Conversations Across Generations: Tracing an Intellectual, Political, and Literary Genealogy from Women of Color Feminist Anthologies to Women of Color Feminist Tumblr

by

Jennifer Alzate González

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(English Language and Literature)
in the University of Michigan
2020

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Ruby Tapia, Chair
Associate Professor Maria Cotera
Associate Professor Victor Mendoza
Professor Lisa Nakamura

Jennifer Alzate González

jalzate@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0003-0242-4563

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to those of us who don't come from radical, progressive, or feminist families. Who are forced to find their own way to voice the silent yearning, and to express the killing rage. Who eventually found it through books, poetry, high school and college classes; through Twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, Instagram, and Tumblr; through TV shows, late-night conversations, and whatever we could get our hands on. May we recognize the inner strength we've gained from forging our own path. And may we blaze a new trail for all our loved ones to come.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Given the inner hellscape that threatened to consume me throughout much of this journey, I couldn't have made it out to the other side without so much support from so many people. Thank you to Ruby Tapia, for always seeing and supporting my vision. And for granting me space and time when I needed it. To María Cotera, for all the pláticas and intergenerational locuras we got up to in San Francisco and for all the joy that working for CPMR gave me. To Victor Mendoza, whose consistent and early faith in me buoyed up my then-fragile sense of self. To Lisa Nakamura, whose feedback pushed my thinking. To Barbara Ransby and Roderick Ferguson, radical thinkers who I deeply admire and who, miraculously, saw something in me too. To the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program at Columbia University, especially Dean Hazel May, Jarvis McInnis, Monica Huerta, Don Ramon, and every single student who walked through that program with me. It was a truly unforgettable academic boot camp whose preparation reverberated throughout my entire time in the PhD. And a special shout out to the MMUF Chicago program, which ignited my passion and started friendships that have supported

me through this whole journey. As well as early mentors like Josh Miller, Meg Sweeney, Matthew Countryman, and, especially, Joey Slaughter.

I also have many, many dear friends who have held me throughout this process. Weihui Lu, THANK YOU for not giving up on me. I'm blessed to be your friend. Shannon Walton, my soul sister! You know just what you mean to me. Dawn Kaczmar, I am *blessed* to have reconnected with you & all that you are. Maryam Aziz, for your constant cheerleading and for showing up to all my things, even when I didn't ask you to. To my cohortmates, especially Laura Strout, Mika Kennedy, Annie Bolotin, Sheila Coursey, Anne Charlotte Mecklenburg, Crystal Yin Lie, Amanda Greene — we're doing it! To Arya Tewatia, Lauren Eriks Cline, Austin McCoy, Robin Zheng, Jim McAsey, Diana Carolina, Valentina Montero, Kyle Grady, Kyera Singleton. To college friends who held me tight during the grad school application process, especially Vangie Shue, Isabel Stillman, Julia Oktawiec, and Vivian Lehecka-Coyne. To Quinn Phillips, a recent but cherished addition to my life. And to friends and lovers whose paths diverged from mine. Thank you to all those who have held me close over the years.

Thank you to my kind, radical, phenomenal cohorts of students in English 125, The American Novel, and Foundations of Intergroup Relations — you rock. To all the adorable dogs I've taken care of. To Buddhist authors like Pema Chödrön, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Tara Brach who have gotten me through hard times. To YouTube yoga teachers. To all the baristas at Blue Owl Coffee in Reo Town, Lansing. To all my therapists, and especially Connie. To the lakes and forests I've walked through trying to find myself.

And thank you to myself, for showing up through everything and for committing to love and awakeness for the long-haul.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the digital pedagogy and political genealogy of women of color feminist Tumblr, a networked community of antiracist users on the social media platform Tumblr. I show how these users' free collection and distribution of social justice educational materials online constitutes a digital feminist of color pedagogy, one which challenges entrenched hierarchies of knowledge-production and circulation. Using textual and discursive analysis as well as social media-specific qualitative methods, I argue that women of color feminist Tumblr harnesses social media as an alternative feminist classroom space—one which challenges the presumed location of feminist and ethnic studies as they have come to be incorporated into the neoliberal multicultural university (Ferguson) and which reimagines their "theoretical subject" (Alarcón) as online users who lack institutional access to these fields' emancipatory knowledge. Further, I show how the very ethics of this online feminist classroom space are derived from the longer history of women of color feminist praxis and the theorization of "women of color" as a cross-racial, coalitional feminist identity. Building upon the work of Norma Alarcón, Chela Sandoval, and Analouise Keating, who argue that Third World feminism's "most potentially transformational theories" were largely "bypassed and ignored" (Keating) by mainstream feminist scholarship, my dissertation intervenes by analyzing Third World feminism's "digital afterlife" (Adair and Nakamura) on social media. By centering

questions of race, class, gender, and sexuality within the digital humanities, I join emergent critiques of the digital humanities (Bailey, Cong-Huyen, Lothian, and Phillips 2016) and show how ordinary users transform social media platforms into powerful tools of feminist (re)education.

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, my proto-inner-angry-feminist was desperate for validation. As early as middle and high school, I had reached my tipping point over the subtle hypocrisy of "girls don't behave that way" and other microaggressions. After repeated exposures to the historical women's movement in history class, I eventually googled it and ran head-first into the feminist blogosphere. As if unlocking the feminist heavens, I hungrily consumed answers and pursued hyperlink trails — and within the year, I was a brand new, 16-year old feminist. My second epiphany came at the beginning of graduate school, when I found the feminist of color Tumblr-sphere, which gave me words, images, and histories that I had never known before. The transformative effect of these digital feminist spaces on my life got me interested in the effect they were having on the larger online culture. If the blogosphere had primarily consisted of older, more seasoned feminists, Tumblr seemed to be run largely by people my age. How were we all finding this feminist information and content? What was moving us to share it? And what special magic did this practice of reblogging and resharing — like passing around zines between girlfriends — conjure that was unique to Tumblr? Why were people like Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde, and books like *This Bridge Called My Back*, so popular online? And what did this all have to do with women of color feminism?

This dissertation analyzes women of color feminist Tumblr as a networked learning community. I show how this community's forms of subjectivity, affective identification with older texts, and translation of theory into Tumblr speak harnesses social media into a political classroom and commentary space. Further, I argue that these Tumblrs discursively hail earlier feminist of color texts and theorists like Anzaldúa and Lorde as shared ancestor points for their articulation of a contemporary women of color feminist praxis. Such Tumblr adaptations show that young people are engaging, adapting, retooling, and expanding liberatory political frameworks outside of traditionally sanctioned classroom spaces. By centering online networks, we can trace the invisible, non-academic genealogies of feminist of color thought.

This project works at the intersection of ethnic studies, women's and gender studies, and digital media studies. My project offers a uniquely comparative approach to digital and print organizing across decades of feminist praxis. Rather than analyze these moments in isolation, my project brings out the convergences, divergences, and nuances between them as the contemporary moment imaginatively hails and organizes around the past one. Thus, my work foregrounds the comparative as a methodology, tracking Tumblr feminism's continuities and divergences with older forms of women of color feminism. I also center my work in ethnic and women's studies, as part of a wave of scholars offering necessary correctives to the white male canonicity of the digital humanities as it is currently being institutionalized. Finally, I follow my subjects in offering "women of color" as a salient analytic for understanding the subjectivities of racialized women online. I argue that identity formation around "women of color" draws heavily from earlier theorizing around the phrase as a coalitional, cross-racial analytic for racial and transnational solidarity. Following the work of Cassius Adair and Lisa Nakamura, who identify Tumblr as a "digital consciousness raising" space where alternative women of color feminist

pedagogies take shape (Adair and Nakamura 2017), I use discursive analysis and a comparative approach to late twentieth-century women of color feminist organizing to analyze this evolution.

Women of color feminism

I use "women of color feminism" to describe a network of political theories and practices that address the identities and lived experiences of American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Latina women. The term women of color was mobilized throughout the late 1970s and 1980s as a cross-racial, coalitional identity to build solidarity among racialized women in the United States and internationally. Scholars like Maylei Blackwell trace the term's genealogy through the terms *third world women* and *third world feminism*, which had been used decades earlier to capture a "transnational imaginary" and a "gendered solidarity born out of U.S. third world liberation struggle" (Blackwell 23). Both third world feminism and women of color feminism emerge from multiple contiguous and simultaneous sites: as responses to sexism within civil rights movements and racism within the white women's movement, as well as a drive towards independent organizing evinced by organizations like the Third World Women's Alliance. During this emergent period, women of color produced essays, newspapers, histories, anthologies, political organizations, and more.

Although women of color feminism is often used as an umbrella term for American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Latina feminisms, women of color feminism also has a distinctive genealogy as a coalition-building theory. For instance, in her report on the 1981 National Women's Studies Association conference, Chela Sandoval reports how the conference assigned all of the women of color into one homogenous "third world feminist CR [consciousness-raising] group" (Sandoval, 1981?, 63) Despite this initial undifferentiated

grouping, and initial internal suspicions of one another, Sandoval describes how the women eventually began to coalesce: "in spite of, and then *because* of our differences, a solidarity amongst the group grew slowly" (Sandoval 63). They eventually tried to "define the 'common ground' of [their] unity," and landed upon a framework which prioritized "a shared understanding of the workings of power" and self-reflection of one's own positionality within those workings of power (63). The group eventually realized that the strongest way forward was by reframing their differences, not as "idiosyncratic and personal," or "divisive," but as a "rich source of tactical and strategic responses to power" (67). Similar organizing efforts between women of color, nationally and internationally, occurred at places such as the Indochinese Women's Conference (Wu, Espinoza), the National Women's conference in Houston (Cotera), and perhaps most famously, in books such as *This Bridge Called My Back*. As Sandoval writes in *Methodology of the Oppressed*, U.S. third world feminism "demanded a new subjectivity, a political revision that denied any one ideology as the final answer, while instead positing a tactical subjectivity with the capacity to de- and recenter, given the forms of power to be moved" (Sandoval 2000, 58).

Women of color feminism online has become synonymous with intersectionality, first defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to address the simultaneity and inextricability of multiple identity-based oppressions. Texts such as the Combahee River Collective statement defined the interdependence of systems of oppression and the impossibility of analyzing them in isolation: to *only* witness racial violence necessarily excluded gendered forms of racial violence. Expanding this Black feminist intervention enables the simultaneous analysis of other marginalized identities, such as disability, immigration status, class position, sexuality, and gender identity on Tumblr. Furthermore, women of color feminism can also be a vantage point from which to

address marginalization not only of women of color, but also all marginalized people — that is, not just *women of color* as targeted groups but also the larger systems of oppression that affect all people. Chandra Mohanty, writing in 1990 of third world feminism, argued that it comprised an "imagined community" of "potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries" (Mohanty 4). From Bernice Reagon's coalition politics ("The only reason you would consider trying to team up with someone who could possibly kill you, is because that's the only way you can figure you can stay alive." (Reagon 356-7)), to Maria Lugones' "deep coalitions," to Carrillo Rowe's "bridge methodology" and AnaLouise Keating's "interconnectivity," women of color feminists repeatedly refer to the danger and promise of coming together across difference to work towards common political goals — "a form of prefigurative politics that enacts the very forms of non-domination that it hopes to realize in the wider society" (Taylor).

The Tumblrs I track enact many of these same political practices, from cross-racial coalition-building, to self-reflection, to using feminism as a launchpad to address all systems of oppression, and not merely *women of color*'s experiences as such. Thus, despite existing outside of official movement spaces, these informal social media spaces operate upon women of color feminist principles. However, they do not merely copy or reiterate those principles or theories verbatim. They *apply* and *translate* those origin theories and shared ancestors in ways that appeal to people on Tumblr now. Whether it is by expanding the number of identities centrally taken up for examination; creating artwork and collages around shared ancestor figures; commenting and reblogging about current events from an intersectional feminist perspective; or translating complex theory into mediums that make sense online, women of color feminist Tumblr appropriates women of color feminist practices and applies them to its contemporary moment and mediums. It translates coalitional, self-reflexive, and networked politics into an online model

that seeks to educate and inform. Indeed, this kind of work happens across all social media platforms, and an intention of this project is to validate, bring attention to, and normalize the study of such networks. Regardless of platform, users' choice to translate feminist of color praxes online shows a continued intellectual and political connection to women of color feminism — and more broadly, intersectional feminism — for explanation and analysis of our present political moment.

My project demarcates women of color feminist Tumblr in both its umbrella and its coalitional sense. Rather than a comprehensive or quantitative examination of women of color feminist Tumblr — indeed, rather than a summative definition or a finite pinning down of what it does — I track its political practices and affinities with older texts and theorists. Thus, I am less interested in strictly defining its contours — what it *is* and *is not* — and more interested in its self-conscious hailing of a longer genealogy of women of color feminist organizing. For the sake of this project, then, I include posts which are tagged #women of color, #women of color feminism, and #feminist of color, as well as posts tagged or having content related to women of color or American Indian, Asian American, Black, or Latina feminism. Like the diffuse networks of women of color feminist organizing in the 1960s through the 1980s and beyond, these Tumblrs do not necessarily form a discrete, demarcated group. Rather, I collectively sort them this way as an homage to their shared ideological principles — to use Tumblr as an intersectional, collective feminist learning space — as well as the ways these networks overlap with each other via reblogs and follows.

Feminism, the internet, and the digital humanities

Without question, the rise of the internet and social media has changed how feminism in general, and women of color feminism specifically, is practiced and accessed. Feminists have long used available analogue and digital platforms to create community: to paraphrase Jessica Marie Johnson, well before Tumblr and Twitter, there were still blogs, and long before there were blogs, there were LiveJournals, zines, and anthologies (Johnson). But digital technologies not only accelerated the pace of conversation: they reoriented movement activity around "communication, itself" (Clark).

Social media and the blogosphere have become major platforms for public feminist discourse and community. Many of today's most visible social justice movements, such as the Movement for Black Lives and #MeToo movement, have used social media to share stories, challenge assumptions, publicize actions, and mobilize bystanders. Other Twitter hashtag campaigns — like Janet Mock's #GirlsLikeUs, CaShawn Thompson's #BlackGirlMagic, Mikki Kendall's #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, and Suey Park's #NotYourAsianSidekick — work as interventions into public discourse. They push back against prevailing assumptions and create autonomous spaces by and for people with marginalized identities. The high visibility and reach of these conversations suggests, as Clark argues, that discourse online has become "an important organizational structure" for social justice organizing across multiple movements.

Academic scholars are also addressing the way marginalized groups use blogs and social media to create autonomous spaces and make interventions in public discourse. Scholars like Zizi Papacharissi study how users create publics through the use of social media to sustain political action. Scholars like Moya Bailey and Jessica Marie Johnson model engaged research on Black digital activism that challenges the stale binary of researcher and subject (Bailey, 2011;

Bailey, 2015; Johnson). Other researchers analyze how Black communities online use social media to intervene in public discourse and forge social movements (Brock; Taylor; Jackson et. al). From a different angle, Lisa Nakamura's work has examined the ways in which women of color's undercompensated labor online (Nakamura, 2015; Adair and Nakamura) belies other women of color's undercompensated labor in creating the material pieces that make up computers (Nakamura 2014).

These interventions have contributed to digital humanities debates more broadly. This dissertation is centrally in conversation with #transformDH, a movement which challenges the presumed white, male, heterosexual and otherwise normative subject of the digital humanities (Bailey, 2015; Bailey et. al; Tilton et. al). As Roopika Risam argues, major digital humanities projects up to this point have focused on preserving the archives of individuals who are so canonical that they are "unlikely to be forgotten in the Anglophone literary history even if these projects did not exist" ("Beyond the Margins"). In order to avoid replicating the same exclusions and marginalizations that Skye Bianco calls "retro-humanism," or the humanities before the interventions of ethnic, women's, and other cultural studies disciplines, we must "develop intersectional practices for the digital humanities that account for difference from the ground up, integrating theory and method" (Risam). Thus, #transformDH and other interventions like intersectional DH and the Postcolonial Digital Humanities, interrupt the normatively Western, white, male, colonial location of the digital humanities. By doing so, the field pushes these disruptions to the digital humanities "beyond the margins" and to the center of what an emerging DH might look like, demanding to know if "black, ethnic, and women's studies [will] be legible within digital humanities? Will other forms of difference – gender, sexuality, ability – have a place in the field as well?" As Emma Perez writes, to "decolonize our history and our historical

imaginations," we must refuse to allow the "white colonial heteronormative gaze to reconstruct and interpret our past" (123) — and our digital present. I situate my dissertation within this larger sphere of digital feminist and anti-racist scholarship challenging the institutionalization of a retro-humanist digital humanities.

Within these challenges to the digital humanities, there is a growing cohort of scholarship focused on specifically women of color's interventions and archives online. The aforementioned essays by Lisa Nakamura, Moya Bailey, Jessica Marie Johnson are part of this growing cohort. From a different perspective, Maria Cotera's "Nuestra Autohistoria: Towards a Chicana Digital Praxis" issues an embodied praxis by locating herself as a "daughter[] of the prehistory of books like *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981) and *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987)," (488) asking what the digital humanities can do to create "an active space of exchange and "encuentro" between the present and the past" (Cotera 489). Similarly, Linda Garcia Merchant appropriates digital technologies for Chicana historical purposes in "Chicana Feminism Virtually Remixed." Merchant uses Scalar, an "open source authoring and publishing platform," (Scalar) to create "a multimodal, media-rich, literary exploration of the political-ideological journey of the women of the Chicana Caucus of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) from 1973 to 1979" (Merchant 605). Indeed, the University of Houston just received a grant to create the first U.S. digital humanities center for Latina/o studies.

If Cotera and Merchant's work represent appropriations of digital technologies to shed light on invisibilized historical moments, other scholars showcase the intellectual and activist work that women of color are doing online right now. Jackson, Bailey, and Welles' essay on Janet Mock's #GirlsLikeUs hashtag focuses on Black trans women and how this hashtag both intervenes in normative transphobic conversations online and creates independent community

space for trans women. Joanna Hearne's "Native to the Device: Indigenous Digital Studies" introduces the issue through a focus on "Indigenous women artists' productive negotiations of the digital mediascape," such as through women-led mobilizations and ceremonies for the indigenous campaigns #IdleNoMore and #NoDAPL. Finally, Janie Jaramillo Santoy's work on Chicana bloggers like Brownfemipower analyzes how they negotiate and foreground their racial identities through blogging platforms. I situate my work within this growing analysis of women of color in digital studies.

