Separate Roads to Feminism

Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave

BENITA ROTH
State University of New York, Binghamton

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

http://www.cambridge.org

First published 2004

Printed in the United States of America

Typeface Goudy 10.5/13 pt. *System* LaTeX 2ε [TB]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Roth, Benita.
Separate roads to feminism : Black, Chicana, and White feminist movements in America's second wave / Benita Roth.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-521-82260-2 – ISBN 0-521-52972-7 (pb.)
1. Feminism – United States – History – 20th century. 2. African American women – History – 20th century. 3. Hispanic American women – History. 4. White women – United States – History – 20th century. 5. Women – United States – History – 20th century. I. Title.

HQ1421.R684 2003
305 42′0973′0904 – dc21

2003046182

ISBN 0 521 82260 2 hardback
ISBN 0 521 52972 7 paperback

Contents

Tables

The Emergence and Development of Racial/Ethnic Feminisms in the 1960s and 1970s

> I refuse to choose. And by that I mean I refuse to choose between being black and being a woman. Men don't have to choose. I don't know why women have to choose. I am both equally, and I'm proud to be both. I wake up, and I don't like what they're doing to Black people, and I'm mad; I wake up, and I don't like what they're doing to women, and I'm mad.
>
> Dorothy King
> Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
> February 2000

> I was at a NOW meeting and being told by women in Denver, you have to choose between being a Chicana and being female . . . and what I'm saying is "I cannot separate the fact that I'm brown and I'm female, I cannot do it physically to this body, I cannot do it emotionally, I cannot do it spiritually. . . . "
>
> Irene Blea
> Albuquerque, New Mexico
> March 2000

Second-Wave Feminism(s)

Feminist mobilizations in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s – commonly known as the "second wave" of U.S. feminist protest – challenged and changed the political and cultural landscape. Having read the first sentence of this work, the reader should be alerted to my use of a plural noun to describe feminist protest in the second wave, and this book is about feminist mobilizations, feminist movements, and *feminisms*. In their words at the beginning of the chapter, both Dorothy King and Irene Blea take the stance that their life experiences as women of color in a structurally unequal society informed their decisions about organizing as feminists of color in organizations that were distinct from so-called mainstream white feminist groups. What I wish to do is develop a picture of second-wave feminisms, feminisms that were plural and characterized by racial/ethnic organizational distinctiveness. This distinctiveness based on racial/ethnic (and class) difference was not "natural" but a result of the way that feminists understood their choices given a particular set of circumstances within which they were

activists. In this book, I explore the ways in which feminists in different racial/ethnic communities stratified by class made decisions about organizing in particular nested contexts, including the overall structure of economic inequality among groups of women, relationships with activist men in their communities, and the exigencies created by organizing in a vibrant, complex, and competitive social movement milieu.

From the beginning of their mobilizations, resurgent feminisms were the subject of study; as the years of mass, highly mobilized protest have passed, feminist movements have become the focus of scholarly work aimed at understanding the nature of the movements and the nature of the changes they wrought. But previous pictures of second-wave feminism have erased the early and substantial activism of feminists of color embedded in these movements, for reasons that I will come back to, and scholarship has generally failed to capture the genuine complexity of feminist mobilizations in this era. In much of the literature on the second wave, one finds a standard conceptualization of what the feminist movement was: white, primarily middle class, although arising out of two distinct social bases (Buechler 1990; Carden 1974; Freeman 1973, 1975; Hole and Levine 1971; Marx Ferree and Hess 1985, 1994). Various labels were used to distinguish the kind of organizing that grew out of each social base, or the social base itself. One branch was, to use Freeman's terms, "older" and one was "younger"; Marx Ferree and Hess referred to one strand, characterized by groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW), as "bureaucratic" and the other strand, which came out of the Civil Rights and New Left movements, as "collectivist"; still another characterization, by Buechler, had one branch of feminism as the liberal wing of the movement and another as "liberationists" who folded socialist and radical feminist ideological components together. All of these ways of talking about the two social bases of second-wave feminism have in common the implicit recognition of the multiple and plural nature of the era's feminist resurgence, although the full implications of this recognition were bounded by a "whitewashed" vision of movement, singular.[1]

