

# Calling for change: women, law, and the legal profession

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CHAPTER 23

COALITION POLITICS:  
EQUALITY IN STRUGGLE

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Both progressive and regressive political movements often increase their visibility and political leverage by joining together a number of community and public interest groups that share some common interest in pursuing a particular social, economic, legal, or regime change. The internal dynamics, decision-making processes, representativeness, accountability mechanisms, and leadership norms of such coalitions vary widely. They may be deeply hierarchical and disfranchising of some participants to achieve results in the quickest, cheapest, and least labour-intensive way. Depending on the change being pursued by those who joined forces, the result may be considered a success by all participants. However, where disparate groups mobilize under the banner of “equality,” hierarchical and/or disfranchising processes contradict in principle and in their results the purpose of the assembled group. This seems obvious. Yet this basic contradiction has defined much feminist activism of the past thirty years.

Contemporary feminist scholars, lawyers, and community activists are, or should be, familiar with widely-expressed criticisms of much second-wave feminist theory and practice as essentialist, exclusionary, and, ultimately, complicit in replicating oppressive practices that feminists purport to oppose and in reinforcing inequalities among women. The critique has three interrelated aspects.

First, the white, economically privileged, non-disabled, heterosexual, Western feminists whose analyses of the oppression of women have dominated feminist agendas since the 1970s often assume(d) commonalities among women that do not exist or do not adequately describe the lived reality of racialized, Aboriginal, poor or working class, disabled, queer, non-Western women.<sup>1</sup> The absence of such non-privileged women from

the most visible and influential feminist circles co-relates strongly with dominant feminisms'<sup>2</sup> non-advertence to very real differences of power and aspirations among "women" that are rooted in historic relations of social, economic, and political domination, in geographic location, and in current tangible and intangible resources. The persistent failure of many elite women to notice or problematize or remedy this absence, even while continuing to theorize, speak, and act on behalf of "women," reflects exactly the systemically unequal power relations distinguishing those speaking and those spoken for.

Second, the interests, concerns, and needs identified with the universalized "woman" at the centre of dominant feminisms' analyses tend to map only the interests, concerns, and needs of privileged women.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the understandings of what is politically or legally possible, reasonable, desirable, and/or effective internalized by elite—especially professional—women often misconstrue or compromise the priorities of more dispossessed women.<sup>4</sup> At best, the result is trickle-down equality: reform initiatives that directly and disproportionately benefit elite women and offer only delayed and marginal gains to women who are adversely affected by systems of oppression that interlock with gender oppression. At worst, the unacknowledged self-referentiality of elite feminist analysis and practice yields outcomes that materially increase the inequality of multiply oppressed women and, thus, reinscribe their subordinate status vis-à-vis more privileged women.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, dominant feminist inadvertence to or elision of historic and current differences in power, agency, and resources among women erases comparatively privileged women's complicity in sustaining and profiting from the interlocking systems of oppression responsible for inequalities within and among different constituencies of women. In particular, it usually erases effects of historic and contemporary colonialism and imperialism.<sup>6</sup> In addition, it allows elite women as well as women who are privileged only in relation to some coalition partners or in relation to specific political initiatives to foreground their identity as targets of systemic sexism and misogyny in order to dis-identify as beneficiaries of interlocking systems of oppression in a dynamic Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack have labelled, "the race to innocence."<sup>7</sup> It fails to tap the political potential of the fact that in different contexts and in different political formations, many—although not all women—exist on both sides of the borders of dominance and subordination: in some contexts and personal aspects operating from privilege and, in others, operating from a location of material and/or internalized oppression.<sup>8</sup>

### WHY WORK IN COALITION?

Coalitions are political formations consciously chosen to expose and disrupt the routine reproduction of unequal power relations within women's or other equality-seeking groups, and to generate equality theory and strategy that is mindful and inclusive of and accountable to all women affected by an equality initiative. By "equality" I mean substantive equality of results: processes, programs, and laws that reduce or remedy oppressive, subordinating, and hegemonic praxis. Egalitarian intentions, of course, offer no guarantee of egalitarian process or outcomes. Coalitions are constructed not simply to disrupt the under-inclusive products of exclusive feminist groups at the formal level but also to enable challenges to the habits and exercise of privilege. Working in coalition must be a "critical and *self-critical*" undertaking, "an occasion for engaging difficult, but pending issues," "calling for personal facilitation and collective accommodation" of such difficult and painful engagements.<sup>9</sup> As Meredith Ralston has summarized the project: the goal of coalition work is to engage, not transcend, difference.<sup>10</sup>

