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Thompson, Vanessa Eileen; Bergold-Caldwell, Denise; Löw, Christine

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FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

FORUM

Black Feminisms: Entangled geopolitical, historical and contextual backgrounds in conversation

Interview with Hakima Abbas, Maisha Auma, Noémi Michel und Margo Okazawa-Rey
VANESSA EILEEN THOMPSON. DENISE BERGOLD-CALDWELL. CHRISTINE LÖW.[1]

Introduction

The interview with Hakima Abbas, Maisha Auma, Noémi Michel and Margo Okazawa-Rey took place online on May 28, 2021.

Hakima Abbas is a political scientist, feminist activist, writer, and researcher. She is currently Co-Executive Director of the Association for Women's Rights in Development. Her political and activist focus is on Pan-African, Black feminisms and LGBTIQ movements, economic justice and struggles against the expropriation of land and natural resources in Africa. Her work concentrates on strengthening and supporting movements for transformation.

Maisha M. Auma is professor for childhood and difference (diversity studies) at the University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal, Audre Lorde Guest Chair for Intersectional Diversity Studies, Berlin University Alliance (2021/2022). Black Studies activist in the Black queer-feminist network ADEFRA (Black Women* in Germany). She researches afrodiasporic and feminist African pedagogies, critiques of normative epistemologies in education, Critical Race Theory, institutional whiteness and decoloniality.

Noémi Michel is a senior lecturer, political theorist, and activist. She works on struggles around memory, injustice, reparations, Black feminist and queer of color concepts of time, voice and vulnerability, as well as Black feminisms addressing the unsustainable inclusion of Black women in Europe/in European racial capitalism. She is member of the European Race and Imagery Foundation (ERIF) and the collective Faites des Vagues.

Margo Okazawa-Rey is professor emerita, activist, educator, and co-founding member of the historic Black feminist Combahee River Collective. She works on militarization and war capitalism, political economies of violence and wars, transnational feminist resistance to militarism and transnational feminist solidarity. She is active in the International Women's Network Against Militarism (IWNAM).

By bringing together Black/African/Afro-feminists from various geopolitical, historical, and contextual locations in this conversation, we as editors aim to highlight and contribute to the motion of the movement, the interconnectedness, and especially the transnational dimensions and the expansiveness of Black feminist theories

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and practices. Although there is now a relatively stable awareness of and work on feminist theory and gender theory in the German-speaking context, Black feminist and transnational Black feminist theoretical and practical references are still highly marginalized. This circumstance leads, as many Black feminists have argued, on the one hand, to ignorance and centering of dominant European, often white, perspectives and, on the other hand, to the marginalization and de-linking of Black, anti-/de- and post-colonial feminist thought and practice from broader gender theories and practices. But Black/African transnational feminist thought and organizing has much to offer to radical analysis and emancipatory transformation of our worlds in (constant) crisis. Therefore, the aim of this interview was not only and primarily to intervene in the German speaking sphere of white often liberal feminisms and white Gender Studies. The conversation was more about further generating Black/African feminist and Afro-feminist knowledges, perspectives and locations of struggles, visions, and projects of building and to imagine further transnational connections and possibilities of solidarities for Black/African/Afro-feminist theorists and activists in the German speaking context, while at the same time moving beyond this context. We wanted to engage in a conversation that engages Black/African/Afro-feminist perspectives and distances itself from mere justification to hegemonic audiences and therefore engages with the questions we want to ask, perspectives, controversies and debates that otherwise do not have much space. "We" includes of course here Black, non-white, migrant and racialized students, colleagues, scholars, and activists, who want to do further work on and alongside Black/African/Afro-feminist transnational thought and practices but are often cut off from the debates in German speaking contexts and in German academia and educational institutions. But it of course also invites white critical feminists and gender studies scholars and activists, who take Black/African/Afro-feminist analyses seriously as projects towards emancipation and liberation for all. And we hope that this conversation also generates interest of those, who haven't engaged with these strands of thought and practices yet, as we consider these topics relevant to all feminist research and feminisms in general.

Black feminism, African feminism, Afro-feminism: Geopolitical points of departure, journeys and visions of freedom

Vanessa E. Thompson:
Hello everyone, a very warm welcome, we are so delighted and grateful that you agreed to participate in this conversation on Black and African Feminisms. We would like to discuss our journeys of Black, African and Afro-feminisms, talk about your perspectives on current struggles and politics from your various points of departure, experience and expertise, as well as about the possibilities of strengthening Black and African transnational feminist solidarities. We thought it would be a good idea to structure this conversation alongside four questions, understood rather as starting points to our conversation, from different but entangled perspectives, geopolitical

settings ranging from Europe to the US and the African continent, but also shaped by relations to the Caribbean, East Asia, as well as generational insights.

Denise Bergold-Caldwell:
The first question is a kind of invitation-question to get us all in. We would like to know what Black/African/Afro-Feminisms means to you? Could you share with us parts of your political and personal journey of Black/African/Afro-Feminisms. Where there any important changes in your perspective you would like to share with us? What were crucial cornerstones in your journey? What are your visions of freedom?

Margo Okazawa-Rey:
The question is foundational, and when we talk about any of these things, we have to talk about departure mentally. Where was I when I was first part of Combahee River Collective, that's sort of the clear starting point as a Black feminist and now I'm in a very different place, for a lot of reasons. One is that even though we talked in the statement about anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, I think I have a clearer sense of what that means now. First and foremost, being connected to the US state, US corporations, US military that are wreaking havoc in the world – even as people who oppose the state and state policies – what does it mean to be connected to the US? And what are the things we can't see about ourselves, being complicit in one way or another, while at the same time giving ourselves credit for being in opposition and trying to imagine other possibilities. In the context of unequal power relations, how do we need to think about solidarity and, coalition work? Part of it is, we need to coalesce and be in *solidarity with our visions*, and that we work out those other things as we're going along. Identify these power kinds of things. But we need a real context. And for me, the real context is what Chandra Mohanty calls: What's our common context of struggle? And that, I think, is the work, in this particular moment, of US based African-American Black feminists, or other Black feminists who are in the States.

