



# GLOBAL FEMINIST THEORY

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# What is Global Feminism?

*"Transnational feminisms extend postcolonial feminist criticism to focus on the situations of women in multiple geographic contexts in feminist theories and activist practice, through the decentring of both national and imperialist/neocolonial power structures."*

— Anneeth Kaur Hundle, Ioana Szeman, Joanna Pares Hoare



It is imperative to acknowledge the presence of these voices, give power to them, and preserve them, especially since they are susceptible to getting drowned out by the dominating group.

Thus, recognizing that different groups face prejudice and discrimination differently allows us to better understand and evaluate our approach to divert this inequality without lumping these issues together as a "unified theory of gender," (Hundle, 2019, p. 4).

# Frameworks, Issues, and Stakes

## Not Your Erotic, Not Your Exotic

Suheir Hammad

Don't wanna be your exotic  
like some dark, fragile, colorful bird,  
imprisoned, caged  
in a land foreign to the stretch of her  
wings.

Don't wanna be your exotic.  
Women everywhere are just like me--  
some taller darker nicer than me,  
but like me but just the same  
women everywhere carry my nose on  
their faces  
my name on their spirits

don't wanna  
don't seduce yourself with  
my otherness my hair  
wasn't put on top of my head to entice  
you into some mysterious black voodoo  
the beat of my lashes against each  
other  
ain't some dark desert beat  
it's just a blink  
get over it

don't wanna be your exotic  
your lovin of my beauty ain't more than  
funky fornication plain pink perversion  
in fact nasty necrophilia  
cause my beauty is dead to you  
I am dead to you  
not your  
harem girl geisha doll banana picker  
pom pom girl pum pum shorts coffee  
maker  
town whore belly dancer private dancer  
la malinche venus hottentot laundry girl  
your immaculate vessel emasculating  
princess

don't wanna be  
your erotic  
not your exotic

"a Western style for  
dominating restructuring,  
and having authority over  
the Orient"

— Edward Said  
*in Orientalism*

ORIENTALISM

The US exploits "gendered  
discursive 'imperial encounters'" to  
enact "interventionist policies" to  
"save" women in the Middle East  
(Saleh, 2016, p. 1). However, the  
effects of these policies are almost  
always destructive, especially for  
those residing within the targeted  
region, and for those that harbor  
"imperial feelings," gendered  
discourse only "legitimizes these  
wars (Maira, 2008, 337)."

# Displacement

## The reality behind rescue narratives...

Resettlement and repatriation is unrealistic for homes that have been colonized, militarized, or naturally displaced by their own environment (Espiritu et al., 2022, p. 31). In this case, some people are not given the choice to migrate, which renders the motives of migration beyond the "fixed and false binary of [politics] and [economics]," (Espiritu et al., 2022, p. 34). This idea complicates the root of displacement, consequently leaving no easy way to resolve this issue for both the law and the displaced. Refugees must also deal with the fears of their homeland and the law regarding their protection (Espiritu et al., 2022, p. 52-53). Challenges posed by refugee laws make it even harder for people to migrate, and thus, more vulnerable, if not already; therefore, this idea goes to show why many refugees cannot trust the law, and are stuck in a purgatory-like state, before feeling safe. In spite of all these challenges, those that have been displaced are "expected to exhibit gratefulness," after being "rescued" (Espiritu et al., 2022, p. 76).



Children shoes representing the refugees crisis



Departures tells the stories of refugees that are often overshadowed by the politics disregarding their experiences.



# Borderlands

The white man speaks: Perhaps if you scrape the dark off of your face. Maybe if you bleach your bones. Stop speaking in tongues, stop writing left-handed. Don't cultivate your colored skins nor tongues of fire if you want to make it in a right-handed world.

— Gloria Anzaldúa

in *Speaking In Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers*

I lack imagination you say

No. I lack language.  
The language to clarify  
my resistance to the literate.  
Words are a war to me.  
They threaten my family.

To gain the word  
to describe the loss  
I risk losing everything.  
I may create a monster  
the word's length and body  
swelling up colorful and thrilling  
looming over my mother, characterized.  
Her voice in the distance  
unintelligible illiterate.  
These are the monster's words.

— Cherrie Moraga

in *Speaking In Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers*

# Sexual Economies, Identities, and Epistemologies

Heidenreich (2020) mentions that “capital functions to create the social structures within which we live,” (p. xxi). Ergo, “new... transgender identities have emerged within the same context of market capitalism that...has supported the globalization of gay identities,” (Jackson, 2009, p. 360). By applying a global feminist framework to this context, we can see that many of these instances place a strong emphasis on the consequences of capitalism, which happens to precipitate a domino effect that impacts, and defines certain cultures and/or subcultures.

In understanding the role/structure of a society’s economy, we can start to understand the politics regarding identity in ways that are often overlooked because of favoritism toward capitalist elites. Moreover, it allows us to acknowledge that (cultural and sexual) identities are not mutually exclusive from economic systems, but rather, bred by the systems.

# Food and Environment

The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

— Chief Seattle

in *Ecofeminism*

Global feminists approach the study of food and environments by examining the compounded effects of white supremacy, capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy on marginalized groups. These approaches are compelling because they provide a deeper insight into the core enablers of modern social issues by looking at areas that might appear irrelevant at first; by expanding on these approaches to other areas of life, such as education, housing, or work, we can recognize how intertwined these issues actually are, and effectively address these issues in an all-encompassing manner.



# Bodies, Health, and Technology



"The soldiers at the checkpoints had the power to decide whether Layal could live her birthing experience or, in her words, 'die her birthing experience'"



The type of loneliness that results from the alienation of other human beings into whom one has invested affective energy is a kind of loneliness that is more tangible than other types of alienation because it fits a common social understanding of a type of being alone that is undesirable.

Any conception of the "the good life" includes the existence of specific needs and the ability to fill those needs in a way that does not entail suffering; yet, in the scope of political economic thinking, affective needs are not often accounted for.

— Kalindi Vora

in *The Transmission of Care: Affective Economies and Indian Call Centers*



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