However, rather than Twitter or the blogosphere, I turn my attention to women of color feminist communities on Tumblr. Despite Tumblr's relatively low profile -- and its "practical barriers to research... including lack of metadata and access to big data," scholarly and popular attention to the microblogging and social networking platform has been growing in recent years (Attu and Terras, 528). Tumblr studies identify the platform's popularity as a gathering place for people with, and interested in learning about, marginalized identities. A growing number of journalists and scholars describe how users turn Tumblr into a community space and learning place for people with marginalized sexual and gender identities, racial identities, and more (Safroniva; Renninger; Cho; Kanai; Oakley; Dame; Guillard; Mccracken; Adair and Nakamura; Wargo). Marginalized users create digital community through shared reading and reblogging practices, especially around race, gender and gender expression, sexuality, ability, and class. Within and around these "networked counterpublics" (Jackson et. al), Tumblr functions as a space where young people learn about minoritized identities, social privileges, and structural oppression -- often for the first time. Such virtual classrooms often function not only to educate, but also to create action, as embodied by the petitions, crowd fundraisers, and calls to action that circulate regularly in such counterpublic spaces. This ability to "find yourself a suitable digital

community" makes Tumblr a uniquely adept platform for community-building and resource-sharing around marginalized identities, especially multiple intersections of identities (Marquart, 74).

My project is the first full-length study of women of color feminist Tumblr, which I define as a diffuse network of interrelated Tumblrs that post about women of color, women of color feminism, and intersectional feminism. With hundreds of posts tagged "women of color," as well as thousands more posts tagged with various related topics, women of color feminist Tumblr represents an important part of Tumblr feminist discourse. By studying women of color feminist Tumblr, we can learn how intersectional, digital feminist networks situate themselves in the broader landscape of social justice-related Tumblr posts.

Despite the seemingly unitary framework of the term "women of color feminist Tumblr," this term (and project) aggregates dozens of disparate Tumblr blogs. Tumblr users themselves do not intentionally create unified phenomena, communities, or even conversations. By their very nature, Tumblr communities are defined by asynchronicity and fragmentation: a cacophony of voices and conversations juxtaposed beside one another with no clear connecting thread or narrative. Although this bears some resemblance to the juxtaposition of disparate genres in women of color feminist anthologies, the question of intentionality is a substantial point of differentiation. While the anthologies possess an introduction and conclusion – and editors combining the disparate pieces into a cohesive whole, under a specific vision of what they want to produce – Tumblr has no such framing or editing. Indeed, women of color feminist Tumblr might be better described as a network of *disparate* projects, rather than one overarching one. While analyzing these Tumblrs under a common rubric makes possible important comparisons, it can also invisibilize the form's fragmentation. Thus, this analysis – like so much of coalitional

feminist thought – must take into account both the advantages of a unifying framework like "women of color feminist Tumblr" as well as its limitations.

A further complication is the difference in the question of form and how women of color reappropriate forms that are designed *against*, rather than for, them. In creating *This Bridge Called My* Back, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga knew that their book would never find its audience amidst a racist mainstream publishing industry, and that seeking out alternative forms of publication was important. For this reason, they sought out independent presses such as the lesbian publisher Persephone Press, and later, Moraga cofounded Kitchen Table Press to publish *Bridge* and other women of color books.

While independent publishing offered a viable alternative to the exclusionary practices of mainstream publishing, there are few such alternatives in the digital landscape. This is in part because the very building blocks of not only the Internet, but computers as a whole, are fundamentally constituted by racism and sexism. In *Algorithms of Oppression,* Safiya Nobles writes that not only is discrimination "embedded in computer code," (1) but also the algorithms that drive search engines such as Google – a reality which reflects "a corporate logic of either willful neglect or a profit imperative that makes money from racism and sexism" (Noble 5). In a digital landscape fundamentally constituted by racism, sexism, and capital -- designed *against* marginalized communities, as it were – are there structural limits to the kind of work that can take place on platforms like Tumblr?

There is an important history of independent digital projects which center people of color and other marginalized communities. For instance, from 1997 to 2001, various social networking sites made specifically for communities of color emerged: AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente all integrated personal web pages with online dating services, job postings, and

discussion boards (Everett) and served as an early community-building site for their respective communities. But despite this early multitude of sites to choose from, the platforms eventually consolidated into three major social networking sites in the early 2000s -- Friendster, MySpace, and Orkut -- and to even further consolidation in later decades (Bolaño and Vieira). Thus, the networks I track on Tumblr in this dissertation are largely carried out on capitalist platforms not created for the women of color who, I argue, are using it for their own devices. Thus, unlike the women of color feminist anthologies, which are able to create their own independent presses to run in their own ways and by their own values, women of color feminist Tumblr makes use of a platform designed with white supremacy in its linguistic and technological code. This creates a kind of structural precarity that I explore further in chapter four.

Chapter outlines and stakes

Each chapter takes up a different, interrelated facet of women of color feminist Tumblr, from genealogy-building, to circulation, pedagogy, and precarity. I analyze anthologies and social media posts through a literary lens; consult archival sources through the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective; and analyze digital networks. Chapter 1 theorizes the forms of subjectivity that emerge out of 1980s and 1990s coalitional women of color feminist anthology-making. I relate this to the forms of subjectivity that emerge on Tumblr today, based on similarities in forms between the anthology and Tumblr as multi-vocal and multi-genre sites. Chapter 2 analyzes the circulation of women of color feminist texts on Tumblr, tracking both the means of their circulation and the affective resonances behind their circulation. Chapter 3 analyzes one particular Tumblr blog, *Women of Color, in Solidarity*, and its translation of feminist of color theories into the language of Tumblr. I track this work as a public feminist

digital modality, or a specific way of "doing feminism" publicly and online which enables access to new kinds of audiences via the distinct discursive space of social media. Chapter four analyzes the ephemerality and precarity of women of color feminist digital spaces like women of color feminist Tumblr. With an eye towards the broader landscape of digital feminist of color organizing, I make a case for preserving the precarious archives of feminist of color history online while also imagining the future of radical thought without such an archive. Indeed, precarity haunts much of this project: many of the blogs I discuss are now shut-down or inactive. Tumblr began to decline as a social media platform as early as 2015, and its datedness renders this project a kind of history of the recent past – a single flashpoint in the inexorable ebb and flow of social media platforms.

Overall, my work contributes to the field of women of color feminist theory through its incorporation of contemporary digital organizing, while also contributing to the digital humanities by centering feminist of color knowledge-production and dissemination on social media. As one part of the contemporary landscape of digital feminist of color organizing, I hope to show how women of color feminist Tumblr challenges the institutionalization of feminist knowledge through grassroots feminist praxes which make historically hostile digital spaces into spaces of opportunity and learning for women of color online. This is a way of bridging the boundaries of our feminist classrooms and scholarship. It answers #transformDH's injunction to center women of color, indigenous, disabled, and queer voices working outside institutional spaces. It brings attention to the still understudied digital places that feminism gets taught, shared, passed on. But most importantly, it affirms these spaces' peer pedagogy practices and the measurable impact that they have.

This deep dive into one online community shows us the multifaceted interventions this digital space makes into mainstream and feminist contexts online. It also shows us one genealogy of today's women of color feminist digital spaces, tracing it through older genres like the anthology. By tracing this genealogy, we can understand how women of color feminism evolves as an adaptive politics and how it gets translated by subsequent generations for the contemporary moment. Their effect is to transform feminist praxes by rendering them in digital space, and to transform digital space through the insertion of women of color feminist praxis. What results is a network of posts that reconceptualize feminist frameworks online, in ways that speak directly to the contemporary moment and to a newer, born-digital generation of feminists. Alongside countless other networks of feminist thought, then, women of color feminist Tumblr develops Black and radical women of color thought into a fresh conceptual roadmap capable of making meaning in the digital age.

WORKS CITED

Adair, Cassius, and Lisa Nakamura. "The Digital Afterlives of *This Bridge Called My Back*: Woman of Color Feminism, Digital Labor, and Networked Pedagogy." *American Literature*, vol. 89, no. 2, June 2017, pp. 255–278., doi:10.1215/00029831-3861505.

Attu, Rose, and Melissa Terras. "What People Study When They Study Tumblr." *Journal of Documentation*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2017, pp. 528–554., doi:10.1108/jd-08-2016-0101.

Bailey, Moya. "All the Digital Humanists Are White, All the Nerds Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave," Journal of Digital Humanities 1.1 (2011).

Bailey, Moya. "#Transform(Ing)DH Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities and Feminist Ethics." *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2015.

Bailey, Moya, et al. " Reflections on a Movement: #TransformDH, Growing Up." *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Lauren F Klein and Matthew K Gold, 2016.

Bianco, Jamie "Skye." "This Digital Humanities Which Is Not One." *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, 2012, pp. 96–112., doi:10.5749/minnesota/9780816677948.003.0012.

Blackwell, Maylei. *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, University of Texas Press, 2015.

Bolaño, César R. S., and Eloy S. Vieira. “The Political Economy of the Internet.” *Television & New Media*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2014, pp. 52–61., doi:10.1177/1527476414527137.

“Born-Digital, Open Source, Media-Rich Scholarly Publishing That's as Easy as Blogging.” *Alliance for Networking Visual Culture*, Scalar, scalar.me/anvc/scalar/.

Brock, André. (2012). From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media. 56. 529-549. 10.1080/08838151.2012.732147.

Cho, Alexander. “Queer Reverb: Tumblr, Affect, Time.” *Networked Affect*, by Ken Hillis et al., The MIT Press, 2015, pp. 43–58.

Clark, Rosemary. “‘Hope in a Hashtag’: the Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed.” Feminist Media Studies, vol. 16, no. 5, 2016, pp. 788–804., doi:10.1080/14680777.2016.1138235.

Cotera, María. “Nuestra Autohistoria: Toward a Chicana Digital Praxis.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2018, pp. 483–504., doi:10.1353/aq.2018.0032.

Cotera, Martha. “'La Raza En Canada’: San Diego Chicana Activists, the Indochinese Women’s Conference of 1971, and Third World Womanism.” *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, by Dionne Espinoza et al., University of Texas Press, 2018, pp. 261–275.

Dame, Avery. 2016. “Making a Name for Yourself: Tagging as Transgender Ontological Practice on Tumblr.” Critical Studies in Media Communication 33, no. 1: 23–37.

Espinoza, Dionne. “'La Raza En Canada’: San Diego Chicana Activists, the Indochinese Women’s Conference of 1971, and Third World Womanism.” *Chicana Movidas: New*

Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era, by Dionne Espinoza et al., University of Texas Press, 2018, pp. 261–275.

Everett, Anna, editor. *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*. MIT, 2008.

Guillard, Julianne. "Is Feminism Trending? Pedagogical Approaches to Countering (Sl)Activism." *Gender and Education*, vol. 28, no. 5, 22 Aug. 2016, pp. 609–626., doi:10.1080/09540253.2015.1123227.

Jackson, S. J. and Foucault Welles, B. (2015), Hijacking #myNYPD: Social Media Dissent and Networked Counterpublics. J Commun, 65: 932-952. doi:10.1111/jcom.12185

Jackson, Sarah J, et al. "#GirlsLikeUs: Trans Advocacy and Community Building Online." *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 5, 2017, pp. 1868–1888., doi:10.1177/1461444817709276.

Johnson, Jessica Marie. 2013. "#FemFuture, History & Loving Each Other Harder." *Diaspora Hypertext, the Blog*.

http://dh.jmjafrx.com/2013/04/12/femfuture-history-loving-each-other-harder/.

Kanai, Akane. WhatShouldWeCallMe? Self-Branding, Individuality and Belonging in Youthful Femininities on Tumblr. M/C Journal, [S.l.], v. 18, n. 1, jan. 2015. ISSN 14412616. <http://www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/936>. 5 Apr. 2019.

Keating, Analouise. 2013. *Transformation Now!: Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Lugones, María. 2003. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Latham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mccracken, Allison. "Tumblr Youth Subcultures and Media Engagement." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 57 no. 1, 2017, pp. 151-161. Project *MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cj.2017.0061

Merchant, Linda Garcia. “Chicana Feminism Virtually Remixed.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2018, pp. 605–607., doi:10.1353/aq.2018.0040.

Mohanty, Chandra T., et. al (ed.). *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1991.

Moraga Cherríe, and Anzaldúa Gloria, editors. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981.

Nakamura, Lisa. "Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture." *American Quarterly*, vol. 66 no. 4, 2014, pp. 919-941. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/aq.2014.0070

Oakley, Abigail. 2016. “Disturbing Hegemonic Discourse: Nonbinary Gender and Sexual Orientation Labeling on Tumblr.” Social Media + Society 2, no. 3: 1–12.

Pérez Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1999.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson. 1983. “Coalition Politics: Turning the Century.” In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology,* 356-368. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Renninger, Bryce J. “‘Where I Can Be Myself … Where I Can Speak My Mind’ : Networked Counterpublics in a Polymedia Environment.” *New Media & Society,* vol. 17, no. 9, 2015, pp. 1513–1529., doi:10.1177/1461444814530095.

Risam, Roopika. “Beyond the Margins: Intersectionality and the Digital Humanities.” *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2015.

Rowe, Aimee Carrillo. *Power Lines: on the Subject of Feminist Alliances*. Duke University Press, 2009.

Safronova, Valeriya. 2014. “Millennials and the Age of Tumblr Activism.” New York Times, December 19. Web.

Sandoval, Chela. “Feminism and Racism: A New Report on the 1981 National Women’s Studies Association Conference.” *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, by Anzaldúa Gloria, Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1990, pp. 55–71.

Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Taylor, Liza. “Coalition from the Inside Out: Women of Color Feminism and Politico-Ethical Coalition Politics.” *New Political Science*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2018, pp. 119–136., doi:10.1080/07393148.2017.1416447.

Wargo, J. M. (2017). #donttagyourhate: Reading Collecting and Curating as Genres of Participation in LGBT Youth Activism on Tumblr. Digital Culture & Education, 9(1), 14-31.

Wu, Judy Tzu-Chun. *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

CHAPTER I

"Every generation rewrites [them]": Tracing a Genealogy Between Women of Color Feminist Anthologies and Women of Color Feminist Spaces Online

"We honor those whose backs are the bedrock we stand on, even as our shoulders become the ground for the generations that follow, and their bodies then will become the next layer." (5) Gloria Anzaldúa, 2002, Preface to *this bridge we call home*

In the preface to *this bridge called home,* coeditors Gloria Anzaldúa and Analouise Keating consider the history of *This Bridge Called My Back* and the transformations in women of color political and cultural expression that happened in its wake. Recalling the generational nature of social change, Anzaldúa here reflects on change as a natural process: like rock, which builds layer by layer on top of the next, she places *this bridge we call home* within a larger genealogy of activism. Indeed, Anzaldúa and Keating credit their wish to "continue the dialogue, rethink the old ideas, and germinate new theories" (2) for the inspiration to compile this new anthology, twenty years after *Bridge* and ten years after its first sequel anthology, *Making Face, Haciendo Caras*.

Tumblr as a genre of writing is also connected to the politics of anthologizing, and women of color feminist Tumblr's discursive and political practices have historical precedents in this longer history of women of color feminist anthologies. In this chapter, I follow one thirty-year genealogy of anthologies — *This Bridge Called My Back, Making Face, Making Soul,* and *this bridge called home* — to trace their shared formal qualities as women of color feminist anthologies. Then, I compare this genealogy of anthologies to the politics of writing that emerge on Tumblr, tracing resonances and discontinuities between both modes. By showing how women of color feminist Tumblr's formal and discursive qualities echo a longer history of women of color feminist anthologizing, I show how these two modes are fundamentally linked within a larger embedded structure — a larger genealogy which encompasses both modes, yet acknowledges the new cultural forms and innovations that Tumblr brings to this genealogy. Tracing this longer genealogy of cultural expression also helps us understand how women of color feminism itself, as a political praxis, changes and shifts to respond to contemporary challenges.

In this chapter, I argue that women of color feminist Tumblr draws from three literary forms of women of color feminist anthologies while also expanding and remixing those forms through the unique affordances of social media. For instance, while women of color feminist Tumblr shares the anthologies' commitment to decentralized authorship, Tumblr expands that commitment through its forms, participants, and explicit political commitments. Women of color feminist Tumblr also shares the anthologies' practice of articulating subjectivity through the naming and reconciliation of one's multilayered identities. But more than merely stating one's multilayered identity, women of color feminist Tumblr actually *enacts* this reconciliation of identities through its curated, multimedia collage of content. And finally, while women of color

feminist Tumblr hails counterpublics in similar ways to the anthologies, it is uniquely commited to decentering the primacy of race and gender — indeed, the very identity of "women of color."

Thinking through and across these differences enables comparative analysis between both moments. This is important because contextualizing women of color feminist Tumblr within a longer women of color feminist tradition locates it within a genealogy, a history, and a sprouting point from which it emerges. Rather than watching every generation reinvent the metaphorical wheel, we can follow threads of discursive norms and political commitments as they reappear in the next generation. As core principles reemerge across historical moments, we can understand how political formations like women of color feminism are changed and reshaped to respond to their contemporary moment.

Anthologizing, then digitizing, women of color feminism

In the 1970s and 1980s, anthologies began to play a central role in defining and enunciating a women of color feminist politics. In 1970, Toni Cade Bambara edited *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, a groundbreaking anthology featuring authors like Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, Paule Marshall, and Grace Lee Boggs. Other anthologies such as *Asian Women*, in 1971, and *La mujer en pie de lucha*, in 1973 followed. *This Bridge Called My Back* was published in 1981 and introduced by Bambara. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies (1982)* was published closely on its heels in the same year. *Homegirls: A Black Feminist Anthology* was published just a year later, as was *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas,* and *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection of Writing and Art by North American Indian Women,* all in 1983. *Making Waves: An Anthology By and About Asian American Women* followed some years later in 1989, and many more anthologies were

published both contemporaneously (Blackwell) and in the decades following, including *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (2001), *Color of Violence: The Incite Anthology* (2006), *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012), and more. Many of these anthologies represented the first efforts to gather and document writings by particular groups of women of color. The rapid profusion of major anthologies during the 1980s and the following decades exemplifies the genre's power to introduce new voices, offer multiple perspectives, and contest dominant narratives: all modes in operation as women of color feminists articulated new inter- and intraracial feminist ideologies during this period.

