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## Can Feminism Get into “Formation”: Whose Voice is Missing from the Conversation?

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# Can Feminism Get in “Formation”?

Community of Scholars  
March 24, 2017  
Presented by Bwann Gwann  
Room 3-092

# What is Feminism?

- As defined by Merriam-Webster, Feminism is *the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes.*
- The belief that women have been treated different by society.



# Types of Feminism

- **Radical Feminism**

- Most radical feminists believe the traditional familial roles is vehemently sexist and should be rejected as a whole.

- **Socialist Feminism**

- Sees the oppression of women as identical to Marxist theory about exploitation, oppression and labor. Socialist Feminists believed that Prostitution, childcare, domestic works were ways women were exploited by patriarchal society

- **Cultural Feminism**

- Encourages traditional feminine behavior over masculine behavior.

- **Liberal Feminism**

- Focused on the removal of political and legal forms of discrimination (voter rights, reproductive rights, salary equity for men and women)

# A Historical Perspective (1700's)



**The Women's March of Versailles**

- Women in the 1700's were fed up with the conditions they faced prior to the French revolution.
- Women's March of Versailles was a response to ongoing social and political tensions between French aristocracy and bourgeoisie which resulted in the negative impact for women.
- There was shortage of food. Meanwhile, King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette (Queen of France) lived lavishly resulting in the outcry from many women at the March of Versailles.

# First and Second Wave Feminism

## First Wave

- Focused on better education for women, removal of gender double standards
- Women's right to vote and run in office

## Second Wave

- Concentrated on social, political and economic inequalities as well as ending discrimination

# Third and Fourth Wave Feminism

## Third Wave

- Redefines “femininity”
- Movement challenged the failed attempts of the second wave feminists whose experiences only reflected that of upper class white women.

## Fourth Wave

- More inclusive movement mainly connected through modern technology while raising awareness in reproductive justice, abortion rights, sex work acceptance, body image support, transgenderism



# Sexual Liberation Movement



- Over the course of time, feminism challenged the conservative ideologies of the first wave feminism as it relates to sexuality.
- Open conversations about sexuality were limited to heteronormative groups
  - Such conversation was not inclusive to members of the LGBTQIAPPK community



# Black Feminism

- Started in the 1960's in response to the sexism experienced by many black women in the Black liberation movement
- Also the result of racism experienced in mainstream feminism. The experiences of women of color, particularly black women was not inclusive to the feminist movement.
- Focused on many issues that impacted black women:
  - The role of black women during the black liberation movement in the 1960's
  - Gay Liberation
  - Female Sexuality



# Black Feminism Continued



- National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) was established in New York City in 1970 by feminist, civil rights lawyer, Florynce Kennedy (pictured left).
  - NBFO focused on matters relative to gender and race
- Organized a Boycott to address the Coca-Cola bottler's refusal to hire Black truck drivers
- Organized the "*Miss America*" protest of 1968 in which she argued the pageant exploited women.
  - The demonstration led to the arrest of dozens of women in which Kennedy served as their legal counsel.
- Led a massive protest at Harvard University in which addressed lack of female bathrooms.
- In 1971, Kennedy started the feminist party in which she nominated Shirley Chisholm as president

# Combahee River Collective

- Created in Boston, Massachusetts in 1974 by black feminist lesbian organization that highlighted traditional feminism's lack of addressing the needs of African-American Women
- The decision to name the Boston based organization "Combahee River" was symbolic of the actions of Harriett Tubman's efforts in the 'Raid at Combahee Ferry' in which she led many escaped slaves to....freedom
  - This was crucial to the black feminist movement
- As a result of the Combahee River Collective, another National Black Feminist Organization chapter was also established in Boston.



