psyche" as universal or transhistorical. I am further suggesting that theorizing the plurality of self within interlocked systems— for both oppressors and oppressed, and when necessary, interrogating that binary, too (Anzaldúa, 2003; Keating, 2013;

[15] See her 1984 *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, which develops this argument early in her writing career.

Lorde, 1984; hooks, 1995)—also has significant implications for the labors of knowledge making, coalition building, writing, and teaching.

For instance, I observe that in dialoguing with hooks, when Hall names his own defenses to feminism and when he uses that reflection to theorize the psychic formations of patriarchies, he is no longer outsourcing gendered psychic labor to women, as he had done earlier in his career. He is able to participate in dismantling gendered power, which isn't a labor men do if they are still disavowing their part in its ongoing production.

I believe psychosocial theory helps us locate how defenses— when enacted across power differentials (of race, gender, class, disability)— mark a psychic labor relation that is interconnected to the labor relations of larger material structures like heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, settler colonialism, and capitalism. I see psychic labor as the labor of transforming subject-object relating (or what I call structural narcissism) as these relations undergird abusive/coercive power. It is often the labor of enduring another's unconscious resistance to acknowledging their own enactment of the very system that harms one's own body and mind. It is often the work of contending with what is disavowed in dominant systems, but is ever haunting, present, and pressing down.[16] It is the intellectual labor that challenges the psychic and material effects of violent systems.

Chapter 4's analysis of critical pedagogy especially considers how psychic labor is ever being done across neoliberal sites of disavowal in classrooms and institutions. Psychic labor is being done when Eve Tuck describes having to deal with settler "moves to innocence" at

[16] Disavowals such as those written about in Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1991); Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* (1997); Dennis Childs' *Slaves of the State* (2015); Grace Kyungwon Hong *Death Beyond Disavowal* (2015); and "A Glossary of Hauntings" by Eve Tuck and C. Ree (2013).

academic conferences as she presents (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Psychic labor is outsourced to women of color in the classroom when Gloria Anzaldúa describes white women students refusing to see themselves as agents of oppression in a class on women of color feminism (1990). I also read psychic labor as part of the production of affect theory Grace Hong describes of Black feminist and Chicana theory in *Death Beyond Disavowal* (2015). I see such labor as part of the knowledge-production of "felt theory" that Dian Million describes of Indigenous feminist knowing, particularly in the rejection of shame projected upon Indigenous women and girls by settlers (2009, 2013). In all these examples, psychic labor includes affective labor, but I formulate my term to pinpoint more specifically how defensive mechanisms within historical-material systems create psychic labor for those on the other side of the relation of abusive/coercive power being reproduced.[17]

Defense mechanisms of abusive power serve a dissociative purpose: the unconscious contains feelings and sensations that one does not wish to feel and sense—feelings like grief, fear, shame, uncertainty, and vulnerability. In some case, those feelings being defended would unsettle claims to mastery if allowed to be fully conscious, felt, and reflected on. Toni Morrison's psychosocial literary theory in *Playing in the Dark* (1991) suggests whiteness, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism are precisely psychic claims to mastery. The mastery is enacted through property relations, borders and occupations, violence, economic control, and dominant forms of education that fuse memory to nationalist imaginaries. But the intra-psychic

[17] Because I am influenced by feminist relational psychoanalysts, I see defensive processes as routing through attachment systems, not Freudian drives.

realm of activity is significant, too. It holds in place dominant imagination and representations protected by defense mechanisms, and it is also enacted intersubjectively.[18]

That being said, defensive mechanisms are also not only about protecting abusive/coercive power and claims mastery—which is where a careful application to learning and pedagogy is especially important for psychosocial theory, as I discuss in Chapter 4.[19] The psychic ability to dissociate from certain feelings helps people function in trauma, triaging and compartmentalizing feelings to allow for prioritizing the next practical steps of survival in war, or domestic violence, or poverty, or on-going sexual abuse (Herman, 1992). Particularly for children[20] under duress, defenses serve an absolutely essential survival purpose of suppressing

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[18] Here, we could make connection to David Roediger's work integrating labor theory and psychoanalysis to understand the psychological and ideological components of whiteness (2007). Gail Bederman's biographical methods in in *Manliness and Civilization* connect the psychic life of race, gender, and class to settler colonialisms and imperial violence (1995). Saidiya Hartman's pathbreaking interventions in *Scenes of Subjection* connects the narcissist defense mechanism within white liberal reading practices to the afterlife of slavery (1997).

[19] It is clinicians[19] that have taught me as an educator to be more attuned to how defenses function in everyday survival for people living under overwhelming affective and embodied stress. The psychic ability to dissociate from certain feelings helps people function in trauma, triaging and compartmentalizing feelings to allow for prioritizing the next practical steps of survival in war, or domestic violence, or poverty, or on-going sexual abuse (Herman, 1992). I am particularly grateful to Karen O'Connell, Christine Hutchinson, and Joy Holt, clinicians who have helped me deepen my understanding that defenses are not "bad"—they are various and serve different functions. Lynne Layton's work and guidance, which I integrate in Chapter 4, has also been tremendously helpful.

[20] This idea that defenses protect vulnerability is important for teachers. A relevant example that came up recently while running a workshop for educators and teaching on defenses in the classroom: A Black male teacher shared an example of a day he was teaching about the events surrounding the murder of Trayvon Martin. His school's context is overwhelmingly white and upper class (indeed, some students of color had recently written an open letter to administration regarding the racism, sexism, and transphobia at the school). There was only one Black male student in the class, and he contested his teacher's use of the word "murder" and shared that he thought Martin was at fault for his death. The teacher felt torn, not wanting to silence the student, but also wanting to help him see Martin was not at fault. As it played out, the two other Black students in the room—young women—challenged their peer and generated a conversation. In a situation like this, my methods would foreground these questions: In an overwhelmingly white space, how safe did it feel for the one Black male student to connect to the profound grief and

certain emotions until there is an adequate holding space (Winnicott, 1971) to process those vulnerable emotions. So, if defense mechanisms are only read as pathological, and if that reading is applied to pedagogy, it will ultimately harm marginalized students the most.

In my assembling of psychosocial theory, I am seeking to understand how defenses are being used and to what end. What and who is being protected? While these are questions I develop most fully in Chapter 4's analysis of feminist ethnic studies pedagogy as psychosocial theory, I also apply the lens to how I see feminist ethnic studies scholars reflecting on the affective and psychic labors of their own work. As Chapter 2 highlights, insurgent knowledge within Black feminism also means writing into knowledge one simultaneously expresses not wanting to feel—because it can be excruciating to create knowledge that does the work of revolutionary change.

As I have already introduced, there is grief labor within insurgent knowledge because that knowledge is naming and contending with both structural and interpersonal forms of violence on one's body. Grief labor describes a knowledge that is hard to theorize precisely because proximity to that knowledge is painful (Williams, 1991; Hartman, 2008; Spillers, 2007). The grief labor connects lived, embodied, and intergenerational experiences to rigorous feminist

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vulnerability of his teacher's words on the murder of Black boys within white supremacy? While I would read his push back on his teacher as a defense, it is not a defense protecting power and privilege; it is a defense to manage the chronic emotional and psychic violence of the white, upper class education space he lives within. This kind of defense is not unlike the ways in which women will blame other women for being raped by men—i.e. It is vulnerable to confront the violence of these systems towards one's flesh, and we often have psychic investments (as a coping strategy) in believing we can control not being harmed. For these reasons, within education contexts with young people, I suggest it is very important that teachers have ways to think about how defenses are employed for different reasons. For example, if the student pushing back on his teacher had been a white male, the defense would have been serving an entirely different purpose (i.e. disavowing his own complicity in a system of whiteness/white supremacy) and would need different pedagogical interventions.

theories of interlocked systems. It is also a relational and reproductive labor, in that it uses the transformation of grief on behalf of building kinship, communities, and coalitions.

Grief labor also has implications for how we understand defense mechanisms vis-à-vis the research on trauma. The latter is a word proliferated in many discourses, which I rethink in this project, especially through Anzaldúa's psychosocial theory in Chapter 3. My key intervention to trauma discourse, based on feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods, is that I conceptualize trauma not as a pathology but as an embodied labor and a somatic proximity to revolutionary knowledge. Furthermore, contemporary clinical trauma theory has focused on the body as holding traumatized memory, but most clinical approaches do not sufficiently attend to how embodiment is situated within historical-material systems and abusive/coercive power.[21]

My methods of viewing trauma as an embodied labor and a somatic proximity to knowledge would emphasize how we become disconnected from the knowledge trauma holds. When capitalism exhausts and alienates the subject from their body (Federici, 2004), or when dualistic epistemological systems collude in splitting the body and mind (Lorde, 1978), it is harder to access the knowledge trauma holds. When people's traumatic experiences are not recognized as part of structural conditions—indeed when entire systems of structural narcissism disavow ongoing, historical violence—it becomes even harder to manage the psychic labor of trauma's knowledge.

So, while, on the one hand, dominant disavowals are a defense not to hear/touch/feel that which haunts, defenses can also be a method of survival, protecting vulnerability and maintaining resistance. Repressing or dissociating the *felt* experience of certain knowledge is

[21] This absence of analysis is changing. Resmaa Menakem's 2017 *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Minds and Hearts* is especially shifting the conversation.

useful in contexts in which one's trauma-knowledge is dismissed, the grief labor is too much, and the available support is too little. In a sense, the knowledge of grief labor the trauma holds is unconsciously protected by defenses until there is a holding space to fully feel the knowledge. Depending on the power relation, defenses could even be read as a practice of refusal—for example, of refusing to show interiority and forms of knowledge in contexts in which one is objectified or read through damage narratives (Tuck, 2009).

I also view grief labor as also connected to resisting the internalization of violent systems. Fanon's concept of disalienation (1952) is certainly relevant here, as is José Esteban Muñoz's concept of disidentification (1999), which he largely grounds in women of color queer theory. In my approach, I take as my starting point Black women and Third World feminist writers and their lived descriptions of negotiating and contesting dominant systems at intra-psychic, intersubjective, and epistemic levels, especially attending to writing as a way to rewrite oneself, challenging the misrecognitions and erasures perpetuated by dominant systems, and connecting with others to grow a kinship base of resistance. Writing was often the act through which political consciousness and identities were shaped: it was often painful and laborious, but also freeing, integrating, and revolutionary.

Returning, then, to *Uncut Funk*, it is noteworthy that hooks and Hall arrive at discussing the important connections between feminist knowledge and writing practices. Hooks first connects the feminist theorization of the personal and political to which modalities of writing have the range for this kind of layered knowledge and exploration. Dialoguing in a moment in which Black women and women of color had fought hard for space within the university, she simultaneously expresses hesitation with how the knowledge within her is then policed by hierarchies of discourse. She explains: "...I feel as though part of what we are trapped in, is

particularly that academia gives us one kind of discourse that is prioritized and valued, a certain aspect of who one is can be articulated through that discourse. Part of why I fought so hard to write both within and outside the academy is to be able to get different dimensions of one's being" (p. 48). As I will take up in Chapter 2, Black feminist theorists did not just advocate for inclusion in the spaces of white settler universities—they continually advocated to claim and reclaim their own epistemic authority in how their work was made and for whom it was made.[22] While it is important to name the neoliberal moves of abusive, coercive and co-opting power within the site of the university, it is also critical to show the revolutionary resistance of feminists of color to abusive power (Ferguson, 2012, 2017).

Hall responds to hooks' reflection on the need to write both inside and outside academia by sharing that for him, writing in a serious academic way also seemed to require him "excluding or expunging from prose those things which I have always done which is to take pleasure in thinking and talking (p. 48). Hooks replies that the space and capacity to play is an essential part of dismantling patriarchal authority, a comment that calls to mind Barbara Christian's "The Race for Theory" (1987) and Audre Lorde's "Uses of the Erotic" (1978), which both emphasize creative play and sensory pleasure as Black feminist maneuvers to unsettle and unmask abusive power. The more I developed my reading lens on psychosocial theory, writing practices, and grief labor, it became clear to me that within feminist ethnic studies traditions, there has been a long focus on creative power, pleasure, sensory experience, and embodied joy as forms of knowledge, too. I note that both joy and grief are part of hooks' concern for connecting writing practices to the expressions of "different dimensions of one's being."

[22] I thank ongoing conversations with Dr. Misa Dayson over Octavia Butler's work, Black feminism, the academy, mindbody connection, and creative writing for my being supported to hone this reading practice in my project.

I also observe that in hooks' dialogue with Hall, she attends to the gendered, classed realities of writing: for example, she explains that it was birth control that allowed a generation of women intellectuals to write who could control the means of their reproduction. She also dwells on the ethics of her own class power to write about the lives of her family (as she does in both her critical pedagogy and social theory), when they do not have the class position to write and publish their narratives speaking back to her. Many feminist of color texts speak to the challenges of distributing the work; hence, the founding of presses such as Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Spinsters/Aunt Lute, Third Woman Press, and Firebrand Press were so important not only as a press to distribute writing but also as a global network to support Black women and women of color writers.

I have turned to this dialogue because the relationality of hooks and Hall's knowledge production is an archive that embodies key practices I identify in psychosocial theory. Their contemplative stance toward understanding themselves as subjects in history—with unconscious processes shaped by structures— as well as their desires for their writing methods to invite all the aspects of themselves (including pleasure and play), foreshadows many of the ideas I write toward as I read my selected archives in Chapters 2–5.

Part III: Linking Psychoanalysis to Studies of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Class

While I suggest in this dissertation that there are many ways into an analysis of feminist ethnic studies contributions to psychosocial theory— and focus primarily on writing practices and pedagogy as my archive—in what follows here I map the engagement between ethnic studies and classical psychoanalysis. While I don't want to position psychoanalysis at the center of my psychosocial analysis, I do want to investigate and take seriously how and why ethnic studies has

chosen to discuss, engage, and use psychoanalytic tools. This discussion sets up the categories I identify as useful to develop within my approach to psychosocial theory in coming chapters.

In Kalpana Seshardi-Crooks' postcolonial critique in "The Primitive as Analyst," she draws on Spivak to argue that the institutionalization of psychoanalysis in colonial contexts (India, in her focus) has enacted epistemic violence in its western notions of subjectivity and rationality (1994). As I explore in Chapter 2, Curtis Marez' analysis (1994) shows how Freud transposed an imperial map into a psychic map" in his theorization of the 'primitive' unconscious (66). By examining Freud's 6 papers on cocaine (from 1884-1887), Marez contends that not only did cocaine offer Freud a virile, embodied experience of his own masculinity, but in writing about South American Indigenous use of it, Freud tried to "transcend stereotypes of the "primitive" Jew" by instrumentalizing "the more distant world of the South American "savage." (73, 1993/94).

All this to say, that psychoanalysis and Freud have been complicit in colonialism, racism, heterosexism, and classism makes it a challenging discourse to reframe. Indeed, when ethnic studies scholars turned in the late 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s to psychoanalytic tools for investigating identity and intra- and intersubjectivity, many of these projects brim with a particular self-reflective, even self-conscious language, concerning their turning toward a thinker privileged in white, western, patriarchal discourse. As I have been outlining, institutional processes in this time period—amidst heteropatriarchy, incorporation of difference, and neoliberalism—seemed to be necessitating language for naming structural realities as lived at intersubjective levels. At the same time, Black feminist scholars including Hortense Spillers (1987, 1996) and Claudia Tate (1998), and Asian American Studies scholars Anne Anlin Cheng (2001) and David Eng (2001), were well aware that engaging a psychoanalytic lexicon could yet

be viewed as eliding the significance of material difference within the conditions of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983); or as participating in a discourse that has pathologized the minoritized subject; or as re-centering whiteness itself. Within their reflections on their methods, they show a sustained effort to address the possible misrecognitions that might be already written upon their work in order to open space for new recognitions.

At the same time, the history of psychoanalysis and race is not only a question of Freud, but also a question of who was engaging and re-deploying his concepts for different purposes. Arlene Keizer argues, for instance, that there was widespread early engagement of psychoanalytic concepts by Black thinkers, including Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston, in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s that was "a critical part of the projection of comprehending black modernity and making black modernist literary art" (p. 412). Fanon's contributions in psychiatry also followed—his *Wretched of the Earth* especially finding wide readership in nationalist, postcolonial liberation movements. But, within white racial imaginaries, psychoanalytic theory in the 1950s and 1960s was also used to pathologize Black communities, the notorious Moynihan report being one example. Amidst the sociological shift in seeing race as biological, to race as cultural, there still lacked adequate analysis of structural conditions. When psychoanalytic frameworks are employed amidst disavowals of the violence of whiteness, patriarchy, and class-based systems, minoritized subjects are read as pathological (thus re-enacting the systems of violence).

Still, as Badia Sahar Ahad has shown through her archival research in *Freud Upside Down,* the work remains to interrogate absences in the archives, too, investigating how historiographies themselves are produced and what has been forgotten in the very history of psychoanalysis (2010) as a critique of abusive power. Gabriel Mendes' recent archival work on

the LaFargue Psychiatric Clinic in Harlem in the mid 1940s is one example of historical research that breaks down the white-middle class narrative of psychoanalysis (2015). From within Latinx Studies, *Psychoanalysis in the Barrios: Race, Class, and the Unconscious* (Gherovic & Christian, 2018), has argued that the notion of psychoanalysis as only useful for white, upper-classes is a U.S.-based idea (and practice), and realities are quite different in Latin America.

Within Black feminism, Hortense Spillers engaged psychoanalysis early on and, I argue, provided a bridge that continues to be a model in how to redeploy psychoanalysis for critical race and ethnic studies. Her methods will be foundational to how I theorize the category of the psychosocial throughout this dissertation, so here I will introduce and historicize one of the key concepts I build from—namely, that of the interior intersubjective.

In her 1996 essay " 'All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race," published the same year as bell hooks and Stuart Hall's dialogue, Spillers begins by naming up front conceptual and interdisciplinary impasses between Black studies and psychoanalysis, and in doing so, provides recognitions for her readers who are justifiably hesitant to embrace classical Freudian methods:

> ...culture theorists on either side of the question would rule out, as tradition has it, any meeting ground between race matters, on the one hand, and psychoanalytic theories, on the other. But I want to shift ground, mindful of this caveat: little or nothing in the intellectual history of African Americans within the social and political context of the United States would suggest the effectiveness of a psychoanalytic discourse, revised or classical, in illuminating the problematic of 'race' on an intersubjective field of play.... (p. 76)

While being forthright to recognize the problems, she also introduces her claim: "I think it is safe to say, however, that the psychoanalytic object, subject, subjectivity now constitute the missing layer of hermeneutics/interpretive projects of an entire generation of black intellectuals now at work" (p. 76).

The reason she asserts a need for this hermeneutic is for greater self-reflection and contemplation on the ethics of "intramural relations," and, more specifically, gendered relations. We might infer, then, that there something about patriarchal relations of power—at this moment of academic and institutional life for Black feminist studies— that compelled an inquiry into the unconscious as a site of repression, projection, and displacement. Her landmark text is explicitly a feminist intervention, not only within psychoanalysis and Black studies—but also the lived, gendered, racialized, here-and-now relations of power that infuse knowledge making. In other words, as so much of Black feminism and women of color feminism does (Hong, 2015), she is offering an epistemological intervention within a neoliberal climate that tries to sever the individual from the impacts of systems and structures.

While naming an impasse, she explains up front her goal is to "[ask] prior questions" and "[put] down tracks"[23] for future investigation, opening a liminal space in knowledge-making, and embracing the multiple points we traverse between knowing and unknowing. Her commitment is not to classic psychoanalytic theory frozen in time—instead, she calls her approach "an exercise in psychoanalytics"—marking a theoretical space of revision and hybridity between fields. And the specific practice she is inviting is what she terms the "interior intersubjective." It is a mode of intention/attention, a kind of self-interrogation of one's role in the intersubjective relation, in order to understand oneself as a subject within history. She also names the interior intersubjective as a "contemplative*"* method. My methods are positing that we might apply her categories of the "contemplative" and the "interior intersubjective" as a practice for psychosocial rigor.

[23] "Putting down tracks" is also a loaded turn of phrase —see Manu Karuka's recent *Empires Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (2019).

In this dissertation, I show how the writers I have assembled practice Spillers' notion of the interior intersubjective in knowledge production, or what I also term contemplative-critical epistemologies. I also practice this self-interrogation in my own writing methods. In Chapters 2 and 3, I did choose to stay very close to the feminist ethnic studies texts themselves, building a foundation of psychosocial theory that centered their voices and language. Then, in Chapters 4 and 5, I weave my own first-person writing. I try to put into practice their psychosocial methods that claim rigorous knowledge is opened through different modalities of writing within our research; but even as I drew attention to lived relations (including thinking about the production of whiteness generationally in chapter 5), I also didn't want to center whiteness in this dissertation. The way and order of how I chose to integrate my first-person writing was thus my strategy for taking up the practice of theorizing myself as a subject, while being cautious about how and when I centered my own experiences.

In Spillers' analysis of the interior intersubjective, she gives a historiography for race and psychoanalysis that routes through Fanon, expanding the questions of psychoanalysis to include the economic, social, and historical. I observe her style as an essayist—her performance of writing, her play with language and syntax, knowns and unknowns, and explicit and subtle critique— is also critical to *what* she is conveying, and thus is also a model for all future inquiry linking psychoanalysis and studies of race, gender, sexuality, and the intersubjective realm. Her path toward a psychoanalytic hermeneutic is about a form of intersubjective encounter with our object of inquiry, a way of moving amidst misrecognitions to illuminated forms of self-reflection within community. In how she writes, she teaches us how to read, and in how she teaches us to read, we learn something about ourselves and our modes of encounter with the object, including what unknowing feels like.

As Spillers addresses in her psychoanalytic bridge building, especially concerning the limits of Fanon's own gendered self-reflective capacities, there is often ambiguity between center and the periphery within our own identities in terms of our relationship to dominant systems. In an educational or movement building context, this center/periphery tension Spillers asks us to wrestle with as mattering immensely for developing psycho-social practices. Because identities are multifaceted, in certain aspects we might be minoritized; while in other aspects, we enact the dominant position and/or imaginary. In many cases, collective and suppressed histories of trauma intersect and play themselves out, in ways we don't have enough language for but we can feel, in ways that affect our capacities to build trust, imagine healing and liberation, sustain coalitions, and dismantle colonial and imperial violence.

One version of Spillers' essay was published in the 1997 *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism,* edited by Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, and Helene Moglen, a text that indicates the ways in which a turn to psychoanalysis was marking not only a need to think about masculinist practices within the academy, but also, just as importantly, white feminist disavowals of their own defense mechanism protecting their alliances with white power and privilege. While the collection is limited in scope by its black-white binary, it represents a historical moment of risky encounter, liminal space, and potential coalition building between white and Black feminist engagement. It is in reading this collection that I also first became attuned to how the category of "spirituality" might be one way (among others) of mapping feminist ethnic studies theories of the psychosocial.

For example, Akasha (Gloria) Hull in her essay in the collection "Channeling the Ancestral Muse: Lucille Clifton and Delores Kendrick," asks why it was necessary to turn to psychoanalysis when African American texts and spiritualities already had theories of the

unconscious—even as those texts were being devalued by the academy and not counted as legitimate knowledge (p. 5). She writes of psychic process, creative process, and spiritual process as interconnected. Hull argues that in African American traditions, women's "spirituality-based attentiveness" is an alternative genealogy to centering psychoanalysis for and understanding of unconscious process (p. 347). The category of spirituality can be a method of resisting colonial, patriarchal Christian hegemony; it can also serve as a way of knowing and connecting conscious and unconscious experience in ways that resist Cartesian epistemologies of the rational vs. irrational. I most fully explore spirituality as a psychosocial theory in my centering of Anzaldúa's work in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I write of how Jacqui Alexander also connects spirituality to feminist epistemology, ancestral connection, rememory work, and land practices, as do Indigenous scholars (Simpson, 2014).

That said, using the language of psychoanalysis has still been an important way to disrupt dominant power, too, and postcolonial writers have in particular have adopted methods to flip the script and show the irrationality of western power. For example, when Edward Said wrote his founding postcolonial text, *Orientalism (*1977*),* one could argue he was seemingly describing how orientalism enacts the primary defenses of splitting and projection, producing an imaginative structure of the "other," a fantasy that is given the authority of scholarly and political status. Said's analysis was followed by explicit psychoanalytic models in Homi Bhabha's postcolonial contributions on hybridity and mimicry (1994). Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather* combined feminist postcolonial approaches and historicized and contextualized the production of Freud's theories, linking colony and metropole in her analysis of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class (1995). Spillers' "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," also succinctly names the psychic mechanism at play in colonialism when she describes Portuguese Christian early

colonial "discoveries" of "Moors" and Black Africans: "Perhaps, from a certain angle, that is precisely all that they found—an alternative reading of the ego" (70, 1987). In other words, given their racialized projections, all Christian Europeans "discovered" was Europe—their imaginations enacted onto others. Or, as Toni Morrison writes in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, "As a writer reading, I came to realize the obvious: The subject of the dream is the dreamer" (1992).

Morrison isn't doing a postcolonial reading—she is talking specifically about how whiteness as both a material and psychic/imaginative structure functions—but her insights here are not unlike Said's, Homi Bhabha's, and McClintock. Morrison is tracking what she terms the "Africanist presence" in white writers, or how it is that a Black spectre haunts white literature. Morrison's insight was built upon and critical to Claudia Tate's 1998 work in *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels* on race and legibility: namely, that Black and white readers alike have struggled when African American writers dare to write "excess"—meaning, the longings, fantasies, and desires that don't fit easily within what is expected of a unitary racial subject protesting racial inequality. Her approach, like Spillers, is also explicitly feminist: she examines, for instance, how Du Bois' work on race can be read through his gender fantasies.

As theorists under the ethnic studies umbrella have engaged psychoanalysis as a tool, the category of melancholy also emerged as another approach. Here, I will note an interdisciplinary convergence with Relational psychoanalytic feminist thinkers, whose work significantly reframe Freud in ways that have influenced how I read for attachment (instead of drives) in psychic conflict. Judith Butler first published her 1996 essay, "Melancholy Gender—Refused Identifications" in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues: The International Journal of Relational Perspectives*— a journal read by Relational clinicians. Scholars of Asian American Studies,

including Anne Anlin Cheng (2001) and David Eng (2001) followed Butler in writing on melancholia, but offering revisions to her theory by centering race, ethnicity, and class, along with gender and sexuality, within identity/identification.

For example, Cheng turns to Toni Morrison and Maxine Hong Kingston, foregrounds the workings of both race and gender, names forms of racial melancholia for both white and Black and brown subjects, and argues that "the education of racism is an education of desire, a pedagogy that tethers the psychical inextricably to the social" (p. 19). Eng's *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asia America* (2001), borrowing the words of Norma Alarcón that we are all "multiply interpellated subjects" (p. 7), argues that the ways in which heterosexual difference conditions loss is never separate from classed and racialized psychic and material conditions. Additionally, in Black studies, Sara Clarke Kaplan (2007), theorizes the politics of diasporic melancholia. Paul Gilroy (2005) and Khanna (2003) have also taken up the category of melancholia in a postcolonial critique. Eng and Kazanjian's *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* was a significant interdisciplinary collection (2001). More recently, Eng collaborated with clinician Shinhee Han to co-write *Racial Melancholia, Racial Dissociation: On the Psychic and Social Lives of Asian Americans* (2019).

The work on melancholy and loss has provided ways to talk about lived and felt impact of violent systems on the body and psyche, while at the same time it has critiqued and corrected for how minoritized subjects have been pathologized by these very discourses of melancholia. While my own approach in the following chapters does not route through the language of melancholia, I do believe these conversations indicate a need to theorize grief. My methods focus on grief as a form of psychic and affective labor, and one that is intimately linked to the rigor that is part of feminist ethnic studies writing and teaching traditions.

Within ethnic studies' engagement of the potential revision and uses of psychoanalytic categories, Fanon still remains a launch point for reading the psychosocial dynamics of knowledge production, just as Spillers had foregrounded in her bridge building essay. Lisa Lowe turns to him to theorize the conditions of speaking and writing for a colonized subject (1996). Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) weaves Fanon's clinical and political commitments, as Coulthard uses Fanon to interrogate the limits of the Hegelian category of "recognition" within Indigenous Studies in a Canadian settler colonial context. David Marriott in Black studies also reads for the mutual imbrication of Fanon's political and clinical work (2018). Daphne Taylor-García's *The Existence of the Mixed Race Damnés: Decolonialism, Class, Gender, Race* (2018) brings Fanon's work into conversation with Sandoval's notion of differential consciousness (1991) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call for "rewriting/rerighting" (1999).

Finally, another important way in which ethnic studies literatures has engaged, countered, re-deployed, or entirely re-imagined psychoanalytic claims is found in Native American and Indigenous critiques of discourses of trauma. In *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in An Age of Indigenous Human Rights,* Dian Million interrogates the production of the discourse of trauma, including its coercive medical diagnostic power as practiced in settler colonialism by both the mental health industry and settler political structures (2013). She tracks the ways in which the category of trauma is used as a neo-liberal technique for managing and pathologizing "individual" mental health and emotions in the name of "self-determination." With the emergence of trauma theory, western nation-states view Indigenous peoples as "medicalized victims, as in need of healing, rather than as societies who vie for political presence" (p. 52).

That being said, she also shows how within Canada, First Nations and Indigenous people have mobilized the category of historical trauma to heal and empower. Positioned within this genealogy, Million writes of how Lakota psychologist Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, who, working alongside early literary trauma theorists studying the testimony of Holocaust survivors, opened a path in the early 1990s to shift understanding of trauma, creating a definition of historical trauma that supported Indigenous worldviews and which she uses in community-based education models. Amy Lonetree's integration of Brave Heart's model of trauma in *Decolonizing Museum: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* is another example, foregrounding how to create embodied, decolonial, educational experiences within museum spaces (2012).

Alongside Indigenous Studies re-imagining of trauma, Lisa Woolfork's *Embodying American Slavery in Contemporary Culture* extended the psychoanalytic engagement of Claudia Tate and Hortense Spillers by building a feminist Black Studies specific trauma theory (2008). She explains that literary trauma theory seldom engages U.S. slavery, and she does not wish to force its ideas to fit the study of slavery. Instead, she reads for representations of embodiment in speculative fiction novels (including Butler's *Kindred*), films, and performed re-enactments, including those done as rituals in Black churches. Woolfork argues this emphasis corrects for the mind-body split that she identifies in literary trauma theory, as it travelled from Freud's work.

Not reinforcing a mind-body hierarchy is critical for ethnic studies intervention in trauma studies; it is also the method most important to contemporary clinical trauma studies, but it often, simultaneously, lacks a structural analysis, as I have previously noted. I suggest that the most helpful forms of trauma work being used in feminist of color movement work, such as generative somatics (brown, 2017) are, indeed, focused on embodiment, sensory connection, and

integrations. This dissertation identifies a long precedent for these approaches within Black feminism and women of color theory more broadly, especially within the persistent centering of embodied epistemologies as part of writing, theory-making, learning, and knowledge processes.

I argue feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory provides tools for understanding how the embodied psyche is impacted by systems of abusive power; at the same time, these intellectual, activist, and creative traditions offer a prioritization of how embodied epistemology is also a source of tremendous creative power and healing. I also hope my dissertation might provide new language for "trauma" based in understanding the psychosocial theories of feminist ethnic studies traditions, and how it is those traditions employ creativity, the senses, and mind-body connection as a healing force, as political resistance, and as epistemic challenge.

I propose that such a grounding for psychosocial theory allows for more language to name the kinds of labors that have gone into feminist ethnic studies methods, epistemologies, and interpersonal, institutional, and political interventions. I also believe that in in attending to archives of feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory, we will be better positioned as scholars, writers, and educators to practice epistemologies that transform histories of violence, helping us write, teach, learn, and love toward presences and futures of healing, creativity, and liberation.

In my next chapter**,** "The Psychosocial Labor of Insurgent Knowledge: On Black Feminist Writing, Renaming, and the 'Marvels of My Own Inventiveness," I begin with a close reading of Hortense Spillers' psychoanalytic intervention in her landmark 1987 essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." I read this essay through a lens of her categories of insurgent knowledge and rewriting/renaming practices, while giving attention to the grief labor in Spillers' revolutionary contributions through listening to what she herself says she experienced in writing the essay. Pivoting from Spillers, I then read a legacy of work within

Black feminism— including texts of Patricia Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Christian, and Barbara Smith— which I argue inhabit Spillers' notion of the interior intersubjective (1996) and offer psychosocial theory through the writing methods. One of my key interpretive practices will also be reading these texts in the contexts of historical processes: for example, I draw attention to the insurgent writing labors of Black feminist theory in the 1980s U.S. academy contending with the racism of white feminism; masculinist practices in Black studies, and neoliberal disavowal within the university's incorporations of Black feminist thought. Finally, my methods emphasize a long arc of the creative powers of Black feminist epistemologies, as I connect insurgent practices to the innovative contemporary work of scholars like Sarah Haley and Alexis Pauline Gumbs.

In Chapter 3: "A Psychosocial Reading of Gloria Anzaldúa's Theory and Practice of Writing," I locate feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theories through how Anzaldúa understood her writing as an intellectual and spiritual practice for connecting the border space of the psyche, body, spirit, and mind. I lay a groundwork for her reading of spirituality by situating intersections of Latinx studies and religious studies; then, I attend to how and why some scholars have also been uncomfortable with the category of the spiritual in her work, including the critique of Anzaldúa's methods appropriating and erasing Indigeneity. I suggest one way to read her work on spirituality is to understand the significance of the decolonized sensorium in her understanding of psychosocial healing practices, including writing as a healing act. I also place her work within insights on identity and subjectivity from Chicana theorists, including Paula Moya, Norma Alarcón, and Emma Pérez. Finally, I link her writing practices to trauma studies, suggesting she offers language for trauma that shifts the diagnostic lexicon from pathology to a new spiritual perception and labor, offering methods for politicized healing practices that are

resonant with the work of contemporary activists and movement leaders.

In Chapter 4: Third-World Feminism, A Psychosocial Theory of Teaching and Learning, and the Uses of Contemplative-Critical Writing Practices, I identify psychosocial theory in the pedagogical and theoretical contributions of transnational/Third World feminist. Beginning this chapter with Chandra Talpade Mohanty's writings and ending with M. Jacqui Alexander's, including her reflections on Anzaldúa and *This Bridge Called My Back*, I examine how both their frameworks prioritize rememory work as a psychosocial method that supports feminist coalition building, counters neoliberal notions of the subject, and understands "the personal is political" as a call toward collective interventions. In my reading of Mohanty, I especially historicize her claims alongside her critiques of the neoliberal "diversity management" of the U.S. academy, beginning in the mid 1980s. Additionally, I center in the middle of this chapter a discussion of teaching and learning using ideas from two Euro-American feminist psychoanalysts—Lynne Layton and Deborah Britzman—whose clinical theory has informed my own pedagogy and understandings of disavowal, a psychic defense that I argue interrupts feminist ethnic studies rememory work. I also complicate their framing of disavowal with Indigenous studies methods, including research from Eve Tuck, C. Ree, and Sandra Styres. Finally, I turn to Jacqui Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* to develop what I call contemplative-critical writing and learning practices, which I put in conversation with scholarship in Indigenous studies on education, namely that of Eve Tuck, Leanne Simpson, Sandra Styres, and Sandy Grande.

Finally, in the concluding Chapter 5: "Performing Contemplative-Critical Writing Practices: Threshold Identities and Un-becoming Arab," I employ the writing practices I have been theorizing about. Integrating the array of psychosocial theories offered in this project, and

layering an understanding of "theory in the flesh" (Moraga, 1981) and "threshold identities" (Keating, 1996), I use embodied writing, sensory experience, and rememory to explore the multiplicity and disavowal within my own formations of subjectivity and identity. Additional historical research in Arab-American studies is integrated to add context to formations of "between Arab and white" (Gualtieri, 2009) in my own racial formations. I also give suggestions for how to use contemplative-critical writing practices in curriculum development and the classroom.

In my introductory section of this chapter, I introduced key terms, methods, and choice of archives. In Part II, I listened to a dialogue, in order to pivot from the practice of psychosocial theory between hooks and Hall to introducing the key lineages, terms, and concepts that I will use in this project to contribute a theory of feminist ethnic studies as archive and analytic of the psychosocial. In part III, I specifically considered how and why ethnic studies has turned to psychoanalytic theory in the past to explore tensions and questions of how the material-historical meets the psychic. In the chapters ahead, I do not ignore psychoanalytic engagement when helpful, but I do de-center psychoanalytic theory as the privileged discourse, instead situating feminist ethnic studies writing practices and critical pedagogy as site of psychosocial theory.

My focus on the psychosocial is a strategy for theorizing and practicing change at multi-scales. It is also a reading practice with a set of texts, one that attunes to connections feminist ethnic studies writers have explicitly and implicitly drawn amongst the psychic, inter-psychic, material, political, spiritual, and social realities. Finally, a psychosocial analytic is a lens for understanding the forms of intellectual labor within feminist ethnic studies traditions, including the distinctly psychic labor of creating knowledge that dislodges the dominant narratives that reproduce psychic and material violence.

Chapter 2: The Psychosocial Labor of Insurgent Knowledge: On Black Feminist Writing, Renaming, and the "Marvels of My Own Inventiveness"[24]

Part I: Introduction

In this chapter, I consider how the writing practices of Black feminism are archives of psychosocial theory and labor. I develop the concept of *insurgent knowledge*—or ways of writing and theorizing that seek to transform psychic, material, and historical violence. I especially highlight the affective and psychic labors that are entwined within such intellectual production. I foreground what I am naming as *grief labor*, which is part of the affective and psychic labor of writing through erasure and misrecognition into revolutionary knowledge and collective transformations. In centering the category of the psychosocial, I also discuss the manifold forms of Black feminist rigor that go into writing about oneself as a subject within violent histories— in which one links the structural conditions with intra-psychic and intersubjective experiences— a method I initially introduced in the previous chapter's examination of the interior intersubjective (Spillers, 1996). Finally, I show how insurgent writing both queers genre and gender boundaries and prioritizes Black feminist sensory pleasure, kinship, and embodiment.

My archive for my reading of the psychosocial theory within insurgent knowledge is found in an array of U.S. Black feminist texts, including those by Hortense Spillers, Patricia J. Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Christian, and Barbara Smith. One of my interpretive practices will be marking various important moments of historical change and context in Black

[24] This phrase is taken from Hortense Spillers' 1987 essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book."

feminist thought. For example, I include in this chapter texts produced *before* Black feminist studies was part of academic institutionalization (Smith, 1977; Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977); texts produced as Black women's studies emerged as a burgeoning field (Hull, Scott, B., & Smith, 1982; Smith, 1983); texts published in the late 80s and early to mid 1990s critiquing academia's attempt to control Black feminist epistemologies (Christian, 1987; Williams, 1991; Christian 1996); and Hartman's long oeuvre of work between 1998 and 2019 that consistently challenges the ethics of reading and writing about violent archives.

In my historical positioning of texts, I also draw attention to the labors of Black feminist theory contending with the exclusions and epistemic violence of multiply layered power dynamics —namely, the racism of white feminism; masculinist practices in Black studies; and neoliberal disavowal within the university's incorporation of Black feminist radical thought (Hong, 2015). But I also emphasize the creative powers of Black feminist epistemologies. As Gloria T. Hull and Barbara Smith wrote in 1982: "What our multilayered oppression does not explain are the ways in which we have created and maintained our own intellectual traditions as Black women, without either the recognition or the support of a white-male society" (p. xviii). I intend to show that foregrounding psychosocial theory within Black feminist writing practices is a way to read for the labors of creating and maintaining Black feminist knowledge.

While I attend to the historical contexts of texts, the chapter is not structured chronologically but rather organized thematically with Hortense Spillers' 1987 essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" at the center point. I see Spillers' landmark essay as a model of insurgent Black feminist writing, or writing not toward inclusion within the symbolic order but rather toward liberatory and revolutionary imaginations. I offer a sustained close reading of her essay; then I build from her methods, making connections to insurgent writing practices and

psychosocial theory and labor across Black feminist history. I show a range of ways in which Black feminist writing practices offer psychosocial expertise for the living and theorizing, healing and becoming[25], within "afterlives" (Hartman, 1997, 2007, 2008, 2019) of violence.

Within my analysis, I foreground affective and psychic labor, as well as grief labor, because I see these categories as lenses to identify intra-psychic and intersubjective processes that are part of Black feminist revolutionary epistemologies, but often overlooked as embodied and intellectual labor. Grace Hong theorizes Black feminist and women of color expertise in imagining otherwise worlds as a "clear leap" from the epistemic norm to moments of suspended potentiality (2015, p. 137). "Leaping" as a method is one she borrows from the Combahee River Collective (1977), and Hong uses it to emphasize that nurturing alternative imaginaries is intellectual, affective, and reproductive labor (p. 137). Other scholars, such as Kalindi Vora in *Life Support: Biocapital and the New History of Outsourced Labor*, have also shown how affective labor is entwined within racialized, classed, gendered relations of global capitalism (2015). In my approach, I intend to show the manifold forms of labor within insurgent writing practices that are part of surviving, resisting, and transforming violent systems, including contesting violent Cartesian epistemologies that split the mind and the body.

As previously outlined in Chapter 1, psychic labor is not disconnected from affective labor, but the term psychic labor holds a different emphasis: it signals living and writing through disavowals, projections, and other defense mechanisms produced by the dominant epistemologies and memory-making of whiteness, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and settler

[25] For a wonderful definition of becoming, see Imani Perry's description in *Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation:* "Flesh regenerates to create scar tissue, and so do love and imagination. The stuff we use to fill the cracks at the site of our wounds is of the utmost importance...Filling the wounds is something more than simply 'healing.' It is a becoming" (2019, p. 240).

colonialism. I draw attention to the psychic labor that is exported to gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized subjects who resist dominant forms of disavowal, and who do the work of dismantling entwined conditions of psychic, epistemic, and material violence. A significant aspect of the overlooked labor is moving from the erasure, misrecognition, and isolation of dominant systems to being able to offer the language that builds conceptual connections, political analysis, and feminist and queer kinship models that then support revolutionary change.