While all of these anthologies share some basic generic features, I focus on those anthologies which grapple centrally with women of color feminism as a coalitional, cross-racial, and intersectional politics: specifically, *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), *Making Face, Making Soul* (1990), and *this bridge we call home* (2002). Although women of color feminist Tumblr derives source material and cites from all of the anthologies listed above, these three anthologies' emphasis on the broader category "women of color" represents a neater genealogical and political corollary to women of color feminist Tumblr. Furthermore, choosing these three anthologies centers the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who edited or co-edited all three anthologies. This choice to center Anzaldúa follows the citational practices of women of color feminist Tumblr, where Anzaldúa is one of the most cited women of color theorists on Tumblr, with hundreds of quotes, images, and tagged posts ("Gloria Anzaldua"). Women of color feminist Tumblr especially draws from Anzaldúa's thinking and her multi-decade theorizing of women of color as a category and political identity. For these reasons, *This Bridge Called My Back, Making Face, Making Soul,* and *this bridge we call home* map most closely on to women of color feminist Tumblr as a coalitional, cross-racial, and intersectional social media network.

Theories of the anthology as a literary form emphasize its generic qualities — namely, anthologies as a collection of multiple texts by multiple authors, usually with the purpose of defining a concept, laying out multiple perspectives on the same subject, and forming a collection of related texts and ideas. Diaspora theorist Brent Edwards argues that "the power of the anthology is concentrated in its discursive frame," or "the frame of the frame" (Edwards 45). This is because the preface and other such introductory materials "speak double" insofar as they "precede the book's 'speaking,'" but are "also the very force that animates the book, that opens it for us and shows its contents" (45). Anthological prefatory materials both theorize and enact the concepts they articulate. For anthologies of women of color feminism, prefatory materials define its politics and identify its history.

In *Making Face* and *this bridge we call home*, these prefatory comments include explicit genealogy-building: they intentionally invoke *This Bridge Called My Back* and the wish to expand upon and reanimate its work. Anzaldúa writes that "for years I waited for someone to compile a book that would continue where *This Bridge Called My Back* left off." (xvi) She goes on to articulate how *Bridge*'s publication lead, not to an explosion of women of color voices on the national stage, but instead, in the repeated "tokenizing [of] the same half dozen mujeres," which she argued was "stymieing our literary/political moment." As a result, she saw the political work of *Making Face* as "bring[ing] more voices to the foreground" (xvi-ii) — and that the anthology form was an explicit way to do so. For *this bridge called home*, Anzaldúa and Keating write about how they have "taken the model provided by *This Bridge Called My Back* and given it a new shape — hopefully without compromising the inherent character and structure of the original. Every generation that reads *This Bridge Called My Back* rewrites it" (2). Anzaldúa and Keating's explicit invocation of *Bridge* here places the new anthology within this

longer genealogy stretching back twenty years. Furthermore, their awareness of the way that subsequent generations rewrite and revise *Bridge* suggests a belief in both *Bridge*'s continued relevance to subsequent generations and its ability to be transformed by new readers. Rather than exist as discrete texts on their own, *Making Face* and *this bridge called home* look both forwards and backwards, aligning themselves with a longer genealogy of women of color feminist anthologies and with Tumblr and other social media platforms and digital cultures. Anzaldúa's intentional genealogy-building across all three anthologies makes *Bridge*, *Making Face, Making Soul*, and *this bridge called home* a particularly compelling group of texts to compare and place in genealogy with women of color feminist Tumblr.

At the same time, the anthologies that precede women of color feminist Tumblr existed in a very different political moment than our contemporary one. While recent historians have complicated the 1970s "backlash thesis," which blamed conservative retrenchment during the period on backlash to 1960s civil rights victories, the 1970s saw an unmistakable "conservative ascendancy in American electoral politics" (Schulman 697) culminating in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1981. Despite this conservative national backdrop, the 1970s also saw gay and transgender liberation organizing emerge post-Stonewall riot through groups such as the Gay Liberation Front, which started in 1969. By 1979, these movements brought together 100,000 people for the first national March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights (Hall).

Furthermore, women of color organizations were active during this period. For instance, the first regional Chicana conference was convened at Cal State Los Angeles in 1971 — the same year that *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, one of the first Chicana newspapers, started publishing (Blackwell). The Third World Women's Alliance's newspaper, *Triple Jeopardy*, was published nationally from 1970 to 1975. In 1975, the International Women's Year Conference took place in

Mexico City, representing an important coalition-building moment between U.S. women of color and women from developing nations. In 1973, the National Black Feminist Organization was founded, followed by the Combahee River Collective in 1975 (Hull et. al). In 1977, the National Women's Conference took place in Houston, Texas (Cotera). Furthermore, the independent feminist Third Woman Press was created in 1979 and Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press followed in 1980. Thus, women of color in the 1970s and early 1980s worked both within their own racial and ethnic communities and in cross-racial and internationalist coalitions through regional and national organizations, newspapers, independent presses, and more (Spira, Havlin).

Forty years later, women of color feminist Tumblr users found themselves navigating the contradictions of the Obama era, the ascendancy of the internet and social media, and growing levels of visible social protest. Carty identifies the "explosion of protest activity among young people" which culminated in Time magazine naming the protester as the Person of the Year in 2011 (Carty 3). With "austere economic conditions around the globe, political disenfranchisement, and a lack of accountability among political elites," (Carty 5) new technologies emerged as central nodes for organization and resistance, as well as surveillance and criminalization.

Among those technologies, Tumblr emerged as a virtual meeting space which helped create a critical mass of online users with identity-conscious, left-wing sensibilities. Angela Nagle argues that "Tumblr was one of the most important platforms for the emergence of a whole political and aesthetic sensibility, developing its own vocabulary and style," or what she calls "Tumblr-liberalism" (69). In the 2010s, Tumblr functioned as a gathering space for like-minded leftist young people — a place farther away from one's typical social networks, like real-life friends and family members, where one could be exposed to different political ideologies.

Indeed, the 2010s saw the rapid mainstream entry of several long-standing concepts from the women's and LGBTQ movements, including safe spaces (Roestone Collective) and trigger warnings (Gerdes), as well as the culmination of decades of protest, such as with the #MeToo (Hillstrom) and #BlackLivesMatter movements (Taylor). For example, in *Mapping Gay L.A.*, Moira Kenney traces the term "safe space" to the mid-1960s, when gay and lesbian bars termed themselves safe spaces to be out about one's sexuality in the face of continued anti-sodomy laws. Safe space usage later become more frequent in the women's movement, where "safety began to mean distance from men and patriarchal thought" (Harris).

However, safe spaces had a mainstream resurgence over the 2010s, when the term safe space was popularized on college campuses as a way to demarcate spaces intentionally (as) free (as possible) from particular kinds of social oppression. Safe space supporters identify safe spaces as a necessary haven from frequent racist, sexist, and homophobic campus-climate incidents (Jaschik, Zeilinger). Indeed, after the 2016 presidential election, dozens of incidents took place across the United States involving swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti, fliers from white supremacist groups, and physical assaults of Black students and hijab-wearing women (Dreid and Najmabadi). According to a 2019 survey of American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED) professionals, three-fourths of survey respondents reported that a hate-bias episode had occurred on their college campuses within the last two years, and 38 percent reported that a hate-bias episode had happened once per semester over the last two years (Bauer-Wolf). Within this campus climate context, safe spaces emerged as a way for marginalized students — particularly LGBTQ students and students of color — to experience a reprieve from these and more subtle bias incidents on campus. The issue reached national attention in 2015, when students at the University of Missouri protested their then-president's failure to make the

campus a safe space for Black students (Wile). Google searches for "safe space" peaked during this time (Google Trends a), as the university president and chancellor eventually resigned over student protests, and the popular adult animation show, South Park, aired a satirical episode called "Safe Space" during this period ("Safe Space").

Tumblr was one place where young people galvanized around the idea of safe spaces. For instance, dozens of posts underneath the #safe space hashtag feature declarations such as "Reblog if your blog is safe for all members of the LGBTQ+ community," which has nearly 40,000 reblogs (magical-chloe). Indeed, another user writes about their own Tumblr as a safe space for them "everytime I needed a cozy and safe place in my head and couldn't find it in the physical world" (witchyautumns). The dissemination of concepts like safe spaces on Tumblr is one indicator of its progressive, college student-oriented political subculture aesthetic. As a digital space where young people can read about and discuss the need for safe spaces — and as a space which *itself* is perceived as a safe space by users — Tumblr appeals to young people predisposed to learning about systems of inequality.

Tumblr's history of spreading awareness about feminist and LGBTQ concepts such as the idea of safe spaces makes it an ideal platform on which to circulate women of color feminist ideas and writings. In a sense, Tumblr's status as a platform for information on social identities creates a built-in audience for women of color feminism on Tumblr — one which can be reached through something as innocuous as a reblogged post, rather than through more time- or money-intensive channels such as physically sharing a copy of a book with someone or attending a book signing. Indeed, because the nature of Tumblr is to curate one's timeline to feature the kinds of content one wants to see — rather than the content of those one knows in real life, such as with

Facebook — like-minded users are especially likely to stumble into anti-racist and feminist content online.

Even more in the mainstream, however, recent watershed moments in popular consciousness around the 2017 Women's March, the Movement for Black Lives, and the #MeToo movement have also changed perceptions about social inequality and identity. For instance, the 2017 Women's March made feminist critiques of Trump's policy, from the nationwide slashing of reproductive rights to his personal history of sexual violence against women, accessible to many. But even further, leaders and critiques about the Women's March definitively introduced the term "intersectionality" to a much wider audience than had previously been aware of it. With headlines such as "Women's March Organizers Address Intersectionality As The Movement Grows" (Gebreyes) and "What the Women's March Teaches Us about Intersectionality," (Anti-Defamation League) as well as scholarly articles interviewing Black women on their perceptions of the success of intersectional analysis at the march (Brewer and Dundes), legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's term enjoyed a cultural moment. Indeed, Google searches for the term spiked in January of 2017, coinciding with national coverage of the march (Google Trends b) — and spiked again in March of 2018, when Ashley Judd, Salma Hayek, and Annabella Sciorra used their platform at the Oscars to rebuke Harvey Weinstein, who they all accused of sexual misconduct and assault, and to underscore the next year's "limitless possibilities of equality, diversity, inclusion, intersectionality" (Stamper).

On Tumblr, hundreds of posts are tagged #metoo movement, #women's march, and #intersectionality. Indeed, Tumblr became an ideal space to share news and political commentary about each movement and cultural moment as it happened. Not only did certain contingents of the Women's March have official Tumblr pages, such as Women's March Ottawa Solidarity

(womensmarchottowa2017), but other Tumblrs collected stories from the Women's March (womensmarch2017stories) and the hashtag #women's march features thousands of photos of protesters from around the country. Critiques of the Women's March were also shared online. A highly circulated photograph featuring three white women wearing pink pussy hats and a Black woman standing in front of them holding the sign, "Don't forget: White Women Voted for Trump" also circulated on Tumblr, with about 4,000 reblogs (thesagechronicles). Thus, throughout the 2010s, Tumblr was a place where conversations and posts about the Women's March and other such contemporary political events were shared.

Key to these moment-to-moment political responses is the way that women of color feminist Tumblr perpetually expands and rewrites itself, making it more adaptable as terms fall out of favor, paradigms are overturned, and new causes emerge. While printed anthologies always date themselves, especially in response to contemporary events, Tumblr responds in real-time to current events. Although the anthologies continue to speak across time, the books themselves reach a kind of stasis, while women of color feminist Tumblr is continually changing, growing, and reimagining itself.

Tumblr's ability to move at the speed of the 24 hour news cycle, is significant for women of color feminist Tumblr praxis, making these online communities politically relevant and up-to-date in ways that published books cannot approximate. In an essay on Tumblr youth subcultures and political engagement, Allison Mccracken writes that Tumblr "offers its users an immediacy of reception that is invaluable in assessing the social impact of events as they unfold," (158). She cites actress Carrie Fisher's death in 2016 as a moment to which Tumblr galvanized a mass response, where users shared posts detailing Fisher's open discussions around feminism, mental health, and body-positivity. Mccracken writes that "Fisher's death simultaneously became an

affective, educational, and activist cultural moment" (158). Unlike media scholars, whose time to publication lags months and even years behind current events, Tumblr (like other social media platforms) offers as an immediate mass response in the hours and days following any given event.

For instance, in 2017, Kendall Jenner starred in a Pepsi advertisement in which she brokered peace between police officers and protesters by offering the officers a Pepsi. Outcry across social media was swift, and Tumblr users fervently joined in, with *Angry Women of Color United* reblogging four different criticisms of the commercial the very day it aired (angrywocunited). Each of these posts alone had anywhere from 800 to 50,000 reblogs, and were replicated throughout political corners of the platform. Pepsi pulled the advertisement and apologized the very same day. The immediacy of such responses to cultural moments gives Tumblr and other social media platforms distinct advantages over traditional publication methods. By allowing users to express outrage and participate in mass outcry through reblogging, women of color feminist Tumblr allows for immediate responses to current events and instant tuning in to a larger community of commenters on what's going on.

By understanding the cultural and political contexts for women of color feminist anthologies and women of color feminist Tumblr, we can track the reemergence of particular politics across time. In addition, we can also discern how Tumblr innovates, adds, and remixes earlier feminist of color cultural expressions. This comparative work enables the outlining of a larger genealogy of women of color feminist political and cultural expression, as well as an understanding of how women of color feminism has changed and been reshaped in the contemporary moment.

Decentering famous authors, decentralizing movements

Genealogy-building within the frame of the anthology is just one of many political-literary choices that define *Bridge, Making Face, Making Soul,* and *this bridge called home.* Another central choice is to explicitly decenter privileged authors, not only through the form of the multi-author anthology, but through how the editors select entries. In *Making Face,* Anzaldúa writes of how she "found [her]self… wanting to include the unknown, little published or unpublished writers," which lead to her making a "special effort to work with women who do not consider themselves writers, or at least not yet" (xvii). This special consideration for unpublished authors reveals a desire to move away from tokenizing the same, recognizable women of color and to introduce new voices and perspectives to the political scene. By decentering already-established authors, Anzaldúa seeks to identify, mentor, and publish new voices.

This choice has not only a literary intention, but a political intention as well. Anzaldúa argues that "we have not one movement but many," which are "discarding the patriarchal model of the hero/leader leading the rank and file." Rather than center around "media stars or popular authors," Anzaldúa centers the "small groups or single *mujeres,* many of whom have not written books or spoken at national conferences" (xxvii). Here, Anzaldúa argues on behalf of decentralized movements, where leadership emerges organically from all parts of the movement rather than a few leaders (Brown). Decentering the patriarchal model of hero/leader and rank and file does not just destabilize normative movement work: it also necessitates a different approach to anthologizing. To decenter this patriarchal model, Anzaldúa must refuse to center the same "hero/leader" voices over and over again, and instead, to cultivate new ones. This is why she goes out of her way to work with new or little-published authors: her literary decision to work

with those authors stems from her political commitments to decentralized movements made of "small groups" and "single *mujeres*."

Women of color feminist Tumblr practices and elaborates upon this ethics of decentralized authorship. First, Tumblr as a platform emphasizes not only decenters authorship, but encourages anonymity. Unlike other social media platforms, Tumblr profiles are not linked to real-life names or identities. Thus, users often create anonymous accounts with no direct correlation to their real-world names or identities, which enables them to cultivate a safe environment in which to embrace identities that they may not yet claim publicly (Renninger, Haismon et. al). As I document in chapter two, anonymity enables more authentic and unrestrained self-expression. But this widespread, platform-enabled anonymity also deemphasizes the primacy of any one voice or account. Unlike on Twitter and Instagram, where accounts are beholden to their follower counts and where celebrity accounts receive an outsized number of views, Tumblr does not display the number of followers a blog has. Thus, while some Tumblr blogs are more popular than others, raw follower count is deemphasized. This makes for more horizontal, decentered digital networks — in other words, for networks that look more like "small groups" and "single *mujeres*" than "hero/leader" configurations. Unlike the tokenization of a famous few voices that Anzaldúa identifies, then, women of color feminist Tumblr is made up of hundreds of voices, accounts, and Tumblr blogs.

Furthermore, while some corporations and well-known feminists use Tumblr, the vast majority of women of color feminist Tumblr blogs are not created by people with real-world publishing experience or professional feminist credentials. For example, *Wocinsolidarity*, the subject of my third chapter, was created by three college students and managed in their free time. Other popular pages, such as *Angrywocunited*, are also created and moderated by college

students, as are most of the other blogs which provide any information about their moderators. This is significant for women of color feminist Tumblr praxis. By centering the curatorial work of college students and other non-professional feminists, this online community decenters well-known movement leaders and encourages younger feminists to participate in online feminist discussion and pedagogy. Indeed, digital feminism scholars identify social media as a prime location for such reciprocal exchange: a "space where feminists can learn from each other about why things some feminists see as harmless can be hurtful and offensive to others" (Thelandersson 529). By expanding feminist space online, feminist digital spaces expand the reach of feminist ideas and expand access to feminist conversations and debates (Crossley), even as social media itself can "enable mobbing, bullying and harassment" (Boynton) of feminist users. Thus, through expanding feminist space online, women of color feminist Tumblr decentralizes the "patriarchal model of hero/rank and file" and encourages non-professional feminists to publish, post, and curate online. This fulfills Anzaldúa's injunction to publish lesser-known writers rather than tokenizing the same well-known voices.

However, women of color feminist Tumblr's commitment to decentralized authorship and passing the mic extends beyond its form and its creators. It is also an explicit political commitment. For Tumblr blogs such as *fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor*, their mission is to repost selfies submitted by queer people and women of color. In doing so, they prove that queer people of color "are here and creating space for ourselves" (*fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor*). This blog riffs off the larger paradigm of "f-yeah" Tumblr blogs, which became popular in 2009 as "an overenthusiastic celebration of one person, one place, one thing." The first "f-yeah" blogs generated tens of thousands of followers, and adaptations as light-hearted as "f-yeahbradpitt," "f-yeahpizza," and "f-yeahmodernism" soon followed (Carpenter). However, users also turned the

trope towards online activism: several identity-centered "f-yeah" blogs proliferated, such as "f-yeahchicanawriters," "f-yeahlgbtqblackpeople," and "f-yeah dykes." Each of these blogs shares information, images, and history about the identity categories that they represent.

