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Editor's Introduction

Carole Boyce Davies, the eminent scholar of Caribbean and African studies, opens the issue with an analysis regarding a “shift” in African feminist discourse in her essay, “Gender/Class Intersections and African Women’s Rights.” Like its African American second-wave counterpart, the discourse challenged “all forms of economic and social oppression” but now emphasizes women’s cultural politics over political systems. Davies explores what she calls the critical variable of class evasion.

The theme of identity and representation regarding women of color in the U.S., Barbados, Great Britain, India, Brazil, West Africa, and East Asia threads through much of this month’s journal.

Claire Raymond, in “The Crucible of Witnessing . . .,” engages the controversy surrounding “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried”: the installation of the renowned photographer Carrie Mae Weems. Utilizing the “project of identity framework” of Arthur C. Danto, Raymond explores the ethics of Weems’s using the daguerreotypes of enslaved, arguably humiliated, women in the work.

On the other end of the spectrum, Lia T. Bascomb looks at the Barbadian performer Allison Hines’s performances as Soca queen to examine the role of black female royalty within African diasporic discourse. “So Proud to Be Your Queen . . .” explores the reclamation of Afrocentric nobility and provides an invitation to go beyond the conventional celebration of what the author calls “a mythic African past.”

The obscured discourses within Great Britain's current pronouncements about the failure of multiculturalism is the subject of "Decolonizing Britain . . ." by Denise Noble. The political gesture to re-inscribe a past that predates the independence of its Caribbean territories and the British welfare state requires, according to Noble, an intersectional analysis of race, class and gender that points to the "management" of women and the reform of "racial rule" internally and abroad.

The representation of indigenous and/or tribal women has often provided "gender trouble" in colonial discourses and this is the case with an Indian woman by the name of Shalini. "Magic Tricks, The Politics of Memory, State and Tribe in Lahul, India," by Himika Bhattacharya, looks at how the death of the subject engendered co-constituting discourses of gender violence from the state and the community—two entities that are usually in opposition to one another except in matters of patriarchal hegemony.

The consequences of how of Brazilian domestic workers and East Asian factory workers in the U.S./ Mexico borderlands are perceived are the subjects of Patricia de Satana Pinho's "The Dirty Body that Cleans . . ." and Long Thanh Bui's "Glorientalization: Specters of Asia and Feminized Cyborg Workers . . .," respectively. Pinho, utilizing Gramsci's "common sense" framework argues that the trope of maids' bodies, used to cleanse but nonetheless perceived as dirty, is a reflection of cultural attitudes toward the poor, manual labor, and aversion to the black body. In his essay, Bui complicates the conventional reading of the maquiladora factory workers as a solely a US /Mexico border issue by introducing the growing influence of East Asian corporations and nations that seek to treat Asian female workers like "cyborgs."

Two women, a generation and a continent apart, who created grassroots, empowering communities are the subjects of the two concluding essays. Cheryl Toman's "Werewere Liking's Village Ki-Yi . . ." discusses Liking, the Cameroonian writer and playwright who, unhappy about the restrictions in her own country, established Village Ki-yi in the Cote d'Ivoire—a place where artists interested in engaging issues of social injustice by nurturing each other as well as orphaned street children whom they also care for. Anastasia Curwood writes about Shirley Chisholm, who attracted many young people to her campaigns as the first black Congresswoman from New York and subsequently as a candidate for President of the United

States. “Black Feminism on Capitol Hill: Shirley Chisholm and Movement Politics . . .” explores how Chisholm used a feminist praxis to institutionalize black feminist organizations and left a legacy of linking local and grassroots groups with national networks.