# Homespaces AC

## Inherency

#### Black women have no privacy within the political - White politicians use the white gaze to pass policies reliant on the tropes of black women. Moconjae 10

Defining Us: A Critical Look at the Images of Black Women in Visual Culture and Their Narrative Responses to these Images. Tanisha Monconjae Jackson Graduate Program in Art Education The Ohio State University 2010

Black women find themselves caught in the policy process that relies on reified images that are used to construct stories of what is “reality.” Stories are constructed to depict black women, often in a rather negative light. If one is not careful, it is easy to accept these policy stories as truths. This work is not centered on questioning the origination of the images used to tell the policy tales of black women, it is more about centering the policy stories, by asking what tales are being told. In many of the tales of black womanhood they are depicted as strong and masculinized. On the other hand, they are also depicted as lazy and promiscuous. She is a woman, albeit a “bad” woman and she is masculinized. The result is that policy attempts to alter her behavior as opposed to addressing factors—structural and institutional—that tend to encourage and promote black women’s inequitable position. In the analysis, I concentrate on a very limited time period. As such some readers might be inclined to conclude that the treatment of black women is static. I encourage all readers to view this work as one that historically isolates and analyzes recurring stereotypical images of black womanhood. What the reader needs to remember is that stereotypes and social icons, while the underlying rationale might remain stable over time, are indeed dynamic. This simply means that some images can remain dormant over a period of time. In addition, images can be used to convey multiple sto- ries. So, two different policy makers can tell two different stories while using one image. This becomes relevant since the use of images of black womanhood have not remained unchanged over time. Public policy, for example, developed during the Great Society era did not necessarily view black women as in need of punishment in comparison to policy developed at later dates. In addition, there has also been a shift in policy making that emphasizes the failure of individual effort and behavior. However, there has been a consistent element in the use of cultural images of black wom- anhood. The consistent factor, across the eras and policy domains, is the social construction of African American women as “Others.” As I developed this work, I have received some very thought-provoking feedback. Consistently, I have been asked, “Does the stigmatization of poor black women also occur among other African Americans?” The answer is yes. By no means do I try to suggest that the negative imagery of black womanhood is employed only among those outside of the black commu- nity. However, this is an analysis of how elite policy makers employ the images of black womanhood in their decision making. Thus the emphasis is on how Euro-Americans, as they are the majority of the policy makers under consideration, employ these images. The second question that tends to follow is: “Are you saying that these individuals are racist?” To this I simply respond, no. The argument being made here is that race and gender hierarchies influence the structures, institutions and practices of society either knowingly or unknowingly.  The primary goal of this work is to bring to the forefront of policy dis- cussions how the intersection of race, gender, and class influence the policy decision-making process. I seek to understand how the policy elite’s use of images of black women, *Mammy*and *Jezebel*among others, are used in the discourses to frame policy choices. Second, I attempt to show how the use of negative images often impede black women’s quest for social justice. It is not simply enough to analyze the use of images, etc., in the policy making process, as this does not adequately satisfy the purpose of black feminist and womanist thought. Thus, I also engage in offering a series of sugges- tions on how black women can begin to challenge their treatment in the public policy-making process.  Prior research has done a wonderful job of showing us how black women are socially constructed and have explored the implications of such con- structions. This might leave some to wonder why we need additional work. Thus far, the trend has been to treat public policy areas as discrete. Efforts at the integration of different policy areas tend to be rather uncommon. Analysts are inclined to explain the impact of the social construction of black women in the area of welfare or crime, thereby, creating a series of specialized literature. By offering a theoretical mechanism for the racing- gendering process of policy making, I strive to bridge these literatures

#### AND this discreteness is problematic because it’s a result of invisible whiteness- Despite these tropes that blackness is confined by, Whiteness has rendered itself invisible within the political. Whiteness remains unmarked, even though its effects have marked us. We need to flip the script and mark whiteness