### COUNTERING ESSENTIALIST AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

Barring bad faith or tokenism in assembling coalition partners, the diverse and representative membership base of coalitions concretely challenges unreflective projections about what all women, or women not present to speak for themselves, want or need. Participants become more self-conscious about generalizing about "women" or "women's" interests when faced with the embodied differences of coalition members selected to represent and contribute expertise in the distinctive concerns of specific constituencies likely to be affected by particular equality initiatives.

All women are raced, classed, sexualized; all exist in relation to the ableist, imperialist, xenophobic norms embedded in and replicated by our culture. Coalitions dramatize, exploit, and build from this anti-essentialist understanding.<sup>11</sup> They force elite women to engage our/their white, heterosexual, middle-to-upper-class, Western, and/or able-bodied/able-minded identities. They legitimate challenges from non-dominant group members, offer the promise of political support and solidarity from other historically marginalized voices, and generate moments of hope when common struggle creates political agreement and solidarity across lines of difference.

As well, coalitions assist multiply oppressed women to resist the backgrounding or fragmentation of their marginalized identities when interacting on “women’s” issues. Coalitions create space for individuals’ multiple identities.<sup>12</sup> They draw on awareness of multiple identity as a consciousness-raising and bridge-building tool. Even the most privileged of feminists can draw on their experiences and their analyses of the dynamics of sexist and misogynist practices to grapple with accounts from their coalition partners of the dynamics of racist, heterosexist, ablist, imperialist practices. I am not here urging simplistic analogies from gender to race, class, disability, or sexual identity. However, in my view, in-the-head political commitments divorced from lived experience of systemically entrenched subordination cannot adequately equip highly elite individuals to do effective coalition work. In my observation, it is their experience as racialized and/or lesbian and/or disabled and/or immigrant or refugee and/or linguistic minority women that has made otherwise privileged feminists effective coalition players. Only accrued skill in shifting from privileged to oppressed identities and of translating across situated differences facilitates collective understandings and can forestall avoidable ruptures.

#### UNPACKING INTERLOCKING RELATIONS OF DOMINATION

As a political matter, the multiplicity of perspectives and interests structured into coalitions offers great promise for unpacking how interlocking systems of oppression, such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and imperialism, rely on one another. Prioritizing progressive change to one system without regard to the implication of and implications for other systems of oppression can worsen the inequality of the groups one intended to benefit.<sup>13</sup> Coalitions recombine the expertise and experience of differently situated participants in ways that can illuminate and shift individual and collective understandings of the complex nature and dynamics of interlocking oppressions in particular contexts. As individuals—each embodying aspects of privilege and oppression in differing ways—interact across their differences when analyzing or strategizing specific issues, the limits, partialities, and violence of privileged understandings will be painfully exposed, as will be their corrosive effects on those inured to subordinating treatment.

### COUNTERING THE ROUTINE REPRODUCTION OF DOMINANT RELATIONS

Although inclusive and representative formations, consciousness of the multiplicity of individual identity, and recognition of the interlocking nature of systems of oppression are necessary preconditions to disrupting the failings of elite feminism, inclusive representation is no guarantee of egalitarian strategizing, theory, or action. Choosing to work in coalition must reflect a constant commitment among all participants to confront, engage, and build upon differences of history, of culture, of situated power, and of relevant skills and expertise. A primary goal of all participants must be to ensure that non-dominant interests, perspectives, and voices are not marginalized, and that historically excluded or under-represented constituencies do not become junior partners to comparatively privileged coalition members operating from dominant perspectives and reproducing and reinforcing existing relations of domination. Coalition participants must also undertake to engage differences within their own community – differences, for instance, among members of the queer community on issues such as pornography, consent, and transgender identity; differences among First Nations communities and individuals on when, whether, and how to use Canadian legal instruments or on how to enable Aboriginal women's equality before or after negotiating self-government; and differences within adherents of the same religion on its oppressive or liberatory dynamics.<sup>14</sup>

"A coalition is not a home: most of the time you feel threatened to the core and if you don't, you're not really doing coalition work."<sup>15</sup> Genuinely engaging situated differences reflects the privileged back to themselves as continuing participants in and direct beneficiaries of oppression, and reflects the subordinated back to themselves as diminished, marginalized, and discounted. Both experiences are painful, but not symmetrically so. Nor does pain avoidance by oppressor or oppressed have symmetrical consequences for the struggle for social change.

