

What's Love Got to Do with It? White Women, Black Women, and Feminism in the Movement Years

This article is based on a study of race in the second wave of the women's movement. It examines two socialist feminist organizations in Boston in the late 1960s and 1970s, Bread and Roses and the Combahee River Collective. Bread and Roses was a socialist feminist group whose membership was, with exceptions, white. The Combahee River Collective was one of the most important black socialist feminist groups at the time—indeed, due to its articulation of a black lesbian socialist feminist politics, of the postwar period. The larger work of which this is a part asks why an integrated women's movement did not develop and focuses on black and white feminists. My research has made me aware that participants' memories of what happened often seemed to supplant what actually happened, if the latter could be ascertained. For example, I could not unravel "the role" of women in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which is critical for understanding subsequent developments in gender consciousness among black and white women and which has been contested for more than thirty-five years. I eventually concluded that interpretations and memories of women's experiences in SNCC were, or had become, as important as, or indistinguishable from, the lived experience. Historical contestation is as critical as what occurred.

I undertook this work because I was puzzled by the ubiquitous charge that the white women's movement was racist. The main story line of youthful, second-wave, radical feminism has been that it was a white movement due to its racism: black women were not welcome. I had been an

Thanks to Nancy Cott, Judith Stacey, Robin D. G. Kelley, Paul Breines, and, especially, Alice Echols for suggestions on this article. Rochelle Ruthchild, Libby Bouvier, and Nancy Richard helped with Boston archives and memories, as did Louise Rice, Tess Ewing, and the other women with whom I talked. Patricia Arend contributed to the research. The big and little readers and editors of *Signs* contributed immeasurably. I am grateful to everyone who is not mentioned here but who over the years has helped me with this project, a book finally on its way. I hope you do not mind waiting until then.

early women's liberation activist, a socialist feminist in *Bread and Roses* in Boston, and I knew that we were not racist, in the sense that we took antiracist positions and were conscious of race and class. After the SNCC years, interpretations of the troubles between white and black women continue to be strikingly divergent. For example, some white women are convinced that interracial romantic relationships between black men and white women in the civil rights and black power movements damaged relationships between the women: heterosexual black women were hurt and resentful. Others recall that whites were no longer welcome in the black freedom movement, that they were summarily expelled. As feminists, they recall making overtures to African Americans and being rejected. Some believe that black women "race baited" the white women's movement—used the small number of women of color in it to discredit feminism. White feminists recall, too, that there were African-American women in the early women's movement, which there were, although not many (Polatnick 1995; Roth 1999; Baxandall 2001). Most black feminists tell of racism in the women's movement. They recount being rejected or ignored or objectified by white women. Black feminists felt that feminism was not relevant to their lives as black and primarily working-class women and that white women were insensitive to their concerns, often insulting and obtuse. They suggest that privileged white feminists could focus only on issues of personal concern, unable to comprehend that for black feminists race and class were as important as sex discrimination. Can these contradictory histories and memories, in which gender, race, and class are central themes, be reconciled?

Part of the story of this work has been my own slowness to recognize assumptions inherent in my research questions. White nostalgia is prominent among them. The promise of the early sixties shaped me and others of my generation of whites. I have not easily let go of a humanistic, universal, racially integrated sisterhood and brotherhood ideal where, hand in hand, we create a benign and just world, a vision I took from the civil rights movement.¹ And, for many of us, the new left, socialism, and Marxism reinforced a universalism that the early civil rights movement embodied. Marilyn Frye writes of the early women's liberation movement, "the influences of Marxist-derived class analysis and of liberal-derived egalitarianism supported the idea that commonalities, likenesses, and equality

¹ Cornel West says, "I think when we look back on the civil rights movement, what we see driving people spiritually is exactly the desire for a transcendent connection—a form of universalism . . . people were able to link their particularity to a deeper universality that was always in the making, but never fixed and always aspirational" (1991, 30).

among the participating women would be the key to their political identity and unity" (Frye 1996, 1006). Other feminists remark, "We imagined, naively, that our 'I' was 'we'" (Greene 1993, 11); "we thought all women were us, and we were all women. Of course we knew better even then" (DuPlessis 1993, 106). The 1950s, too, contributed to my ideals. The liberalism I imbibed in my northern, white, middle-class, suburban family and in the larger society abstractly embraced the value of American tolerance and acceptance of one another regardless of race, which was ironic in the midst of a life and death struggle against southern racism. Color-blindness, our supposed sameness, moved me. I remember reading and rereading the book version of "The Family of Man" photography exhibit. Edward Steichen curated the 1955 Museum of Modern Art exhibit from which was made a book that found its way to "most middle-class American living rooms in the 1950s and 1960s" (Hirsch 1997, 48). In Steichen's words, the exhibit "was conceived as a mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life—as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world"; it stressed the "universal brotherhood of man" (Hirsch 1997, 49; see also Sandeen 1995). As an adolescent, I identified with the nine brave black teenagers who, accompanied by the National Guard for months, integrated the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. I was horrified at southern white racists. I wanted to befriend the students. My research questions have been shaped by these ideas, and I have been slow in revising them, which is part of the story I tell. I yearned for racial integration and a universalism that, significantly, I never experienced. White feminists embraced identity politics by the late sixties, but we simultaneously harbored a political image of universal community that made little sense to women who were not like us. Feminism inherited, generated, and struggled with these contradictions.

I began to revisit the sixties and the women who were engaged in social movements for social change precisely because it seemed a moment of possibility for cross-racial bonds on a mass scale. Activists carried the civil rights-inspired image of a truly interracial community with them into the student, antiwar, and feminist movements, although, after the 1968 murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, the possibility was all but lost.² I wonder, though, whether it was primarily whites who innocently embraced that image, which raises a revealing question. Was it primarily white youth who were interested in interracial links and movements? And closer to

² Eldridge Cleaver wrote, "The assassin's bullet not only killed Dr. King; it killed a period of history. It killed a hope, and it killed a dream" (1995, 171).

home, are the questions I raise in this research, or the way I originally framed them as the lost opportunities and misunderstandings between women, of concern to me because I am a white woman who came of age in the sixties? Are these the romantic questions of a middle-aged, middle-class white woman who cannot let go of the early civil rights movement's goals of integration, interracial harmony, community, and even love? Did I believe that black and white women were "the same," and what does that mean? Is this another case of a white woman innocently longing for racial togetherness who does not take responsibility for understanding her own complicity in the racial divide, particularly in feminism, by ignoring differences of power, especially her own in relation to African-American women?

It is significant that many white civil rights movement activists remember the early sixties as the high point of their lives. For those who write about it, crossing the black/white racial divide in political work, interracial friendships, cooperation, hope, and devotion to racial justice transformed everything. Their lives became meaningful in an American culture rigid with repressive racial and gender rules; it moved them and moves them still. The way they tell it, the experiences have never been surpassed. They are emotional and eloquent about the beauty of their time in Mississippi or elsewhere in the South. Listen to Casey Hayden, who, after the civil rights movement, longed for it profoundly: "The movement today is commonly known as the civil rights movement, but it was considerably more than that. To me, it was everything: home and family, food and work, love and a reason to live. When I was no longer welcome there, and then when it was no longer there at all, it was hard to go on." She continues, "And we did love each other so much. We were living in a community so true to itself that all we wanted was to organize everyone into it, make the whole world beloved with us, make the whole world our beloved" (1987, 8–9). Another participant describes listening to the civil rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome," "when its words come pouring forth, 'The truth will make us free . . .,' 'We'll walk hand in hand . . .,' and most of all, 'Black and white together,' I feel the old, choked, aching joy and, for a second, the old leap of hope, boundless hope. *We shall overcome*" (Watters 1971, 57).³ Lise Vogel, a civil rights movement volunteer, new leftist, antiwar activist, and socialist feminist put it this way: "In Mississippi I knew the transcendent moments

³ Some young southern blacks also look back on the civil rights movement with reverence. Curtis Hayes, a SNCC activist, says of the movement, "I was in heaven for a minute"; also see the recollections of Endesha Ida Mae Holland (both in the 1994 film *Freedom on My Mind* by Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford).

in which Blacks and whites seemed truly to come together in struggle." She continued, "In subsequent years the gap between the permanence of racism and the movement's vision of justice, community and love produced in me a kind of enraged mourning—a grief to which it is difficult to see an end" (1995, 17, 18). Vivian Rothstein wrote, "Freedom Summer took us all past the segregation that defines American life—the divisions of Black and White, rich and poor, northern and southern. Connecting us in pursuit of a larger moral purpose, it made us bigger than ourselves" (1994–95, 11).

Such idealism, a romanticization of interracial harmony in the civil rights movement, is not common among African Americans. Most did not see it that way. They wanted to be free; they wanted equal opportunity, justice, and peace, to be able to live any life they chose. Integration was not necessarily the goal; neither was building community with whites. Equality was. For African Americans, "loss" would be more accurately employed to refer to the demise of the promise of racial justice rather than to the ideal of integration. Or, perhaps, ambivalence is more accurate; African Americans were not immune to the dream of integration. But, by the late sixties and early seventies, when African Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asian Americans, women, and gays and lesbians, among other groups, recognizing their marginalization and subordination, organized on the basis of their own group characteristics, often joyfully, integration was far from their minds. With the assassinations, repression, and continuing brutality of the war in Vietnam, it was difficult to maintain integration hopes. I shared in these changes, but they were chastening realizations nonetheless since politics became a great deal more frightening. Idealism had lost its place.