**Yancy 2** Yancy, G. (2012). *Look, a white!: Philosophical essays on whiteness*. Temple University Press.

The reality is that the “workings of race” are precisely what people of color see/experience most of the time. Important to this learning process, though, is reminding my white students that they are white, that they are part of the very “workings of race” that they are beginning to recognize.39 For most of my white students, before taking my course their own whiteness is just a benign phenotypic marker. Indeed, for most of them, whiteness has not really been marked as a raced category to begin with. They do not recognize the normative status of whiteness that the marking is designed to expose. For them, “to be white” means “I am not like you guys”—those people of color. Whiteness as normative and their whiteness as unremark- able thus remain in place, uninterrogated, unblemished. Sara Ahmed writes, “There must be white bodies (it must be possible to see such bodies as white bodies), and yet the power of whiteness is that we don’t see those bodies as white bodies. We just see them as bodies.”40 In short, the process of disentan- gling the sight of white bodies from the sight of such bodies as just bodies is not easy, but it is necessary. For many whites, the process of marking the white body (“Look, a white!”) is not just difficult but threatening. The process dares to mark whites as racists, as perpetuators and sustainers of racism. Furthermore, the process dares to mark whites as raced beings, as inextricably bound to the historical legacy of the “workings of race.” Hence, the process encourages a slippage not only at the site of seeing themselves as innocent of racism but also at the site of seeing themselves as unraced.41 As Zeus Leonardo and Ronald K. Porter write, “Hiding behind the veil of color-blindness means that lifting it would force whites to confront their self-image, with people of color acting as the mirror. This act is not frightening for people of color but for whites.”42 It is frightening because whites must begin to see themselves through gazes that are not prone to lie/obfuscate when it comes to the “work- ings of race” qua whiteness. Indeed, there is no real need to lie about white- ness. People of color have nothing to lose; whites have so much to protect. Yet what do they have to protect? As Richard Wright notes, “Their constant outward-looking, their mania for radios, cars, and a thousand other trinkets, made them dream and fix their eyes upon the trash of life, made it impos- sible for them to learn a language that could have taught them to speak of what was in theirs or others’ hearts. The words of their souls were the syl- lables of popular songs.”43

#### AND this invisibility and troping pushes black candidates into respectability politics where they separate their blackness from their politics in order to attempt to be normative or “white” and when they don’t they risk losing and never entering the political. Only thorugh destroing these trpes can black women ever have access to the political Reid Brinkley 12

Shanara Rose Reid-Brinkley, 2012, Mammies and Matriarchs: Feminine Style and Signifyin(g) in Carol Moseley Braun's 2003-2004 Campaign for the Presidency Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Pittsburgh, where she also serves as the Director of Debate for the William Pitt Debating Union. Keller JB