Effective coalition work necessitates a genuine undertaking by women who enjoy any situated privilege in relation to other participants to recognize and acknowledge such privilege more than simply rhetorically.<sup>16</sup> They/we must work against the oppressive habits and perspectival shortcomings of their/our own and their/our peers' privilege, and grapple with their/our own and their/our peers' continuing and cumulative implication in other women's subordination. In this endeavour, literacy in critical race, queer, left, disability, and anti-imperialist writings provides an indispensable foundation. Fluency in such critical writings will not, in

itself, effect behaviour modification; however, it can flag commonplace habits and reflexes of privilege and suggest how to suppress or alter them through practice.

Coalition work requires courage and generosity from comparatively disempowered women. Their role inevitably involves offering up their embodied experiences and analyses as teaching tools<sup>17</sup> to expose and challenge privileged thinking and inegalitarian dynamics within the group in full knowledge of the personal and political costs and risks of doing so. Because such counter-hegemonic educative work is more or less violently resisted by those directly or impliedly challenged, non-dominant group members need the self-discipline to resist the personal humiliation and political despair triggered by such violations. Instead, their focus must remain on the collective political necessity of relating as equals in the equality struggles for which the coalition was created.

Dominant group players need to publicly censure peers who resist the essential educative work of coalition building, and should show leadership in assuming the burden of such teaching as soon as they have the political and interactive skills to do so in non-appropriative and self-effacing ways. Even without such skills, they can and should assume other risks or burdens commensurate with those ventured by less resourced coalition partners. Among such risks is honestly admitting privileged deficits—ignorance of colonial history, unfamiliarity with relevant critical scholarship, inability to understand a political claim or theoretical contribution—without directly or indirectly presuming entitlement to be personally educated. They should also admit to differences of experience and perspective that might help illuminate the assumptions and world view of privilege, notwithstanding that such admissions will implicate them in the oppression of others. Concealing privileged deficits is cowardly or condescending or both.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING AND CONFRONTING PRIVILEGE

Some privileged equality activists do resist acknowledging and then ceding their privilege on the basis of their material interest in our systemically unequal status quo. But more often, privileged women resist being confronted for acknowledging their race, class, heterosexual, health, and Western privilege(s) only adjectivally rather than substantively. We acknowledge we are white but not that we are socialized in, and think and act from, white supremacist values, expectations, stances, and behaviours and not that we are implicated in the continuing dispossession and colonization of First Nations people. We deny our habits of privilege,

our privileged ignorance, our choices not to know and to unknow, our presumed authority and/or superior qualification to set rules, assume leadership roles, speak, plan, theorize, educate, and override others/Others, our prerogative to exempt ourselves from collective political undertakings, our entitlement to be credited for our views, however partial, self-referential, and self-serving. We prefer the seduction of dominant ideology's definition of discrimination and of supremacism as the vice of ill-educated bigots and extremists.<sup>18</sup> We expect deference on pronouncing ourselves above and beyond our systemically racist, (hetero-)sexist, classist, ableist, and imperialist socialization. Coalitions, by intent, challenge that complacent and privileged indulgence, or they irreconcilably fracture.

The weak link in every coalition is the inflated self-regard and internalized sense of superiority and superior entitlement that follow from acculturation to/within any relations of privilege. Such supremacist training impairs the ability to entertain even the most gently put criticism from systemically inferiorized co-participants of supremacist behaviours or thinking. Vigilant self-reflection, self-criticism, self-discipline and peer scrutiny must be exercised to ensure that privileged players suppress egocentrism underpinned by supremacism when engaging with and responding to systemically inferiorized and devalued women. Remaining focused on or being reminded by one's peers of the political goal(s) of the coalition, and addressing criticism analytically as an individual and collective political responsibility, are essential to this end. Privileged women who respond to criticism of their exercise of privilege as a personal affront or as rudeness or unkindness disqualify themselves from coalition work.