Through close reading of insurgent writing method, I will attend to what it means to write toward liberation within systems violent to one's flesh and psyche, but also as I have discussed in chapter 1, I wish to resist a reading that essentializes Black women as objects of violence. Rather, I listen to their call for liberatory knowledge making, including joy, embodiment, and kinship practices, alongside what they have said about their experiences of writing amidst erasure, misrecognition, and material and epistemic violence.

In my attention to Black feminist psychosocial theory, I am arguing that Black feminism holds a profoundly different measure of intellectual expertise than lineages of knowledge that disavow, minimize, and repress the enormity of violence within the making of white supremacy, capitalism, settler colonialism, and heteropatriarchy. Jennifer Nash, in *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, explains the position and the labor this way: "Black women are…witnesses who can see and even name forms of violence that other subjects cannot see, or simply refuse to see. The willingness to name, to make visible, to again and again describe and analyze structures of domination is a laborious act for black women…." (2019, p. 19). She then names Black feminist witnessing as a form of love and political world-making that has required upending conventional forms of academic writing in order that Black women's embodied experiences and interiority can be both visible and protected (p. 119).

Nash also connects the labor of such witnessing to Christina Sharpe's idea of "wake work." In *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016), Sharpe gives the definition of wake work in many ways—as vigil keeping watch with the dead, as a state of awareness and form of consciousness, as remembering and celebrating, as imagining ways to live in the afterlife of slavery, as theory and praxis. Wake work is also an epistemic labor: it is the task of representing Black self-knowledge and kinship as exceeding the violence of slavery's archives and afterlives. As she repeats throughout the text: "To be in the wake is also to recognize the ways that we are constituted through and by continued vulnerability to overwhelming force though not *only* known to ourselves and to each other *by* that force" (p. 24, italics original). Said another way, there is a structural vulnerability to violence that Black women endure, but Black feminist knowledge (of self, of one another) exceeds these forces.

For these reasons, many Black feminist theorists— such as Jennifer Nash, Christina Sharpe, Patricia Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Smith, and Barbara Christian— emphasize writing methods that both name the effects of violence on Black women but also resist writing and reading practices that frame Black life, and Black women specifically, as objects of violence. Writing through "the ongoing and quotidian atrocity" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 20,) of the afterlives of slavery requires "new modes of writing, new modes of making-sensible" (p. 113). It means theorizing the entwinements of material, psychic, relational, institutional, and epistemic violence. It means thinking and feeling carefully the ethics of encountering and representing the archive's silences (Hartman, 2007, 2008, 2019). It means writing-as-witnessing strategies that at times take on the task of "calculated self-disclosure" (Nash, 2019, p. 120).

My own writing methods in this chapter will layer extended close readings of Black feminist texts because I wish to represent the language, sensuality, and feeling of the insurgent

knowledge, honoring the literary production and the depth of insight carried by both form and content. This intimacy between the form of the writing and what is being said is a critical practice within Black feminist intellectual history.

The arguments of this chapter take the following trajectory: The next section, Part II, close reads Hortense Spillers' landmark essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987). I suggest this essay is not only about reframing the foundations of psychoanalysis, as well as expanding in significant ways the feminist project itself, but it is also about insurgent writing methods as renaming practices. I propose the essay can be generatively read as a model of the psychic, affective, intellectual, and kinship labor of moving between being read/named within violent systems to liberatory modes of rewriting and renaming oneself.

As part of my reading, I juxtapose Daniel Boyarin's, "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus" (1995), which offers a different kind of reframing of Freud, that when read alongside Spillers' essay, further illuminates the kinds of radical claims and interventions in psychoanalysis, feminism, and writing methods that Spillers is making. Building from Boyarin's queer Jewish cultural studies intervention, I argue that because Freud wrote toward inclusion, he reproduced the violence of the dominant symbolic order. I contrast Freud's writing methods to Spillers, who creates other feminist possibilities for gender in the very spaces of historical exclusion from the dominant order. Here, I also connect the stakes of her methods of the interior intersubjective, as previously described in Chapter 1, to her insurgent methods. Finally, I read her essay alongside a later generation of Black feminist scholars' reflections on its immense influence, as well as Spillers' own reflections on the affective and grief labor of writing the revolutionary essay.

In Part III, I then turn to Patricia J. Williams and Saidiya Hartman's work as further examples of insurgent writing and renaming practices. In Williams' writing, I consider how she contends with epistemic violence by positioning herself as a character within the text who reveals the affective and psychic labor of her intellectual project, including the labor of naming and resisting the psychic violence of anti-Black racism (1991). In Hartman's oeuvre, I analyze how she moves from interrogating the white reader's narcissistic complicity in the afterlife of slavery in her earlier work (1997) to considering her own intra-psychic and intersubjective experience within her later research methods (2006, 2008). I also show how Hartman's later writing practices can also be connected to Spillers' notion of the interior intersubjective, in which a researcher centers an interrogation of their own psychic and intersubjective life vis-à-vis the archives and the ethnographic data.

Finally, I examine how Hartman's most recent monograph, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*, interrupts the violence of the archive and centers young Black women's revolutionary creativity and queer kinship (2019).

Having close read Spillers, Williams, and Hartman's texts as examples of psychosocial labor and theory within Black feminist insurgent writing methods, I pivot in Part IV to analyze flashpoints in the institutionalization of writing methods. I situate a historical context of two abusive systems of power: namely, white feminist practices in the 1980s U.S. academy that both excluded and appropriated Black feminism; and, masculinist norms of Black studies that minimized and misrecognized the kind of psychosocial expertise performed by Black feminist insurgent writing. I consider what these relations of power further reveal about the psychosocial labor within Black feminist knowledge-making, including the affective and psychic labor of

writing through misrecognition into embodied, liberatory theory. I tether my analysis to Barbara Christian's call for sensory pleasure and narrative writing in "A Race for Theory" (1987); Barbara Smith's articulation of writing out of silence and through misrecognition in "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (1978); and Joyce A. Joyce's argument for sensuous theory in "The Black Canon" (1989). I also analyze masculinist critiques of these works by Michael Awkward (1989), Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1987), and Houston Baker (1987).

I conclude by signaling the ways which recent approaches to the study of archives—including speculative writing, creative/narrative forms, and genre shifting within historical methods—show the radical persistence of Black feminism to claim and reclaim insurgent writing methods and ways of knowing that perform the "clear leap," hold grief labor, and enact creative transformations. Here, I use the work of Sarah Haley and Alexis Pauline Gumbs as contemporary examples. I also signal possible points of future research for investigating how Black feminist epistemologies of the body and the senses pre-date by decades much of the contemporary clinical research on trauma healing that focuses on prioritizing embodied, sensory integrations.

My intention is for the close reading and historical methods to contribute to questions on education, writing practice, and pedagogy as taken up in the remaining chapters, including the importance of the senses; the naming of psychic and affective labor relations, including grief labor; and how feminist educators might best support insurgent knowledge.

Part II: Renaming Practices as Insurgent Writing: Creating Revolution Within Exclusion

Hortense Spillers' 1987, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" sets a framework for Black

feminist insurgent writing and renaming practices. She also resets the gendered terms of Freudian psychoanalysis, and creates a new vocabulary for Black queer and feminist studies.[26]

Notably, Spillers concludes the essay summarizing the core idea of her insurgent method: "…we are less interested in joining the ranks of gendered femaleness than gaining the insurgent ground as female social subject. Actually claiming the monstrosity (of a female with the potential to 'name'), which her culture imposes in blindness, 'Sapphire might rewrite after all a radically different text for female empowerment" (p. 80, italics original). Choosing not to write toward inclusion within the already dehumanizing system, Spillers' path is toward a subjectivity and text of female empowerment that names with new sets of terms. Spillers resists "joining the ranks of gendered femaleness" within the symbolic order of Freud's Oedipal Complex and Lacan's "Law of the Father." Instead, she imagines from the position of the exclusion an "insurgent ground" of liberatory being, kinship, and creative power (p. 80).

But to move in/to that radical intervention, Spillers must also name and analyze the sadistic violence written upon the Black captive flesh and show how that violence already removed her from the symbolic order of "woman."[27] Spillers is thus theorizing Black female

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[26] Spillers notes in an interview that white male gay scholars also deeply engaged this essay and contacted her to discuss its effects on their work (2007, p. 302).

[27] Important to Spillers' discussion of slavery and its afterlife is that she is specifically concerned with naming and theorizing the experiences of enslaved women, in contrast, for example, to a work like Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (1982). Her critique is certainly most forcefully of the Euro male oppressors, but also there remains an implicit critique of masculinist historiographies of slavery, too. Concurrently, her feminist critique also includes a recognition of the oppressive role of white women. Through her invocation of Linda Brent (now known to be Harriet Jacobs)— a writer whom Spillers says offers a psychoanalytic imaginary decades before Freud— Spillers describes a layered "psychodrama" through Brent's depiction, in which both white and Black women are property of the white patriarchs, but white women are actively participating in the enslavement, material exploitation, and sadistic torture of Black women. Such a family scene isn't a neat nuclear, heterosexual, middle or upper class patriarchal family at all, and thus the classic unit of late 19th-century/early 20th-century Viennese psychoanalysis is revealed as a fantasy in this new world slavery context.

subjectivity being violently read/ written upon, even as she describes and models a Black feminist subject emerging into their own naming and rewriting of themselves as an act of insurgent practice. The psychosocial labor is to write through, into, and out of centuries of epistemic, psychic, and social violence.

As "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" is an essay about rewriting oneself in the very symbolic order that already writes upon Black women, it is also significant how Spillers' narrative voice first enters the page, beginning, as she does, with the first person: "Let's face it. I am a marked woman. But not everyone knows my name" (p. 64) It is not quite clear at this initial moment of the essay who the "I" is—but it is clear the "I" enters with naming how her own identity has been written upon. Peaches, Brown Sugar, Sapphire, Earth Mother, Aunty, Black Woman at the Podium follow, as Spillers describes "a locus of confounded identities" that are already written upon this "I" within the racial patriarchal order. Then, by the end of paragraph two, psychoanalysis' theory of the split subject is invoked in order to understand the "black woman" (quotes hers) alongside the question of what it means for her to speak whose personhood has already been overly invested with these property relations.

Spillers explains this dilemma of finding oneself already named: "In order for me to speak a truer word concerning myself, I must strip down through layers of attenuated meanings, made in excess in time, over time, assigned by a particular historical order, and there await whatever marvels of my own inventiveness" (p. 65). Here, she exhumes the predetermined strata of a violent history and discourse. But also, importantly, she signals anticipating an encounter with the "marvels of my own inventiveness"—or what I have referred to as Hong's "clear leap" that is part of transformative imaginations and insurgent knowledge.

While I am pointing out the essay is about, in one sense, an excavation of identity, it is also not claiming an essentialized or fixed self, but it is claiming the possibility of speaking *truer words* concerning oneself. The very idea of the split subject within psychoanalysis is Spillers' early reminder in this essay that a subject is necessarily in movement and emerging. At the same time, when one's own being is violently written upon by the property relations of the symbolic and material order, there are yet "truer words," even if there is "no easy way for the agent buried beneath" the symbolic-material to write oneself anew (p. 65). Writing becomes an active creation of the self, amidst discourses of violence written onto the self.

In seeking the "agent buried beneath" Spillers is meditating on a history of Black women commodified into *property*, into objects through the law's authority to read and interpret them. The reading and interpreting is also a writing upon. She articulates how the symbolic, violent sedimentations of slavery upon her flesh and body still circulate in multiple kinds of discourse. For instance, Spillers turns to the infamous 1960s Moynihan Report on the "Negro family," in which the Senator had assessed the problem of poverty within Black communities not as a consequence of racial capitalism or a history of dispossession, enslavement, and exploited labor, but rather that the "Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal society," thus pathologically out of step with the patriarchal norm (p. 65). Here lies the etiology of all kinds of problems, says the Senator, including Black women who achieve out of proportion, and in doing so, lead to the underachievement of Black men.

As Spillers introduces Moynihan's diagnosis of the upside down gendered orders, she observes the "stunning reversal of the castration theme" of psychoanalysis (p. 66). It is also here where she introduces another central question: At a time when gender differentiation was being questioned in feminist critical discourse, what do we make of the ways in which Black women

and men[28] are already positioned outside of the (white) symbolic order of normative gender? (We can hear again in her method the importance of asking the *prior questions*.)

Moving from the Moynihan Report, she next describes how in the "total objectification" of U.S. chattel slavery, there existed a dehumanizing theft of the body that lead to the loss of gender differentiation. Patriarchy pivots on the property relations of the patriarch; in a western/white and Freudian context, it is also about his regulation of the domestic sphere and dominance over the nuclear hetero family. Yet, Spillers shows how U.S. chattel slavery, as a violent theft of African kinship, precludes the possibility of the Black nuclear family; does not allow either father (or mother) to own their own children; turns the white slave master father into a "monster"; and locates "domesticity" as only for white middle and upper classed womanhood, thus again, ungendering Black women in the female symbolic order. In other words, the very constellation of terms through which Freud's Oedipal Complex and Lacan's Law of the Father are thought cannot apply to Black women's experience under slavery. They are excluded. And what does one do with/within exclusion? This question pulses at the core of the essay—and is critical to her insurgent method and the labors of her psychosocial methods.

Gender also is lost, Spillers argues, when the body becomes a "thing," and here she introduces her critical distinction between "body" and "flesh." If poststructuralism argued for how the body and gender itself are constructed through discourse, gender itself a citational practice (Butler, 1990), Spillers' Black feminist intervention is to caution how certain kinds of theory are in danger of disappearing the literal Black female captive body, while violently writing upon that body its metaphors. She argues that before the body of poststructuralist

[28] Today, within our available terms, we could add intersex, genderqueer, nonbinary, two-spirit (in Indigenous contexts), and trans to the binary categories of male and female that Spillers is deconstructing.

discourse there is "'flesh' as a primary narrative." That flesh is "seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship's hole, fallen, or 'escaped' overboard" (p. 67). Such torture alters human tissue, a literal violent writing upon bone, skin, and sinew, a "kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh." Inside is turned outside, both through sexual violence (an interiorized violation of the body, she writes), but also through other kinds of torture that rip flesh inside out, including through medical research conducted on Black people. Importantly, she also asks how this "phenomenon of marking and branding" (p. 67) is transferred generationally.[29]

This flesh reduced to thing and property, even before it is a cultural text, speaks meanings that are not visible when, as Spillers argues, "contemporary critical discourses neither acknowledge or discourse away" the concentration of "ethnicity" written upon it. She punctuates her readings of this violence toward the flesh/body with words like "startle" and "shock" and "astonish." She uses these words in the context of expressing what it means for African American writers to write and think under the pressures of the historical events of the transatlantic slave trade and the rupture of kinship. These words also function rhythmically within her syntax to interrupt, to pause, to perform a temporal break—the words slow the reader down to reckon with the practice of writing and reading these violent histories.

Spillers says of the historical memory of such horrors and the writing practices that name them: "In a very real sense, every writing as revision makes the 'discovery' all over again" (p.

[29] This statement, it seems to me, anticipates questions on historical trauma which emerged within literary theory and Holocaust Studies, and also, more pertinent to the lineage of Ethnic Studies, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart and Eduardo and Bonnie Duran's work within Native American and Indigenous communities in the early 1990s. In a 1998 interview, when asked about trauma in this essay, Spillers also clarified she does not mean an inevitable genetic transmission that locks Black people into pain but a kind of social memory, carried forward (Haslett). I will explore various understandings of trauma for ethnic studies methods in subsequent chapters.

69). What is this method of "writing as revision" Spillers is theorizing? Given the next section of the essays moves toward documenting how colonizers violently upheld their right to *name* those whom they colonized or enslaved, even if the naming was without a name—a mark in a ledger book, a brand burned on the body, or the stereotypes invoked at the beginning of this essay to name Black women—I suggest writing as revision is the naming of the self amid conditions Spillers repeatedly describes as "unimaginable."[30]

Here, then, is the psychosocial labor of insurgent writing: the affective, psychic, intellectual work of rewriting within the afterlives (Hartman, 1997, 2006, 2008, 2019) of material and symbolic violence. This labor of the writing is all the more strenuous because the experience of "dehumanizing naming" leads to a loss of what Spillers calls "communication force." This loss is not just a buried time capsule that can be uncovered and then written about with an "objective" sociological lens. Rather, that loss time travels in the material and symbolic order, showing up in semantic sedimentations of the collective past. And it is not just Moynihan she is critiquing—sociology, anthropology, science, and importantly, the critical discourse of her time, are all complicit in dehumanizing naming, which has effects on the "labors of communication."

The essay ends with an invitation toward creative feminist selfhood and the marvels of liberatory community invention: Spillers claims that both Black women *and* men, amidst their exclusion from the symbolic order, have the potential of rewriting gender itself. Of Black men specifically, within the context of the peculiar institution of slavery and its afterlife, she writes,

[30] The rewriting is especially significant given slaves were legally not allowed to write—which I say not to minimize other forms of expression during slavery, such as spirituals and lived and embodied theologies, that were yet part of survival, kinship, art, and resistance, but rather to emphasize that literacy and written expression has particular insurgent meanings within African American history.

"the black American male embodies the only American community of male which has had the specific occasion to learn who the female is within itself." She invites Black men to reclaim the "power of the 'yes' to the 'female' within (p. 81). Spillers would later explain in a discussion with Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, and Jennifer Morgan, reflecting on this essay, "What I was hoping to suggest is that black men can't afford to appropriate the gender prerogatives of white men because they have a different kind of history" (2007, p. 304). Her insurgent writing methods offer a freedom not available within reproducing the status quo violence of heteropatriarchy. In exposing the limits of psychoanalysis—indeed of the western philosophical[31] project of the "human"— Spillers assembles Black feminist tools for freedom that queer liberation and become invitation for both Black women and Black men.

Next, I want to consider further the radical nature of her invitation by reading her essay beside Daniel Boyarin's queer Jewish studies critique of Freud. In "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus" (1995), a text in implicit conversation with "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," Boyarin argues that Freud's entire Oedipal premise of his work was a heterosexual alibi, allowing Freud to write from his own marginalization as an effeminized Jewish man toward inclusion in the dominant Christian order. In contrast to Spillers' method of insurgency, I am suggesting that Boyarin helps illuminate how Freud is seduced by masculinist inclusion, and in the process, reproduces the psychic and symbolic violence of the normative order.

Boyarin's argument takes the following route: Drawing on Sander Gilman's *Freud, Race, and Gender* (1993), he first contextualizes how within Freud's lifetime the "othering" of

[31] The philosophical project in this essay is also briefly presented as a theological project, for it is Christian colonizers' cosmologies– of human and "savage," good and evil, light and dark—that undergird the enslavement of Africans, Spillers argues.

European Jewry routed through racial science and Christian dominant conceptions of virile masculinity that imaged Jewish men as effeminate, hysterical, and queer. Boyarin claims if contemporary readers don't consider Freud's own felt vulnerability to exclusion from the patriarchal order in his own historical moment, then we won't understand his anxious march toward inclusion that pushes his theory into an obsession with gender and sexual binaries and the prominence given to "successful" gender differentiation in psychoanalysis. Freud writes toward inclusion in a gender system that is and continues to be deeply violent, especially to women, nonbinary, genderqueer, trans, and two-spirit people.

Boyarin is suggesting it matters to pause and ask *why* he might have chosen this route. I am pointing out that such a line of questioning can further highlight the harm Spillers is calling to account and the methods she offers for another way through exclusion. I further want to suggest that a juxtaposition of Spillers and Freud through reading Boyarin helps illuminate the stakes of Spillers' practice of the interior intersubjective—or the rigor of reading one's intra-psychic and intersubjective relations through the "bombardments" upon the construction of identity. As a feminist practice, the interior intersubjective could prevent writing toward inclusion because it offers a lens to understand the particular configurations of one's own psychic investments, vulnerabilities, and enactments.[32]

Boyarin's assessment of Freud's "alibi"—or what I am reading as writing toward inclusion in the masculinist Christian symbolic order—considers that there are two Freudian theories of the psyche in widespread circulation: his earliest claim that hysteria in female subjects was a result of sexual abuse by their fathers, then his renouncement and "discovery" of

[32] See chapter 4 for my theorization of enactment through Lynne Layton's work on whiteness, class, heteronormativity, and what she terms "normative unconscious process."

the Oedipal Complex instead. The Oedipal Complex is a patriarchal script that reproduces gender and sexual differentiation and hierarchy. Feminists have emphasized that Freud's shift in theories of the psyche alters the point of view of psychoanalysis toward infantile sexuality, replete with fantasies and drives, instead of believing his women clients and moving toward a critique of the actual patriarchal abuses of Viennese, bourgeois fathers and the psychic impacts of that violence. In Boyarin's understanding, though, this feminist critique leaves out something important: why Freud moves toward a story of male aggression toward the father and (hetero) eroticism toward his mother. It also leaves out that 6 of the 18 abused patients were men.

Boyarin makes his queer/feminist intervention through a close reading of Freud's letters to Fleiss that shows salient details often omitted from discussion of Freud's theoretical shift. First, Freud and his brother were themselves survivors of sexual abuse from their father, and Freud's clinical material hardly restricted sexual abuse or hysteria to women. Secondly, Boyarin makes a convincing claim from Freud's letters that he struggled with his own bi-sexual desires, and specifically for his friend Fleiss. At a time when Jewish male masculinities were already associated with the grid of the effeminate, the figure of the male hysteric, and the homoerotic, Boyarin argues that the shift to the Oedipal Complex was an alibi, and right as Freud was separating from his intense feelings for Fleiss.

From an ethnic studies framework, there are multiple approaches to tracking the formations of Freud's changing masculine identity/identifications. Notably, it matters how he is positioned within western Europe, as Boyarin takes up, but Freud is also within a global colonial economy of racial hierarchies. Curtis Marez has offered a compelling analysis of Freud's own wrestling with identity this way: "I would argue that, in order to transcend stereotypes of the 'primitive' Jew, Freud instrumentalized the more distant world of the South American "savage"

(1993–1994, p. 73). By examining Freud's 6 papers on cocaine (from 1884-1887), Marez contends that not only did cocaine offer Freud a virile, embodied experience of his own masculinity, but in writing about its South American Indigenous use, "...Freud translates an imperial map into a psychic map" in his theorization of the 'primitive' unconscious" (p. 66).

While Boyarin's analysis in this essay does not connect the intimacies of the continents (Lowe, 2015) with the same precision or ethnic studies method as Marez, Boyarin's methods do interrogate Jewish men as racialized/gendered/queered subjects within Christian Europe in such a way that opens lines of feminist and queer theoretical analysis. Most importantly, in examining the enmeshment of homophobia and antisemitism in Freud's lifetime, he argues for how Freud creates a theory whereby he can cover for himself not (fully) belonging to the patriarchal symbolic order. In other words, Freud tried to write himself out of the very racialized, gendered, sexualized categories that the antisemitic discourse of the late 19th-century wrote upon him: "feminized, pathic, queer—Jewish." As an act of escape, he wrote a different universal narrative—the "inexorably heterosexual" script of the Oedipal Complex, which becomes a theoretical route back into gentile phallic heterosexuality. As Boyarin explains of Freud's relationship with himself:

> The fundamental ideas of human sexual development in Freud are a sort of screen or supervalent thought for a deeper but very threatening psychic constituent that Freud had found in his own hysteria that then panicked him: the desire for 'femaleness,' for passivity, to be the object of another man's desire, even to bear the child of another man. The analysand that Freud came to disbelieve was thus himself (p. 128).

I am aiming to highlight how both Spillers and Boyarin show how a subject is violently written upon by the symbolic order, albeit in different ways; I am also wanting to contrast the choices made within the exclusion. As "Mama Baby, Papa's Maybe" describes, the Black female subject of Spillers' essay is historically, literally written upon by the whip, the ledger

book, sexual violence, the tortures of medical research, the chains of chattel slavery within 400 years of the (Christian) transatlantic slave trade, and the violent sedimentations of the symbolic order. Boyarin's subject—the late 19th-century and early 20th-century Jewish man[33]—would come to be written upon by the destructions of the Holocaust, along with queer people, the disabled, political dissidents, and Roma, all categories of people connected in the Nazi imagination. (Of note: Freud's books were burned by Nazis. He was able to flee Vienna, though all his four sisters perished in concentration camps.)

This interdisciplinary juxtaposition of Boyarin and Spillers is useful because from within their respective disciplines and identities, both are analyzing fundamentally violent symbolic and material orders, even as those histories are distinct and have especially different political and material afterlives. In subsequent chapters, I will return to the challenges of how to bear witness within education practices to different kinds of historical trauma and their afterlives, as well as give attention to the methodological and ethical challenges that arise with ethnic studies engagement of the concept of trauma. For now, I wish to make the point that I see both thinkers performing a feminist psychosocial reading of history that has potential uses to understand the needed practices of the interior intersubjective as applied to theory-making, writing practices, and developing pedagogies for reading and writing methods.

Both Boyarin and Spillers are describing how a subject might claim certain sets of choices (though, highly circumscribed choices) within the prevailing violent patriarchal order. Freud, according to Boyarin, chose to write and theorize toward inclusion in dominant categories

[33] Pellegrini's critique (1997) has questioned how it is that Jewish women are elided in Jewish cultural studies analysis of Freud; she specifically critiques the work of Sander Gilman (1993). Boyarin's work, while focusing on critiquing dominant masculinities, is more methodologically attentive to centering women, such as his focus on Bertha Pappenheim (Anna O.) in *Unheroic Conduct* (1997).

of heteropatriarchal, Christian virile masculinity—which had a significant historical effect for the field of psychoanalysis. Writing toward inclusion insured the field's survival, and, I argue, also pathologized women, queer folks, intersex, genderqueer, trans, and racialized colonial subjects and continues to do so. Spillers, in contrast, is specifically closing her essay asking African American men *not* to be seduced by inclusion, but instead to create other feminist possibilities in the very spaces of their historical exclusion from the dominant order.

In her invitations, I see the insurgent path, or what Hong calls the "clear leap." Spillers radicalizes the imagination for other possibilities, including a liberatory invitation for Black men to touch the female within themselves and to inhabit their own site of exclusion from white-patriarchy as creative possibility, in contrast to a Freudian fear of the feminine. While her focus is on Black women's insurgent, revolutionary powers, and their claiming their creative power to rewrite themselves in the symbolic order, her methodology of centering "a radically different text for a female empowerment" opens manifold freedom possibilities for Black men, too.

Her insurgent writing also creates radical ground for others' writing, as we see in how Black feminists inhabit the very sets of terms she has built. In the 2007 roundtable discussion on this essay that Spillers participated in with Hartman, Griffin, Eversley, and Morgan, Spillers' fellow scholars all spoke of the deep significance of this essay to their own work and to an entire generation of Black literary critics that inherited Spillers' language (2007). The discussion highlights what I see as the reproductive labor of Spillers' writing, which birthed ideas that gave literal life energy to the next generation of theorists.

Morgan shared "...when I go back to the essay I am stunned to see how much 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe' generated my own work," going on to explain how Spillers created the vocabulary to confront the violence of history (p. 301–302). In Hartman's contribution in the

interview, she emphasizes how Spillers' essay re-thought the very project of the writing of the human, challenging and opening the limits and possibilities of the analytic of "gender" within feminist discourse (p. 303). Griffin expressed how she could not think of another piece of writing with the exception of *The Souls of Black Folks* that had so profoundly affected literary critics of her generation, including work by Sharon Holland, Elizabeth Alexander, Fred Moten, and Lindon Barrett (p. 299). She further expressed how the essay both consciously and unconsciously was foundational to her own work because it "gave us a vocabulary" (p. 302).

The conversation poignantly illustrates the implications of Spillers generating a language outside the dominant order: an entire transformative body of work would simply not have been possible in the same way without her creative-intellectual act of birthing "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe."[34] What I want to highlight next, though, is how she describes her own labor of making the revolutionary work itself. In her reflections in the discussion, Spillers shares the conditions of her writing, the very affective and intellectual labor that were entwined within the writing.

She describes the writing itself as a "battle" filled with intense feelings of hopelessness and sadness, the writing part of the "living to fight another day" and the need to "confront psychological violence, epistemic violence, intellectual violence" (p. 301). She explains of needing to create a vocabulary, "I was trying to explain what seemed to me impossible to explain" (p. 308). And what seemed so impossible, she says, was the gap so well exposed in the 1982 text, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (edited by Gloria T. Hull, Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith), which was the first

[34] See also Farah Jasmine Griffin's "That the Mothers May Soar and the Daughters May Know Their Names: A Retrospective of Black Feminist Literary Criticism" on the critical reception and influence of Spillers' article (2007).

anthology of its kind that centered Black women's experiences and knowledge, amidst the exclusions of white feminist studies in the academy and masculinist practices in Black studies.

Spillers articulates she was writing toward the "interstitial spaces where you fall between everyone who has a name" (2007, p. 308) even as she was experiencing the repertoire of "genteel" quotidian violence of Black women's knowledges attacked, ignored, and/or appropriated inside the academy (p. 301). What she is describing is not merely that writing itself is difficult, but rather that writing as a Black woman within the ongoing conditions of white and male supremacy, while trying to find language for the historical violence, while trying to create alternative creative possibilities amidst the exclusions of the symbolic order, is akin to the daily fight for survival. Here, I emphasize her consistent articulations of the challenges of the psychic, affective, and intellectual labor of her project.

Spillers' reference to the 1982 text *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave* is important, for it is a text that addresses the tensions between naming oneself and the immense labor of doing so within white and male power structures. Hull and Smith explain in the start of the book's "Introduction: The Politics of Black Women's Studies": "Like any politically disenfranchised group, Black women could not exist consciously until we began to name ourselves" (p. xviii). They close the introduction by drawing attention to just how hard it was to create their text, explaining that "pulling the book together was a struggle" for all the reasons related to the "politics of our lives as Black women/scholars" (p. xxix). While acknowledging the reasons are multiple, they focus specifically on the psychic reasons.

For example, they reference an unnamed colleague who "admitted that the death of feminist energy in her essay was caused by her having been recently traumatized by a Black male critic who consistently made misogynistic statements about both Black women writers and

about the women in the seminar in which she was a part" (p. xxix). They also cite a letter from another woman who apologized for her "inexcusable lateness" but the conditions of her work were leaving her unable to write. She explains, "All of my writing—including my essay *and* the dissertation—are at a virtual standstill...Perhaps I'll get myself together to write, but I just haven't been able to do anything. Seems like some kind of crazy block—some indication, perhaps, of the intense isolation I feel" (p. xxix). Hull and Smith go on to speak to the "accumulated generations of psychic damage" one experiences after being treated as though one is not capable of thought, a trauma which "must heal before being able to put pen to paper, thinking, acting, (and writing) like the wonderful Black women we are" (p. xxx). Finally, they emphasize that just accomplishing living as a "whole person amidst the contradictions and negations of this society" is not simple (p. xxx), thus situating the topic of the integration of the self in a conversation on the challenges of naming oneself.

I am suggesting it matters to listen to what Black women have said about the forms of erasure and psychic violence they must write through in order to rename themselves. How these formative early texts in the field were created is especially significant as psychosocial data because the writers were creating the insurgent ground of ideas that transformed knowledge-making practices—and they did so amidst the capitalist, masculinist, and white supremacist structures inside and outside the university. Spillers bears witness to the intensity of her own affective and intellectual process within these conditions, and the Hull and Smith edited collection is yet another archive of the affective and psychic labor relations within Black feminist writing. These labor relations are enfleshed: material structures, the body itself, one's energy, and "communication force" as Spillers terms it, feel the psychic effects of abusive power.

I would further ask: As educators, how do we understand and better support this Black

feminist labor of living, learning, studying, teaching, reading, and writing from within exclusion, and writing not toward inclusion but rather a new imaginary? And specifically for non Black teachers and scholars like myself, what does it mean to center this in our classrooms without appropriating the knowledge, and thereby making invisible the lives and consuming the labors?

As I have emphasized in my introduction, situating the psychic and affective conditions of writing alongside a critique of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) is not meant to minimize the ways in which access to material and financial resources is such a significant aspect of being able to write, circulate, and publish one's ideas. But it is to say that there are affective and psychic labor relations within Black feminist writing that matter to name. It is also to say that there is important Black feminist psychosocial knowledge operating within the revolutionary intellectual production that has long made conceptual links amongst the intra-psychic, the intersubjective, and the structural conditions.

In Part III, I now turn to texts of Patricia Williams and Saidiya Hartman, which I see as models and further developments of Hortense Spillers' insurgent writing and renaming practices. More particularly, I focus on how Williams theorizes and narrates the intersection of psychic and epistemic violence within the law, and how Hartman produces psychosocial theory through theorizing reading and writing practices vis-à-vis the violence of archives.

Part III: Further Examples of Insurgent Writing and Renaming

Patricia Williams' *Alchemy of Race and Rights* (1991), published four years after "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," offers a critical meditation on property alongside an examination of educational practices and institutionalization, writing methods, and power relations. As Ferguson's work has explored (2012), by the early to mid 1990s, Black feminist

studies was burgeoning but also being incorporated into the structures of the neoliberal university (p. 35), which failed to support Black women's embodied, intellectual labor (Hong, 2015; Christian, 1994). As Christian's 1989 essay "But What Do We Think We are Doing Anyway" would illuminate, Black women in the late 1980s and early 1990s were historicizing the moment of institutional change and writing about the problems of incorporation. I place Williams' intervention in theory and writing practices in this historical context.

Like Spillers, Williams' method moves in historical layers, not linearity, showing how contemporary power relations are embedded in psychic and material sedimentations. Also akin to Spillers, Williams employs writing techniques that disrupt the racial and gendered commodification and consumption of Black female flesh. Finally, just as Spillers deconstructs the ledger books of chattel slavery, psychoanalytic theory, and the sociological decrees of "knowledge," Williams deconstructs the language of law, reading it as an archive that tells us something about how abusive power functions.

Williams' insurgent writing in *Alchemy of Race and Rights* is also an example of narrating embodied, lived experience, including the intra-psychic and intrasubjective dynamics of how relations of power are *felt*, in order to access a critical Black feminist knowledge. Through putting her close reading of embodied experiences alongside her close reading of the legal code, she exposes the psychic and intersubjective life of the symbolic order. Her narrative voice doesn't just weave between critical analysis and 1st person narrative: rather, it collapses that binary entirely, asking the reader to question how the "universal" and "objective" voice is one that has been used to hide the workings of abusive power and property relations.

In breaking down interlaced binaries—the subject-object, the public-private, the mind-body, reason-emotion, and the academic and the personal—her writing methods upend the

universal claims of the law. As she explains: "I would like to write in a way that reveals the inter-subjectivity of legal constructions, that forces the reader both to participate in the construction of meaning and to be conscious of that process" (p. 8). I suggest the affective, psychic, and intellectual labor she performs in her writing thus invites a reflective reader into Spillers' notion of the practice of interior intersubjective locations: or, said another way, Williams' writing methods help readers consciously understand their unconscious investments in ways of knowing that are part of relations of gendered and racialized power.

Williams' approach also draws links between the claims to universality of the law and the psychic effects of epistemic violence. For instance, she explains how the very laws of property rights speak in a transcendent, authoritative voice— what she calls a "High Objectivity"— that then gets internalized as a norm that does not allow for difference, with devastating effects (pp. 12-13). Williams applies this description of abusive power, the law (as part of the symbolic order), and the psyche to multiple relations: how "children are taught not to see what they see; by which blacks are reassured that there is no real inequality in the world, just their bad dreams; and by which women are taught not to experience what they experience, in deference to men's ways of knowing" (p. 13). She writes further of the effects of the psychic and epistemic violence of racism and sexism as leading to a kind of "obliteration of the self," that manifests in losing faith "in the true self, in one's own experiential knowledge" (p. 63). For instance, when explaining her experience of understanding herself as "colored" as a three-year-old girl, Williams writes that her joy and pride in being "Negro" crashed into racism such that, "I have spent the rest of my life recovering from the degradation of being divided against myself" (p. 120), language that reverberates with Fanon's theory of alienation and disalienation.

While the language of "true self" might not resonant with some poststructural ideas,

Williams is naming a psychically colonizing force that thefts the self through dividing the self, not unlike Spillers' assessment of the need to find truer words of the self. Williams' psychosocial labor is revealing how psychic and epistemic violence are entwined through processes of internalization that target minoritized subjects' access to their own insurgent knowledge. For these reasons, I argue it has been critically important for Black feminism to include embodied experience as one aspect of theory-making—as a counter act to these forces that disconnect the subject from what they know in lived experience. The very act of renaming through writing can be one way of reclaiming the self—a creative act of integrating insurgent knowledge—as well as a holding space for the labor of grief in the process.

Williams depicts within her critical legal theory her own living of the grief as part of her methods of knowing and writing. For instance, in the beginning of the book, she narrates herself reading an 1835 case of a runaway slave named Kate. It is a case about if Kate was crazy, mad, or stupid, which might void the sale of Kate. Williams re-iterates that "this is the sort of morning when I hate being a lawyer," asking if her own feelings indicate she herself is "stupid or crazy" (p. 4). The writing next moves to naming the violence all over her contemporary world, ending with confessing how hard it is to begin to write "in the panic of this deadly world" (p. 5). But write on she does, going on to flip upside down in this book who exactly is irrational. As she analyzes affect itself as a historical production and object, her reflections on her own felt, embodied experience are a rich archive of data points for interrogating structural violence and the psychic and material effects.[35]

[35] I connect Williams' writing on affect to the Combahee River Statement's recognition of their own "feelings of craziness" before they found the words to analyze the knowledge their experiences held. Perhaps one could argue that feeling "crazy" vis-à-vis structural abuse means precisely that you are not crazy, but rather that you are holding un-worded knowledge made to feel irrational within modernity's policing of the sane/insane binary. I identify this policing of

Williams narrates a particularly haunting moment as an academic in the chapter "Mirrors and Windows," in which she is at a conference with "authority bullets whizzing through the air" as people invoke Hegel, Foucault and Adorno to theorize the social construction of gender, race, and oppression (p. 168). Meanwhile, she is feeling her raciality socially constructed in the here-and-now, such that "I feel my blackself as an eddy of conflicted meanings—and meaninglessness—in which my self can get lost…." (p. 168). She finds herself coerced into "the necessity of deference," which she then follows with this astute confession: "It is very painful to permit myself to see all this. I shield myself whenever possible" (p. 168).

I see her sharing the desire to shield herself as further highlighting the kinds of labor she is all the while doing as a writer. Williams attests to how hard it is to be present to the knowledge she all the while knows: it is painful knowledge disavowed by others not living the experience. This strategic not knowing has the effect of exporting the labor of knowing to gendered, sexualized, and racialized others, like Williams, who don't have the privilege of not knowing, who carry the knowledge— even if it is hard to name because it is such painful knowledge. Others can choose Hegel-Foucault-Adorno bullets, intellectualizing the matters at hand, remaining removed from the embodied experience of raciality as a social construction that Williams is meanwhile living as the bullets whizz around.

Williams is performing multiple modalities of rigor in her knowledge-making, which raises methodological questions on what forms of writing best convey these modalities of rigor. We could ask: What ways and genres of writing support the psychic labor Williams is describing? What ways of writing help access the knowledge of grief work, as that knowledge is

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feeling itself (i.e. whose grief is perceived as irrational or pathological) as central to the epistemic and psychic violence of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism.

connected to the naming and theorizing of embodied, epistemic, and psychic violence towards one's own flesh and the bodies of one's ancestors? And what ways of writing support the integration of self that Williams is describing as a counter act to internalized violence?

Certainly, Williams choice to use narrative, sensory moments in her text—from spaces of conferences to classrooms, to storefronts, to the kitchen table with her sister—is one insurgent writing practice for Black feminist theory-making. In these scenes, she is both narrator and character, illuminating how violent structures are enacted upon bodies and to what effect at the intra-psychic and intersubjective level. While I am not suggesting narrative is the only way to create theory—and I am definitely not suggesting the writing of 1st person narrative as theory should be coerced on minoritized subjects in a classroom (which could lead to other felt experiences of exploitation, hyper visibility, and vulnerability)—I am arguing that Williams' different modalities of close reading (of experience, of the legal code) create insurgent psychosocial methods and writing.

Finally, like the texts I have foregrounded from Spillers and Williams, Saidiya Hartman's insurgent writing traverses collective disavowals, situates herself as a subject within history, and expands and makes fluid genre boundaries. Perhaps most foundational to her methods across all her monographs (1997, 2007, 2019) is her centering of reading and writing practices and the ethical engagement of the state archive's violence. Similar to Williams theorizing of the intersubjective space between herself and the law cases she is reading, Hartman also analyzes and historicizes the intersubjective space between her readers' gaze on her writing, and well as her own gaze on the archives she studies. In my close readings of her texts that follow, my method is to read for the trajectory of her work, for each project adds insurgent methods, culminating in her recent *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* that centers the "everyday

anarchy of ordinary colored girls" (2019, p. viii) as a counter to the archive's violence.

In her first pathfinding book, *Scenes of Subjection* (1997), Hartman begins by holding the white scholarly reader to account before Hartman attempts to represent anti-Black and patriarchal violence on the page. She shows the binds of trying to name this violence when whiteness is psychically, narcissistically invested in a libidinal economy that denies Black sentience and sadistically exploits Black pain. Drawing on the critical work on empathy done by anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin (1992), she specifically targets white empathy as an affect masking white narcissism. She links the narcissism of the white reading gaze upon Black suffering to the gaze of the white abolitionist who could only feel empathy for the enslaved child by imagining them as their own white child, thus again denying the enslaved their humanity. In my reading, Hartman's analysis thus positions the intra-psychic and intersubjective space of reading as an archive of the psychic afterlife of slavery.

If in *Scenes of Subjection* she is asking how can she write about white violence to Black bodies when the white libidinal economy of readers will re-enact violence, in her later writings in *Lose Your Mother* (2007) and "Venus in Two Acts" (2008), she then questions her own reading and writing gaze as an African American woman whose generational inheritance goes through enslavement. Having positioned the white liberal scholar within a history that is not past, she now theorizes her own identity as deeply entangled in that history that is not over. As she explains in an interview with Patricia Saunders discussing her writing process in *Lose Your Mother*, "I'm writing about an experience that I psychically inhabit. Most history isn't written from that perspective" (2008, p. 9).