[1] In one area – that of the links between institutionalized and mass feminist protest – the picture of the second wave has been made more complex. The idea of a discrete "wave" of feminist organizing, that is, the appearance of wide-scale feminist mobilizations sui generis has been made problematic by work on the importance of preceding "abeyance" structures for feminist mobilizations (Rupp and Taylor 1987; V. Taylor 1989). Related scholarship has argued against an overemphasis

In this book, I argue that the second wave has to be understood as a group of feminisms, movements made by activist women that were largely organizationally distinct from one another, and from the beginning, largely organized along racial/ethnic lines. In other words, there were more than two twinned social bases of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s; feminisms were articulated in diverse political communities. Feminists of color argued that their activism was written out of the histories of second-wave feminist protest; they argued that racial/ethnic and class biases that were part of white feminist ideology and practice have shown up in subsequent scholarship about that ideology and practice (García 1990, 1997; Giddings 1984; hooks 1981, 1984; Hull, Scott, and Smith 1982; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1979; B. Smith 1979, 1983; Smith and Smith 1981). In light of their critiques, a different picture of feminist protest in the U.S. second wave has begun to emerge, one that argues that feminist protest in the 1960s and 1970s was shaped into feminist movements, plural (Gluck et al. 1998).

I trace the emergence and early development of Black, Chicana, and white feminist movements on the left during the second wave. I do not suggest that these three movements exhaust the list of feminisms, or that there is no room for the adding of other feminisms, racial/ethnic or otherwise. Working-class white women certainly felt distance from an organized (white) feminist movement that was perceived to be middle class (see Naples 1998a, especially Chapter 6) and feminist groups were organized in other communities of color, although as Gluck et al. (1998) have noted, feminist organizing in some other communities of color, for example, the Native American community, was delayed and made relatively difficult by competing loyalties and overall political circumstance. I selected Black, Chicana, and white feminisms for study because of the timing of their emergences, the multistate scale of their organizing, and the kinds of connections and cleavages that existed on the ground between feminists from these communities. Nor do I wish to suggest that the only women's movements worth addressing are feminist ones, or that feminism is not manifest in other kinds of women's organizing, for example, community organizing.[2]

on extra-institutional protest as distinct from important institutional feminist efforts, which in some cases predated feminist movement emergence (Hartmann 1998; Katzenstein 1998).

[2] The literature on women's protests in and for communities is large and growing; among others see Ali (1987), Aulette and Mills (1988), Bookman and

Overall, I have two main concerns in this work. First, and following the critiques of the feminists of color noted, I document the articulation of feminisms in diverse communities. Recognition of feminist organizing in different communities allows us to ask questions about who came to feminism, how they came to feminism, and how feminism was done in different social spaces. Charting the organizing of feminists of color also requires that we acknowledge that self-identified feminist activism is a political choice among other choices for empowering action that women can take for their communities. Second, I look at feminist emergences explored here as stories about the connections and cleavages between feminist movements, of the relationships between differently situated feminists, and the complicated movement dynamics that militated against those relationships. In choosing to refer to Black, Chicana, and white feminisms on the left as "organizationally distinct" movements, I acknowledge that defining the boundaries of social movements is always an exercise in some degree of abstraction – and therefore some degree of frustration. I am mindful that positing the existence of organizationally distinct racial/ethnic feminisms may not capture some of the contact that occurred between feminists of different racial/ethnic and class backgrounds during the era, especially those feminists committed to bridging racial/ethnic divides (see Thompson 2001). But my characterization of racial/ethnic feminisms as organizationally distinct is not only accurate in the main but is, in fact, useful in exploring what linked feminists in different communities and what separated them.[3]

In the following, I look at the development of feminisms from the African American Civil Rights/Black Liberation movement, the

Morgen (1988), Cameron (1985), Dowd Hall (1990), Kaplan (1982), Kingsolver (1996 [1983]), Milkman (1985), Naples (1991, 1998a, 1998b), Omolade (1994), Piven and Cloward (1977), Ruiz (1990), and Townsend Gilkes (1980) on the activities of working-class women in workplace strikes, in protest and community work within neighborhood settings, and as "auxiliaries" to striking men.