# Combahee River Collective Continued

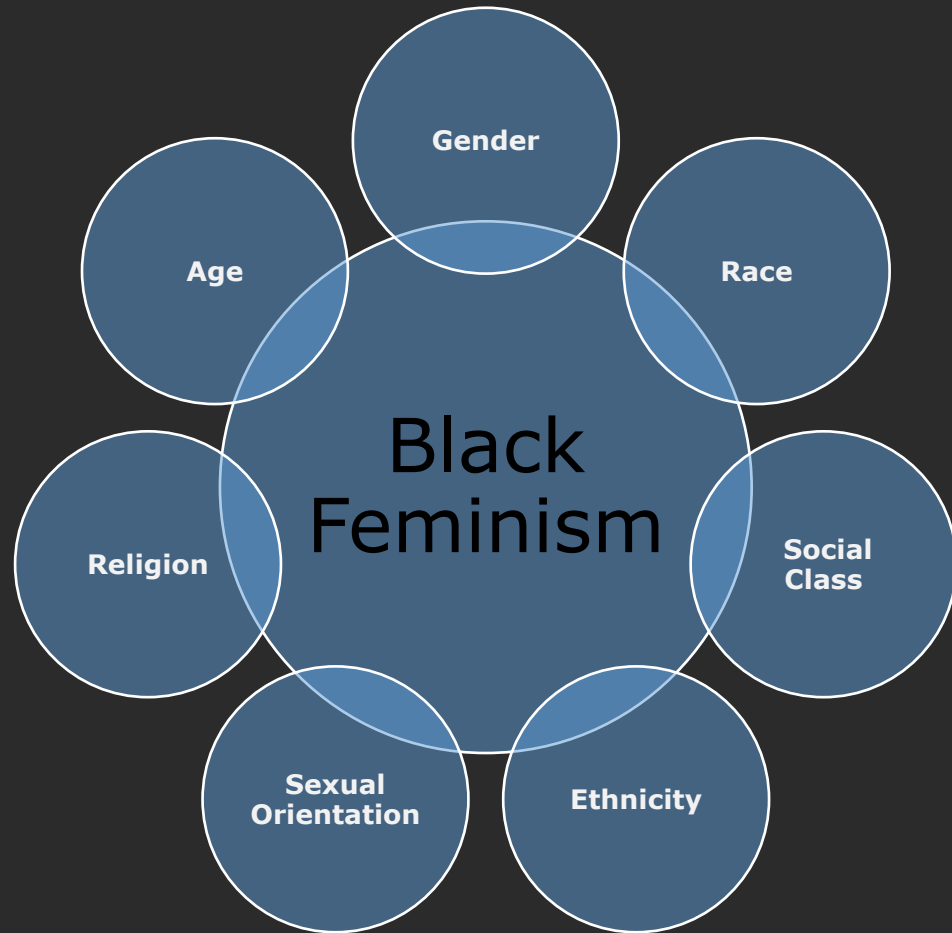
- CRCC laid the foundation for the idea of intersectionality
- The CRCC also focused on marginalized identities within the feminist circle
- Members of the Boston CRCC directed its attention to the desegregation of Boston Public Schools
- Were vocal against the attacks on black women at the hands of law enforcement.

# Womanism



- Term coined by Alice Walker (pictured left)
- Focused on gender and race based oppression against black women and other women of marginalized groups.
- Womanism allowed black women to affirm and celebrate their culture and color in a way traditional feminism does not.

# Intersectionality Theory



- Coined by Legal Scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw
  - Oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, sexism, xenophobia and classism) can not be examined separately from the other.





#Liberated  
#Strong  
#Flawless



# Feminism in Pop Culture

- Music has been used as a tool for many artists to give voice to many social, political and economic injustices that exist in the world or share personal narratives
- The content in an artists lyrics can also has often been used to empower others



# Beyoncé

- Pop singer, songwriter, actress
- Winner of multiple Grammy awards
- Self-identifies as a feminist and uses her movement to address beauty standards, her success relationships, and black liberation
- Songs like “Formation”, “Run the World, Girls” speak to empower women to be bold and be free.