Hartman takes up this approach by weaving multiple histories at the generational and historical level. For example, Hartman first tells narratives of her own family and the silence

around slavery. She conveys her own need as a child and adolescent to differentiate from her parents' expectations of her, even changing her name. She resists her parents' unwillingness to speak about the past, and she constructs research that is in part to "tumble the barricade between then and now" (2007, p. 15). Hartman wants to write into the silencing, but she also comes to realize that her graduate training also did not give her the tools to "write a story about an encounter with nothing" (p. 16).

I suggest she is theorizing through narrative how different kinds of silence need to be written through in the process of renaming work. Some disavowals and the silences they keep are a form of epistemic violence reproduced by oppressors to avoid accountability. In contrast, there is also intergenerational silence that is a necessary, adaptive defense mechanisms for those who have suffered the unimaginable or inherited the memories or affect of such suffering. So, for example, when Hartman explains the writing and historical methods of the university, she is describing a system of silencing complicit with abusive disavowals. She is left to do the labor of constructing her own methodology for an unspeakable archive in order to "reclaim the dead" (2007, p. 6). But when she speaks of her own family's resistance to her need to break silence, and her own path to differentiate from her family—that renaming work is the healing labor of suturing past and present in a context in which silence previously served survival purposes. I see these multiple levels of renaming work within silences as part of Hartman's psychosocial labor and method.

As a Black feminist methodology, it is important that the knowledge Hartman is writing into is driven by a search for connection with kin—the very kin slavery stole—and a pursuit of home. But what she finds, as she retraces the slave trade traveling to Ghana, is that there is no place of return, no pan-African identity as once promised. Her feminist methods trouble any easy

binaries. She is not embraced as kin in Ghana, and there is so much knowledge to face: the knowledge of class difference and African elites selling commoners into slavery; the knowledge of the internal patriarchal trade that trafficked in women, including the Islamic slave trade; the knowledge of how these histories come to be repressed; and the knowledge of how the capital of the Christian slave trade ended up in the hands of western Europe, which led to the collapse of African economies and the cutting up of the continent in the 19th century by colonial powers.

Sometimes the vast pain of the research, of writing into so much carefully kept silences, of feeling too much, is unbearable to know. "I refused that knowledge," she tells us at one point, when standing on the floor of a slave dungeon whose top layer was compressed remains of the captives' feces, blood, and exfoliated skin (p. 115). As she says, "Waste is the remnant of all the lives that are outside of history and 'dissolved in utter amnesia'" (p. 115). Throughout *Lose Your Mother*, she is doing research to name historical truths that resist knowing because their knowing is too difficult, holding too many implications. Her task is overwhelming affective and intellectual work—it is also deeply lonely to do the grief work and the renaming work. Her narrative voice persistently locates herself as feeling isolation within this unspeakable history she studies.

In some sense kinship is elusive in this text— as she punctures again and again particular fantasies of kinship—and these emotional realities are part of the labor of grief in the afterlife of slavery. Yet, the grief in the book's pages is also about what it means to ever seek knowledge *with* others—including ancestors, including the literal matter of ancestors' remnants on the earth's floor that is knowledge too hard to know, because the grief is too immense. Feeling the extent of grief, separation, isolation, and loss—that millions of human lives were irreparably stolen, that there is no home, that home is not what others have been able to idealize to fill

heartbreaking absence, and that every "we" breaks down, too, of who sold whom — are knowledge points through which Hartman enters ever more nuanced levels of historical analysis of entwined African and transatlantic slave trades.

Her article "Venus in Two Acts," published after *Lose Your Mother*, then wrestles through the ethics of writing methods that she struggled with in her book, specifically in her writing on the deaths of two girls on a slave ship. How does one ethically witness, she asks, writing into the silences of the archive? What modes of writing bear witness? In Hartman's terms within this essay, the afterlife is not primarily a melancholic condition, but a property relation. At the same time, affect is a significant method of knowing in this essay, just as analyzing the psychic life of the white reading gaze is critical to *Scenes of Subjection's* interrogation of contemporary reading relations as embedded in slavery. Thus, I see a necessary tension in Hartman's work: "afterlife" is a distinct political and material afterlife—including mass incarceration, poverty, and anti-Black police violence—but her writing methods also suggest that an analysis of affect, intra-psychic realms, and intersubjectivity can illuminate the materiality of ongoing structural conditions and their effects.

In this way, Hartman analyzes and historicizes the intersubjective space between her own gaze and the archives. Perhaps we could call the space between her gaze and the historical archive a psychosocial archive, holding affective and psychic data. For example, in her discussion of how to ethically witness to another's experience, she interrogates her own desire to write kinship onto a slave ship, to imagine the two girls comforting one another, in order in part, to comfort herself. And yet, she knows she is writing onto their experience within her reading. And yet, there are no existing autobiographical accounts by women enslaved in the Middle passage to fill in gaps. For even "the stories that exist are not about them, but rather about the

violence…" (2008, p. 2). Hartman reckons with many questions as to the task of history: What modes of writing are a practice of freedom? What forms of writing don't reproduce the grammar of violence? What is the role of reckoning with loss and longing in the telling of impossible stories? And, I am asking, what kind of psychosocial labor undergird these questions and her route through them?

In the end, she describes her own writing of "Venus of Two Acts" this way: "The method guiding this writing practice is best described as a critical fabulation" (p. 11), the purpose of which is to make visible how humans are/were produced as object, lives disposable. In the end, she also turns to Octavia Butler's *Kindred,* explaining that like Dana's loss of her left arm, to encounter the archive of slavery is also a form of dismemberment—an image that lingers at the end of "Venus in Two Acts" to remind the reader of the cost to Hartman of the knowledge-contribution she has offered. Living, as she is, within the afterlife of slavery as a Black woman, descended from slave masters and the enslaved, the kind of witness she bears cannot ever be entirely separate from her embodied being and that entanglement is the point of what is so particular to the history and afterlife she is writing.

When Hartman ends the essay, "With this in mind, we must bear what cannot be borne: the image of Venus in chains" (p. 14), I hear echoes of Spillers naming of historical memory, slavery, and writing practices that: "In a very real sense, every writing as revision makes the 'discovery' all over again" (1987, p. 69). I also hear Williams' recognition that some forms of knowledge of the depths of violence are unbearable to see, and yet they are borne on her page, nonetheless. Or, as another example, in her interview with Patricia Saunders, Hartman speaks of the "psychic inheritance of an experience without memory" (2008, p. 8), in which one lives and writes within the history of unimaginable violence that continues to be disavowed in dominant

white and patriarchal imaginaries. All three of these writers also position their own entanglement within these unbearable histories as part of knowledge production itself, and here, again, we might consider the relationship between grief and knowing itself, and what forms of labor and writing carry and hold the process of such knowledge production.

Hartman's most recent *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (2019) builds upon her earlier use of critical fabulation, but it more boldly plays with upending conventional form, as it represents Black queer joy, sociality and anarchy as forms of resistance. With meticulous archival research, and through writing methods that seem to queer the very conventions of genre itself, she illuminates the lives of young Black women between 1890 and 1935 as they moved and lived in NYC and Philadelphia. The characters and events are all real, culled from a vast array of archives—including journals of rent collectors, surveys of sociologists, social workers, interviews with psychiatrists and psychologists, and prison case files—but Hartman's form crafts a "counter-narrative liberated" from discourses that pathologize and surveil the life of Black girls. The result is a stunning achievement of archival engagement and art.

The sheer beauty of her writing captures the beauty of the lives she is representing, lives that held onto radical imagination and creativity even in unrelenting deprivations and violence. Pleasure, art, hope, and queer anarchy take central stage in this story, allowing for the rich rendering of inner lives and the history to be told through their eyes. "The endeavor is to recover the insurgent ground of these lives" (p. xiv), Hartman writes, and to represent that insurgent ground, her form "places the voice of the narrator and character in inseparable relation" (p. xiii).

I suggest the narration of their sensory and sensual experiences of their urban worlds is also key to Hartman's insurgent practice as a writer and researcher. Her form of writing allows

for the intimate narration of immense pain—the injustices faced are relentless—but what also pulses is the powerful creativity of trying to keep hoping and holding on in a world that did not mean for you to survive or for your dreams to hold. "*How can I live? I want to be free. Hold on*" (p. 349) is the book's last line of the chorus. The very definition of the wayward is "a practice of possibility" (p. 228) amidst the impossible. It is "an ongoing exploration *of what might be*: it is an improvisation with the terms of social existence," when those terms are set by a life sentencing to servitude.

There is grief labor and its depths in this text: and, that labor is woven alongside attending to the creativity and queer kinship central to Black feminist love, creativity, and world-making. To resist the violence of archives—and to make central to the story of Black radicalism within the "everyday anarchy of ordinary colored girls" (p. viii)—is Hartman's revolutionary project. I have sought to illuminate how that project extends a long lineage of Black feminist insurgent writing methods and psychosocial labor.

Part IV: An Archive, Cases Studies, And Turns that are Returns

In Part II and III, I hoped to show the many ways in which Black feminist theorists perform ways of writing that are psychosocial theory: connecting the facets of embodied, sensory, psychic life to the material-historical; holding space for grief labor and creative leaps; writing toward kinship; and queering categories, including gender and genre. But it is also true that social and institutional forces have put pressure on what modes of writing receive the mark of "knowledge" and "scholarship," and which modes have been marginalized or treated as suspect. It is therefore important to give context for how the very claiming of these forms of expertise and writing methods was yet another form of affective and psychic labor.

As Hartman shares with Saunders concerning writing *Lose Your Mother* in the travelogue style she chose: "...we know all the critiques of confessional discourse. We're all good Foucauldians, so we know to stay away from that stuff. So I had to inhabit a rhetorical position that was discredited on numerous fronts. To write *Lose Your Mother* I had to imperil myself and make myself vulnerable to critiques from poststructuralists, Africanists, and historians" (2008, p. 4). Yet, given the silences of the state archives she consulted, she needed to "counter the violence of abstraction," and "For me, that had to be embodied in physical story, and I was the one who had to hazard the journey" (p. 5).

Her generational proximity to the knowledge she was seeking also mattered, as was choosing a narrative form of writing that allowed her to better connect to those outside the site of the university who cared deeply about these issues (2008, p. 5). But also, notably, as to her choice of genre for her research, she further explains that the "gendered nature of scholarship" is important to analyze, for in the silences of archives, "Women often attempt to embody an archive or to be it. They are willing to make the body a vehicle; courage and recklessness are required to be a host of history" (p. 5). In other words, the critical tools scholars have to work within, which includes ways of writing and thus ways of approaching the object of study and one's relationship toward the object, have a gendered history. Even the choice to embody history within narrative writing—to claim that some forms of knowledge live best within narrative, and/or in forms of writing in which ones represents themselves as a subject in relation to the "object" of knowledge— is arguably a feminist act, according to Hartman's assessment.

In Part IV, I now extend Hartman's implication that transgressing genre boundaries is specifically a gendered transgression within particular discourses. I perform this reflection by close reading two essays, "The Race for Theory" (1987) and "The Black Canon" (1987) by

Barbara Christian and Joyce A. Joyce, respectively, as well as close reading the masculinist responses to these essays. I hope to show how another way of understanding the affective and psychic labor of insurgent writing is to consider how Black feminist methods were not just critiqued, but more so misrecognized as a form of rigorous knowledge.

Barbara Christian's 1987 "The Race for Theory" is a text that is concerned with how institutionalization effects which (and whose) kinds of writing and knowing are valued and monetarily rewarded within the spaces of the university. Writing in solidarity with what was then called Third World feminism, at a time when French theory was being adopted by the U.S. academy, Christian tracks an emerging hierarchy between those considered theorists by the western academy's concept of (white) theory and those who do cultural work as Black feminist creative writers. Her essay layers an analysis of transnational flows of capital, racial and gendered power relations, and how it is that she saw the university privileging a mode of theory that cannot account for the vast range of writing and expression—including narrative, poetry, and oral traditions—that are central to Black feminist knowledge.

Her critique questions why it is that French critical theorists (both men and women) are reasserting themselves at the center at a time when it was imperative that Black and Third World texts were centered, reclaimed, remembered, produced, and studied. She was not saying reading and writing practices don't need careful analysis, but she was saying that Black and Third World literary texts should direct reading practices that center the intersections of race, gender, and class. While critics read her as anti-theory, I suggest that is a misreading, and one she tried to correct (1996/2007). Christian was against privileging Western European theory as the default center of theory. She was *for* the centering of Black and Third World literary texts which would generate different kinds and methods of reading and writing. She wanted to intervene in "theory"

and instead discuss multiple ways of theorizing (as a verb). In what follows, I revisit her claims because I see her nuancing of the writing of theory as important for understanding what was at stake in Black feminist insurgent writing practices.

Christian argued that the emerging poststructuralist style of writing was alienated from the senses, and therefore alienated from the body, from pleasure, and from sharing one's experiences in community—all values she identified in the tradition of Black women's writing. I see her use of the word "alienation" in "Race for Theory" (1987) as embedded in her larger Marxist critique, as she describes how the production of "theory" has become a "commodity" for one to be hired in the university, instead of a source of "nourishment" as it is in Black women's knowledge-making. Also in her use of alienation, I suggest she parallels Marx's work on the senses in *Capital*: for just as the worker is alienated from their own product and body, and numbed to their senses in the process, Christian is making a similar critique of poststructural theory as "disembodied" and stripped from affect and the senses[36].

She maintained that the power relations of academic hegemony were producing writing and reading practices that disciplined the body and interrupted the creative flow of pleasure and power, narrative and poetry, from which so much of Black feminist theory was birthed. In Christian's approach, she is notably offering a different theory of the body than the widespread Foucauldian legacy. I argue that Christian suggests a more robust distinction between oppressive disciplinary power's effect on the body and the kind of sensory, embodied power that midwives

[36] Roderick Ferguson's "Of Sensual Matters" (2012) also alerts us to how the connection between the senses and the intellect were part of the social movements of the 1960s and afterward (p. 295). Looking at Cixous' "Laugh of the Medusa" alongside Lorde's "Uses of the Erotic" and "Poetry is not a Luxury," he suggests that the language of affect and the sensory "became part of the language used to mark new and insurgent social formations and the "release of immense energy" (p. 297).

creative resistance, community, imagination, and collective and intergenerational survival. To Christian, Black women's creative, sensual, narrative work was theory, and simultaneously, a celebration of life itself under conditions and histories shaped by genocide. Just as Spillers argued the conditions of racial slavery had reduced Black women's flesh to "thing"—and called for marvels of Black feminist inventiveness—Christian is testifying to how within 400 years of oppression, a range of intellectual, narrative, and creative approaches were needed as insurgent practices.

In a passage often cited as the kernel of her essay, Christian connects this kind of theory to survival and kinship practices:

> For people of color have always theorized —but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined say that our theorizing (and intentionally use the verb rather than noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in rid and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? And women, at least the women grew up around, continuously speculated about the nature of life through pithy language that unmasked the power relations of their world. (1987, p. 52)

Like much of Black and Third World theorizing at this time, Christian is concerned with the connections amongst telling one's truth, unmasking power, theorizing, and survival. Her point—that Black feminists and Third World feminists have written, read, and theorized for the purpose of saving their lives—needs emphasis because it is a method that critics of her work have overlooked, leading to impoverished readings of her epistemic claims.

As Christian states in her later essay, "Does Theory Play Well in the Classroom" (1996/2007), she wrote "Race for Theory" with a commitment to a definition of intelligence that included the sensual-erotic epistemologies and playful vernacular of Black feminist literatures (p. 51). She also locates these forms of writing as much harder to appropriate, and therefore a mode of resistance to the institutionalization underway. Furthermore, in all her work she is asking her

reader to be attendant to the moment they are living and the histories that are upholding them.[37] She consistently locates Black feminist creativity as an act of theorizing (a verb) and prior to academic critical theory. Indeed, she highlights in her 1989 essay "But What Do We think We're Doing Anyway: The State of Black Feminist Criticism(s) or My Version of a little Bit of history" that when Black women writers were producing unprecedented creative flourishing in the 1970s, white women's studies journal and Black studies journals were ignoring their work. But Black women at the kitchen table were not.

She further gives context to her writing of "Race for Theory" that she was herself located at Berkeley and watching a very narrow version of theory become a commodity for academic advancement. Christian was the first Black woman at Berkeley to be granted tenure (in 1978) and was a central figure in establishing the African American Studies department. She also chaired the Ethnic Studies doctoral program from 1986–1989. As Grace Hong takes up in her analysis of her important legacy (2015), Christian long labored for the rights of minoritized students to access the university: in NYC in 1968/69, as a Ph.D. student at Columbia she fought for both ethnic studies and open admissions at CUNY, and at Berkeley she fought for affirmative action. She had seen great change in the university, both the successes of Black women's studies as a field, and simultaneously, the negative effects of institutionalization, in which the field was burgeoning but also many Black women could not access the university (Christian, 1994/2007).

[37] Of her historical methods using personal memory in her theory, she explains: "I begin my reflections on the state (history) of black feminist criticism(s) with this memory because it seems to me we so quickly forget the recent past. Perhaps some of us have never known it. Like many of us who lived through the literary activism of the sixties, we of the eighties may forget that which just recently preceded us and may therefore misconstrue the period in which we are acting" (1989/2007, p. 6).

Such is the larger trajectory of the historical context in which she affirms in her 1987 "Race for Theory" that Black feminist theorizing was built to resist academic hegemony because its roots were beyond its walls. She writes, "For me, doing black feminist criticism involved a literary activism that went beyond the halls of academe, not because I had so legislated but because in practice that is what it often, happily, had to be" (1989/2007, p. 14). She again names the literary activism and the writing as "life-sustaining, life-saving" for Black women's communities. Here, she is re-emphasizing that the work being done within and outside the university are interrelated, and that the work is for the purpose of sustaining the lives of Black women who might never be inside academia.

We might contrast her Black feminist commitments with the claim that white feminist studies—as it became institutionalized in the 70s and 80s—became classist and disconnected from grassroots activism and political change outside academic walls, as Barbara Smith has argued (1982). Barbara Christian, in a 1990 article, "Being the Subjected Subject of Discourse," posited that elements of 1960s white feminism were much more liberatory than later academic versions because the theorizing of the category of "woman" was rooted in lived alliances with the civil rights movement (1990/2007, p. 178). In Christian's assessment, the very liberatory life of feminism requires knowledge-making practices and coalitions outside the academy, as well as a commitment to insurgent writing practices within. Many of her essays, as compiled in the 2007 *New Black Feminist Criticism 1985–2000* (edited by Gloria Bowles, M. Giulia Fabi, and Arlene K. Keizer, with an afterward by Najuma Henderson, her daughter), take up these themes and especially so between the years 1987–1996.

Additionally, just as I have positioned Black feminist critiques of white feminism, it is important to see the simultaneous labors being done in this same time period to critique

patriarchal formations of Black studies. I would argue we can further identify how Black feminist ways of writing and theorizing were gendered psychosocial labor by observing the forms of masculinist critique to their methods. Michael Awkward's 1989 response to Christian's "Race for Theory," which also includes a lengthy critique of Barbara Smith's "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," is one historical example.

In "Appropriative Gestures: Theory and Afro-American Literary Criticism," Awkward critiques Christian's essay, though does not stay close to her ideas. He explains his reasoning for not attending to the details of her argument "The particulars of Christian's attacks on theory certainly are not original, nor are they, I believe, persuasive….Christian rehearses old arguments which, frankly, I am not interested in addressing" (p. 238). We might ask: What does it mean that Awkward as a male critic does not believe he needs to even read the "particulars" of Christian's text carefully, even as he advances for a literary theory that is supposed to generate more rigorous reading practices than those she advocates?

As one instance of his method of refusing to address the "particulars": Awkward suggests that the corrective reading and writing practices offered at the end of Christian's essay could be described as what critic Daniel O'Hara calls 'fly-by-the-seat-of-one's-pants" (p. 239). But, what she is actually suggesting, in citing Audre Lorde's "Poetry is Not a Luxury" (1977) and talking about a "disciplined attention," is that we need to learn from our unnamed feelings, including how we are in a relationship to a text's invitation to feel something and thus to know something. As Hong has written, Black feminist and women of color theory offered affect theory well before there was a turn to so-called "affect studies" in the mid 1990s humanities (2015). Christian writes this way in "Race for Theory" of the affective connections between her reading and writing methods: "For my language is very much based on what I read and how it affects me,

that is, on the surprise that comes from reading something that compels you to read different, as I believe literature does" (1987, p. 236). She forthrightly admits: "As risky as that might seem, it is I believe, what intelligence means—a tuned sensitivity to that which is alive and therefore cannot be known until it is known" (p. 236). While this insight might not make sense in Awkward's assessment, she is calling for an affective practice of attention.

Awkward dismisses her method as containing insight, and instead claims the dangers of her supposed dismissal of theory, and turns to a reading of Barbara Smith's 1977 "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" to give a historical example of the failure to properly use theory.[38] (Of note: while Smith's essay was originally published in 1977 in *Conditions* magazine, I will be quoting from its 1978 publication in *The Radical Teacher* since it is more widely accessible than the *Condition*s archives.) Awkward does concede Smith's text is important, calling it "the most influential work in the area of black feminist criticism" (p. 241). But he also claims her "insufficient awareness of advances in reader-response theory" and general "lack of awareness of the contemporary literary theories that Christian devalues" leads her to make serious mistakes, including her reading of Sula as a lesbian novel. She could have been more accurate and "innovative," he explains, if she knew theory. He assures us his "intent is not to discredit Smith's essay," but in suggesting she does not use enough of a certain kind of theory to produce her Black feminist knowledge, he is misrecognizing the foundational method of producing theory in this landmark text—as well as misrecognizing Christian's modes of rigor in her approach, too.[39]

[38] For a critique of Smith's essay as essentialist, see Hazel Carby's *Reconstructing Womanhood* (1987). For a critique of Carby's reading methods with Smith's essay, see Barbara Christian's 1989 essay "But What Do We Think We are Doing Anyway"?

[39] See also Farah Jasmine Griffin's "That the Mothers May Soar and the Daughters May Know Their Names: A Retrospective of Black Feminist Literary Criticism" on the critical reception and influence of Smith's article, including critiques by Black feminists (2007).

Smith has explained, especially of her observations of the precedent Alice Walker embodied of Black feminist traditions, that Black feminist knowledge claims the right to theorize from their chosen starting point: namely, the intersections of the embodied experience of race, sex[40], and class. She explains the reasons for her chosen method for Black feminist theory (and which I will quote at more length than as cited Awkward's essay):

> In other words, she [the Black feminist critic] would think and write out of her own identity and not try to graft the idea or methodology of white/male literary thought upon the precious materials of black women's art. Black feminist criticism would by definition be highly innovative, embodying the daring spirit of the works themselves. The Black feminist critic would be constantly aware of the political implications of her work and would assert the connections between it and the political situation of all Black women. (1978, p. 23)

Smith methodologically asserts the right to build theory from her lived experience. She does not equate experience with equaling theory, thereby treating experience as fully transparent or stable. Rather, she claims the right to engage the layers and intersections of her own lived experience as a key part of the process of theoretical reflection on structural conditions.

Similar to Hortense Spillers naming the "loss of communication force" and "labors of communication," Smith speaks throughout this essay to the specific challenges of writing from a position of erasure and through misrecognition as a Black lesbian woman.[41] Smith begins her essay by showing the psychic burdens of her work: "I do not know where to begin" is the first sentence, foregrounding that she is writing something unprecedented. She goes on to say that "Black women's existence, experience, and culture and the brutally complex systems of

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[40] I note: Today, the sex-gender distinction is emphasized in feminist and queer theory, but I am seeking to stay close to her words and historicize her ideas.

[41] In an interview in *How We Get Free* (2017), Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's text commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Combahee River Collective, Smith explains how, given the extent to which Black feminist theories of "interlocked systems" or "intersectionality" have been widely adopted, it is hard to fully imagine how Black women were ridiculed and debased for advancing these foundational ideas (p. 48).

oppression which shape these are in the 'real world' of white and/or male consciousness beneath consideration, invisible, unknown" (1978, p. 20). This "invisibility" is extremely difficult to break, she explains, including how to go about un-silencing how it is that feminists have internalized both a racist and sexist system. Smith names up front the difficulty of the task of writing from her own silence and erasure into Black lesbian existence being reflected on the page.

She writes of the affective difficulties of her starting point in "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" as being "filled with rage" at the exclusion of Black and Third-World women in academic, white-centric women's studies journals. She explains that she does not know how to begin because she wants to be writing her words for a Black feminist publication, for women who might not know the names of the Black women writers she will offer but have "at least profoundly felt the pain of their absence" (p. 20). The publication of the essay was almost 10 years after the establishment of the first Black studies departments, and a decade in which Black women writers like Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker were producing astounding literary work. And yet it was also a time in which, as Christian notes, commenting on Smith's essay, "…the sexism of Afro- American literary/intellectual circles and the racism of white feminist literary journals resulted in a kind of homelessness for critical works on black women or other third world women writers" (1989/2007, p. 8).

When Smith thus writes of having "profoundly felt the pain of their absence," she is claiming an affective posture of feminist knowing from a site of exclusion. She is also highlighting the relationality of writing: the need psychologically and intellectually to write for a community who will receive your words, especially when the words do not yet exist in other forms. She repeatedly advocates for the need of a political movement to come into existence to

support the creation of Black women's art. Like Christian's essay, Smith theorizes Black women's intellectual production as art created within community and kinship. "Academic," "scholarly," or "theoretical" knowledge was not in Smith's understanding ever divorced from artistic productions or Black feminist kinship practices—which is the point that Barbara Christian was also making.

The goal, for Smith, was to heal the "total suppression of identity that all Black women, lesbian or not" face and to use theory to unsilence these narratives. One example is Smith's interpretation of *Sula*, in which she produces a theory of kinship that challenges heteronormative supremacy. While noting Morrison was not consciously writing a lesbian novel, Smith also suggests that the women-centered relationships within *Sula* can provide a way of theorizing lesbian existence and women's kinships. Awkward argues Smith has mishandled *Sula* by "her insufficient awareness of advances in reader-response theory." But Smith's point was not just about reader-response theory or the heterosexist assumptions of the reader; it was also about heterosexist assumptions of the writer, and yet the ways art allows for the emergence of more layered theories of women's experiences in kinship.

Ultimately, Awkward misses the central aim of her making of theory: That her task was to write through a silence into connection with those who have lived the experiences she is writing about, and who have felt the pain of the total lack of textual mirroring and recognition. Her method to write into such knowledge goes through theorizing and staying close to her own misrecognized, mishandled, maligned, and silenced experience as a Black lesbian woman. As she writes toward the end of her intentions: "I only hope that this essay is one way of breaking our silence and our isolation, of helping us to know each other" (p. 26). As she laments at the end of her essay, there were not books that existed that she could read "that would tell me something

specific about my life" (p. 27). Moving through the isolation of her experience as a Black lesbian feminist theorist, she ends with naming "the most expansive of revolution" as one centrally of kinship that activates political consciousness and revolution.

I suggest Awkward's line of critique thus not only overlooks the revolutionary meaning and labor of her starting point, but also misrecognizes the intellectual and kinship goals of her insurgent practices.[42] In the end, Awkward concludes his essay by moving from his misreading of the central methods of Smith's essay to pivoting back to "The Race for Theory," suggesting that Christian's "readings will do little to insure the survival of the black women's literary tradition," explaining what is required is that she "master the discourse of contemporary literary theory" (1989, p. 243).

Awkward's essay critiquing Christian, and critiquing Smith as a further example of the supposed errors in Christian's thinking, is published 12 years after Smith's original publication of her essay in *Conditions* 2 in 1977, thus giving him ample time to understand its historical impacts. As I noted, Smith's essay was then re-published in 1978 in *Radical Teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching*, before being widely anthologized in the following decades. The success of the publication in *Conditions 2* also led to Smith co-editing (with Lorraine Bethel) *Conditions 5:* "The Black Women's Issue," which sold 3000 copies in a few weeks, a historic number at the time, given the political

[42] Arguably, he actually enacts the violation of misrecognition that Smith calls out again and again in her essay. I would like to further contextual his response as at the beginning of his career, when he was likely feeling pressures within white institutions to establish his *own* authority as a Black male scholar. How we are positioned within hierarchies of class, race, gender, and sexuality tempt scholars—if we are not careful—to read and respond to someone else's work for the purpose of shoring up our own access to authority or material resources and survival within an unfair hierarchical system. But, whatever the complexity of the motives, such misreadings remain a mishandling of another's text and life and enact the violation of misrecognition that Smith calls out again and again in her essay.

movement to support Black women writers was in the process of being built precisely through her labor. The success of her work in opening space for other Black women to connect, write, and politically organize led to her investment in independent publishing and co-founding the Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, which published foundational texts of women of color feminism such as *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). In 1982, Smith also co-edited (with Gloria T. Hull and Patricia Bell Scott) *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, a revolutionary text, as Robin D. G. Kelley explains: "By calling for a critical analysis of race, gender, and sexuality, Smith anticipates so much of the scholarship that now falls under the rubric of queer studies and critical race theory" (2014, p. xix). In 1983 Smith then edited *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* in 1983. Today, she is widely credited not only for her long-term anti-imperial, anti-capitalist feminist activism but also as one of the founders of Black women's studies (Taylor, 2017, p. 11).

I give this list of credentials to speak to the influence of this 7-page essay and to emphasize that it accomplished the goals the piece set out to do: namely, to claim the right to theorize from the intersections of Black lesbian lived experience, and in doing so, to provide spaces of recognition, connection, and creative and political energy for Black women artists and scholars. What I have been hoping to pinpoint through remembering this theoretical controversy is that the intellectual and psychosocial tools of Black feminism met with masculinist resistance, which further sheds light on the psychic and affective labor of these methods.

To be clear, I am not suggesting generative coalitions between Black feminist scholars and Black men in Black studies were not also unfolding in this time period: for instance, Robin Kelley beautifully reflects on how The Combahee River Collective and Smith's *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men* first caused him to grow beyond the limits of his prior

masculinist politics, making rigorous connections he had not made before between the personal and political (2014). (He then read everything by her he could find as a young student!) For as he writes, "…she convinced me it was impossible to be a revolutionary without becoming a feminist" (2014, p. xx). Still, as Smith herself wrote in her 2000 preface to the reissued *Home Girls*, reflecting on the time since its original 1982 publication, there remained a significant need for more Black men to take up feminist labors (and, also, white women to join anti-racist labors). I am arguing these gendered theoretical controversies highlight the multiple forms of psychosocial labor within Black feminist thought, as well as highlight the costs. Kelley himself insightfully names, that, even as he was reading and indebted to everything Smith was writing in the 1980s, he was not tuned into the costs she paid for her radical politics, including living as an out Black lesbian (2014, p. xx), and also her 1977 essay being "viciously attacked (and egregiously misread)" by Black intellectuals (2014, p. xx).

As one last example in this late 1980s historical flash point: Joyce A. Joyce's exchange with Houston Baker (Awkward's Ph.D. advisor) and Henry Louis Gates Jr. in the *New Literary History* (1987) also replicates these patriarchal gendered labors.

Joyce's "The Black Canon: Reconstructing Black American Literary Criticism" (which Christian had not read before writing her own) is a different example of how Black feminists challenged the process of institutionalization. Joyce writes of Black male literary critics and Euro-western/white male theory policing who is considered a theorist/knower. Like Christian, she advocated for a specific sensory and aesthetic function to language, and she was also concerned by the writer's responsibility beyond the circles of the university. She cautions Black literary critics against methodologies that lead to "distance and sterile" language, and she critiques poststructural writers for "evince[ing] their power of ratiocination with an

overwhelming denial of most, if not all, the senses" (1987, p. 339). She advocates a sensory-rich process that employs language as a medium to navigate double consciousness and the inchoate feelings and complex experiences waiting to become words.

What is striking about both male critics' responses is that they rhetorically undermine not just her ideas, but her capacities as a knowing subject. As Joyce herself would later reflect on in in her Winter 1987 article in *New Literary History*, Gates and Baker's response to her original essay were notable for their lack of engaging her key claims, and for their paternalistic misogyny in their responses to their female colleague's supposed "resistance to theory."[43] As Sharon Holland writes of the exchange in "The Revolution, in 'Theory'" (2000), Gates and Baker "cit[e] factual errors, theoretical misreadings, and personal inadequacies in Joyce's critique," but they also "overlook one of Joyce's most startling assumptions"— namely, that gendered experiences matter to Black American literature" (p. 327).

Joyce's response essay to both Gates and Baker re-focuses on her original essay's key point, and she notably ends with this transnational call: Black critics need to be involved in the "complicated human network that makes for great change," and furthermore, if one is a Black American critic living in such a powerful country, there is an even deeper responsibility to use that position to participate in a worldwide intellectual movement (1987, p. 378). Like other Black feminist and women of color theorists of her time, the responsibility of knowledge-making connected with, extended, indeed often originated, beyond western academia and within Third World movements (Sandoval, 2000).

[43] For example, Baker began his response to Joyce by explaining, without irony, he somehow keeps finding himself in conflicts with Black women academics, and upon reading Joyce's essay, he has no choice but to "take up arms" again and go to "battle." His militant opening metaphor is itself revealing of the gendered power structures at play.

Clearly, at this historical moment of critical theory and institutionalization many systems of abusive power were colliding and trying to marginalize Black feminist epistemologies and insurgent ways of writing. Awkward, Gates, and Baker evidence masculinist systems of power within Black studies (and the university as a whole). In addition, and simultaneously, Black feminism and women of color feminism more broadly were consistently doing the labor of calling out white feminism of this time period for disregarding Black feminist or women of color theory, and/or using Black feminist and women of color knowledges in entitled ways (Smith, 1977, 1982; hooks, 1994; Christian 1989/2007). Concurrently, Black and women of color knowledges—even as they forged new fields— were also being co-opted and their labor exploited by the neoliberal university's language of multiculturalism (Hong, 2015; Ferguson, 2012, 2017; Lowe, 1996; Melamed 2011).

While I have raised these historical examples— in order to consider moments of misrecognition of Black feminist knowledge—I am also hoping to center that what is prevailing and persistent are the epistemic interventions Black feminists have long made, both inside and outside the site of the university. Hartman's recent monograph is a significant example—and so are the writing methods in texts like Sarah Haley's *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016). Haley draws upon Spillers' work on the gender binary and Hartman's notion of critical fabulation" in order to write what she calls "speculative, subjunctive offering" (p. 271) entwining historical research with methods of narrative writing that representing kinship practices, as well as illuminate intersubjective and intra-psychic realities, covered over by the violence of dominant archives.

As another example, Alexis Pauline Gumbs' recent work is boldly transgressive of the boundaries amongst poetry, "speculative documentary,"[44] history, and theory. In *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity* (2016), and *M Archive: After the End of the World* (2018), texts that are in intimate imaginative conversation with the writing of Spillers and Jacqui Alexander, Gumbs writes of sensory, embodied, contemplative realms as Black feminist theory. Her work is deeply invested in ancestral and cross-generational connection and knowing, as well as manifold forms of Black feminist creative practice.

Such recent turns to various forms of speculative, narrative, and embodied forms of theory—as found in *Hartman's Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, Haley's *No Mercy Here*, and Gumbs poetic engagement of Spillers and Alexander—are important examples of the persistence of Black feminist psychosocial theory and writing methods that have claimed revolutionary space within and outside the site of the university. Narrative, literary, and/or speculative writing challenges the violent abstractions of official archives (Hartman, 2007, 2008; 2019). Writing toward the sensory (Christian, 1987), relational, intellectual, and inner life (Williams, 1991; Smith, 1977; Hartman, 2007, 2019) of Black women's experiences (Smith, 1977; Williams 1991; Hartman, 2007, 2008, 2019) is rigorous theory-making and a form of insurgent methods. I contend that such writing practices perform psychosocial theory and labor because they ever link and historicize connections amongst the structural conditions and intra psychic relations and intersubjectivity. There are modes of writing that draw knowledge out of silence (Lorde, 1984; Smith, 1977; Christian, 1987) and support the psychosocial labor of

[44] For her use of the phrase "speculative documentary," see her interview at *Indy Week* (March 28, 2018) with Zaina Alsous titled "Alexis Pauline Gumbs's Groundbreaking Poetic Trilogy Engaging with Black Feminist Scholars Continues in M Archive: After the End of the World."

insurgent knowledge that is confronting the violence of history, remembering modes of survival and joy, and leaping toward liberatory future possibilities.

Finally, I wish to note as a possible path of future research, in that the focus in Black feminist history on the senses, the body, and relationality that are precisely the values that the most recent clinical trauma theory is also focusing on for healing modalities (Levine, 1997; Van der Kolk, 2015). I read in Black feminist psychosocial theory epistemologies with expertise in surviving and transforming traumatic structures—and that these Black feminist psychosocial theory and practices proceed the clinical research by at least two decades, even much longer (Christian's point is these epistemologies are actually centuries old). Said another way, what Christian was claiming is important for theory-making practices rooted in lineages of community survival (reconnecting to the senses and sensuality, mind-body connection, and community presence) is only now being understood by clinical trauma theorists as significant for the body and the nervous system.

I also observe that Christian's methods that account for community, senses and sensuality, play, and pleasure also echo Hartman's concerns that there are entwined political and aesthetic questions for how to write about histories of violence and their afterlife. As Hartman explains in an interview with Thora Seimsen published online at *The Creative Independent*, "Certain representational structures continue to produce black death, or death as the only horizon for black life" (2018). To Hartman, as to a long lineage of Black feminist intellectual history, aesthetic strategies matter for interrupting the afterlife of slavery. For example, when Christian focuses on how language is a form of sensual and embodied pleasure (1987/2007, p. 59), when she gives prioritization to creativity and embodied knowing for countering violence, and when she centers fostering kinship, beauty, and joy—she is making a theoretical, aesthetic, historical,

and epistemic claim rooted in a long tradition of Black feminist knowledge and forms of theory-making, both inside and outside the site of the university.

"Black Feminist ReWriting: Violence, Naming Practices, and the Marvels of One's Own Inventiveness" began by situation insurgent writing and renaming practices in a foundational text of the field, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." Then, working primarily from the texts of Patricia Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Barbara Christian, and Barbara Smith, I showed how the lineage of U.S. Black feminism offers distinct ways of writing that is itself an archive to consider the psychosocial conditions of knowledge production within historical and institutional moments. I paid particular attention to the affective and psychic aspect of intellectual methods that write not toward inclusion but toward the "clear leap"—or, what I have theorized as Black feminist insurgent writing methods. I emphasized the importance of sensory and embodied methods to writing within violent systems and toward liberation. Furthermore, I located how Black feminism contested norms in both white academic gender studies and masculinist practices of Black studies.

In my next chapter, I build on ideas in Chapter 2 to re-think clinical work on trauma, healing, and integration through the lens of Gloria Anzaldúa's writing methods and Chicana theories of the psyche, spirit, body, senses, and identity.

Chapter 3: A Psychosocial Reading of Gloria Anzaldúa's Theory and Practice of Writing

"My chief forms of orientation to the world are feminism, soul work, and devotion to spirituality. My struggle has always been to combine the inner work of the soul with outer service in the world…My struggle, like yours, is always to be fully who and what I am, to act out of that potential, to strive for wholeness, and to understand both the fragments and the whole of my being." —Gloria Anzaldúa

Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality (2015, pp. 182–183)

Introduction:

In a 1982 interview with Linda Smuckler published in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, Gloria Anzaldúa explained that she read widely in psychoanalysis and psychology, particularly devouring the work of post-Jungian analyst James Hillman[45] alongside her interest in literature on the occult (2000, p. 37). While she did not center classic psychoanalytic frameworks in her writing, I suggest she did create a nuanced psychosocial theory with detailed attention to identity and subjectivity, the unconscious, psychic healing, the senses, and social change.

Anzaldúa especially theorized her writing as a practice for connecting the border space of the psyche, body, spirit, and mind. This methodology of making connections infused her feminism, just as the pursuit of integrations was the central premise of how she defined her spiritual practice. The claim of this chapter is that her psychosocial theory cannot be understood without first engaging her spiritual frameworks and practices, including the links she draws between her writing practice and psychic integrations, decolonial epistemologies, healing, and

[45] Hillman was a Marxist who trained in and taught Jungian psychology, but his own work focused less on archetypes and more on the creative power of the imagination. Like Anzaldúa, he used the language of "soul making" and was committed to the generative possibilities of the plurality of the psyche and the multiplicities within the self. Hillman's ideas also influenced the bestselling feminist writer Clarissa Pinkola Estés, who identifies as a Mestiza Latina (Native American/ Mexica Spanish) psychoanalyst and post-trauma recovery specialist (1992).

social and political transformations.[46] In order to explore the psychosocial contributions of her work, this chapter will illuminate the significance of her theory of spirituality for not only her writing, but also the links she draws to personal, political, and social change.

For Anzaldúa, spirit and spirituality are words to name connectedness—namely, that spirit exists in all things. Her spirituality is an imaginative, sensory-rich method for perceiving multiplicities and interconnections amidst the status quo of separations. Her spirituality also intervenes in the subject-object split of western science. And while she critiques what she saw as western science's limits, she also loved science[47] and, through her spiritual frameworks, she arguably anticipated realities of interconnection that science is coming to know.[48]

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[46] While I conceived of the premise of this chapter before reading her dissertation proposal, I did feel chills when I recognized that the links I pursue in this chapter align with many stated goals of her unpublished dissertation. That said, my goal is not to recreate the goals of her unpublished project, but rather to read the oeuvre of her work, combined with my own training, to create new links from her work. She stated this kind of engagement from other writers pleased her. Still, I note the shared goals between this chapter and her last project before her death. In a version of her dissertation proposal drafted in the 1990s but last saved on her computer in 2002, she described a project that was distinctly interdisciplinary in methodology, and bridged literary analysis, psychoanalytic thought, anthropology, folklore, history, and Chicana and Mexican women's narratives to explore how identities are constructed by various discourses and how embodied, politically resistant, female postcolonial writing subjects negotiate identities. She also discusses making new connections across fields and lines of thought as being the task of the artist and writer. She describes such a task as both spiritual and psychological. See the Appendixes to *Light in the Dark* for drafts of her dissertation proposal and chapter outlines.