I began to wonder whether I was perhaps asking the wrong questions. Instead of grieving for lost interracial connection among women, which in fact was problematic even in SNCC, a more promising strategy consisted of examining white and black feminists' political histories as a way to understand why we were unsuccessful in crossing the color line. I also came to believe that I had to—we have to—give all political feminists, white and women of color, more credit for valiantly struggling against gender, race, and class hierarchy and for creating radical challenges to U.S. society. The image of community that I "missed" could not have lasted precisely for the reasons radical political activists understood by the late 1960s: U.S. capitalism's business is not equality, justice, freedom, or community. We often forgot to apply that insight to our own fledgling organizations and relationships, blaming each other and mourning instead (DuPlessis and Snitow 1998; Breines 1999). Finally, I am a white feminist re/remembering and

reconstructing our gendered and raced histories. I undoubtedly recreate a fuller story of Bread and Roses than of the Combahee River Collective because I was in Bread and Roses, and, because I retell the story chronologically, white feminism appears, again, to be the norm with black feminism the “difference.” In fact, they shared a great deal as radical white and black feminists separating themselves from male movements, influencing one another in Boston and across the country, and struggling against sexism and racism. At the same time, they have distinct race and class histories. I offer an unavoidably asymmetrical intervention on a topic filled with silence, resentment, and uncertainty (Breines 1996). In Susan Stanford Friedman’s words, “I cannot accept the notion that the racial privilege of my whiteness should enforce my silence about race and ethnicity. . . . The landmines are everywhere—my own ignorances based on racial privilege and the rush of others to dismiss, censor, not hear, condemn, withdraw. Yet I ask you to hear me out. I offer these reflections in the spirit of dialogue—a precondition . . . for growth and change in the academy and feminist movement” (1998, 38).

Bread and Roses

Bread and Roses members’ median age was twenty-five years old, and they were highly educated—most had finished college, and a good number had some graduate education or graduate degrees. They were white, many came from liberal families with at least one professional parent, and they grew up in large east coast urban areas.⁴ Most were single and/or childless.⁵

Bread and Roses was announced formally in the early fall of 1969, the “first socialist women’s organization,” according to women’s liberation movement historian Alice Echols (1989, 330, n. 172). The organization was named after the women textile workers’ slogan of the Lawrence, Massachusetts, strike of 1912. In 1967 women had begun meeting in a variety of settings to discuss and write about women’s subordination, particularly

⁴ According to Ann Hunter Popkin (1978, 29), the average age in 1969 was 24.3 years old; the median age was 25 years. Her study was based on a sample of 71. Kristine Rosenthal says the majority of the women were between 25 and 29 years old and that 77 percent of those who answered her questionnaire came from large east coast urban areas. Her study was based on a random sample of 150 members of Bread and Roses (Rosenthal 1972, 22, 21).

⁵ According to Rosenthal 1972, 23–24, 54.7 percent never married, 27.6 percent were currently married, 10.6 percent were separated, 7.0 percent were divorced, and 60 percent of the women who had been married had children, usually one child under the age of 5, which made child care a significant concern.

by movement men. Based on political activism in SNCC, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the new left and antiwar movement, and in some cases their red-diaper-baby backgrounds (their parents had been members of the Communist Party), many of the women had already identified themselves as socialists and were struggling with the concept of socialist feminism. There were, of course, other new women's groups in Boston as well, particularly young radical feminists who were an important part of the feminist landscape. In 1968, some of these young feminists organized Cell 16/Female Liberation and within the year put out the first issue of *No More Fun and Games* (Dunbar 1998).

Several regional meetings took place in 1968, one in Sandy Springs, Maryland, and the next in November in Chicago.⁶ Many who attended had known each other through movement work. They met to discuss the formation of an autonomous women's movement, unaffiliated with the male or mixed movement. An enthusiastic response greeted Boston attendees who returned from Chicago to report on the development of a national women's movement, and through word of mouth, meetings were organized (see interview with Bread and Roses members Wini Breines, Kris Rosenthal, Beth Rimanoczy, and Eleanor Stephens in *Hysteria* 1971, S3-S4; see also Popkin 1978, 45). In May of 1969, a number of informal women's groups of varying perspectives organized a female liberation conference at Emmanuel College in Boston. To the surprise of the organizers, 500 women attended. During the summer, large meetings were organized by and for women who would form Bread and Roses in the fall. After that, "for over two years, about six hundred women met, talked, wrote, made posters, yelled, designed courses, organized, made speeches, learned karate, had conferences, marched, wrote songs, sang, changed public opinion, changed

⁶ The small women's liberation conference held in Sandy Springs, Maryland, has taken on an infamous significance because of white women's discussion of black women. In an appendix to her book, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, Alice Echols published the section of the proceedings devoted to how the fledgling women's liberation movement should relate to African-American women (1989, 369-77). In Kimberly Springer's words, the transcript is "riddled with misguided ideas about Black women and feminism" (1999, 66). It shows that white women did not trust black feminists, believing they were not really feminists or that they would be disruptive. Their anxiety toward black women is obvious, and their inability to "recognize the complexity of race and gender oppression" was manifest (1999, 66). It is not clear how significant the conference discussion was then, and I suspect it was never important to black women at the time. But it articulates white women's confusion and apprehension. Echols says that "the drama would be played out many times in the future, for the issue of black women's relationship to women's liberation continued to haunt the movement" (Echols 1989, 106, and see also 104-8; Umansky 1996, 93-94; Valk 1996, 218-19; Dunbar 1998, 99-102).

their lives, changed their sexuality, changed jobs, taught, wrote pamphlets, sent out newsletters, talked to workers, talked to high school students, talked to housewives, talked to their men, demanded, changed laws, changed tradition, changed expectations, changed themselves" (Rosenthal 1972, 192).⁷

A first draft of the Bread and Roses statement of purpose read as follows:

Bread and Roses is an organization of socialist women. We believe that a socialist revolution is a necessary precondition to the liberation of women, although we know that we will not be liberated unless we continually fight against the oppression of women. For this reason we believe that a woman's movement must be autonomous in order to fight against male supremacy as it exists in all institutions, and in its structural basis, the bourgeois family. We believe that capitalism has to be overthrown to create a socialist society, which means one free of all forms of exploitation, racism, imperialism and male supremacy. (Rosenthal 1972, 59)

Bread and Roses women struggled to define themselves in relation to the mixed or male left. Leslie Cagan, a recent college graduate in New York City at the time and later a member of the Boston Women's Union, an organization into which Bread and Roses evolved, states, "We had to deal with the fact that the Panthers were being shot down, we couldn't ignore the war in Vietnam. I didn't know how to do it, how to pull it all together. So I felt and acted as if I were several different people all at once; I was an anti-war activist; I was a Panther support person; I was a feminist and my women's group probably had the biggest impact on me" (Cagan 1979, 241). Women divided between those who believed that capitalism was at the heart of women's oppression, which meant that they maintained their connections to the male left, and the feminists, those who ultimately prevailed, who argued that women should not continue their subordination in the left, that not only capitalism but male supremacy was responsible for women's oppression. This is often referred to as the politico/feminist split.⁸ Bread and Roses is not easily categorized; members maintained ties to the

⁷ The organization existed from 1969 to 1971, for only two years. This is not unusual for socialist feminist organizations. See Hansen 1990 for a discussion of how short-lived women's unions were—the two longest, the Chicago Women's Liberation Union and Baltimore Women's Union, lasted seven and a half and ten years, respectively, but most lasted only two or three years—and after 1975 most of them disappeared. See Popkin 1978, 226.

⁸ See Morgan (1970) 2000; Piercy 1970; Echols 1989, 51–137; Rabine 1993, 211–25; Valk 1996, 207–8; Roth 1998, 76–105; Rosen 2000, 94–140.

left but recognized the significance of "patriarchy" and became more feminist over time.

The immediate impetus for organizing Bread and Roses was women's subordinate positions in the movements and men's disdain and arrogance in the face of women's concerns. In the words of two Bread and Roses members who had come through the movements of the 1960s, "We have tried to voice our opinions as members of male-dominated organizations. We are tired of trying to out-argue men. . . . Sexist attitudes are so deeply ingrained in even movement males that our words are not strong enough to change their thought processes or actions" (Gordon and Popkin 1972, 307). They organized, too, because women's equality was on the social and political agenda in the postwar period due to women's growing labor force participation. The contradictions between the culture they had grown up in, in which white middle-class women were expected to be wives and mothers, and the growing opportunities available to them were profound. Politically active for years, they were ready for a transformation that recognized them as gendered subjects. Cagan suggests the divisive pressures that both white and black left feminists faced as they moved out of the mixed movements toward feminism. There was more at stake for black women, but for both groups the necessity of organizing on their own behalf, of feminism, created divided loyalties. This was, however, not an experience they consciously shared. Black women distrusted white women's rupture with white men, understanding that white women had less to lose than did black women in a break with black men and that the black community was already ruptured in dangerous ways. As the 1970s progressed, splintered loyalties were less characteristic of younger women who had been less deeply involved with the new left or the Black Power and Black Arts movements and/or were lesbians.

From Bread and Roses's founding statement to its members' support for the Black Panther Party to their concern with outreach to poor and working-class women, a consciousness that was broader than their own personal fulfillment or equality with men is evident. "Among politicians and socialist feminists, the mandate to respond to the material situations of black women had always been emphasized, at least in writing," writes Lauri Umansky (1996, 107). She notes that in 1970 Bread and Roses argued that feminists must pay particular attention to population control that concentrates on nonwhites; to an education system that miseducates about women, working people, and people of color; and to the establishment of admissions policies at schools and universities that give preferential treatment to women from races and classes that have been discriminated against. In addition, a national network of socialist feminist

publications and connections expanded, bringing Bread and Roses news of other socialist feminist activity. All were engaged with issues of gender, capitalism, race, and class. About another important socialist feminist organization, the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU), Margaret Strobel writes, "Their evolving ideology embraced antisexist, antiracist, and anticapitalist sentiments and affirmed lesbian rights. Thus, CWLU activists envisioned societal, not only personal, transformation" (1995, 53).

I am not suggesting that young socialist feminists were not focused on their own oppression and on efforts to liberate themselves as individuals and women. This took the form of redefining female sexuality, the family, and personal relationships. The latter is the story of radical second-wave feminism with which we are most familiar—white women, who thought little about race or class, engaged in male bashing, experimented sexually, became lesbians, attacked the nuclear family and housewives, and learned to be strong, free of men's judgment and sometimes of men and of hegemonic standards of beauty and femininity. They became feminists based on their own lives and wanted to change those lives. They were often most energized by the realizations they made in the sphere of what we usually think of as personal life, but they were deeply concerned with the politics of inequality, racism, exploitation, and imperialism.