The 2003-2004 race for the Democratic presidential nomination began with a barrage of candidates, which did not bode well for the democrats' chances at beating George W. Bush in the 2004 pres- idential election. Considering the increased rhetorical saliency of diversity and representation, the nominees included a Jewish Amer- ican man (Joe Lieberman), an African American man (Reverend Al Sharpton), and an African American woman (Carol Moseley Braun). Senator Moseley Braun, the second African American to enter the race and the only woman, ran for the bid depicting President Bush as a violent, political leader that held America "hostage," contrasting herself as the calm, cooperative, and strong feminine alternative. Moseley Braun's rhetoric failed to produce a significant support base for the campaign and she conceded the race before the primaries. In an interview six years after the election, Moseley Braun said, "This is where being black and female comes in. Because black women have to work on being docile.... Because I missed some of the cul- tural cues, particularly with regard to both gender and race, I was not as sensitive as I should have been. And I paid the price for it."' Her inability to fit within appropriate frames of black femininity cre- ated a perceptual problem that made gaining support for campaign elections difficult. This chapter analyzes news media representa- tion as well as Moseley Braun's presidential campaign discourse to identify the frames that not only constrained her effectiveness as a black female candidate, but also the frames to which she had access to resist dominant images of black femininity. Moseley Braun used feminine style as a rhetorical strategy to create an appropriate per- formance of femininity that was intelligible to a broad and diverse support base. However, given that black political candidates may be deemed single-issue candidates if they explicitly engage race, Mose- ley Braun used feminine style as a rhetorical cover for the African American practice of signifyin'. Intersecting the analysis of gender with race, class, and sexuality highlights the limitations of femi- nine style research, which largely ignores the various interactions of identity-based ideology. In the following sections, I review the contextual considerations associated with an analysis of Moseley Braun's rhetoric. Then I engage contemporary rhetorical theory on feminine style, illustrating the limited nature of this theory, when conceptualized from a non-intersectional framework. In the analy- sis section, I identify three frames-the Good White Mother, the Modern Mammy, and the Black Matriarch-as performance frames that Senator Moseley Braun negotiated during her campaign. Before she ran for national office in 1992, Carol Moseley Braun served as an assistant U.S. attorney, a state legislator, and a county execu- tive. Running during the "Year of the Woman," and arguing that she would be the first black woman senator in history, Moseley Braun beat her white male opponent, Richard Williamson, in her first bid for a congressional seat. Despite her victory politically and histori- cally, Moseley Braun suffered a number of political scandals, includ- ing accusations of campaign money mismanagement and claims of a "mediocre" Senate record that led to her defeat after only one term in office.' Even though there had never before been an African American female member of the Senate, and she actually achieved a laudable Senate record during her years of service,4 she lost her Senate seat in 1998 to Peter Fitzgerald, the republican who outspent Moseley Braun and ran a vicious campaign, with the assistance of republican strategist Karl Rove. Following the loss, President Bill Clinton appointed Moseley Braun ambassador to New Zealand. On September 22, 2003, Moseley Braun formally announced her intention to seek the Democratic nomination for the presidency. Receiving support from notable women's organizations, including the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), Moseley Braun formulated her campaign discourse to be persuasive to women voters specifically and to the American public in general. Given the early support from women's organizations and Moseley Braun's use of gender as a rhetorical strategy, it is important to analyze the significance of feminine style in her campaign discourse. To do so, I have gathered the speeches, debates, interviews, and Internet chats that feature Moseley Braun, many of which were transcribed on her campaign site. Other artifacts were drawn from transcripts of news televi- sian and radio available online. As the number of actual artifacts for this analysis is quite large, I will not describe the context for each speech; instead, I am interested in the discourses constructed nationally through Moseley Braun's rhetoric and the fact that cam- paign speeches are never limited just to the immediate audiences to which they are delivered. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell argues that women rhetors engage in the use of feminine style as a rhetorical strategy designed to create a space for women's participation in public deliberation.' Bonnie f. Dow and Mari Boor Tonn note that "the feminist agenda in rhetori- cal studies itself has been primarily liberal-feminist in orientation, a clear goal has been to revise the traditional 'great speaker' paradigm to include women rhetors.'" Contemporary rhetorical study of femi- nine style has been used to study women's rhetoric across various rhetorical situations, including the study of women candidates and elected public officials. Feminine style "produce(s) discourse that displays a personal tone, uses personal experience, anecdotes and examples as evidence, exhibits inductive structure, emphasizes au- dience participation, and encourages identification between speaker **and audience.