[47] Keating states in the Foreword to *EntreMundos/Among Worlds* that "Anzaldúa was an inventor, a lover of technology, loved science, physics, M-and string theory" (2005, p. xv). Keating believes it was her fascination with science (and science fiction) that brought about nepantla states of consciousness. She describes Anzaldúa's theories as a "physics of love" (p. xv).

[48] For example, in critiquing the subject-object paradigm of science, and positing a theory of interconnection, one might argue that Anzaldúa is saying in a spiritual lexicon what quantum physics is saying: the observer is part of, not apart from, the interaction and thus the data. Furthermore, particles are mysteriously communicating and entangled across time and space. See Karen Barad's material feminist *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007).

Images were important to Anzaldúa's method, so I will begin with one she offers to AnaLouise Keating that helps explain how Anzaldúa sees spirituality as connected to her understanding of psychic and social transformations. In a 1991 interview, she asked Keating to consider that the human body is a multiple and shifting reality: different kinds of bacteria live symbiotically in one's stomach, eyelashes, and forehead, a multiplicity of connections making up the self (2000, p. 158). Anzaldúa was ahead of her time: in the research on the microbiome the last 5–10 years[49], we now know the human body is maintained by a symbiosis of highly evolved microbial communities (bacteria, fungi, viruses) that digest our food, tutor our immune systems, and affect every process in the body. The health and diversity of our microbiome is also dependent on the health and microbial diversity of the soil: gut, brain, and earth are intimately entwined.

The image of the multiplicity and interconnection within the body and the planet is also how Anzaldúa perceived our relationship with cosmic realities. She says to Keating in the 1991 interview: "One's own *body* is not one entity. You can take this idea from microcosm to microcosm, from the microorganism to the cosmos and its thousands of systems of planets" (2000, p. 158).[50] Consider, then, another image that illustrates her point: The iron[51] carried in

[49] Of note, UCSD is one of the key sites of microbiome research. The UCSD News Center, "Ahead of the Curve," reported in May 20, 2016: "President Obama's BRAIN Initiative, a $100-million neuroscience research initiative which the White House developed with the help of UC San Diego's neuroscience, neurobiology, and cognitive science faculty, was launched in April 2013."

[50] In 1991 at the time of her statement, scientists did not report thousands of planets; they now do. Anzaldúa was making a statement ahead of her time.

[51] Our bodies, quite literally, "are dead stars looking back up at the sky," says NASA astronomer Dr. Michelle Thaller in her May 14, 2014 interview. Accessed YouTube, February 7, 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUo-Q8hhvB0

your blood was produced in the instant of an ancient supernova explosion.[52] So, how do we re-think the western philosophical and scientific investment in the "human" if our materiality has its genealogy at such a cosmic scale? And how do we understand the "self" when our cells require elaborate microbial universes of dynamic interdependence?

In Anzaldúa's psychosocial theory, she perceived that just as a universe of ancient inter-relations exists within our own bodies, our psyches are linked to layered and collective realities, too. She asks: If our materiality is this layered in time, space, and scale, what of our psyche's historical sedimentations? While classic psychoanalysis made the human psyche the center point of study—as experienced in an upper class, early 20th-century Viennese world—Anzaldúa de-centers the nuclear heteronormative family as the central drama and perceives a different story, as lived out in a collective history and as mediated by the psyche. It is through this lens that she accounts for the subconscious, unconscious, collective unconscious, and even a collective consciousness (2005, p. 46).

Her psychosocial theory, which I am suggesting is also her spiritual practice, was rooted in her sensing the world in terms of connection, and thus being attuned to traumatic separations of all kinds— including at the epistemic, relational, and psychic level. She believed these separations needed healing through creative reintegration and "soul work," which writers and artists facilitate for themselves and for others. As I will explore throughout this chapter, such a theoretical frame shaped her feminist understanding of identity and subjectivity; inspired her embodied epistemology and her contemplative, sensory practices in her writing; and supported a view of psychic trauma and healing quite different from dominant western therapeutic models.

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[52] See the 2015 book *Living with the Stars: How the Human Body is Connected to the Life Cycles of the Earth, the Planets, and the Star*, co-written by Iris Schrijver, a physician, and Karen Schrijver, an astrophysicist.

In order to consider these links, this chapter has three sections. Each weaves scholarship on Anzaldúa with salient transdisciplinary links across a range of fields, including ethnic studies, religious studies, feminist studies, and trauma studies.

In Part I: Spirituality as Epistemology: Explorations of Possibilities and Critiques, I lay a groundwork for her reading of spirituality by offering a selected literature overview of how Anzaldúa's framework connecting the political to the spiritual has been more recently turned toward at the intersections of Latinx studies and religious studies. Then, I attend to how and why some scholars have also been uncomfortable with the category of the spiritual in her work, including the critique of Anzaldúa's methods appropriating and erasing Indigeneity. Finally, I shift to what I see as a necessary reading practice for Anzaldúa's notion of the spiritual—namely, that we attend to the significance of the decolonized sensorium in her understanding of psychosocial healing practices, including writing as a healing act.

In Part II: Identity, Spirituality, Transformation, I bring a focus to how feminist theories of identity and subjectivity are important for understanding Anzaldúa's sense of spirituality and psychosocial theory. I weave insights from Chicana theorists, including Paula Moya, Norma Alarcón, and Emma Pérez, to better position how Anzaldúa's spiritual practices and decolonized sensorium were so important to her understanding of identity. By sensorium, I mean the ways in which Anzaldúa understood sensory experience as culturally and historically constructed, as well as tied to felt experience of identity and change processes. I also make the argument that debates on intersectional theories of identity, as produced in critical legal theory, would benefit from the psychosocial theory of identity explored in Chicana writing in the 80s and 90s. I end by making two transdisciplinary links, suggesting Anzaldúa studies could benefit sensorium studies as well as the emerging research in education on neurodivergence.

Finally, in Part III: Implications for Trauma Studies and Writing Practices, I link her writing practices to trauma studies. I argue she gives a language for trauma that shifts the diagnostic lexicon from pathology to a new spiritual perception and labor. First I outline key insights and critiques of trauma studies, drawing together work in clinical psychodynamic lineages and Native American and Indigenous Studies. I suggest that while many lineages of trauma theory within western mental health models do disavow structural conditions and historical relations of abusive/coercive power, contemporary activists and movement leaders, such as those benefiting from generative somatics, are integrating valuable trauma studies research that centers the body and the senses. Then, I return to my analysis of how Anzaldúa's writing and spiritual practices could be read as contributing to trauma theory and politicized healing practices. I argue that in her theories, trauma is a neplantla labor and a knowledge needing contemplative ritual, sensory integration, and embodied and creative holding.

A final note on this chapter's reading practices and methodology: Anzaldúa's most frequently cited works are *This Bridge Called by Back (*Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981) and *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987),[53] but in my engagement, I follow AnaLouise Keating's call to

[53] *This Bridge Called by Back* (1981) and *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) are classic texts in women of color theory and often referenced in queer theory, feminist studies, Chicanx studies, and rhetoric.

read a fuller scope[54] of her contributions to engage the nuance of her oeuvre.[55] Also, as part of my interpretive practices, I follow Anzaldúa's commitment to a transdisciplinary imagination, writing toward "bissociation," often opening more questions than giving final claims. Anzaldúa borrows this term from Arthur Koestler to describe her methods. It "refers to the bringing together of two different lines of thought—in other words, making new connections" (2015, p. 179).

Part I: Spirituality as Epistemology: Explorations of Possibilities and Critiques

To connect Anzaldúa's body of work to emerging research in religious studies, it is first necessary to outline terminology in the relevant scholarship. While Anzaldúa used the category of the "spiritual" and was highly critical of "religion," the terms spiritual and religion are not set in distinct opposition when used in religious studies and by historians of religion. The term

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[54] Her other works include: *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color* (1990); *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (2001), edited with Keating; and *Interviews/Entrevistas* in 2000 (interviews edited by Keating). Her children's books are *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del Otro Lado* (1993) and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y La Llorona* (1995). Recent critical scholarship include the 2005 *Entre Mundos/Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa,* edited by Keating; the 2009 *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, edited by Keating; and Keating's drawing together of *Anzaldúa's* unpublished dissertation work in *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (2015).

[55] The question of why it is that there has been avoidance of this fuller scope of her work and theories beyond *This Bridge* and *Borderlands* has been taken up in several different ways. Certainly, as Anzaldúa has herself addressed and Keating elaborates on, Anzaldúa's commitment to the spiritual made some academics uncomfortable, though certainly there is increasing work being done now on spirituality, as I will outline in this chapter. Another theory of why her oeuvre has been neglected is because her writing spans so many disciplines and does not fit neatly into one disciplinary formation of knowledge (Dahms, 2012). As Keating points out, her method of seeking connections is inherently transdisciplinary (2013). Anzaldúa's relationships and methods of coalition building were also committed to challenging exclusionary effects of rigid identity labels. This at times caused alienation (Dahms, p. 5, 2012). The methods of her intellectual, spiritual, and relational practice were revolutionary, but often meant not fitting into social or disciplinary norms.

"religion" is contested, and in part because of how the meaning(s) of the term have come to be overdetermined by hegemonic, colonial, and capitalist Christianities.

What religion is and is not thus remains an open, alive question and one which motivates new ways of doing scholarship on "religion."[56] For example, historians of religion are concerned by how the enmeshment of Christianity and empire puts pressures on minoritized populations to translate themselves into religious terms that are legible for white, patriarchal Christian assumptions.[57] I suggest that, similar to such scholarly attention to historical relations of power imbedded in the term religion, when Anzaldúa critiques religion, setting it in opposition to the category of the spiritual, denouncing its mind-body dualism, and critiquing its misogyny, she is implicitly critiquing the white Christian patriarchal hegemony embedded in the term religion, too.

All this to say, when scholars integrate Latinx studies and religious studies approaches to read Anzaldúa's work they are part of a contemporary scholarly lineage reimagining the very study of "religion." Some use and reimagine the term religion (Carrasco & Sagarena, 2008), while others use the term spirituality (Facio & Lara, 2014; Delgadillo, 2015) to make a distinction from the ways in which hegemonic religion functions as institutional and oppressive.

Davíd Carrasco and Roberto Lint Sagarena in "The Religious Vision of Gloria Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera as a Shamanic Space," published in *Mexican American Religions:*

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[56] See Lofton, 2017; Wenger, 2017; Weisenfield, 2017; D. Boyarin, 2018.

[57] As Tisa Wenger's recent pathfinding book *Religious Freedom: The Contested history of an American Ideal* (2018) shows, many groups of people—including Indigenous nations in the U.S., African Americans, and Jews— were coerced to translate their practices into categories of "religion" in order to try to gain access to some of the legal protections given to white Protestants under the category "religious freedom," a category simultaneously used to justify U.S. imperialism.

Spirituality, Activism, and Culture (Espinosa & García, 2008) choose to revitalize the category of religion through a focus on Anzaldúa's use of myth, ritual, and shifts in consciousness. They contend that while most scholars have focused on gendered, ethnic, and political elements of the spaces in *Borderlands*, "…we believe that the heart of her portrayal of the borderlands is articulated, and must be understood, as a religious vision" (p. 224). They argue that it is the ecstatic (and, also, simultaneously, often painful) trances that create the particular quality of knowledge in her work, including her knowledge of psychic injury, healing, and ancestral spirits. While they rather briefly critique that she did not know enough about the Aztec traditions she wrote of, and acknowledge the dangers of what they call religious colonialism in how her work is used, Carrasco and Sagarena believe that her powerful imagination and writing methods offer models for the intersections of art and Chicana religious expression (p. 238).

More recently, the contributors to *Fleshing the Spirit: Spirituality and Activism in Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous Women's Lives* (Facio & Lara, 2014) take a different approach: they make central the transdisciplinary, queer, feminist methodology of Anzaldúa to the ambivalent study of spirituality within the academy. The anthology is the first of its kind to focus entirely on Anzaldúa's theory and methodology alongside Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous women's spirituality, thus bridging ethnic studies and Indigenous studies; women's, gender and sexuality studies; religious studies; and theology (namely, liberation and mujerista theology). In their introduction, Facio and Lara articulate that speaking of the spiritual in academic contexts is as transgressive as speaking of sexuality in other contexts. But they also argue that it is lesbian and queer artists and scholars who have led analysis of the spiritual, especially examining the role of religion in constructing heteronormative practices (p. 10). Insisting on the "intellectual and political significance of analyzing spirituality and activism within transcultural and historical

contexts" (p. 7), the anthology engages Anzaldúa's idea of spiritual activism (2002) as a concept of radical interconnectedness, ritual, and social change (p. 14). *Fleshing the Spirit* argues convincingly that scholars need to give greater attention to understanding how women's spiritual practices are epistemologies and ways of being in relation, including relation to kin, other than human kin, and land. Those relations, they argue, are sites of justice making and healing practices.

As a third example of recent scholarship: Theresa Delgadillo in *Spiritual Mestizaje: Religion, Gender, Race, and Nation in Contemporary Chicana Narrative* (2015) locates spiritual mestizaje at the center of *Borderlands*. She writes "Spirituality informs every aspect of the work that *Borderlands* performs with respect to subjectivity, epistemology, and transformation…" (p. 6), and then uses her analysis of *Borderlands* to read Chicana narratives of spirituality in film and literature. She maintains that Anzaldúa's "border theorizing on spirituality" functions as the "social practice of imagination" (p. 2), one that insists on epistemic inquiry over dogmatic arrival, and integrates both a psychic and intellectual sense of interconnection.

The sense of connection with the cosmos is rooted in connection to the body. In a passage I will quote at length, Delgadillo proposes that the decolonial process in Anzaldúa's writing practice is precisely anchored to the epistemology of the body:

> In this process, her body is not only the site of experience but also the repository of knowledge, which can only be fully deciphered in tandem with research and contemplation. Writing becomes both an intensely physical, bodily process of decolonization and an examination of the imprint of ideologies and religions on the physical self. It is perhaps the intensity of this discovery, of the way that our physical presence in the world, our very bodies, are shaped by oppressive discursive paradigms that creates the rupture that leads Anzaldúa, and others following in her path, into the Coatlicue state. (pp. 7-8)

Delgadillo describes such a writing process as "unmaking her subjection" (p. 10). She sees this

method as Anzaldúa's countering the masculinism of nationalist projects of the 60s and 70s. Spiritual mestizaje is thus the practices for resisting notions of static identity and, instead, contemplating a lived process of "critical mobility" that continually assesses all the elements that inform identity (p. 12).

Finally, the most recent text, Christina Garcia Lopez's *Calling the Soul Back: Embodied Spirituality in Chicanx Narrative* (2019), represents a turn to link Anzaldúa's "decolonized spirituality" to discussions of narrative, historical trauma, and embodied ritual. The project is tethered to Lopez' desire to understand the forms of resilience, amidst suffering extensive injustice, that she finds in Mexican American culture. Her research bears witness to an embodied "spiritual knowledge" that "counters destructive forces of coloniality and modernity" (p. xi). Reading the work of Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, and Rudolfo Anaya, among others, she attends to how Chicanx literature shifts readers' consciousness through epistemologies and ontologies of interconnections. For Lopez, narratives of embodied spirituality perform political work: overcoming "epistemic subjection" is both psychically healing and politically revolutionary.

While these works represent directions in scholarship that are buoyed by Anzaldúa's theories and practices of spiritual activism, two inherent risks with Anzaldúa's articulations of the spiritual remain: 1) There are risks to the legibility of her work on spirituality and 2) There are critiques raised of how her use of the category of the spiritual rests on appropriating and erasing Indigeneity.

The former is connected to how the "rational" and the "spiritual" are set in opposition in modern western Enlightenment thoughts and mapped onto notions of the "modern" and the "primitive," categories which are also racialized and gendered. As Laura I. Rendón's work in contemplative studies, Latinx studies, and education argues, for those adhering to Cartesian

norms within white/male/western traditions, inner work is often discounted as non rational or non academic (2009). Rendón explains the hesitation this way: that any kind of focus on "inner work is closely associated with spirituality, and spirituality can be an explosive, taboo topic with many definitions espoused by some fanatics and frauds invoking spirit for their own dubious purposes" (p. 27). As Anzaldúa herself shares in personal interviews, when she brought up spiritual practices in women's studies academic spaces, she could feel the room get uncomfortable.[58] That said, there has been significant change since Anzaldúa experiences: the development of the very concept of "spiritual activism" within some academic circles shows that shift.[59]

Some of the discomfort by certain academics regarding the spiritual frameworks of Anzaldúa's own identity and theory is primarily connected to critiques of her appropriating or erasing Indigeneity within her use of Aztec myth (Saldaña-Portillo, 2001; Contreras, 2006; Guidotti-Hernández, 2011; Moraga, 2011; Hartley, 2012; Perez, 2014). Josefina Saldaña-Portillo names the heart of what is at stake: that Anzaldúa's representations, while intending to counter masculinist nationalism, actually participates in nationalist rhetoric that excludes and erases lived Indigenous subjectivity; writes over here-and-now Indigenous claims to land and political sovereignty; and collapses the historical and living differences within Indigenous nations and traditions in her "psychobiological" claims to female Aztec deities 500 years ago (2003).[60]

Saldaña-Portillo's further argues that in positing a biological claim to Indigenous subjectivity for the purpose of shoring up Chicana identity formation, Anzaldúa enacts a model

[58] See, for example, her interview with Irena Lara in *Entre Mundos/Among Worlds* about her experience in 1981 at NWSA (2005, p. 48).
[59] I thank Keating for this insight discussed with me via personal correspondence.
[60] See her *Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas* (2003), and her earlier article, "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandón" (2001).

of liberal development: "Ultimately, Anzaldúa's model of representation reproduces liberal developmental models of choice that privilege her position as a U.S. Chicana: she goes through her backpack and decides what to keep and what to throw out, choosing to keep signs of indigenous identity as ornamentation and spiritual revival" (2003, p. 286). Indeed, Anzaldúa's idea of "new tribalism" does precisely this pick and choose approach. She is quite explicit in wanting to integrate epistemologies and practices from a vast range of cultures and histories. It is a method she bases on her belief that there is a difference between borrowing and consuming/appropriating (2009, p. 289), and that people with multiple-identities are positioned to integrate the very kinds of spiritual knowledges silenced by western, patriarchal, Christian colonialisms. For example, in "Speaking Across the Divide" in the *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, she discusses how spiritual transformation can be borrowed across traditions, though she cautions against Chicana/os enacting Eurocentric, colonial mentalities. She suggests people "scrutinize the purpose and accountability for one's 'borrowing'" (2009, p. 289), but she does believe borrowing across spiritual traditions can be done ethically.

Even then, how do we best read statements like this one shared in an interview with Irene Lara on her concept of new tribalism (a passage often quoted to be critiqued)?

> New tribalism is a kind of mestizaje. Instead of somebody making you a hybrid without your control, you can choose. You can choose a little Buddhism, a little assertiveness, individuality, some Mexican views of the spirit world, something from blacks, something from Asians. I use the image of an orange tree, like an árbol de la vida, to illustrate. Some kinds have a very strong root and trunk system but don't put out as much of the fruit, so you graft them together to get a variety with better oranges. (2005, p. 42)

Of this passage, Domino Renee Perez argues in "New Tribalism and Chicana/o Indigeneity in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa," that while Anzaldúa sought categories outside dominant racial groupings, and wanted to challenge Chicano nationalism and patriarchy, she enacts "a la carte spiritualism," which Perez also ultimately identifies as individualistic. Anzaldúa's larger point,

though, with new tribalism is that reality is always in transformation, and we need ways of understanding identity that are more porous and changing: she tells Lara the whole point is to practice "reshuffle[ing] all the categories" and come up with new identity markers every few years as a way of perceiving human connection and not dividing the world into the rigid racial categories of colonialism (2005, p. 42). But the problem for Perez is that both in Anzaldúa's desire for ever new and fluctuating identity markers, and in her invocation of Indigeneity as "past," she is not attendant to how sovereign Indigenous Nations would not share her views for historical, social, cultural, and political reasons (p. 9).

While there are now significant amounts of scholarship parsing out these problematics, I wish to note how Lee Maracle's use of narrative writing in "This is Personal: Revisiting Gloria Anzaldúa from within the Borderlands" performs a different model of critique (2005). She offers an embodied, narrativized reflection of being on a panel with Anzaldúa, and step by step, she takes her reader through the relational aspects of these questions. She tells us what it was like to first learn Anzaldúa had been invited to be on the Indigenous women's panel without any consultation from Indigenous women. She describes the moment of being told this news by the conference organizers and then being put on the spot to answer whether Chicanas are Indigenous. Maracle answers: "Some people, Diana, are not in the habit of presuming to name the place, position, or belonging of others" (p. 208).

And indeed, her method in her storytelling is to refuse[61] the role Diana tries to put her in. She does not agree to the terms of the question. Instead, Maracle narrates the affective and sensory textures of the experience of being in a room together as Chicana and Indigena. She

[61] See Audre Simpson's *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014) for a theorization of ethnographic refusal in Indigenous Studies.

savors Anzaldúa's presence, even as Maracle explores the deeply felt ambivalence and differences within the room. Maracle is particularly struck hearing Anzaldúa listen. While she will not answer the question put upon her of Anzaldúa's identity, of Anzaldúa's listening practice she writes: "I would die for this kind of Indigenous discipline" (p. 210). Maracle's narrative techniques do not discount the stakes of the critiques of Anzaldúa's work, but they do serve to soften critique toward a shared space of presence. She foregrounds lived moments of encounter, accountability, and interconnection, a way of being that Anzaldúa's frameworks and practices also embraced.

Keating, whose scholarship embraces Anzaldúa's entire archive, provides yet another way to shift the modes of critique, as she emphasizes more engagement with the epistemic, ontological, and spiritual project behind her theories. Keating was a close longtime collaborator of Anzaldúa's, and now is the literary trustee of the Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers at the University of Texas. Having an in-depth view of the oeuvre of Anzaldúa's work, she believes many of the critiques of Anzaldúa's work aren't focused on the full scope of her writing, but rather passages seemingly frozen in time and excerpted. Keating also suggests we take into account how Anzaldúa herself responded to these critiques and thoughtfully revised her ideas.

For example, *The Gloria E. Anzaldúa Reader* (2003), edited by Keating, includes Anzaldúa reflections on the critiques raised of her work. "Border Arte: Nepantla, el Lugar de la Frontera" is an extended authoethnographic meditation on Anzaldúa visiting an exhibit on Aztecs at a museum. She internally tracks both the desire for Chicana/os artists to connect to Indigenous roots of their ancestors and also the impulse to consume, exoticize, or romanticize Indigeneity, as white colonial culture does. She observes she feels multiple identities and "races running in her veins"—including "a white man who constantly whispers in my skull" (p. 185).

Or, in "Speaking Across the Divide" in the same reader, Anzaldúa dialogues with Inés Hernández-Avila (Nez Perce/Tejana) expressing the importance of dialogue between Chicanas and Native Americans. Of Saldano-Portillo's work, she gives appreciation for the critique but also says "my sense is that she's misread or not read enough of my work" (p. 288). At the same time, she reflects on how her work has been used to erase Indigenous people, and the ways in which she feels Chicanas/os silence Indigenous faculty within the university. Anzaldúa also discusses the difference between her claiming indigenous ancestry and connections, but never claiming a North American Indian identity (p. 286).

Still, she is explicit in this interview that she feels her own Indigenous ancestry holds "psychic fragmentation" because of the cumulative unrecognized losses of genocide and rape; at the same time, her Indigenous ancestry also means to hold a creative power of psychic integrations (p. 283), to be a nepantlera. She discusses in depth how she feels her indigenous roots are important to her understanding of the links among spirituality, creative power, nature, her body, and writing practices. I outline these claims not as a defense of the critiques launched at Anzaldúa, but because it is necessary to see what was at stake for her in continuing to hold to her spiritual frameworks amidst critique.

I also believe it is important to understand what is at stake from multiple vantage points, and to keep shifting the angle of examination in the very way Anzaldúa's methods invite. What is at stake for Saldaña-Portillo and others in line with her critiques is how Anzaldúa's spiritual frameworks work against political solidarity with Indigenous people. What is at stake for Maracle is rejecting the terms of the question when she is put on the spot and asked to adjudicate Anzaldúa's identity. Instead, she shifts to telling a story, narrating how critique, presence, and dialogue must be held together. What is at stake for Keating is appreciating the scope of

Anzaldúa's theory and writing methods and contending with how her spiritual concepts are not only deeply embedded in her work, but "inspire the most innovative dimensions of her theories" (2005, p. 242).

All these interventions continue to be salient for how to read, revise, or reimagine how Anzaldúa's understanding of spirituality organizes her ideas. Like Keating, my project here is to better understand why Anzaldúa says she linked spirituality, theories of identity and subjectivity, writing practices, and decolonial epistemologies and ontologies throughout her life. But to do that, I also believe we need to better position her work within her understanding of the personal as political, as well as within a larger discourse in feminist history on identity, subjectivity, and fragmentation.

Part II: Identity, Spirituality, Transformation

In Anzaldúa's theories, spiritual practices are embodied, sensory, psychic, and epistemic. These practices are modes of resistance because they support reintegration in the context of centuries of violence. While one might debate her historical methods, what I want to consider is how she *feels* and *senses* an unspoken history within her body, which is not only her history as an individual, but an interconnected history across time and space. Her psychosocial diagnosis is that the consciousness of our interconnection is cut up by violent patriarchal, colonial histories. She believed we need knowledge-making practices that intervene and offer multiple forms of integration. She writes of her writing (another often quoted passage):

> "When you take a person and divide her up, you disempower her. She's no longer a threat. My whole struggle in writing, in this anti-colonial struggle, has been to componerlas, to put us back together again. To connect up the body with the soul and the mind with the spirit. That's why for me there's such a link between the text and the body, between textuality and sexuality, between the body and the spirit. (2000, p. 220)

In *Making Face Making Soul, Haciendo Caras* (as well many places elsewhere in her texts) she also links the creative, spiritual and psychic in this process, explaining: "inherent in the creative act is a spiritual, psychic component—one of spiritual excavation, of (ad)venturing into the inner world, extrapolating meaning from it and sending it out into the world. To do this kind of work requires the total person—body, soul, mind, and spirit (1990, p. xxiv). Prioritizing healing fragmentation, an act of creative power, requires deep personal work. And yet this psychic healing—defined as integrations and reconnections— is a catalyst for transformation at far reaching, collective levels of being, or what she calls spirit.

In her methods to reconnect and integrate, she places an emphasis on understanding the links among identity, inner and outer transformations, and spirituality. While this method is evident throughout her essays, her interviews are especially illuminating. Anzaldúa conducted well over a hundred interviews in two decades, serving as a backdrop to her other publications. Her interviews are archives of her modes of personal transparency and inner reflection. They are also archives of her theories of writing, and were an important part of her writing process and making new connections. As Keating explains: "For Anzaldúa interviews are another dimension of writing—oral writing, as it were" (2000, p. 4). As oral writing, they represent a more spontaneous kind of knowledge creation than her published words because in the latter her writing was always meticulously revised over and over.

While discussing the personal as a method throughout all her writing—including the fusions of genre in autohisteorias and autohistoria-teorías[62]—her interviews are even more detailed, which made Keating nervous as the editor of her interviews. Keating discusses her

[62] Both these genres infuse 1st person, embodied experience and narrative to understand historical and cultural relations, but autohistoria-teoría includes more explicit theorizing.

process of checking back several times with Anzaldúa and asking if she was sure she wanted in print discussions that included reflections of drugs, her intimacy with her friend Randy, her sexual experiences with the cosmos in meditation[63], and her radical spiritual beliefs. Anzaldúa says if she has integrated that knowledge of herself— an integration she worked out through her practice of writing— she is comfortable with it in print.

In the introduction to *Interviews: Entrevistas* (2000), which Keating titles, "Risking the Personal," she meditates on how Anzaldúa first read the draft of her introduction and encouraged her to put more of herself at an embodied and sensory level into her writing. But Keating was hesitant. She valued her privacy and also worried if she integrated the personal into her writing, she would not be respected as a scholar. She writes, "*I fear these risks!* But one of the most important things I've learned from reading and teaching Anzaldúa's work is the importance of risking the personal" (p. 2).[64]

Anzaldúa's methods of risking the personal is a way to root knowledge in— and create knowledge of and from and through— the entwinements of identity, history, and subjectivity. It was also a prominent practice of women of color and Third World feminism's knowledge

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[63] I note that the sexuality in Anzaldúa's practices has many conceptual links to what some religious studies scholars identity as 13-15th century feminism in Christian women's mystical practices in Europe. These practices were often condemned by the official church because these Christian mystics challenged the power of men in the church through identifying and writing about the spiritual knowledge within women's experiences and lay communities. Marxist-feminist Sylvia Federici in *Caliban and the Witch* links the suppression of such practices to enclosures and witch hunts in Europe. She also argues the epistemic and spiritual oppression of mystical practices, which first occurred within Europe, was central to western colonial violence toward Indigenous peoples in the Americas (1998).

[64] In *Voicing Chicana Feminisms: Young Women Speak Out on Sexuality and Identity* (2003), Aída Hurtado writes of Keating's introduction and wrestling out loud with Anzaldúa's invitation to risk the personal. Hurtado writes that while she too feared the vulnerabilities of this methodology, in reading this passage of Keating's she was able to stick to her original vision for her book, even amidst pressure from her publisher to be less "persona."

production, creative work, and anthologies. In what follows, I zoom out from my focus on Anzaldúa to a larger view of how aspects of feminist theory have contended with why the personal is part of a larger conversation on identity and subjectivity. I do this in order to read her work alongside historical and theoretical moments, including the prevalence of postmodern and poststructural theory that many feminists engaged (such as the influence of Derrida's work on writing and différance).

Notably, the momentum of much of contemporary feminist scholarship on how to understand identity and subjectivity is in direct discussion with intersectional theory (Nash, 2019), which is a lexicon originally from critical legal studies and Black feminist theory (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). But I want to suggest one reason there is benefit to turning to what I name as the psychosocial theory in Chicana theory (which intersected with Third World feminism and the emergence of transnational feminism) is because there are additional lexicons within these conversations to understand difference and multiplicity—within the self, and within groups. My approach is not a critique of intersectionality or identity politics, but rather an attempt to use more of the overlapping tools available within feminist ethnic studies history, including theorizations of the intersections of the psychic and political, which was not Crenshaw's project in legal studies.

Crenshaw's core theorization of intersectionality (1989, 1991) argued the problem is not identity politics but rather the discursive collapse of the differences within the categories, which has the material effects of Black women, women of color, and immigrant women being illegible in the law as subjects and denied access to resources and protections. Because intersectionality became such a defining theory of feminism (Nash, 2019), its application has become highly debated. More recently, the debates have included the extent to which intersectionality is or isn't

a theory of identity (Cooper, 2016; Puar, 2012); how the term intersectionality has been institutionalized (Nash, 2019); who it includes and who it excludes (Nash, 2019); and the explorations of what other ways of understanding identity, difference, and coalition building in WOC theory and history might be useful to center (Keating, 2012).

When we turn to place Anzaldúa's contributions within Chicana theories of the subject, I believe we find a different emphasis than the contemporary intersectionality debates.[65] Additionally, I argue that shifting the feminist theory lexicon back and forth between one originally rooted in legal theory, to layering a lexicon from what I name as psychosocial theory in Chicana and Third World theory, can offer tools to help these contemporary debates overcome impasse. "Shifting" is a central method to Anzaldúan theory. Agility between terms, disciplines, and perceptions is the goal, not a static end product or mono framework. Or, as Keating has said, speaking of conflict in feminist classroom settings and her theory of "post-oppositional" methods, there is a rich and long history within women of color theories of identity and difference, and it is important to be strategic in assessing which set of tools helps us in our given moment move through conceptual and relational impasse (2013).

To consider psychosocial tools within theories of identity and subjectivity, I start with Paula Moya's mapping of Chicana theory in "Chicana Feminism and Postmodern Theory" in *Learning From Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles* (2002). Moya writes:

> The important development of a women of color identity and politics, which was seen as supplementing but not replacing a Chicana identity and politics, allowed Chicana feminists to engage in coalition politics even as they retained at the center of their politics an analysis of the interrelationship of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the explaining the particular conditions of their lives in the United States. (p. 66)

[65] These debates are often referred to as "intersectionality wars" (see Nash, 2019). I prefer not to use the term "war" as a metaphor in this way, so I will use the phrase intersectionality debates to discuss these contemporary tensions in feminist scholarship on identity.

This analysis is important on several levels, one of which is her emphasis on a Chicana and women of color coalitionary politics that does not ignore the particularities of lived difference, but rather embraces difference as a path to knowledge. For example, in *This Bridge Called My Back*, women of color writers discuss difference within the shared category "women of color," recognizing that it can be frightening to interrogate difference for fear of losing relationships in naming difference; but at the same time, it is through understanding difference that women of color can theorize interconnections within a larger intersecting system of oppression (i.e. capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, etc.). Of such histories of coalition building, Moya connects how Chela Sandoval's theory of "differential consciousness," as both a psychological and political practice, is knowledge generated out of these experiences of difference within the context of seeking alliances for social change.

But Moya insightfully notes that to understand relational "difference" and to build coalitions one needs tools to interpret *and* re-interpret one's own identity and experiences. Moya turns to Moraga's explanation in the forward to second edition of *Bridge*: "Because differences are relational, our ability to understand an 'other' depends largely on our willingness to examine our 'self' (p. 24). Moya explains that poststructuralism and postmodernism had challenged notions of transparent access to the meaning of "experience" or the "self," cautioning against essentialism and showing how discourse produces "identity"; but feminist of color theory also knew that within a felt sense of identity and subjection was information for understanding how oppression and ideology are inscribed on the body. Moraga's "theory in the flesh" is a good example, for she wasn't claiming access to unmediated experience or experience outside discourse, but she was claiming the body holds knowledge. Moya writes that Moraga can use the

category of identity because she reconceptualizes it (p. 26) as relationally and historically grounded and produced across categories of gender, race, sexuality, and class.

But the historically, relationally, discursively produced body also holds a psychic experience—a consciousness and an unconscious, holding silences, gaps, repressions, and contradictions. It is the argument of this dissertation that women of color psychosocial theory connected the material-historical to the psychic, and this was certainly true of Chicana writers. Here, I turn from Moya's mapping to considering what I view as the range of psychosocial insights of Norma Alarcón that I see as important context for Anzaldúa's work on identity and subjectivity.

Norma Alarcón wrote a number of essays with theoretical and methodological tools for engaging Chicana feminist insights on subjectivity and identity alongside and across Third World feminism, transnationalism feminism, and postmodernism. Significantly, she also helped build a women of color literary movement as the editor and publisher of Third Woman Press. The links between her work as an editor/publisher and her theories of identity and coalitions are important, so I will first briefly situate the visionary work of Third Woman.

In Alternative Cartographies: The Impact of Third Woman on Chicana Feminist Literature, 1981–1986, Catherine Ramírez writes: "Rather than aligning *Third Woman* with the discourse of Chicano cultural nationalism, which defined cultural identity exclusively in terms of race and class, Alarcón located it within an emergent, woman of color feminism based on coalitional politics." Ramírez explains that, initially situated in the Midwest as a feminist press, Third Woman from its beginning challenged physical/geographic and ideological boundaries, as it built coalitions and a literary movement amongst Chicanas, Latinas, and Third World women. Value was placed on both connection to the past and also "inventing" oneself (Alarcón, 1981).

Alarcón and Third Woman moved to Berkeley in 1986, then Third Woman became Third Woman Press in 1989.

As a scholar, supporter of student activism at Berkeley, and editor/ publisher, Alarcón's legacy has been embedded in a feminist ethnic studies intellectual history that is deeply tied to community, women of color literary expression, and coalitionary politics. Her own writing reflects deeply lived and studied knowledge of how to understand oneself in relationship to oneself and to others also working towards liberation. As a central value for feminist coalition building, Chicana theory, and women of color theory more broadly, she theorizes the decentered postmodern subject, multiply constructed, but "in so far as she desires liberation, must through toward provisional solidarities, especially through social movements," (1999, p. 67). Said another way, there is no "essential" identity, but there is still specificity amidst difference that matters for how social movements are built, a psychosocial framework critical to understanding subjectivity im women of color activist and intellectual history.

Alarcón observes in her essay "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism" that like Anglo-American feminism, much of Chicana theory of the 1970s assumed a subject that was "autonomous, self-determining, and self-defining" because such a subject opened ways to understand the agency of the subject (1989). In "Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of 'The' Native Woman" (1990)[66], Alarcón writes of the shift for an initial desire for "a true self or identity" in the 1960s and 1970s Chicano movement to the feminist recognition, as observed by Anzaldúa, that the "I" is multiple and not yielding one origin story (Kaplan, Alarcón, & Moallem, 1999, p. 65), thus breaking from Chicano nationalism. Alarcón writes of

[66] This essay was republished in *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State* (Kaplan, Alarcón, & Moallem, 1999).

the desire for Chicana writers to reconstruct multiplicity and to write into embodied histories, in which a spiritual category of loss[67] is used with political implications, a category she believes should not be underestimated and can be "refocused for feminist change" (p. 67). Alarcón views the evocation of Indigenous figures in Anzaldúa as an attempt to make sense of "cultural and psychic dismemberment" (p. 67) perpetuated through colonization. Whether or not her method is successful is debatable, as I have outlined in Part I, it is important to recognize that the impulse behind Anzaldúa's method was to find language for a subjectivity shaped by centuries of colonial, patriarchal violence and women's resistance.

Alarcón also shows how women of color theory had expertise in developing a theory of historicized subjectivity and intersubjectivity that was different from Anglo theory, the latter of which was limited in viewing sexual and gender difference as the most important themes or categories of identity. In "Conjugating Subjects" (1994), Alarcón theorizes "identity-in-difference: she gives as examples how Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*, Chela Sandoval's work on oppositional consciousness, and Audre Lorde's theory of difference illuminate not just the psychoanalytic understanding of impulses *within* the subject, but also the "experience of 'otherization' *between* subjects" (p. 128). In "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called my Back and Anglo-American Feminism" (1991), Alarcón further explains how the writers of this foundational anthology recognized "the displacement of her subjectivity across a multiplicity

[67] For relevant theorization of loss through the Freudian category of melancholia see *Indian Given: Racial Geographies Across Mexico and the United States* (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016); "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive" (Muñoz, 2006); and "Loss, Rumination, and Narrative: Chicana/o Melancholy as Generative State," a dissertation by Michelle Patricia Baca (2014).

of discourse: feminist/lesbian, nationalist, racial, and socioeconomic" (p. 28). They needed to understand not just difference but historicized particularities of embodied difference, in order to move toward coalitionary work on behalf of survival and liberation.

Of these women of color methods, Alarcón explains, "These voicings (or thematic threads) are not viewed as necessarily originating from the subject, but as discourses that transverse consciousness and which the subject must struggle with constantly" (p. 38). I am making a link and contending that writing practices for Anzaldúa are a location of psychosocial labor and knowledge through which the subject struggles with the discourse that transverse her body and consciousness. Near the end of the essay, Alarcón quotes a statement from Anzaldúa that registers the cost of discourse written onto the body, even seemingly progressive discourse of identity label: "What am I? A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystical leanings. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label" (p. 38). This citation Alarcón chooses is also similar to a central question in Trinh Minh-ha's *Woman, Native, Other* (1989)— a text frequently cited by Chicana theorists—that shows how the Third World woman is written upon, essentialized, and dissected by the anthropological, colonial gaze, pinned like a butterfly to a board (p. 48). What Anzaldúa is especially naming is that even the attempt to label oneself for the purpose of liberation leads to similar traps and immobilizations of thoughts and understanding.

In *EntreMundos/Among Worlds,*[68] Irene Lara pinpoints an important question, asking Anzaldúa, "How are the ways you describe your identities different from your description in

[68] Of this collection, I will note that *EntreMundos/Among Worlds*, a collection of writing by others and interviews, was the last book Anzaldúa conceived of and that she blessed before her death. In the *Foreword*, Keating tells us Anzaldúa was thrilled people were taking her ideas and writing them out in their own way and developing their own theories. That engagement validated her life's work as a writer. She was not invested in people sticking exactly to her ideas. She

Borderlands?" (2005, p. 43). She responds by explaining that labels like "women of color" as used in *Borderlands* help unite people to fight for social justice, as the use of the label creates a unity that furthers social transformations. But for Anzaldúa there were always serious costs to labels.

One cost is obscuring people's lived process of change, as she saw identities as multifaceted and in movement. Her example in her interview with Lara is the shifting of class positions for women of color writers and scholars of her generation: the more writers gain class position, Anzaldúa observes, they tend to partake of dominant culture, re-arranging the us/them lines previously drawn in the oppressor/oppressed binary logic.[69]

Another cost, which Anzaldúa often wrote about, is that an identity label can further the fragmentations of colonial discursive systems. In *Light in the Dark*, she says she is often asked:

> "What's your primary identity? Is it Chicana, Mexicana, Mexican American, Latina, or Hispanic? Is it being a woman, queer, working class, an elder, short; is it being a writer, diabetic, intellectual, spiritual activist, mystic, dreamer…? This question assumes that a person can be fragmented like Coyolxauhqui, and I answer, 'All of me is my primary identity. I can't be cut up." (2015, pp.183–184)

Her concern was that while labels emphasize parts of ourselves, our potentiality lies in accessing all the parts of ourselves that don't fit into labels.

Another cost to identity labels for Anzaldúa is losing a felt, embodied, psychic, spiritual sense of connection to others beyond the labels. But even then, she still holds the tension of the uses and the costs. In her 1983 interview with Weiland she explains: "We use labels—like

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wanted the images and ideas she gave to support each writer's working through of their own ideas.