Noémi Michel:
First of all, thank you for this question, because I tried to clarify, before coming to the conversation, what does Black feminism, féminismes noirs in French, mean to me? I think it's a huge question. And my first formulation would be that it means the world to me, and it gives me life. With these two key words: *world* and *life*, I try to conceptualize Black feminism – because I'm a political theorist, I always try to conceptualize. Even if I'm also in the streets, an activist. But I think concepts allow me to clarify how I want to take part in this vision that you were talking about, Margo. Black feminism is a constellation of thoughts, of figures, of people, of moods, of feeling, acting, being and relating. And those constellations have been nurtured by the experiences of resistance to colonialism, slavery, and their aftermaths everywhere

on the planet. They are centering on the experiences and resistances of those whose capacity to give and sustain and care for life has been interrupted, forcibly, and coded as the main matter of racist capitalism. And then it's a method to relate to the world, a way of asking and generating the right questions. To be in relation to life in another way in a non-extractive, non-appropriative way of being in relation to life and other people. For me, it's a way of always remembering how we can be in relation to life and the world in another way than racial capitalist systems, and their different modes of being institutionalized and reproduced in different contexts. And, to echo the question of evolution, I think that I have become more critical also within the different traditions of Black feminism, and kind of personally radicalized. I see that Black feminism is very co-opted right now in Western Europe, in French, Francophone, Western European contexts, especially where I am. That's the phenomena of the "Black woman on the poster"[2] that I'm critical of. And I think Black feminism is, has to be, anti-capitalist. There is no way to relate to life and to generate new worlds by staying within capitalism. Thus, I'm very concerned with what I call "Afro fame" – to play with "Afro-fem", which is the French word designating the Afro-feminist. Another preoccupation that I have now is that I have been really US-centric myself. I mean, I have family in the U.S., I'm partly from the Caribbean, so that makes sense. But I think it's so important also for myself to study and add the constellations related to other places, especially the Caribbean and the African continent.

Hakima Abbas:
What does Black feminism mean to me? When I was looking at that question, for me the word *home* came up. I thought that was maybe because of indeed my trajectory, that part of my growing up in the diaspora; all those things mean that home is not a geographic location, but it really is about safe space, about bold space, brave space, the place where we build these new worlds. And Black feminisms, as Noémi said, as concepts, as practice really is the place where *home* fits for me. I was born in the diaspora to an African family who had migrated. And there's a sense of dispossession, of displacement and being born in the context of Othering. But that always felt – because, I think I was raised in a very political and matriarchal family –, like the value on who we were – our Blackness – was really centered. It felt to me like the margins were the place of the creativity and the innovation in the world. It was the place, where the excitement happens, where we should be, where we are celebrated and celebratory and the mainstream didn't seem very appealing. My journey has been on multiple continents in my activism, so I really started through that pan-Africanist, Black nationalist lens, thus my Black feminism feels also very global. The belonging doesn't come from a belonging that's kind of rooted in what people perceive to be culture or tradition or those things or even language, but rather belonging as understanding and a deep love for Black people and marginalized Black communities. I also agree deeply with what Noémi was saying, that for me, Black feminisms, it feels like you should add lots of other things like: anti-capitalist. At the same time,

I want it to be obvious that Black feminism, you know, that in itself, once you put the word "Black" in front, it really should not have the possibility of being capitalist or being oppressive in lots of other ways: heterosexist, transphobic, etc. So, for me, Black feminism is a liberatory practice and concept and should be liberatory in all of the senses, even in the ways that we don't even understand or know yet, because liberation is a journey. And as we build that, we will continue to get more and more understanding of what freedom can mean.

Maisha Auma:
To me Black Feminism is a collective practice of recovering our interconnected freedoms. It is based on a set of ethics, that has to be renegotiated continuously. At the core of those ethics is a commitment to safeguard intersectional Black lives and to deepen understandings of anti-blackness, as being rooted in the normalization of multiple and overlapping oppressions. I grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. I completed my entire school education on the African continent, before migrating to Kiel, Germany for my undergraduate degree. I have recently begun to use the term "Feminist Africans" to refer to my approach to Black Feminism. This is inspired by the online-journal *Feminist Africa*[3]. It is also in a sense, a move against the epistemic ignorance rooted in coloniality and towards epistemic freedom. Knowledge production is white-centric, even in Gender Studies. It tends to de-normalize contemporary African Feminist Social theory, or theories from geopolitical spaces outside of the West. Transnational Black Feminisms in my view, react to this continual epistemic marginalization and elimination, by normalizing collective practices of re-situating and re-embodiment of knowers and of knowledge production.

Noémi Michel:
I really like that we have *home, vision, love* and *life*. I think that says it all.

Connections between research areas, political engagements, and visions

Christine Löw:
The second question we thought about is how do Black/African/Afro-feminisms speak to your areas of research and political engagement? We were also very curious to hear about the connections between these perspectives and approaches in your important and respective work and activism, like knowledge production and the fields of education with regard to your work Maisha, LGBTIQ activisms on the African continent as an important part of your work, Hakima, struggles against militarism with regard to your work, Margo, and your work on translation and voice, Noémi. What does Black/African/Afro-feminism mean to you when we think about your broad and connected research fields that relate to many important scholarly issues and transnational feminist activism as well as related struggles?

Maisha Auma:
My current focus is on the actors and the epistemic agents who produce Feminist/ African inspired knowledges, and intersectional critiques of anti-blackness in the social world. Looking backwards, after being embedded in teaching and research in Gender Studies, in the German speaking context for almost 25 years now. There is a divide between the feminist analysis of BIPoC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) scholars and educators, who are embedded in contemporary African societies, in relation to institutionalized Gender Studies in the West. That became clear to me at an early stage of my feminist scholarship. I have actively sought to bridge this divide. One arena of action, a crucial epistemic community has been the Black queer-feminist organization ADEFRA. I have been active in ADEFRA since I was 19 years old. There were always such spheres of knowledge-making outside the academy, a form of knowledge-making which is not acknowledged as official knowledge. It's extracted, marketed, and consumed, but not explicitly recognized. It has been crucial to my anti-/de- and post-colonial work to forge connections between scholarship inside the academy, which is extremely white-centric and West-centric, and which consumes knowledge produced by Black bodies while normalizing barriers historically constructed on anti-blackness, and outside of the academy. My attempt to bridge divides, to make scholarship in contemporary African feminist contexts relevant to the work I am doing in my location in the West, and thereby to dislodge institutional whiteness, is a Black Feminist epistemic strategy. I rely heavily on texts from the online-journal *Feminist Africa* to be able to do this work.