The prudent move for newcomers to coalition work is to observe and learn from players who appear to have built trust across their own differences through what Maria Lugones has termed "world-travelling."<sup>19</sup> Novice or veteran, the essential response from anyone called to account for subordinating ideas or behaviour is respectful engagement, not anger, tears, guilt, or stony silence, and not unthinking deference. In the vast majority of cases, correction is warranted. Accordingly, the appropriate response is to listen actively and thoughtfully, to attempt to understand the claim, to credit the claim and convey what has been understood, and to undertake to try to avoid repeating the same behaviour. In the rare case in which correction was misplaced due to miscommunication, the appropriate response is constructive effort to sort out the source of misunderstanding. Pulling and closing of privileged ranks to discredit criticism from

systemically disempowered people and to deny their expertise in the nature and dynamics of marginalization is never an acceptable response to the exposure of privilege.

### MOVEMENT BUILDING

Both the male left and the male right have criticized rights activism as an elitist, anti-democratic legalization or juridification of politics. They argue that by channelling political disputes into an elite (legal) discourse and an elite forum for resolution by unelected, unrepresentative, and unaccountable judges, rights activism undermines democracy and the building and mobilization of movements for progressive change.<sup>20</sup> Pursuing equality activism in coalition works against these real risks of rights activism. Coalitions are alliances that, when successful, build and mobilize women's and other movements from the grassroots up, not the top down. Coalitions are not simply heterodox assemblies of individuals accountable to no one but themselves; they embed multiple structures of accountability in multiple directions. Within the coalition itself, individuals hold each other accountable to the collective, even while they are also accountable to the organizations or constituencies that they represent, to whom they report and from whom they must seek authorization before endorsing particular initiatives. The coalitions I have worked with on violence against women's issues, for instance, were drawn from two sectors: the leadership of autonomous, women-defined and women-run organizations such as La Fédération des femmes du Québec; La Fond d'action et d'éducation juridiques pour les femmes/the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund; L'Association des femmes autochtones/ Native Women's Association of Canada; L'Association nationale de la femme et du droit/ the National Association of Women and the Law; the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies; the Disabled Women's Network/ Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées du Canada; the Congress of Black Women, and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, as well as front-line workers from rape relief and women's shelters across the country and the leadership of their umbrella organizations such as the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, and Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergements et de transitions pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale.<sup>21</sup>

Collective brainstorming on any subject invariably yields a larger number and range of perspectives, strategies, and possible solutions than individual thinking. When theorizing or strategizing inequality, more is definitely

better as a matter of inclusive, accountable politics. Even at the practical level, the augmented yield of collectively shared experience and expertise is enabling and empowering:

One of the greatest things about working in a coalition is that if people are truly open and conscious of what is going on, there are very few problems which arise which can't be solved by the combined wisdom of the group. Problems and hurdles which may defeat some members are often things that others have encountered and developed ways of dealing with—but unless there is opportunity to listen to others and they feel equally included, this information won't be available to the group at large, so the key is to really live the practice of equal membership in the coalition.<sup>22</sup>

Broad-based coalitions seed new individual and organizational alliances; they aggregate and compound shared expertise, including expertise in how to bridge unavoidable divisions in constructive ways; bring needed visibility and validation to non-mainstream organizations with little leverage in traditional political fora; and allow under-resourced and overstretched organizations to pool resources and avoid duplication of labour. The most marginalized voices gain strength from the presence and potential backup of comparably situated women from other organizations and from the possibility of caucusing when conflicts emerge between representatives of privileged and marginalized communities. When coalition politics succeeds, it builds lasting ties among allies based on earned trust and accrued skill and confidence in bridging divisions toward a common purpose. Coalitions are, and are meant to be, greater than the sum of their parts.