[69] Hooks and Hall in *Uncut Funk* also address this shifting of class position for Black writers. They dialogue about how one claims an identity to fight a political struggle, but in doing so comes to realize that no label can contain the shifting grounds of self amidst the journey (76, 2017).

lesbian— because the world is set up in such a way that if we do not represent that part of us, that part will get "killed" if we don't use the word (2000, p. 199). But even, then, she maintains, "I'm a citizen of the universe" (Weiland, 1983, p. 2000), going on to explain: "I think it is good to claim your ethnic identity and your racial identity. But it's also the source of all the wars and the violence, all these borders and walls people erect. I am tired of borders and I'm tired of walls. I don't believe in the nationalism" (p. 188).

This framework of identity and subjectivity is ultimately rooted in her understanding of spirituality, and why it is that she sees writing practices as a spiritual path to integrations and integrations. But what I believe first needs more attention, and what can help us better understand how her spiritual sense framed her notions of identity and subjectivity, is foregrounding how Anzaldúa's sensing of interconnection wasn't a mental assent or belief. Rather, it was foremost an embodied experience that she felt even as a child, a sense which she articulates as a spiritual power. Her theories of decolonial epistemologies were shaped by how she felt and understood the spiritual as interconnected to the sensory and the political. She says to Christine Weiland that spirituality it is "awakening to the fact that you're a spirit, that you have this presence" (2000, p. 98). This awareness was the strength of her rebellion because it allowed her to cut away from dominant cultural thinking/feeling without feeling alone (2000, p. 98). Anzaldúa says, "I didn't have the money, privilege, body, or knowledge to fight oppression, but I had this presence, this spirit, this soul" (p. 98). The spiritual is always inherently political to Anzaldúa for it is the resource of presence and interconnection through which we fight injustice, evolve humanity, and create revolutionary leaps.

Living her spirituality on a sensory realm, she described her process of learning to live with these sensory sensitivities toward spirit—that she was part of all. As a child, she felt

"bombarded" with what her senses experienced. She gives an example in a 1982 interview with Linda Smuckler: "Once when I was in Prospect Park in Brooklyn for a picnic everyone was smoking cigarettes and putting them out in the grass. My whole body reacted: I could feel the pain of the grass. These people were turning their live cigarettes on it" (2000, p. 26). She had to learn how to manage sensory overwhelm. One technique was to disconnect from herself to turn down her sense of empathy, identification, and interconnection, and thus it follows that her writing practice is a process of integrating and holding the knowledges of interconnection that have been fractured inside of her.

Her capacity to sense interconnection is also heightened in traumatic moments. For example, when she almost drowned as a child of 10-years-old, her sense of connection with the ocean would come to root her in interconnection as a source of power. Speaking of this power within herself, and learning it through nearly drowning, she said to Christine Weiland: "It's sort of like there's an ocean out there that you call consciousness, and I have a little part of that ocean within myself" (2000, p. 112)

Or, speaking to Keating (1991) of the physical world as a mask for the "interpenetration of other worlds," Anzaldúa reflects on an experience of getting mugged, in which the "traumatic shock" brutally opened her sensory perceptions: "…I became aware of things that had to do with landscape and the trees and the particular ravine where I was mugged. I could almost hear their vibrations because every living thing has vibrations" (p. 159). These faculties of sensing beyond the 5 senses are further developed within oppression because being able to sense danger (2000, p. 123) is necessary for survival, but it is also a sensing faculty connected to the "creative life force." In other words, while her senses are vigilant against any approaching homophobic, racist,

or misogynistic danger, she sees these same faculties as holding the sensitivity to create (r)evolutions in consciousness.

She believes people have the capacity to sense far more, but the privileging of the eye by western scientists has created an objectivity that separates us" (2000, p. 163). These ideas were foundational to *Borderlands* because she critiqued "the consciousness of duality" (1987, p. 59), naming the subject-object relation as the "root of all violence" within western epistemology. This rationalism keeps us from "touching" the world (p. 59). Subject-object is also the primary dichotomous frame onto which social hierarchies are mapped in western colonization: binaries/hierarchies including mind-body, rational-emotional, male-female, white-colonized, etc. Mestiza consciousness performs the "massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in individual and collective consciousness," an inner work she believes could ultimately end war and rape (p. 102).

When Anzaldúa speaks of "war and rape" in this context, she is referencing the subject-object sexual violence that is endemic to western colonization and that which is written in particular ways onto women's bodies and reproductive history. As she discusses in an interview with Inés Hernández-Avila, the conquest for women has been about what happens to their bodies and to their children "because the first thing the conquistadors did was rape the Indian women and create the mestizo race" (2000, p. 181). We could connect here Emma Pérez' re-writing of Freud's primal scene in "Sexuality and Discourse" (1993): "The colonial primal scene, for my purposes here, is a reenactment of the rape of Indian women by white male colonizers/conquerors (p. 113). In search of a decolonial imaginary, Pérez [70], like Anzaldúa,

[70] She ends her text, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History* (1999): "I have suggested that some answers lie in a psychic terrain, that unseen region where our only hope is a new consciousness, a healing consciousness, where desiring devices can serve to free us and not obstruct, stifle, and limit our identities" (p. 124).

believed we needed to make space for the histories written onto women's bodies that are discursively silenced. While taking different paths, as Pérez is a historian, both theorists identify a need for more methodological and theoretical tools to name the unspoken, to disrupt what has been "shuffle[d] through unidentifiable spaces" (p. 124). The labor of this work is thus not only embodied survival, but as part of survival and resistance, negotiating the colonial psyche enacted on Indigenous and Chicana bodies (p. 125). For Pérez, these tools are in part psychosocial methods, as she argues that some of the routes to a decolonial imaginary "lie in a psychic terrain" (p. 124).

For Anzaldúa's psychosocial methods, that psychic terrain and decolonial imaginary is linked to spiritual practices that she inhabits in her sensorium. I emphasize that uprooting colonial dualistic thinking is not just a cognitive reframing for her: it is a sensory-psychic-spiritual experience. This method of knowing was rooted in her body. Anzaldúa was writing authohistoria in the pages of *Borderlands*, a genre that places her embodied, sensory experience within cultural history. It is radical when one's gendered, racialized, queer body has been devalued to use one's body as a conduit of historical knowledge and future vision. It is also radical within colonized contexts of rationalism and empiricism to write toward entirely different sensing systems for how we know the world and how we connect to knowledge of inner life and levels of consciousness.

She had a radical re-vision in her spiritual-sensory imagination, and one that I read as attempting to decolonize the sensorium. To that end, I suggest that when Anzaldúa critiqued the subject-object binary as the etiology of all western violence (upon which she argued all gendered, sexualized, racialized, colonial objectification is built) she was making an argument

that has epistemic implications that connect to a long body of work on the hierarchy of the senses.

As a brief review: Debord had argued that within capitalism, the spectacle produces alienation (1967) and Foucault's work on the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) had connected the privileging of the eye to surveillance and imprisonment. Martin Jay called the privileging of the eye ocularcentrism, showing that when the eye is considered the apex of sensory input (from Plato to Descartes), the sensorium that is constructed is a hierarchy of sensing (1994). Feminist and critical race work has investigated more closely the gendered, sexualized, and racialized psychic economizes within the gaze (DuBois, 1903; Fanon,1952; Mulvey, 1975; hooks, 1992;). More recently, Mirzoeff's *The Right to Look,* articulating that "modes of visuality are psychic events that nonetheless have material effects (2011, p. 9), has argued for countervisuality as a way to re-assert autonomy and challenge the imperial complex of visuality. Since the privileging of the ocular has been a technology of patriarchy and colonial racism, one counter to that violence is marginalized subjects challenging the psychic economy of who looks and who is looked at. I do want to note that bell hooks use of psychoanalysis in her 1992 "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators" (which was her response to Laura Mulvey's 1975 "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema") offered one of the earliest articulations of reclaiming autonomy in the visual field, centering Black women's experiences, agency, and subjectivity, an essay that could be read as a precursor to Mirzoeff's notion of countervisuality (though, he does not cite her).

Juxtaposed to this body of work on ocular power relations, I suggest that Anzaldúa contested the privileging of vision itself through her categories of a decolonized sensorium. She proposed as a feminist decolonial intervention an expanded sensorium that interrupts the subject-

object framing of visuality and leads to a felt, somatic experience of interconnection. In her understanding of spirituality, she believed we as a species could radically evolve our felt sense of interconnection with others, such that there would no longer be violence inflicted on others because we would feel that violence in our flesh and psyches, across time and space, as though it was inflicted on our own being.

I want especially to honor that her attempt to find language for these spiritual frameworks emerged from how her embodied experience of her sensorium connected her to not only traumatic knowledge, but creative knowledge. And while the implications for her theories of spiritual sensing across time and space can and should be debated, it is helpful to remember she experienced these ways of non-rational knowing a child and spent her writing career reaching for language to represent knowledge she accessed at non verbal levels. Alongside her intense sensory and psychic experiences, she also had chronic pain from infancy and started menstruating at 3-months-old. Anzaldúa did not have a body and a sensorium that could fit into the "normal" and her spiritual framing was helping to work out what she knew within those experiences.

Before turning in Part III to a closer examination of the lineage of trauma studies alongside Anzaldúa's theory of writing practices, I wish to raise transdisciplinary questions for thinking about the notion of a decolonized sensorium. First, how could Anzaldúa's framing of decolonial spiritual practice bring feminist ethnic studies knowledge to bear on sensorium studies? Sensorium studies has emerged in several fields, including geography, anthropology, history, sociology, biology, psychology, neuroscience, art, and design. Given my approach to reading Anzaldúa's work, I am especially interested in connecting how the nexus of scholars of

religion, art historians, and anthropologists have been attentive to recognizing that the experience of the sensorium is culturally and historically specific.

Scholars of religion, especially those in art history like Sally Promey, turned to sensorium studies as a way to understand links between material culture, spiritual practice, and religious imaginations (2014).[71] Historians of religion, such as Kathryn Lofton in *Consuming Religion* (2017) and Leigh Eric Schmidt in *Hearing Things* (2000) make links to embodied, sensory practices, spaces, and the effects of new technologies. Anthropologists, like Kathryn Linn Geurts in *Culture and the Senses* (2002*)*, use ethnography to show that sensing, defined as "bodily ways of gathering information" is profoundly interconnected to a "society's epistemology, the development of its cultural identity, and its forms of being-in-the-world" (p. 3) Similar to Anzaldúa, Geurts sees deep ties between sensing practices and identity, inner life knowledge, psychic and physical balance, social practices, and cosmology.

But what I view as distinct within Anzaldúa's method than these avenues of sensory studies is much greater attention to the effects of historical violence at the psychic, sensory, epistemic, and spiritual level. So, it is not only that she writes of a sensing apparatus beyond the 5-senses western folklore model (Geurts, 2002), but also Anzaldúa connects a fuller sensorium to a historical process of healing colonial, patriarchal, and racialized dominance.

Also relevant, Anzaldúa's concept of the sensorium implies sensing cannot be chopped up into discrete senses, an analysis with overlap in the research of sensorium studies. Synesthesia is one example—such as when people who, when hearing music, also see colors. But even for non synesthetes, multiply layered sensory experiences are always interacting in encountering phenomena. For Anzaldúa, the sensorium not only has more capacities than senses that can be

[71] *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice* (Promey, 2014).

distinctly counted, but the sensorium is interconnected to a spiritual sense of interconnection. So, for example, an experience she had of physical violence helped her hear the physical vibrations of the land. Watching people put cigarettes on grass as a child caused her physical pain, connecting her at a visceral level to the earth. The haptic sense of almost drowning as a child (which certainly also had auditory, ocular, and taste sensations), was not only negative in her sensory memory—for from it she developed her sense of her being part of a drop in an expansive created body, a sensing experience that for Anzaldúa also defies linear temporalities of her own existence.

While drawing from a different body of theory than Anzaldúa, Tina Campt's recent work on images (2017) perhaps offers insight on the range of relations Anzaldúa's decolonizes sensorium might point us toward. Campt's *Listening to Images* integrates sonic and haptic frequencies to looking at racialized photographs, and the layering of sensory engagement with the archives disrupts not only the dominance of the racialized visual field, but also shapes temporalities and affective connection to the other. For example, when holding in her hands photographs of racialized hands, she writes: "What is haptic about these archival temporalities? The haptic is not merely a question of physical touch. It is the link between touching and feeling, as well as the multiple mediations we construct to allow or prevent our access to those affective relations. These haptic relations transpire in multiple temporalities, and the hands are only one conduit of their touches" (2017, pp. 99–100). Writing within the lineage of Black feminist theory (and drawing on Hartman and Moten, especially), Campt is touching/sensing/writing toward an interruption of the afterlives of violence that does seem to share Anzaldúa's sense of the kinds of interconnection and affective relations that are possible when resisting a fragmented model of sensory experience. It is as though in not chopping us the senses, and not privileging the eye in

the encounter with the archive, the sensorium might resist the violence of the archive and feel more frequencies of interconnection. Arguably, integration in sensory capacities interrupts what Anzaldúa called subject-object relations, opening temporalities and affective relations.

My second transdisciplinary question: Could Anzaldúa's decolonial spiritual practice, and its links to the sensorium, be read as a practice of neurodivergence? This term has helped bring to recognition that people process sensory data in a rich diversity of ways. A range of diagnostic labels, including synesthesia, ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and aphasia were classified for decades as deficits, pathologies, or learning disorders. But with the labor of activist efforts, there has been a push for scientific engagement and clinical approaches to reframe the normal/abnormal binary and to recognize these "disorders" hold great abilities, including creatively.

Especially illuminating, we now know neurodivergence is a sensory condition—meaning people with neurodivergence are considered "hypersensitive," which means they experience the sensorium differently than what had been considered the "normal brain."[72] While pathologizing language—like "sensory processing disorder"—is still used, the conceptual and clinical move to begin to understand that children especially need different models for sensory integration is hopeful. I also note from the perspective of trauma studies, that sensory integration also has potential applications for somatic therapies, an idea I will return to in Part III.

[72] As autistic children were once considered to not have empathy or be able to read facial expressions, we know now they are overwhelmed by sensory processing because they are reading more, not less, information in their environment than those without their abilities. And there are specific embodied interventions to help, like weighted blankets and jackets that help them organize their sensory overload and calm their nervous system. There are also techniques for arranging an environment so it is less of an assault on the sensorium (including sensitivity to light and sounds). Anzaldúa talked about having to form barriers from her sensory overload when she was writing.

I raise these transdisciplinary links to how we understand senses to consider how Anzaldúa, within a spiritual-sensory-psychic practice, has raised questions that cannot be answered in the confines of one set of methods and to suggest new readings of her work might be found within a transdisciplinary imagination.

Part III: Implications for Writing Practices, Trauma Labor/Knowledge, and Contemplative Epistemologies

As Alarcón pointed to tensions that are critical to Anzaldúa's working through of identity, I am considering how Anzaldúa's spiritual commitments, decolonized sensory experiences, and writing practices were entwined in her methods of inhabiting these tensions of identity in creative and generative ways.

Anzaldúa theorized writing as a critical and creative practice for the liminality of new configurations, shifts, and perceptions—or what she theorizes as soul-making. Lopez' *Calling the Soul Back: Embodied Spirituality within Chicanx Narrative* (2019) places Anzaldúa's theory of writing as soul-making within a lineage of Chicanx writers "conceptualized as healer, able to draw on intimate knowledge of the community, including its history and its wounds, and to powerfully acknowledge that which has been silenced, creating a space where suffering can be heart and shared and the self can be reclaimed" (p. 10). Lopez explains that "calling the soul back" includes sensory, spiritual, interpersonal rituals of re-integrating the body and soul after susto (soul-fright or soul-loss).

That loss, trauma, or shock causes a felt experience of emotional fragmentation and disconnection with the body is now a central principle for clinicians specializing in trauma (Herman, 2003; van der Kolk, 2014). Building on Lopez' frame of "calling the soul back," I

want to suggest that Anzaldúa's theory of writing as soul-making challenges and advances clinical and literary trauma theory in significant ways, offering important interventions for healing that support emerging social movement work that incorporates tools of trauma theory. To write toward these points, I will first outline key ideas and critiques of several lineages of trauma theory. Then, I return to why I see Anzaldúa's writing practices as a form of trauma theory, offering psychosocial tools to support politicized healers, activists, writers, and educators.

There are a plethora of lineages and lexicons of trauma theory,[73] and many should be borrowed cautiously for Ethnic Studies purposes because too many models still lack a structural and historical analysis of power and violence. That said, the now popular discourse of "trauma" is providing traction and recognition for naming certain realities within violent systems. As I will explain, more bridges could be built to revise what is useful and to name what is not, especially

[73] While this chapter will focus on Indigenous and Chicana conceptualizations of trauma, a brief review of other relevant literatures from literary and clinical contributions is useful. Literary and psychoanalytically informed trauma studies emerged from studies of the Holocaust and representation in the Yale literature department of the 1980s: Dori Laub, Shoshana Felman, Cathy Caruth, and Geoffrey Hartman were key players in these efforts. Judith Herman developed an influential theory of trauma and recovery in white feminist clinical work (1992) that sought to connect the personal to the political, though her methods lacked deep engagement of race and almost no engagement of settler colonialism. That said, from two decades of clinical experience, she did contribute important ideas: that changing violent systems requires a politicized social movement; recovery is marked by empowerment and connection to self and others; communities must bear witness to survivors' experiences; and moving out from collective disavowal of structural violence releases incredible creative energy into the world. Ruth Leys has drawn attention to historicizing the very discourse of "trauma" that entered with psychoanalysis (2000). Stef Craps offered a postcolonial critique of literary trauma theory (2012). Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score* is likely the most well read work in current clinical discussions on trauma (2014). Trauma studies is an ever proliferating area of inquiry: a full literature review bridging work in the humanities to clinical work would be outside the scope of this dissertation. But I do argue that what "trauma" is and how it is or is not a useful conceptual tool remains an inherently interdisciplinary and cross-professional question, and yet many formations of trauma theory do not connect ideas across fields.

to aid in liberatory education. I will suggest that Anzaldúa's theories of writing and spirituality distinctly help with such a project.

Dian Million has shown in *Therapeutic Nations* (2013) how the discourse of trauma can be a tool of settler colonialism. She explores how within the western mental health industry, the discourse is used to pathologize Indigenous people and enact neoliberal assumptions to attempt to write over Indigenous claims to political sovereignty.[74] That said, the idea of historical trauma as a colonial and settler effect—as first articulated by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1988)—moves beyond neoliberal and Cartesian frameworks and, as I will show, is similar to Anzaldúa's approach. Brave Heart defines historical trauma as cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over generations, including up to the current lifespan, as inflicted from massive violence and trauma on a people and resulting in unresolved grief. She first developed her framework of analysis for historical trauma in the 1970s, working alongside Jewish clinicians in her psychoanalytic training program. From her conversations with descendants of the Holocaust, to her own felt, intuitive experience of holding a grief in her body much larger than her own lifespan, she came to core theories that would infuse her 1992 dissertation on historical trauma. Linking the psychosocial effects of the violence of Christian hegemony in both genocidal contexts (the Holocaust and settler colonialism in the Americans), she developed a social work theory and curriculum for her own Lakota community that supported traditional healing and grief practices.

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[74] Leanne Simpson's *Islands of Decolonial Love* (2013) also offers a scathingly brilliant and heartbreaking critique of the western industry of mental health in her short story "it takes an ocean not to break." Its Indigenous narrator decides to interview her white "therapy-lady" like an anthropologist, turning the tables, trying to figure out how "therapy-lady" and her "white fucking pathologizing savior" complex can't possibly understand what survival and kinship means every day in a white settler context. While critiquing the mental health industry, the story also reaches toward decolonial imaginaries for a collective healing of generational traumas.

Many others built on Brave Heart's core framework, including Amy Lonetree in *Decolonizing Museums* (2012) and Renee Linklater in *Decolonizing Trauma Work: Indigenous Stories and Strategies* (2014). In Chicana Studies, Edén Torres was influenced in the early to mid 1990s by Native American clinicians, namely Mary Clearing Sky, and began writing and presenting on historical trauma in an effort to give frameworks to help her students. In her book, *Chicana Without Apology* (2003), her first chapter is devoted to theorizing traumatic memory, with particular attention to how ongoing capitalist exploitation of labor exhausts the body, stealing life energy and time, and thus compounding unresolved grief and pain. She also draws heavily on Anzaldúa's understanding of the open wound of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Having myself been studying clinical and literary trauma studies for almost 15 years, as well as collaborating with and teaching clinicians, I am often struck by the gaps between literatures and fields. Brave Heart made her intervention decades ago and has had considerable influence, as I have outlined, but dominant western psychodynamic mental health curriculum within training programs for clinicians[75] still do not sufficiently engage methods developed in Indigenous studies and ethnic studies. In other words, institutional intellectual practices in clinical training programs often ask students to orbit white models of mental health that do not account for structural violence.

But one contribution that has been valuable from western dominant models of clinical trauma theory—indeed the key contribution being now borrowed within social movement work—is the more recent neuroscience research drawing attention to how mind-body disconnection and the felt experience of fragmentation is an adaptive survival skill to surviving a traumatic event. Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the*

[75] The field of social work is significantly more attuned, however, than counseling psychology.

Healing of Trauma, has been highly influential to clinical treatment for its synthesis of neuroscience and its centering of how violence imprints the brain and body with dissociative, fragmenting processes (2014).

The central problem, according to his diagnosis of trauma, is that dissociation is a necessary survival skill that nonetheless persists even when the event is long past.[76] In contrast to Brave Heart's understanding of psychosocial realities that cannot be contained in past-present binaries, he frequently uses language like "stuck in the past" to describe how the nervous system of trauma survivors is tethered to a "past" event. Just as ethnic studies scholars critiqued Freud's idea of melancholia as being pathologically attached to a lost object, and intervened with their discussion of racial, diasporic, and postcolonial grief (Cheng, 2001; Eng, 2001; Eng & Kazanjian, 2003; Clarke Kaplan, 2007; Gilroy, 2006), their methods could be similarly applied to critiquing van der Kolk's assessment of time, psychic life, and embodiment. Van der Kolk, like most white, influential psychodynamic trauma theorists, give little to no language or analysis to structural conditions—like imperialism, militarization, and heteropatriarchy— as on-going, traumatic conditions.[77]

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[76] Van der Kolk came to his understanding of traumatic memory as being stuck in the past from his interpretation of U.S. soldiers with severe nightmares, who were not able to function "normally" in civilian life after perpetrating murder and rape on Vietnamese. While van der Kolk's writing gives a startling lack of space to considering how imperial war effects those whose homeland and communities are under occupation and attack, he does show how being asked to perpetrate state violence traumatizes people, too—an important point especially when considering how the military industrial complex recruits in Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities marginalized from financial resources for their college education.

[77] Van der Kolk grew up as a son of a Christian preacher and among Holocaust survivors. Million notes that the Holocaust has a "before" and "after" in ways that do not map on settler colonialism in the Americas and Native American and Indigenous experience (2013). I would add that the Holocaust does not have the same material and political afterlife as other historical traumas, including the afterlife of slavery, anti-Black racism, settler colonialism, and colonialism. I think as part of nuancing the very category of "trauma," theorists need to be more specific about what kinds of material and political afterlives exist, and what structures inform

While from an ethnic studies lens there is thus ample space to critique, his writing does collate and distribute research that is changing trauma treatment. He gives decades of research that shows how traumatic events overwhelm the body's nervous system in a fight for survival, and how memories are split and suppressed, while still held somatically[78] at the unconscious and subconscious level.[79]

Healing is a process of affective and relational integration, and of releasing energy stored in the body's fight, flight, and dissociative processes. It requires a holding environment (Winnicott, 1971) that allows the survivor to connect with their own body's sensations and to connect to others. Sensory integration helps tether the survivor to the present embodied moment. It is a significant shift from "talk therapy," because the emphasis is not on reliving every detail of violence. Caring for the body, sensory integration, relational and community witnessing, and re-setting the nervous system is at the center of healing, but the holding environment creates the pathway— otherwise integration would collapse and there would be retraumatization instead.

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memory-making and discourses of trauma. Michael Rothberg's 2009 *Multidimensional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, offers some helpful comparative methods of analysis. Fanon, writing on colonialism in the aftermath of the Holocaust, also offers methods for analyzing the psychic and material life of antisemitism, anti-Black racism, and colonialism.

[78] I do believe that clinical trauma theory's attention to what is called somatics is doing important reparative mind-body work— thus offering a powerful epistemic intervention that aligns with the theories I have already discussed in Black studies (Chapter 1) and Chicana studies. But the frameworks often lack analysis of material-historical relations of abusive/coercive power. From an Ethnic Studies perspective, clinical psychodynamic models would greatly benefit from analysis of whose epistemologies and economies fragment the mind and the body, and displace people from land and community.

[79] This process of fragmentation, over time, will immensely tap a person's energy, a point Peter Levine emphasizes in his Somatic Training Institute. Judith Herman also notes that when the violence that has been collectively repressed and dissociated comes to be named and witnessed, there is an incredible opening of creative energy for survivors (1992).

Clinicians of color and those in social justice movements are adapting and transforming the tools of this research. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Our Bodies* (2017) by Resmaa Menakem is a recent influential work of clinical trauma studies that connects a study of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and police violence toward Black bodies to an emerging somatic framework for understanding trauma. It builds on the body-centered psychology and trauma studies of Bessel van der Kolk and also Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute. Menakem's analysis shifts from a neoliberal analysis of the individual, instead showing how traumatic events are not isolated or past, but part of enduring psychic-material-historical conditions within white supremacy. However, I observe that, like van der Kolk and Levine's work, it does not engage feminist of color or Indigenous feminist work and does not account in rigorous ways for gendered experience.

The group of people I suggest effectively integrating tools from trauma studies, feminist ethnic studies concerns, and politicized healing work are generative somatics practitioners, many whom are women of color social movement leaders and Black Lives Matter activists. Here, I wish to highlight convergence with Gloria Anzaldúa's methods on writing, soul work, creativity, trauma, and spirituality. And, I suggest that as Anzaldúa's theories of spirituality and writing are explored alongside her understanding of trauma, there are further resources for supporting trauma theory as used within movement work.

The website for generative somatics[80] explains that while body-centered approaches to trauma healing are increasingly being institutionalized within Western psychodynamic contexts,

[80] The website is generativesomatics.org, an organization started by Staci K. Haines. For an introduction to its approach to trauma, healing, and movement work, including Black liberation,

training programs do not account for social conditions, violence, and relations of power as large shaping forces. Their website explains:

> "Without a political analysis, much of the trauma that folks withstand is either left unnamed (racism, gender oppression, homophobia, class oppression) or only partially addressed. A politicized somatics can act as a fundamental collective practice of building power, deepening presence, and capacity, and developed the embodied skills to generate large-scale change. Without a political analysis, this doesn't get leveraged."

Generative somatics trainings deepen theory and cultivate embodied practices of building more awareness of sensations and responses that are unconsciously enacted from fight, flight, or dissociative processes created from surviving traumatic systems. Integrating fragmented and unconscious parts of the self occurs through community and creative and intellectual practices is a method for linking personal and political change processes. Furthermore, as exemplified in the writing and workshop facilitation of adrienne marie brown, who draws on generative somatics, spiritual practices that perceive interconnection can be rich modalities of resiliency and imagination within these practices (2017).

Anzaldúa's theories of writing, spirituality, the body, and the senses are a further resource for trauma theories, such as those in generative somatics, that seek resources for resilience, politicized healing, and the connections between person and social change models. Anzaldúa understood, and perhaps in some ways deeper than much of clinical trauma theory, how the body holds knowledge, and why there is also a flight from the body[81] and from sensory integration

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see the podcast, "Trauma Healing and Collective Power," in which adrienne marie brown is in conversation with Staci K. Haines, Spenta Kandawalla, and Prentis Hemphill.

[81] A relevant text to consider is Susan Brison's *Aftermath: Violence and the Re-Making of the Self* (2003), in which she writes of how dissociation enables survival but healing requires a way to return to the body and academia does not prioritize those practices. She wrote her book after surviving rape and attempted murder, and trying to function as a philosopher. And what she realized in her own healing process is that the foundational epistemic tools of her own field of analytic philosophy were not useful to grasping the embodied experience of trauma. Or, as Lisa Woolfork writes in *Embodying American Slavery in Contemporary Culture*, the legacy of a

within traumatic experience. I suggest this kind of epistemic impasse—between the knowledge in the body, yet un-languaged, and that held in the mind's insights— is precisely what Anzaldúa was intervening in when she created a psychosocial theory and a spiritual practice of writing.

Furthermore, I want to name a particular kind of psychosocial labor in her spiritual process as a writer— a labor I will call trauma labor and trauma knowledge. I suggest that she uses the term trauma not to signal an individual pathology but rather a potentiality—namely, some people can sense the soul-spirit-body fractures in history that need healing. Sensing trauma—defined as a kind of dismembered psyche, body, and spirit—is embedded in the labor of the writer with a neplanta consciousness. She describes this liminal space as a perception that can move amongst and between "rational to visionary states, from logistics to poetics, from focused to unfocused perception, from inner world to outer" (p. 108).

Seeking a creative process that empowers interconnections and re-integrations is important to Anzaldúa because she experiences (and theorizes) racial trauma and colonial abuses as fragmenting the psyche, a loss of self and identity, even losing parts of the soul to manage the pain and to cope (p. 87). Such losses happen in also the traumatic larger context of being forced to internalize the white dominant ideals of society (p. 87). She says that while psychologists emphasize that the split-off parts of ourselves are "lost in an undifferentiated region called the unconscious" (p. 38) but for her, it is different. She believes it is her soul's pieces, because of traumatic histories, that live in other dimensions, pieces of the self and one's knowledge that need to be reclaimed in the process of making soul. Integrating sensation and memory in the body is part of "calling the soul back"—the mindbody reparative work is spiritual work.

Freudian based, literary trauma studies in the humanities is limited in use for Black feminist theory because she argues the former lacks a bodily epistemology necessary for understanding racialized-gendered trauma (2008).

Colonial invasion is the primary condition she names as trauma, a collective wound that "keeps bleeding in the psyches" of all the different people exploited, while dominant white society continues to deny these atrocities. She links this trauma to continued exploitation of nature and the life energies and attention of racialized and gendered bodies. Similar to Torres' analysis of trauma and capitalism, picking tomatoes twelve hours a day, working in a factory, and cleaning a white person's house are all connected to the on-going trauma because your life energy and attention is being exploited (2005, p. 55).

For Anzaldúa, the capacity to deeply sense this collective trauma is also one (though not the only) etiology of depression. She also explains of this sensing process: "It's like being in grief, collective bereavement because of this big wound" (2005, p. 55). Anzaldúa felt this kind of grief/depression deep in her body since childhood when she felt herself grieving for the world, inhabiting senses beyond her own individual experience or lifespan (2000, p. 26). As she tells Keating (159), what is called shamanic traditions include the experience of the interpenetration of worlds, but she also believes traumatic experiences do something similar— but there is also a potentiality. There is interconnection with spirit that is possible when one is "cracked open" by trauma's fragmentations. Or, as she says in *Light in the Dark*, reframing notions of trauma and healing, and drawing on her trust of the body's innate healing capacities: "The wound heals us, we don't heal the wound" (2015, p. 89).

For Anzaldúa, the faculty of imagination is perhaps the most critical of all for the healing process—for integration, evolution, and personal and systemic change (2000, p. 159). The spiritual is for her principally about the imagination, and the writing process is about accessing the unconscious knowledge within the imagination.

I see her emphasis on the imagination and creative process as a way of conceptualizing a "holding space" for transformation. The imagination works from the body and the senses to the intellect; she starts with embodied experience, then theoretically examines the experience (2005, p. 53). She uses dreams, images, and myths in the process in order to engage different parts of the psyche, as she seeks to rearrange knowledge and find new integrations. She describes her creative process this way in an interview with Weiland: "The development isn't about finding myself—because I've never been lost. It's about recognizing myself, taking the veil off. It's like building a bridge to the source—to the creative life force" (2000, p. 125).

This kind of writing practice is many layered events at once: a practice of reckoning; a sacrifice; a wrestling with deep inner struggle; at times a flooding of knowledge about the self. Writing is liberation, but it is also a painful birth canal. It is used in service of coalition building with others, but for Anzaldúa it required significant amounts of time alone. Writing is the healing of the fragments sliced apart within the self by dominant Cartesian epistemic values. But a commitment to a writing life also has a high cost on her body.

The body was ground of the work of her work of making connections to time and space beyond herself. Soul-making is not apart from but interconnected to one's body and the mind (2000, p. 75), and, simultaneously, extending outward to our part within a greater universal soul. The inner work of the healer, or what she also refers to as spiritual activism or shamanic poetics, is tied to effecting collective transformation. Inversely, in order to understand how we are connected to one another, we have to reconnect to all the parts of our own selves in the process. And we have to do that work that through accessing and integrating fragments of knowledge held within the body: "If we were some other life form then maybe we could work it out in spirit," Anzaldúa tells Christine Weiland (2000, p. 125).

In *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, and Reality*, she writes of feeling and sensing interconnections and integrations as the revolutionary labor of her life (2015). She envisions all the universe as connected, and the unconscious and subconscious like conduits, helping the writer go deep into their inner life and noticing what resides. She explains:

> Spirit and mind, soul and body, are one, and together they perceive a reality greater than the visions experienced in the ordinary world. I know that the universe is conscious and that spirit and soul communicate by sending subtle signals to those who pay attention to our surroundings, to animals, to natural forces, and to other people. We receive information from ancestors inhabiting other worlds. We assess that information and learn how to trust that knowing. (p. 24)

It is in ever deconstructing duality— between subject-object frameworks—that allows her to creatively work with her unconscious, with the chaos that emerges, with what she might hear in silence, with the mysterious process of the psyche working out integrations and thus new perceptions. It is in those modes of attention that she says she receives the shock and pleasure of recognition, those moments where what has been fragmented by structural, historical, and epistemic violence starts to re-connect.

For Anzaldúa, the swirling internal pieces and fragments within her unconscious can't lead her to new synthesis, new knowledges, unless she can enter nepantla consciousness. Her descriptions of nepantla echo the psychic movements she wrote of in *Borderlands* in which it is in perceiving conflicting information and multiple points of view that she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders and has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries" (1987/2007, p. 101). Instead, she writes, "In our very flesh, r(e)volution works out the clash of cultures. It makes us crazy constantly, but if the center holds, we've made some kind of evolutionary leap forward" (p. 103). But she moves from the language of mestiza

consciousness in *Borderlands* to her theory of neplanta because she wanted her readers to understand the subconscious soul work of this process is not tied to specific geographic borders.

Her theories of social change, such as the role of neplantla state, are about evolution, liminality, and inhabiting transitionary seasons in identity formation. It is precisely the unknown and the in-between that is the psychic and spiritual threshold of new configurations of knowledge that do not easily fit into any existing system of thought. It is when boundaries break down and borders are crossed that consciousness shifts, new connections are made, and healing integrations occur. Spirituality—and the act of writing as a spiritual practice— is thus an epistemic practice that supports the psychic thresholds that allow greater perceptions of interconnections. And for Anzaldúa, the writing into and through liminality and new integrations is done through intimate connected to the body, both internal and external stimuli (2005, p. 5). As she says of inhabiting the embodied spirituality of her writing practice: "The material body is center, and central. The body is the ground of thought. Writing is not about being in your head; it's about being in your body" (p. 5). That tether to the body and the decolonized sensorium also enables the working through of traumatic knowledge, as pieces of the soul are brought back together in the act of writing.

But her commitment to writing is also precarious, because Anzaldúa's diabetes means her eyes strain under the labor, with the constrictions of flow of blood. Balancing her financial needs, her body's need with diabetes, and her writing passions was an ever-present concern. Theorizing chronic illness became part of her embodied theory of writing. As she explains, "What you've learned from your body and chronic illness that you can apply to the creative process is that change in one part or organ triggers adjustment in all the other parts. A minor change in the text causes reverberations throughout (2015, p. 115). Here, she is taking

experiences of embodied vulnerability—indeed, she died of complications from diabetes— and listening for where the theory of creativity is within the precarious experience.

Anzaldúa also had a theory of one etiology of her diabetes that is significant for thinking about the psychosocial labor of her work of making connections and coalitionary politics. She believes her diabetes was triggered by exhaustion from being a nepantlera and feeling caught between so many groups of people, and from being misunderstood in what she was trying to offer. Her first example was an early NWSA conference in 1981 when she spoke about spirituality and she felt fellow panelists and the audience "horrified." She says to Lara: "If you speak out like that too often, your body takes it on. I am convinced that part of the reason I came down with diabetes is exhaustion from those situations" (2005, p. 28).

The next example she gives in the interview is also telling of the psychic, intellectual, and relational labors that are specifically part of women of color coalitionary practices. She describes being at NWSA in in Akron in 1990 when she felt the fierce split between women of color and white women. As Jennifer Nash explains in her research on the history of NWSA, the decades of the 1980s for the organization held an intense focus on consciousness-raising regarding anti-racist practice; but in Nash's assessment, there were shortcomings in its "individualized approach" that broke down in Akron (2019, p. 88). Protesting the firing of Ruby Sales, the only Black women on staff-time full-time in NWSA's national office, the Women of Color Caucus called for accountability and pulled out of the organization. The organization lost a considerable amount of its membership after Akron and the 1992 conference was cancelled.

Anzaldúa described wanting to side with her sisters of color who were walking out at the conference—and, indeed, she was not shy about calling white feminists to account for their racism or their refusal to hear WOC's experiences, experiences that also deeply exhausted her

body, especially as a teacher (2009, p. 130). But in some conflicts in coalition building efforts, she also didn't view rigid binary divisions of identity accounting for differing class and historical experiences within conflict. Her co-presenter at the conference, Irena Klepfisz, was a white Holocaust survivor. Anzaldúa wanted to mediate sides, not choose a side, but it was also these kinds of experiences—of trying to inhabit multiple perspectives and negotiate relationships of groups in conflict—that exhausted her body.

At different points, she realized she needed to pull back from this kind of relational labor and rededicate herself to her writing as her primary space of offering healing, and she needed to collect the scattered pieces of herself in the process (2000, p. 19). And while her writing practice was meant to heal the divisions, the exhaustion of the psychic, intellectual, relational, and spiritual labors conditions were always deeply felt in her body as a writer in the process.

Anzaldúa sought a process of transformation within her self that she could then offer others in her writing. María Lugones has reflected on how Anzaldúa's theories of change are not about the western concept of liberal agency, but rather are about creating the conditions for germination across the different levels of our consciousness (2005, p. 86), or "fomenting the potential self" (p. 95). Lugones also suggested that Anzaldúa's under-theorized the connection between personal change and social change, but it was still possible to build such a theory from the seeds in her work.

I think the healing of psychic fragmentations is the bridge to the social in Anzaldúa's spirituality. To heal the psychic divisions of colonialism—to make soul, especially as an artist or writer—means that one has a knowledge of healing to offer across divisions. She explains how mestizo borders artists use the nepantla state to work against the dangers of disorientation and

dissociation of identity and, instead, cultivate receiving meaningful images from the unconscious that root, connect and integrate with the earth, water, and one another (2009, p. 180).

I also see her call for building a practice of contemplation in our intellectual work within academia (p. 92) as a part of this healing of psychic and social fragmentations. As she explains of the social implications of her ideas, in order to maintain our connections amidst those of "different genders, races, classes, regions, generations, and physical and mental capacities" we need to cultivate daily contemplative practice so that radical realizations of connection "burst through the cracks of our unconscious" (p. 92). In her unpublished dissertation she also makes these links to the need for contemplative practice within education (2015, p. 181), and I see her interest as holding important connections to emerging research in education and contemplative practice.

In this chapter, I have sought to explore how Anzaldúa's spirituality sought theories and practices that moved fluidly between the historical, material, geographic, psychic, and epistemic realms. It is in exposing the cracks between norms that new perceptions emerge and humans evolve. Those thresholds are both personal and historic: the body and psyche are situated and speaking within the sedimentations of history. Her psychosocial diagnosis is that the consciousness of our interconnections is cut up by violent patriarchal, colonial histories. Her work and commitment as a writer is seeking interconnections in order to propel social transformations of reconnections. This kind of multiscalar perception underlies all her spiritual and psychosocial methods. Writing and contemplation are the tool for inhabiting the disorientations of the portal and the new perceptions and interconnections that emerge. It is in bringing together what has been separated and integrating psychic fragmentations that Anzaldúa locates healing as the source of social and political transformation.

Chapter 4: Third-World Feminism, A Psychosocial Theory of Teaching and Learning, and the Uses of Contemplative-Critical Writing Practices

Part I: Introduction

In chapters 2 and 3, I considered writing practices within U.S. Black feminist theory and Anzaldúa's body of work, respectively, as routes into feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory. I foregrounded these texts' understanding of afterlives of violence, grief labor, creative imagination, embodiment, kinship, the sensorium, and spirituality. In this chapter, I hold the epistemic commitments of these theories in mind, while turning toward a feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory of pedagogy, learning, and contemplative-critical writing practices.

More particularly, I identify psychosocial theory in the transnational/Third World feminist theoretical and pedagogical contributions of Chandra Talpade Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander. Beginning this chapter with Mohanty's writings and ending with Alexander's, including her reflections on Anzaldúa and *This Bridge Called My Back*, I examine how both their frameworks prioritize rememory work as a psychosocial method that supports feminist coalition building, counters neoliberal notions of the subject, and understands "the personal is political" as a call toward collective interventions. Additionally, I center in the middle of this chapter a discussion of teaching and learning using ideas from two feminist psychoanalysts—Lynne Layton and Deborah Britzman—whose clinical theory has informed my own pedagogy and understandings of disavowal, a psychic defense that I argue interrupts feminist ethnic studies rememory work. I reflect on my own pedagogical challenges, failures, and embodied limits I have experienced in offering a psychosocially informed teaching practice. I also integrate ethnic studies and Indigenous Studies contributions that help me reframe and historicize psychic processes within the classroom.