For *fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor*, a primarily selfie-based Tumblr blog, dozens and sometimes hundreds of selfies are tagged #lesbian, #tomboy, #gay, #stem, #butch, #polyamorous, and #androgynous, culled from direct submissions as well as from other Tumblr blogs. This collection of reposted selfies comprises a kind of curated gallery of images of queer people of color. Tags about the users' sexual orientation, relationship orientation, and gender expression contextualize these images within a larger community and easily link to all the other blog's submissions around a particular identity. Thus, within the blog *fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor*, one can not only see hundreds of queer people of color, but also browse a tag such as #tomboy to see a smaller collection of selfies with that specific tag.

At a baseline, these selfies provide representation for people with marginalized identities. But more fundamentally, they also extend the political project of such a Tumblr blog beyond the lens of what the original creators can accomplish on their own. Rather than pose as the ultimate "hero/leader," the creators of *fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor* use their platforms to invite others to participate in the blog's political project via selfie submission. This allows selfie submitters — themselves usually users with personal blogs, rather than blogs with a specific public mission like *fuckyeaqueerpeopleofcolor* — to locate themselves within a larger queer community of color online. Here, selfie reposting is a democratizing praxis which uplifts ordinary Tumblr users through the posting of their photographs, allowing them to be literally seen online. This praxis not only echoes Anzaldúa's desire to uplift more voices, it radically expands it. By reaching out

to audiences in real-time, these selfie Tumblr blogs decenter the creators' own voices by intentionally amplifying the voices and images of their followers via selfie reposting.

Another formal aspect across the three anthologies is an emphasis on fragmentation and discontinuity over linearity. In *Making Face*, Anzaldúa argues that it is the *reader* themselves who "must do the work of piecing this text together," forcing the reader into "participating in the making of meaning — she is forced to connect the dots, to connect the fragments" (xvii-iii). Rather than provide an easy and intelligible roadmap to the anthology, then, Anzaldúa presents the book as a circuitous maze which readers must navigate and piece together in order to make meaning. In *bridge called home*, this emphasis is reflected in its political commitments: "though most people self-define by what they exclude, we define who we are by what we include" (3). Rather than excluding in order to more strictly or cogently define the subject "radical women of color," these three anthologies define themselves by a more inclusive and amorphous approach to anthologizing. This diversity of material in what is included results in a fragmentary and non-linear approach to anthologizing.

Tumblr, as a platform, takes this emphasis on decentralization and discontinuity to a new level. First, unlike other text-based social media platforms, Tumblr heavily traffics in images: particularly memes, gifs, jokes, and fanart. Rather than the familiar stream of friends and family life events (marriages, births, awards, vacations) one might find on Facebook, or the soundbytes of political analysis on Twitter, Tumblr's content is highly personally curateable. Users choose which conversations to follow and what kind of content they would like to appear on their dashboard, or home page — and those wide-ranging interests all show up side by side, in a dizzying diversity of content. Media scholar Paul Byron describes Tumblr as "a space where users could move between pornography and visual arts, suicidal thoughts and self-help, and

discussions about gender categories and how to situate yourself within a wide-ranging landscape of identity" (346). Moving between these different modes and discourses with no connective tissue or transition between them, Tumblr's formal aesthetic is fragmented and discontinuous. Like Anzaldúa, who grounds *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Making Face, Making Soul*, and *this bridge called home* in a non-linear narrative thread that readers must make sense of, Tumblr offers a discontinuous experience of social media. But unlike the anthologies, Tumblr's discontinuity is predicated as much on abrupt changes in topic and tone as it is on a mere diversity of content. Tumblr timelines produce a collage of different topics and affects: from an illustrated interview with Mariame Kaba discussing prison abolition to memes about nature documentaries, to jokes about clownfish, and then back to Bernie Sanders tweets about capitalism. This more extreme discontinuity — especially the toggling back and forth between political and humorous content — produces a different kind of reading experience from the anthologies. By layering Internet humor with political posts, Tumblr produces a space in which politics exists *alongside*, rather than in isolation from, more traditional Internet humor and parody.

Furthermore, as a networked community, women of color feminist Tumblr is diffuse and decentralized. For instance, *Angry Women of Color United*'s virtual bibliography of "Sister" blogs lists 89 Tumblr blogs which carry out similar or related missions to the blog itself, which posts content related to women of color. Despite this overlap, most of the blogs center around different identities — for example, the linked blogs include Daily Fatspiration, a fat-positive and body-positive blog, and Muslim Women in History, which posts content about contemporary and historical Muslim women. While each blog has a different identity focal point, each contributes to the overall "Sisters" network. This framework views gender expansively, seeing anything

under its purview that is related to women and to patriarchy more broadly — including how it is raced, classed, gendered, and more. What results from this kaleidoscopic, multi-issue focus is a horizontal media landscape where blogs fill their own niches, rather than compete with one another. Women of color feminist Tumblr decentralizes the "patriarchal model of hero/rank and file" through this very diffuseness. By refusing to elevate any one blog or blogger above the rest, and engaging in a practice of cross-blog citationality (understood here as "sisterhood"), women of color feminist Tumblr draws upon the unique strengths of each different identity-focused blog in order to create a network which is greater than the sum of its parts.

The decentering of patriarchal models of leadership exemplifies a women of color feminist praxis. In her oral history of Chicana feminist organization the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, Maylei Blackwell describes the way that Chicana/o movement historiography has "been organized around a cosmology of male heroes that reifies the "great man" narrative and interpretive structure" (28), and which "eclipse[s] a fuller historical understanding of these social movements, especially women's participation" (Blackwell 28). If patriarchal models of leadership eclipse women's participation in social movements, decentered and diffuse movement historiographies can more accurately account for women's multi-sited participation in social movements. In addition to the historiographic intervention, a decentered and diffuse social movement — or digital space — can also empower local leaders. For instance, historian Barbara Ransby argues that the Black Lives Matter Movement's decentralized form of political organizing is "more sustainable in the long run" because the "local work allows people to take ownership of the political struggles that affect their lives" (Ransby). Rather than taking orders and looking for solutions from national leaders, decentralized movements explode the binary of hero/rank and file altogether. Similarly, women of color feminist Tumblr resists the centering of

any one voice or blog. This democratizing feminist praxis, in turn, encourages more voices and blogs to take up a role in women of color feminist Tumblr, and thus, encourages more users to actively participate in the digital network.

Articulations of subjectivity

Another textual political mode that *This Bridge Called My Back, Making Face, Making Soul,* and *this bridge called home* jointly theorize is their articulation of subjectivity: particularly, the dialectic between fragmentation across multiple different identities and the wholeness that results from acknowledging all those fragments at once. In *this bridge called home,* Analouise Keating identifies the "importance of self-naming, claiming a specific location — marked by some precise mixture of class, color, culture, gender, and/or sexuality — from which to speak" (18). Such declarations of identities occur frequently throughout all three anthologies. For example, in *Making Face*, Maria Lugones writes: "we want to be seen broken, we want to break cracked mirrors that show us in many separate, *unconnected* fragments. Soy de la gente de colores, soy mestiza, latina, porteña, indita, mora criollita, negra" (47). Here, Lugones' list of racial signifiers — "gente de colores" (people of color), "mestiza," "latina," and so on — represents the way in which Latin American women are fragmented by race and seen as "unconnected fragments." Lugones' declaration, "Soy," or "I am," before this list of racial signifiers suggests that she rhetorically identifies with each of these racial subject positions, seeing them as "unbroken" instead of through the "cracked mirrors" which fragment them.

This discursive naming of fragmented identities, and the push towards seeing them as an unbroken whole, also takes place with individual writers' named subject positions. In *This Bridge Called My Back,* Anzaldúa writes about being chopped up into fragments:

> ‘Your allegiance is to La Raza, the Chicano movement,’ say the members of my race. ‘Your allegiance is to the Third World,’ say my Black and Asian friends. ‘Your allegiance is to your gender, to women,’ say the feminists. Then there’s my allegiance to the Gay movement, to the socialist revolution, to the New Age, to magic and the occult. And there’s my affinity to literature, to the world of the artist. What am I? A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label.
>
> You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body… A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web.
>
> Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (205)

Here, Anzaldúa lays out all her different allegiances: to her Chicana/o identity, to cross-racial organizing movements, to women, to gay identity, socialism, literature, and the occult. Her succinct naming of all her identities — “a third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings” — represents both the fragmentation of her identities across so many descriptors *and* their fundamental union within her. She rejects the idea that she is “confused” or “ambivalent” and instead argues that “only your labels split me” — that the obsessive labeling of her identities, and the resultant pressure to choose one allegiance, is what makes her appear to be fragmented. Rejecting this imposed fragmentation, Anzaldúa identifies herself as a “many-armed and legged body,” a “spider woman” who deftly weaves between all of these worlds at the same time.

In a similar fashion, Renee M. Martinez in *this bridge called home* writes of this feeling of fragmentation, and of ultimately finding a way of inhabiting multiple subject positions: “One foot in the white world, the other in the Brown… one foot in middle class, the other in poverty;

one foot in a heterosexual world, the other in Lesbian/Gay… I no longer feel so torn or pulled apart. Instead I am honored to travel within and between worlds, like dancing light" (43). Here, Martinez's "traveling within and between worlds" directly rejects the demand to pledge allegiance to any one world. Indeed, like "dancing light," this travel between multiple subject positions is understood to be beautiful and natural. Thus, the articulation of identity that emerges in these anthologies is one of initial fragmentation and overextension across multiple identities, followed by a transformative reckoning with the unique strengths of inhabiting multiple identities and perspectives.

On Tumblr, identity is articulated in similar, aggregate ways. A survey of different Tumblrs and their self-articulations reveals the similarities in how Tumblr users understand their identities. For *Fuck Yeah Queer People of Color!*, the authors write: "We are queer. We are trans. We are nonbinary. We are here and creating space for ourselves." On *fuckyeahfatdykes*, the author writes that the blog's mission includes "anything and everything that affirms, celebrates and inspires my queerness, fatness, spirituality and fagdykery. The affirmation of my body is always in tandem to the affirmation of my Puertorriqueñidad." These lists of marginalized identities — queer, trans, nonbinary; queerness, fatness, spirituality, and fagdykery — borrow from and echo the discursive precedent set by women of color feminism. Naming one's identities becomes a way to step into one's unique and multiple subject position. At the same time, listing one's identities next to each other, without any particular hierarchy of importance, unites them into "unbroken fragments" rather than segmented parts of a whole. Indeed, these blog's riff off of the "f-yeah blog" phenomenon marshalls the use of playful, overenthusiastic swearing to center and celebrate the identities in question.

Even blogs whose names do not follow this formula tend to identify a particular nexus of at least two, and often three identities that they comprise — "Queers with Disabilities," "LGBTQ+ Latinos," and "Queer WOC" to name just a few. These Tumblrs not only affirm marginalized identities, but actively foreground them by listing them out. Like the anthologies, women of color feminist Tumblrs consolidate group identity through the repeated naming of specific identities, whether they be "radical women of color," as in *This Bridge Called My Back*, or *queerwoc*, a Tumblr blog. This hailing of marginalized identities speaks the blogs into existence, giving them a central topic around which to reblog content and transforming them into clearinghouses for information on particular identities. By uniting these usually disparate identities in one digital space, women of color feminist Tumblr essentially recreates Anzaldúa's "many-armed and legged body," the "spider woman" who skillfully moves between multiple worlds. Indeed, like Anzaldúa, these Tumblrs navigate multiple subject positions — not as a point of fragmentation or lack, but rather, as a point of integration and representation.

More than mere coincidence, these overlapping conceptions of identity reflect women of color feminist Tumblr's unique remediation of women of color feminist identity models. If writers from anthologies such as *Making Face* and *this bridge called home* successfully reconcile competing allegiances and identities, then women of color feminist Tumblr builds and innovates upon this theoretical and textual political model. It refracts the reconciliation of multiple identities through the lens of contemporary social media, where platform affordances — the ability to post multimedia content instantly — change the meaning and reception of this approach to identity. Where the blog *fuckyeahfatdykes* lists off the identities *queerness, fatness, spirituality, fagdykery,* and *Puertoriqueñidad* in its heading, it is in the blog's reposted content where those identities and intersections are born out. It is there where articles about Puerto

Rico's debt crisis, astrological memes, music videos by queer artists of color, and illustrations of fat women (*fuckyeahfatdykes*) meld into an associative blend of relevant material. This ever-expanding archive of content about queerness, fatness, spirituality, and Puerto Rican identity exemplifies the reconciliation of multiple marginalized identities into a diffuse, yet collective whole. Although such reconciliation itself borrows from a women of color feminist intellectual lineage, *fuckyeahfatdykes* reconciles those identities not through language and poetry, but through a patchwork curation of multimedia material that its anthological precedents could not predict or duplicate.

A crucial part of Tumblr's patchwork, curatorial aesthetic is the platforms' centering around iterative reblogging of existing content over posting original content. Rather than the anthologies, where as I have shown, editors Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and Analouise Keating strive to bring new voices to the fore through soliciting essays and poems from unpublished writers, women of color feminist Tumblr amplifies new ideas and voices through *reposting existing content*. For example, the blog *angrylatinxsunited* reblogged a photoset depicting the Nicaraguan folkloric dance, "La Vaquita de Managua," alongside a queer artistic rendition of the traditional dance with two women kissing. This post was reblogged from *reclaimingthelatinatag*, which itself was reblogged from the original artist's Tumblr page, *felixdeon* or Felix d'Eon (angrylatinxsunited). Here, the more popular Latinx blogs *angrylatinxsunited* and *reclaimingthelatinatag* use their platforms to amplify original, queer, feminist artwork to their followers. Rather than requiring individual artists to build a following, women of color feminist blogs are able to share relevant artwork with their followers, enabling a larger audience to view the artwork and its political project. This ability to share relevant art exemplifies what Carty calls this generation's "unprecedented degree of control over the

production, distribution, and consumption of information and therefore over their cultural environment" (Carty 9). One of women of color feminist Tumblr's interventions, then, is to help change the cultural landscape by circulating content. By uplifting relevant stories, images, and artwork to like-minded followers, such blogs successfully propose counternarratives and images to wide audiences online.

Blogs like *fuckyeahfatdykes, angrylatinxsunited,* and *reclaimingthelatinatag* adopt Tumblr's platform architecture to create and enact public digital identity projects: online spaces which not only represent pieces of identity, but realign them into an unfragmented whole. Thus, these blogs do not merely duplicate the earlier identity model, but actively expand it through the specific platform architectures at their disposal. This attention to the form of Tumblr as a platform results in a powerful retooling of social media towards personal and social justice.

Publics and counterpublics

This Bridge Called My Back, Making Face, Making Soul, and *this bridge called home* also share the naming and heralding of a counterpublic readership. In *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner defines a public as "a relation among strangers" (Warner 74) which exists "by virtue of being addressed" and is "organized by nothing other than discourse itself." A public is hailed into being the moment it is discursively addressed, whether explicitly -- as in an open letter addressed *to* somebody -- or implicitly, as in the academic language this chapter uses to signal its primarily scholarly audience. *Bridge*'s preface addresses one such public when it hails a group of strangers united by a shared commitment to the anthology:

> This book is written for all the women in it and all whose lives our lives will touch. We are a family who first only knew each other in our dreams, who have

> come together on these pages to make faith a reality and to bring all of our selves to bear down hard on that reality. (*Bridge*, xix)

Here, Moraga ties the book's purpose to this imagined group of women "whose lives our lives will touch," or women who find their own struggles reflected within the anthology's critiques of racism, patriarchy, and heterosexism. According to Warner, then, we can think of *Bridge*'s audience as a public which is explicitly addressed here. Importantly, there is a slippage in the identity of the subject "we" of the second sentence: when Moraga claims that "we are a family who first only knew each other in our dreams," she refers to the editors and contributors who "have come together on these pages." But since that ambiguous "we" is placed after a sentence which refers to the anthology's *public*, there is space for the reader to feel that they, too, are included in an imagined family between the anthology's contributors and its public more broadly. Thus, we see how even as the preface addresses its public and its contributors in separate sentences, there is subtle but significant rhetorical and affective overlap between both groups of people. This suggests that the anthology's public, too, might eventually be enveloped by the book's affirming and revolutionary community — if not literally, then literarily, through a reader's affective connection to the anthology's poems and narratives.

Warner's second term, *counterpublics*, follows all of the same definitions as publics with one important addition: "a counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status" and hopes "that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely" (119). The evidence of such intent is present throughout *Bridge*'s introductory materials, but nowhere more explicitly than in Moraga's preface, in which she recounts her "own journey of struggle, growing consciousness, and subsequent politicization and vision as a woman of color" and reflects upon how "this anthology and the women in it and

around it have personally transformed my life, sometimes rather painfully but always with richness and meaning" (*Bridge* xiii). Thinking of the anthology as addressing a counterpublic helps us locate not just its original intent, but also its method of addressing and implicitly helping create the counterpublic now constituted as "radical women of color." The other anthologies, too, herald a distinct counterpublic readership. In *Making Face*, Anzaldúa writes that "In addition to the task of writing… we've had to create a readership and teach it how to 'read' our work. Like many of the women in this anthology, I am acutely conscious of the politics of address" (xviii). The act of creating a readership suggests the active creation of a counterpublic: a distinct, subordinated group capable of making meaning of the anthology.

Tumblr, too, centers around its own counterpublics — or subcommunities. Writing of the connection between zines and Tumblr, Byron notes that "Tumblr offers space to say and share things that don't appear to be circulating in a wider public. Both foster connection between people who share similar feelings, experiences, and politics" (336). In a study about LGBTQ+ people and seeking mental health help, one survey respondent replied that "Tumblr is a great mental health resource. It pretty much educated me on the majority of what I know about gender, sexuality, mental health and identity" (337). As a platform that both teaches and creates a sense of community, Tumblr discursively hails counterpublics through tags (Dame) such as #lgbt, #woc, #intersectionalfeminism, and #socialjustice. These tags make it easy to sort and find information, and themselves make up a kind of community of like-minded posts and content. The #womenofcolor hashtag, for example, features images of women of color in fashion spreads, selfies from users, screenshotted political Twitter posts, and anti-racist memes. These tags constitute a "relation among strangers" which exists "by virtue of being addressed" (Warner 74), or here, by virtue of being hashtagged. But additionally, the Tumblr users who tag their posts are

aware of the hashtag's "subordinate status" such that each post is meant to be "transformative, not replicative merely" (119). Indeed, we can read the practice of multiple hashtags – "#qwoc love, #qwoc selfies, #black qwoc" (nas-aa) – as a kind of strategic repetitiveness in order to multiply locate posts. Multiple hashtags not only increase the likelihood of seeing particular posts, but also create a constellation of related signifiers. Each of these signifier-tags, in turn, hails closely related counterpublics.