Bread and Roses members were involved in antiwar activity, particularly draft counseling, support for the Black Panthers, developing health groups concerned with women's treatment at the hands of doctors, providing mental and physical health services, campaigning for the legalization of abortion and against sterilization abuse, raising consciousness about violence against women, celebrating International Women's Day, organizing secretaries and child-care centers, picketing and demonstrating against institutions that discriminated against women, researching and publicizing information about women's sexuality, exploring their own, living communally, writing for and publishing newspapers and newsletters, and learning and teaching auto mechanics and karate. Some of the collectives were devoted to organizing women different from their mostly middle-class selves—working-class women, high school girls, women of color. A women's center was established in Cambridge after feminists took over a Harvard University building at 888 Memorial Drive and demanded space for women on International Women's Day, 1971. They sought to involve surrounding community women and envisioned a center utilized by all women. By the following year, a center had been set up, with no help

from Harvard.⁹ It is the longest-running women's center in the United States, a space where the Combahee River women met. A thriving women's school was founded that operated out of the women's center. It offered courses in topics including "In America They Call Us Dykes," "Her Story" (women's history), "History of Black Struggle and White Racial Response," "Jewish History and Culture," "Fix-It," "The Capitalist System," "Marriage and the Family," "Native American Women," "The War in Indochina," "Lesbianism," "China," and "Introduction to Black History." The book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1973) grew out of a course first offered at the school.¹⁰

I sketch these projects because this article seeks to re/remember second-wave socialist feminism. A more flamboyant anti-male or cultural radical feminism is associated with youthful feminist activism in this period, but, as Ellen DuBois notes, left-wing women founded the radical women's liberation movement (DuBois 1991). And while some white socialist feminists were anti-male and extreme in their positions, their antiracist politics based on equality for women of all classes and races and sexual orientation get lost in the telling. Feminist historians have recently queried the revision of the history of second-wave feminism. Lise Vogel points to a straw women's history, to a trend toward "flattening" the complicated history of second-wave women's liberation. As a former activist, she "especially resented the common assertion that issues of race and class were not of interest to feminists until the 1980s" (1995, 100–101). Marilyn Frye writes that

memory and research both attest to the fact that various differences among women were very salient indeed, from the moment solidarity among women was conceived. To mention just a few examples: there were issues both about class and sexuality articulated within (and

⁹ Women's School records, M23, 1971–92, University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections, Northeastern University Library, Boston; Cambridge Women's Center Herstory, 1996, taped discussion with Sue Lyons, Judy Norris, Mary Rowe, and Rochelle Ruthchild of 888 Memorial Drive building takeover for a women's center (Ruthchild possession); interview with Laura Whitehorn, 1976, David Holmstrom collection, archives, University of Massachusetts, Boston (photocopy in author's possession).

¹⁰ Flyers for the Women's School, March 5, 1972, and Fall Term, 1972, Women's Center School (author's possession). In the words of Susan Brownmiller, "*Our Bodies, Ourselves* sold more than a million copies and earned more than a half a million dollars in royalties during its first five years of commercial distribution, and [it] became the premier source book for a generation of sexually active young women, crossing all lines of race and class" (1999, 185).

from without) the National Organization of Women in the early 1970s; the Furies Collective battled out class issues; more leftist women's groups such as Bread and Roses attended actively to issues of race and class; black women, in and out of the Black Power and Black Muslim movements, were discussing the relations of feminism and black women to those movements. (1996, 1006, n. 17)¹¹

Especially significant after the Stonewall rebellion in 1969, lesbianism created tensions among white feminists. The primarily heterosexual socialist feminist movement's relationship to lesbians in their midst was often as divisive and wrenching as the conflict between the male left and feminism. Difference in sexual preference raised homophobia and fears of dividing and discrediting the young women's liberation movement. In fact, lesbianism was probably the first real experience of difference among white feminists, and they had difficulty dealing with it. They devoted so much time to the issue that those outside the movement often saw sexuality and lesbianism as its major preoccupations. Young socialist feminist lesbians came out publicly and demanded to be acknowledged by their sisters. They created new identities, often confronting straight women about their fears and dependence on and connections to men. Leslie Cagan continues her narrative about her conflicts between the left and feminism by recounting her developing identity as a lesbian, which complicated not only her own understanding of herself but relationships in the women's movement. Lesbians were able to cut their ties to men and heterosexual culture in ways that threatened straight women. The gap between them often appeared large and potentially dangerous to feminist solidarity. Socialist feminists did not ignore differences between women, although sometimes they tried to, and when they did not, they, like most others of that time, were not particularly successful in negotiating them (Echols 1989, 210–41; Valk 1996, chap. 6; Jay 1999).

A Bread and Roses document includes a poem that begins, "Four revolutionary sisters / Erika [*sic*] Huggins / Rose Smith / Margaret Huggins / Frances Carter / 344 days of confinement / No trial yet." Bread and Roses members and socialist feminists around the country engaged in Black Panther Party support work, including a November 22, 1969, New Haven women's march and rally to protest the imprisonment of the Panther women. The long poem was part of a flyer for the demonstration in New Haven, Connecticut, to free the jailed Panther women. This was one of the first large-scale militant demonstrations of the women's liberation move-

¹¹ See Bordo 1990, 141; DuPlessis and Snitow 1998; and Baxandall and Gordon 2000.

ment. The flyer ends with "Sisterhood Is Powerful." Another Panther rally flyer, signed by "Sisters from women's liberation in New Haven, Boston, and New York," begins, "To Our Sisters: Women in the women's liberation movement have come to New Haven to support the Black Panther Party's struggle for liberation. All over the country the women's movement is beginning to understand that the fight against racism is a part of our own liberation. . . . [We know that] the system that keeps black people down is the same system that keeps women down [and that] . . . the women's liberation movement has developed a deeper understanding of racism through its experience of sexism." During the day of demonstrations, for which day care was provided, meetings at the New Haven Women's Center were organized around topics such as racism and sexism, anti-imperialism, child care, the Venceremos Brigade—groups of young leftists who went to Cuba to help in the harvest of sugar cane—and abortion/genocide/birth control/population control.¹²

It appears from the documents that much of the focus on race in those early years, the Bread and Roses years, took the form of Panther support work, which meant primarily working with black men to organize and participate in demonstrations.¹³ Some women were, of course, working on issues such as sterilization abuse and violence against women in communities of color or with women of color. There was only a small Black Panther Party and a small black population in Boston, but there were trials and rallies in New Haven and New York. White radicals responded to the emergency created by the government's efforts to destroy the Panthers. Reification and romanticization were involved on the part of whites toward the Panthers and Black Power figures as the threatened vanguard of the revolution, but support for them was one of the only tangible ways for whites to be antiracist.¹⁴ Although there were female Panthers, white women worked primarily with black men who were in most cases the leaders. White socialist feminists rarely had relationships

¹² Copies of the fliers are in this author's possession.

¹³ Although, based on conversations, white women also worked in schools and community organizations in black communities. In early 1971 groups of men and women organized around the country to support Angela Davis, accused of abetting murders in conjunction with her support of the Soledad brothers. See, e.g., Anne Valk's discussion of Washington, D.C. (1996, 338 ff.).

¹⁴ Discussing her participation in the Chicago 1968 Democratic Party convention demonstrations for peace and freedom, Barbara Smith reports ironically on hearing Bobby Seale, a Black Panther Party leader, at a rally in Lincoln Park. "It is always curious to me to see a certain type of white person receive with such enthusiasm the promise of the destruction of their society by Black people" (1998, 159).

with Panther women, although they were sensitive to their plight in jail in New Haven and elsewhere. Some did try to raise feminist issues with Panthers.¹⁵ Channeling support for black people through the Panthers was problematic, however. One mimeographed letter to Bread and Roses members put it this way: “It seems to us critical to find other ways of relating to black people—specifically black women—than coming to Panther support rallies.” The authors are critical of themselves for accepting the egotism and chauvinism of Panther leaders, suggesting that this situation has “positively held back our development of new ways to fight racism.”¹⁶

A kind of “third worldism” characterized the politics of many late sixties white radicals. Analysts have pointed out the complex racial and gender politics involved, including the guilt of privileged whites. Like the civil rights and Black Power movements, the struggle of the Vietnamese against U.S. intervention—a small, poor third-world country unwilling to surrender to the most powerful country in the world—inspired radicals. Glorified images of freedom fighters from around the globe, including women carrying rifles with babies on their backs, permeated the new left in the United States. Some feminists, usually women who most identified with the male left (politicos), supported a position that verged on the sycophantic and/or adulation of third-world revolutionaries, including the Black Panthers. The position was a genuine but uncritical recognition of the heroism of third-world freedom fighters, and one of its motivations was a denial of the legitimacy of their white and middle-class backgrounds. The notion of “white skin privilege” was generated by and used to generate guilt. And yet there was a real crisis facing the Black Panther Party and black people in America. The idea of white skin privilege was ambiguous, not a simple guilty denial of whiteness. Whites in the radical movements recognized racism and looked to blacks and black culture in order to make sense of American society and whites’ place in it. What Kobena Mercer calls a “dis-affiliation from dominant self-images, a kind of strategic self-othering” (1992, 432), an identification with racial otherness, was a critical part of white youth’s creation of oppositional identities. Young whites were ambivalent about their whiteness and drawn to blacks and black culture, not only as appropriation but to find meaning for their own lives (Lhamon 1990, 39–76; Wallace 1990a, 187–98; Breines 1997).

¹⁵ See Cagan 1979, 245; Echols 1989, 222–23; and Valk 1996, 315–38.

¹⁶ Letter from Linda Gordon, Susan Orchard, and Jean Tepperman to Bread and Roses members. Mimeographed, n.d. (1970?). Bread and Roses collection, Wini Breines papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.

The documents, then, make it clear that Bread and Roses members, like other socialist feminists, embraced antiracist politics. They were acutely self-conscious of their own status, primarily white, educated, and middle class, and attempted to develop programs and strategies that included and recognized difference, particularly by addressing the difficulties facing poor women and women of color. Bread and Roses members *were* focused on their own personal liberation; they believed in personal politics, and they wanted to free themselves from traditional white femininity, to invent new forms of personal life (Popkin 1978, 1979; Evans 1979). They possessed the racial and class privilege that enabled them to confront sexism as individuals—for example, to focus on developing an equal relationship with a partner, achieving sexual pleasure, and escaping or transforming the ways in which the traditional nuclear family suppressed and controlled women. And they were consistent antiracist and anti-imperialist socialists. They believed that women's liberation could not be confined to white middle-class women and attempted to construct a politics that combined the personal and the political.