Hakima Abbas:
Maisha, thank you. That was lovely to hear. And I'm learning so much from all of you. I do not work in the academy, but I am a theory geek and I do think that theory and practice, as Amílcar Cabral said, need to inform one another and we can't make a revolution without the two. And when we talk about theory, liberatory theory, that emerges and that we all have access to – I think from a very young age, I had access to African theory, but mostly cis-male theory of liberation, and/or to African American, in which then was also included feminist theory, but not as much to African feminist theory or even Caribbean feminist theory or Latin American, Afro-descendant feminist theory. It's because of imperialism, but it's also because of language and how we theorize in colonial languages in terms of how we translate our lives and the gaze of whiteness while we're making that translation. And so, you know, since being a part of the important African feminist spaces, conversations are often still held in English, French, maybe Portuguese. And global Black feminist spaces are the same so – and as someone who only speaks colonial languages – I know that there's a part of my experience that I don't articulate as easily in these languages. And for me, that just means that there are other ways, that are not necessarily spoken, where I am able to articulate them, but otherwise they're silenced. And then in terms of access to theory, Maisha talked about *Feminist Africa*, and I think we know lots of spaces

and knowledge production that we all gather from and kind of find and relate to. But still, there's very little that finds its way to the myriad of us. And that's because of everything that we know. I think about citation practice, about the academy and who gets valued and what knowledge means and who determines what really is real knowledge, how knowledge is passed on. There is a continued Eurocentrism to the ways in which feminism is understood. If you ask people about the history of feminism, they'll start telling you about waves in the U.S. Whereas I think that the history of African feminisms is much richer, much wider, much longer than those things. Rather than waves we have oceans of African feminist practice.

The same is true for African queer movements, organizing and practice. There has been an evolution across time, over at least the last three decades, around African queer organizing. And that there's, in some ways, I would almost say, three types of activism. The first type is the organizing around legal recognition, and those have been quite successful, in e.g. Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Cape Verde. Places where LGBTIQ organizers have managed to shift the legal framework away from criminalization and in some cases even in favor of non-discrimination, like the law in Cape Verde around workplace discrimination, which is quite important. But those strategies have been obviously directly linked to seeking recognition from the state. In other places, the state is actively seeking to roll back rights on LGBTIQ people and community. I think, cynically, mostly because it is a quick majority kind of trigger to rally around. So LGBTIQ folks are being targeted when politicians are looking for a rallying point. We see this also outside of Africa, like in the U.S., around reproductive rights. We saw that very early in the 2000s like in 2006/2007, with the case of the anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda, at its peak. There were many different ways in which the state sponsored homophobia and transphobia and was really creating a repressive environment (also in Zimbabwe, Malawi) in ways that we had not seen before in Africa. And that seeded and burgeoned a movement. I don't think social change happens linearly or social movements happen out of single moments or because of a backlash, I think there is a kind of evolving that is simultaneous. Unlike the resistance against the state and/or the push for state recognition was that some of the demands in the West started to creep in – through NGO-ization and donor requirements – and reached some of the discourses in the movements in Africa. But what I'm glad for is that they didn't take root, for example, issues of marriage recognition or marriage equality. It didn't root because our realities around marriage, even in terms of heterosexual marriage, are very different. I think it was almost a try, an attempt to glue something to us that wasn't relevant. And at that time, there was a lot of conversation in the LGBTIQ movements in Africa, around "what are some of the issues?" Economic rights and economic justice were really clearly a strong concern for LGBTIQ communities.

The second type lies outside of the legal frameworks, and I guess *with* the state, the counter-culture and the counter-power. And at the time it was an interesting and quite vibrant movement, that, you know, had its roots in, how we come together, how we

are politicized, how we think about ourselves in the multiplicity and plurality of identities. So as Africans, how is Pan-Africanism part of a struggle for LGBTIQ movements? Or again, as Africans, what does anti-imperialism look like? And especially as impoverished Africans, as the majority of LGBTIQ people are, what does that look like? How do we also think about the state as legitimate, and what that means in terms of making legal demands? What do we think about the economic system and capitalism and what would it look like for LGBTIQ people to thrive in a non-capitalist Africa? A counter-culture was developing and there was lots of arts and culture that developed and kind of blossomed that period until now. There was a radical feminist/queer politic that emerged that was deeply rooted in Africa. Some evidence of this was for example the statement from LGBTIQ movements against this threat that the Western world kept putting on African states to withdraw aid, ostensibly in defense of LGBTIQ rights.[4] And this statement was saying, in a nuanced way: "You are not our saviors. And the thing that you're threatening would harm us all, and anyway that's not being in solidarity. *This* (counter-culture) is what solidarity looks like." It was a time in which a collective definition of African queer politics emerged and is still evolving and being shaped today by young queer African people. The third type of activism is an interesting way in which queer activists are embedded in movements on many different issues. Be it #FeesMustFall[5] in South Africa, and the ways in which women and particularly queer women were at the forefront of some of those demands, and of course feminist movements and movements for land and territory, and all of those ways in which the LGBTIQ movement has – and continues to – make demands and creates its own counter-power, but also fighting at the intersections of the many ways in which Africa and Africans are impacted by global oppression and by oppressions internally. We even saw the activation of LGBTIQ people around the End SARS protests in Nigeria. We see it also in the ways in which LGBTIQ people participated in the uprisings in Sudan against the authoritarian regime. Those kinds of things.

Margo Okazawa-Rey:

Thank you so much. This is so crucial and also shows the relevance of class and economic conditions. I want to start somewhere slightly different but surely related, which is that I've come to understand Black feminisms from being and working primarily in Asia, the Pacific, and Palestine. My Black feminism has been informed by my relationships, my time spent in those places and theorizing with the feminists in those locations. I was one of the founders of the International Women's Network Against Militarism (IWNAM), and its women activists from Guam or (Guåhan as indigenous country name), Hawaii, Okinawa, Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Puerto Rico[6] and in the U.S., mainly on the West Coast. Through those engagements, and we've been together since 1997, and what we've learned, theorizing together, drawing on our different experiences, giving analyses of our situations. The focus is on challenging U.S. military bases, violence against women, committed by the institu-