However, Tumblr's profusion of counterpublics differs from women of color feminist anthologies, which explicitly hail one central counterpublic – "women of color" – while addressing multiple issues and audiences within that larger mantle. By contrast, women of color feminist Tumblr creates overlapping communities of posts which decenter the very identity of "women of color." While this dissertation argues for the significance of women of color feminist Tumblr and names it as such, the edges of such a category are always fuzzy. Is a Tumblr called "Queers with Disabilities" a part of women of color feminist Tumblr? Does it become so if its content centers on queerness and disability, but centrally takes up race and gender as well? How expansive a definition of women of color feminist Tumblr can we create before it bursts into a broader category, like "social justice Tumblr" or "intersectional feminist Tumblr?" And do such distinctions ultimately matter given the porous boundaries of social media? Women of color feminist Tumblr's loose edges and expansive definition are as much embedded in the platform's allowances as they are strategic. Users' varied hashtag practices reveal an understanding and commitment to not only interconnected systems of oppression, but also interconnected liberation struggles. For example, a blog like "Queers with Disabilities" not only joins the *representation* of queerness and disability, but also the overlapping and intersecting systems of homophobia and ableism. By hailing multiple overlapping counterpublics rather than any single one, women of

color feminist Tumblr dramatically expands the counterpublic which the anthologies before it hail.

Expanding these counterpublics has significant repercussions for women of color feminist Tumblr praxis. By decentralizing the primacy of race and gender, the network is able to link expansively to all blogs which represent marginalized social identities. This broader citational work connects blogs about all systems of oppression without ranking or prioritizing the different forms of marginalization. Furthermore, social media's fundamental open-endedness — its constantly proliferating blogs and posts — means that users can always add more blogs to address more intersections of identity, including any which have been neglected by the network. Thus, unlike the anthologies — and on a significantly faster timeline — women of color feminist Tumblr fashions itself into a self-updating, self-correcting exploration of marginalized identities online.

Furthermore, while Tumblr and the anthologies are published publicly, Tumblr remains associated with more personal and private micro-blogging practices. As Renninger argues, Tumblr bloggers often use anonymous usernames and, despite knowing that their posts are searchable online by anyone, write in an ultimately private manner. This anonymity makes users feel that Tumblr is a more personal space where they can be themselves — an anonymity that is particularly important for queer and transgender users who are not out. Published anthologies, on the other hand, are generally linked to real names, with only the occasional pseudonym (such as *Bridge*-contributor Chrystos), and are meant for highly public circulation.

Tumblr's public-private nature is important because it facilitates comfort with publishing personal or revealing information online. In a study of Tumblr as a trans technology, Haimson et. al write that "participants characterized Tumblr as an open space. By openness, we mean a safe

and comfortable place where people could reveal sensitive information, be understood, and tell secrets." This is important to women of color feminist Tumblr because it facilitates more intimate kinds of sharing — the vulnerability of submitting selfies to be posted, or in sharing one's personal reaction to new texts, as I discuss in chapter two. But it also means that Tumblr complicates the *public* part of *counterpublic*. If Tumblr users only intend their posts to be public to a perceived small, safe digital community, does this narrow their political mission? Ultimately, Tumblr blogs' weaving between the public/private digital dichotomy enables a different kind of sharing: unfiltered and earnest, compared to the polish of published writing. As a counterpublic, women of color feminist Tumblr is visible, yet vulnerable; public, yet personal. And where the anthologies create communities of readers through their circulation, Tumblr blogs create communities of participants who actively speak and share. Thus, women of color feminist Tumblr functions not just as a "relation among strangers" (Warner 74) but an active and ongoing *community* among strangers.

Conclusion and significance

Women of color feminist anthologies express themselves politically through decentralizing and democratizing writing modes. Through the form of the anthologies — multi-author, decentralized, and bringing new writers to the fore — as well as their political choices — their intentional invocation of feminist counterpublics and their articulations of subjectivity — *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Making Face, Making Soul*, and *this bridge called home* create a literary-poetic mode which is emblematic of women of color feminist politics. Women of color feminist Tumblr, in turn, manifests and expands upon this literary-political mode. It echoes the anthologies' political imperatives and expressive forms while also innovating them by

decentering the primacy of race and gender, reconciling fragmented identities through multimedia curation, and facilitating ongoing communities. Together, these overlaps and divergences importantly suggest that women of color feminist Tumblr is part of a longer genealogy of women of color feminist thought. The ability to draw upon a longer tradition while responding to the contemporary political landscape and articulations of identity suggests the vitality of women of color feminism as a framework and a reason for its popularity on Tumblr. By analyzing the formal overlaps and incongruities between these two disparate modes of "doing" women of color feminism — via Tumblr and via its foundational anthologies — we can understand its versatility and adaptability as a political framework.

WORKS CITED

angrywocunited. Tumblr, 5 April 2017, angrywocunited.tumblr.com/archive

angrylatinxsunited. Tumblr, 2 Oct 2019, angrylatinxsunited.tumblr.com/post/188091466650/felixdeon-the-folkloric-dance-of-managua

Anti-Defamation League. "What the Women's March Teaches Us about Intersectionality." Anti-Defamation League, 24 Jan. 2017.

ed. Anzaldúa Gloria. *Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*. Aunt Lute Books, 1990.

ed. Anzaldúa Gloria, and AnaLouise Keating. *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*. Taylor and Francis, 2013.

Bauer-Wolf, Jeremy. "Hate Incidents on Campus Still Rising" *Inside Higher Ed,* Inside Higher Ed, 25 Feb. 2019, https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/heres-a-rundown-of-the-latest-campus-climate-incidents-since-trumps-election/115553

Blackwell, Maylei. *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement.* University of Texas Press, 2011.

Brewer, Sierra, and Lauren Dundes. "Concerned, Meet Terrified: Intersectional Feminism and the Women's March." Women's Studies International Forum, vol. 69, 2018, pp. 49–55., doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2018.04.008.

Brown, Adrienne M. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. AK Press, 2017.

Boynton, P. (2012) Getting the press we deserve: Opportunities and challenges for innovative media practice. Feminism & Psychology 22(4): 536–540.

Cotera, Martha. "Mujeres Bravas: How Chicanas Shaped The Feminist Agenda at the National IWY Conference in Houston, 1977." *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, by Dionne Espinoza et al., University of Texas Press, 2018, pp. 51–75.

Crossley, A. (2015) Facebook Feminism: Social Media, Blogs, and New Technologies of Contemporary U.S. Feminism. Mobilization: An International Quarterly 20: 253–268.

Dame, Avery. 2016. "Making a Name for Yourself: Tagging as Transgender Ontological Practice on Tumblr." Critical Studies in Media Communication 33, no. 1: 23–37.

Dreid, Nadia and Shannon Najmabadi. "Here's a Rundown of the Latest Campus-Climate Incidents Since Trump's Election" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 13 Dec. 2016, https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/heres-a-rundown-of-the-latest-campus-climate-incidents-since-trumps-election/115553

Edwards, Brent Hayes. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2003. Print.

fuckyeaqueerpplofcolor. *Fuck Yeah Queer People of Color!*, Tumblr. fuckyeaqueerpplofcolor.tumblr.com/.

fuckyeahfatdykes. "Hard Moon Femme," Tumblr. fuckyeahfatdykes.tumblr.com/

Gebreyes, Rahel. "Women's March Organizers Address Intersectionality As The Movement Grows." Women, HuffPost, 27 Jan. 2017, huffpost.com/entry/womens-march-organizers-address-intersectionality-as-the-movement-grows_n_5883f9d9e4b070d8cad314c0.

Gerdes, Kendall. "Trauma, Trigger Warnings, and the Rhetoric of Sensitivity." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2018, pp. 3–24., doi:10.1080/02773945.2018.1479767.

"Gloria Anzaldua." Tumblr, 2019, tumblr.com/search/gloria+anzaldua.

Google Trends a, 10/29/11-11/29/19. Google, trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2011-10-29%202019-11-29&geo=US&q=safe%20space

Google Trends b, Past 5 years. Google, trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=today%205-y&geo=US&q=intersectionality

Harris, Malcolm. "What's a 'Safe Space'? A Look at the Phrase's 50-Year History." Splinter, 11 Nov. 2015, splinternews.com/what-s-a-safe-space-a-look-at-the-phrases-50-year-hi-1793852786.

Havlin, Natalie. "'To Live a Humanity under the Skin': Revolutionary Love and Third World Praxis in 1970s Chicana Feminism." WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly, vol. 43, no. 3-4, 2015, pp. 78–97., doi:10.1353/wsq.2015.0047.

Hillstrom, Laurie Collier. *The #MeToo Movement.* ABC-CLIO, 2019.

Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell-Scott, Barbara Smith. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. Feminist Press, 1982.

Jaschik, Scott. "Epidemic of Racist Incidents." *Inside Higher Ed*, Inside Higher Ed, 21 Sep. 26 2016, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/09/26/campuses-see-flurry-racist-incidents-and-protests-against-racism

magical-chloe. Tumblr, "Reblog If Your Blog Is Safe for All Members of the LGBTQ+ Community." Kate Bishop Love Bot, 4 Nov. 2016, magical-chloe.tumblr.com/post/152720939539/reblog-if-your-blog-is-safe-for-all-members-of-the.

Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.

Movement for Black Lives. "Platform," https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/.

Nagle, Angela. *Kill All Normies: the Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Washington, USA, 2017.

nas-aa. 18 Aug 2018. Tumblr, nas-aa.tumblr.com/post/177119706926/i-can-be-your-pretty-girl

Ransby, Barbara. "Black Lives Matter Is Democracy in Action." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 21 Oct. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/opinion/sunday/black-lives-matter-leadership.html.

Renninger, Bryce J. 2015. "'Where I can be myself . . . where I can speak my mind:' Networked Counterpublics in a Polymedia Environment." New Media and Society 17, no. 9: 1513–29.

Roestone Collective. “Safe Space: Towards a Reconceptualization.” Antipode, vol. 46, no. 5, 2014, pp. 1346–1365., doi:10.1111/anti.12089.

“Safe Space.” Parker, Trey, director. South Park, season 19, episode 5, 21 Oct. 2015.

Spira, T. Lea. “Intimate Internationalisms: 1970s 'Third World' Queer Feminist Solidarity with Chile.” Feminist Theory, vol. 15, no. 2, Aug. 2014, pp. 119–140., doi:10.1177/1464700114528768.

Stamper, Kory. “A Brief, Convoluted History of the Word ‘Intersectionality.’” Word Search, The Cut. 9 Mar. 2018, thecut.com/2018/03/a-brief-convoluted-history-of-the-word-intersectionality.html

Thelandersson, Fredrika. 2014. “A Less Toxic Feminism: Can the Internet Solve the Age Old Question of How to Put Intersectional Theory into Practice?” Feminist Media Studies 14 (3): 527–530.

thesagechronicles. 21 Jan 2017, Tumblr, thesagechronicles.tumblr.com/post/156199529201

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation.* Haymarket Books, 2016.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2014.

Wile, Rob. “Everything You Need to Know about the Racism Scandal at the University of Missouri.” Fusion, 9 Nov. 2015, fusion.tv/story/229493/university-of-missouri-protests-explained/?_ga=2.52829864.1818777624.1575060874-227323748.1575060874.

witchyautumns. “It’s been four years since I...” Witchy Autumns, 17 July. 2019, witchyautumns.tumblr.com/post/186348809904

womensmarchottawa2017. “Women’s March on Washington - Ottawa Solidarity,” womensmarchottawa2017.tumblr.com/

womensmarch2017stories. “Women’s March 2017 Stories,” womensmarch2017stories.tumblr.com/

Zeilinger, Julie. “College Women Sound Off on the Disturbing Sexism They Face Every Day.” *Mic*, Mic, 21 Sep. 2 2015, https://www.mic.com/articles/124284/college-women-sound-off-on-the-disturbing-sexism-they-face-every-day

CHAPTER II

Reinscribing a Women of Color Feminist Ethos Online: The Circulation of Women of Color Feminist Texts on Tumblr

"Ultimately, as all people of progressive politics do, we wrote this book for you-- the next generation, *and the next one*. Your lives are so vast before you-- you whom the popular culture has impassively termed "Millennials." But I think the women of *Bridge* would've simply called you, "familia"-- our progeny, entrusting you with the legacy of our thoughts and activisms, in order to better grow them into a flourishing planet and a just world." (xxiv)
Cherríe Moraga, November 2014, Preface to the 4th edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*

Thirty-three years and four editions after *This Bridge Called My Back*'s original publication in 1981, and tasked with introducing *Bridge* for the fourth time, Cherríe Moraga took the opportunity to invite millennials to take up the mantle of women of color feminism. But years before Moraga dedicated *Bridge* to the next generation and the next one, *Bridge* and other women of color feminist books had already become a rallying cry and an organizing node of the activist corners of a popular social media platform. Searching Tumblr for *This Bridge Called My Back, Sister Outsider,* and other women of color feminist texts reveals hundreds of posts shared

by thousands of users featuring direct quotes, comments, and photographs of those texts. How did these books find themselves digitized and re-rendered on social media? And how have they informed the emergent politics and praxes of the digital community I term women of color feminist Tumblr?

According to Adair and Nakamura, "On Tumblr, not only have hundreds of posts been written and tagged #ThisBridgeCalledMyBack, but an uncountable number of posts have taken up the woman of color ideas and reposted, questioned, debated, and taught them" amidst what they call a "a community of learners and vernacular educators" (268). While Adair and Nakamura call attention to the under- and unpaid labor networks behind *Bridge*'s circulation specifically, this chapter analyzes the circulation of multiple women of color feminist texts, as well as listicles and link round-ups. As the first scholarly engagement with Reblog Graphs, an experimental Tumblr Labs feature which depicts how posts travels across digital space, this chapter sheds new light on how users and corporations interact in the circulation of women of color feminist texts online. Finally, this chapter examines not only the mechanisms of their circulation, but user's affective responses to the texts and the role that affect plays in their circulation online. By doing so, I show how women of color feminist Tumblr navigates around more traditionally institutional forms of knowledge-circulation in order to increase access to and discussion of women of color feminist texts online.

To do this, I cite and close-read a wide sampling of Tumblr user posts engaging with women of color feminist texts. There is no generally accepted consensus within digital media studies when it comes to the citation of social media content, which threads a line between technically public content that is nevertheless not typically intended for popular consumption or academic use. Particularly for anti-racist feminist researchers, with an awareness of the power

dynamics between a credentialized researcher (no matter how apprenticed) and the anonymous user whose posts we use as evidence for arguments, this is a fraught topic (Thelandersson). For the sake of this dissertation, I have chosen not to request permission from individual users whose posts I use; instead, in an effort to give credit to users for their content, I have included their username and a link to the exact post. Should this dissertation become a manuscript, I will anonymize their posts and/or reach out to the individual users whose work I use. My hope is that this two-tiered system of citation-- full citation with credit in the dissertation, and concomitant changes towards anonymity and/or full permission for a manuscript-- productively walks the line between flexibility in research, the public/private nature of blogging and social media, and the power differentials implicit in citation and analysis.

Contemporary historical context: #BlackLivesMatter

While technically preceding the emergence of the Movement for Black Lives, the circulation of women of color feminist texts online took on a new urgency in the #BlackLivesMatter age. Black queer activists Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi began the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for killing 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. The hashtag has been used more than 100 million times to elevate the names of other African American victims of police brutality, criticize state responses to BLM protests, and organize protests against state and vigilante devastation of Black life (Jackson; Freelon; Jackon and Welles). The movement frames itself through an explicitly intersectional lens, “elevating the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people,” including women, queer and trans people, disabled and working-class people, and more (The Movement for Black Lives).

In shaping this intersectional lens, the movement's queer Black founders engage an intentional Black feminist citational practice. For instance, when Alicia Garza cites Assata Shakur's writing, she "shar[es] where it comes from, shar[es] about Assata's significance to the Black liberation movement" (Hobson, 27). In Asha Bandele and Patrisse Khan-Cullor's *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*, Khan-Cullors contrasts her inability to connect with the Bible to "the feeling of connection and spirit I feel reading Audre Lorde, whose books I carry with me everywhere," (72) and goes on to cite the personal importance of Lorde's *Sister Outsider*. Khan-Cullor's citation of Lorde, as well as Garza's intentional pedagogy around Assata Shakur's life, reveals a commitment to naming the ideological history of the Movement for Black Lives and to uplifting the work of Black feminists. This commitment to Black feminist citation is also exemplified by the Black Lives Matter Syllabus, which incorporates readings from not only BLM movement organizers, but also Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, and Audre Lorde (Roberts). Finally, the official Black Lives Matter Tumblr features posts about the history of Harriet Tubman (*blacklivesmatter, a*) as well as a post sharing Audre Lorde's quote, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (*blacklivesmatter, b*). These citational practices also correlate with the emergence of the Cite Black Women campaign, which pushes people, and especially academics, to acknowledge and center the intellectual labor and contributions of Black women (Smith).

These collective citations of Black women and contemporary movements' Black feminist roots created new urgency for the circulation of Black feminist quotes, images, and PDFs on Tumblr. Indeed, Black feminist theorists are among the most popular and well-circulated women of color feminist theorists on Tumblr. For instance, a search for Angela Davis on Tumblr reveals dozens of very highly-circulated posts, including image stills of Davis talking about the War on

Drugs from Ava Duvernay's documentary *13th* (32,000 notes, or reblogs); a quote by Angela Davis from the 2016 election night (29,000 notes); and a 1970s clip of Davis speaking about non-violence (17,000 notes). A search for bell hooks also reveals multiple well-circulated posts, including quotes from *The Will to Change* (24,000 notes) and *all about love* (24,000 notes). Finally, Audre Lorde's tagged posts include quotes with 16,000 notes and images with 5,000 notes. On a platform where a few hundred reblogs is considered moderately popular, these tens of thousands of reblogs apiece represent a groundswell of resonance with these Black feminist posts. The popularity of Black feminist posts on Tumblr suggests, in part, a response to the contextualization of the Movement for Black Lives within a larger Black freedom tradition and within intersectional feminist politics more broadly. For young people looking to understand and educate themselves about Black feminist politics, Tumblr offered a digital classroom full of Black feminist and women of color feminist posts. This contemporary political context deeply informs the circulation of Black feminist and women of color feminist texts on Tumblr.