However, despite relatively sophisticated understandings of class and race, of difference, white socialist feminists simultaneously conceptualized women as an undifferentiated oppressed group. These contradictory themes persisted alongside one another. Referring to Heather Booth of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, who had been active in the civil rights movement, SDS, and community organizing, Strobel remarks that she "clearly transferred her understanding of the oppression of blacks and the urban poor to women as a group" (1995, 58). Numerous published and unpublished socialist feminist documents refer to women as a group, often comparing women with other oppressed groups such as African Americans, which was deeply offensive to African Americans. It was a first step in separating their identity from movement men, part of a political struggle to make left-wing men understand that discrimination against women was real and political. Its rhetorical form encouraged comparison of all women as a relatively powerless group with all men as a powerful group. "To counter new left claims that feminist interests were somehow narrower than those of the working class (or of Third World peoples), feminists claimed that gender oppression was as fundamental and widespread as class domination and, especially, racism" (Roth 1998, 257).¹⁷

¹⁷ Bread and Roses women wrote, "Women today are being told by the male movement that our oppression is nothing compared to that of blacks and third world people, without these men's [*sic*] realizing the basic connection of the oppression of all three groups—by a few rich white men" (Gordon and Popkin 1972, 304–5). This statement also contains the

I have suggested that legacies from the 1950s and the civil rights movement played a part as well. The new left consisted of young whites who grew up in the postwar period, were influenced by the civil rights movement, and brought notions of universal citizenship and participation, of the “family of man,” into the women’s movement. The thinking was reminiscent of new left arguments that students were the new working class or that students’ situations could be compared with that of African Americans. A kind of aggrandizement of whites’ unfreedom was characteristic of efforts to theorize a revolutionary position for themselves. They identified themselves as an oppressed group, one among many, and they utilized the Black Power movement as a model to develop a politics of identity based on their femaleness. Black Power inspired youthful white feminism. Black women deeply distrusted that relationship.

The Combahee River Collective

A small group of young primarily African-American women who became known as the Combahee River Collective began meeting in Boston in 1974. This was several years after Bread and Roses had dissolved, but socialist feminism was flourishing in Boston. Other primarily white socialist feminist organizations that developed out of Bread and Roses—including specific issue groups, such as women against sterilization abuse, which included many former Bread and Roses members—were synchronous with Combahee. Combahee women worked in these groups. Their name refers to the campaign led by Harriet Tubman, who in 1863 freed 750 slaves near the Combahee River in South Carolina. (It is notable that both Bread and Roses and the Combahee River Collective named themselves, as did the Boston feminist newspaper, *Sojourner*, after militant historical events that featured working-class women and women of color.) Like white socialist feminists they, too, had been involved in movement activity and were socialists. Barbara Smith, a key founder, along with her sister Beverly, of the Combahee collective, became politically active in the civil rights movement in high school in Cleveland and then in black student organizing and the anti-Vietnam war movement in college in 1965. Demita Frazier, another founder, says, “many of us were refugees from other political movements—civil rights, the antiwar movement, the labor movement—where we found ourselves in conflict with the lack of a feminist analysis and, in many cases, we were left feeling divided against ourselves”

implicit assumption that all women are white. See *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982).

(1995, 12). Frazier continues that in some of the political groups with which they were allied as nascent feminists they were branded as “troublemakers, brainwashed by the ‘man-hating white feminists’” (1995, 12). But for black women in the primarily white feminist movement, feminist analyses that “did not look closely at the issues of race, color, caste, and class created frustration and tension” (Frazier 1995, 12).¹⁸

By the late 1960s a backlash to the social movements was developing. In Boston the 1970s was the time of the busing crisis where, under court order, black students were bussed to white schools and whites to black schools as a way of redressing segregated education, an outcome of the civil rights movement and, specifically, the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Boston is infamous for the ugly white response to African-American students in South Boston. Racial tension was high in the city, creating a frightening and threatening environment for African Americans. The Combahee collective women worked in this fraught context, involved in an array of political activities. In Frazier’s words, Combahee was “instrumental in founding a local battered women’s shelter. We worked in coalition with community activists, women and men, lesbian and straight folks. We were very active in the reproductive rights movement, even though, at the time, most of us were lesbians. We found ourselves involved in coalition with the labor movement” (1995, 13). Founding members remark on how difficult it is to convey what it was like in the mid-seventies to do black feminist and lesbian organizing when they had no role models. Smith quotes Frazier saying, “This is not a mix cake. We have got to make it up from scratch” (1998, 171–72). They felt that they were staking out new territory. In Smith’s words, “I was very aware that we were doing something new. . . . It was absolutely daunting work. It was depressing. It was frightening. It was exhausting” (quoted in Harris 1997, 131; see also Okazawa-Rey 1999).

Beverly Guy-Sheftall writes that 1970 saw the publication of Toni Cade’s *The Black Woman*, writing by Toni Morrison and Audre Lorde, and the autobiography of Shirley Chisholm, which “signaled a literary awakening among black women and the beginning of a clearly defined black women’s liberation movement that would have priorities different from those of white feminists, and generate considerable debate, even hostility, within the black community” (1995, 14–15). Immensely influential, Cade’s edited volume contained a range of poems and essays by radical black women, mostly about the plight of black women in the

¹⁸ Also see Smith 1983, 295–96; Smith 1998, 179; Okazawa-Rey 1999; Springer 1999, 48–49.

United States, many responding to the sexism of black nationalism. Gloria Hull, affiliated with the Combahee collective, remembers, "Among . . . early formative reading, the most precious of all for me was *The Black Woman: An Anthology* . . . which I acquired in October 1970, the year it was published. . . . It gave me theory, analyses of current issues and cultural works, poetry and fiction. . . . In its uncompromisingly radical female and racial perspectives, *The Black Woman* taught me how our position could be both thoroughly feminist and for-real Black" (1993, 58).¹⁹ The Combahee River Collective built on Cade's book and the work of, to name just a few women, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Lorraine Hansberry, Pauli Murray, and other radical black women writers, women artists affiliated with the Black Arts movement, in addition to Alice Walker, Angela Davis, and Audre Lorde.²⁰ Despite the development of black feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the Combahee women were self-conscious about their aloneness and sense of embarking on a new kind of politics. Demita Frazier recalls that, for a change, "We weren't having to apologize for being smart. We weren't having to apologize for being intellectuals. We weren't having to apologize for feeling that we had a right to say what we saw and to speak the truth about what we saw. It was very powerful. And also because we recognized that it was powerful because we were standing at the cross roads of our own identity. We were not going to give up being female or being Black. We wanted a synthesis" (quoted in Harris 1997, 125).

Most of the founding women were lesbians or in the process of coming out. Smith says that "the women who were integral to organizing Combahee were Lesbians," although there were also bisexual and straight women in the group (quoted in Harris 1997, 128). She remarks that it

¹⁹ Indicating the range of influences on feminists, Hull also writes, "Even with my current knowledge of all that is lacking in Friedan's analysis, I have to admit that her work deeply affected me (as it did other Black and Chicano women my age and slightly older). Looking at it now, I am still struck by its clear passion and radical persuasion. . . . It goes without saying that, because of my education, feminist tendencies, social positioning, and personal circumstances, I could identify with what Friedan was saying" (1993, 52).

²⁰ The Combahee River Collective also built on the historical tradition of African-American women's activism. The black female activists of the 1970s, however, were unique in calling themselves feminists. Alice Walker's term for black feminism, *womanist*, raised the question of how black feminism is different from white feminism and of the legacies on which black feminism builds (Walker 1984, xi-xii). For discussion about whether to define poor, working class, and third-world women's activism on behalf of their communities and families, which includes almost all black women's activism, as feminist, see, e.g., Collins 1990, 139-61; Omolade 1994, 117-28, 161-77; Pardo 1995, 356-71; Polatnick 1995, 110-30; Giluck et al. 1998, 31-56; Naples 1998, 327-49; Roth 1998, chap. 4; Mansbridge 1999.

was not an accident that most of them were lesbians or bisexual since they had less to lose in staking out a radical feminist antihomophobic or pro-lesbian politics. She adds, "In that era, many heterosexual black women did not want to work with open lesbians" (Mansbridge and Smith 2000, 32). Radical black heterosexual feminists risked the disdain of men and the black community, of losing intimate relationships with men, of marginalizing themselves by calling themselves feminists. To call oneself a lesbian feminist in an era of nationalism in which the black community and heterosexuality were idealized was to place oneself outside the community. The Combahee River Collective was the only explicitly antiheterosexist black feminist organization, perhaps ever, which explains their feelings of exhilaration, fear, and fatigue. Their risks were enormous given the homophobia of the country, radical men and women, and the black community. In her anthology of African-American feminist writing, Beverly Guy-Sheftall writes, "Black lesbians have indeed been critical to the development of black feminism as ideology and praxis. . . . They have been denied their rightful place in African American cultural, intellectual, and political history" (1995, 231).²¹

Before proceeding, I want to suggest that the time gap between the development of the radical white women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and the political articulation of a black feminism more than five years later is an important piece of this story. At the moment that white early second wavers were developing an autonomous socialist feminist movement, black nationalism was at its height. Although Toni Cade's *The Black Woman* was published in 1970 and several small black feminist groups developed, many younger black women were on a different path, their attention focused on race and racial solidarity. Black feminism developed later than white feminism. In 1979 Barbara Smith stated that white women in general do not grasp that "the Black feminist movement is in a very different period historically than the white feminist movement, even though the participants in these movements are each other's contemporaries. I have been constantly aware of this 'time-lag' during my seven years of involvement in Black feminist politics. If measured by the closedness of the Black community to feminism, the still relatively small number of Black women who identify themselves as feminists, and the lack of Black feminist institutions Black women have, our movement is still in its early stages." White women should recognize this and "not

²¹ See also Clarke 1983, 197-208; Collins 1990, 192-96; Frazier 1995, 12; Harris 1997, 128; Springer 1999, 102-11; author's conversation with Barbara Smith, Boston, June 6, 1997 (notes of the conversation in author's possession).

assume that it means the same thing for us to be feminists and lesbians as it does them to be feminists and lesbians” (Smith 1979, 2).²² On another political track, most young radical black women were not compelled by feminism in the early years of the women’s liberation movement. Referring to white women’s struggle over how to include black women in the formative stages of feminism, Umansky writes, “To some very large degree the dilemma was academic, because black women did not flock to white feminist meetings. The question of how to reach black women remained largely hypothetical. When most of the predominantly white feminist groups arrived at a decision that their politics did mandate the inclusion of black women, they faced a crisis in recruitment” (1996, 94–95). Radical white and black women’s time frames were nonsynchronous in the early years.