tion, but also individual personnel, and the destruction of the environment because of that presence. Our work includes protest against the military practice in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, because now there are these new U.S. military forms, among them the *Indo Pacific Command*, including Australia, India, Israel and 42 more countries. Having that experience over the years, it has taught me that we need to really work out identities and these categories in practice and in context. It's interesting, the ways in which Blackness is relevant in particular ways in the network. One of the most egregious situations that happened was when that 12-year-old Okinawan girl was raped by three U.S. military personnel back in 1995. Really important was that the three rapists were Black men, African American military personnel. The women in Okinawa understood what that meant in the U.S. context: that the rapists are just the three Black bad apples in the good bushel. And they had a strategy for dealing with that, which is really amazing, like not posting photographs of the men and race was not mentioned, so race was not used as the analytic that could be exploited. They also linked it to the violence of militarism. In 1997, when we became a network, we talked about racial categories, but we also tied it to these inequalities among nations. So even in East Asia, there's a hierarchy and in the metaphor is the oldest brother, the middle brother and the younger brother, with China being the oldest, the middle being Korean and Japanese being the younger brother. So, there are all these ways to understand (also racialized) inequalities that are really different from the starting, using Black feminism as a starting place. What that engagement has enabled me to really think about is how do we think about Blackness in a more global context and how do we not create a canon like it's done in the academy. But how does praxis help our theories to stay alive and relevant and dynamic and can hold all these, what seem like not fitting parts. What framework will help us see how they fit together or what's the relationship among them? "Fit" isn't exactly the right word. Does that make sense? And Blackness, for example, in thinking about the Philippines: there's an indigenous group called the Aeta, Aetas people, who are "Black" – from if we looked at it, you know, the optics, as they say – but may not necessarily think about themselves as Black, right? So, I just want to interject that we also need to be really mindful of how we put out our ideas in such a way that we can also incorporate what comes back to us.

Noémi Michel:
That makes a lot of sense to me and actually Hakima's elaboration and yours, Margo, makes me think about desires that I have for myself, but also for us identifying as part of this plural, planetary, Black/African/Afro-feminism. One of those desires is for more and more translation in the richest sense, and I find it sometimes hard to sustain different politics of translation. Vanessa and me are part of a project and we are translating a text by Hortense Spillers collectively from English to French, from English to German, but also between us, trying to make sense of displacements, differences that happen when we translate. So, it's less about canonizing Spillers

across languages and more about coming together and putting our contexts in relation. But translation for me is also not just about languages, it's also about: how do we translate our experiences in other forms of expression. Hakima, you were saying "I only speak colonial languages"; I also speak almost only colonial languages – and I'm taking now Kreyol classes to reconnect with my Haitian background. But I also think that we can connect to part of ourselves and our traditions through other forms of expression, like gestures, music. Music – Black music especially –, dance and performance, the arts in general, and creation are forms of expression. So, I have this desire that we have space and time to cultivate all these forms of translation in all their senses.

Maisha Auma:
I think it's pertinent to our shared perspective to go deeper, and to use Margo's expression. It's pertinent to speak more on collective strategies of creating knowledge *otherwise*. We've all undergone forms of training informed by imperialism, by colonial languages, as Hakima has pointed out. We converse in colonial languages, we have an English bias, colleagues from Dakar or who are based in Dakar remind me constantly that conferences are often in English everywhere. It's important to interrogate, the hierarchies of nations, hierarchies of languages. Interrogate how we react to hierarchies in knowledge production and how we open spaces for more access: to knowledges and languages about being in the world which have been marginalized and eliminated, especially indigenous knowledges, including the standpoint of transnational Black feminisms. We need to uncover tracks of knowledge which have been interrupted and try to relink them. We need to make space for our racially marginalized bodies to be able to survive the institutional whiteness of the academy. I mean this wrestling within institutional suffering and navigation barriers built on anti-blackness within our westernized institutions. At the same time, I'm trying to nurture alternative spaces. I'm trying to figure out, how do we force institutions, that belong to us as well, to function for us, in our interest?
It's good to hear all your thoughts, because it's making me try to shift my perspective and maybe let go of a limiting focus, let something else become apparent and meaningful.

Margo Okazawa-Rey:
I would like to react to two things you said, Maisha. One is, I think it's beyond the question of access, right? Yes, we want access, but I think it is about how we actually co-create with people new ideas, new perspectives, new theories. And the other thing is, at some point, I learned that institutions are by definition conservative and all about preserving themselves. I decided that what I'm doing is creating free spaces where I can be with my students. Where community can have, in this case, access to resources, whatever. If we tie our agenda to any dominant form, this institution or whatever, then we are inextricably, tying ourselves to them. And so, having free

spaces where we're going to do what we want, while recognizing the emergencies that are around us, the immediacy, it's a *both/and* moment.

Hakima Abbas:
Again, as someone outside of the academy, I find that one of the ways that's been useful to think about it is what can I expropriate from these mainstream institutions, for my own people. But also, what energy can I use to also create our own autonomous institutions? When I say institutions, because I'm also an anarchist, I don't mean permanent structures. I mean just institutions as places where we can build. Be it theory, be it resources, be it other things to enable this liberatory world that we're looking for. And as I said, I don't think that's prescriptive because I think that liberation, we're constantly learning what it is. But if we can/ if we spend all our energies trying to change institutions that are built from coloniality, that have entirely that logic and a capitalist logic, I think we could spend all our time there and waste our energies entirely. Whereas if we also spend our time building our autonomous institutions, we're going to have a power from which to also fight.

Noémi Michel:
I really resonate with all this discussion about the institution, and I constantly struggle to find a balance between being in the institution and outside at a liminal space. When I am in the institution, I think I belong, in my way. I define how I belong. But at the same time, people make me feel all the time that I don't belong to this *white* institution. Black women in Western European academia are pressured to become token. If you go to any website of a university, you are going to see the image of a smiling Black woman (most of the time light skin, skinny, you know, very "feminine" and "respectable"). Since our Black women's bodies are the main matter of racial capitalism, they continue to be invested in new ways. It can be a trap when you are younger to think this new hypervisibility of certain kinds of Black bodies on posters and in conferences is a form of valuation. That's what I call "unsustainable inclusion" and I became very skeptical about that. At the same time, I also agree that it is important, too, if possible, if livable, to find ways to stay in relation to those institutions. Because, as you said, Maisha, they also belong to us.

Margo Okazaw-Rey:
I want to add something here to what you all are saying. If we think about it, we've all been colonized in various ways, especially our hearts. Because that's the thing that really completes the colonial project when people's hearts and souls have been colonized. So how do we come to recognize and internalize what's truly valuable and worthy?

Politics and Ethics of (Self-)Care

Denise Bergold-Caldwell:
We wanted to ask you all, as our third question, what do you think of the relation between Black feminism and care work – or Maisha is talking about nurturing? Like Margo said "we have been colonized in various ways, especially our hearts" and that is why care work is a form of ethic in Black Feminism. For me care work is a major issue in Black Feminism and it means so much – not only by theorizing its matter, but also in a practical-theoretical way. There are many and various contributions that matter. And so, I wanted to ask you: How do you perceive the importance of analyzing and doing care work, and the work of decolonizing ourselves, our emotions, our thoughts and feelings, and hearts, like Margo said.