[3] My view on the necessity of conceptualizing second-wave feminist protest as *feminisms* is different from the one taken by Marx Feree and Hess in the latest edition of their key work, *Controversy and Coalition* (2000). While they acknowledge that it is difficult to think of second-wave feminism as a truly unified movement, they state that "the fiction of unity within a single movement is . . . necessary as a political tool" (2000:vii). However, feminists of color have argued that it is precisely "the fiction of unity" in feminism that is harmful to the full participation of women of color (see Sandoval 1990). The question of the roots of the "fiction of unity" within white feminism will be further explored in Chapter Five.

Chicano movement, and the white Left as a set of linked cases, and draw out the key factors that led to the emergence of organizationally distinct racial/ethnic feminisms. Feminists in each racial/ethnic group were affected by their race and class status, by their own experiences within their movements of origin, and by the structure of political choices for activism available at the time. At the macro level, Black, white, and Chicana women were situated within an unequal racial/ethnic hierarchy at a time of general postwar prosperity. The emergence of a postwar middle class in the Black and Chicano communities was an incomplete process that did not put feminists of color on an equal footing with white middle-class feminists when it came time to organize. Although women in all three racial/ethnic communities were gaining some greater economic independence, and were entering higher education in growing numbers, these improvements in women's access to the resources necessary for social protest were unequal across racial/ethnic communities, putting emergent feminists in different places from the start. These starting places mattered to feminists in making their movements.

On the level of micropolitics, African American, white, and Chicana feminists were, for the most part, members of oppositional protest movements that provided them with organizing skills and social networks. These protest movements were communities of activists that both gave to and demanded from their members. As members of these communities, emergent feminists shared ideologies of general liberation from oppression with men (and with nonfeminist women), ideologies which they extended to address the specifics of gender oppression. But as feminism developed in these women activists, it did not obliterate their other concerns, or set them immediately loose from the oppositional communities within which they lived. Over the course of a number of years, when it became clear that existing left movements could not easily accommodate a feminist agenda, feminists activated their networks, argued for a particular kind of feminist organizing, and created the new communities they would need to form their own more fully autonomous movements. Forming these movements was a complicated process in all three racial/ethnic communities, but issues of loyalties to movements of origin were particularly acute for feminists of color, and difficulties in resolving those issues were compounded by the successful and visible organizing of white feminists on the left.

Following directly from this last point, intermovement politics in a competitive social movement sector influenced the choices that Black, white, and Chicana feminists made to remain organizationally distinct

from one another. Women ran the day-to-day activities of oppositional movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and feminist challenges were a threat to the economy of social movement activism; we can see that threat marked by the different ideological arguments that men in each parent movement made about why feminism threatened movement unity. Feminists in each racial/ethnic community developed counterclaims, specific political arguments meant to allay fears of feminism's divisive and destructive nature. And, in a crowded and competitive social movement sector, increasingly (but not inevitably) structured along lines of race and ethnicity, feminists encountered what I have called an ethos of "organizing one's own" as being the only authentic form of activism. Feminists in different racial/ethnic communities adopted the ethos, which led to the structuring of feminist movements along the lines of race/ethnicity. In summary, the exigencies of political organizing in a crowded field and the ideas about the best way to organize informed decisions feminists made about how to be feminists and at the same time stay true to their prior political investments. These exigencies and these decisions led to the emergence of organizationally distinct feminisms.

As should be clear from this summary of the book's arguments, I challenge the idea that these racial/ethnic feminist movements emerged "naturally," as a result of race/ethnicity being a natural division for women. Even if racial/ethnic identities were particularly salient in the United States during this wave of protest, they were not "naturally" chosen ones; identities, as links put forward by "social actors with certain historical experiences" to particular socially salient groups, are constructed contingently (della Porta and Diani 1999:86). And as will become clear in the narrative to come, I also challenge the idea that feminism among women of color emerged solely as a result of (demonstrably present) racism in the white movement; this is an inaccurate conception that negates the agency of feminists of color. Different contexts for doing politics influenced how feminists situated in Black, Chicano/a, and white oppositional communities were able to relate to their movements of origin, and to one another; it is precisely with these different contexts and their impacts that I concern myself in this work.