### BACKSLIDING

The challenges of effective coalition work cannot be overstated. Interactions, strategizing, and theorizing will be continuously, if differently, threatening to all participants as they individually and collectively work through the many systemic and situational inequalities that divide them, and negotiate the different personal styles and practical approaches that distinguish one activist from another. Coalition work is not an appropriate undertaking for those who prioritize action and results over process. I do add, however, that coalition participants need be wary of co-partners—typically, elite players uncomfortable with radical actions that may injure their elite standing—who erect insurmountable process hurdles as a pretext for delaying action.

The least advantaged women in any coalition enter with guarded expectations, anticipating that in moments they will be oppressed, used, and betrayed, or, as Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa framed it, a bridge walked on and over by the privileged.<sup>23</sup> Given many privileged feminists' persistent failures to own and work against race, class, heterosexual, Western, and/or health-based supremacism, such wariness is reasonable. Privileged women who take offence at being presumed untrustworthy until proved capable of relating non-imperial<sup>24</sup> to those systemically positioned as their inferiors are unsuited to coalition work.

Successful coalition works takes time. Inclusive practice takes time. Reducing distrust takes time. Balancing the process- and outcome- focused members takes time. Unpacking how interlocking oppressions operate takes time. Learning and then unlearning one's own supremacist habits takes time. Regrouping after painful divides takes time. Reporting to the constituencies one represents and taking their instructions takes time. In time crunches, everyone falls back on the tried and true (however flawed by omission and privileged presumption) or yields to the most assured and dominant voices. The result is the reinstatement of dominant norms.<sup>25</sup> Often, because we are fighting defensive battles to preserve the few reforms we have secured or to prevent escalation and normalization of the war on the poor, the war on women, the war on so-called terrorists, the war on racialized men, we conclude that we don't have time to work through our differences. The urgency of egalitarian struggle must not preclude serious engagement about whether "we" should be proceeding with a particular campaign, reform, test case, fund-raising strategy, or conference in the absence of time to engage differences. Those who have historically gained most from trickle-down equality initiatives tend to overestimate the value of compromised or token reforms. They also incline to the imperial reflex of assuming that what is good for them—however compromised—is good, rather than useless or damaging, for others. It should be left to those least aided by trickle-down equality to judge whether and when something is better than nothing.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY AND SOLIDARITY

Historically excluded and non-elite players in coalitions are justifiably wary of being used by more privileged players to legitimate projects conceived and directed by dominant interests. Elite activists, in my observation, demonstrate far less sensitive antennae for detecting their own co-optation. This is a mistake. In every coalition in which I (a white, highly educated, legal expert representing a high-profile feminist legal advocacy organization)

have participated, I have been informally approached by power-holders from outside the coalition to make a private deal. Approaches have come from representatives of mainstream lawyers' groups, government lawyers, public commission chairs, and politicians. The outsider will offer to support the coalition's agenda if I use my (privilege-based) leverage within the coalition to persuade my coalition co-partners to drop, modify, delay, or add a particular element. Usually, the pitch is framed according to professional or dominant understandings of the "reasonable." Not agreeing to sell the proposed compromise to my coalition partners is characterized as utopian, unrealistic, or irrational. In fact, the pitch is to vanity. Being singled out by the powerful as a key player is flattering, and being offered the chance to be a dealmaker is seductive (and rewarding).<sup>26</sup> When ego eclipses the political commitments and imperatives of coalition work, the individual will fall back on imperial habits and rationalize agreeing to the deal as in the coalition's best interest. But no member of a coalition of equals has veto or deal-making power. All should be wary of being used by those with greater power. Being clear about for whom the coalition is struggling and to whom it is accountable provides the best check against co-optation by outside powerholders.

There is another, equally corrosive form of breaking ranks in coalition work caused by failure to be vigilant against "the race to innocence."<sup>27</sup> This is the inclination of most equality activists to foreground those aspects of their identity that reflect subordinated status and to dissociate from or deny their privilege and its implication in the subordination of other women. Feminist solidarity often fails because of the problem of "competing marginalities" ... centred around individual women's intense belief that they are not implicated in the subordination of other women. "When we view ourselves as innocent, we cannot confront the hierarchies that operate among us. Instead, each woman claims that her own marginality is the worst one; failing to interrogate her complicity in other women's lives, she continues to participate in the practices that oppress other women."<sup>28</sup>