Maisha Auma:
Denise, what I have learned recently about how practices of mutual care and also ethics of care which are generated out of our engaging together as Black feminists sustain us, despite the pervasiveness of intersectional anti-blackness. I think I will begin with something very immediate, and then expand to a wider scope: The situation I want to characterize is about recent attacks on my institutional position and my work by the far right, online in the digital sphere. There are unfortunately many forms of such attacks, regardless of where we are located, elsewhere in Europe, in France, or in the North American context and so on.
I gave an interview about the pervasiveness of structural racism in German Universities at the end of last year (2020). I was subsequently attacked by a member of the far right and his followers on social media early this year. According to him, he wanted to prevent "racism against whites", by attacking my critique. An enormously high content of anti-black racism that was then addressed towards me. "Go back to Africa" etc. – I'm not even going to repeat other awful things that were said, the deeply racist comments online. Anti-blackness was just pouring out. After the first confusion of trying to ignore the attacks and wishing it would all just go away I began listening to the voices, advice and strategies of fellow Black Feminist scholars, and Vanessa and Denise, you were both crucial for my sense of protection. You gave attention to a situation I just wanted to end. Because of your support we spoke about the ethics of care, or care politics especially within the academy. The most important effect was that I stopped feeling isolated. We were in effect standing shoulder to shoulder. It was a collective exercise not just to say: We are in solidarity with you, but to collectively figure out strategies of support and protection. Until today, institutions fail at figuring out a way to protect Black (intersectional) Lives. Racially marginalized groups are vulnerable, when we participate in public discourse, in academic discourse. It's not my situation as an individual, it is structural. Vanessa, you introduced me to the concept of the membrane of care. I had become a target, but through your interventions Denise, Vanessa and other intersectional BIPoC femi-

nists, and white feminist allies as well, the structural racism became the target. The solidarity from people who have an inside understanding of Black Life and of what this symbol – because it's not necessarily each society in Africa that's meant, it's Africa as a symbol – within the experience of Blackness and the experience of Black Lives means, was crucial to my protection. We were all really afraid, that someone else might get attacked, it might get bigger. We're always afraid when such attacks happen. I felt like this situation was easier for me to navigate, not just because you are there, but that you have this deep knowledge about how anti-blackness functions, about how Africa is used as a symbol for that, about how this was being projected on my body and on my professional status, my institutional belonging and all of that.

Hakima Abbas:
Thank you for that, Maisha. When you were talking, I was thinking it's so interesting how that connects to what we were already saying about recognition and value, in some ways. That caring is about recognizing each other, seeing each other, valuing each other, and trusting each other and building communities with each other. Those communities are our defense in many ways. And it made me think about the deep solidarities that Margo was talking about, even beyond Blackness and how we ensure that when others are attacked. I'm thinking, even, for example, of Palestine just now. What we mobilize as Black feminists in terms of action, can sometimes feel insignificant, up against systemic oppression. But having a historic record that we dissented, that we said no, and we were opposed, I think it's really important. I'm based on the continent of Africa. And so, I don't have the proximity to whiteness in my day to day that you all do. But, to paraphrase Thomas Sankara, if you want to see imperialism, you don't have to look further than your plate. There's still a long way to go in our liberation journey.

Margo Okazawa-Rey:
I was thinking about all these concepts that – we've been talking about counter-power, love, care, all of that. And I don't know if this works in other languages. But what if we turn those into verbs? What's the practice that they would be if we were using them as verbs and not just as a noun? And then concepts like reparation, I've been thinking a lot about: so, what are we repairing and for what purpose? What needs to be repaired if anything. There's something that's being talked about: restorative justice. What's being restored? Do we want to restore bad relationships or are we talking about transforming something like that? I've been thinking about hope. And thinking about hope is a concept that is about the past, present and future. It's not just future. What are we hoping will happen? And would there ever be a time where we would co-create Blackness into something else? Black feminism into something else? If we were in genuine praxis of solidarity and struggle.

Noémi Michel:
My brain and my heart are going to all the directions with all the things I heard. Maybe to echo what you were sharing with us, Maisha: I was nodding all along because I have been going through the same experience four years ago. That was a turning point for me, a moment where I actually deepened my relationship to Black feminism, because Black feminist texts and repertoire of actions, a grammar of caring was, at the end, what made me heal. The people who cared for me were not the fellow activists who were in my Afro-feminist collective of that time but my close ones who are actually not academics or activists in the classical sense. So, it reminded me that Black feminism is not about self-labelling, but first and foremost about loving, trying to turn to what you said, Margo, about turning the nouns into verbs. And I just remember that at that very moment where I had to be on medical leave, suffering a lot because of one of the heaviest attacks that I experienced in my life, the people who were the most helpful for me were those close friends and family members practicing a form of caring rooted in love. And not in visibility. So, I'm having a reflection since then about digital feminism and digital Black feminism and visibility and online activism. I find that it's so important to not let the far right and the alt-right have all the online and digital space and that a lot of these attacks began and are cultivated, true, in real life, but via online circulation of hate. But then I'm like, the response to that has to happen maybe somewhere else. It's so important to show support online when someone is attacked. But it's way more important to show love to that person in ways that won't be visible. Those ways won't be visible because they won't be appropriated and instrumentalized to nurture, you know, mainstream media ways of sensationalizing violence on Black people. But at the same time, as Hakima was saying, we need historical record of the fact that we dissented, and I think we also need a historical record about the fact that we loved, and we lived. My question is, how do we create those archives of care, of caring moments and caring strategies? How do we find non-commodifying ways of visibilizing caring and loving practices for and by ourselves from the past, from now and into the future?

Maisha Auma:
Wow, Noémi, now I have "all tabs open", very inspiring, I'm trying to find a way to respond. First of all, I'm really sorry about the attacks against you! I like how you're linking it to digital feminism and digital Black feminism or what kind of actions, activities, what kind of spaces offer protection and solidarity during such attacks and moments of overexposure and potential isolation. I feel a sense of protection and community every time I come across a Black feminist inspired and intersectional digital space. I like your focus on digital activism. It is such a vital resource. If you look at the whole situation with the Covid19 pandemic, where could we go, during all these lockdowns, where could we actually go to connect with Black Feminist Thought, strategies? So, I really like your ideas on that. The online journal *Feminist Africa* is just one example for me. I don't want to make this one example, "the exa-

mple", it's one example of a form of communication of Black feminist engagements which take Blackness into account in a very complex way. Speaking about care as a complex practice and thinking about how that protects against being singled out, it links into the question of being overexposed to attacks and to Black feminist strategies to deal with this reality of being made vulnerable.