© BEYONCÉ

# Lyrics and Symbolism in Beyoncé's Song, "Pretty Hurts"



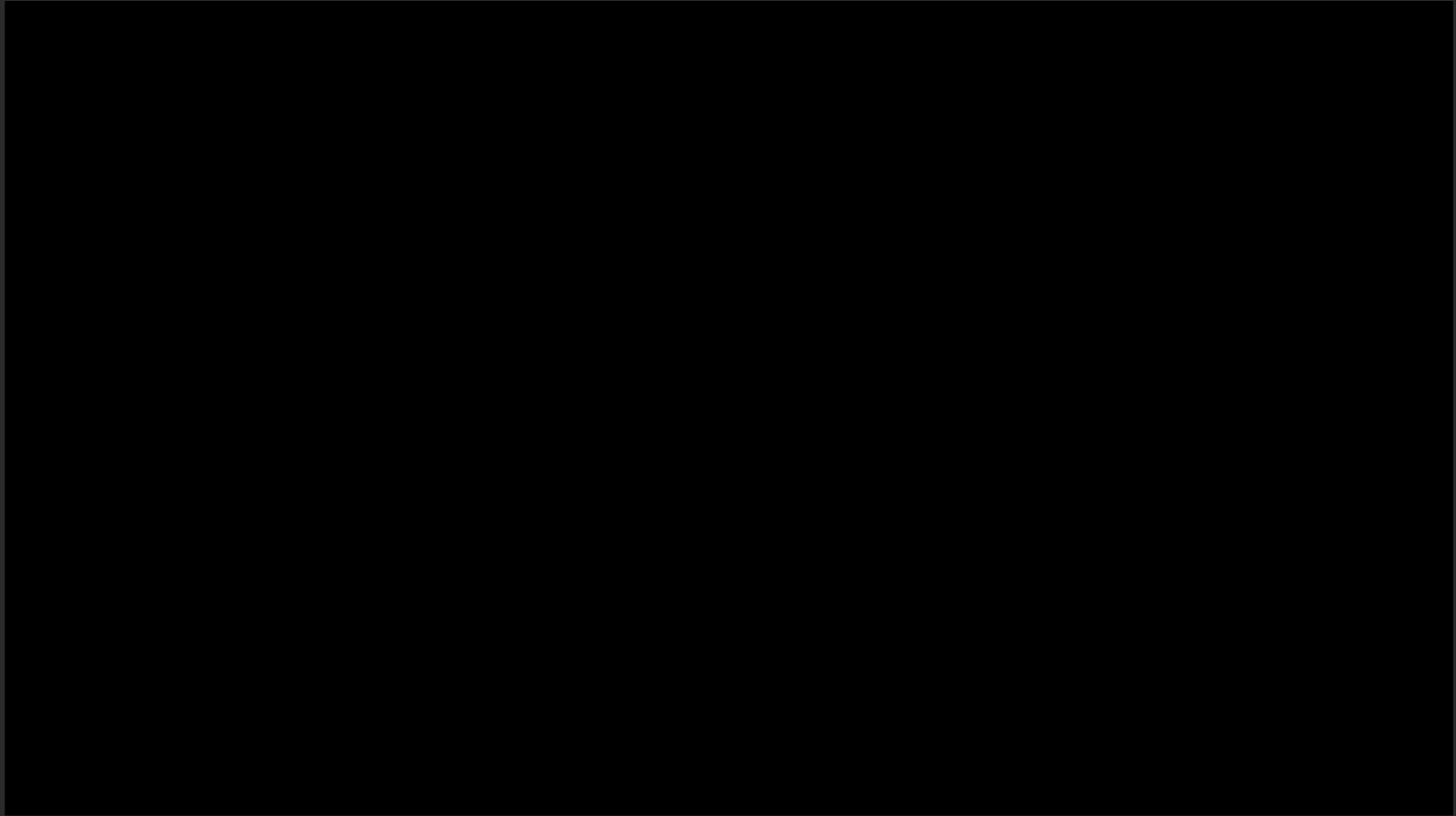


# Criticism



Despite Beyonce's musical success as a global pop icon, she has received wide criticism from many feminist scholars, such as bell hooks (pictured left) has been very vocal about the pop singer ability to objectify her body to suit the white capitalist patriarchy systems that have oppressed women for purposes of entertainment.

# **bell hooks analysis of Beyoncé**



# Small Group Activity

Get in to small groups to discuss the following:

1. Do you consider bell hook's critique of Beyoncé anti-feminist. Yes or No?
2. Does Beyoncé embracing her sexuality through her videos and lyrics serve as a pillar of objectification of the female body?
3. Does embracing your sexuality make you more or less feminist?

# Moving Forward

How can we as a community “get in formation” to ensure that all intersectional identities are equally represented and addressed within the feminist movement?





“It’s not our differences  
that divide us. It is our  
inability to recognize,  
accept, and celebrate  
those differences.”

Audre Lorde

Thank you!