The Whitewashing of the Second Wave

Above, I stated that one of my chief concerns in this work was actually documenting activism by feminists of color in the second wave, so

as to counter "whitewashed" versions of a singular feminist movement. Case studies about second wave (white) feminism began to be written almost from that movement's inception; they continue to be written, and memoirs and documentary histories have been added (see Brownmiller 1999; Buechler 1990; Carden 1974; Chancer 1998; Echols 1989; Evans 1979; Freeman 1975; Hole and Levine 1971; Marx Ferree and Hess 1985, 1994, 2000; R. Rosen 2000; Ryan 1992; and Ware 1970; note the dates of publication for Carden, Hole and Levine, and Ware). But the literature on second-wave feminism – singular – has not, to date, considered in a full and dynamic fashion the reality of the existence of second-wave feminisms. African American feminist organizing has generally been given a nod in the form of a mention of the National Black Feminist Organization and a query as to why Black women did not join feminist groups in greater numbers, a view that ignores their instrumental role in forming liberal feminist organizations such as NOW (see Buechler 1990; Echols 1989; Freeman 1975; Marx Ferree and Hess 1985, 1994). Chicana feminism is given only the barest of mentions, and no analysis whatsoever as a distinct and wide-scale social movement.

It is important to note that most feminists in the 1960s and 1970s were white because most people in the United States were white. Certainly mass media further whitewashed the movement by focusing on the activities of a relatively few selected spokeswomen for the movement, drawn most consistently from the "older," bureaucratic, and liberal branch of feminism (e.g., Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan). But within feminist scholarship itself there have been several analytic tendencies that add (unintentionally, I think) to the whitewashing of the second wave. After considering these, I next explore how feminist theory on the intersectionality of oppressions – theory that itself came out of theorizing by second-wave feminists of color – can help recast a vision of 1960s and 1970s feminist protest as composed of multiple feminisms, and understand how those multiple feminisms came to be.

First, on the question of the whitewashing of the second wave, scholars of postwar feminist protest have, to some extent, conceptualized second-wave feminism as white by focusing on the number of feminists of color actually in the second wave, that is, on the number of feminists of color in white feminist organizations. The supposed absence of women of color from the development of second-wave feminism became, for some, a problem to be explained, primarily by resorting to arguments that women of color – in the racially dichotomous vision of the time, chiefly Black women – were less relatively deprived vis-à-vis the men

in their communities than were white women, a problematic argument that I further address in Chapter One (Freeman 1975; Lewis 1977). In any case, as will be argued, looking for feminists of color in white feminist organizations, not finding them, and then explaining their absence makes feminists of color invisible: Not only were they not in white feminist organizations; there is no sense in these explanations that they could have possibly been organizing on their own.

Second, scholars have misunderstood the timing of feminist emergences. White feminism has been seen as first on the block, with Black feminism and Chicana feminism coming later to add the factor of race/ethnicity to the feminist project. This picture of the later emergence of feminism among women of color is not correct. There was roughly simultaneous emergence by 1968 of white and Black feminist groups, although certainly more white feminist groups emerged from the New Left and the remnants of civil rights organizing by whites. And while it is true that the first national Chicana feminist conference was held in 1971, Chicana feminists organized as early as 1969, with this negligibly later start a product of the timing of the Chicano movement itself, and possibly of the onset of recruitment programs that brought Chicanas into universities in greater numbers. The failure to see the early emergences of Black and Chicana feminisms also obscures the mutual influence that feminist activists had on one another across racial/ethnic lines. Authors of case studies of second-wave white feminism have noted the impact that Black women civil rights activists had on emergent white feminists as role models (Evans 1979), but Black women were not solely proto-feminist examples for white feminists. Early Black feminists were involved in political relationships with early white feminists, and influenced each other's thinking, as there were real and personal connections between them. White feminists remained, however fitfully, in dialogue with women of color as they mobilized, and Black and Chicana feminists knew and debated ideology and strategy with radical white women, directly and indirectly. Black and Chicana feminists' political stances should also be understood as in dialogue with white feminists, and not merely in a reactive way. Rather, feminists of color confronted white feminism's blinders on matters of race and class, just as they confronted the neglect of gender inequality on the part of the movements from which they emerged.