Important struggles, contradictions and the politics of solidarity

Vanessa E. Thompson:
For our last question or prompt, we would like to stay with some current, but not so new, contradictions and struggles. And ask, how can we, as activist scholars and grassroots theorists, contribute further to confront the pressing and various crises of this moment, which are of course products of racial gendered capitalism and its motor. A lot was already mentioned by you all. What is the purpose in these times of current struggles, and how are they connected? Struggles against extraction and dispossession, and for the environment, struggles for Black Lives and against the carceral condition, against neo-fascism, struggles for freedom of movement and against borders, against deepening economic deprivation and precarity, always racialized and gendered, a global pandemic. I was wondering if we can really say that Black feminism is always anti-capitalist, I mean it should be, yes, but that's not what we see, as there are also active inclusions into neoliberal and liberal Black elite projects, Kamala Harris, and that is really just one example, the list goes on, would maybe call herself a Black feminist too, while working for an administration that deports migrants and refugees also under her leadership, a carceral feminist and rooting for neoliberal capitalism. Frantz Fanon talked about this with regard to anti-colonialism, Joy James talks about this with reference to Black feminism, and so many others, there are different class interests that we have to consider, right? Then there are questions, like certain discourses on decolonization, that really do not make a huge difference to the masses of poor Black people globally, Black migrants and refugees, especially women and non-binary folks. I do not want to play this out against each other, but purpose, like Margo said, matters. How can we marry our thoughts and practices even closer with the damnés, understood as a condition, as Sylvia Wynter reminds us, and this might mean also challenging certain strands of Black feminism? Those are some of the contradictions I am thinking through, and alongside with you, and I would love to hear what you think about this. And also, as we are moving to the end of this nurturing and inspiring conversation, maybe we could link this to what you would like to leave the readers with from this conversation.

Hakima Abbas:
In order to line out the contradictions and the possibilities of solidarity. One important question is about land, which has been central to the struggle for liberation in Africa for at least 400-500 years. While the legacies of colonialism continue, I think the

shape and face of colonialism shifted. From the kind of direct "ownership or rule" during colonialism to, obviously, neo-colonialism that continues to serve the North. Capitalism and private companies played a huge part in colonialism and continue to. Private companies to this day grab land and establish a type of commercialized land ownership in Africa – and it's huge. And it is related to ecocide, environmental devastation, that creates conflict – because people no longer have access to natural resources, including water –, and creates urbanization – because people can no longer live off the land –, but also has really devastating effects in terms of our ability to self-determine. We're also not able to self-determining economically what we plant, grow, produce and eat. The pandemic showed again how African economies are dependent on global economies. They would say *global*, but I would say *Northern*. Particularly the ways in which we import food – and many natural resources that are taken from here and sold back to us.

We also see a real battle around GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and the attempt to make Africa almost an experimentation ground for GMOs. And this is really pushed by large corporations, but also philantro-capitalists like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They come in this very insidious way, in the sense that if you read the material, it all sounds so great. Even just language around green revolution, that sounds great. But in fact, they're pushing false solutions on the world and on Africa in particular. You can get points with the UN climate mitigation scheme REDD system[7], meaning you can deforest, but then if you grow a monocultural plantation tree, even though it's nothing comparable to a tree that's been there for centuries, you can earn money through carbon bonds. Programmes that are sold as climate and forest-friendly solutions like REDD are creating this way in which capitalism could continue unabated and pretend to be so *green* while the environment is actually devastated. And that links to African feminisms because literally African women are putting their bodies on the line, defending forests, defending land and territory, subverting fossil fuel extraction, trying to not enter this market-dependency around grain, seeds, food crops and trying to resist by seed-saving. This all happens in relation to the land but similarly in relation to the oceans. Many of our fishing communities are being devastated because of the ways in which huge trawlers are taking fish from the oceans on our coasts, often illegally. That has really deep impacts on fishing communities, including fishing women in fishing communities, who have a really specific role in terms of trade around fish. Whole communities are losing livelihoods. Often these restructurings have created mass migration, such as in Senegal. Because there is simply no access to means of subsistence and survival. Of course, we know what it has created in Somalia and other places.

I'll use the example of West Africa: there is a community and a campaign of African women in seven countries called "We Are The Solution" – and they are saying, look agroecology is the way to mitigate climate change. And we are the scientists and the experts. We are the ones who have been tilling the land and adapting to that tilling. And this mode of production is not primitive, not evolved or whatever – referring

to all the racist tropes. Understanding Africaneity as something of the past. In opposition, this campaign is saying: no, *we* are the future! We have deep indigenous and ancestral knowledge, but we also have deep scientific knowledge that has taken us forward into how to mitigate and how to adapt. And we're feeding the continent, we're feeding most people. If you're looking for the solutions rather than promoting GMOs, rather than supporting all these Western false solutions, here we are. And I think that's really important, all again from an African feminist frame, in terms of how we value knowledge of African women and how African women resist but also create the alternatives to climate change.

With the impact of Covid and looking back to 2007, having understood what happened with that supposed financial crash, we knew immediately how this pandemic would go. We know that capitalism seeks crises as ways to reconstruct, but also as ways to deepen precarity of the impoverished and those that are already deeply impacted negatively by the impacts of capitalism. That is what we have seen, right? The billionaires have gotten richer and poor people are literally on the brink of starvation. We were saying that we need immediately a people's response to the increasing social inequalities as effects of the Corona pandemic. That demands a feminist economic recovery, that demands feminist bailout. And that resonated deeply amongst Black feminists because as we know, as Black women we are always, for instance in employment, the last in and the first out. Or, because we are always – in terms of the economic system – deeply understood as disposable, as cheap labour and we are not just alienated from work, but we are taking work, any work that we can, at the expense of decent work. And beyond labour – obviously our communities – we are also suffering from unfair trade systems and illicit financial flows and all the rest of it. While for example in Kenya, the president announced during Covid that he was going to decrease the taxes of corporations, in order to attract more investments, which is the absolute opposite of the lessons of Covid (laughs cynically), feminists in Kenya – particularly within impoverished communities in Nairobi – were saying: absolutely not. We demand a feminist bailout, we demand universal basic income, we demand a say in the economic policies of the country and into the future.