The Combahee collective was a small core group that met for years, reading, writing, and organizing in Boston. “As the only Black lesbian, socialist, feminist organization in the Boston area, Combahee was at the vanguard of articulating the parameters of Black feminism” (Springer 1999, 196; see also Roth 1998, 298). They produced the Combahee River Collective Statement in 1977, one of the most widely cited and influential documents of radical black feminism. They organized periodic retreats between 1977 and 1980 for about twenty to thirty black feminists in the Northeast. “It was a way for people who were separated to be in the same place and do some political work with each other” (Smith quoted in Harris 1997, 113–14). But the retreats were more than that, too—they were a way to connect to other black feminists, to learn and change, explore, celebrate, and organize. Audre Lorde participated in them and was an inspiration to many of the younger women. Poet Cheryl Clarke recalls being at retreats with Lorde: “Audre Lorde was an incredible inspiration . . . hearing her talk about writing, the act of writing, and what it meant to her, was very inspiring for me and liberating” (quoted in Harris 1997, 121). Clarke recounts how fearless Lorde and other women in the group were, how forbidden it was for black women to write, and how she began to write poetry as a result of the retreats (Harris 1997, 121). Smith says, “I used to feel like if only Lorraine [Hansberry] hadn’t

²² Benita Roth argues that there was no time gap. She suggests that looking for large numbers of black women in white feminist organizations, or playing the “numbers game,” obscures the “simultaneity and interrelatedness of Black and white feminist emergence, the very mutual influence that some feminists had on one another across racial lines” (Roth 1999, 75). Earlier organizational development of white feminism and interrelatedness are not mutually exclusive.

died so early then there would be someone who is older than me who is trying to carve out the territory. Audre [Lorde] was important to me in that way. Being able to look over to and up to someone who had been here more years than I, who shared the same kind of vision in politics" (quoted in Harris 1997, 113).

Gloria Hull writes about her association with the Combahee River Collective and attending their retreats once or twice yearly. "At the retreats we tried out our creative and critical work on each other; shared our latest reading; discussed books, music, and films. Planned (and sometimes executed) ways to spread Black feminism among Black women; formed nucleus groups for politically and culturally active projects; talked about ourselves and our lives; and engaged in stringent social critique and analysis. I probably do not need to say that we also drummed, danced, loved, laughed a lot, did rituals, and made gorgeous meals" (1993, 60–61). Smith recalls how exciting the retreats were with people coming from all over. She says that they had been organizing by that time for a couple of years and were feeling isolated and hungry for more. "It was risky to be a feminist in the Black community. We realized it was risky and there we were, all these risk takers, all these ground breakers" (quoted in Harris 1997, 118).

The Combahee women began to meet in Boston after the first public meeting of the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), an Eastern regional conference in New York City in 1973. The NBFO, which lasted from 1973 to 1975, is an extremely important and much larger black feminist organization of the period. "The National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) was the first national Black women's organization that was explicitly feminist and dedicated to eliminating the dual oppression of racism and sexism" (Davis 1988, 43). Margaret Sloan, a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine, had noted a strong black women's interest in feminism.²³ She and a number of other women organized the first conference. Sloan stated that "Black women have suffered cruelly in this society from living the phenomenon of being Black and female in a country that is both racist and sexist. The women's group . . . will remind the Black liberation movement that there can't be liberation for half of a race" (quoted in Davis 1988, 43–44). The response to the NBFO was overwhelming, and within a year of its founding it had a membership of two thousand women in ten chapters, although the founding New York chap-

²³ Polls show that black women were more supportive of the women's movement and women's equality than were white women. See, e.g., Valk 1996, 347–48; Harris 1997, 90; Mansbridge 1999, 297–99; Mansbridge and Smith 2000, 31.

ter lasted only two years. A number of chapters, which operated independently, lasted much longer. The NBFO, founded primarily by professionals, some of whom had been involved in the white women's movement, wanted to define black women's relationship to feminism. Critics of NBFO dismissed it as being too middle class (some calling it a black NOW), of emulating white women, of dividing the race, of lesbianism, and of not supporting black men. But in Deborah Gray White's words, "More than any organization in the century, the National Black Feminist Organization launched a frontal assault on sexism and racism" (1999, 242).²⁴

The Combahee women came together out of the NBFO meeting in New York. Combahee was more radical and less mainstream than the NBFO in their anticapitalist position and their explicit concern about class and homophobia.²⁵ In the Combahee statement's words, they decided to "become an independent collective since we have serious disagreements with NBFO's bourgeois-feminist stance and their lack of a clear political focus" (Combahee River Collective 1982, 20; see also Springer 1999, 102–11). The statement they published in 1977 (Combahee River Collective 1982) is one of the founding documents of postwar radical black feminism. They argue that all forms of oppression are linked and cannot be separated or prioritized. "We are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions create the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face" (Combahee River Collective 1982, 13). Their experiences in the movements led to Combahee. "It was our experience and disillusionment within these liberation movements, as well as experience on the periphery of the white male left, that led to the need to develop a politics that was anti-racist, unlike those of white women, and anti-sexist, unlike those of Black and white men" (1982, 14). They were the first or one of the first political

²⁴ On NBFO, see Giddings 1984, 344; Walker 1984, 273–77; Davis 1988, 43–47; Wallace 1990a, 24–25; Guy-Sheftall 1995, 15–16; Roberts 1996; Harris 1997, 86–99; Roth 1998, 157–69; Springer 1999; White 1999, 242–53.

²⁵ Kimberly Springer states that the NBFO "was one of the few Black feminist organizations besides Combahee to have a committee dedicated to connecting the concerns of Black lesbians to the organization's agenda." She also says that the Combahee River Collective was the first organization in her sample of black feminist organizations to mention heterosexual oppression publicly (1999, 100, 102; see also White 1999, 251–52).

groups to use the term *identity politics*. "This focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially the most radical politics come directly out of our identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression. . . . We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously" (1982, 16).²⁶

They declare racial solidarity with black men. "Although we are feminists and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive Black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand. Our situation as Black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the fact of race, which white women of course do not need to have with white men, unless it is their negative solidarity as racial oppressors. We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism" (Combahee River Collective 1982, 13). At the same time they argue that "accusations that Black feminism divides the Black struggle are powerful deterrents to the growth of an autonomous Black women's movement" (1982, 13). They articulate a left politics: "We realize that the liberation of all oppressed peoples necessitates the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy. We are socialists because we believe that work must be organized for the collective benefit of those who do the work and create the products and not for the profit of the bosses" (1982, 14). And the Combahee women were critical and deeply disappointed about white women's lack of effort to understand and struggle against racism in the feminist movement. They remark that in the recent period, "Black, other Third World, and working women have been involved in the feminist movement from its start, but both outside reactionary forces and racism and elitism with the movement itself have served to obscure our participation" (1982, 16).

The most pervasive explanation for the development of black feminism, by black and white feminists alike, including the Combahee River Col-

²⁶ In an interview Barbara Smith says, "I think we came up with the term 'identity politics.' I never really saw it anywhere else and I would suggest that people if they really want to find the origin of the term that they try to find it in any place earlier than in the Combahee River Collective statement. I don't remember seeing it anywhere else" (quoted in Harris 1997, 130).

lective, is, simply, the racism of the white women's liberation movement. According to E. Frances White,

Many black feminists sought out white feminists in what at first seemed like a natural alliance: womanhood. Feminism made all women more aware of themselves as women and extended support to black women as they confronted the sexism of black men. Serious divisions among women were temporarily obscured by the call for women to unite. Black women entered alliances with white women with the expectation that a raised consciousness of female oppression led to a constructive sensitivity towards other forms of subordinating oppressions. When many white feminists remained blind to major class and race differences, black feminists felt betrayed. (1984, 10)

In the first pages of her 1984 book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, bell hooks states, "white women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women's reality is true to the lived experience of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the extent to which their perspectives reflect race and class biases. . . . Racism abounds in the writings of white feminists, reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries" (hooks 1984, 3; see also hooks 1981, 119–58; Omolade 1998, 388). Combahee member Lorraine Bethel's poem title says it simply, "What Chou Mean *We*, White Girl? Or, the Cullud Lesbian Feminist Declaration of Independence (Dedicated to the Proposition That All Women Are Not Equal, i.e., Identical/ly Oppressed)" (Bethel 1979, 86; see also Springer 1999, 68–69). Black women questioned white women's notion of sisterhood, noting that "the sister" was usually white and middle class. Neither women of color nor lesbian women of color were included in feminist analyses and practice. Deborah Gray White bluntly sums it up: "Few African-American women thought black and white women had anything in common" (1999, 249).

A powerful contributing factor to the trouble between white and black movement women was that of romantic or sexual relationships between black men and white women. I do not explore the issue in this article, but it created hostility and suspicion on the part of black women toward black men and white women. A discussion of heterosexual sexual politics in the civil rights movement began in the 1960s in SNCC during and after the 1964 Freedom Summer when whites worked in Mississippi and interracial sexual relationships occurred. In 1965 the debate was shaped by the Moynihan Report, which injected an ugly note about African-

American families, men, and women, and it has continued ever since. The *Black Scholar*, among other journals, devoted a great deal of space to the relationship of black women and men, sexism, racial solidarity versus feminism, the role of black women in social change, and the black family, themes found in much poetry, fiction, and nonfiction (Giddings 1984, 314–24; Guy-Sheftall 1995, 16–17). The use of Black Power by white socialist feminists as a model for their own autonomy also generated mistrust. Women liberationists credited Black Power with the inspiration for political activity on their own behalf. Latinos, Asian Americans, women, and gays all modeled their movements on the Black Power movement. Referring to white feminists, Echols states that, “Black Power enabled them to argue that it was valid for women to organize around their own oppression and to define the terms of their struggle” (Echols 1989, 49).²⁷ But in the view of many black women, according to Paula Giddings, the women’s movement coincided with the deterioration of the black movement, and “it appeared that the predominantly White women’s movement was going to reap the benefits that the Black movement had sown. . . . Comparing the status of women to that of Blacks was particularly upsetting” (1984, 308). Giddings cites Linda La Rue: “One can argue that Women’s liberation has not only attached itself to the Black movement but has done so with only marginal concern for Black women and Black liberation” (Giddings 1984, 308; see also Morrison 1971; Reid 1972, 53). Radical black activists distrusted the women’s liberation movement for what they interpreted as piggybacking on Black Power and dividing black women and men.