Finally, I discuss epistemologies within contemplative-critical writing practices, which I draw from Mohanty and Alexander's frameworks and also put in conversation with epistemologies and pedagogies from Indigenous studies, including work by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), Sandy Grande (Quechua), Sandra Styres (Kanien'kehá:ka), and Eve Tuck (Unangaŝ). I consider how contemplative-critical writing practices are an intervention for providing holding spaces for traversing disavowal, navigating grief labor, and facilitating rememory in feminist ethnic studies education.

By feminist ethnic studies rememory practices, I mean a creative process that brings into vibrant relationship pieces of the self/soul fragmented by violence—physical, psychic, and epistemic violence, as perpetrated by patriarchal, colonial, capitalist regimes. The contemplative-critical methods are decolonial methods in that they reconnect the mind, body, spirit and senses and ground knowledge in specific geographies, land, histories, and communities. Rememory also includes the grief labor I have been attending to throughout this dissertation. And, as I give more attention to in this chapter, in a classroom context dominant aspects of identity might psychically defend against the grief labor involved in rememory, thus outsourcing more psychic, intellectual, and emotional labor to those most effected by structural violence. My goal is thus to situate the psychosocial contributions I see in Mohanty and Alexander's frameworks, alongside feminist psychoanalytic insights on defenses, and Indigenous studies epistemologies, in order to suggest learning practices that best support the rememory labors, grief work, and embodied epistemologies of feminist ethnic studies intellectual history.

I also center in my argument that a specific contribution of Third-World feminist practice and theory (which I will also call transnational feminism, following Mohanty and Alexander's interchangeable use of terms) is that examinations of identity and experience in rememory work

can become a path to deep political engagement and solidarity practices across borders—and conversely, the practices of solidarity then infuse the production of theory. For example, as editors of the text *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, and Democratic Futures* (1997), Alexander and Mohanty describe the specific interventions of transnational feminist theory as being anchored in theorizing interconnections and solidarities. As they explain of their own intellectual kinship practices: "Psychic residues of different colonialisms made it necessary for us to grapple with the nuances of the interconnectedness of struggles for decolonization" (p. xiv). They share the similarities of their journeys: Both came to feminist studies in the U.S. in the 1980s (Mohanty from India, Alexander from Trinidad and Tobago) and encountered the institutionalization of a particular brand of Women's Studies in the U.S. academy that protected whiteness and subsumed them into U.S. narratives of racialization. Both are outspoken critics of "free market feminism" (p. xv), or what they call a liberal-pluralistic multicultural feminism of European descent that domesticates difference. Both ground their theorizing in feminist community struggle, making links between the local and the global, with attention to not only colonial legacies but also how capitalist processes of recolonization and heteropatriarchal state violence are impacting women's lives.

Mohanty and Alexander are clear that their theory of identity does not propose an "essence" or unified, stable identity, but it does propose methods for linking consciousness, writing, pedagogy, and political engagement. They explain that such a practice and theory of feminism centers Third World women's self-determination practices. It also offers epistemological possibilities that intervene in white and male articulations of postmodernism, which they write, "generated a series of epistemological confusions regarding the interconnections between location, identity, and construction of knowledge" (p. xvii).

I bookend this chapter with their psychosocial theories of learning, teaching, and writing because I see their methods as having great importance for classroom practice as a site of coalition building, and specifically building community in spaces that are layered with many different experiences and subjectivities— including white defensiveness, male defensiveness, and other disavowals that defend against rememory work. As they explain in their introduction to *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, and Democratic Futures*, Mohanty and Alexander emphasize that, "We cannot overestimate the need for conscious self-reflexivity about the complicity of intellectual frameworks in politics…" (p. xviii), specifically referencing white defensiveness in the classroom. I share their concerns in my own contemporary classrooms. This chapter weaves throughout its sections an interrogation of white defenses, as well as other psychic defenses that show up in teaching about systems of abusive power.

I note I situate Mohanty and Alexander's epistemologies in relation to many different subjectivities, identities, and learning experiences, not to appropriate their experiences but rather to argue that their psychosocial contributions have significant reach for all theories of critical pedagogy and writing practices. They themselves write that the tokenizing of Third-World feminist work assumes that "our theories are plausible and carry explanatory weight only in relation to our *specific* experiences, but that they have no use value in relation to the rest of the world" (1997, p. vii).

By turning to their work as a source of psychosocial theory and critical pedagogy, I am suggesting—as I have done throughout this dissertation—that feminist ethnic studies intellectual history has import for all theories of learning and knowledge-making. Furthermore, in integrating analysis of my own teaching with clinical insights and Indigenous studies epistemologies, I am seeking to contribute to critical pedagogical practice that brings together lived experienced,

psychic, processes in classrooms, and an understanding of material and historical processes in learning.

My argument takes the following trajectory: I begin with the decolonial methods of Chandra Talpade Mohanty. I show how her understanding of the "personal is political" means that feminist writing practices resist the liberal and neoliberal limits of the subject, instead reaching toward collectivities. I historicize her claims alongside her critiques of the neoliberal "diversity management" of the U.S. academy, beginning in the mid 1980s. I suggest that what I am calling contemplative-critical writing practices are epistemologies that enact what Mohanty refers to as "insurgent knowledge," which are ways of knowing always interconnected to social movements and the communities of care that sustain such movements. I highlight her critical pedagogy in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, and I examine her close reading of Minnie Bruce Pratt's writing methods in "Identity: Blood, Skin, Heart," showing how her psychosocial theory of rememory links teaching, learning, and contemplative-critical writing practices with feminist coalition building practices.

Then, in Part III, I turn to a closer examination of the psychic life of neoliberalism within teaching and learning, focusing on the psychic defense processes that disrupt such feminist learning. I center insights from feminist psychoanalysts Lynne Layton and Deborah Britzman, alongside relevant ethnic studies scholarship, and I offer reflection on my work designing feminist ethnic studies curriculum to clinical psychodynamic interns and K-12 educators and administrators. I also read Britzman's work through the lens of Indigenous studies, suggesting that the defense mechanisms she is observing in the classroom are part of white, patriarchal, and colonial formations of disavowal—a kind of psychic resistance to feel hauntings that refuse settler colonial linear time (Tuck & Ree, 2013). Finally, I arrive at questions about grief labor

and the possible uses of contemplative-critical writing practices to better hold the depth work of the psychosocial aspects of decolonial learning praxis (Styres, 2019, p. 32) and what Britzman calls "difficult knowledge" (1998).

In Part IV, I then briefly examine theories of mourning (Butler, 1995; 1997; Cheng, 2001; Eng, 2001) then return to transnational feminist approaches, this time through the lens of Jacqui Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, in order to formulate a psychosocial theory of writing that accounts for grief, the senses, identity formation, and transformation. I also put her insights on desire, memory, the senses, place, and relationality in conversation with Indigenous feminist work on education, including that of Eve Tuck (Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2019), Leanne Simpson (2014, 2017), Sandra Styres (2017), and Sandy Grande (2004). Finally, I locate epistemologies in Alexander's approach that specifically re-imagine the categories of the psychic and the spiritual.

In turning to foundational work of Third World feminist theory, alongside feminist clinical psychoanalytic insights, my own pedagogical experiences, and Indigenous studies critiques of settler education and centering of Indigenous philosophy, I hope to show how contemplative-critical writing processes might be used in service of feminist ethnic studies critical pedagogy. I suggest these practices offer support for rememory work—particularly amidst the ongoing structural conditions and psychic life of neoliberalism—and thus also support coalitionary practices in feminist ethnic studies education.

Part II: On Writing, Re-Memory, and Multiplicities

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's decolonial feminism views resistance to structures of psychic domination (2003, p. 7) as part of an anti-capitalist strategy. As my project has been

arguing, feminist ethnic studies knowledge does not separate the psychic from the material or the historical, nor the intra-psychic or intersubjective from the political.

One of the ways I see Mohanty employing psychosocial praxis in her scholarship, teaching, and activism is in her attention to feminist Third-World writing as a "remembering" and "rewriting" that leads to greater political consciousness to resist empire, militarization, and heteropatriarchal nationalism. For example, in "Cartographies of Struggle," Mohanty's introduction to *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism,* she explains that writing is a transformative process of identity work for Third World feminists (1991). Identity "can never be reduced to automatic, self-referential, individualistic ideas of the political (or feminist) subject," but rather, the act of writing is part of the "production of self- and collective consciousness" (p. 33).

While she includes a reflection on the class implications of who has access to write and who does not, she also argues that writing into the multiple meditations of gender, race, class, and sexuality within women of color subjectivity has been a critical practice of Third-World feminist knowledge production. Given that the effects of relations of power on subjectivity are not transparent, the discursive space to contest, remember, and rewrite oneself becomes key to what she calls "insurgent knowledge." Navigating difference—within the self, and within and across communities—in the writing practice becomes a site of transformative, dynamic feminist knowledge and personal and collective power.

She contracts the epistemologies of what she calls "insurgent knowledge" with neoliberalism's pressure to domesticate "difference" in the U.S. academy of the late 1980s and early 1990s. For instance, she compares the collectivity-focused 1980s feminist scholarship-activist organizing—which grounded theories of difference and multiplicity in specific,

geographic histories— with the emergence of neoliberal "diversity management" within universities. As Lisa Lowe (1996), Jodi Melamed (2011), Roderick Ferguson (2012, 2017), and Grace Hong (2015) have also argued (and as I previously examined in Chapter 1), Mohanty connects her analysis of the U.S. university to a historical framing of the impact of the Reagan-Bush economic policies reshaping global capitalism. In her analysis of identity, writing, and consciousness in her 1991 "Cartographies of Struggle," she is specifically tracking the shifting modes of power underway within neoliberalism and its impact on the university. Importantly, she is also identifying and centering what modes of feminist knowledge resist the hegemony of liberal multiculturalism and its co-optation of difference.

In her more recent article "Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique" (2013), she offers a concise explanation of the ongoing dangers of neoliberalism on knowledge production:

> Neoliberalism has transformed material and ideological conditions in ways that have profound implications for radical critique and insurgent knowledges. Neoliberalism in the early twenty-first century is marked by market-based governance practices on the one hand (the privatization, commodification, and proliferation of difference) and authoritarian, national- security-driven penal state practices on the other. Thus, while neoliberal states facilitate mobility and cosmopolitanism travel across borders for some economically privileged communities, it is at the expense of the criminalization and incarceration (the holding in place) of impoverished communities. (p. 970)

In such an intellectual and economic climate, her concern is the process through which radical theory becomes a commodity to consume, especially within the U.S. academy, and the material result of such a process: namely, a tremendous loss of the learning practices and analytic tools to understand and effectively work against empire, colonialism, and militarization.

Her writing the 2013 article is specifically rooted in exposing how the convergence of neoliberal and postmodern frameworks in the U.S. academy gut a critique of material power

regarding the forces that shore up Israeli occupation of Palestine (a long term feminist activist and scholarly concern for Mohanty). She names a "threshold of disappearance," starting in the mid 1980s, by which the state and the university attempted to subsume the radical social movements of the 20th-century under a privatized notions of the political, a flattening of difference, and a loss of critique of material power relations (p. 970). It is in this context that she critiques postmodern notions of difference that do not stay anchored in material, historical, geographic conditions, and she centers how the "personal" in Third-World feminist theorizing is not a neoliberal category of the private individual, but rather a social and political category of collective resistance to interconnected sites of empire.

Holding in mind this framework—i.e. historicizing her critique of neoliberalism's impact on education—I turn to her 2003 *Feminism Without Borders*, a book reflecting two decades of theorizing and engagement with feminist struggles — to further examine how she connects feminist theory, writing, pedagogy, and coalition building practices. Here, I again note that part of the power of Mohanty's critiques of neoliberalism is that she centers also the feminist practices, communities, and social movements that resist such abusive power.[82]

In her introducing the books frameworks, Mohanty describes feminist theory as having three interconnected realms: the acts of everyday that constitute how identities are lived

[82] Lisa Duggan's analysis of neoliberalism in her entry for *Key Words for American Studies* notes that while neoliberalism has different meanings and interpretations across a host of fields, "…postcolonial and transnational studies scholars have offered the most pointed set of challenges to the standard narratives of spreading neoliberal hegemonies since the 1970s," with feminist/queer methods attending particularly to class and labor politics and the significance of social movements contesting neoliberalism (2014, p. 183). I am reading Mohanty as one significant example of this countering of neoliberal hegemonies through her commitments to centering feminist Third-World epistemologies and social-political practices.

relationally and within material and economic histories; the collective ways feminism catalyzes social transformation; and the intersection of "theory, pedagogy, and textual creative in the scholarly and writing practices of feminists engaged in the production of knowledge" (2003, p. 5). It is within this larger formulation of feminism that she theorizes the "personal" not as about a transparent experience or about feelings expressed confessionally, but rather the personal is "deeply historical and collective" (p. 191).

In the chapter, "Race, Multiculturalism, and Pedagogies of Dissent," (an expanded version of her 1993 essay, "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Neoliberal Education in the 1990s"), Mohanty explains that such a use of the personal for theory-making requires understanding how the lived stories are not static experiences or memories, but rather our perceptions change and shift as we gain knowledge and re-contextualize our experience through political engagement. Engaging in feminist collectivities is also part of this process of critical consciousness, and one outcome is that feminist theory is created in service of understanding both difference and interconnections within the collective struggle for solidarity. Mohanty chooses the language of solidarity instead of "sisterhood." Solidarity is based in and requires anti-racist and anti-imperial political practice.

As she centers the contributions of Third-World feminist theory and praxis, Mohanty criticizes the North American university for "managing" difference of race, gender, class, sexuality according to norms of global capitalism. She shows how difference is domesticated by neoliberal structures precisely because difference—when approached through feminist of color epistemologies, and when connected to radical social movements—is so powerful to counter hegemonic power. Said another way, the "incorporation" of difference (Ferguson, 2012, 2017), is a response mobilized by hegemonic power as a strategy to gut a reading of material, structural,

and interpersonal power relations within the very concept of difference. But as I am arguing through centering Mohanty's contributions, Third-World feminist writings in the late 1980s and early 1990s were critiquing the cooptation of difference, and explicitly naming their critiques as "crucial to a feminist project concerned with revolutionary change" (Mohanty, 1993, p. 43).

The multicultural management of difference underway was in direct contrast to how Mohanty defines feminist critical pedagogy, which makes links between the "historical configuration of social forms and the way they work subjectively" (2003, p. 195). She explains that feminist critical pedagogies embrace epistemologies that illuminate how subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and voice are being worked through in contexts shaped by hegemonic histories. She defines resistance as mobilized collectively through teaching and learning, a process that involves "self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations" and the "active creation of oppositional analytics and cultural spaces" (196). As she wrote in her 1993[83] essay "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990s," given the neoliberal forces underway within processes of institutionalization, feminist pedagogical practices are particularly critical for maintaining insurgent knowledge, as rooted in genealogies of social movements and resistance both inside and outside the U.S. academy.

These "self-conscious engagement" and "active creation of oppositional" strategies, are in my view, ever dynamic pedagogical processes requiring feminist ethnic studies psychosocial learning tools and strategies. Mohanty writes that the process of evolving critical consciousness is indeed very complicated pedagogically (2003, p. 200). Here, she offers a psychosocial pedagogical framework for understanding how identities are made and unmade, shifting and

[83] She notes the essay was originally written for a 1989 conference, "Feminisms and Cultural Imperialism: The Politics of Difference" at Cornell and that Gloria Watkins (bell hooks), Satya Mohanty, and Jacqui Alexander were key interlocutors in the shaping of her arguments.

being transformed in relation, ever rememoried, through a feminist learning process. As I have suggested in previous chapters, these claims go farther than French theories of deconstruction (though, certainly, are influenced by), making more links to the particularities of identity, materialities, and different formations of power. Feminist Third-World psychosocial theory re-formulates the very notion of the "self" through re-negotiating how memory-making connects the personal and the political, the historical and the material, and the conscious to unconscious realms of identity formation. Furthermore, these feminist re-memory practices have multiple implications for the project of education requiring our critical reflection on identity and subjectivity, and the connections made between the local and the global.

For example, Mohanty gives an example of how her own identity and memory work had import for her understanding of global systems. Reflecting on her own lived process of racialization—from Indian to being labelled as a Third-World foreign student, to a person of color, to Asian, to Black—she shows how her analysis of changing labels and self-identifications influenced her understanding of feminist praxis and knowledge-making within the context of imperialism and globalization. The deconstruction of any "essentialized" self thus linked her personal, embodied stories to much larger and layered stories, allowing for greater political reflection and action. In reading the terms written onto her own embodiment, identity, and experiences, she then reads back—and writes back—, creating rememory and constructing new feminist narratives.

While Mohanty applies this framework on identity to critical pedagogy, she also uses it in her reading of a particular kind of self-reflective feminist writing practices in her chapter, "What's Home Got to Do With It." Through her close reading (with co-writer Biddy Martin) of Minnie Bruce Pratt's autobiographical narrative, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart," Mohanty and

Martin shows how these writing practices of rememory are useful to disentangle intergenerational identity formations of whiteness, norms of heterosexuality, and dominant forms of Christianity. Such attention to formations of identity are part of the writing practices I am calling contemplative-critical, and I am aiming to show how these writing practices are part of a feminist Third-World framework of revolutionary pedagogy and coalition building.

In looking at this particular example in Mohanty and Martin's reading of Pratt's essay, I don't wish to enact a binary of "theory" vs. "narrative"—for I see narrative as one modality of theory-making—but I do wish to consider how contemplative-critical writing practices hold distinct feminist memory-making practices that are forms of political consciousness raising. I also wish to suggest that these contemplative-critical writing practices are useful within feminist pedagogy and learning, supporting a creative and reflective holding space for the change process of feminism at conscious and unconscious levels. Finally, I use this example to point out how the contemplative-critical epistemologies I am tracking in Third-World feminist theory also hold important tools for rememory work around whiteness, which I am suggesting as a useful education practice.

Mohanty and Martin perform an extended close reading, showing how Pratt's narrative voices attends to historical specificity in order to explore shifting categories of her white, middle-class, Christian raised, southern, lesbian identity. In Spillers' language, Pratt is writing into the interior intersubjective (1996), showing how her own psychic life and intersubjectivity are lived within relations of historical, material, and social power.

Pratt's essay is written in a persistently self-reflexive way, showing how dominant identity formations are made— and at what cost— within changing periods of history. For example, Mohanty and Martin point out how Pratt explores the "feigned homogeneity" of

whiteness, a method which they argue effectively exposes how rigid binaries of white/nonwhite and West/East disavow the historical and material production of these categories (2003, p. 87). Traces of memories are ever being re-interpreted, such that Pratt's identity formations are shown to be holding exclusions and unnamed contradictions (p. 91). Pratt especially shows how suppressed family knowledge, knotted within patriarchal silences, is part of the maintenance of exclusions and unnamed contradictions that reproduce Christian hegemony, heteropatriarchy, and whiteness in the southern U.S.

While there are many sites of these reproductions—including the law, cultural representations, architecture, interactions on the streets, and other intersubjective scripts—Pratt also gives weight to several early childhood experiences and formations with her family, especially her father. I see one technique of contemplative-critical writing practices as using psychosocial methods is this linking of inter-generational processes of silence (within one's family/kin of origin) and larger structural and histories realities.

Mohanty and Martin describe the essay's method of journeying across time and life stages, geography, relationships, and intersubjective moments as a "constant recontextualizing" and an interpretive act. They argue that "personal history acquires a materiality in the constant rewriting of herself in relation to shifting interpersonal and political contexts" (2003, p. 104). Pratt's lesbianism especially provokes change in her understanding of her own identity: it is in transgressing the boundaries of sexuality and challenging the reproduction of heteronormativity that moves her to question the "boundaries so carefully, so tenaciously, so invisibly drawn around white identity" (p. 97). Her narrative voice isn't reporting back on a change process, or implying a finished product, but rather shows the non-linear, in-motion, tentative process. It is a journey that begins with love and desire for her woman partner and moves through a painful

process of grief, rememory, and awakenings, as she comes to recognize how she has been shaped by Christian hegemony, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy.

Mohanty and Martin's close reading ends with a question on how such recontextualizing and "rewriting" of Pratt's experience and identity moves toward solidarity and coalitions within feminist social movements. I also observe, though, that while the rewriting is a source of knowledge for coalition building practices, Pratt's essay also reflects on the risks of rejection when one's frameworks for understanding identity formations exceeds the self-definition of the group (2003, p. 103).

I note the essay was part of an effort by lesbian women to build theory across difference and to understand the intersections of different forms of historical and on-going violence. Originally published in the 1984 co-written book *Yours in the Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Racism and Antisemitism,* Pratt, Barbara Smith, and Elly Bulkin theorize across their respective communities in order to build coalitions. The very beginning drafting of the book (Elly Bulkin's chapter) comes at a time in feminist activist history in which Israel had just invaded Lebanon in 1982 and murdered thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian refugees. The U.S. feminist movement was fracturing in its struggle to find analysis that linked critique of so many axes of oppression: namely, occupation; colonization and recolonization; heteropatriarchy and nationalisms; racism; the rise of the Religious Right in the U.S. (a significant constituency supporting Israel's militarization and occupation); and antisemitism.

It is in this historical moment of activism, controversy, and knowledge production that all three feminist theorists in this *Yours in the Struggle* discuss how in their work making connections across different identities and histories, they risk their intentions and research outcomes not being understood by their most immediate community. They explore how

difference is hard to write into in such a moment: the relational implications of exploring difference (within the self, amongst community) might disrupt the categories that hold together political identities and much needed kinship inclusion—and therefore access to material resources, especially for those already excluded from the resources of heteropatriarchal models. Exploring difference puts much at stake in feminist communities, but it also opens immense possibilities for growth, learning, and coalition building that can effectively counter empire and militarization.

As I have been hoping to show, contemplative-critical writing methods, as Pratt inhabits and Mohanty close reads, are examples of learning strategies for feminist memory-making practices that support re-negotiations of identities and potentially birth new formations of solidarities. Writing into difference as grounded in embodiment and material histories opens for Pratt a sensory experience of rememory, offering an anchor to the renegotiations of her subconscious process as she contests the entanglements of heteropatriarchy, Christian hegemony, and whiteness. The juxtaposition of inter-generational psychic inheritance and geographic and place-making specificity loosens and re-shapes her understanding of identity. These feminist contemplative-critical memory-making practices provide new forms of transformative recognitions of self and others, challenging hegemonic systems that objectify identities through language and images that restrict the multiplicities and movements within/amongst subjects.

While Third-World activism was, arguably, always rooted in coalitionary politics, what I am especially aiming to illuminate in these particularly feminist epistemologies are the relational and discursive practices that support psychic, emotional, and relational labors and vulnerabilities—the very forms of praxis that uphold communities and build trust, creating more

possibilities for solidarity across difference. I am also aiming to point toward the significance of these epistemologies for pedagogy and learning in the classroom today.

Part II: Learning as a Psychic Event: Enactment, Re-memory, and Difficult Knowledge

I have been suggesting that rememory work and theories of subjectivity within Mohanty's transnational feminism facilitate contemplative-critical writing practices that hold the shifting, recontextualization of identity that is part of the change process of feminist teaching, learning, and building coalitions. While these are methods developed by women of color, I also showed how Mohanty points to how these methods are also necessary for white feminists to incorporate to reflect on white subject formation across race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and empire. It is here that I next want to take up these topics vis-à-vis how disavowals work against such rememory practices.

While I will be turning to the clinical psychoanalytic frameworks of Lynne Layton and Deborah Britzman, as refracted through my own teaching practice, I wish to take as a starting place a connection Grace Hong draws in *Death Beyond Disavowal* (2015). She writes: "I define neoliberalism foremost as an epistemological structure of disavowal, a means of claiming that racial and gendered violences are things of the past. It does so by *affirming* certain modes of racialized, gendered, and sexualized life, particularly through invitation into reproductive respectability, *so as to* disavow its exacerbated production of premature death" (p. 7). She also explains that it is "ungrievable death" that remains disavowed (p. 12), prompting a question for me about what grief practices look like within learning practices committed to countering such disavowal. I am especially concerned by how disavowal in the classroom obstructs the rememory

and grief work necessary for countering empire, thus enacting psychic violence and outsourcing labor onto racialized and gendered subjects.

From her definition, I also wish to point out that part of the affirmation of modes of "reproductive respectability" might also be the many ways in which feminist and queer models of kinship and solidarity—particularly as I have described in the previous section—get rendered invisible or marginal in the telling of history. How exactly do we measure the influence of the "invisible" revolutionary work —affective, intellectual, and relational work— that Hong describes of Black feminism and women of color feminism that changed history? Indeed, the psychic, intellectual, spiritual and emotional labors; the profound grief work; and the rememory practices are all significant aspects of feminist and queer reproductive labor and kinship—intimacies that are actively not recognized by the state or patriarchy as part of intimacy, family, and inheritance.

These "invisible" labors are also central to transformative experiences of feminist learning: for rememory work, grief work, and coalitionary practices are ever contesting the dominant disavowals of hegemonic power and offering other possibilities for life. But neoliberalism, what Hong calls "an epistemological structure of disavowal," also takes up significant presence in classrooms, creating pedagogical, relational, and epistemic challenges.

In my experience employing psychosocial theory in my teaching, I have needed to borrow ideas from feminist clinicians to further understand the pedagogical challenges of disavowals. While teaching is not therapy, psychic processes— and thus differentials in psychic labor—are nonetheless happening in the classroom. In *Teaching Community, a Pedagogy of Hope*, bell hooks explains this tension and what is at stake this way: "Refusing to make a space for emotional feelings in the classroom does not change the reality that their presence

overdetermines the conditions of where learning can occur (2003, p. 133). She writes that while "Teachers are not therapists," conscious teaching and love for our students involves reading the "emotional climate of our students and attending to it" (p. 133).

Similar to bell hooks' careful attention in her critical pedagogy of how learning processes effect students' relationships with their family of origin (1994, 2003), I observe as a teacher that learning about systems of violence often catalyzes a change in beliefs for students, such that the threat of a change in beliefs is also a threat against their prior attachments, prompting defense mechanism in the classroom as identities are shifting and interrogated in a process of rememory. The attachment might be to a family of origin value, to an idea of the nation, to heteropatriarchy, to whiteness, or to some combination of—the point is that a deep attachment in identity feels challenged and provokes a defensive process in the classroom.

A defense can be in the form of intellectualization, in which ideas are intellectually engaged but in ways that shield the learner from feeling, connecting, and encountering the "other" or the on-going implications of the difficult knowledge. A defense can also manifest as an excess of empathy that yet does not acknowledge one's own implication in the injustice. A defense might be merger with the subject, or as Deborah Britzman writes: "the learner's strategy of projection impedes an understanding of the differences between the learner's knowledge and the knowledge of the other" (1998, p. 119). Merger might include not differentiating between the experience of the traumatic events for the lived subject vs. later encounter with the events second hand, and/or it might look like exercising a mode of empathy that obliterates the other's difference.

In clinical understanding, defenses are psychic processes that guard against feeling and moving through a difficult emotion—like guilt, shame, overwhelm, or anxiety. I notice that

defenses also provoke many forms of intersubjective labor in a classroom—intellectual, affective, psychic, and relational labor, all entwined in a space of learning. While Lynne Layton and Deborah Britzman don't use the language of labor, as I do, the insight they give to defensive processes has helped me in my own attention to labor and disavowal in the classroom experience.

I first found Layton's research[84] when she was on a cross-professional panel she and Lisa Lowe participated in in 2014 on race and racialization in the clinic. I then integrated Layton's psychoanalytic insights into my work designing and running an 8-month feminist ethnic studies training program for psychodynamic clinical interns. While Layton's theories of psychic life are for the clinical setting, not the classroom—and that distinction needs to be emphasized—her clinical observations offered me language for intra-psychic and intersubjective phenomena in ways I found useful when teaching feminist ethnic studies.

Working in relational psychoanalytic traditions, which de-centers classical Freud's drive theory, Layton focuses on "enactment," a term at the center of the field to describe how the dissociative process of self states are acted out interpersonally." Said another way, what is disavowed at an intra-psychic level is enacted in the here-and-now of the intersubjective relation. But, unlike many relational analysts, she also expands the theory of "enactment" to consider racial, gendered, sexual, and class hierarchies."[85]

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[84] The panel discussion was at Simmons College in 2014, titled "Race and Racism in Clinic and Culture," in which Lynne Layton chaired a panel that included Lisa Lowe in dialogue with M. Fakhry Davids (British psychoanalyst), Usha Tummala-Nara (psychodynamic psychotherapist), and Johnnie Hamilton-Mason (Professor of Social Work) to talk about race, racism, and processes of racialization. Layton's body of writing, as well as her mentorship of my own learning across fields, was a significant foundation for this project.

[85] Relational analysts do not center Freud's theory of drives and discharge; rather, they center relational patterns and attachment structures. Enactment is at the center of the theory. As Stern writes, succinctly describing the idea: "Enactment is the interpersonalization of dissociation: the

She uses the phrase "normative unconscious process" (NUP) to describe the enactments in which people reproduce the cultural hierarchies of race/class/gender/sexuality that serve the dominant ideology (2006). She sees NUP enactments as based on psychic splits that de-value the other, circulate and project shame onto the other, and split off one's own vulnerability onto the other.[86] She wants psychoanalysis to take better account of its *own* unconscious investments, asking how the field "pulls to repeat affect/behavior/cognition patterns that uphold the very social norms that cause psychic distress" (2006, p. 242).

Her most widely read article, "Racial Identities, Racial Enactments, and Normative Unconscious Processes" (2006), theorizes her own enactments of whiteness, as tied to gender and heterosexuality, with one of her own Asian-American queer male patients. She focuses on identity as always negotiated in a lived, relational moment, informed by the psychic effects of power hierarchies (p. 239). So, while she certainly frames whiteness as having a material history,[87] she also attends to how it is enacted and reproduced within power dynamics of

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conflict that cannot be experienced within one mind is experienced between or across two minds" (2004, p. 212). Enactments are connection to clinical theories of self states are many and diverse, but one understanding as used by relational analysts is that self states refer to a process of splitting, in which intolerable anxieties and conflicts are banished to the unconscious. Experiences that set splitting in motion include the parts of us primary caregivers considered "bad": or, said another way, we push to the unconscious aspects of the self we don't know how to fit into our attachments and relationships. The intersubjective and intra-psychic conflict is dissociated to manage the internal conflict, but it is also ever enacted interpersonally.

[86] For an example: If we put her observations in dialogue with Million's work on shame, we could say that "felt theory" (2009) for First Nation's women was a way to politicize their experience of shame—shame which was that of settler's own violence, but that was projected upon them to hold and internalize as the psychic part of the physical abuse. In writing through shame, and trusting their own felt theory, they interrupt NUP, or the ways in which settler psychic life seeks to transfer its own shame at an embodied, psychic level. Layton does not have an analysis of settler colonialism, but she does have an analysis of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and neoliberalism.

[87] George Lipsitz's work has been important to Layton's engagement of ethnic studies, as she has discussed with me.

intersubjective relations and spaces.[88] Informed by Gramsci's concept of hegemony, she also emphasizes that dominant groups don't have the power to determine subordinate groups identities, but she implicitly shows how subordinate groups are forced into the psychic labor of negotiating the splits and projections of the dominant group.[89]

To theorize enactment and NUP, neoliberalism is one of her main concerns. Of the impacts on neoliberalism of more privileged classes of people, she writes: "Their capacity to separate their fate from the fate of those all around them is one hallmark of what I shall describe below as social narcissism" (2014, p. 165). Layton shows that neoliberalism is a political, economic, material and psychic force that severs felt experiences of interconnection, and indeed operates through shaming people for having the need to be interdependent and thus shaming collective action.[90] In contrast to the psychic life of neoliberalism, the feminist rememory work I have been describing requires historicizing ourselves as subjects in history, which also requires the capacity to understand intersecting systems and interconnected realities.

Layton's body of work has provided for me tools to consider the here-and-now of classroom enactments and normative unconscious process, and I find it especially useful for understanding how white and cis male identities are shifted or challenged in the learning process, and to consider the kinds of racialized and gendered labor outsourced to students of color, women, and Black women and women of color specifically. It also gives me frameworks to

[88] Sara Ahmed makes a similar argument within her theories of emotion (2004).
[89] One contention Layton has with Judith Butler's framing of subjectivity is that there is not enough space in the theory to show how people contest their own subordination.
[90] She explains: "Yet, even as every group labors under the mainstream U.S. premise that a successful human is a rich human and not a dependent or vulnerable human, even though all of us have been enjoined to become "entrepreneurial selves" and to be suspicious of collective action, the psychological impact of neoliberalism differs greatly depending on where one is socially located, particularly with respect to privilege or lack of privilege" (2014, p. 163).

understand how feminist rememory involves helping students (and myself) question how the psychic life of neoliberalism effects our understanding of vulnerability, our experiences of shame, and our imagination for collective, radical interventions in systems of historical violence.

The first year I used Layton's insights in my training program for psychodynamic clinicians, I wrote an autoethnographic account of my pedagogical experience teaching feminist ethnic studies to clinical interns. The co-written article in *Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Society*, entitled, "Labor, Leaps, and Risky Beginnings: Reading the Body as Text in a Classroom" (George, Roslan, & O'Connell, 2018), focused on enactments of whiteness in our classroom. I practiced a first-person, contemplative-critical writing approach in the article, weaving Black feminist theory alongside reflecting on my own negotiations of whiteness (mine and others) in the classroom. The article ends with two reflective pieces, by Jade Roslan and Karen O'Connell, two participants of color in my 8-month training program for clinical psychodynamic interns.

Our three pieces converged in how we each wrote about the forms of labor in our classroom—namely racialized and gendered— when reading Octavia Butler's *Kindred*. I wrote about not knowing how to hold the space as a teacher so as to interrupt white women's enactments, such as their transferring onto the text their white investments in white redemption, which I also read as tied to investments in compulsory heterosexuality. Jade wrote about her experience of so often being the only Black woman in the room within her own training in counseling psychology; about how precious Dana's story in *Kindred* was to her; and about the pain of watching white women in the class simply not understand Dana. Karen wrote about the power dynamics she experienced as an Asian-American woman in the space, and as a person extremely perceptive and trained to tune into the emotional and psychic dynamics of trauma work, including grief. Together, we tried to move the conversation from the topic of "trigger

warnings" (then circulating among many publications) to a discussion of the racialized labor women of color bear in educational spaces so infused with white women's psychic defense processes, enactments and NUP.

Writing our article in narrative form and using the tools of noticing embodied, sensory phenomena also helped me to write into something I would otherwise not have reflected on as part of the psychosocial process: I wrote about getting very sick. Running that program compromised my health in lasting ways, triggering a new autoimmune disease and compounding two existing ones. At the end of my autoethnography, I tried briefly to take into account *why* my body was breaking down as I taught. I began slowly to notice: Might this be embodied data for what was not working pedagogically? In retrospect, I can see that writing into my embodied experience held abundant unconscious information—not fully examined but emerging on the page to be seen—that came to be important *later* to my considering the next steps of a psychosocial theory of pedagogy in this dissertation.

What was clear when I initially finished writing the article is that I wanted to grow as an educator in order to create a better holding space for the different learning experiences of everyone in the room—for Black women and women of color and white women, for queer women, for heterosexual-identified women who come to see their queerness through our readings, for all the trajectories and vulnerabilities in the space unfolding together through our course of study. I wanted to design learning spaces for my students that had more support for engaging histories of violence, rememory, and/also leaning into creative and sustaining practices. I wanted to find ways to help students process their intra-dynamic process and take better care of each other as the group dynamics were lived out. I wanted to help hold difference in ways that led to coalitions and interconnections, not separations and more exhaustion and pain.

It was in the felt failures of my pedagogy, when running that program and getting so ill, that I developed the seed of the idea on contemplative-critical writing practices. I began to consider: How could I have designed writing exercises for white students that helped them explore their own transference with *Kindred* before they set foot in the learning space together? How could I have helped white students bring more awareness of what they were likely to enact, so that the psychic labor did not fall to Black students and students of color? While I had them read Saidiya Hartman's Introduction to *Scenes of Subjection*, alongside *Kindred,* I could also have helped them anticipate and thus deal with in advance their own unconscious desires to protect whiteness. If I had provided them a route into self-reflection, how might that have better prepared our class time so their psychic labor of interrogating whiteness was not disavowed and then outsourced to racialized students?

While these questions were only seeds in my mind as a possible intervention, when I later began to read feminist ethnic studies as a psychosocial archive, I realized there already were writing practices and that brought recognition to the psychic life of learning in these ways. In other words, there is a precedent in feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory of using writing practices specifically for this kind of identity work and rememory practice: the intervention already existed, and I especially saw it in Third-World feminist approaches to identity work.

Additionally, because I would come to have more analysis of illness, disability, and class position within the teacher-student relationship, I also came to see that the pedagogical intervention I was seeking with contemplative-critical practices was also about taking better care of my own body and my own labor as a teacher. The cost to my own health has been very high doing the work of psychosocial teaching that I do—*and,* I am not bearing racialized labor—so I can only imagine the compounded experiences of exhaustion teachers of color are bearing.

Teachers cannot be expected to lead a psychodynamic or therapeutic process, but I do perceive that feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory and writing practices offer methods that could better support the kinds of psychic processes already occurring in our learning spaces.

In my more recent work training K-12 educators in feminist ethnic studies texts, I have turned to insights from Deborah Britzman,[91] to further consider the defenses operating in classrooms, and to observe how I might implement contemplative-critical writing practices in my pedagogy. Similar to my claims with Layton's work, I see Britzman's ideas as helpful pieces to put in collaboration with feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory and epistemologies of contemplative-critical writing.

Britzman is a feminist/queer/anti-racist educator and psychoanalyst, and distinct from Layton's focus on the clinic, she is situated as a Research Chair in Pedagogy and Psycho-Social Transformation. She is most known for her work formulating the concept of "difficult knowledge" within critical pedagogy (1998). In *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects*, she explains: "The term of learning acknowledges that studying the experiences and the traumatic residuals of genocide, ethnic hatred, aggression, and forms of state-sanctioned—and hence legal—social violence requires educators to think carefully about their own theories of learning and how the stuff of such difficult knowledge becomes pedagogical" (1998, p. 117). In other words, K-12 educators need to be able to do rememory work and grief work in order to teach without enacting disavowals.

[91] Britzman holds the York Research Chair of Pedagogy and Psycho-Social Transformation. She began her career as a high school teacher before her academic training, followed by her psychoanalytic training. Given my efforts teaching feminist ethnic studies to psychotherapists and high school teachers, I have been drawn to her work at the intersections of pedagogy, change processes, and the psychosocial.

When I teach educators, I introduce the term difficult knowledge as a framework for discussing how psychic defense mechanisms within learning hold in place dominant disavowals, thus helping folks of all identities anticipate the intra-psychic and intersubjective dynamics of our learning together. I have noticed that focusing on enactment or NUP in the educational context can create high anxiety in a small group (people become vigilant in ways that contract learning and risk taking), but the language of difficult knowledge seems to open breathing space to consider these defense mechanisms with less shame, more curiosity, and increased capacity for self-reflection.

The concept of difficult knowledge gives teachers a framework for anticipating they might have a defensive process at various points in the learning, and it is encouraged to slow down and pause over psychic and affective entanglements. I am noticing in particular that instead of white men acting out defense mechanisms, the ones truly invested in growth have language to mark and take greater responsibility for what Britzman calls "unlearning" as the path of learning. I encourage them to practice an embodied epistemology and connect to their body's sensations and affect, and feel into all elements of the process (including the shame and anxiety). We try to approach the psychic data as a symptom of the structural, as evidence of socialization, and as a route into self-reflexivity.

Britzman's theory of difficult knowledge is not, though, just describing aspects of identities with an investment in privilege. She is also describing the pain of confronting overwhelming grief when the injustice inflicted has been in close proximity to one's generational history. Because identities are multiple and in flux—and teachers and learners are navigating multiple intersections of power and privilege within their own self—there can be simultaneous

defenses employed in classroom exchanges that don't easily map onto dominant/minoritized binaries.

As she explains, even within progressive, politically aligned spaces of learning, the psycho-social process of learning/unlearning difficult knowledge is still fraught because of the multiple intersections of identity, revealing the "tangled engagement" between experiences of victimhood and oppression at intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Furthermore, she emphasizes defenses don't only protect dominant ideologies; they are also protecting the vulnerable experiences of being harmed by the historical violence. Thus, she offers some language for what I have called elsewhere in this project "grief labor"—namely, that revolutionary knowledge is often very painful knowledge, depending on one's embodied and generational proximities. Ambivalence, love, aggression, identification, and disavowal are thus part of the "psychic time of learning," which is simultaneously, an unlearning.

To see learning as in dynamic relationship to unlearning is a concept she draws from Gayatri Spivak's "Acting Bits/Identity Talk" (1992), later republished in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (2012), in which Spivak theorizes the making of re-memory from fractured bits. She writes of identity splits and fragmentations; on war and partitions made at midnight; on land and loss; and on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Lebanese-Canadian artist Jamelie-Hassan's *Midnight Children*. She interrogates how what is unacknowledged within a system of representation is precisely what is allowing "you a self-representation that you believe is true," thus connecting processes of identity formation to politics, gender, the violence of nationalism, and its heteropatriarchal memory-making practices (1992, p. 785). Like Mohanty and Alexander's methods, Spivak's accounting of gender in the interrogation of nation is a

feminist method through which to understand power, subjection/subjectivity, contradictions, and resistance.

Spivak's intervention is useful to hold in mind for a reading of the limits and possibilities in Britzman's psychoanalytic approach to feminist, queer, anti-racist pedagogy. While Spivak uses deconstruction and feminist postcolonial methods to raise questions about the relationships amongst learning, unlearning, rememory, representation, and identity, Britzman uses psychoanalytic tools to describe, within a classroom scene, how historical relations of power are enacted within psychic and intersubjective relations realms. Like Spivak, Britzman is especially concerned with how the normative claims of the nation-state reproduce disavowal.

Yes, there is another tension: for there are many disavowals within Britzman's framing of education and nation-state violence, too. For example, in her focus on critiquing normative education practices, she seems to elide the revolutionary forces that had been present since (at least) the social movements of the 1960s, including the student of color labor that challenged (and continues to do so) the educational project of white supremacy (Ferguson, 2012, 2017). As I emphasized in my reading of Mohanty, part of countering disavowal is precisely through centering and remembering the contributions of Third-World feminists to radical social change.