That was the same in Haiti, and that was the same at a pan-African level, where African feminists came together and created a statement "African Feminist Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery Statement" (11.6.2020) around what the feminist economic recovery *should* look like[8]. And in that statement – I was part of that organizing – and the important thing there was that we were saying: look, we don't know how much we'll be able to influence this moment, but what we *do* know is that there needs to be a stated, known intervention, that we refused, *we don't agree*, and that's on record. And so, partly in terms of that organizing, I think different people are taking it up in different spaces.

So yeah, what can Black feminists in the North do? I think to support African feminists, as we keep going in the struggle for economic justice, I think it's useful to find ways to amplify, find ways to connect. Often these are issues that we are all facing – I

know in the economic sphere they make a distinction between micro- and macroeconomics. But in many ways, in which the issues that are being faced at the – what economists call the household level – but even just the community level in Black communities in the North, are mirrored in many ways in the issues at the macro level that African communities and the African continent faces globally. And so, I think how we connect, how we build, how we organize together, how we also create the alternatives and support the alternatives, is really important.

Maisha Auma:
I'm going to end with two thoughts. Within the academy, as part of my intense conversations with BIPoC scholars, I offer an extra session, in which we take off the "functioning suit" for the white institution and bring in some realness about navigating realities of coloniality and anti-blackness. This is usually just one session per semester for BIPoC scholars only. In this session, I invite other Black feminist scholars, very often Peggy Piesche and Katja Kinder, whom I have known for over 25 years. We discuss and develop strategies to deal with being de-normalized in the white-centric, West centric academy. I have observed how many BIPoC students become so overwhelmed by the intersectionality of oppression – that we come to a position where they think "I am the person who has the worst, the most oppression". I have deep empathy with BIPoC scholars and with myself, because I reacted in more or less the same way, I however try to shift their perspectives. I believe there is something that makes us resilient when we assume that we are not the end point of the most oppression. Call it a more Afro-futuristic modus: So I encourage them to operate under the assumption, that there's always someone else who might be in a more precarious situation. How can they make their conceptualizations relevant to this? I encourage them to participate actively in dismantling a set of oppression, which does not impact them negatively. I believe there is a form of resilience, a set of strategies to be learned. The idea mobilizes care and solidarity for the collective, without creating dependency.
And finally, you did ask us, Vanessa, what we would like to leave the audience with: I go back to Noémi's point, thinking about intersectional Black Feminist strategies in digital spaces. I'm a huge fan of self-determined Black feminist sexual politics and sex education. My favorite Feminist African sex ed digital resources are, "Adventures from the Bedrooms of African Women" by Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah and fellow Feminist African epistemic agents and "HOLAAfrica! A PanAfricanist Queer Womanist Collective"[9] which is a sex positive and GNC Blog-Space by Tiffany Kagure Mugo and fellow Feminist African epistemic agents, a Blog by, for, about African Queer Women. These sites produce crucial and accessible Black Feminist knowledge, where potentially any Black Feminist can self-publish.
These are resources that we all can access in our homes. The content is literary explorations of Black bodies, of desire from an intersectional and trans inclusive Black Feminist perspective. And I think this is more of the kind of work that I'm trying to give value to and to give more space and visibility.

Margo Okazawa-Rey:
I would like the readers to take away from this interview the idea of a different starting place, and this goes to, Maisha, your point, right? You talked about this kind of oppression Olympics and all that stuff. Nonsense. I'd like readers to think about where are the places to start? That are not about bodies. That are not about trauma. That are places to start, that are about liberation. What does liberation and freedom look like. What does genuine security look like? And what are the – not just the interconnecting bodies and all of that – but what are the forces that are keeping all of us tied to the current systems as we know them? And how do we think about the forces rather than the impacts? In other words, the processes rather than the impacts? Because I think we begin too often with the impacts. And when we do that, then we're comparing whose impact is worse. We often talk about margins, center, we have a geometric way to think about the current situations. If we're thinking geometry, are there other formations, forms that will help us understand the complexity besides margin and center? Finally, I want readers to really think about reconceptualizing self. This very notion of self that is often singular. Egocentric. Even as we claim oppression and you know all of that, we're still very egocentric about it, even though intellectually we may say something else, right. So how do we, and the capitalist way of thinking about self is very individualistic and it's very consumerist also, whether it's you're consuming status or you're consuming time? As well as all the material things. I want our readers to think about deeper questions that try to get to some of the sources of things and not just the manifestations, not just the impacts, but the processes and then the values that those processes are attached to. In other words, think about vision. Let's create spaces where we're getting to think about imagined possibilities. It's like the politics of vision and possibilities. And could our next conversation be about that? I'm getting too excited here, but you get the idea. Yeah, not a politics of scarcity where the assumption is there's not enough of anything that's valuable, whether it's material or none-material. But the most dangerous part of the politics of scarcity is not that something is scarce, but the ethic that we're not going to share.

Noémi Michel:
I'm so inspired and thankful and trying to listen deeply. So, I think it's hard sometimes to talk after having listened. I imagine myself as a reader, because I want to reread our conversation, be in relation again with this exchange and think about ways of continuing it. The conversation itself is an archive. I'm really, really interested in Black feminist practices as forms of conversation. You were asking, Margo, how do we think about alternative geometries that aren't organized around center and margin? I think conversation is an alternative form that has also a temporal dimension. We took time. Nobody was centered. There was a flow, exchanges. I want to go back to that form as a reader of that conversation. What you were talking about, Vanessa, the contradictions, is so true. And you said it so clearly. And Hakima's reference to