Naomi Weisstein of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union explains that “We were afraid to call ourselves feminists, since in the New Left that was hopelessly ‘bourgeois.’ We finally came up with ‘women’s liberation,’ an analogy with Third World struggles (since we couldn’t yet imagine the legitimacy of our own)” (quoted in Schneir 1994, 108; see also Echols 1989, 53). Some socialist feminist women, as we have seen, embraced a kind of third-worldism. They were intimidated or persuaded by the left’s invocation of more serious oppression than their own. The denigration of women’s issues by new left men led these women to embrace a revolutionary version of feminism linked to third-world people, including African Americans. “The main reason that the ‘60s feminists relied so

²⁷ Ironically, the model of the Black Power movement, which invented 1960s identity politics of “organizing around your own oppression” and thus inspired white women to leave the male movement, simultaneously undermined the idea of white feminists organizing women different from themselves into their movement.

heavily on comparisons between sexism and racism is that white male politicians recognized the race issue as morally legitimate, while dismissing feminism as ‘a bunch of chicks with personal problems’” (Willis 1982, 12; see also Roth 1998, 84–89, 256–66).

Profoundly influenced by the Black Power and black nationalist movements, many African-American feminists have also written about the male chauvinism of those movements. Barbara Smith says simply that she was turned off by the sexism of black nationalism (1983, 296). Time and again black women struggled with loyalty to their race and to themselves as gendered individuals. The black nationalist movement utilized images of black masculinity as the epitome of freedom. Slavery and racism had destroyed black manhood, they argued, and overcoming racism meant achieving manhood. In much black nationalist rhetoric and writing, women were absent or subordinate or producing babies for the revolution. Often they were unrealistically glorified. Frances Beal writes that, when it came to women, the black male in the Black Power movement “seems to take his guidelines from the pages of the *Ladies Home Journal*. Certain black men are maintaining that they have been castrated by society but that Black women somehow escaped this persecution and even contributed to this emasculation” (1970, 92).²⁸ The political writing and poetry of the men of the Black Arts movement were defiantly heterosexual and homophobic. Radical black women were hurt and angry, particularly by the revolutionary rhetoric of their men and hypocritical—in the context of black pride and “black is beautiful” politics—romantic liaisons with white women. The theme of heterosexual interracial relationships reoccurs often in the literature (see, e.g., Lincoln 1970, 80–84; Reid 1972, 79–87; Fowler 1992, 47). And while some female activists in Black Power organizations attempted to change men and gender politics (Jones 1998, 14; LeBlanc-Ernest 1998, 305–34; Matthews 1998, 267–304), black nationalism was not, ultimately, a hospitable space for black women.²⁹

Radical African-American movement women were in an unenviable position. Michele Wallace writes poignantly, “Those years from 1966 to 1970 during which Black Power and Women’s Liberation flowered were also the years in which the political and philosophical weight of the black woman was either erased or divided between black men and white women, who then proceeded to go their separate ways, pulling her apart in the

²⁸ See also Wallace 1978; hooks 1981, 1–13, 87–117; Giddings 1984, 311–24; Harper 1996.

²⁹ For more positive evaluations, see Omolade 1994, 1998, 377–401; Watkins 1998; and James 1999.

process" (1990b, 170–71). Black women were left. In the words of Madhu Dubey, black nationalism and the women's liberation movement of the early 1970s "at once catalyzed and constrained the formulation of a feminist politics centering around the black woman" (1994, 15). In neither the women's liberation movement nor the nationalist movement could black women assume subject status; their sense of exclusion from the two liberationist discourses of the period is eloquently expressed in the title *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982; see also White 1999, 249).

Whether they were "pulled apart," excluded, or a space was created to develop black feminist politics, or all three, black feminists saw no option but to work on their own. The Combahee River Collective self-consciously staked out a political site shaped by nationalism but outside of and critical of it and separate from but influenced by white socialist feminism. While Combahee women were profoundly influenced by the Black Power movement, most had not been members of the organizations or friends or lovers of its leaders. And they were lesbians. They were less invested in the male movement. Kimberly Springer writes that, "Black women, particularly those who founded Black feminist organizations, were less ambivalent than some civil rights forerunners and nationalist women about the importance of gender struggles in Black communities" (1999, 58).³⁰ Finding no comfortable place for themselves among white feminists, distressed by sexual connections between black men and white women, transformed by the Black Power movement but alienated by its hypermasculinity, Combahee and other radical black women developed a feminism of their own.

³⁰ Most of the women linked to or active in the National Black Feminist Organization and the Black Power and Black Arts movements were slightly older than the Combahee women, and it is primarily this older, northern cohort that struggled so passionately with men against male chauvinism and hypocrisy. Black Arts movement writers, in particular, such as Toni Cade, Nikki Giovanni, and Sonia Sanchez, some of whom published in Cade's *The Black Woman*, argued with the men, pleaded, and were sometimes bitter and angry. There were, of course, other slightly younger women writing. Alice Walker explored painful heterosexual movement relationships in her early fiction, as did Michele Wallace and Ntozake Shange (Nelson 1997, 114–24). And there is evidence that women in the Black Panther Party challenged sexism (see, e.g., Matthews 1998). But in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was the older women who publicly engaged in intense personal debate with men about sexism and heterosexual relationships. The older women had a greater allegiance to nationalism—and were more ambivalent about feminism—just as Bread and Roses women had a deeper connection to the male left than did later socialist feminists.

Puzzle pieces

I have long wondered why the central accusation by black (and other women of color) feminists against white women was racism. This is a naive question, linked to white nostalgia, at such a late date in feminist history. It certainly is a question that raises intense feelings. And the answer is perhaps patently evident since I have just explored black feminist views. But memory and research confirm Bread and Roses's and other socialist feminists activists' consciousness about race and class in addition to sex inequality. Their discussions and position papers often had race and class in mind, a fact that would surprise most young students of second-wave feminism. They were antiracist activists until they were no longer welcome in the black freedom movement, a point that white women mention often and resentfully. They were instructed not to work among African Americans and then criticized for not doing so. Many white feminists were "innocently" and consciously, if abstractly, antiracist. From the perspective of African Americans, it was an innocence in which only privileged whites can indulge and is thus suspect: abstractness impaired white women's understanding of the reality of the lives of women of color, which, in effect, was racist. The fact is that black and white women did not know each other. They had little connection with one another, especially in the North; an abstract antiracism characterized much of the theorizing and politics of white feminism. White groups were the context for socialist feminist antiracist politics. They wrote about and analyzed race and class, and some activists, without notable success, devoted themselves to organizing in working-class communities and with lower-income groups. Conversations with former Bread and Roses members reveal that white women did not know any black women, and, if they did, only rarely were they good friends. Segregated postwar America was the context of their growing up and college years. Perhaps key to this story is that white heterosexual women were more likely to have sexual relationships with black men than friendships with black women. Interracial female relationships were more common among lesbians, which is why lesbians were more able to bridge the racial divide between women. Men did not come between them.³¹ In the 1979 words of white and black Boston feminists, "Theoretical and analytical comprehension of the political and historical causes of racism is essential, but this understanding on an intellectual level

³¹ Conversations with Bread and Roses members contributed to this discussion of their lack of contact with black women. See also Joseph and Lewis 1981; Breines 1992; Frankenberg 1993; Campbell 1994; Golden and Shreve 1995; Lazzar 1996; Raybon 1996; Wilson and Russell 1996; Reddy 1997.

doesn't always help to make face-to-face meetings with women of color real, productive or meaningful. We need both a political understanding of racism and a personal-political understanding of how it affects our daily lives." They continue, "you simply cannot do political action without personal interaction" (Cross et al. 1979, 11).

Overt racism was not the motivating issue for black women's feminist organizing or rejection of white feminism. The critical charge against white feminists was their analysis, the focus on gender as the sole explanatory factor in the subordination of women, their apparent ignorance of and insensitivity to the intersection of gender, class, and race in African-American women's lives. While some white women felt that black women dismissed feminism by calling it white, that they were called racist when they considered themselves allies, black women understood racism to revolve around their own invisibility. Benita Roth argues that white feminists' "neglect of economic survival issues . . . were [*sic*] the main stumbling block to joint work," that "white women's class unconsciousness was the key obstacle to a linked feminist struggle" (Roth 1999, 76). The accusation of racism was less about individual racist experiences with white feminists, which is how it often sounded or, more important, felt to white women, and more about a feminist analysis that did not seem to know or care enough to learn about poor and working-class women of color. Because they did not know each other, most of this was not personal, although it felt personal then and has since to both white and black women. Abstract antiracism could not compensate for the rejection that black women felt at the hands of white women. That Bread and Roses and other socialist feminist groups articulated race and class politics *did not matter* to African-American women who experienced white feminism as racist. Whites' abstract antiracism did not speak to them. Black women felt invisible to white women, even when they were directly relating to them. And continuous accusations of racism made some white women weary and bitter.³² Without knowing one another, they could not make a movement together.