She also does not sufficiently unmask how the disavowals of the reproduction of nationalism are embedded in the violence of colonialism, imperialism, and settler colonialism. Her framing for difficult knowledge follows 1990s literary trauma theory, which originated in the Yale English department and looked to the genocidal catastrophes of the 20th and specifically the Holocaust, without placing those histories within a longer history of colonialism, imperialism, settler colonialism, and Christian hegemony. As I reviewed in Chapter 1, trauma theory has a specific history within academic institutions, and while there are many different

branches and cross-pollinating intersections—including Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart re-conceptualizing historical trauma through settler colonialism— literary trauma theory's initial rooting was not in rigorous engagement with postcolonial, Indigenous, and critical race thought.

While a fuller historical context is thus missing in her approach, Britzman does bring a careful eye to observing a set of psychic data in the classroom, which we might read using ethnic studies and Indigenous studies tools. For example, she reads disavowal as an on-going present reproduction within the site of education, since the very terms used to manage nation-state memory are embedded within psychic defenses to minimize and actively forget. She writes of the compulsive repetition in education: "… if education is to be an intervention, it must also admit its own preoccupation with an unadmitted violence that is cushioned under the names of *nation*, *law*, *order*, and *exploration*…" (1998 p. 129, italics original). Thus, while she is not investigating settler colonialism and colonialism as formative to these psychic processes, she is identifying the intra-psychic and intersubjective realities of that very violent, on-going history in classroom defense mechanisms.

Said another way, she is observing psychic data that is understood at historical and structural levels within Indigenous studies and ethnic studies. For example, she writes at length about the psychic maintenance of the past-present binary as a defense mechanism not to engage the ongoing sedimentations of nation-state violence. But we could also read this defense as historically produced by whiteness, Christian hegemony, colonialism, and settler colonialism—because the very understandings of time as linear is embedded in western colonial and settler violence (Byrd, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2019). For example, in the introduction to *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View* (2019), Tuck and Yang write: "Decolonizing studies, when most centered in Indigenous

philosophy, push back against assumptions about the linearity of history and the future, against teleological narratives of human development, and argue for renderings of time and place that exceed coloniality and conquest (2019, p. xiii). Additionally, postcolonial theorists have also shown how racialized time built into modern, Euro-Christian colonial "progress" narratives has also meant that whiteness and industrial capitalism were marked present progress, an assumption of a grand arrival into the "advancements" of western industrial modernity, set apart from the "primitive" past (McClintock, 1995). Historians of religion attentive to racial formations, imperialism, and settler colonialism emphasize how Protestant Christian hegemony was used to sanction these notions of time, progress, and whiteness (Wenger, 2017).

We could thus read the binary Britzman calls attention to as a psychic sedimentation that disavows the implications of entangled history and the material, psychic, and affective after-lives. I'd further suggest that part of the disavowal of the past-presence defense is repressing histories of on-going violence; but what is also disavowed are on-going histories of survivance (Vizenor, 2008) and Indigenous resurgence (Simpson, 2014, 2016, 2017). As I have been attending to throughout this project, abusive power works not only by not being accountable to its harm, but also by seeking to render invisible the alternative forms of creative power, knowledge, and resistance that are ever contending with hegemonic power. Thus, what is at stake is not only language for naming the violence of the structures, but also challenging the epistemic violence—or what Alex Wilson and Marie Laing call "epistemicide" (2019, p. 133)—that settler colonial education uses "to sever Indigenous peoples from traditional education and traditional knowledges" (p.133).

The epistemic violence is felt in the body—but the insurgent knowledge being disavowed in a past-present psychic defense is also felt palpably. Thus, another way to consider the defense

mechanism Britzman is tracking of abusive power is considering how the psychic maintenance of a rigid binary of "past" and "present" is a way to ward of the embodied feeling of the hauntings, to not sense the reckonings, to not touch rememories all the while present. Decolonial practices interrogate the intellectualizing "moves to innocence" in academic spaces (Tuck and Yang) that disavow the palpable presence of hauntings. As Eve Tuck and C. Ree write: "Decolonization must mean attending to ghosts, and arresting widespread denial of the violence done to them. Decolonization is a recognition that a 'ghost' is alive, so to speak" (2013, p. 647). Indeed, many different theories of afterlives, hauntings, and ghosts conceptualize palpable interconnections across time and space (Gordon, 1997; Morrison, 1987; Hartman, 1997). As I have been suggesting throughout this dissertation, there is a sensuality to insurgent knowledge—what Hartman describes as making her embodiment a vehicle of historical methods; or what Million calls "felt sense" (2008); or what I read in Anzaldúa's theory as a decolonized sensorium (2000, 2005, 2015).

Placing Lynne Layton's work on normative unconscious process and Britzman's critical pedagogy within theories of decoloniality and whiteness, I have been able to construct tools for psychosocial pedagogical practices; though, I have also found those practices require particular community contexts to hold the change process.

In what follows, I analyzed a live experience of a workshop I gave to 100 K-12 faculty and administrators after the 2016 election. During my presentation, I showed an image of student-activists protesting white nationalism at Charlottesville. I explained the transformative power of student movements within education, and I emphasized that as educators, our curriculum and pedagogy need to support the labor and creative power of young people challenging white nationalism today. Drawing on Britzman, I also suggested we needed to

situate what it means to teach difficult knowledge within this historical moment. I spoke of the larger context of Christian hegemony, whiteness, and settler colonialism. And, I used various contemplative-critical writing exercises in my hour-long teaching to foster self-reflection and pausing with the content of my teaching.

After the presentation, I learned that the head of the school criticized the presentation because I used images showing *contemporary* activists. He felt it would have been far better to use photos from the Civil Rights movement. The implication was that if we were allowed to talk about white supremacy and student activism at all, that discussion needed to be a history lesson, not something here-and-now, requiring our present attention, action, and accountability as educators. I read his response as a defense against difficult knowledge—a normative unconscious process he enacted, ironically, as I was teaching about the very concept.

As I considered his critique, I remembered Britzman's assessment that difficult knowledge threatens some learners because it interferes with how the self's sense of coherence has been shaped in relation to its previous understanding of the world, creating an anxiety that provokes defenses (1998, p. 199). I also suspected— based on my embodied experiences interacting with him, and the power dynamics I felt, as well as the research on how male administrators' backlash to institutional change is enacted as a gendered power struggle (Datnow, 1997)—that my having expertise he did not have was enough to provoke masculinist defenses, let alone the content of my teaching on white supremacy, Christian hegemony, and settler colonialism.

I had already done year-long ethnic studies training with many of the teachers in the room in smaller cohorts, so there already was change underway in curriculum development and teaching methods at the school. But this was the first all-faculty and administrators required

training I had done, and as I have come to experience more and more when I give required trainings, they provoke many different kinds of rigid defense mechanisms, particularly from white men. In contrast, when people opt-in to my smaller, year-long learning cohorts, we build community practices to do careful rememory work and move through defenses.

As I have explained, psychic dynamics intersect the multiplicity *within* the self—including that which we cannot consciously access about our own subject formation, that which has been pushed outside our conscious awareness—as well as how we engage difference outside the self. Furthermore, what I find remains the most complex dynamic to navigate pedagogically is that defenses are not only about protecting power and privilege: defense mechanisms are also needed to survive traumatic systems by creating distance from a felt experience, especially in environments without adequate recognition of those experiences and the knowledges those experiences hold. (Of note: adequate recognition, I mean a form of recognition that moves into accountability and change, vs. the settler recognition that Coultard interrogates in his 2014 *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*). In contrast to defenses protecting minoritized experiences or silence as a form of refusal (Simpson, 2014; Muñoz 2019, p. 77), defenses as used by people in positions of authority to avoid sensing and feeling their own complicity in a historically violent system are enactments of psychic, epistemic, and material conditions of violence.

Even then, the intra-psychic world of ourselves or another is never transparent, even if the institutional impacts of behaviors are apparent. For example, I do not know what this particular administrator felt when looking at a photo of young, brave, terrified student activists surrounded by a mob of white men with torches. Perhaps he felt a small, flickering, subconscious sensation of shame because the violence of white supremacy is shameful. Perhaps he felt merely

anxious about how such teachings in his school would interfere with his efforts to woo wealthy, politically conservative donors. Perhaps he felt confusion about his own Christian white-passing privileges vis-a-vis structural realities of white supremacy I was teaching on. Perhaps he would have responded very differently if a white man had taught the very same lesson I taught. I do not know the different self-states he was managing in his various responses to me, but I do believe resistance to difficult knowledge is usually managing many negotiations.

What I see as a teacher focused on psychosocial understandings of learning is that there are patterns of enactment that map onto socialization of certain identities and those patterns outsource psychic, emotional, and intellectual labor to others. It is important to track these patterns in a classroom. But I also believe there is a pedagogical danger in assuming to much about what specifically is being negotiated within another's psychic experience of learning and unlearning because there is a great deal we do not know about another's life and identity formations.

For example, given some of his first words to me after my talk were, "My family made it," and given I knew that he had both white passing privilege and generational experiences of Arab descent (as I myself do), I suspect that (like most everyone's learning process), defense mechanisms are knotted into family narratives and intergenerational changes processes, too. Here, it is also becomes clear that whiteness is not only about a fixed identity but it is about practices that resist the knowledge that would challenge the status quo. Or, as Styres has argued:

> Whiteness is not about racial profiling based on identity and skin colour but instead relates to whiteness as a structural–cultural positioning of relations of power and privilege. It is not about who has whiteness but about how whiteness is perpetuated and maintained through networks and relations of power and privilege within and across societies – and in this case, within educational contexts." (2017, pg. 36)

So, while I am arguing whiteness functions, on the one hand, as a psychic defensive process, I am pointing toward a larger network of material and institutional relations in which whiteness centers and reproduces itself within the site of education.

There are ways to de-center whiteness, but when defenses are rigid, not connected to the holding space of actual relationships with genuine accountability, and enacted across gendered, colonial, and racialized institutional power relations, the learning/unlearning process cannot move fluidly. Defenses become more entrenched and are not examined as psychic sites of the oppressive structural system itself. As Styres puts it, explaining the emotional climate of defenses this way: "When decolonizing praxis is introduced into the classroom context, it discomforts and challenges taken-for-granted biases and assumptions. This unsettling provokes many nuanced emotional responses from students particularly mainstream students, that can range from guilt and shame to denial and resistance" (2019, p. 33). Styres, like Britzman, also emphasizes that these emotional responses come from both the educators (in positions of institutional authority) and the students (Styres, 2019, p. 33; Britzman, 1998, p. 126). Unlike Britzman, though, Styres connects white defenses to a larger context of maintaining settler colonialism (2019, p. 31).

As I grapple with my own praxis of feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory, I have come to experience that, though this work of moving in and through resistance and "nuanced emotional responses" is very challenging, when people in smaller groups enter into genuine community with one another as learners (hooks, 2003)—when trust can be built, even through failures and attempts at repair, over a period of time, and perhaps entirely subversive to the institution—there are tremendous community resources for creating transformational educational methods for bearing witness to learning and unlearning. Said another way, when relationality is

core of the decolonial method, movement is possible: we can help our own subconscious and unconscious worlds to unfurl, to be contemplated. If we show up consistently in a holding space of community—and show up to the texts of feminist ethnic studies history—there is a deep change process to connect to.

As part of this holding space, I am continuing to explore in my teaching how aspects of the change process benefit from being rooted in a self-reflexive writing practices, or what I am calling contemplative-critical, especially to hold the different kinds of desires and grief work that might surprise us in the learning/unlearning process. In our learning communities, we exist in different proximities to structural violence, in different embodied responses to trauma knowledge, and we will have different psychic processes and grief work within these realities.

In the next section, I begin with considering mourning and theories of melancholia, before returning to Third-World feminist writing practices through centering Jacqui Alexander's understanding of rememory, the senses, and coalitions and putting her contributions in discussion with Indigenous studies methods.

Part IV: On Grief Labor, Re-Memory Work, and Contemplative-Critical Writing Practices as a Holding Space

At the end of "The Question of Pedagogy" in *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects*, after unraveling many implications of difficult knowledge, Britzman puts her questions this way: "How does a nation come to terms with its internal violence, and how do these internal violences return in the form of curriculum? How does a nation mourn its history? And what place does education have in such a project?" (1998, p. 135). She theorizes together the "risk of learning" and the "work of mourning," opening questions for me on *how* spaces of education hold

mourning, especially amidst the uneven power differentials, disavowals, and defense mechanisms at play.

I believe defenses are often a presenting symptom for what is actually ungrieved grief, such that part of the task of feminist ethnic studies critical pedagogy is how we account for the work of grief and mourning—but also live into the collective, creative power that comes from that work. I see grief labor as connected in layered ways to navigating psychic defense mechanisms that show up in classroom learning. As I noted, I have observed as a teacher that processes of attachment, whether to a sexual object choice, a gender formation, a nation-state, a class position and economic formation such as capitalism, or to whiteness—will get unsettled in feminist ethnic studies learning. And, sometimes, the unsettling will provoke defense mechanisms deeply tied to identity formations and attachment. For example, to recognize the claims of compulsory heterosexuality to be built on a violent system of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism provokes grief because of the "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2011) the system had promised. Recognizing and grieving the violence might significantly shift relational attachments for students. Defensive processes might intervene, halting the felt recognition of violent system and halting the process of changing beliefs.

There is a great deal at stake when studying knowledges that are systematically disavowed. Part of what is at stake is what emerges to be felt, and how the feelings might re-shape a life. Defense mechanisms are intra-psychic and intersubjective processes that guard against feeling a difficult emotion—like guilt, shame, anger, vulnerability, overwhelm, or anxiety. As I have outlined in the previous section, defenses also provoke forms of intersubjective labor in a classroom—intellectual, affective, psychic, and relational labor, all entwined in spaces of learning. But since I also believe defenses are often a presenting symptom

for what is actually ungrieved grief, such that part of the task of feminist ethnic studies critical pedagogy is how we account for the work of grief and mourning—and who does the labor of that work within the process of collective transformation.

In Judith Butler's early work on melancholia, she argued that attachment to compulsory heterosexuality holds ungrieved grief because of love that could not be even acknowledged, and therefore its loss could also not be mourned (1995, 1997). Mourning is a form of acknowledgment not allowed by the disavowal.[92] So while in Chapter 3, I considered Anzaldúa's understanding of fragmentation vis-à-vis colonialism, with a focus on the effects of colonial, gendered, racialized violence on minoritized subjects, from Butler's work, we could also take the idea that dominant aspects of identity—such as adhering to compulsory heterosexuality or dominant models of masculinity— are also fractured and fragmented by historical violence, and sedimented with ungrieved grief.

Her students Anne Anlin Cheng and Davis Eng extended her categories, thinking through how disavowal effects dominant and minoritized subjects, as well as how identity itself might move between dominant and minoritized positions. Reconfiguring Butler's approach to melancholia, they show racialization, class, and gender/sexuality, as formed within an imperial U.S. context, are all bound up within these processes of fragmentation, disavowal, and mourning. For example, Cheng gives tools to unpack how the "multiple layers of denial and exclusion" within U.S. ideals of the "nation" maintain a psychical process of "loss-but-not-loss" (2001, p. 9) for Asian-American experiences, and she also presses for language that shows how white US identity and racialized US identities are both haunted by "disarticulated

[92] She presents this argument in a chapter of *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), but the chapter was originally an article written for a *Psychoanalytic Dialogues,* a relational psychoanalytic journal read by clinicians (1995).

grief," albeit for different reasons and with different costs and outcomes. Eng's *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asia America* (2001), borrowing the words of Norma Alarcón that we are all "multiply interpellated subjects" (p. 7), argues that the ways in which heterosexual difference conditions loss is never separate from classed and racialized psychic and material conditions.

While a full review of the literature on melancholia is outside the scope of this chapter,[93] my key point in connecting grief labor to Butler, Cheng, and Eng's theories of melancholia is that because identity is multiple (and emerging), disavowal holds different kinds of relationships to ungrieved grief. Sometimes, refusing to do grief work in terms of the dominant part of one's own identity might be a form of disavowal that colludes in reproducing relations of abusive power. I say "might be," not "is," because from my perspective as an educator, there are so many layers to identity and so many reasons for the maintenance of disavowal. So, for example, building on Anne Anlin Cheng, it does seem that an aspect of whiteness is refusing to perceive its own melancholic condition. However, when we historicize whiteness—bringing a lens to both its generational and structural components—even a dominant identity like whiteness can contain multiple kinds of ambivalence and suppressed affects, like loss from assimilation into whiteness.

To be clear, I am also not suggesting white feelings re-center themselves in an ethnic studies classroom, or that cis men re-center their feelings in a feminist classroom, or that settler's recenter settler feelings of guilt or "moves to innocence" (Tuck & Yang, 2012) in decolonial

93 93 Many others have taken up loss as a critical category: in Black Studies, Sara Clarke Kaplan (2007), theorizes the politics of diasporic melancholia; Paul Gilroy (2005) and Khanna (2003) have also taken up the category of melancholia in a postcolonial critique; Eng and Kazanjian's *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* was a significant interdisciplinary collection (2001). And more recently, Eng collaborated with clinician Shinhee Han to co-write *Racial Melancholia, Racial Dissociation: On the Psychic and Social Lives of Asian Americans* (2019).

education. But I am suggesting that grief work does need a holding space, and that different aspects of our identity are entangled with different kinds of grief work—and that the learning/unlearning process, form a psychosocial lens, needs practices to move through grief work and rememory.

The psychic process is layered amongst identity formations of class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, nation, ability and disability, and all the layers are interacting within an experience—so I am not suggesting a reading of interior life (our own, or another's) that claims transparency or mastery. I am suggesting for the purposes of critical pedagogy that it is helpful to think of disavowal as layered. While certainly white or male students will present as disavowing patriarchy or white supremacy, it also has *not* been my experience that a defense—such as disavowal— simply maps onto a dominant position of identity either. Women can blame women for patriarchal rape culture and people of color can disavow the structures or impacts of white supremacy. Yet, those disavowals are also qualitatively different than ones that hold in place material power and privilege. Or, as another example, someone inhabiting a position of dominant social privilege (white, male, cis, upper class, hetero, able-bodied, Christian in a Christian dominant context etc.) may have patterns of behavior in a classroom that seem to arise from how their own identity claims power and privilege, but also how and what someone is internally or externally negotiating through that behavior is layered and shifting within a historical process.

To that end, I am invested in building on feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory to develop writing practices that serve as a holding space for my students' learning. I want to help them have a way to access and have more language for their interiority, to anticipate what they might be feeling, to protect themselves (when is necessary) and to form communities that hold space for one another's growth and coalition building practices. As I have been attending to

within feminist ethnic studies theories, our own subjectivity is multiple, such that many of us carry access to dominant systems of power alongside exclusions and marginalization. The learning, then, is to integrate the multiplicities.

To return now to Third-World feminist theories of learning and coalition building, I see ways to formulate contemplative-critical methods as an intervention to support such learning, connecting feminist ethnic studies pedagogy to a set of writing practices that offer a multi-scalar, psychosocial approach to identity, subjectivity, and re-memory. I am thus asking: How do feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods provide writing methods for these integrations within the self—the reclaiming of split off memory, fractured identity, grief labor, and a fuller range of embodied knowing and desires? And how are these methods also the groundwork of much of feminist collective creative power?

Jacqui Alexander's work on memory— and the links she makes to writing, the senses, and pedagogy—is a particularly generative location to consider such questions. One especially helpful essay is "Remembering This Bridge Called My Back," in which Alexander celebrates the anthology through articulating the kinds of feminist of color memory work the book performs. This essay was written as a tribute to Anzaldúa after her death, and it is included in Alexander's text, *Pedagogies of the Cross: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual, Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*.

Alexander writes that that "textures of identity made into theories of the flesh" (2006, p. 261) showed her how she could analyze embodied experience to develop an analysis of the political. Though she recognizes that the processes of colonization written about in *This Bridge* were different from the ones she had experienced, she writes that the anthology gave her

transformative recognition and insight into remembering, which then supported her process of becoming as a feminist writer, teacher, spiritual practitioner, and scholar.

As Alexander reflects back, *This Bridge Called My Back's* "theory in the flesh" made connection across difference within the shared category "women of color," in order to build coalitions with wide-ranging political analysis. The essays and poems explore identity, power (both coercive and creative kinds), and many forms of community and attachment within knowledge-making. I see such sensory, embodied writing as one approach to feminist theory making, and one that layers temporalities, writes toward rememories, and connects inter-generational experiences to the structural and historical conditions. This form of what I am calling contemplative-critical writing has been significant not only in feminist histories, but I argue it remains important for contemporary education practices.

Alexander especially looks to the political power of the memory work of *This Bridge*, showing how "theory in the flesh" interrupts the amnesias of nationalism and counters how dominant discourse colonize memory. But the memory work is also not just an analysis of colonial, racial, and heteropatriarchal violence and coercion: Alexander names feminist of color memory work as opening desire, daring us to connect to and recognize ourselves and one another through and amidst the separations instituted by nationalism, colonial racial hierarchies, and heteropatriarchy. I see her transnational feminist focus on desire and interconnection as sharing methodologies in Indigenous Studies that counter "damage-based" research through desire based and relational methods (Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2014). These methods refuse the terms of settler and racialized objectification and spectacle-making, while still naming the effects of settler, patriarchal, and colonial violence on communities.

Also salient to the psychosocial theory I have previously analyzed in my project, including in my exploration of Anzaldúa's contributions to trauma theory, Alexander describes the writing within *This Bridge* as "re-membering" parts of ourselves forgotten, a suturing of fragmented parts of the self that have been split by material, psychic, epistemic, and discursive violence. This re-membering work is also connected to desire, including a "yearning" for cultural inheritance and generational connection. She says the contributors to *This Bridge* write of isolation from cultural inheritance and the cost, sometimes, of being connected to it, too (2006, p. 260).

Alexander says of her own felt experience as a reader vis-à-vis such memory work that they were "saying so much about so many different things, gesturing to me about a forgetting so deep that I had even forgotten what I had forgotten" (2006, p. 260). The "forgotten what I had forgotten" speaks to the unconscious processes that go into memory formation, and the reasons why memory work is such powerful personal and political work within feminism. The memory work of a text like *This Bridge* performs the mirroring and recognition, that then opens and supports deep knowledge within the self and grows transformative community.

For Alexander, remembering is also about being in-relation to land, water, and stars. She writes: "Trees remember and will whisper remembrances into your ear, if you stay still and listen" (2006, p. 263). Her method thus not only provides a way to name historical and on-going violence, but it also connects the writer and reader to a fuller sense of being in-relation and to the power of creative, desire-based ways of knowing connected to community, place, earth, and self. Her work at The Tobago Centre for the Study and Practice of Indigenous Spirituality is rooted in land practices as practices of spirituality. Alexander practices and writes of an epistemic and ontological priority of expanding all the ways of being in relation as a method of knowing: body,

mind, spirit, and land in relation; prose and poetry; self and other, history and present, all in integration.

I see these methods of feminist pedagogy and writing linking transnational, Third-World, and Indigenous methods. For instance, many feminist Indigenous scholars have also written of how pedagogy, writing, and knowledge-making is founded in being in-relation to human kin, including ancestors and future generations; to place, land, and water; and to other-than human kin (Tuck & Ree, 201; Goeman, 2014; Simpson, 2011, 2013, 2013; Maracle, 2004). For example, Muñoz write of how "embodied and emplaced pedagogies" (p. 78) are "built on storytelling, collective memory, and land-based knowledge, are a means of healing ourselves, and our communities" (2019, p. 78). Inhabiting silence to listen to plants and animals is part of the collective memory process. In Leanne Simpson's work on Indigenous resurgence practices, she describes the land and water as pedagogy (2014); in Sandra Styres' work on the land as the first teacher, she writes of sensuous, embodied learning as a pathway of remembering (2017).

Goeman also writes of Indigenous spatialities and how emplaced memory disrupts the naturalization of the violence of nation-state borders (2013). Like Alexander's decolonial rememory practices, these Indigenous studies methods are explicitly feminist and queer, for to interrogate colonial land claims is also to interrogate colonial control of the body and gender. For example, Wilson and Laing situate a prioritization of Indigenous sovereignty and relation to lands and water to a critique of colonial heteropatrarchy; their understanding of both land and "body sovereignty" includes interrogating the impacts of how Christianity as a colonizer impacted Indigenous spirituality, the body, and gender (2019, p. 135). Memory work is thus an insurgent practice, and as part of its practice, it depends upon resistance to colonial gender hierarchies and epistemologies that split mind, body, and spirituality from land and water.

To return for a moment to Alexander's conception: Rememory is also connected to the intimacies of home —though home is both memories of nurture and of heteropatriarchal violence. Home is not an idealized safe space. But it is all embodied and sensory. She writes: "So much of how we remember is embodied: the scent of home; of fresh-baked bread; of newly grated coconut stewed with spice (we never call it cinnamon), nutmeg, and bay leaf from the tree (not from the bottle). Violence can also become embodied, that violation of sex and spirit" (2006, p. 277). Her emphasis is that writing into sensory memories facilitates layers of remembering, providing a route into reconnections and relations that transgress nationalist narratives, and in doing so, also challenge heteropatriarchy within colonization and recolonization.

Her point is especially important because, as described in other essays in *Pedagogies of Crossing*, the psychic violence of colonialism, including its use of shame and sexual abuse as a tool of heteropatriarchal violence, keeps silent feminist truths about embodied experiences. The re-membering labors transform shame, empowering women to name their personal experiences and make claim to political analysis. Here, again, I see Alexander's transnational theory as connecting to Indigenous studies theories of knowledge-making. For example, in Dian Million's "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Approach to Affect and History" (2009) she argues that it was Canadian First Nation's women's first-personal narratives especially contending with shame from sexual abuse, that exploded the category of "objective" colonial histories. The etiology of the abuse was in settler colonial violence and boarding schools, but the impacts of the abuse continued generationally in the home. Million argues it was precisely Indigenous feminist intimate, embodied, emotional knowledge of colonialism—writing through shame, and indeed, making the voicing of shame a political act— that illuminated the violent realities within

Canadian "education," fueled the discursive shifts around residential schools, and provided frameworks for talking about the violence of heteropatriarchy in kinship spaces.

It is also important that Million critiques a settler academia for gatekeeping not only the emotional knowledge of colonialism, but how that knowledge is told and theorized. She writes that, "Our felt scholarship continues to be segregated as a "feminine" experience, as "polemic" or at worst as not knowledge at all" (2009, p. 54). She shows how challenging settler colonial knowledge also means interrogating how hierarchies of the human within modern western philosophical projects were tied to hierarchies of ways of knowing, including marginalizing felt, sensuous, embodied experiences of knowledge that were not coded as white and masculine knowledge, so were thus not seen as knowledge at all.

Here, we could also connect Million's insights to Sandy Grande's claims in *Red Pedagogy*, in which gaining language for her experience requires transgressing dominant norms of knowing. Grande writes it was *through* (italics hers) actively transgressing the "illicit borders" of settler education—including disciplinary boundaries, spirit and reason, teacher and activist, past and present, and theory and practice—that she found words for experiences that were not immediately self-explanatory (2004, p. 5). While critiquing abusive power, both Million and Grande continually center the literary, community, and creative power of First Nation's and Indigenous women's theorizing, showing the power of their connecting felt knowledge to political change.

Thus, Million, Grande, and Alexander are each theorizing ontologies and epistemologies more expansive and connected than Euro-patriarchal rationalism and dualisms. Million challenges the western philosophical binary/borders of rational and affective knowledge. Grande speaks of transgressing disciplinary borders to challenge settler borders. And Alexander, who I will

conclude with, speaks of inheritances and becomings as the process of thinking and feeling beyond colonial constraints of memories.

In an interview on her understanding of subjectivity, Alexander teaches: "Because we never quite know who we are... because we are always making and unmaking ourselves. [But] We know some of the inheritances that we have." Her inheritances are anticolonial movements and feminist and queer women of color movements in the U.S., which gave her a sense that the world could be "rewritten," she explains. But she adds that another aspect of inheritance is finding a method to meld all the inheritances together because all the different aspects don't necessarily fit together easily, too. Finally, the last and oldest layer to our inheritance, Alexander teaches, is our sensing and meeting within the space of interconnection with one another. She calls this space Spirit, sacred, or the divine, but also says it does not have to be named in such terms, either.

However this cosmology is represented, Alexander describes the space as deep remembering of fundamental relationalities that exist prior to hierarchies, labels, division, and violence. She also expresses that it is a paradox that feminism has insisted on the politics of the historicized self, yet has too often not recognized the "spiritual labor and spiritual knowing" in feminist history that has precisely been the project of self-knowing, amidst the building of community (2006, p. 15), that has been so important to many women's life. She contends that one of the ways to interrupt the violence of religious fundamentalisms is precisely to include within transnational feminist epistemologies more recognition of the spiritual labor that practices this self-knowing and metaphysics of connection with all our relations (people, land, water, the earth, other than human kin, etc.).

In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, Alexander connects this vision both to writing practices and pedagogical and learning processes. In her section "On Writing, Memory, and the Discipline of Freedom" she speaks to the emergence of a shifting and transformed "I" in the narrative voice of her work, that ultimately allows for greater connections. Drawing on Audre Lorde's epistemologies within "Poetry is not a Luxury," she explains of her approach to writing: "Modulations in voice, therefore, are not solely speech—perhaps not about speech at all—but instead about an opening that permits us to hear the music, an indication of how memory works, how it comes to be animated. But whose memory, whose voice, and whose history" (2006, p. 16). Alexander says the journey from "dismemberment to rememory" is not linear and not free of contradiction, but it is a conscious choice to practice ontologies and epistemologies of the self that link historical, embodied specificity to an imagination that transgresses borders. She says what while there will be resistance in the classroom— because of how nationalisms have structured identities— the challenge of using re-memory is critical to a pedagogy of "cross[ing] over into a "metaphysics of interdependence" (p. 6).

As she points toward in her essay *Remembering This Bridge*, these practices use what I am calling contemplative-critical writing methods as a mode of inhabiting these decolonial epistemologies of rememory work. They are a holding space for reconnections, but also as I hoped to show in Mohanty's close reading of Pratt's essay, the writing practices also offer space to traverse disavowal and move into relational accountability across difference. Ultimately, I see in feminist ethnic studies writing practices perceptions of both difference and interconnection that fundamentally challenge the separations and hierarchies within the psychic life of neoliberalism that I analyzed earlier in this chapter.

Alexander's insight on interconnection of all life, in and amidst difference, is perhaps the most profound feminist rememory of all. In AnaLouise Keating's "Charting Pathways, Marking Thresholds," which is her introductory essay to *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Revisions for Transformation* (2002), she credits Jacqui Alexander for her powerful articulations and labors on "spiritual activism." In Indigenous studies epistemology and critical pedagogy, we see that spirituality is interconnected to relationship to emplaced memory, land, and water. In both the Third-World feminist and Indigenous studies, work I have taken up, writing itself can be used as a medium of the oral storytelling capacity to be part of the sensory, embodied, place-making epistemologies that cut through the disavowals of nation-states and neoliberalism, offering education practices that move toward decolonial practices and the collective work to re-imagine healing.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I turned to Third-World feminist epistemologies, alongside feminist psychoanalytic insights, my own teaching practice, and insights from Indigenous studies, in order to ask questions about learning, disavowal, grief work, and rememory within education. I developed the category of critical-contemplative knowledge practices, not to suggest that critical and contemplative are a binary set of terms, but rather that the "contemplative" emphasizes a mode of rigor that makes these psychosocial links. I see contemplative-critical methods within Third-World feminist, Indigenous studies, and ethnic studies methods not only about naming abusive power relations, violence, and coercion within embodied experience and identity; rather, they are also methods to access creative power, interconnection to others (including inter-generationally), liberatory transgressions, and epistemic integrations. While violence *is*

fragmenting, there is tremendous creative and collective power in integrating and honoring the dynamic, shifting, ever evolving aspects of the self.

I have also aimed to show how thinking/feeling into difference within the self, along with feeling into difference amongst community, is critically important for building a feminist ethnic studies analysis of how hegemonic systems operate, with multiple implications for the challenge of feminist ethnic studies pedagogy and learning. Finally, I suggested that feminist history holds writing practices for how to hold the challenges of pedagogy, difference, and the experience of rememorying identities that are part of practicing solidarities. In my final chapter, I now turn to performing my own contemplative-critical writing practices, as framed by Keating's understanding of interconnections and identity thresholds.

Chapter 5: Performing Contemplative-Critical Writing Practices: Threshold Identities and Un-becoming Arab

In this dissertation, I formulated and practiced what I call psychosocial theory. By this term, I mean an analytic that links structural, historical, and material conditions to intra-psychic- and intersubjective realities. I argued for how the analytic of the psychosocial helps us read the labors and revolutionary contributions within feminist ethnic studies intellectual history.

There are many possible paths into assembling and reading psychosocial theory in feminist ethnic studies histories. I explored three main routes: In Chapter 1, I assessed how feminist ethnic studies has engaged the tools of classic Freudian, Lacanian, and object relations psychoanalysis. In chapters 2 and 3, I then examined, though Black feminist and Chicana theory, respectively, how feminist ethnic studies theories and practices of writing hold an archive of psychosocial theory that is an alternative to explicitly psychanalytic engagements of psychic life. In Chapter 4, I turned to feminist transnational/Third World pedagogy and Indigenous studies as an archive of psychosocial knowledge, and I also described contemplative-critical methods of writing that support feminist ethnic studies teaching and learning.

Throughout this project, I have argued that the insurgent epistemologies within feminist ethnic studies psychosocial theory are necessary for our writing, teaching, and learning practices. In this final chapter, I now perform how I use the contemplative-critical writing practices in my own process as a scholar, and I link implications for my curriculum development as a teacher. I am interested in how these writing practices might support both myself (as a scholar and learner) and my students as we seek to move between structural analysis and theorizing lived experience, including intra- and inter-psychic realms.

This chapter's frameworks are indebted to AnaLouise Keating's work on writing, teaching, reading, and learning practices that inhabit "threshold identities" (1996) and which move in "post-oppositional consciousness" (2013). In *Women Reading Women Writing*: *Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde* (1996), Keating looks at how each writer takes risks to question notions of "authenticity," and instead their work shows the process of how identity is made (and re-made). While Keating certainly acknowledges the importance of political strategies based on uniting under a term or shared experience, she is also concerned by how the binary thinking of dominant western thought shows up in identity categories, too (for example, woman vs. man, or people of color vs. white, straight vs. queer, etc.). To that end, she reads for writing practices that develop modes of perception that move more fluidly between difference and sameness, and she identifies such perceptual and methodological movement as necessary for coalitions and personal and social transformation.

In *Transformation Now*! (2013), Keating is especially concerned with opening binaries in the classroom and finding methods for moving through relational impasses that lock students into binary thinking, including "us" vs. "them" frameworks that deny the range of difference within any one category. Here, she turns back to many of the writing methods in *This Bridge Called My Back*, which she suggests, employ a politics of "interconnectivity" (p. 30) that have the "potential to alter the psychic landscape of twentieth- and twenty-first-century U.S. feminist thought" (p. 31, 2013). She doesn't see that method in all the 29 writers, but she does see how the book's overall theorizing of both difference and sameness offers a powerful method for formulating understandings of relationality and identity as emerging and in movement.

At the same time, Keating suggests that while *This Bridge* is a landmark text, the contemporary tendency is to cite it but not actually employ its methods. I seek in this concluding

chapter to employ its method through practicing and performing contemplative-critical writing methods that "risk the personal," name differences, and seek interconnections (2013, p. 30). Like Keating, I see these ways of knowing as useful for both white women and women of color. (Of note: Keating uses the phrase "women of colors" to mark differences within the category itself.)

Also like Keating, I don't especially *like* the vulnerability of writing about myself in the context of academic scholarship (1996, p. 181), though I have found it to be a necessary and generative method of knowing. I also think it would lack integrity for me to theorize the psychosocial implications of "theory in the flesh" but not actually practice these methods, too. Because what I am theorizing in this dissertation *is* a practice.

Keating shares her own story of learning how to be more personally present in scholarly writing. Anzaldúa, after reading some of her work, nudges her: "This is good, AnaLouise, but you need to include more of yourself on the page" (1996, p. 180). Then, as I just did, Keating talks about why it's hard to do! Keating goes on to share about her personal process with her work and her shifting sense of identity—but, I note, she uses the third person. I actually give writing exercises to my students (and to myself) in which I invite my students to choose whether the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person voice feels the most creative and safe for a particular exploration of ideas. I take this idea from a college professor, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, from whom I first learned contemplative reading and writing practices almost 20 years ago. (For example, I almost wrote this chapter's narratives in the 3rd person but elected for the 1st.)

Pedagogically, I think it is important to offer students ample choices, especially since writing about oneself is vulnerable and contemplative-critical methods perform many affective, intellectual, and psychic labors. Writing about oneself can open joy, desire, and delight, and it can also require grief labor and it might open traumatic memories, too. If you are reading this

chapter and are yourself a teacher interested in using contemplative-critical writing practices in the classroom, I want to emphasize that consent is important in a classroom, especially to healing the violations of traumatic experiences, and students should feel the full exercise of their agency in their feminist learning.

I would never, for example, require a student to share out loud their writing unless they wanted to. And I give them the option of turning their writing assignment in to a trusted friend instead of me. Also, while I love words and personally find writing to be a helpful medium of expression and learning, words are not everyone's primary mode of communication and sensing—so I try to include on my syllabi other options (visual art, dance, cartooning, etc.) for creatively translating the writing assignments into another medium. I do invite my students to create theory from their lived experience, but I try to remember that requiring theory to always be embedded in words can also reproduce neuro-typical privileges and hierarchies. (There are many languages and many forms of knowledge that are not word-based.)

When I introduce what theory is to my students, I explain that experience is not transparent—and that is the point of needing theory!— and/also why writing "theory in the flesh" (Moraga, 1981) is a method for coming to perceive more about structures, identities, and relations. I have a large curriculum of writing prompts—indeed, my most recent course curriculum has turned into a 200-page writing workbook, in which I offer students my own writings, to go along with the course lessons, and I also lead them through writing prompts of their own.

One contemplative-critical writing exercise I particularly enjoy is pulling lines from feminist essays but leaving words blank to fill in. In contrast to most of the reading practices I use in my classes, this exercise is intentionally designed for students *not* to stick to what the text

means in its original context but rather to creatively inhabit the method of knowing the text offers. The words of the feminist foremothers are used as invitations to freely enter their own experiences, as a kind of kinship support for their courage to self-reflect on being a subject-in-history. Two examples will be useful here. (Both of these examples were useful to me in my opening of feelings to write into/toward in this chapter's coming narratives.)

The first example is from Adrienne Rich's 1984 "Split at the Root," an essay which grapples with how to be accountable to her experiences at the intersections of patriarchy, lesbian existence, class privilege, Jewishness, and whiteness. I am not asking my students to attend to those intersections, per se, unless those intersections happen to feel resonant with their own journey, which can certainly be useful, too. But what I am emphasizing is their paying attention to how Rich is *coming to know*, including through her psychosocial process of writing, anxiety, grief, love, and desire. I also give my students historical context that Rich was actively laboring to create coalitions with people across difference, specifically partnering with Black women and women of color, and that writing into her own subject formation gives her more tools to be accountable. Here is the quote I use to create blank spaces for them to enter with their words:

> "For about fifteen minutes I have been sitting chin in hand in front of the typewriter, staring out at the snow. Trying to be honest with myself, trying to figure out why writing this seems to be so dangerous an act, filled with fear and shame, and why it seems to necessary. It comes to me that in order to write this I have to be willing to do two things
>
> _____
>
> and there is of course the third thing_____.

The idea is that their creative process, sensory memories, and the felt connection with the writing process of a feminist foremother (and I have usually had them read other essays in advance by Rich), gives them a holding space for the next steps of their contemplative learning.

Below is another example from my curriculum, a series of three quotes I take from Leila Ahmed's memoir *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey* (1999):

1). "Different patriarchies evidently had their different styles and their different forms of casual, ordinary, acceptable_____(p. 230).

2). "Second, my crisis and my attempt to resolve it by turning to_____had been my response to, and my attempt to remedy, a loss I had suffered—without knowing that I had suffered it, without knowing that I had lost anything" (233).

3). "Reading such facts as these and observing my own feelings and the paralyzing anxiety I felt at the mere thought of writing about such things, I came to conclude_____" (251).

These quotes come from sections of her memoir describing navigating both the whiteness and anti-religious rationality of British academia, and her self-reflections on the political process that changed her identity from "Egyptian" to "Arab." Both navigating whiteness *and* realizing how her very sense of "Arab" identity was being played by political patriarchs leads her to historical reflections that intersect intimately lived kinship experiences and deep losses. For example, in

her chapter "On Becoming an Arab," she wrestles with how Arab nationalism tore apart her earliest (childhood) sense of pluralistic community in Egypt; at the same time, to question being Arab as an adult not only felt "unthinkable," but it also felt disloyal to her Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian friends. The difficulties of these personal reflections led to intense grief and a feeling of paralysis—but she felt a psychic need to do the historical research that would break apart many of the categories she had inherited for understanding herself and Egyptian history.

Still, every step of the journey is fraught for her, and she questions why she feels a need to think about the "small" and "trivial" details of her own psychic and kinship displacements in the transition from "Egyptian" to "Arab" when so many of her Arab kin were literally living displacement from their homes and land because of occupation. I think Ahmed is pinpointing an important question of psychosocial theory: How do we do the work of interior reflection when it seems "trivial" compared to the material violence, displacements, and other forms of violence that are urgent to resist? I don't have a definitive answer, but I do see within feminist ethnic studies histories that the intimate work of collectivities and coalitions has seemed to require that feminists understand their own identity formations to better understand the systems and structures reproducing violence.

In the next section, I now perform my own contemplative critical writing practices. I flip Ahmed's Chapter title "On Becoming an Arab" to "Un-becoming Arab" to describe aspects of my own racial formation.

Part II: Un-becoming Arab

The text from my sister arrived at the time that Rachel Dolezal was first making national news.