One final caution: essentialist erasures did occur in the past and continue in the present. But I see a good deal of essentialism in response to second-wave feminism among current equality activists and in contemporary feminist writing. It is characterized by a readiness—especially among some of the younger activists in all constituencies of women—to trust contemporary critiques of the critiques of the critiques of earlier works without testing the partiality of new claims against the actual texts of the old. It is accompanied by glib ignorance about historic alliances across

race, class, linguistic, and other divides, which should be resources, not whipping horses, for contemporary activists. This posturing strikes me as a variant of the race to innocence, as if denouncing an author, a reform, a generation, a movement as “essentialist” secures one’s credentials as an “anti-essentialist” or as an activist untouched by supremacism and unimplicated in the oppression of others. Equality activists are too thin on the ground and too beset by resistance to jettison veteran activists and groundbreaking feminist works because they are veteran.

Entering into coalitions, like equality activism, is a desperate act of faith that individual and social change are possible despite all that divides us, precisely because of all that divides us.

#### ENDNOTES

- \* Sheila McIntyre, a Professor in the Common Law Section of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, has been a feminist legal activist for over twenty-five years. She was Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre from 2003–2005, and co-sponsored the conference from which this book emerges.
- 1 There is now a vast literature on this point. I have cited some of the earliest Canadian works: Esmeralda Thornhill, “Focus on Black Women!” (1985) 1 C.J.W.L. 153; Himani Bannerji, “Notes Toward an Anti-Racist Feminism” (1987) 16 Resources for Feminist Research 10; Marlee Kline, “Race, Racism, and Feminist Legal Theory” (1989) 12 Harv. Women’s L.J. 115; Shirley Masuda and Jillian Riddington, *Meeting Our Needs: An Access Manual for Transition Houses* (Vancouver: DisAbled Women’s Network, 1992); Patricia Monture-Okanee, “The Violence We Women Do: A First Nations View” in Constance Backhouse and David Flaherty, eds., *Challenging Times: The Women’s Movement in Canada and the United States* (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992) 193; Diane Driedger, “Discovering Disabled Women’s History” in Linda Carty, ed., *And Still We Rise: Feminist Political Mobilizing in Contemporary Canada* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1993) 173; Mary Eaton, “Abuse by Any Other Name: Feminism, Difference, and Intralesbian Violence” in Martha Fineman and Roxanne Mykitiuk, eds., *The Public Nature of Private Violence: The Discovery of Lesbian Abuse* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 195.
  - 2 I have adopted the term “dominant feminisms” from Toni Williams, “Reforming Women’s Truth: A Critique of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada” (1990) 22 Ottawa L. Rev. 725.
  - 3 For classic expressions of this point, see: Elizabeth Spellman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988) and Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” in C. Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds. *Third World*

- Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) 51.
- 4 See, e.g., Patricia Monture-Angus, "Constitutional Renovation: New Relations or Continued Colonial Patterns?" in *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks* (Halifax: Fernwood Press, 1995) 152.
  - 5 Sherene Razack, "The Cold Game of Equality Staring" in *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 23 and Maivan Lam, "Feeling Foreign in Feminism" (1994) 19 *Signs* 865.
  - 6 See Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye*, *ibid.*; Himani Bannerji, "In the Matter of 'X': Building 'Race' into Sexual Harassment" in *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1995) 121; Sunera Thobani, "Nationalizing Canadians: Bordering Immigrant Women in the Late Twentieth Century" (2000) 12 *C.J.W.L.* 279.
  - 7 Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, "The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations Among Women" (1998) 1 *J. Gender Race & Just.* 335.
  - 8 See, e.g., Diane Fowlkes, "Moving from Feminist Identity Politics To Coalition Politics Through a Feminist Materialist Standpoint of Intersubjectivity" in Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1997) 12:2 *Hypatia* 105; Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, "Seeking Relations: Law and Feminism Roundtables" (1994) 19 *Signs* 1048.
  - 9 The quoted phrases are from a definition of LatCrit Theory offered by Elizabeth Iglesias and Francisco Valdes in their "Afterword" to the published proceedings of the Second Annual LatCrit Conference held in 1997. See, "Religion, Gender, Sexuality, Race and Class in Coalitional Theory: A Critical and Self-Critical Analysis of LatCrit Social Justice Agendas" (1998) 19 *Chicano-Latino L. Rev.* 503. [Emphasis added].
  - 10 Meredith Ralston, "Upstream in the Mainstream: Strategies for Women Organizing" (2000) 20 *Can. Woman Stud.* 176.
  - 11 Iglesias and Valdes, *supra* note 9 at 515, observe that "anti-essentialism has been a means of securing discursive space for voices and interests that mainstream preferences and projects tend to overlook or marginalize; this claim to space and visibility, in turn, allows outgroups to conceive, articulate, and organize anti-subordination projects."
  - 12 See Edwina Barvosa-Carter, "Multiple Identity and Coalition Building: How Identity Differences Within Us Enable Radical Alliance Among Us" in Jill Bystydzienski and Steven Schacht, eds., *Forging Radical Alliances across Differences: Coalition Politics for the New Millenium* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001) 21.
  - 13 For an extended analysis of the interlocking forces that generate, enable, and normalize male violence against women and undercut women's efforts to combat those forces, and of the ways that liberal reformism not only deepens those forces but worsens inequality among women see Lee Lakeman, *Canada's*