Ellen Willis suggests that "emotionally our belief that sex was a more

³² In 1979 (30) Susan McHenry wisely wrote, "So maybe one thing women of color can offer to the modern world is our ancient revolutionary tool of call-and-response discourse, and maybe this can be the basis for a genuine, ongoing listening on the part of white women to what women of color are really saying—and this must be responded to by a willingness on the part of women of color to lift up our voices, now and again, to white women. And perhaps this can be the beginning of an authentic exchange rather than the abstract rhetorical dialogue of which we are all so tired, where we alternately hazard the platitudinous, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to work together?' or shout 'Racist!' across a widening chasm."

basic division than race allowed us to evade responsibility for racism." She continues, "we were acting on the unconscious racist assumption that our experience was representative, along with the impulse to gloss over racial specifications so as to keep the 'complication' of racism from marring our vision of female unity" (1982, 11). Many white feminists learned, over time, that their notions of gender universality, their "I was we," was just that, theirs, based on their own dominant race, class, and cultural experiences. African-American women never had the luxury of that idea or the experience on which it was based. Paradoxically, while white women supported black nationalism and were organizing an autonomous women's movement, many also believed deeply in an ideal in which beneath their race, ethnic, and class differences people are united in a common and universal humanity. In Marilyn Fryc's words, implicit in the politics of the late sixties and early seventies was the strategy of constructing a positive category of women. However, it "quickly emerged at many sites of this organizing of women's groups that differences among women were often more salient than commonalities." Fryc continues, "But the idea that articulating and elaborating differences among women was a route to a viable female identity and solidarity was not an easy idea to grasp; indeed it has had to be invented. As I see it, this idea has been in practice, however, in advance of its being understood." There are no guidebooks, no rules; it has been a "constant and hazardous invention (not without its casualties)" (1996, 1007). Difference began to be more tangible when actual contact developed and women of color and lesbians of all races and ethnicities insisted that they be seen and taken into account by white middle-class women. While socialist feminists raised the issues, too, it seems likely, as Fryc points out, that the politics of difference had to be invented in practice.³³

White and black Boston socialist feminists faced similar problems. One of the striking similarities between their struggles was intense experiences in and reactions to mixed left organizations. Both groups of women par-

³³ In 1979 the Coalition for Women's Safety was organized in Boston by Combahee and other women of color and white socialist feminists, community organizers, educators, and community service providers. In the previous months eleven black women had been murdered. In the face of this emergency, women worked together, with white women as allies and supporters of women of color. A multiracial, multiethnic, antiracist, and antisexist coalition was organized. Barbara Smith writes, "This is *new*. Black and white, feminist and non-feminists, women have never come together on a woman's issue, an issue of racial-sexual politics, at least in this era; White women taking leadership from Black women" (Smith 1994, 318-19). In a longer version of this article, I consider in more depth the significance of this multiracial group.

ticipated in, embraced, were influenced by, and rejected the “male” movements. Their politics were shaped by SNCC, the new left, SDS, the antiwar movement, Black Panthers, and black nationalist and Black Power movements (Echols 1994; Breines 1996). However, for black women this was more complicated than for white women who, as part of the dominant race, could with more anger and assurance reject white men. White women’s responses to gender trouble were strikingly different from black women’s, simpler perhaps. Black racial loyalty appeared to be jeopardized by feminism, which was central to the differences between white and black feminism. Whiteness required no race loyalty. If anything, it pointed to its opposite (Rich 1979).

Both Bread and Roses and the Combahee River Collective discovered that difference lay not just between the races but within them. Lesbianism divided women. Class and education divided them. Raising issues of sexual preference, class, and caste in feminism was seen as divisive—they *were* divisive. Class and sexuality remained the perennial stumbling blocks of black women’s national organizing and made solidarity difficult (Frazier 1995, 12; Springer 1999, 228; White 1999, 260–61). White socialist feminism, too, was replete with debates and bitterness over sexuality, class, and leadership. Conflicts between women were often more bitter than struggles with male chauvinism, sexism, patriarchal institutions, and men. Ironically and sadly, white and black feminists’ shared gendered experiences with their parent groups, the intragroup tensions both experienced, did not link them across race.

Legacies of racism lay heavily on activists. History teaches us that racial fractures between white and black feminists have a long past. It seems obvious now, although it did not at first, that it is extremely difficult for a social movement to overcome centuries of slavery, racism, and sexism. This may appear self-evident, but it was not to me in my youth, which indicates something about how I was shaped by the sixties myself. And, I would add, the 1950s as well: a sense of efficacy and optimism characterized the movements, a naïveté perhaps, even hubris. Young people, especially white middle-class youth, imbibed a postwar American confidence that included a conviction that even their rejection of the status quo would be successful. It dawned on me startlingly slowly that I was assuming that the movements could be successful in their goals of transforming American society. Characteristically for a person of my race, class, and generation, I had attributed too much power to activists, including white and black feminists, and their abilities to reverse American racism in a few short years. I had believed the words of the civil rights anthem, “We Shall Overcome” (and “black and white together”), as had the white

civil rights volunteers, that we could build an interracial feminist community quickly and without too much pain. Individual commitment appeared to be enough. I learned that capitalism, racism, and sexism are much more powerful than we were. In that chastening lesson, activists began to understand that racism is not only about individual belief, but that it is a political, economic, and cultural system that shapes us all. We came face-to-face with enormous forces that were not only “out there” but were, despite our best intentions, inside of us.

Many years later white and black socialist feminists are still learning that it is possible to be connected in difference. This claim is not as feeble as it sounds in a conservative society built on tenacious racism. Difference and collectivity have been continually negotiated and invented, and feminists have learned that to “other” oneself, to recognize fluid and multiple locations and split affinities, is critical for building multiracial and multiethnic feminist solidarity.³⁴ As feminists, we have been part of a transformation of race relations in the United States. Unsurprisingly, the voice that I use here circles around and swings back and forth between white and black women, hope and discouragement, self-doubt and pride in socialist feminists’ efforts. Reflective of experiences as they circulated from group to group and person to person, the narrative is continuously shifting and ambiguous. There is no clear resolution to the story or the process. The puzzle is still in pieces because of the density of race and racism, the difficulty of overcoming racism between us, and the land mines that are set off by even talking about it. The ambiguities of my judgments are not unconscious—there seems no alternative for now.

I conclude far more humbled by race than I was decades ago. While nostalgia for integration and love between the races must be abandoned, I am not prepared to relinquish the hope of universality and community nor the recognition of their loss to our political and personal lives. Such thinking is discredited now. It is acceptable in religion and spirituality but no longer in progressive or radical politics. Because they have been used to enforce domination and inequality, universality and morality have become suspect categories. Nevertheless, they have their place in liberation movements and civil society. They connect us in a common project and ideal at a time when there is less chance that difference will be submerged in a hegemonic narrative. Interviewed in 1995, Combahee member Demita Frazier said, “One of the things that has always troubled me is that

³⁴ For examples of feminist writers who have explored this issue, see Rich 1979; Joseph and Lewis 1981; Frye 1983; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Pratt 1984; Spelman 1988; Anzaldúa 1990; Friedman 1998; Smith 1998.

I wanted to be part of a multicultural feminist organization, and I never felt that the feminist movement became fully integrated" (1995, 13). Like Frazier, many of us are troubled despite the fact that we have begun to understand why an integrated women's movement did not develop and even, inevitably, how racial and ethnic feminisms developed separately according to their own histories and responses to one another. Women use words such as *love*, *mourning*, *grief*, and *loss* when they write about civil rights and feminism precisely because of the hopes the movements raised. "In different ways and with different consequences, we all experience the pain and disappointment of failed community" (DuCille 1996, 119; see also Nelson 1997, 124). White and black socialist feminists have experienced the losses differently. But there is no doubt that we have suffered the loss of each other.

Department of Sociology
Northeastern University

References

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1990. *Make Face, Making Soul, Hacienda Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation.
- Baxandall, Rosalyn. 2001. "Re-visioning the Women's Liberation Movement's Narrative: Early Second Wave African American Feminists." *Feminist Studies* 27(1):225-45.
- Baxandall, Rosalyn, and Linda Gordon. 2000. Review of *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* by Ruth Rosen and *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* by Susan Brownmiller. *Nation*, July 3, 28-32.
- Beal, Frances. 1970. "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female." In Cade 1970, 90-100.
- Bethel, Lorraine. 1979. "What Chou Mean We, White Girl? Or, the Cullud Lesbian Feminist Declaration of Independence (Dedicated to the Proposition That All Women Are Not Equal, i.e., Identical/ly Oppressed)." In "The Black Women's Issue," ed. Lorraine Bethel and Barbara Smith, special issue of *Conditions: Five* 2(2):86-92.
- Bordo, Susan. 1990. "Feminism, Postmodernism and Gender-Scepticism." In *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda Nicholson, 133-56. New York: Routledge.
- Boston Women's Health Book Collective. 1973. *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book by and for Women*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Breines, Wini. 1992. *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties*. Boston: Beacon.
- . 1996. "Sixties Stories' Silences." *NWSA Journal* 8(3):101-21.
- . 1997. "Postwar White Girls' Dark Others." In *The "Other" Fifties: In-*