** Analysis of feminine style as a rhetorical strategy has largely been limited to studying the public discourse of white, middle-class women. This is partly a function of the focus of such scholarship on speeches representative of "feminist social reform."' As such, feminine style is a particularly raced and classed theory of criticism. As the women's suffrage and women's liberation movements have proven of great historical import, it is the famous voices of these movements, and the white women engaged in national politics, that have received the most attention in feminist rhetorical scholar- ship on feminine style. Various studies of feminine style note the need for further study into the diversity of "feminine styles.'" Jane Blankenship and Deborah Robson suggest that such "study will be needed to fully address the salience of race, class, age, and ethnic- ity, etc., especially as it relates to women in politics."10 Although their article "focuses only on the commonalities ... found promi- nently placed in the discourse of women in settings of campaigns and governance,''11 the authors argue that they do not "suggest that all women, monolithically, speak alike; rather, the intersections of gender with race, class, etc., mean that a multiplicity of voices help constitute variations within the feminine style."12 More recently, Victoria Pruin DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski in *Communicating Gender Diversity* argue that "it is important to make room for diverse feminist theories" in the study of communication.13 The authors note that there are multiple "fem- inine styles," with white, middle-class, straight femininity being but one version. However, the authors do not indicate that this par- ticular style is a citation of a privileged performance of a culturally normative femininity. As a reiteration of a privileged performance of white femininity, it is no wonder that the study of feminine style in communication studies has been largely limited to the study of white, straight, middle-class women.14 Campbell's germinal essay analyzing feminine style in the rhet- oric of Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Ter- rell is one of the few rhetorical analyses of feminine style in black women's political rhetoric15 Campbell seeks to demonstrate that the theory of feminine style is explicative in studying diverse wom- en's rhetoric. However, a reading of Campbell's analysis demon- strates the limited utility of the theory when race is not galvanized as an intersectional tool of analysis. Given that most women of the time period who spoke publicly in support of women's suffrage were white and middle class, Truth's race and class difference from such women is a critical space of evaluating her use of feminine style as a rhetorical strategy. The purpose of Truth's speech is not just to dem- onstrate that women deserve legal and political representation, but also to define womanhood, so that black women who have been tra- ditionally defined outside of the feminine standard can be included. For Truth, the use of her *female* body cannot be disconnected from her use of her body as also *black* to make a political argument. To focus on her rhetoric as an example of feminine style functions to elide the difference that her race and class make. In order to complicate this notion of feminine style, I argue that Moseley Braun spoke to African American discourse communities through the rhetorical strategy of "signifyin(g)," or "the African/ African-American practice of Signification."'6 Henry Louis Gates fr. notes that "Signifyin(g) is black double-voicedness; because it always entails formal revision and intertextual relation."17 In interactions with white America, African Americans have often had to speak out of "two mouths." They developed rhetorical practices designed to communicate with white people according to accepted norms of social interaction. "Double voice" as a rhetorical practice can refer to the rhetorical use of indirection in which the racial other depends on the shared knowledge of blackness being "brought to bear upon the manifest content of the speech act."18 Such a rhetorical strategy is dependent upon a simultaneity: training in black discourse com- munities, its values, beliefs, and sociolinguistic rituals, but also a mastery of the discursive practices of whiteness. Given the history of the enslavement and subjugation of black people in the U.S. con- text, it has been a critical strategy of resistance to develop language and communication strategies that would allow African Americans to convey information and messages while under the surveillance of whites. Although white audience members may often read the rhetoric of black people literally, black discourse can function to produce underlying messages designed to be heard by members of the discourse community, but also misdirect non-members from interpreting or attaching significance to the message. Given the recognizability of feminine style as a rhetorical strategy for women candidates, the "double voice" of feminine style can function as a strategy of misdirection to create a cover for African American sig- nification. As Gates argues, "Repetition, with a signal difference, is fundamental to the nature of Signifyin(g)."19 Because she was one of the highest-ranking black officials in the country during her tenure in the Senate and the first black woman elected to that position, Moseley Braun is an important sociopoliti- cal figure on the American political landscape. Her race and gender increased her public visibility. Thus, any hint of scandal surround- ing her campaign captured media attention. Before her election, Moseley Braun, and her siblings, were accused of taking a $28,000 Medicaid disbursement intended for their mother. Moseley Braun was required to pay the state back $15,000.2°Following her election to the Senate in 1992, an article in *Time* notes that after winning her seat, Moseley Braun rented an expensive penthouse apartment, bought a new SUV and a new wardrobe, and left for a month-long vacation with her fiance (Kgosie Matthews) and son.21 During her unsuccessful run for reelection to the Senate in 1998, the *St. Pe- tersburg Times* referenced"Allegations that Matthews and Moseley Braun improperly spent several hundred thousand dollars of cam- paign donations on luxury vacations, jewelry, and clothing."" A writer for *The Economist* wrote that it was "rumored" that Mose- ley Braun's fiance used campaign money "to cover Braun's personal credit card bills."23 During Moseley Braun's campaign for the presi- dency, the *Christian Science Monitor* noted: "From the start of the race, Moseley Braun was plagued by charges that her office was mis- managed; that she misused campaign funds, spending donated dol- lars on dresses and jewelry; and missed important Senate functions, like orientation."24 The financial issue concerning Moseley Braun's misuse of her mother's Medicaid disbursement was leaked to the press during her 1992 Senate campaign. If this problem had been her only financial hiccup, the senator may not have faced the political difficulties that developed in the 1998 Illinois Senate race and the 2004 presidential race. However, Moseley Braun was not just ac- cused of mishandling campaign funds, she was accused of purpose- fully misusing those funds for her own personal gain. Her personal gain was constructed as feminine as she violated the public trust by allegedly using campaign contributions to purchase clothes and jew- elry. However, her missteps were also constructed within ideologies of race, as Moseley Braun violated acceptable norms of performance for black women in her position.