- Promises to Keep: The Charter and Violence Against Women* (Vancouver: Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, 2004).
- 14 For an extraordinary unpacking of such complex, shifting, and contextual dynamics of differences within political communities see Iglesias and Valdes, *supra* note 9.
  - 15 See Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century" in Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds. *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Wansworth, 1992) 540 at 541. Reagon delivered this now classic analysis at the West Coast Women's Music Festival in 1981.
  - 16 See Sheila McIntyre, "Studied Ignorance and Privileged Innocence: Keeping Equity Academic" (2000) 12 C.J.W.L. 147, esp. at 162.
  - 17 For the destructive personal impacts of counter-hegemonic teaching, see, e.g., Himani Bannerji, "Re:Turning the Gaze" in *Thinking Through*, *supra* note 6 at 99; Carol Schick, "Keeping the Ivory Tower White: Discourses of Racial Domination" (2000) 15 C.J.L.S. 71, and Kathleen Martindale, "Que(e)rying Pedagogy: Teaching Un/Popular Cultures" in Suzanne de Castell and Mary Bryson, eds., *Radical In(ter)ventions: Identity, Politics, and Difference/s in Educational Praxis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997) 59. The phrase, "using one's body as a teaching tool" is Bannerji's.
  - 18 See McIntyre, *supra* note 16 at 162–69, 180–85.
  - 19 See Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World-Travelling' and Loving Perception" (1987) 2:2 *Hypatia* 3, reprinted in Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives By Women of Color* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation, 1990) 390. For an expansion on her theorizing of coalition work, see Maria Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppression (Feminist Constructions)* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
  - 20 For description and feminist responses to the Left and Rights critique of rights activism see Radha Jhappan, "Introduction: Feminist Adventures in Law" and Sheila McIntyre, "Feminist Movement in Law: Beyond Privileged and Privileging Theory" both in Radha Jhappan, ed., *Women's Legal Strategies in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 3, 42.
  - 21 For an account of how that national coalition was formed, the egalitarian process it pursued, and the outcomes it achieved, see Sheila McIntyre, "Redefining Reformism: The Consultations that Shaped Bill C-49" in Julian Roberts and Renate Mohr, eds., *Confronting Sexual Assault: A Decade of Legal and Social Change* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 293.
  - 22 Tasha Yovetich graduated from the English Common Law program of the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law in June 2004. She provided invaluable research assistance and input on this presentation. The passage quoted comes from email correspondence, 3 March 2004.

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- 23 *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1981) at xv.
- 24 For a brilliant analysis of the imperialist department of many Western feminists toward those they deem “others” see Lam, *supra* note 5.
- 25 I am indebted to Tasha Yovetich for this reminder.
- 26 Members of coalitions who have accepted the offer to deal privately are always rewarded for secretly agreeing to sell out coalition partners and allying with outside power-holders. In the sphere of law, the rewards include judgeships, professional promotions, and the award of government contracts.
- 27 See *supra* note 7.
- 28 *Ibid.* at 335.