Third, as a result of the failure to think in an intersectional fashion about second-wave feminist mobilizations, feminist scholars waded

into a problem of where to draw the line in calling a movement "feminist." There is a sometimes explicit definition of feminism as being about organizing around gender unencumbered by thinking about other oppressions. The feminist organizing of white middle-class women in the United States has been seen as a kind of model for feminist activism, such that a real feminist movement must be one that makes claims solely on the basis of gender. Model making by scholars can be quite explicit, as in Chafetz and Dworkin's (1986) typology of women's protest; other times, model making takes place as scholars devote little or token attention to the organized feminism of women of color, presumably because that feminism has been mixed with claims based on racial/ethnic status, or with nationalist demands. Implicit model making can be seen in some later case studies of second-wave feminist protest, where the organizing efforts of feminists of color were included in case studies, but bracketed, such that they appear in chapters about different varieties of feminism.[4]

Clearly, even equating feminism with making claims solely on the basis of gender does not really illuminate the variety present in the feminism of white women in the second wave; socialist feminism fits uncomfortably into this construction, as do women's movements that make claims on the basis of gender difference and complementarity, rather than gender equality (on the latter point, see Cott 1989; DuBois 1989; and Offen 1988). One can, as I do, define a feminist movement as one that calls itself "feminist," and yet not require that the political label be held to the exclusion of all others. Following West and Blumberg (1990:19), a feminist movement is one in which women make claims based "on the rights of women **as** women and citizens of society." When feminists aim to change "gender relations" (Marx Ferree and Hess 2000:x), they are not precluded from also asking for the rights due them as members of racial/ethnic groups or classes. Feminists of color in the second wave made just such claims on the basis of their being women who were members of racially oppressed, economically disadvantaged communities; selecting the label "feminist" was not a simple or automatic act but a political choice among other political choices. Accounting for that choice and understanding the circumstances under which the choice was made is the subject of much of this work.

[4] See Marx Ferree and Hess (2000) or Ryan (1992). A recent collection of primary documents from the second wave, *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* (Baxandall and Gordon 2000) does a better job of representing the writings of feminists of color as part and parcel of feminist protest.

Related to the question of the whitewashed vision of second-wave feminist protest is the question of class. Case studies of second-wave feminism have noted the middle-class backgrounds of most (white) feminists, as middle-class women were the ones with the resources necessary to act on women's grievances. As will be further discussed in Chapter One, gender-specific changes in women's labor force participation and attendance at institutions of higher education were seen as indicators of an increased level of resources available to potential women activists, an increase crucial for feminist mobilization. In the "younger" branch of feminism especially, African American, white, and Chicana feminists were largely college educated – indeed much of the organizing they did was campus based – and by virtue of their college education, upwardly mobile in comparison with others in their communities. Hence, it has seemed legitimate to label feminism – that undifferentiated feminism in the singular – as middle class.

But the question of class differences among racial/ethnic communities has been glossed over, and as I will argue, awareness of these class differences mattered greatly in constructing distinct racial/ethnic feminist movements. Arguing that middle-class status was common to feminists in each community because they were well-off compared to others in their communities is not the same as arguing that being middle class had the same meaning for feminists across communities. Because the general rise in resources postwar was not a uniform one for African American, white, and Chicana communities, the differences in the class status of the feminists embedded in those communities were important for feminists constructing collective activist identities. Women in the African American and Chicano communities faced racial and economic barriers to participation in the public sphere that white women did not, and the expansion of the middle class in communities of color did not mean that these communities were suddenly on an equal footing with the white majority.

In any case, early characterizations of feminism as white and middle class by the media, and, as will be seen, by activists hostile to feminist organizing, have not been effectively countered by scholarship; the whitewashing of second-wave feminism has enabled the rise of a myth about all women of color being hostile to feminism, a myth that fails to explain the actual organizing done by feminists of color. As will become clear, I argue that a more fruitful approach for understanding the emergence of racial/ethnic feminisms lies in understanding that some women of color who were activists began organizing as feminists when

some white women who were activists did, in the late 1960s, during a time of heightened popular protest, and that as organizationally distinct movements, these feminisms proliferated, related to each other, cooperated, and competed. Feminists of color saw themselves as belonging to a different movement than white feminists did, a self-perception that should be taken seriously; understanding why they saw themselves as different requires taking a feminist intersectional approach to the matter of oppressions.