Modes of circulation and network maps

On Tumblr, posts engaging with Black and women of color feminist texts can reach anywhere from one to over 30,000 reblogs. Such posts vary widely in their engagement with the texts: from photographs of their covers, to selfies with the books, to quotes and reading lists. Together, such posts create a wide-ranging and cumulative corpus of women of color feminist images, quotes, and PDFs.

Although women of color feminist texts can be shared on any social media platform, the particular affordances of Tumblr as a platform enable a kind of affective attachment to these texts which promote their circulation (Renninger). According to Tumblr scholars, users turn their

personal Tumblr pages into a "visible digital scrapbook, diary, or virtual bedroom space" of "material that evokes strong feelings for them" (Mccracken 154) through the acts of blogging and reblogging. In particular, reblogging images plays a central role on Tumblr, where "literal testimonial and narrative storytelling" is eschewed in favor of "the felt register of suggestive imagery" (Cho 46). Thus, highly reblogged posts tend to be both affectively suggestive and to elicit strong emotion (Sedgwick; Berlant). We see this through a post like that of user nerdquality, who writes: ""Social change does not occur through tokenism or exceptions to the rule of discrimination, but through the systemic abolishment of the rule itself." - Cherríe Moraga, "Catching Fire" Preface to the Fourth Edition of "This Bridge Called My Back" #mp #quote #cherríe moraga" ("Social change…") The selected quote here is not only politically evocative, but also pithy and aphoristic — precisely the kind of concise political expression that circulates effectively on Tumblr.

While reblogging itself is an important form of communication on Tumblr, often signaling agreement and emotional evocativeness (Mccracken), we can also direct our attention to how posts move in space once they are reblogged — that is, who reblogs which posts, and from where. One key tool to understanding a post's trajectory of reblogs is an experimental Tumblr Labs feature called "Reblog Graphs." Reblog graphs are network maps that depict how a post travels across digital space: who reblogs it, who the most influential rebloggers are, and where the post travels in cyberspace. This has proven a useful feature for analyzing high volume reblog posts, as they show researchers the exact course any given post takes in the Tumblrsphere, and this chapter is the first scholarly engagement with this tool. As reblog graphs reveal, the number of "notes," or reblogs, on each post varies tremendously: some posts are never reblogged, while many others have upwards of two hundred reblogs, and some reach into the

thousands. To follow the network of notes on any given post, but especially the most popular ones, is to peer into the ways that women of color feminist texts travel across Tumblr and into multiple counterpublic spaces therein (Warner).

One of the most popular such posts to date is a 2013 post by user b-case: it depicts a photograph of the cover of the second edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*, followed by this quote: ““the oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those boundaries.” - audre lorde, "an open letter to mary daly”” (“the oppression of women…”). As of October of 2019, it has been reposted 5,166 times, with the most recent reblog as recently as June 2019. The reblog graph, below, lets us see the virtual path of this post and how it came to have so many reblogs. Each dot represents a new user who has reblogged the post, and the lines connecting the dots demonstrate who reblogged the post from who. The bigger the dot, the more “influential” that reblog was, and the more people reblogged that reblog. When looking at a post live on Tumblr, this is a highly interactive feature which lets you click on the different dots to see the users who reblogged the post, and also allows you to see a larger and larger reblog graph. In this case, there are too many reblogs to show them all with individual dots, so the “biggest” option available is figure ii, which shows the first 527 influential reblogs.

In the first picture below, figure i, the small yellow dot towards the left-hand side of the image represents the original post by b-case. Following the green line to the right, we can see that the post is reblogged by one person, and then reblogged again, which takes us into the much larger dot with a large cluster of dots surrounding it. This post is “2 reblogs deep” -- that is, it has been reblogged twice since the original post. This post is reblogged by user ethiopienne, whose comment we can see in the bottom half of figure i: “free PDF here,” with a link to the PDF

version of *This Bridge Called My Back*. The large cluster of dots surrounding it suggests that many, many users reblogged this post -- and not only that, but that most of the post's rebloggers can trace their post back to ethiopienne's reblog. We can see this because the vast majority of the dots on the reblog graph are connected by a thin line to ethiopienne's post. Almost every post radiates out from this one. We see that the same is true in the second reblog graph, this time with many more dots, representing more of the total reblogs. The large green dot again represents ethiopienne's reblog, and the vast majority of the reblogs can be traced back to ethiopienne's.

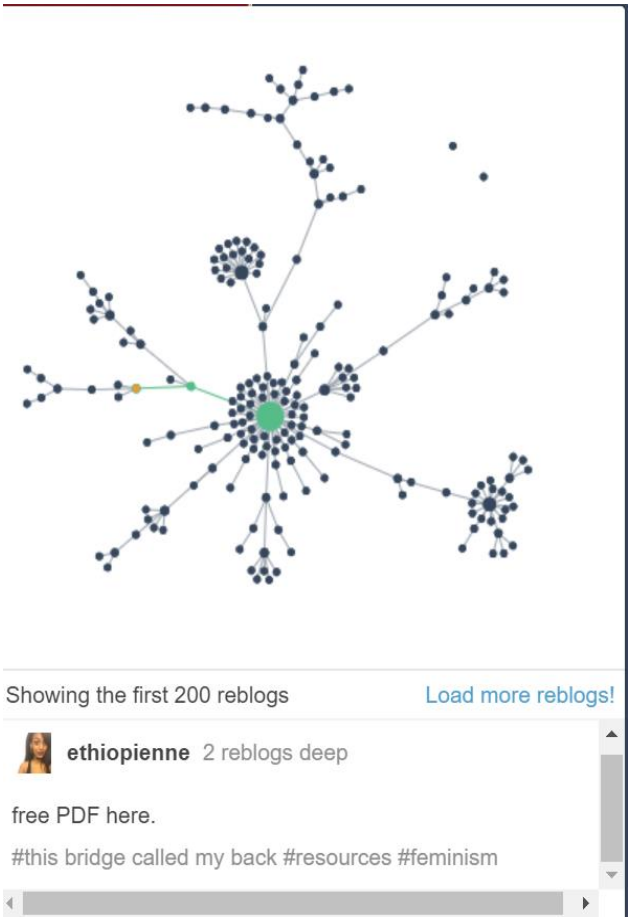

Figure ii: Reblog graph of the first 200 reblogs of the most popular #TBCMB Tumblr post.

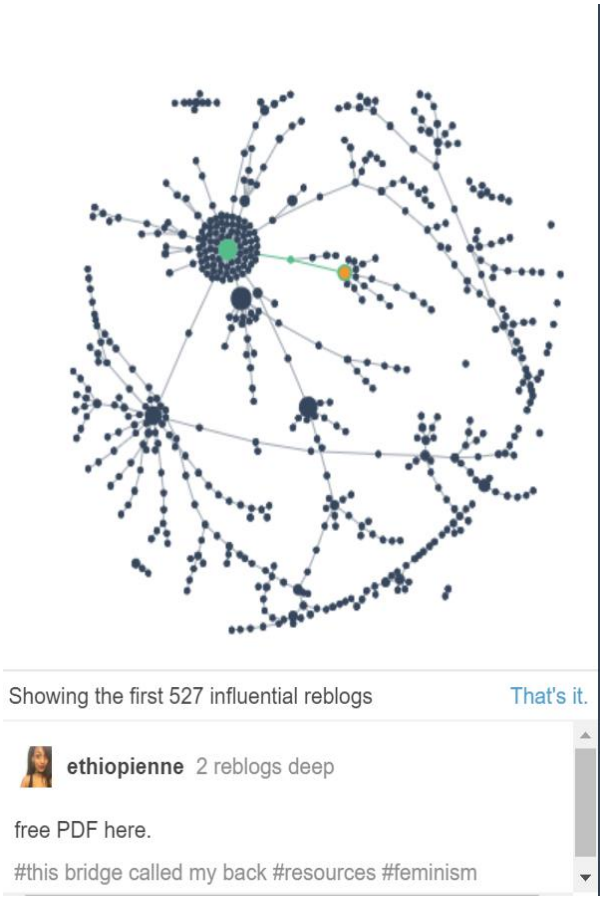

Figure ii: Reblog graph of the first 527 influential reblogs of the most popular #TBCMB Tumblr post.

Together, these reblog graphs show us that ethiopienne's reblog is the most influential. While this is partly a function of her tumblelog's popularity, it is also likely in part because she

adds value to the original post: that is, she adds a link to a PDF of *This Bridge Called My Back* in her own comment. Thus, not only does the original post with its image and quote circulate, but also ethiopienne's added link to the full and free online text of the book. The added value and rebloggability of her post suggests that engagement with the text is collaborative, with users contributing new information and resources to the original post. Indeed, many users who reblog ethiopienne's post add the tags #futurereading, #forlater, or #booktoread, indicating the importance of ethiopienne's PDF contribution. Such tags suggest a desire not only to share the post with followers, but also to bookmark the post on the user's personal Tumblr page for later reading.

Here, ethiopienne's addition of the PDF as well as other users' hashtags like #futurereading or #forlater represent a kind of digital engagement that mimics analog engagement. By adding the PDF, ethiopienne effectively transforms the original image and quote into a full-length copy that she can pass between users through the act of reblogging. And hashtags like #futurereading or #forlater represent a kind of dog-earing or post-it note: a note or self-reminder to go back and read the PDF, and a way of archiving it.

But social media affordances do not merely mimic analog practices: they actively transform them through the digital. Indeed, because Tumblr as a social media platform bridges the personal with progressive politics and subcultures (Mccracken), users are even more likely to stumble upon *Bridge* than they are to actively seek it out. On Tumblr, a *Bridge* reblog is likely to coexist with fan subculture art, cat memes, and fashion photography on a given user's timeline. Thus, Tumblr makes women of color feminist texts not only more accessible, but more *discoverable* for the average Tumblr user.

This discoverability is due in part to *Bridge* posts' adoption of Tumblr norms. For example, this *b-case* post features a combination of the most popular methods of engaging with women of color feminist texts, including an eye-catching image of the cover and an emotionally evocative quote from the book. This is significant because it shows us that in order to circulate widely, users must adopt *This Bridge Called My Back* to Tumblr's existing discursive norms. Pages of narrative exposition, while effective in their original print context, lose their salience on Tumblr. According to a study done by Microsoft, human attention span fell from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2015 — one second shorter than the paradigmatic goldfish memory (McSpadden). Thus, in order for longform texts to circulate well on Tumblr, they must be adapted to circulate on social media through the use of attention-grabbing images and concise quotations.

Second, the popularity of *ethiopienne*'s post shows that the attachment of the full text PDF of the book dramatically enhances the post's rebloggability. This, in turn, suggests that users *want* free, digital access to *This Bridge Called My Back* and that they believe that their Tumblr followers might as well. While the number of people who went on to read all or part of *Bridge* from this post is unknown, the post's popularity suggests an organic desire for free access to the book. Free access to the book became particularly important over the last several years, since up until the SUNY Press fourth edition was published in 2016, *Bridge* was out of print, rare, and prohibitively expensive to buy. As Adair and Nakamura argue, the circulation of *Bridge* PDFs on Tumblr kept *Bridge* in circulation while the print version was inaccessible. Posts like ethiopienne's constitute, then, a part of a digital women of color feminist sharing network.

Despite the prevalence of posts engaging with or sharing *Bridge*, it is far from the only women of color feminist text circulated on Tumblr. Another post, titled "radical women of color

literature, free .pdf" and reblogged almost 2,000 times, features links to complete online copies of Audre Lorde's *Zami, Sister Outsider,* and *Undersong*; Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*; Angela Davis and Neferti Tadiar's *Beyond the Frame*; bell hooks' *Selling Hot Pussy*; and Angela Davis' *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Such collections of PDFs and online copies are commonly circulated through different networks on Tumblr. The post's reblog graph shows its most popular reblogs to be from users such as *afrafemme-blog, lati-negros, fuckyeahhardfemme,* and *projectqueer.* In this case, we see how Black feminist texts circulate through both explicitly Black-focused blogs, such as *afrafemme-blog* and *lati-negros*, as well as intersectional queer blogs, such as *fuckyeahhardfemme* and *projectqueer*.

While these texts never went out of print like *This Bridge Called My Back* did, they were no less likely to circulate online than *Bridge*. Indeed, an even longer list of PDFs (*flanneryogonner*) titled "Free PDF Books on race, gender, sexuality, class, and culture" and featuring books by Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Zora Neale Hurston, and Gloria Anzaldúa, as well as *This Bridge Called My Back*, was reblogged over 98,000 times — 16 times more than the earlier two posts combined. Thus, it is not so much the text's absence in print copy that contributes to its high circulation, but rather, its recognizability online as a valuable text.

On the one hand, such PDF copies represent illegal downloads which contribute to the erasure of women of color feminist labor and basic compensation for their work (Adair and Nakamura). Indeed, the New York Times reported that copyrighted books were illegally downloaded 9 million times in the final months of 2010 alone (Rich).

On the other hand, the hundreds of thousands of reblogs that these posts have attest to the extent to which such quotes and images resonate with Tumblr users today. Through user

compilations of PDF links, photographs, and quotes, users ensure that others can freely discover and access feminist of color thought. Indeed, such user compilations represent a more horizontal form of peer-to-peer sharing than traditional classroom models, where information flows from instructor to students, and even feminist classroom models, where information is co-produced by the instructor and students. On Tumblr, instead, information travels voluntarily between peers sharing in an informal, unstructured online setting. Away from paywalls, outside of a university setting, and freed from the obligation of buying the books, users are granted unprecedented access to feminist of color thoughts, praxes, and texts.

Another important form of women of color feminist text circulation is the sharing of reading lists on which such books appear. One of the most widely circulated such reading lists on Tumblr is from a post put out by Buzzfeed Books. The post features an image composite of the covers of six books: *Colonize This! Young Women Of Color On Today's Feminism,* by Daisy Hernandez; *Redefining Realness,* by Janet Mock, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches,* by Audre Lorde, *Feminism Is For Everybody*, by bell hooks, and *This Bridge Called My Back*. Over these six covers, white bolded text in capital letters reads: "Here's what to read if you want to learn more about intersectional feminism." What follows is a listing of the aforementioned books, with one quote from each book, as well as an admonition to read "Literally anything by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989" and a link to her essay "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." This post has been reblogged 6,010 times as of October of 2019, making it the second most popular post found under the *Bridge* Tumblr search as of this date.

\

Figure iii: Screenshot of Buzzfeed Books post, "Here's What to Read If You Want to Learn More About Intersectional Feminism"

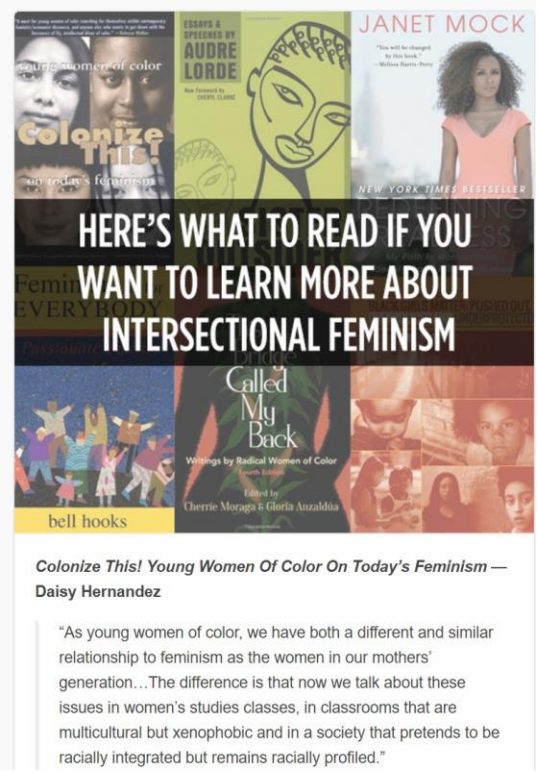

Figure iv: Reblog graph of Figure iii, the most highly shared book list featuring This Bridge Called My Back as one of its entries

Following this post's network map, we see that the most influential reblogger is Buzzfeed Books' parent company, Buzzfeed itself, which on the reblog graph, is represented by the large blue dot with the largest cluster of dots around it, at the bottom of the image. The root post by Buzzfeed books is represented in yellow, just a short distance (that is, one reblog) up from the Buzzfeed node. This means that the Tumblr representing the entire parent company reblogged the Buzzfeed Books post to its own, comparatively larger audience. Another influential reblog depicted elsewhere on the reblog graph comes from another literary press: Penguin Random House's Tumblr page adds the comment, "So good!" Buzzfeed and Penguin Random House

represent a sizable amount of the post's reblogs, meaning that they are two of the most influential reblogs.

However, despite the large size and thus influence of Buzzfeed's reblog, we can see clearly that the top half of the network map, which represents another very sizable amount of reblogs, is not connected at all to Buzzfeed. Following the straight line upwards from the root post, in yellow, we see that all of the reblogs in the top half of the map are connected to a dot roughly surrounded by a few dots that branch off to the left, and then the straight line upwards continues. In other words, the top half of the network map is traceable to the reblogs by the users directly above the root post. One reblog deep, user *wellreadblackgirl* adds, "THIS. MORE OF THIS!" Two reblogs deep, continuing up the line, user *theproblackgirl*; north of that, user lavendersisterhood, who hashtags with #domesticviolence, #abusesurvivor, and #abuse; and so on and so forth, with a considerable amount of influential reblogs coming from lavender-related or sexual abuse-related blogs and an equally considerable amount of influential reblogs coming from Tumblrs that reference, represent, and uplift Black women, such as *wellreadblackgirl* and *theproblackgirl*.

The wide circulation of the original post via Buzzfeed and Buzzfeed Books suggests that large digital media companies have an outsized effect on the dissemination of women of color feminist texts online. Indeed, Buzzfeed Books article went on to publish another reading list on Buzzfeed.com which included the original seven books, as well as other books such as *Methodology of the Oppressed*, *Black Feminist Thought*, *Women, Race, and Class*, and *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Unlike Tumblr, Buzzfeed's website does not show the exact metrics of any given post. However, the combined rebloggability of the original Buzzfeed Books post, the Buzzfeed Tumblr reblog, and then the Buzzfeed article featured on the website itself means

that the combined posts reached a wider audience than any single reading list. This is because, beyond the 5,000 reblogs on Tumblr itself, Buzzfeed takes advantage of an intra-platform network of shares — from Tumblr to Buzzfeed, and from Buzzfeed to every other social networking site. This greatly enhances the reach of any given post-- and in this case, greatly enhances the number of people who access the women of color feminist books on the reading list.