the current crucial struggles and resistances and ways of defending life also shows and reminds us that there are Black feminism*s*. I'd like to ask the readers (including myself) to remember that. Yes, there are certain expressions of Black feminisms that have purposes that do not meet. My relationship to this tradition tries to be anti-capitalist and in solidarity with life. With lives that are constrained and rendered precarious, but that are lives who are always more than that. I think it's also our duty to never forget that those who are labeled as the most precarious, as the poorest, as the less privileged are actually very rich and have a lot to give. How to find a way to be in solidarity against the processes that are constraining and killing those lives, while never forgetting that the people who inhabit those lives are way more than what the processes are actually making us see in them. My thinking is not very linear. It's my Haitian Kreyol way of thinking sometimes. So going back to this: remembering that Black feminism is complex and that there are internal contradictions and not being fearful of addressing them. And I think that's important also for the youngest – or the newest, because it's not a question of age – people who come to Black feminism. Because sometimes we fear of exposing contradictions, because we fear of being restaged as the angry Black woman and the angry Black Queer, or we are in that battle of who is the most oppressed. I am really grateful that you brought up the word contradiction as a fruitful word that is allowing us to go forward and deepen our conceptions of liberation. That's the thing I set for myself as a reader.
And then for current readers (some whom I don't know) of *Femina Politica*. This is the first time that an issue of the only German speaking journal of feminist political science is centered on our voices and our thoughts. So, I just got to shout out. You know, as in the rap songs. At the end of the rap song, you shout out to people and that's not going to be exhaustive at all. I hope you can include it somehow in the piece. Those are some people with whom I am right now, these weeks, in conversation for collective thinking, but also for collective action. So I just want to shout out to Bel Parnell-Berry, co-conspirator in my collective ERIF, to my sister, the artist Ka(ra)mi, to Vanessa Eileen Thompson, to Jovita dos Santos Pinto, to Jenny Oliveira Caldas, to Chantal and Cédric Djedje, to Myriam Paris, to the Racial Justice Student Collective – in the German part of Switzerland, to my collective here in Geneva Faites des Vagues*,* to all the current abolitionists, you know, who are struggling and bearing the struggle for abolition, and yeah, the list could go on. But these are the shout outs that I wanted to give today, thinking about Black feminism as a constellation. Those are the stars right now for me.

Vanessa E.Thompson:
Thank you so much, Noémi, I think this is a wonderful idea, so much beauty in this practice, for readers and engagers, encouraging us to stay in these radical Black feminist constellations. We'll just open with the closing, that actually our end is going to be a further opening. Thank you so much for your time, for being in conversation, in relation, for really making this such an important conversation. Which is so inspiring

and also, in a very productive way, challenging in terms of thinking about practices and in terms of thinking about making our geographies of liberation. Putting them into practice, about loving as a practice. We as interviewers are really deeply thankful.

Christine Löw:
From my side many thanks as well. The exchange was very rich, also very inspiring, and I learned very much. I have a lot more questions and appreciate the idea that we could have a further conversation. And I very much like the spiral Noémi was relating to. I'm also grateful for your ideas, your critical thoughts and your visions for another future coming from the manifold diverse voices of Black feminist, feministes noires and African feminists located in different continents. Bye bye.

Denise Bergold-Caldwell:
Yes, I found it really inspiring and overwhelming as well. In the beginning – as we started as editors for the special issue on Black Feminisms – one year ago – we wanted to create a space where the possibilities, richness, and the demand or claim for universalism of Black Feminisms, African and Afro-Feminisms can be shown. Now, having this conversation, I think we needed this conversation, to demonstrate and illustrate all the enrichening perspectives. As a young scholar and woman, I always dreamed of a conversation among Black Feminists published in the German context, to interrupt and engage in what is known about Black Feminism in Germany. And so, for me, it's like a dream come true. Because I started this process thinking about: I want to hear more what Black feminists say, what they think, what we should do and how we should work things out. I'm so grateful for this conversation, to be part of it, just to hear all of you speaking. So, yeah, I can just say have a nice evening and I'm going to bed now and I'm dreaming of not ever ending this conversation, just to listen to you (laughs).

Margo Okazawa-Rey:
I know, I know to be continued, I guess the best way to finish this off. Yeah. Thank you so much, everybody, for organizing.

Notes

1 A special thanks goes to Magdalena Wanda Protte for the transcription.

2 The notion was coined by Hortense J. Spillers in the opening paragraph of her essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe. An American Grammar Book", published in Diacritics. 17 (2), Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection, pp. 65-81 (1987) and I actualize it in relation to white European institutions' over-investment in Black women's image. (comment Noémi Michel).

3 See https://feministafrica.net/.

4 See "Statement on British 'aid cut' threats to African countries that violate LBGTI rights" (27.10.2011) at https://www.pambazuka.org/activism/statement-british-aid-cut-threats-african-countries-violate-lbgti-rights.

5 Student lead protest movement that started in 2015 in South Africa against increases in students fees and for the radical democratization of education.
6 See http://iwnam.org/ (16.10.2021).
7 REDD now expanded towards REDD+ means Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in "developing" countries is a top down market-based United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate mitigation scheme that creates financial incentives for saving forests. For a critical perspective on its greenwashing, undemocratic and dispossessing aspects, see Redd-Monitor on Africa: https://redd-monitor.org/?s=Africa (16.10.2021).
8 See https://africanfeminism.com/african-feminist-post-covid-19-economic-recovery-statement/ (16.10.2021).
9 See http://holaafrica.org/publications/ (16.10.2021).

Telling anger – Wut erzählen und Wut, die erzählt

LESLIE KARINA DEBUS

> It is not that anger at women's oppression 'makes us feminists': such an anger already involves a reading of the world in a particular way and also involves a reading of the reading; so identifying as a feminist is dependent upon taking that anger as the grounds for a critique of the world (Ahmed 2014, 171).

In vielen Protesten und aktivistischen Bewegungen der letzten Jahre ist die Wut, die in diesen Protesten sichtbar wurde, ein herausstechender Aspekt. Der Women's March vor dem Weißen Haus 2017, die Black-Lives-Matter-Bewegung, die feministischen Proteste in Chile und Argentinien und auch Fridays for Future zeigen, dass viele Menschen wütend sind. Andere, oft in gesellschaftlichen Machtpositionen, bezeichnen die Protestierenden mitunter als unverantwortlich, überreagierend, empfindlich und gefährlich für das soziale Gefüge. Ein einprägsames Beispiel sind die staatlichen Reaktionen auf Black-Lives-Matter-Proteste im Kontrast zu Reaktionen auf die Wut *weißer* Nationalist*innen (vgl. Thompson 2017). Hier zeigt sich, dass gesellschaftliche Strukturen einen Einfluss auf den Ausdruck und die unterschiedliche Interpretation von Wut haben. In diesem Artikel möchte ich beleuchten, wie Wut mit gesellschaftlicher Macht zusammenhängt und was wir lernen können, wenn wir Wut zuhören.

Von allen Emotionen nimmt Wut einen besonderen Platz ein, da sie oft als etwas Negatives oder Destruktives und gleichzeitig als etwas Machtvolles gesehen wird. Wut ist in den meisten Strängen der Sozialwissenschaften lange nicht umfassend beachtet worden. In den letzten Jahren hat diese Emotion eine ganz neue Aufmerksamkeit bekommen, vor allem vonseiten BIPoC und feministischer Autor*innen, die ein komplexeres Bild der Wut selbst und darüber zeichnen, was sie uns über uns

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