It was June of 2015, and Dolezal had been exposed by her parents as white, when she had led part of her adult life passing as Black. Dolezal was a fraud, a white woman who had claimed an identity not her own, all while leading a public life as a civil rights activist. (Indeed, the prior year, she had been elected president of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP.)

My sister's text said something like this (I didn't save it verbatim, but this was the idea): "It's weird reading this story, coming from my experience— growing up white in Spokane and having people assum*e* I was Black. People aren't understanding how much this is about *Spokane*."

My sister is not a reader of critical race theory, but her comments calling attention to place struck me as extremely relevant and under-examined in media representations of the situation.[94] Spokane is 92% white, and highly segregated, and has a dominant social milieu with very little understanding of whiteness or processes of racialization.

I pondered my sister's idea.

She spoke it from a unique experience: she self-identified as white, even though as a child and teenager in Spokane, she was sometimes read as mixed or half Black, or when she traveled in college, she realized she was being read as Indigenous Hawaiian in Hawaii or Honduran in Honduras.

I did not understood as a child why my sister was so often not read as white, because I understood my own identity as white, and we had the same parents—so how could my sister not be white?

[94] I don't have the date or record for this exact date of this text, but I do want to credit my sister, Shannon Brown, with this critical insight that helped shape this chapter's writing. I also want to thank her for permission to write into my memories that overlap her formative experiences.

As an adult in her mid-twenties, my sister's skin color lightened considerably, it no longer turned to black in the summer sun, and, even more salient to this conversation, her once tight brown ringlets of hair have relaxed, too. But childhood and her teenage years were quite different.

* * *

Bell hooks writes in *Teaching to Transgress*: "When I teach Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in introductory courses on black women writers, I assign students to write an autobiographical paragraph about an early racial memory. Each student reads that paragraph aloud to the class" (1994, p. 85). As a response to my reading of this text, I did that exercise my first year as an Ethnic Studies Ph.D. student in a directed reading course with Dr. Shelley Streeby, a class in which I was exploring how to use creating writing practices in ethnic studies curriculum and teaching.

First, my mind went blank with the question. Then I had a sensation of a magnet in my hands being tied to the end of wet hair. I had no conscious understanding of why I needed to write about this scene of my childhood to answer hooks' question. But I did, and it led me on this journey that I now depict.[95]

[95] Sections of this chapter—namely the vignette on the magnets— had their seed in the creative writing work I did in the aforementioned directed reading Winter 2016 with Prof. Streeby. The reading of the archives I assemble later in this chapter on the early Syro-Lebanese diaspora are adapted from the research paper I wrote in Sara Clarke Kaplan's "History and Memory: Slavery and its Afterlives" seminar (Spring Quarter 2016, UCSD). The method of blending the contemplative-critical and historical methods also started in that research paper, though the particular trajectory and conclusions I inhabit in this chapter are significantly more developed (theoretically and personally) and take new directions.

* * *

Reader, if you touch your thumb and pointer finger together in the shape of a circle, that's the size of the red, yellow, and blue magnets that decorated our fridge when I was in elementary school. The magnets were given to me by my childhood best friend whose dad was temporally in the business of selling magnets.

(I lost touch with the friend, but 30 years later, these magnets are still on the fridge because I come from a place in which many things stay the same. But in an interesting twist of fate, this childhood best friend and I re-found each other 3 years ago on the streets of Manhattan, and she has been invaluable support since for my dissertation process.)

Now, these magnets have a hole in the middle, so these dozens of small heavy circles *seemed* like the right thing at 9-years-old for tying to the ends of my sister's hair when it was wet, hoping her hair might dry straight with the magnets' weighted help.

(It didn't work. The curls sprung right back up after her hair dried).

It's not that my sister didn't like her curls (they were quite special), but she had no guidance as how to tend to hair that really wasn't, perhaps, white girl hair. Her hair was a big ordeal because it could not be combed and we did not know how to help her. Childhood was ongoing hair management frustration for her. We resorted to a number of home remedies, the magnets being one disappointing idea. We also tried washing her hair in fabric softener; I don't know where she got that idea, but the hope was it would chemically relax the curls. (If you are wondering, it doesn't work.) She finally tried once to get her hair professionally relaxed and the man burned her ears and singed her hair (sad, because spending money on hair was certainly not something we ever did in our frugal household, and to end up with burned ears as a teenager!).

In her childhood, teenage years, and early twenties, she also had very dark skin, sometimes darker than our childhood neighbor and dear friend, S., whose mother is Black and father white. (For fun, while playing in the backyard, S. and my sister would compare skin color in the summer months, arm-to-arm, laughing. My sister was usually darker.) Up through high school, people still made comments to me about my middle sister being "mixed" or half-Black. I sensed that changed in her twenties, as her skin lightened and her tight curls started to straighten out, and sadly, right as she had found someone who could help her with her hair. Depending on the location and context, she might still read racially ambiguous as an adult, but she does not read as a Black woman.

It was my sisters, and especially my middle sister (because of her hair) that did the emotional labor for experiences I would now describe as multiracial. I was the white, youngest child confused about why I didn't fit in with my siblings. As Daphne Taylor-García has written in a piece for the *Feminist Wire* on how Dolezal exploited stereotypes on mixed race identity in Black cultural spaces, "Alleles can be patterned differently and unpredictably across siblings…" (2015). Dolezal was, of course, lying—she had adopted Black siblings but she was herself white. And my experience was not in Black cultural spaces— it was in a mixed white and Arab-American family.

Still, I wish I had known what alleles were.

It is strange for me to think now that central affective experiences could have been explained and made sense of with language talking about being mixed or multiracial. But, when you are white, in a very white town, there is little access to language about race and difference.

So, you help your sister hang magnets in her hair.

* * *

When I went to my father's house every weekend for 24-hours, I was usually left to myself to play or I was with my sisters. If I wasn't in the overgrown, dilapidated old garden looking for hidden fountains or the magical key to the underworld, I would often go into his den. On the desk, there was a stash of yellow legal sized notebooks he kept for work. I was allowed a new fresh one for writing my stories. (I wanted to grow up to be a writer.)

In that den, I was mesmerized by a large picture.

Above the desk, was a large poster of a Black boy with the caption "Otay Buckwheat." He was wide-eyed in the photo, and I stared at him, confused, because the little boy in the picture had my dad's name. (Not his legal name, but it is what all his friends call him and have been calling him since he was a child.)

But the little boy on the poster in the den was Black, and my father was white.

So, I asked my dad who the boy in the picture was, and he told me it was a character on the show *The Little Rascals*, which was a T.V. syndication of the films *Our Gang*, which had started in the 1920s.

(I learned researching for this chapter that William Thomas, Jr. played Buckwheat in the short films from 1934–1944, which the T.V. show replayed in the 50s. I believe he was the person on the poster. Early on, his character also was female and/or indeterminate gender. My father has also told me that as a young child some read him as a girl because of the curls in his hair. In 2015, Julia Lee published *Our Gang: A Racial History of the Little Rascals*, with Henry Louis Gates Jr. writing the forward. Both scholars nuance how the extremely popular T.V. series—which started in 1955, a year after *Brown v. Board of Education* — both imported racial stereotypes and simultaneously offered subversive strategies in portraying inter-racial childhood friendships.)

Staring up at the picture as a child, I tried to understand something I had no language for: Why was my white dad in his childhood in Spokane given the nickname of a Black T.V. character?

My father gregariously and frequently talked about being Lebanese or Arab. But in Spokane, Washington in the 1980s of my childhood, *race* meant Black to me, not Lebanese or Arab[96]. In my mind, my father was white like me, just with dark skin and different features. Just like I thought of my sisters as white like me, just with dark skin and different features. My opinion was not altered just because friends at elementary school would ask me about my sisters' black dad and my white dad and what it was like to have a different dad than my sisters. I just corrected them. *My sisters do not have a black dad. We have the same white dad.*

It was the poster, though, that remained the childhood conundrum. It felt like a puzzle to figure out, like a story I was inside of that had no words to read it, just pictures.

I am white, my mom is white, my sisters are white, my dad is white. That is what I would have told you if you asked me as a kid. I knew I didn't look like my dad or my sisters, but I also did not look much like my mom, for that matter. As a child, I struggled with this feeling of not belonging—it was a pervasive early psychic sensation for me. (*We don't know where you came*

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[96] "Lebanese," "Syrian, and "Arab" for early Syro-Lebanese immigrants are terms that came to be used years after immigration. In Alixa Nash's landmark 1985 study, *Becoming Arab: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience*, she underscores the shift in identity into becoming American as rooted in feeling (p. 8). Prior to arrival, identity was not "Syrian" or "Arab," but based on religion, sect, and place of origin cultural rather than nationalist reference. Becoming American was a particular process over time, as she writes: "In the process which transforms aliens into loyal Americans, *becoming* American is prerequisite to *being* American." While the essence of being Syrian was to honor family ties and hospitality, one became American through a low degree of "ethnic consciousness" that emerged in the second generation (p. 13). She also argues that in the 1920s political developments in Syria catalyzed ethnic consciousness in the diaspora, and it is at this time that "Lebanese" is used as an identity for those from Mt. Lebanon, which also "cloaked them in the robe of Christianity and separated them from the rising anti-West, anti-imperialist, and Arab nationalist stridency in the Middle East" (p. 16).

from, anyway! got lobbed my way in a fight with my older sister, and it emotionally stuck, given the appearance of the situation.)

My father also marked me as different. I was not called white, but I was called Blondie, even long after I was no longer blonde (my hair darkened in puberty). As another of my father's explanation for the patterning of the alleles, he has told me since childhood that I am his beloved Danish mother reincarnate: that I got her genes and anxious temperament, and was placed on earth to haunt him after she died. Or, there was the not uncommon joke my entire life, which I always hated, of my father explaining me this way to his friends at parties: *Her mom had an affair with my attorney* (his attorney is his best friend since childhood, still a dear family friend of all of ours, which was the joke) *and that's how she turned out this way*.

My father is expressive, and very much so about being Lebanese. He talks about it a lot, and he talks about it in his gesticulating ways. It is his identity and it is matters to him. I do not know exactly what being Lebanese means to him but it definitely means food.[97] I still remember watching him scoop up raw kibbe (and I was a vegetarian as a child, a young advocate of animal rights, so the raw kibbe was horrifying!), but he loved that raw seasoned red meat and grape leaves at holidays. From my vantage point, my father's enthusiasm for being Lebanese was also always connected to a sense of unlanguable loss, even hollowness, which I felt but could not name. It was him awkwardly trying to lead a dance with his siblings at my cousin's wedding, but only knowing a few steps—and I didn't know what that dance was at all. (15 years later I see this delightful dance on Facebook, and only then I realize it was a drunken version of the dabke my father had been up to!)

[97] Nash writes of 2nd and third generation Lebanese, that the ties were weak but "they relished the food, but usually on special occasions; if they did not attend church regularly, they at least observed religious holidays" (1985, p. 23).

How I experienced being Lebanese as a child was emotionally connected to my Danish grandmother because she cooked the food and organized the holidays. She made the grape leaves, Syrian bread, and tabbouleh. She labored over the 12 batches of baklava at Christmas and I got to learn the recipe. She taught me how to clarify butter and squirt it on each paper-thin layer of phyllo with the turkey baster without messing up her clean kitchen, and she discussed with me the merits of orange water verses rose water in the walnut filling. When she died in my mid- twenties, the only thing I asked to inherit was that baklava pan that has the grooves of how she cut the diamond shapes. (As it turned out, no one claimed her antique furniture that I always loved, so I wrote a great deal of this dissertation on her kitchen table.)

My grandmother was love and snugness, my grandfather gruffness. He had not had an easy life, even if, escaping poverty and working the mines in Butte, he had somehow got himself into law school in Spokane, and created a middle-class life for his white wife and 5 children. I knew he loved us because when it was time to leave, he and grandma stood in the doorway and I could see tears in his eyes, but over dinner he had likely just quizzed me on how to avoid hell as a 9-year-old and the immorality of abortion! *All* my family was Catholic on both sides, but my grandfather's version felt to me to be the scary, patriarchal kind.

Still, Catholic families, in my experience, have a penchant for closeness. I treasured being Lebanese because it felt bonding amidst other forms of pain and disconnection on my father's side, and it held the only distinctive cultural traditions my family had. The feelings of family ever around me—aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, big Catholic families on both sides, and chaos mixed with love—was my childhood, and I savor its memories.

I do not have that family experience now in my daily scholarly life, living my adulthood as one of the few that moved away (except the 3 times a year I get to come home).

* * *

When I moved across the country at nearly 28 years old in 2008, I left 2.5 years of training to be a therapist and I set out to become a feminist scholar. In my M.A. program in religious history at Yale, I then had the privilege of being trained by the amazing African American womanist theologian and ethicist, Dean Emilie Townes, and also the poet Elizabeth Alexander. In these classrooms, I was first learning to interrogate the violence of my whiteness; I was learning critical race theory in an African American studies context; and I was learning how to form coalitions and partner with Black colleagues.

Even before reading Jared Sexton's *Amalgamation Schemas: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism*,[98] which came out the same year I began that M.A. program, it was obvious to me by felt experience that in the context of the spaces I was in, it would not have been appropriate to nuance my identity because those spaces were not about centering my experiences. The few times I mentioned other aspects of my history, I felt the feeling of it not being appropriate, and because I am sensitive to not belonging—and because I genuinely wanted to be part of building coalitions to work against anti-Black violence—I didn't bring it up again. (I also never saw any representation of mixed Arab/white experiences in my studies.) At any rate, the goal of these spaces was how we come together to end anti-Black violence—that was the work— and that is what being a white ally needed to be about. And it is these spaces that were my formation as a scholar.

[98] For an important re-thinking of "mixed" race experience, using a methodology that interrogates colonialism and anti-Blackness while making space for a theory of the multiracial for people of color, see Daphne Taylor-García's *The Existence of the Mixed Race Damnés: Decolonialism, Class, Gender, Race* (2018).

Also, simultaneous, in my late twenties and early to mid 30s, depending on where I lived, I had strangers or fellow students occasionally assume I was not white or that I was mixed, or I was asked the "What are you?" question. But I never gave these questions much attention, either, since they were infrequent and they came from strangers, not people in my kinship circles. But also the question for me was not about whether or not I identified as white as these people were asking—because that wasn't my internal struggle. My struggle was how the process of my whiteness asks for a continued forgetting of also being Lebanese, and that I didn't know how to interrupt that forgetting without feeling the risk of appropriating women of color experiences.

I had no language, no theory, no framework. And the risk of trying to find a way to express it was not worth the risk of overstepping. The more I became involved in anti-racist work, the more I did not talk about other aspects of my life, childhood, kinship, family, and belonging. It seemed right at the time for the stage of learning I was in regarding white privilege and anti-Blackness and how we form coalitions to dismantle white supremacy.

But two situations in my studies after Yale prepared me for some of the new questions that started showing up in my Ethnic Studies Ph.D. training.

One, I built a program to teach therapists-in-training feminist ethnic studies texts. I named myself as white (as I always have) and I often raised questions of how white readers should engage these texts without reproducing psychic norms of whiteness. But at some point, two of my students, themselves women of color, asked me questions about my relationship to my family history. They both seemed shocked that I did not integrate into my teaching that my whiteness itself had a multiracial, inter-generational context. From their vantage point in their field of training, I was participating in a disavowal—which they read as core to the psychic reproduction of whiteness.

I took notes and pondered their feedback.

The second event, or rather a series of events: at that time of my life I experienced trauma from patriarchal violence that broke me open, the way that Anzaldúa describes how trauma actually increases our sensations to know things about the world, including our fundamental sense of interconnection across time and space. I had a mystical connection to a foremother to help me endure my most vulnerable moments (which could also be explained, perhaps, as a mechanism of psychic dissociation—but for me, it was a deeply spiritual experience of the time/space continuum being disrupted by love). And then, as one does after such experiences if you have the resources to do so (which I did because my friends helped me), I started seeing a therapist. She was Indigenous and she understood my ways of inhabiting time differently than linear time.

We did not focus at all on the contemporary events of my life other than to read them as symptoms; instead, we went back three generations, and we did work around patriarchy, whiteness, settler colonialism, shame, and the power, agency, and wisdom of the land, specifically the land my French/German ancestors had stolen from the Lakota. We did work around the intersections of my teaching, how I got sick teaching, and these histories of white supremacy, patriarchy, and settler colonialism I was trying to teach on. We did not do work specific to my father's line because we had limited sessions and I was moving to California to start my Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies. But, she told me, as I prepared to move, "At some point you do need to do the work of understanding your dad's side, and integrate all the lineages of who you are."

And I think that is what led me to do bell hooks' prompt on early racial memories, and that is what led me to consider how writing itself is a holding space for psychosocial process and feminist theory.

* * *

When I was home for the holidays as a Ph.D. student, I asked my mom if she would help me find more information on our Lebanese side (I had already previously already researched her French-German side). I was seeking archives for a class on historical methods.

"But why?" she responded, adding emphatically, "You are *American*."

"Right," I answered. "But I still want to find some information."

It's at that point she called up my aunt for me (married to my dad's brother) and we headed over to see the stash of family archives, which had been neglected for quite some time. My aunt emerged from the basement with a bounty of dusty oral history documents she had collected at a family reunion in Montana in the 1980s and we read them together in the kitchen.

I saw in writing for the first time the family name—El Ettah—which felt like a discovery because the name had faded in my memory. Except for my eldest aunt, I had never heard anyone say the name. But that I had forgotten the name by 37-years-old intrigues me, because I know I knew the name in my mid-20s. I know I knew because at that time, I had wanted to use it as a pen name instead of my real name as a writer. I has sought advice from friends farther along than I was in doing anti-racist work. And, I had concluded the name might be read as presenting as a woman of color, and I did not want to be appropriative as a white woman, so I did not use it.

Those documents from my aunt's basement gave me access to names of great and great-great grandparents, which I found I could then further research in two places 1) through an online subscription to the Butte Silver Bow Public Archives, assembled in 2014 by librarians in

Butte, Montana, a tiny mining town once the home of many different immigrant communities in the late 19th-century, including my own relatives. And 2) an online ancestry site run by the Church of Latter Day Saints which stores genealogies, birth certificates, census materials, and death certificates. I then researched for a class I was taking in historical methods how my own family members between 1885 and 1890 (the records vary) were part of the very earliest Syro-Lebanese migration to the U.S. (The early period is marked as 1885–1914.)

The immigrants in my family were all listed as from "Syria," with a race marked "White" in the U.S. 1920 Census documents. Given the series of flip-flopping court cases between 1906 and 1917 that Sarah Gualtieri explores in *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian Diaspora*, which ended with the hard-won legal designation of White for Syrian immigrants, it's no surprise that Syrians were listed as White on the 1920 Census, as they had been in previous censuses (Jacobs, 2015). But, I was also interested that I found in the Butte Silver Bow Public Archives a list of several naturalization certificates for Syrians in 1896, a process granting or (assuming) whiteness before the definitive naturalization cases of the early 19th-century.

In the list of certificates of naturalization is a certain Joseph George, who is likely my great-grandfather from Syria and naturalized October 26, 1896. The official documents are inconsistent in showing my great-grandfather's place of birth: it was in 1885 in either Batroun, Lebanon, or Butte, Montana. Family records confirm the latter, him immigrating in 1886 as a baby with his father Antone and a step-mom, his mother having mysteriously died prior to immigration. Family lore has it that my great-great grandfather killed someone and had to flee to the U.S.; other strains of family lore say he killed his wife (Joseph's mother), since she died right before immigration and yet Antone had procured another wife in the same year for immigration.

Growing up with these stories of the Lebanese forefather who had committed violence and fled his homeland, I was struck by Linda Jacobs' suggestion in her meticulous *Strangers in the West* (the most thorough study yet of a Syrian colony in the U.S.), in which she notes she also had a story like this in her family. She suggests that such stories of Syrian-Lebanese murderous forefathers were common and constructed as part of processes of myth-making—in effect, told as exotic tales to American listeners.

Family oral stories about murderous patriarchs aside: I should mark I am assuming the Joseph George in the archive in Butte Montana, as naturalized in 1896, is my great-grandfather. It would be reasonable to expect more than one person with that name in a community of Syrian-Lebanese where "George" as a surname was common after immigration. Also, it is unclear to me if children would be recorded in naturalization papers (and he would have been around 11 years old). What is definitely evident from the Butte Silver Bow Public Archives is that in 1896 several immigrants in the Syrian-Lebanese community of my family, with my last name, were marked as from "Syria" and granted naturalization in 1896.

I began to ask: How can studying the early Syrian-Lebanese diaspora, including those like my own family who arrived in the U.S. when the Ottoman Empire was still in power (if greatly declining), reveal aspects of what whiteness meant in the U.S. in the late 1800's and early 1900s? My interest is not in just the legal categories (naturalization papers and court cases), but also how whiteness was psychically negotiated by these immigrants, and also how whiteness was performed and bequeathed generationally through assimilation.

As Tehranian argues in *Whitewashed: America's Invisible Middle Eastern Minority*, this historical moment of late 19th and early 20th century immigration into the U.S. was a time of significant shifts for the legal coding *and* performance of whiteness. Himself a practicing lawyer,

not a cultural theorist, his positing of whiteness as "performed" is a category he borrows from feminist theory's understanding of gender as performed (Butler, 1990). In his analysis, Tehranian argues that whiteness as a ruling conceptual and legal structure must be malleable, across specific moments and historical changes, so as to fit the needs of those who hold power. For instance, the racialization today of "Middle Easterners" in the U.S. is quite distinct from the kinds of racialization of early Syro-Lebanese immigrants. The existing scholarship suggests that the change in racialization has a great deal to do with the fact that the early waves of Syro-Lebanese identified as Christian (my own family was Maronite) and thus could leverage access to legal whiteness via proximity to Christianity. (Of course, legal granting of whiteness and practices of assimilation did not foreclose lived experiences of racialization, but it provided some protections and privileges.)

Later waves of Syro-Lebanese immigrants after WWI were majority Muslim, which changed the kinds of experiences of lived racialization and systemic racism happening in a nation-state ruled by Christian hegemonic structures. In other words, whiteness granted to *some* "Middle Easterners" (a racialized category created by colonial boundary making) has had a great deal to do with who can assimilate into religious norms. It also has to do with U.S. imperialism, claims to oil in the mid to late 20th-century, and the construction of the figure of the "terrorist" to aid war and occupations (Salaita, 2006).

In the earliest texts on early Syro-Lebanese immigration (Hitti, 1924; Kayal & Kayal, 1976; Naff, 1985), I read a focus on Christian identity of early immigrants as a way to negotiate their assimilation into US identity, which I am reading as part of assimilation into whiteness, following Gualtieri (2009). For example, Gualtieri examines naturalization court cases from 1906–1917 to show how early Syro-Lebanese immigrants mobilized their financial

resources and kinship networks to go to court and "prove" their whiteness, a process which almost always involved claims to Christianity.

You can also read for this language in Philip Hitti's 1924 *Syrians in America*, the first study of early Syrian immigrants of its kind. Notably, it was published seven years after the 1917 federal court case determined once and for all Syrians as legally "White." Hitti's highly romanticized, even idealized, narrative of Syrians gives clues into the particular formations of whiteness that were happening:

> "Syria and Syrians constitute the first land and the first people in Southwestern Asia who have entered into modern civilization. They stand alone in this. If Syria were an islanded- land, instead of being for four thousand years a thoroughfare of conquering people's, swept by many tides, it would be, in its place, as striking an example of progress as Japan." (p. 1)

I quote its beginning because of how it exemplifies the processes that were written into productions of whiteness and claims to citizenship and naturalization. As Gualtieri's *Between Arab and White* shows, Syrians claimed their access to Americanness by differentiating themselves from Southwestern Asia and the "Asiatic zone," and claiming themselves as contributors to "modern" (read: Christian European) civilization. In Hitti's opening narration, we see that Southwestern Asia is presented as backward, whereas Syrians are positioned as having always made major contributions to "civilization." From Gualtieri's research, we also know they positioned themselves as not Black with language that fed into anti-Black discourse.

In Chapter 1, Hitti goes on to explain that Syrians are not Turks or Arabs (this claim actually counters the early designations of Syro-Lebanese as Turks on many official papers). Hitti emphasizes that the adoption of Arabic tongue was recent, with the rise of Islam and 7th century Arab invasion. This telling of such a history positions Syro-Lebanese as not really Arab at all, but Semitic and the true remnant of Phoenician-Canaanites. He goes on to explain that they

have no sense of nationalism or internationalism, no political ambitions, but only love for family and clan and religion. He explains that just as Americans are born to nationality, Syrians are born to religion and intense religious feelings. Furthermore, the Maronite and Greek Orthodox even had an "immunity" against Islam, despite being "an island in a sea of Islam."

To Hitti, the Syrian character was essentially always the immigrant and trader, and coming to the U.S. is just another brave exploration, like the hundreds upon hundreds of years of Phoenician history. In this long migration story he tells, Syrians are always already embedded in European culture; and, furthermore, their origin is the Holy Land itself. Here, he briefly discusses a lower court case in St. Louis determining Syrians "alien" and not white. He responds to that case, how could this possibly be? —-explaining it is "almost amusing" the courts don't have basic Sunday school knowledge of the people of the holy land (p. 89). In this way, Syrians are actually *more* Christian than other "Americans," he argues.

Furthermore, he deems Americanization as a "spiritual" process that happens over generations (p. 99), but that Syrians are easiest to assimilate because they don't have prior political identification (p. 101), and their commitment to the church helps the "psychological" process to create national unity (p. 121). In other words, Syrians make perfect immigrants; they won't cause political tension, and they not only subscribe to Christianity, the dominant religion of the land, but are actually in direct lineage to original Christianity, and therefore have more of a claim to "civilization" than even non Syrian-Lebanese American Christians.

What Hitti's narrative obscures is that, according to Gualtieri (2009) and Bawardi (2015), early Syrian immigrants were actually quite politically minded—and they had to be between 1906 and 1917 to mobilize resources and networks to attain legal whiteness. But also, as both Gualtieri and Bawardi explore, Syro-Lebanese immigrants were invested in transnational

diasporic networks engaged in the implications of the decline of Ottoman empire, WWI, French and British colonialism in the Middle East, and the threats of Zionism.

Does Hitti position Syrian-Lebanese immigrants as politically indifferent, Christian, and easy to assimilate, in order—at some level—to protect their access to the hard won privileges of whiteness itself? My suggestion here is tentative. Further research would also need a much more specific analysis of intersections of Catholicism and immigration in this time period.[99] Much of the research on constructions of whiteness in the early 19th century investigates Protestantism (and Muscular Christianity) alongside whiteness; but the case of Syro-Lebanese claims to whiteness go through Catholicism, also a historically marginalized religious practice in a dominant Protestant history of the U.S. What seems to be evident, though, as suggested by Nash (1983), is that proximity to Christianity of any kind helped to fend of anti-Arab sentiment for

[99] For one fascinating study that links Protestant missionaries in Syria to Catholic Syrian immigration to the U.S., see Adele L. Younis' 1995 *The Coming of the Arabic-Speaking People to the United States*. This text was published in 1995 but written prior to 1970. (The author never published her extensive work in her lifetime; Philip Kayalm, the editor of the volume, argues Younis ought to have been the founder of Arab American studies, even more foundational than his own work.) Younis brings together studies in Syrian immigration with Western colonialism and specifically U.S. Protestant missionary work in Greater Syria. With Western missionaries in Syria in the mid 19th-century came also Western economic and political interests. Younis argues French powers wanted to convince Syrian Marionites that one could not be Arab and Christian at the same time, thereby co-opting their economic resources into European networks of power. Her study of Protestant Calvinist influences in Syria especially provide a needed context to understand how U.S. Christians narrated their missionary work in Syria as a return to convert "heathen" in the Holy Land. She goes on to argue that one of the outcomes of missionaries in Syria was a resurgence of Arabic Bibles, which then produced a resurgence in Arabic education and literature. She argues these interactions for Syrians with missionaries then catalyzed a desire to see America and prompted immigration. Especially pertinent, Younis historical work on Greater Syria in the years prior to immigration shows how Syrian-Lebanese Christian immigrants were already exposed to western imperial narratives of themselves as "western" through missionary contact, in contrast to Muslim Syrian-Lebanese immigrants read as backward and uncivilized.

these early immigrants; and also, the social practices of the church facilitated claims to group and ethnic identity, even as there was a high cost to Latinization (Kayal & Kayal, 1976).

* * *

As I did historical research for class, it catalyzed more personal reflections. I was watching the rise of white nationalism under a Trump presidency supported by white evangelicals, and I was thinking about how Christian hegemony—even in the form of brown Lebanese Catholics claiming whiteness—was so critical to racial formations.

I also, in the background of my scholarly work, felt a subtle subconscious psychic shifting, as though something I had initially excised to become a feminist critical race scholar was finding some new integrations as a feminist ethnic studies scholar. It was like a polaroid coming back into focus, but it was sensations within myself. I looked in the mirror and saw my olive skin. I saw other Lebanese women who actually did look like me and I noticed. I saw videos of myself teaching and realized, for the first time, how I talk very expressively with my hands, and that form of embodiment is straight from my father. (*Dad, do you have to be so exaggerated in how you move your hands and your arms about as you talk?* I thought as a junior higher. But of course, what I had read as dramatic, can also be read as quite characteristic to Lebanese and Arab modes of embodied communication.)

I just noticed in my own self there was more to notice. And it mattered to me was to do this work of self-recognition internally, to be present to it, but I saw no need to discuss it, nor did I feel there were any appropriates spaces to discuss it, except through my creative writing practices.

* * *

Another time I was home during my ethnic studies graduate training, a childhood picture falls to the ground from the table. My mom had been going through old photos. Two very dark skinned little girls with big curly dark hair and big brown eyes. One olive skinned child with straight blonde hair and hazel eyes in a purple jumper.

I wasn't going to comment on what I was thinking as that photo floated to the ground, but my mother said it: *Yep, you were the white one, Beebo*.

(Beebo is my childhood nickname.)

I can't tell you how much it was a relief finally to have simple language for a complex childhood feeling of confusing alleles!

* * *

Still, I noticed I wanted intellectual clarity and a kind of moral/ethical clarity about how to inhabit whiteness and dismantle it, instead of a murky psychosocial process of connecting within myself to sensations and feelings I had no words for. I also felt that as an ethnic studies scholar I wanted to speak to realities best described as multiracial lineage verses multiracial experience, which is a helpful distinction I found in Daphne Taylor-García's *The Existence of the Mixed Race Damnés* (2018). I was also thinking about how white people were discovering mixed ancestry through genetic testing, and the questions rising up in this cultural moment about that.

So, I wrote a blog post on how, if you are white taking DNA tests and discovering Black and brown ancestors, it is important to be aware of how whiteness has the psychic impulse to appropriate Black and brown experiences. I also discussed settler colonialism, racial science, Indigeneity, and Kim TallBear's *Native American DNA* (2013). I also used myself as an example: Isn't is ironic that 23andMe told me I am 35% North African and Asian, when these are the very racial categories that Syro-Lebanese went to court to fight to gain whiteness!

I also described in the post that I identify as white, and that I know I am white because people (mostly) read me as white. I also know I am white because I do not experience racism or do the psychic labor racism coerces. I did not state but I did imply it would be an act of appropriation to claim multiracial experiences, that multiracial ancestry is not multiracial experience.

While I agree with that statement in some register, what if you don't yet have language to recognize your own multiracial experiences? That question is what seemed to linger for me. I thought also of how K-12 teachers I train might read my post; I wondered if my post would open or foreclose their being able to support their multiracial students who possibly never see their experiences represented. I thought of the ambiguous experiences, like of my sister's childhood, that my post rendered invisible and unimportant because I was anxious as an ethnic studies scholar trying to finish a dissertation and I needed personal and theoretical clarity. I thought about how the post was subconsciously motivated to quiet my emerging internal predicaments: that if how I feel about my layered selfhood does match how I am read, then what most matters for feminist coalitions is not being appropriative, and that should drive my methods of self-understanding and my teaching and research methods.

But something still felt viscerally wrong—even though my clarity of words and categories on the screen felt intellectually exhilarating (as clarity can feel, after one has been amidst anxious liminality).

What happened next was this: Friends reached out to give me feedback. (And I would take the blog down within a few hours—but friends had already read it.)

The friends in conversation with me are people I trust to give careful thought to racial injustice, anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, and dismantling white supremacy. Two are

multiracial, and read as white or women of color depending on the context and who is doing the reading; one did not grow up in the U.S., and while they study race in a U.S. context, they also have different lived reference points for racial classifications.

"I have never ever read you as "white," as in fully white white. So, it is super interesting to me that you explained yourself as white."

"Kim, I have only ever read you as multiracial, so your post really surprised me."

"I do not read you as white but I hear you refer to yourself that way, so I make mental notes to remind myself to respect how you describe your identity."

I was fascinated that three friends who had known me for several years (one, 20 years) were now telling me this. It was very different than the occasional stranger asking *What are you*? I also felt no real surprise by my friends' feedback, though not feeling surprise was extremely surprising to feel. I felt a psychic relief. Like there was space to just be me, that the internal negotiations could rest now, that, finally, many things could be true at once.

Most importantly, I felt like I had community who could have conversations with me about complicated, layered realities: family histories, feminist coalition building, whiteness, and accountability to people of color to dismantle white supremacy. Also, what does the word multiracial mean? Do my experiences fit inside that word? And what are these memories, these stories, all these experiences outside a binary that I have not been able to talk about, and thus these experiences have been hard to think about, too?

In the course of these conversations, I was with a friend and her partner at dinner, and talking about my blog, she expressed, "It was surprising to me—I have always read you as multiracial," and then her partner chimed in, staring at me perplexed, "I *only* read white when I look at you." Then she and I chimed back, "That's because you aren't mixed!"

Inhabiting multiple categories is a reading practice that offers a form of recognition. I have found there is a series a series of psychic negotiations, internal re-negotiations, and strange suppressions of lived experiences when there is not access to interpersonal recognitions. I also found that at a psychic level, being able to be recognized by friends who are themselves holding multiracial experiences feels like relief, but it is also not unlike the relief I felt to hear my mom say, *yep you were the white one*.

It is all there, layered, at once.

For me, as someone who has always needed words to understand myself, I need language to hold multiple experiences, and then I can start to understand and theorize the layers of psychosocial experience. That I realized I had a community[100] with reading practices for layers of myself helped me connect—and instantly— to locate an old intense feeling in my stomach. That feeling is like a capsule of grief I need to hold intact until it has space to break open, that I still need to titrate, until I know what to do with it. Because I don't fully know how to name why it matters yet, but I know it is connected to grief, loss, racial formation, whiteness, and patriarchy's numbness, addictions, and suppression of feelings.

I know I have erased my own intuition because I had no language to feel it, and I am not sure I am ready to feel the grief, anyways. I know a hundred times in writing this chapter I have asked why ¼ matters? ¾ white + ¼ "between Arab and white" (Gualtieri's phrase) means my mathematical calculation tells me this visceral feeling I sense internally is irrelevant. But having people recognize me, even when I didn't know I needed that, connected me to my body and

[100] This chapter's integration of finding more language for personal experiences and my previous historical research would not have been possible without conversations with Mariko Cavey. I thank her for her emotional labor; her generous sharing of her lived insights on multiracial experiences; her expertise in education; and her commitment and partnership in feminist anti-racist work.

helped me set aside my mathematical calculation long enough to feel something that will take time to feel.

Steven Salaita makes a short but interesting critique in *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: Where it Comes From and What it Means for Politics Today* (2006) of those ½ or ¼ Lebanese descent (3rd generation), who after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, found a return to Arab identity. Salaita equates this phenomenon with white people who claim being part Cherokee and yet have no connection to Cherokee culture, kin, or history (p. 75).

I wonder, though, as someone who is trained as both a therapist and in feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods, if there are other ways to think through why white-identified Arab descendants might want to reclaim some aspect or memory of their memory? Certainly, appropriation is a central category to foreground in the analysis, given how whiteness functions psychically and interpersonally as a form of pervasive and violent entitlement. At the same time, a psychodynamic approach might also recognize that processes of whiteness and patriarchy are psychically fragmenting—and, perhaps some folks of ½ or 1/4 Lebanese descent (like myself, or my father) are also subconsciously driven to understand what has been disavowed in their own family relationships by becoming American.

I know that in doing this project, there was actually many moments of recognition and healing, especially vis-a-vis my relationship with my own dad and late grandfather, whose behaviors I cannot really understand outside of recognizing their place in a family lineage of assimilation. That sentence is not the same as my claiming any experience in racism or in being racialized as brown; but it is to say that whiteness is produced in families inter-generationally, just as it is produced structurally, and it is perhaps useful to understand how it is produced and at what cost, especially in patriarchal gendered formations.

My questions here are perhaps not unlike some of the questions being asked in *This Bridge* by Latina and Chicana writers on access to whiteness within their women of color identity, but at the same time, my questions are very different, too, because I am asking about multiracial identity within white identity. Still, there is a shared impulse of writing toward "theory in the flesh," as Cherríe Moraga puts it. For example, Moraga— who had changed her name from Cherríe Lawrence (Moraga is her mother's name)—was writing to explain her lived process of reclaiming the joy of being Chicana. She repeats the lines in "For the Color of My Mother" that "I am a white girl gone brown" (p. 12). Elsewhere in the collection, she wrestles out loud with having the "skin of my Anglo father" (p. 23), while editing a text on women of color feminism, "And yet, I don't really understand first-hand what it feels like being shitted on for being brown" (p. 25), though she also knows racialization is deeply entwined with class. She also writes, "I have many times questioned my right to even work on an anthology which is to be written 'exclusively by Third World women' (p. 28). Still, she knew Anglo culture had taught her to disown herself, she knew she felt "bleached," and she knew she had a lot to learn from other writers in the collection who "know a hell of a lot more than I do about racism, as experienced in the flesh, as revealed in the flesh of their writings" (p. 29).

To be clear, I am not intending to imply my experience is the same as Moraga's as she navigates white and brown, Spanish and English-speaking roots, and reclaiming her woman of color identity (p. 29). But I am pointing toward a sharing of epistemology and psychosocial method—that she was scared to take a risk and name all these issues for herself (p. 29), as I also am, within my respective mixed white/Arab-American formations. But I observe that such risk-taking modeled by Moraga—her "theory in the flesh" at 27-years-old— was precisely part of the power of *This Bridge*. In the preface to the first edition she describes why the book was written:

"It is about physical and psychic struggle. It is about intimacy, a desire for life between all of us, not settling for less than freedom even in the most private aspects of our lives. A total vision" (xli). Here, I observe that *This Bridge* has no Arab or Arab-American writers as part of its vision, but if they had been included, I wonder what they would have written in this time period of its publication (which, I note, was one year prior to Israel's invasion of Lebanon). What was their "theory in the flesh"?

For me, as a theorist of feminist ethnic studies psychosocial archive, I see a route into knowing that is different from masculinist formations of knowledge that often excise vulnerable feeling and sensation. I see methods that make possible Keating's threshold identities. Experience is not transparent—and that is precisely the point of needing these psychosocial writing, teaching, and learning methods that helps us theorize experience within material histories.

I perceive a method in which grief and grief labor hold knowledge. For example, I feel visceral textures of loss in my father's lineage that cannot be disentangled from gendered, religious, and racial formations: I just know that since immigration, men in that family line have numbed pain, and the result of that has been deep, and I carry that grief, the way you carry pain that patriarchy doesn't allow to be grieved, the consequences of which reached me in intimately psychic shaping ways, most of which I have chosen *not* to write about here. But I also sense my body knows what I know if and when I choose in my own agency—because feeling embodied agency is part of healing— to make space for that knowing.

What I am doing here is what I invite my students also to do—namely, to link feminist ethnic studies learning to their own identity formation, using various creative expressions and techniques, amidst historical and theoretical research, to navigate their learning. This kind of

contemplative-critical writing is rooted in embodied experience and sensations but the felt experience changes, emerges, and re-emerges through the act of writing, reading, research, and theorizing. I believe that this work of the "interior intersubjective," in the words of Hortense Spillers, is what feminist ethnic studies psychosocial methods make space for.

These methods are transformative because they recognize grief knowledge, our trauma labor, our senses and flesh, our joy, our kinship, and our belonging/unbelonging. They make space to understand differences within the self so we might be able to show up for the work of partnering across difference in our communities with more understanding of how these structures work in/on/through our lives.

These methods also expand our toolkit to read historical change over time at many scales. According to Keating, based on her reading practices with Anzaldúa, Gunn Allen, and Lorde's writing practices, when we practice perceiving outside binaries—when we are willing to enter liminality—we gain tools of analysis not accessible inside a dominant western binary system of thought. Writing into how identity comes to be shaped is a practice of the threshold that expands out from the personal into the political and the historical. I see so much of feminist ethnic studies writing as precisely this practice of inhabiting emerging thresholds. I also view the psychosocial theory as offering the epistemic methods that hold the process.

One of my goals as an educator has been to think carefully about how feminist ethnic studies theory links intra-psychic, intersubjective, and political change processes, so that that I might center these methods and develop pedagogical tools attentive to transformation. My focus on the psychosocial is thus a strategy for theorizing and practicing change at multi-scales. It is also a reading practice with a set of texts, one that attunes to connections feminist ethnic studies writers have explicitly and implicitly drawn amongst the psychic, inter-psychic, material,

political, spiritual, and social realities. Finally, a psychosocial analytic is a lens for understanding the forms of intellectual labor within feminist ethnic studies traditions, including the distinctly psychic labor of creating knowledge that dislodges dominant narratives.

This dissertation has been interdisciplinary and indebted to many lines of scholarship: notably, I integrated previous research questions in psychodynamic studies and religious studies, but it was in turning toward and centering feminist ethnic studies theories of the psyche and the social that allowed me to gather all the pieces of what I had been trying to re-think (and re-feel). I have argued there is a mode of rigor within feminist ethnic studies history that offers an intellectual toolkit for naming why these connections amongst the psychic, intersubjective, and structural conditions are so critical to how we know, write, and teach through systems of violence. There is a legacy of possibilities for our work of imagining and co-creating this world.

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