However, quite apart from a focus on digital media companies and their role in circulating women of color feminist texts, this network map is equally a story of Black feminist Tumblr and Tumblrs that support sexual abuse survivors, and the huge role these Tumblr-native and non-corporate blogs play in sharing women of color feminist books and essays. Indeed, we might see it as even *more* impressive that the top two-thirds of the reblog graph is dominated by reblogs emanating from this vertical, upward line of Black feminist tumblelogs. These Tumblr pages show a notable interconnectedness, as the ability to reblog a post depends on your *reading* the post in the first place. Thus, this reblog graph reveals a small sketch of a larger Black feminist network through which Buzzfeed Books' suggested readings on intersectional feminism, travel -- a pathway that is equally important to the quantity of reshares as their corporate counterparts, and one that represents a more grassroots approach to the circulation of women of color feminist texts. Rather than be dominated by corporate social media networks, then, we see that even women of color feminist posts initially shared by media companies are ultimately circulated widely among non-corporate networks. This is important because it is easy to dismiss Buzzfeed Books' post as a kind of clickbait pandering to progressive politics, with no connection to a larger Tumblr community. But in practice, Black feminist and sexual survivor

Tumblr networks are able to reclaim and repurpose such corporate posts for their own pedagogical uses.

A second highly circulated post, however, blurs the lines between user- and corporate-generated content. Women of color feminist Tumblr blog *Women of Color, in Solidarity* posted the Huffington Post's Latino Voices article, "11 Books By Latinas Every Feminist Should Add to their Collection" (*wocinsolidarity*). It has been shared about 2,000 times, and the original article features a range of books from different decades, including Gabby Rivera's *Juliet Takes a Breath* (2016), Michele Serros' *How to be a Chicana Role Model* (2000), Esmeralda Santiago's *Almost a Woman* (1998), and *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981). In this case, rather than a corporate Tumblr account posting its own articles, a user account has opted to post Huffington Post's list. The way the post travels, too, is largely grassroots: corporate Tumblr accounts do not appear in the post's most influential reblogs, which include user accounts like *newwavefeminism*, *angrylatinxsunited*, and *thelatinaissue*. In this case, the original poster appropriates the Huffington Post's list as a valuable resource for their Tumblr followers.

Both the Buzzfeed Books and the Huffington Post Latino Voice's posts successfully circulate women of color feminist texts on Tumblr. However, this circulation also drives revenue through third-party advertisements that users view when they click on the links. What are the implications of this uneasy alliance between women of color feminist texts, with their critiques of capitalism and corporate labor practices, and digital media companies?

On the one hand, Buzzfeed and Huffington Post gain revenue by exploiting free labor on social media. As I have shown, their reading lists of women of color feminist texts circulate widely on Tumblr through the resharing practices of ordinary Tumblr users. This labor directly increases the number of people who click on the articles, and thus, the advertisements consumed.

Christian Fuchs, following Hardt and Negri, describes this phenomenon as the "capitalist exploitation of free immaterial labor," (Jin and Freeberg) since users receive nothing in return for their labor. Indeed, although users may only have the intention to learn about women of color feminist texts when they click on such a link, users "unintentionally commodify themselves" through the process of interacting with such corporate-made reading lists.

However, to reduce the corporate circulation of women of color feminist texts to exploitation and economic gain is to ignore users' agency in reappropriating corporate content for pedagogical purposes. As Jin and Freeberg argue, despite the "dispiriting commercialism of SNSs [social networking sites] on the Internet," effective mobilizations still can and do take place online. In the case of women of color feminist reading lists, such posts build awareness of women of color feminist books regardless of where they originate. Thus, while it is "indispensable to look at the role of advertisers as well as new media platforms in the renegotiation of power relationships," (van Djick) the commodification of such posts does not preclude their utility. Monetized or not, such corporate posts represent one important way that women of color feminist texts circulate — not only on Tumblr, but on Buzzfeed and Huffington Post's websites, as well. Acknowledging this cognitive dissonance productively troubles the uncritical celebration of companies like Buzzfeed for sharing women of color feminist texts.

Reblog graphs allow researchers to track the dissemination of posts across multiple reblogs. This is particularly important for tracking the ways and means by which women of color feminist texts circulate on Tumblr. As I have shown, users selectively choose for visually impactful photographs and short, emotional quotes which circulate more effectively online. Users also add value to the original post through the addition of PDFs and other contextual material. Finally, while corporate accounts can and do contribute to the circulation of women of

color feminist texts through their vast follower networks, ultimately the texts circulate through the immaterial labor of grassroots users.

Self-reflection and Tumblr feels

Bridge functions in parallel ways online, where the networked affordances of Tumblr enable and encourage different kinds of emotional expression. Indeed, many #TBCMB original posts express emotional experiences reading *Bridge.* One user writes: "I'm reading This Bridge Called My Back for my WGS class and it's blowing my mind, fucking me up, and making my life make sense all at the same time" (*Faeriehymnal*). This comment identifies the user as a student in a women's and gender studies course reading *Bridge* for the first time as part of the class syllabus. The post elucidates several facets of the user's experience of reading *Bridge*: that it's "blowing my mind," or surprising and opening their life view in a substantial way; "fucking me up," or substantively challenging their worldview; and "making my life make sense," or putting the pieces of their lived experience together in a new and meaningful way. And according to the user, this has happened "all at the same time," producing a significant pedagogical and emotional shock which motivated the user to write about it on Tumblr. The process this user describes maps onto the kind of self-reflection that *Bridge* puts forth as part of its theory of liberation. Like the present tense of *Bridge*'s narratives, this user's comment puts us in the present tense of their rupture in consciousness. Their online reflection on the experience of reading *Bridge* in class is itself a kind of political engagement through self-reflection. Through the act of writing — itself a key tenet *Bridge* espouses — the user is able to think out loud about how reading *Bridge* has impacted their understanding of their life experiences. Indeed, other Tumblr users also write about the effect *Bridge* has on their lives: *smarilu* writes, "This book has

changed my life," while carpaydiem adds in a hashtag: "#this touched me in such a profound way when i read it" ("As so many others…"). Like the writers who retrospectively reflect on their relationship with *Bridge*, these users engage in a kind of meta-reflection on not only the content of the book, but how that content affects them. Thus, we can see how Tumblr users like this one read *Bridge* in ways that are consistent with the anthology's emphasis on political engagement via self-reflection.

Other Tumblr users express their reflections on the book in less discursive, but more enthusiastic ways. User megbits writes: "IT'S BACK IN PRINT. Or about to be in the very, very near future. Let me repeat that: *THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK* IS FINALLY BACK IN PRINT." User vivalaglamourpuss writes: "LOOK WHAT JUST CAME IN THE MAIL! l. AM. SCREAMING!" Finally, weepwillows writes: "umm who tf got me this off my wishlist?!... i've been wanting this for two semesters now/i am crying???" Rather than reflecting on how *Bridge* has changed their perspectives, these posts effusively express emotions like excitement through all-caps, exclamation points, and proclamations about (happy) crying.

To be sure, emotionally expressive posts are par for the course on Tumblr. Tumblr discourse often centers around users' self-identified emotions, where phrases such as "so many feels" and "all the feels" are commonly used. As Nakamura quips in a talk on the social media platform: "So much of Tumblr is about feelings… There's so much about crying!" Tumblr's emphasis on feelings is further quantified in an article titled "Multimodal Communication on Tumblr: "I Have So Many Feels!" In it, communication and media scholars Bourlai and Herring "manually analyzed a corpus of Tumblr posts for sentiment," using data mining and coding to understand the range and intensity of feelings communicated in multiple kinds of Tumblr posts.

Thus, Tumblr as a social media platform enables communication through particularly strong emotional displays.

But while Tumblr's discursive atmosphere may influence the effusive way users express themselves online, that atmosphere does not determine whether emotions are experienced by users. In fact, it is *Bridge* itself which enables and provokes strong emotional experiences as a part of its emphasis on self-reflection and analysis. In other words, Tumblr's affective openness as a platform merely structures the expression of emotion; it is *Bridge* which elicits the emotion itself.

Bridge elicits such emotion in part because of its emphasis on the process of political reflection and self-awareness. The book's political performance is one of process: according to its editors, *Bridge* chronicles the "first ruptures of *consciencia* where we turned and looked at one another across culture, color and class difference to share an origin story of displacement in a nation never fully home to us" (xxiv). The poems and narratives of *Bridge*, too, put us in that very moment — that very process — of rupture. Indeed, so many of its narratives are written in the present tense: "Writing this I am browner than I have ever been" (51); "I feel angry about this" (29); "In facing myself, while eliminating my self oppression, I stumble into a terrifying and isolated place" (236); "You don't question the urgency to write, to express yourselves" (176). Across these quotes, the present tense places readers on the very edge of the moment where consciousness encounters itself. That "terrifying and isolated place," that "urgency to write," and that anger signal the moment that self-reflection begins to lead to new understanding. However, the book itself is also itself the *product* of such present-tense reflections. The decision to capture these moments of consciousness-raising in an anthology is itself a choice that comes deliberately, even retrospectively, after those moments actually happen. This self-conscious

modeling of the past as if it were the present is a choice meant to elicit readers' own ruptures of consciousness. The text's staging of such ruptures encourages readers to see themselves in the text, to walk the same self-reflective paths. Thus, the book asks to be read as a map and handbook through the readers' own self-discovery process.

Indeed, scholars and readers of *Bridge* reflect just such uses of the book. M. Jacqui Alexander writes in *Pedagogies of Crossing*: "For me, *Bridge* was both anchor and promise in that I could begin to frame a lesbian feminist woman of color consciousness and, at the same time, move my living in a way that would provide the moorings for that consciousness. Neither anchor nor promise could have been imaginable without the women in *Bridge,* who gave themselves permission to write, to speak in tongues." Helen Johnson in an essay published in *this bridge called home, Bridge*'s twenty year sequel, writes: "Teaching *This Bridge* had broadened my own views" (65). Jesse Swan, also writing in that anthology, writes a "love letter to the editors" of *This Bridge Called My Back* and says, "Now, though, after reading your book for years, reading that has helped me outline some of the contours of the hate and tyranny I had childishly internalized and so directed against my mother/my self" (59). Finally, Rebecca Aanerud in the same anthology writes: "I first read *Bridge* in an Introduction to Women's Studies course in 1986. Still fresh in my memory is the excitement I felt looking at its cover and reading the titles of its entries… Consider *Bridge* now, thirteen years later and as it nears its twentieth anniversary, I am struck by how my own growth as a feminist… has been fundamentally impacted and shaped by this text" (70). These retrospective accounts reflect an intimate relationship with *Bridge* for creating a space for ruptures of consciousness: for framing a "lesbian feminist woman of color consciousness," for "broaden[ing] my own views," for rethinking the relationship with one's mother, and for "my own growth as a feminist." If *Bridge*

asks to be read as a map through the reader's self-discovery process, then these writers confirm *Bridge*'s function as precisely such a guide in their coming to consciousness as feminists. *Bridge* therefore both embodies such self-reflection and puts itself forth as a tool for further self-reflection.

The Tumblr responses to *Bridge* reflect precisely such embodied self-reflection practices. When users write that the book has changed their life, or that it has "touched me in such a profound way when i read it," ("As so many others….") they are engaged in a process of self-reflection on the book and its effects. We often try to replicate this meta-cognitive reflective practice in university classrooms: for instance, when we ask students which texts in a course impacted them the most, or which ideas challenged them the most. The difference here is that on Tumblr, such meta-reflection takes place organically. Not only that, but Tumblr users' meta-reflections take place in a low-stakes, personalized way. When a user enthuses about how they've "been wanting this [*Bridge*] for two semesters now/i am crying???," or excitedly shares, "I. AM. SCREAMING!," they are engaging in visceral reader response unhampered by the traditional decorum of a classroom or other such performative pedagogical space. The effect is to facilitate a different kind of virtual classroom space: one where the coursepack is free, the instruction is peer-generated, and the floor is open to all kinds of emotional responses.

Uncoincidentally, these tenets of Tumblr as a pedagogical space dovetail with two more of *Bridge*'s central tenets — heart and theory in the flesh. As Moraga writes, "What brought me to feminism almost forty years ago was 'heart.' Feminism allowed 'heart' to matter. It acknowledged that the oppression we experience as human beings was not always materially manifested, and that we also suffered spiritually and sexually" (xxi). Heart is closely related to theory in the flesh, defined as a theory where "the physical realities of our lives… all fuse to

create a politic born out of necessity" (19). Heart and theory in the flesh both drive toward the politicization of emotion. Rather than dismissing Tumblr users' all-caps exclamations about *Bridge* as frivolous or excessive, we see how *Bridge* itself argues for the centrality of emotion to feminist of color praxis. By grounding theory *within* the flesh, or the blood and guts experience of our lives, *Bridge* anticipates and celebrates the kind of effusive emotional displays found on Tumblr posts about it. These users' emotional posts reflect an uncensored ownership of *Bridge* and its importance in their lives. And *Bridge* locates this affective ownership within a political project which rejects mind/body binaries and encourages heart, emotion, and connection. Thus, users' use of *Bridge* as both a tool for self-reflection and a cause for unharnessed glee continue to fulfill the anthology's self-described political project.

Still, it is important to note that Tumblr readers of *Bridge* in the early 2010s are embedded within different political circumstances than readers of the book either when it came out, in 1981, or retrospecting in the 1990s, when *this bridge called home* was published — and that sociohistorical context matters for how and why *Bridge* is read in any given moment. Tumblr users sharing *Bridge* primarily did so in the middle of Barack Obama's second term as president, when colorblindness reigned as the racial ideology de jour. During this time, the U.S. did not just "passively contend that it [was] a colorblind society; it actively promote[d] its supposed colorblindness as an example of its democratic traditions and its authority to police the globe" (Taylor 4-5). Despite this supposed end of racism, scholars have shown how Black communities fared about the same or worse under the Obama presidency in terms of unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, eviction rates, HIV infection rates, and median wealth (11-12). Additionally, "conservative activists [began] using Obama's victory as an argument to scale back the enforcement of civil rights, including affirmative action and the Voting Rights

Act" (262), a phenomenon Osborn and Goode call "winning while losing" — that is, winning the White House while losing the enforcement of civil rights gains from the 1960s.

Reading *This Bridge Called My Back* in this sociopolitical context was a way of speaking back to Obama-era colorblindness. While mainstream society insisted that only a few holdover bigots practiced racism anymore, the authors of *Bridge* clamored for the recognition and abolition of continued racial and gender inequalities. Tumblr users, then, react strongly in part because they see their contemporary experiences reflected in the world painted by *Bridge* in 1981. This felt continuity over time across multiple presidencies and decades of sociopolitical change directly defies colorblindness as an ideology. After all, if the Obama presidency had truly solved inequality in the United States, then Tumblr users would not connect so deeply with *Bridge*'s political analysis of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Instead, the felt continuity between the racism in *Bridge* and the contemporary experience of racism shows how racism had not disappeared, but rather, shifted over time. Thus, while Tumblr users might read *Bridge* as a tool of self-reflection, as did prior generations of readers, their experience is also refracted through the lens of their contemporary moment and its own political exigencies.

Incredibly, this is but a small sample of the full realm of PDFs, images, and quotes from women of color feminist texts on Tumblr. But what I have shown is that women of color feminist texts circulate on Tumblr through corporate posts and grassroots networks alike, as well as through highly emotional displays and through the iconization of highly cited feminists of color such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Angela Davis, and Assata Shakur. The free online circulation of women of color feminist thought is not without issues. In particular, we must note the uncomfortable irony that the women of color who wrote the books are not compensated for their labor, while their writing drives traffic and revenue to the social media companies they circulate

on. Nevertheless, it is unproductive to reduce the circulation of women of color feminist texts on Tumblr to the realm of the purely exploitative. The earnestness with which Tumblr users read, share, and write about women of color feminist texts gives the books new life online, where they can reach many more people than would otherwise be possible. Thus, women of color feminist Tumblr creates its own unique digital classroom space.

WORKS CITED

Aanerud, Rebecca. "Thinking Again: *This Bridge Called My Back* and the Challenge to Whiteness" *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation,* Taylor and Francis, 2013, pp. 69–76.

Adair, Cassius and Lisa Nakamura. "The Digital Afterlives of *This Bridge Called My Back*: Woman of Color Feminism, Digital Labor, and Networked Pedagogy." *American Literature*, vol. 89, no. 2, June 2017, pp. 255–278.

"As so many others…" *carpaydiem.tumblr.com,* Carpaydiem. 2017, Web.

Berlant, Lauren Gail. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2012.

Blacklivesmatter, "The master's tools…" Black Lives Matter Tumblr. Jul. 23, 2013.

Blacklivesmatter b, "September 17th 1849: Tubman escapes" Black Lives Matter Tumblr. Sep. 17 2013

Blake, Aaron. "Ranking the Media from Liberal to Conservative, Based on Their Audiences." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 21 Oct. 2014, Web.

Bourlai, Elli, and Susan C. Herring. “Multimodal Communication on Tumblr: ‘i Have so Many Feels!".” *Proceedings of the 2014 ACM Conference on Web Science - WebSci '14*, 2014, pp. 171–175.

Clayton, Tracy. “19 Books On Intersectionality That Taylor Swift Should Read.” *BuzzFeed*, Buzzfeed, 23 July 2015. Web.

Cho, Alexander. “Queer Reverb: Tumblr, Affect, Time.” *Networked Affect*, 2015, pp. 43–58., doi:10.7551/mitpress/9715.003.0005.

Dame, Avery. 2016. “Making a Name for Yourself: Tagging as Transgender Ontological Practice on Tumblr.” Critical Studies in Media Communication 33, no. 1: 23–37.

Dionísio, Pedro, et al. “Piracy Among Undergraduate and Graduate Students.” *Journal of Marketing Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2013, pp. 191–200., doi:10.1177/0273475313491578.

Dijck, José Van. “Users like You? Theorizing Agency in User-Generated Content.” *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2009, pp. 41–58., doi:10.1177/0163443708098245.

Dunn, Jeff. “Facebook Totally Dominates the List of Most Popular Social Media Apps.” *Tech Insider*, Business Insider, 27 July 2017, Web.

Fink, Marty, and Quinn Miller. 2014. “Trans Media Moments: Tumblr, 2011–2013.” Television and New Media 15, no. 7: 611–26.

Flanneryogonner. Free PDF Books on race, gender, sexuality, class, and culture. 11 January 2013. Tumblr.