#### AND the consistent racial microgressins that accompany the stereotypical tropes of black women lead to racial battle fatigure Corbin, Smith, and Garcia 18

Nicola A. Corbin, William A. Smith & J. Roberto Garcia (2018): Trapped between justified anger and being the strong Black woman: Black college women coping with racial battle fatigue at historically and predominantly White institutions, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, DOI: 10.1080/09518398.2018.1468045 **adepartment of communication, Weber State university, ogden, ut, uSa; bdepartment of education, culture, & Society and the ethnic Studies Program, university of utah, Salt lake, ut, uSa; cteacher education department, Weber State university, ogden, ut, uSa To link to this article:** https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2018.1468045

Black women continually work to maintain their psychic space in historically and predominantly White higher education institutions through ongoing efforts to subvert media-perpetuated stereotypes of their very essence. The constant need for hypervigilant, self-policing responses to misogynoir microag- gressions are filtered through the culturally constructed controlling images of the Angry Black Woman and the concomitant *STRONGBLACKWOMAN* response. In effect, these images create a trap that pro- motes or enhances racial battle fatigue. The post-secondary Black women students in this study battled against fatigue in a number of areas: being purveyors of experiential knowledge for all things Black; being boxed into damaging media-perpetuated Black female archetypes and then having their sense of self doubted when they did not conform to these pervasive constructions; and being pressured to present strength and resilience as the most respectable formats under the White gaze. These conditions all directly contribute to a contested sense of being and belonging, where agency can lead to personal success, but also mental and emotional exhaustion. However, this much is clear from our study. The dominant and problematic mass media-perpetuated controlling image of the Angry Black Woman continues to structure the lives of Black college women. Much like the respectability politics of the clubswomen and women of the Black Baptist Church in the 1920s who advocated bearing up in strength to cower one’s aggressors, these college women engage the *STRONGBLACKWOMAN* controlling image as a coping strategy to be heard, to not be dismissed, and to be recognized. It is within this paradox, which leaves little room for human emotion and expression, that racial battle fatigue occurs.

**AND blackness needs a space in which we can maroon in order to counteract the effects of whiteness, civil society’s consistently tropes blackness out of inclusion within the political – the hope for blackness doesn’t exist here Weheliye 14**[Alexander Weheliye, Associate Professor of African American Studies at Northwestern University, 2014, “Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human.”]

**We are in dire need of alternatives to the legal conception of personhood that dominates our world,** and, in addition, **to not lose sight of what remains outside the law, what the law cannot capture,** what it cannot magically transform into the fantastic form of property ownership. Writing about the connections between transgender politics and other forms of identity-based activism that respond to structural inequalities, legal scholar Dean Spade shows how the **focus on inclusion, recognition, and equality based on a narrow legal framework** **(especially as it pertains to antidiscrimination and hate crime laws) not only hinders the eradication of violence against trans people and other vulnerable populations but actually creates the condition of possibility for the continued unequal “distribution of life chances.”**22 **If demanding recognition and inclusion remains at the center of minority politics, it will lead only to a delimited notion of personhood as property that zeroes in comparatively on only one form of subjugation at the expense of others, thus allowing for the continued existence of hierarchical differences between full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans. This can be gleaned from the “successes” of the mainstream** feminist, civil rights, and lesbian-gay rights **movements, which facilitate the incorporation of a privileged minority into the ethnoclass of Man at the cost of** the still and/or newly criminalized and **disposable populations (women of color, the black poor, trans people, the incarcerated, etc.).**23 To make claims for inclusion and humanity via **the U.S. juridical assemblage removes from view that the law itself has been thoroughly violent** in its endorsement of racial slavery, indigenous genocide, Jim Crow, the prison industrial complex, domestic and international warfare, and so on, **and that it continues to be one of the chief instruments in creating and maintaining the racializing assemblages in the world of Man. Instead of appealing to legal recognition,** Julia Oparah suggests **counteract**ing the “racialized (trans)gender entrapment” within the prison-industrial complex and beyond **with practices of “maroon abolition**” (in reference to the long history of escaped slave contraband settlements in the Americas) to **“foreground the ways in which often overlooked African diasporic cultural and political legacies inform and undergird anti-prison work,” while also providing strategies and life worlds not exclusively centered on reforming the law**.24 Relatedly, Spade calls for a radical politics articulated from the “ ‘impossible’ worldview of trans political existence,” which redefines “the insistence of government agencies, social service providers, media, and many nontrans activists and nonprofiteers that the existence of trans people is impossible.”25 **A relational maroon abolitionism beholden to the practices of black radicalism and that arises from the incompatibility of black trans existence with the world of Man serves as one example of how putatively abject modes of being need not be redeployed within hegemonic frameworks but can be operationalized as variable liminal territories or articulated assemblages in movements to abolish the grounds upon which all forms of subjugation are administered.**

## Solvency

#### Thus I affirm the resolution as a method of black countergazing

The political has become a site of domination for our bodies , but we can use the homespace as a place to counteract surveillance and maroon ourselves Hooks 90 Hooks, B. (1990). Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics. Boston, MA: South End Press.

