

REFERENCE

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Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality.
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Pearl K. Dowe

Oxford College, Emory University

What happens when the theoretical analytic developed by black women to resist the erasure of their experiences and to critique hostile space within the academy becomes a buzzword to signify an ongoing chase for diversity, inclusion, and equity? In *Black Feminism Reimagined*, Jennifer C. Nash explores how black feminism has responded and should respond to the use of intersectionality, which is grounded in the experience of black women but has become the center of an academic space that has shown a disinterest in the experiences and protection of black women. The paradox of the "success" of intersectionality became evident to Nash as she saw how intersectionality became a constant presence in university strategic plans and mission statements as well as a core value in women's studies departments across the country. She also witnessed how her students had encountered the term or idea of intersectionality prior to taking gender-related courses but remained unfamiliar with the black feminist work that birthed the analytic.

For Nash, black feminism is an "affective project — a felt experience — as much as it is an intellectual, theoretic, creative, political, and spiritual tradition" (3). Because intersectionality has become central to feminist thought and women's studies, the contemporary affect of black feminist practice is defensiveness, in which black feminism has become a type of protective police occupied with the usage and circulation of the term and of black feminism itself. Nash contends that only by letting go of the effort to make intellectual work controlled and protected property can black feminists reimagine the

theoretical analytic in ways that unleash black feminist theory's visionary world-making possibilities.

The text is bold in its intellectual underpinnings as Nash develops an argument for the reimagining of black feminism. The complexity of her argument is fomented in an extensive review of the intellectual history of the term, the impact of defensiveness, and the ongoing debate among black feminist scholars that Nash refers to as "intersectionality wars" (6). But before the reader arrives at the proposed solution, the argument to reimagine the field meanders at times through several areas later in the book that can read as musings, leaving the reader wondering, at times, where Nash is going. The text's strength is its first half, in which Nash largely focuses on the complexity of women's studies' long history of anti-black elite spaces and the analytic of intersectionality and black feminist scholars. Nash utilizes a breadth of literature to make plain that the academy and women's studies are a reflection of the broader society in which the artifacts of blackness are sought after and appropriated while the creators are disregarded and become an afterthought. By diligently walking the reader through the evolution of intersectionality and the debates surrounding its origins, she builds an argument for how and why intersectionality can be seen as an object that hinders the robust intervention that the women who collectively formulated the analytic envisioned.

How can an intersectionality critic such as Nash (she acknowledges this is how her peers refer to her) advance the idea that black women should release a framework that is born of a long history of pain and neglect in a space that black women continue to demand as their due? Gently. Nash's gentle hand in evaluating the nature of defensiveness and the means in which intersectional wars play out is extremely kind and caring, which is a component she identifies as a function of the affective nature of black feminism. However, Nash's care is not intended to control access but rather to develop a heart of openness for black feminism to flourish.

In the second half of the text, Nash proposes the "suturing" of intersectionality and transnationalism, in which she boldly asks, "What if we embraced a vision of intersectionality ... that insisted on the intimacies between transnationalism and intersectionality in terms of both their construction and use by women's studies and their creative world-making possibilities?" (84). Nash introduces this concept by providing an archival analysis of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) and its embrace of both intersectionality and

transnationalism while keeping the two distinct and separate. The NWSA introduced transnationalism as a global analytic that left black women void of any connection to a global community, while using intersectionality as a means for women's studies to signify that it was a space of intellectual equality. It is fitting to review the activity of NWSA because it is the academic institution in which much of the incorporation of intersectionality and demand for the field's introspection about race occurred. However, this section is somewhat weaker than the preceding chapters, and it reads somewhat disjointedly following the theoretically charged chapters that were woven together with a strong sense of committed love.

Nash chooses to think through both analytics simultaneously while recognizing the differences in both traditions, so as not to conflate women of color and black women or ignore the historical context and intellectual labor in which black women engage. At the same time, she recognizes that transnationalism has struggled to recognize race and has negated the global citizenship of black women. Nash states that the reading of both analytics together has the potential to bring forth an intimacy of two analytics that are apart and to "blur the boundaries of who the analytics 'belong' to, who they can — or should — describe" (107). She deliberately does not use the term "coalition," as she seeks to move the application of the analytics from fixed to permeable.

Nash should be applauded for her bravery in approaching a subject that is intimate to so many scholars and peers. Some readers may read the text and walk away not convinced that engaging transnationalism and intersectionality and releasing the affect of defensiveness would invigorate black feminism. I am sure this text will leave a skeptic pondering the possibilities of the future of black feminism, which is what Nash desires readers to do.

Pearl K. Dowe is the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Political Science and African American Studies at Oxford College, Emory University: pearl.dowe@emory.edu