Feminist Movements and Intersectionality: Recasting the Second Wave

Many African American women activists and many Chicana activists became *feminists*, choosing a political label and a political path that was not encouraged by male (and many female) activists in their communities (Blackwell 2000b; Cortera 1977; García 1990, 1997; Gray White 1999; Harris 1999; hooks 1981, 1984; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1979; Saldívar-Hull 1991; B. Smith 1983; Springer 2001). In the groups and organizations they formed, they espoused a feminism that incorporated analyses of the consequences of mutually reinforcing oppressions of gender, race/ethnicity, and class (and, less frequently, sexual orientation), analyses which in turn influenced white feminists, such that feminists today acknowledge as axiomatic the necessity of recognizing multiple sources of domination in women's (and men's) lives. In short, in Black and Chicana feminisms of the second wave we find the roots of feminist insights about the *intersectionality* of inequalities in people's lives. I wish to take seriously what this feminist scholarship has to say about exploring the social world in the very examination of the movements that gave rise to that scholarship.

Theory on the intersectionality of oppressions was part of Black and Chicana feminist thinking from the start of their organizing. In her 1970 piece "Double Jeopardy," Frances Beal argued that Black women occupied a social space constituted by their gender, race, and class (and subsequently, the Third World Women's Alliance named its newspaper *Triple Jeopardy* in order to incorporate the insight that class oppression intersected with race and gender). Later in the 1970s, the Combahee River Collective explicitly took an intersectional stance; they added heterosexism as a key component of Black women's oppression, ending the relative silence in Black feminist theory over lesbianism. The need to do their "politics in the cracks," what Springer (2001:155) has characterized

as "interstitial politics," with Black feminists caught between the blind spots of most of white feminism and most of Black liberationism – all this meant that Black feminists early on saw the shortcomings of a "monist" (D. H. King 1988) politics that focused on only one axis of oppression. Although Black feminism varied in its organizational form and ideology, in its theory it was nonetheless characterized by a consistent examination of interlocking oppressions and oriented toward action agendas that linked solutions for gender oppression with solutions to other forms of oppression.

Although differently situated in the racial/ethnic hierarchy and left political milieu, Chicana feminists initially organized an interstitial politics as well, in and around the Chicano movement. Feminists in the Chicano movement challenged that movement's shortcomings regarding the liberation of the Chicana in her community, arguing from the inception of their movement that it was only with Chicanas' liberation as women that the entire community could move forward (Cortera 1976a, 1976b; Flores 1971a, 1971b; *La Raza* 1971a; Longauex y Vasquez 1970; Nieto-Gómez 1976; Rincon 1971; Sosa Riddell 1974). Chicana feminist organizing was therefore interstitial in its formation, but not in its aims; feminists strove to stay linked to streams in the Chicano liberation movement, and sought to distinguish themselves from what was seen as a very different "Anglo" form of feminist praxis. In an intersectional way, Chicana feminists analyzed their situation as women as the result not just of gender but of racial/ethnic, national, linguistic, and class dynamics. Later critiques by Chicana lesbian feminists deepened this analytical intersectionality by filling in earlier lacunae around issues of heteronormativity.[5]

Thus, theories of intersecting oppressions as mutually constitutive were rooted in feminist politics, born of experience and created to guide

[5] On a more general note, the later "addition" of heterosexism to intersectional analyses in feminisms of color does not reflect total silence about sexuality, as will become clear in the narrative of this work. Rather, early in the emergence of second-wave feminisms, and particularly in communities of color, questions of lesbianism and homosexuality were broached in an inconsistent way. Clearly, criticisms of lesbian feminists of color as to their movements' failure to incorporate a struggle against heterosexism as an element of their political agenda were accepted and influential (see Alarcón, Castillo, and Moraga 1993; Anzaldúa 1999 [1987]; Castillo 1994; Clarke 1983; Combahee River Collective 1981; Lorde 1982, 1984; Moraga 1983; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1979; Pérez 1991; B. Smith 1979, 1983; Trujillo 1991a, 1991b).