- terrogating Midcentury America*, ed. Joel Foreman, 101–21. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- . 1999. Review of *The Feminist Memoir Project*, ed. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow. *Nation*, January 4, 28–32.
- Brownmiller, Susan. 1999. In *Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*. New York: Dial.
- Cade, Toni, ed. 1970. *The Black Woman: An Anthology*. New York: New American Library.
- Cagan, Leslie. 1979. “Something New Emerges: The Growth of a Socialist Feminist.” In *They Should Have Served That Cup of Coffee*, ed. Dick Cluster, 225–58. Boston: South End.
- Cambridge Women’s Herstory. 1996. Taped discussion with Sue Lyons, Judy Norris, Mary Rowe, and Rochelle Ruthchild of 888 Memorial Drive building takeover for a women’s center. Taped at WMBR-FM in Cambridge, Mass., on December 19 (tape is in author’s possession).
- Campbell, Bebe Moore. 1994. *Brothers and Sisters*. New York: Berkley.
- Clarke, Cheryl. 1983. “The Failure to Transform Homophobia in the Black Community.” In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith, 197–208. New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color.
- Cleaver, Eldridge. 1995. “Requiem for Non-violence.” In *Takin’ It to the Streets: A Sixties Reader*, ed. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, 170–73. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Combahee River Collective. 1982. “Combahee River Collective Statement.” In Hull, Bell-Scott, and Smith 1982, 13–22.
- Cross, Tia, Freada Klein, Barbara Smith, and Beverly Smith. 1979. “Face-to-Face, Day-to-Day—Racism CR.” *Sojourner*, May, 11.
- Davis, Beverly. 1988. “To Seize the Moment: A Retrospective on the National Black Feminist Organization.” *Sage* 5(2):43–47.
- Dubey, Madhu. 1994. *Black Women Novelists and the Nationalist Aesthetic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- DuBois, Ellen. 1991. “Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win.” Review of *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975*, by Alice Echols. *Radical History Review*, no. 49 (Winter): 129–34.
- DuCille, Ann. 1996. *Skin Trade*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Dunbar, Roxanne. 1998. “Outlaw Woman: Chapters from a Feminist Memoir-in-Progress.” In DuPlessis and Snitow 1998, 90–114.
- DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. 1993. “Reader, I Married Me: A Polygynous Memoir.” In *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, 97–111.
- DuPlessis, Rachel, and Ann Snitow, eds. 1998. *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women’s Liberation*. New York: Three Rivers.
- Echols, Alice. 1989. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- . 1994. "Nothing Distant about It: Women's Liberation and Sixties Radicalism." In *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber, 149–74. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Evans, Sara. 1979. *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*. New York: Knopf.
- Field, Connie, and Marilyn Mulford, producers and directors. 1994. *Freedom on My Mind*. San Francisco: California Newsreel. Videocassette.
- Fowler, Virginia C. 1992. *Nikki Giovanni*. New York: Twayne.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Frazier, Demita. 1995. "Interview by Karen Kahn: Rethinking Identity Politics." *Sojourner*, September, 12, 13, 23.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. 1998. *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Frye, Marilyn. 1983. "On Being White: Toward a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy." In *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, ed. Marilyn Frye, 110–27. Trumansberg, N.Y.: Crossing.
- . 1996. "The Necessity of Differences: Constructing a Positive Category of Women." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 21(4):991–1101.
- Giddings, Paula. 1984. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: Bantam.
- Gluck, Sherna Berger, et al. 1998. "Whose Feminism? Whose History?" In *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing across Race, Class, and Gender*, ed. Nancy Naples, 31–56. New York: Routledge.
- Golden, Marita, and Susan Richard Shreve, eds. 1995. *Skin Deep: Black Women and White Women Write about Race*. New York: Doubleday.
- Gordon, Linda, and Ann Popkin. 1972. "Women's Liberation: Let Us Now Emulate Each Other." In *Seasons of Rebellion: Protest and Radicalism in Recent America*, ed. Joseph Boskin and Robert Rosenstone, 286–312. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Greene, Gayle. 1993. "Looking at History." In *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, 97–111. New York: Routledge.
- Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, ed. 1995. *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. New York: New Press.
- Hansen, Karen V. 1990. "Women's Unions and the Search for a Political Identity." In *Women, Class, and the Feminist Imagination: A Socialist Feminist Reader*, ed. Karen V. Hansen and Ilene J. Philipson, 213–38. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Harper, Phillip Brian. 1996. *Are We Not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African American Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, Miriam Lynell. 1997. "From Kennedy to Combahee: Black Feminist Activism from 1960–1980." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota.

- Hayden, Casey. 1987. "Preface." In *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Mary King, 7–10. New York: William Morrow.
- Hirsch, Marianne. 1997. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- hooks, bell. 1981. *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End.
- . 1984. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End.
- Hull, Gloria. 1993. "History/My History." In *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, 48–63. New York: Routledge.
- Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. 1982. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press.
- Hysteria. 1971. "Bread and Roses." *Hysteria* 1 suppl. (4):S3–S4.
- James, Joy. 1999. *Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Jay, Karla. 1999. *Tales of the Lavender Menace: A Memoir of Liberation*. New York: Basic.
- Jones, Charles E., ed. 1998. *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*. Baltimore: Black Classic.
- Joseph, Gloria L., and Jill Lewis. 1981. *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor.
- Lazarre, Jane. 1996. *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- LeBlanc-Erncst, Angela D. 1998. "'The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job': Black Panther Party Women, 1966–1982." In Jones 1998, 305–34.
- Lhamon, W. T., Jr. 1990. *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.
- Lincoln, Abbey. 1970. "Who Will Revere the Black Woman?" In Cade 1970, 80–84.
- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1999. "'You're Too Independent!' How Gender, Race, and Class Make Many Feminisms." In *The Cultural Territories of Race: Black and White Boundaries*, ed. Michele Lamont, 291–317. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane, and Barbara Smith. 2000. "How Did Feminism Get to Be 'All White'?" *American Prospect*, March 13, 30–36.
- Matthews, Tracye. 1998. "'No One Ever Asks, What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is': Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party, 1966–1971." In Jones 1998, 305–34.
- McHenry, Susan. 1979. "Notes of a Native Daughter." *Sojourner*, November, 8, 30.
- Mercer, Kobena. 1992. "'1968': Periodizing Postmodern Politics and Identity." In *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler, 424–49. New York: Routledge.

- Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. 1983. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color.
- Morgan, Robin. (1970) 2000. "Goodbye to All That." In *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*, ed. Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, 53-57. New York: Basic Books.
- Morrison, Toni. 1971. "What the Black Woman Thinks about Women's Lib." *New York Times Magazine*, August 22, 14, 15, 63-66.
- Naples, Nancy A. 1998. "Women's Community Activism." In *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing across Race, Class, and Gender*, ed. Nancy Naples, 327-49. New York: Routledge.
- Nelson, Jill. 1997. *Straight, No Chaser: How I Became a Grown-Up Black Woman*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Okazawa-Rey, Margo. 1999. Taped interview by Nancy Richard, December 26, 1999. Northeastern University archives, Boston.
- Omolade, Barbara. 1994. *The Rising Song of African American Women*. New York: Routledge.
- . 1998. "Sisterhood in Black and White." In DuPlessis and Snitow 1998, 377-401.
- Pardo, Mary. 1995. "Doing It for the Kids: Mexican American Community Activists, Border Feminists?" In *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, ed. Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin, 356-71. New York: Routledge.
- Piercy, Marge. 1970. "The Grand Coolie Damn." In *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writing from the Women's Liberation Movement*, ed. Robin Morgan, 421-38. New York: Vintage.
- Polatnick, M. Rivka. 1995. "Poor Black Sisters Decided for Themselves: A Case Study of 1960s Women's Liberation Activism." In *Black Women in America*, ed. Kim Marie Vaz, 110-30. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Popkin, Ann Hunter. 1978. "Bread and Roses: An Early Moment in the Development of Socialist Feminism." Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University.
- . 1979. "The Personal Is Political: The Women's Liberation Movement." In *They Should Have Served That Cup of Coffee*, ed. Dick Cluster, 181-222. Boston: South End.
- Pratt, Minnie Bruce. 1984. "Identity: Skin Blood Heart." In *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith, 9-63. Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand.
- Rabine, Leslie. 1993. "Stormy Weather: A Memoir of the Second Wave." In *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, 211-25. New York: Routledge.
- Raybon, Patricia. 1996. *My First White Friend: Confessions on Race, Love, and Forgiveness*. New York: Viking.
- Reddy, Maureen. 1997. *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Parenting, and Culture*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

- Reid, Inez Smith. 1972. *"Together" Black Women*. New York: Third Press.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1979. "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynophobia." In her *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences: Selected Prose, 1966-1978*, 275-310. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Roberts, Tamara. 1996. "Lost to History: The Rise and Fall of the National Black Feminist Organization." Unpublished paper, Northwestern University.
- Rosen, Ruth. 2000. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. New York: Viking.
- Rosenthal, Kristine. 1972. "Women in Transition: An Ethnography of a Women's Liberation Organization as a Case Study of Personal and Cultural Challenge." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education.
- Roth, Benita. 1998. "On Their Own and For Their Own: African-American, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in the 1960s and 1970s." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- . 1999. "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence in the 1960s and 1970s." In *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer, 70-90. New York: New York University Press.
- Rothstein, Vivian. 1994-95. "Reunion." *Boston Review*, December-January, 8-11.
- Sandeen, Eric J. 1995. *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Schneir, Miriam, ed. 1994. *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present*. New York: Vintage.
- Smith, Barbara. 1979. "Letter to Sojourner." *Sojourner*, September, 2.
- . 1983. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color.
- . 1994. "The Boston Murders." In *Life Notes: Personal Writings by Contemporary Black Women*, ed. Patricia Bell-Scott, 315-20. New York: W. W. Norton.
- . 1998. *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Spelman, Elizabeth V. 1988. *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Boston: Beacon.
- Springer, Kimberly. 1999. "'Our Politics Was Black Women': Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980." Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University.
- Strobel, Margaret. 1995. "Consciousness and Action: Historical Agency in the Chicago Women's Liberation Union." In *Provoking Agents: Theorizing Gender and Agency*, ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner, 52-68. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Umansky, Lauri. 1996. *Motherhood Reconceived: Feminism and the Legacies of the Sixties*. New York: New York University Press.
- Valk, Anne. 1996. "Separatism and Sisterhood: Race, Sex, and Women's Activism in Washington, D.C., 1963-1980." Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University.

- Vogel, Lise. 1995. *Woman Questions: Essays for a Materialist Feminism*. New York: Routledge.
- Walker, Alice. 1984. "A Letter to the Editor of *Ms.*" In her *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*, 273-77. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Wallace, Michele. 1978. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. New York: Dial.
- . 1990a. "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash." In her *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory*, 187-98. London: Verso.
- . 1990b. "Twenty Years Later." In her *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory*, 158-71. London: Verso.
- Watkins, Vaelethia Anne. 1998. "Black Feminist Gender Discourse (1970 to the Present): A Critique." Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University.
- Watters, Pat. 1971. *Down to Now: Reflections on the Southern Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Pantheon.
- West, Cornell. 1991. "Roundtable: Doubting Thomas." *Tikkun* 6(5):23-30.
- White, Deborah Gray. 1999. *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- White, E. Frances. 1984. "Listening to the Voices of Black Feminism." *Radical America* 18(2-3):7-25.
- Willis, Ellen. 1982. "Sisters under the Skin?" *Voice Literary Supplement*, June 1, 10-12.
- Wilson, Midge, and Kathy Russell. 1996. *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap between Black Women and White Women*. New York: Doubleday.