I speak of this journey as leading to my grandmother's house, even though our grandfather lived there too. In our young minds **houses belonged to women, were their special domain, not as prop-erty, but as places where all that truly mattered in life took place—the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurtur-ing of our souls. There we learned dignity, integrity of being; there we learned to have faith. The folks who made this life possible**, who were our primary guides and teachers, **were black women.** Their lives were not easy. Their lives were hard**. They were black women who for the most part worked outside the home serving white folks**, cleaning their houses, washing their clothes, tending their chil-dren—**black women who worked in the fields or in the streets, what-ever they could do to make ends meet, whatever was necessary. Then they returned to their homes to make life happen there.** This tension between service outside one's home, family, and kin network, **service provided to white folks which took time and energy, and the effort of black women to conserve enough of themselves to provide service (care and nurturance) within their own families and communities is one of the many factors that has historically distinguished the lot of black women in patriarchal white supremacist society from that of black men**. Contemporary **black struggle must honor this history of service just as it must critique the sexist definition of service as women's "natural" role.** Since **sexism delegates to females the task of creating and sus-taining a home environment, it has been primarily the responsibility of black women to construct domestic households as spaces of care and nurturance in the face of the brutal harsh reality of racist oppression, of sexist domination**. Historically, **African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack),** had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, **one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship, and deprivation, where we could restore to our-selves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world.** This task of **making homeplace was not simply a matter of black women providing service; it was about the construction of a safe place where black people could affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. We could not learn to love or respect ourselves** in the culture of white supremacy**, on the outside; it was there on the inside, in that "homeplace," most often cre-ated and kept by black women, that we had the opportunity to grow and develop, to nurture our spirits**. This task of making a homeplace, of making home a community of resistance, has been shared by black women globally, especially black women in white supremacist societies.

#### AND the homespace functions as a site of liberatory potential for blackness

Hooks 90 Hooks, B. (1990). Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics. Boston, MA: South End Press.

**Looking back** as an adult woman**, I think of the effort it must have taken for her to transcend her own tiredness (**and **who knows what assaults** or wounds to her **spirit had to be put aside** so that she could give something to her own). Given the contemporary notions of "good parenting" **this may seem like a small gesture, yet in many post-slavery black families, it was a gesture parents were often too weary, too beaten down to make**. Those of us who were fortunate enough to receive such care understood its value. Politically, **our** young **mother**, Rosa Bell, **did not allow the white supremacist culture of domination to completely shape and control her psyche and her familial relation-ships. Working to create a homeplace that affirmed our beings, our blackness,** our love for one another **was necessary resistance. We learned degrees of critical consciousness from her**. Our lives were not without contradictions, so it is not my intent to create a romanticized portrait. Yet **any attempts to critically assess the role of black women in liberation struggle must examine the way political concern about the impact of racism shaped black women's thinking, their sense of home, and their modes of parenting. An effective means of white subjugation of black people globally has been the perpetual construction of economic and social structures that deprive many folks of the means to make homeplace. Remember-ing this should enable us to understand the political value of black women's resistance in the home.** It should provide a framework where we can discuss the development of black female political conscious-ness, acknowledging the political importance of resistance effort that took place in homes. It is no accident that the South African apartheid regime systematically attacks and destroys black efforts to construct homeplace, however tenuous, that small private reality where black women and men can renew their spirits and recover themselves**. It is no accident that this homeplace, as fragile and as transitional as it may be, a makeshift shed, a small bit of earth where one rests, is always subject to violation and destruction. For when a people no longer have the space to construct homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance**. Throughout our history, **African-Americans have recognized the subversive value of homeplace, of having access to private space where we do not directly encounter white racist aggression**. Whatever the shape and direction of black liberation struggle (civil rights reform or black power movement), **domestic space has been a crucial site for organizing, for forming political solidarity. Homeplace has been a site of resistance. Mark Its structure was defined less by whether or not black women and men were conforming to sexist behavior norms and more by our struggle to uplift ourselves as a people**, our **struggle to resist racist domination and oppression.** **That** liberatory **struggle** **has been seriously undermined by con-temporary efforts to change that subversive homeplace into a site of patriarchal domination of black women by black men,** where we abuse one another for not conforming to sexist norms**. This shift in perspective, where homeplace is not viewed as a political site, has had negative impact on the construction of black female identity and politi-cal consciousness.** Masses of **black women, many of whom were not formally educated, had in the past been able to play a vital role in black liberation struggle.** In the contemporary situation**, as the para-digms for domesticity in black life mirrored white bourgeois norms (where home is conceptualized as politically neutral space), black people began to overlook and devalue the importance of black female labor in teaching critical consciousness in domestic space**. Many black women, irrespective of class status, have responded to this crisis of meaning by imitating leisure-class sexist notions of women's role, fo-cusing their lives on meaningless compulsive consumerism.