activism (see Anzaldúa 1999 [1987]; Beal 1970; Cortera 1977; Crenshaw 1989, 1995; Hill Collins 1990; D. H. King 1988; Naples 1998a, 1998b; Sacks 1989; Sandoval 1990, 1991; Spelman 1982; Thorton Dill 1983). As Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995:358) wrote, for women of color, there was (and is) a "need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed." The need to account for one's disadvantaged position as part of a disadvantaged community was based on experience, but it promoted a particular kind of knowledge; as Paula Moya has written, a kind of "epistemic privilege" comes from being at the intersecting point of oppressions, such that women of color actually have "a special advantage with respect to possessing or acquiring knowledge about how fundamental aspects of our society (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) operate to sustain matrices of power" (2001:479). And knowledge of the intersectionality of oppressions at the core of women's lives then further facilitated a particular kind of awareness when it came to political activism, one that relied on "new subjectivity," constant political revision, and the "capacity to recenter [one's politics] depending on the kinds of oppression to be confronted" (Sandoval 1991:14).

Thus, feminists of color constructed intersectional theory on the basis of their lived experiences and embodied knowledge. Their theories were oriented toward guiding their activism; in a continuing process, theory and activism constructed further definitions of what constituted a feminist agenda. There were, however, some silences in the earlier constructions of intersectional feminist theory around questions of heteronormativity and sexuality. Early feminists on the left broke silences about the effects of gender domination, racial/ethnic domination, and class domination in their lives; they did so in order to argue for a politics of liberation that would address these dominations simultaneously. But while the archival record of political discussion reflects feminists' displeasure with sexual double standards, there was initially little *written* discussion of homophobia and little *written* theorizing about the oppressiveness of heterosexism. These lacunae in intersectional feminist theory were, of course, filled by feminists who reacted to initial silences with very loud shouts. For example, as will be further discussed in Chapter Three, Black feminists in the Third World Women's Alliance would stress the jeopardy that Black women faced as a result of gender, race, and class oppression; later Black feminists in the Combahee River Collective would include critiques of heterosexism and homophobia in their analyses of what needed to change in order to liberate women. By the

1990s, the intersectional political agenda of feminists of color – the need to simultaneously analyze and battle dominations of gender, class, race/ethnicity, *and* sexuality – migrated to the "mainstream" of feminist scholarship and activism, moving beyond the starting point of their own feminist movements. If the reader wonders where there were feminists discussing the constraints of heterosexuality and whether I am leaving them out, rest assured of my certainty that the discussions were taking place; the reader can draw her own conclusions as to why it took many feminists a little while to circulate their discussions about heternormativity in written form.

Feminist Emergences, Intersectionality, and Social Movement Theory

I start from the position that the emergence of feminist movements in any time and place is an interesting problem for those who care about the way that women choose to protest, because self-conscious feminist protest is a relative rarity in women's social protest. The emergence of a feminist social movement is infrequent, analogous in its rarity as a response to gender oppression to that of revolutionary movements as working-class responses to class domination; both feminism's rarity and its potential for large-scale social change make it of enormous interest – to scholars, to the public at large, and even, if grudgingly, to the mainstream press. In this work about the making of racial/ethnic feminisms in the second wave, I combine a feminist intersectional approach with a compatible "multilevel" constructionist perspective that takes seriously questions of structure, opportunity, perception, and interaction (Taylor and Whittier 1998). I believe these approaches are compatible because while both acknowledge structural inequalities in social locations, and the role that such inequalities have in determining consciousness, neither approach is deterministic when it comes to assessing the effects of structure on consciousness. In other words, in explaining activism, both feminist intersectional theory and social constructionism mandate an exploration of the way that structure, social locations, and activists' awareness interact in political decision making, and thus in movements' emergence and development.

The social constructionist turn in movement scholarship (see especially Morris and Mueller 1992) was a result of scholars trying, since the early 1990s, to redress what came to be seen as a neglect of interaction in studies of social movements. Interaction in movements came to be neglected with the rise of "resource mobilization" in the study of