## 

## Framing

**THE ROB is to vote for the debater who best deconstructs the whit gaze**

**THE ROLE OF THE JUDGE IS TO ENGAGE IN BLACK FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY**

#### The black female standpoint is not only a survival strategy but is a way to counter the dominant stereotypical images produced during the slave era and continued after it.

O’Reilly 04 (O'Reilly, Andrea, writer on women's issues and currently a Professor in the School of Women's Studies at York University. Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart. N.p.: State U of New York, 2004. Print.) JSW

The black female standpoint develops in opposition to and in resistance against the dominant view or what Collins calls the controlling images of black womanhood. Collins argues that “the dominant ideology of the slave era fostered the creation of four interrelated, socially constructed controlling images of Black womanhood, each reflecting the dominant group’s interest in maintaining Black women’s subor- dination” (71). The four controlling images that Collins examines include the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother, and the Jezebel. By way of controlling images, as Collins explains, “certain assumed qualities are attached to Black women and [then] used to justify [that] oppression” (7). “From the mammies, Jezebels, and breeder women of slavery,” Collins writes, “to the smiling Aunt Jemimas on pan- cake mix boxes, ubiquitous Black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture, the nexus of negative stereotypical images applied to African-American women has been fundamental to Black women’s oppression” (7). Black women, according to Collins, may resist these derogatory stereotypes through the creation of a distinct black female standpoint that is based on black women’s own experiences and meanings of womanhood. The black female standpoint, Collins argues, develops through an interplay between two discourses of knowledge: “the commonplace taken-for granted knowledge” and the “everyday ideas” of black women that are clarified and rearticulated by black women intellectuals or theorists to form a specialized black feminist thought. In turn, as Collins explains, “the consciousness of Black women may be transformed by [this] thought” (20). She elaborates: Through the process of rearticulation, Black women intellectuals offer African-American women a different view of themselves and their world from that forwarded by the dominant group. . . . By taking the core themes of a Black women’s standpoint and infusing them with new meaning, Black women intellectuals can stimulate a new consciousness that utilizes Black’s women’s everyday, taken-for granted knowledge. Rather than raising con- sciousness, Black feminist thought affirms and rearticulates a consciousness that already exists. More, important, this rearticulated consciousness empowers African-American women and stimulates resistance. (31–32) a politics of the heart 3 In other words, the black female standpoint, emerging from black women’s everyday experiences and clarified by black feminist theory, not only provides a distinct “angle of vision on self, community and society” but also, in so doing, enables black women to counter and interrupt the dominant discourse of black womanhood. The formation and articulation of a self-defined standpoint, mark Collins emphasizes, “is [thus] key to Black women’s survival” (26). As Audre Lorde argues, “[I]t is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment” (as quoted in Collins, 21, 1991). However, as Collins emphasizes the importance of self- definition, she recognizes that black women, as an oppressed group, inevitably must struggle to convey this self-definition, mark positioned as they are at the periphery of the dominant white, male culture. Collins writes: “An oppressed group’s experiences may put its members in a position to see things differently, but their lack of control over ideological apparatuses of society makes express- ing a self-defined standpoint more difficult” (26). The black female stand- point is thus, in Collins’s words, “an independent, viable, yet subjugated knowledge” (13).

#### You as the judge need to engage in black feminist epistemology in order to challenge dominant norms

Crenshaw 89 (Crenshaw, Kimberle () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at:<http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>) JSW

**It is not necessary to believe that a political consensus to focus on the lives of the most disadvantaged will happen tomorrow in order to recenter discrimination discourse at the intersection. It is enough, for now, that such an effort would encourage us to look beneath the prevailing conceptions of discrimination and to challenge the complacency that accompanies belief in the effectiveness of this framework. By so doing, we may develop language which is critical of the dominant view and which provides some basis for unifying activity.** The goal of this activity should be to facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups for whom it can be said: "When they enter, we all enter."