Freelon, Deen Goodwin, Charlton D. McIlwain, and Meredith D. Clark. *Beyond the Hashtags: #Ferguson, #BlackLivesMatter, and the Online Struggle for Offline Justice*. Washington, DC: Center for Median and Social Impact, School of Communication, American University, 2016. Print.

Garza, Alicia. "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement." *Feminist Wire*. 7 Oct. 2014. Web. 5 July 2016.

"Hello, I was wondering…" *profeminist.tumblr.com*, Profeminist, Aug 28, 2017, Web.

"Here's What to Read If You Want to Learn about Intersectional Feminism." *buzzfeedbooks.tumblr.com*, Buzzfeed Books, 1 Feb. 2016, Web.

Hobson, Janell. *Are All the Women Still White?: Rethinking Race, Expanding Feminisms*. State University of New York Press, 2017.

"IT'S BACK IN PRINT." megbits.tumblr.com. Megbits. Web.

Jackson, Sarah J., and Brooke Foucault Welles. "#Ferguson Is Everywhere: Initiators in Emerging Counterpublic Networks." *Information, Communication, and Society* 19.3 (2016): 397–418. Print.

Jin, Dal Yong, and Andrew Feenberg. "Commodity and Community in Social Networking: Marx and the Monetization of User-Generated Content." *The Information Society*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2014, pp. 52–60., doi:10.1080/01972243.2015.977635.

Johnson, Helen. "Bridging Different Views: Australian and Asia-Pacific Engagements with *This Bridge Called My Back*." *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, Taylor and Francis, 2013, pp. 62–68.

Khan-Cullors, Patrisse, and Asha Bandele. *When They Call You a Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir*. Canongate, 2017.

"LOOK WHAT JUST CAME…" vivalaglamourpuss.tumblr.com. Vivalaglamourpus. Web.

Lothian, Alexis. "Queer Geek Methodologies: Social Justice Fandom as a Transformative Digital Humanities." Digital Studies Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop, 30 March 2017, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. Public talk.

McSpadden, Kevin. *You Now Have a Shorter Attention Span Than a Goldfish*. Time, 14 May 2015, time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/.

Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.

Nakamura, Lisa. "The Digital Afterlife of *This Bridge Called My Back*: Woman of Color Theory and Activism on Social Media." Digital Inflections: Visions for the Posthuman Future. Victoria, University of Victoria.

Oakley, Abigail. 2016. "Disturbing Hegemonic Discourse: Nonbinary Gender and Sexual Orientation Labeling on Tumblr." Social Media + Society 2, no. 3: 1–12.

Pérez, Domino Renee. "New Tribalism and Chicana/o Indigeneity in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa ." *Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*, Oxford University Press, 2020.

Renninger, Bryce J. 2015. "'Where I can be myself . . . where I can speak my mind:' Networked Counterpublics in a Polymedia Environment." New Media and Society 17, no. 9: 1513–29.

Rich, Motoko. “Report Says 9 Million Books Pirated Online.” *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)*, 15 Jan. 2010.

Roberts, Frank Leon. “‘We Could Be Free’: (Fall 2017 Course Version).” *Black Lives Matter Syllabus*, 2017, www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com/black-lives-matter-fall-2017/.

Safronova, Valeriya. 2014. “Millennials and the Age of Tumblr Activism.” New York Times, December 19. Web.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Smith, Christen A. “Cite Black Women.” *Cite Black Women*, 2018, www.citeblackwomencollective.org/.

“Social change…” *nerdquality.tumblr.com.* Nerdquality. May 16, 2017, Web.

Swan, Jesse. “Bridges/Backs/Books: A Love Letter to the Editors.” *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, Taylor and Francis, 2013, pp. 59-61.

“the oppression of women…” *b-case.tumblr.com.* tomato sandwiches. Feb. 18, 2013, Web.

Thelandersson, Fredrika. “Tumblr Feminism: Third-Wave Subjectivities in Practice (MA Thesis 2013).” *Academia.edu, New York University*, 2013, Web.

“this bridge called my back,” carriemurph.tumblr.com, Carrie Murphy, 8 Dec 2012, Web.

“umm who tf…” weepwillow.tumblr.com. Weepwillow. Web.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2014.

Wocinsolidarity. “11 Books By Latinas Every Feminist Should Add To Their Collection.” Wocinsolidarity. Web.

CHAPTER III

Where Born-Print and Born-Digital Collide: Writing 1970s and 1980s Women of Color Feminist Coalition Theories into Contemporary Feminist Praxis on Tumblr

I remember that February nearly four years ago, watching the late night news, during the eighteen days of revolt in Tahrir Square, scanning the faces of protesters, searching for visual signs of *sisters* amid the fervent masses of men. I spy the hijab; swatches of dark fabric and multi-colored pastel blend among the hundreds of thousands. I press my ear to an Al Jazeera radio broadcast, "Hosni Mubarak steps down!" And I hear a woman's voice, "I have worked for this my whole life." She is crying and I am crying because her victory is mine. To view the world today through a feminist of color lens shatters all barriers of state-imposed nationality. *The Egyptian revolution is my revolution!* (xvi Moraga)

Since the terms *Third World women* and *women of color* were first theorized by racialized women in the United States, they have evoked a politics of cross-racial coalition and of "yearning for each other's company" (Alexander 91) as women of color—of habitually "scanning the faces of protesters" for "*sisters* amid the fervent masses of men" (Moraga). In the preface to the fourth edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherríe Moraga's "feminist of color lens" enables her to bridge the chasm not only of "state-imposed nationality" between herself

and the Egyptian activist on the radio, but of geographic distance, of race and ethnicity, and of formerly colonized nations to global imperial centers. We can mine the complexities of such a moment: Moraga's scintillating feeling of connection is framed as a sort of revolutionary solidarity, yet the Egyptian woman's voice is limited by its framing as a far away voice with no further speech. Moraga's Western-derived framework, then, risks an imperializing collapse of difference: an assumption of easy solidarity where third world women stand in as objects rather than people who can speak back to Moraga's assumptions. Nevertheless, Moraga's hopeful claim for a felt alliance between women of color around the globe intervenes in a myopic, Western-based feminism which fails to address the global interconnectedness of imperialism, autocracy, and liberation struggles. Thus, Moraga's take on the Egyptian revolution represents an idealistic, complex internationalist feeling-action enabled by a feminist of color lens.

This feminist of color lens, capable of creating felt alliances between different women both in the U.S. and internationally, was first theorized and honed in the 1970s and 1980s. In organizations like the Third World Women's Alliance and anthologies like *This Bridge Called My Back*, a body of writing emerged that might be understood as women of color feminism's *coalition theories*, or those writings which reflect upon the possibilities and perils of differently racialized women coming together, *cara a cara*, to listen, learn, and build alliances based on mutual understanding and a deep sense of our interconnectedness. From Bernice Johnson Reagon's coalition politics to Gloria Anzaldúa's mundo zurdo; and from Analouise Keating's "politics of interconnectedness" to Toni Cade Bambara's faith in our ability to "sit down with trust and break bread together," (Anzaldúa and Moraga, xxix) these feminists theorize what it would mean for women of color to not only come together, but to deeply listen to one another and to build a politics of solidarity from that place of deep listening.

Such an interracial and internationalist feminist of color lens has even more purchase in today's digitally connected world. Profound advancements in the internet and other mobile technologies connect those who can access such technology with unprecedented speed and ease. On the other hand, the acceleration of climate change and other global calamities continues to reveal the interdependent and vulnerable nature of our existence on the planet, and particularly, the uneven distribution of precarity across fault lines of power. Public discourse about these connections and fault lines increasingly takes place on social media, where access to platforms and the shareability of content promotes a somewhat more grassroots media model through the circulation of viral text, images, and hashtags. Among such viral content, social justice issues have recently taken center-stage as hashtags-turned-movements such as #OccupyWallStreet, #BlackLivesMatter, and #MeToo blaze through long-standing public silence on issues like class inequality, white supremacy, Black freedom, and sexual violence. Women of color feminists have themselves sparked many of these national and international conversations — Black women founded #BlackLivesMatter ("Our Cofounders") and #MeToo ("Me Too Movement") — as well as carved space within existing conversations. They have publicly tackled a diverse range of issues, from critiquing white mainstream feminism (Desmond-Harris) to analyzing Supreme Court cases (Matos), pop culture (McKenzie), and reproductive justice (Flores) through the lens of women of color's experiences of marginalization.

On Tumblr, college-age feminists are building digital spaces by and for women of color that explicitly hearken back to women of color feminist writings from the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, they are challenging, expanding, and retheorizing women of color feminist constructions of solidarity in virtual space. Armed with the writings and vision of their feminist of color foremothers, women of color on Tumblr make brilliant use of social media technology and a

cross-platform social justice culture to break down and build new feminist of color lenses for their contemporary sociopolitical and technological context. Their work actively builds the capacity and potential of a new generation to embody and reimagine Moraga's feminist of color solidarity with the Egyptian revolution through new feminist praxes that emerge from their internet-oriented and highly accessible online labor.

In this chapter, I analyze the Tumblr blog *wocinsolidarity* both to show how young feminists of color forge relationships with women of color feminist thought online and to analyze the praxes of solidarity that emerge from their work's new digital context. By understanding how a new generation of feminists translates feminist of color writings from the 1970s and 1980s into their contemporary political context and into internet discursive norms — a kind of theory in the [digital] flesh — we can better understand how Tumblr users are sustaining and transforming women of color feminism today.

A context of invisibility

Created in March of 2013, *wocinsolidarity* or Women of Color, in Solidarity, emerged as one of a growing number of feminist and feminist of color social media accounts, blogs, and websites. *Women of Color, in Solidarity* pushes back against the underrepresentation and distortion of women of color in film, TV, music, and more by centering women of color, not as sexual objects, but as writers, actresses, models, politicians, activists, and more. As a digital space for women of color "wanting to celebrate their own culture" and "coalition-build[] among WoC," *Women of Color, in Solidarity* draws deeply from the historical legacy of women of color feminism. From its name, which evokes a coming together of women of color, to its mission statement, "*Because we're tired of the bullshit, and needed a space just for us,*" the blog evokes

the need to temporarily separate from the larger mainstream and build capacity from within. In essence, this blog articulates the need, possibility, and value of women of color coming together in solidarity: a process Anzaldúa and Moraga describe as "a positive affirmation of the commitment of women of color to our own feminism" (xliv). Like *This Bridge Called My Back*, which created a revolutionary space that decentered whiteness by speaking to the connections between women of color, *wocinsolidarity* creates a digital space for women of color to read about and speak to one another.

Women of Color, in Solidarity reblogs content about women of color in the United States and internationally. Part of a larger network of social justice and identity Tumblrs, *Women of Color, in Solidarity* posted daily and reached 27,000 followers by 2018. In addition to a high number of followers, the blog also achieved recognition as a hub of feminist information. The Tumblr staff's official 2017 International Women's Day post, which recognized feminist activists like Dorothy Height, Marsha P Johnson, and Alice Paul, also recognized *Women of Color, in Solidarity* as a "good activist blog[] to follow" (Tumblr staff, 2017).

Wocinsolidarity defines itself as a "safe space and living archive" created for "anyone who identifies as a Woman of Color": one which aims to "celebrate WoC, teach the histories of marginalized people, boost current events and modern struggles, and push ourselves and our followers in our critical thinking" (Wocinsolidarity, a). In addition to reblogging content about women of color, it reblogs about race, gender, and sexuality more broadly, as well as other identities like fatness, disability, and undocumented status. *Women of Color, in Solidarity*, like other Tumblrs, also reblogs a rich diversity of multimedia: articles and op-eds are posted alongside photos, infographics, Twitter screenshots, gifs, and memes. Photosets of Japanese lesbian writer, Nobuko Yoshiya (Wocinsolidarity, b) sit next to interviews with French

Afrofeminist organization, the Mwasi Collective (Wocinsolidarity, c); and photography by queer Chicana artist Laura Aguilar (Wocinsolidarity, d) hovers just above an article centering Black sex workers in the Movement for Black Lives (Wocinsolidarity, e). As a digital space, *wocinsolidarity*'s expansive breadth of posts makes it feel as much like a Tumblr as a women of color feminist library: one where it is easy (and delightful) to lose yourself in the richness of the content and the feeling of both representation and safety that the blog aims to create.

While increasing the representation of women of color online is only one part of online feminists of color's work, such an emphasis should come as no surprise, for such representation actively resists and critiques limiting narratives and stereotypes about women of color in traditional media. In the University of Southern California's 2016 Comprehensive Annenberg Report on Diversity in Entertainment, researchers found that while representation in film, broadcast, cable, and streaming roles was disproportionately small for both white women and people of color, the numbers were even worse for women of color. While barely over a quarter (28.3%) of all speaking roles went to people of color, women of color played only about a third of this already small sliver. Moreover, while women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds were found to be disproportionately sexualized relative to men, these numbers were particularly high for Latinas and "other" women, which included mixed-race women. Finally, when researchers sorted representation by age, they found that "underrepresented females are largely invisible from 40 years of age forward in film, television, and digital series" (Smith et. al 9). This simultaneous invisibilization — especially their near-lack of representation as middle-aged or elderly — and oversexualization results in both a lack of proportional representation and a severe skewing of representation where it does exist in TV and film. Thus, online feminists of color fill

in crucial gaps and absences for women of color through representing women of color and critiquing their absence or marginalization.

But *Women of Color in Solidarity*'s work extends past representation: it also reconceptualizes feminist of color frameworks for digital spaces and non-academic audiences. In doing so, it models how feminist content can be translated to circulate readily and widely online, in spaces that reach beyond the traditional boundaries of our feminist classrooms and scholarship. *Women of Color, in Solidarity* does this translation work through citation, engagement with theoretical debates, and reconceptualizing current political events through feminist of color frameworks.

Citing feminist of color coalition theories

Women of Color, in Solidarity explicitly and intentionally cites American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Chicana/Latina feminist histories. As part of its injunction to "teach the histories of marginalized people" (Wocinsolidarity, a), the blog frequently reblogs posts about women of color activists across multiple movements. The posts span from informative — such as quotes from Grace Lee Boggs and biographies of Dolores Huerta (Wocinsolidarity, f, below) — to more evocative and humanizing, such as black-and-white photos of Gloria Anzaldúa (Wocinsolidarity, g) or selfies of Janet Mock with bell hooks (Wocinsolidarity, h, below). Writers and activists like Assata Shakur, Winona Laduke, Ella Baker, Cherríe Moraga, Toni Cade Bambara, Audre Lorde, Merle Woo, and Chrystos have their own tags, and each of these posts generate dozens (and sometimes hundreds) of likes and reblogs. These posts rely heavily on image and photography, which are crucial not only because of Tumblr's image-heavy interface, but because they can connect users to the flesh-and-blood humans behind social

movements. Whether it is through a photograph as humanizing as a smiling selfie between Janet Mock and bell hooks (left), or as powerful as a young Dolores Huerta beside a United Farm Workers poster (right), these posts capture attention and draw users into the substance of each post. Moreover, they literally provide representation through thousands of images which affirm the presence and reality of women of color feminism.

Figure v: Selfie of Janet Mock and bell hooks. (Wocinsolidarity, h)

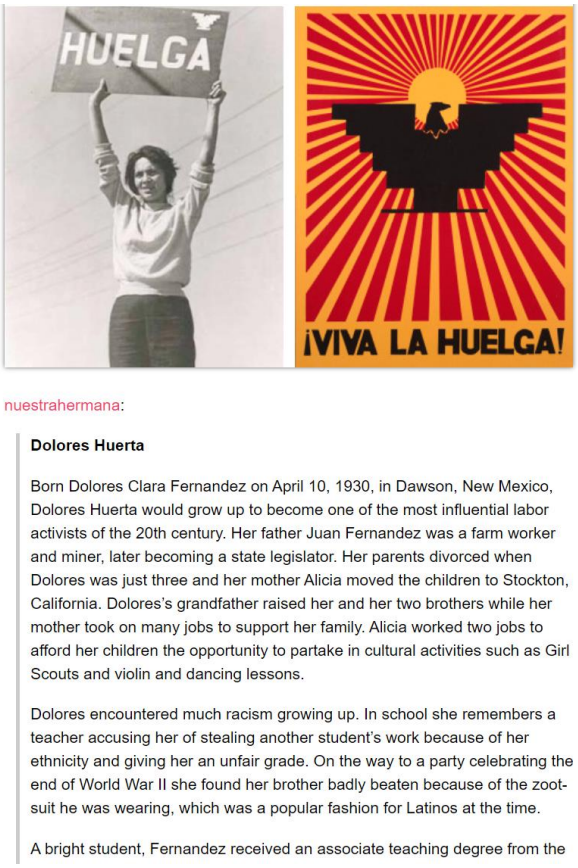

Figure vi: An image of Dolores Huerta protesting; a protest screenprint that reads "Viva la Huelga!"; and biogrpahical information on Dolores Huerta. (Wocinsolidarity, f)

Citations of such images and posts fulfill multiple purposes. First, they recirculate an older generation's canon of women of color activists, likely introducing many followers to these women's work for the first time. The blog offers itself up as a pedagogical space where followers can learn about women of color activists without needing access to academic publications or

college classrooms. Indeed, Tumblrs like this act as a kind of digital classroom, connecting users to long histories of activism that they may not have been previously exposed to. Thus, followers can use the blog to supplement their existing knowledge and to search for more information about histories and people they have not encountered before. Further, they have the option to reshare the posts to their own Tumblr blogs, continuing the chain of online education as users share posts with their own followers, who share them with their followers, and so on. Such posts are passed around networks of users who then benefit from the shared knowledge.

A second purpose such citations fulfill is to anchor *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s own activist mission within a longer lineage of activism. Reblogging posts about women of color activists pays homage to the radical people and frameworks which laid the foundation for the blog's own exploration of radical women of color feminist politics. This importantly marks the continuity in their political projects: *Women of Color, in Solidarity* identifies itself, not as the first, but as part of a greater network and history of women of color, in solidarity. In doing so, the blog identifies its intellectual genealogy while giving followers the tools to learn their own histories, as well. Thus, the labor behind reposting quotes, images, and autobiographical information about these women is as much intellectual as it is archival: it anchors *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s own emergent politics in a longer lineage of activists, revealing shared ancestors through decades of women of color feminist work. What emerges is a true grappling with the politics of citation, one which enables *wocinsolidarity* to self-consciously build and trace a herstory *of* women of color, in solidarity through lineages of thinkers and fighters. Such a move combats the invisibilization of women of color's activist interventions and accomplishments – a form of theft that still happens today as movements hit the mainstream (Garza). By inserting women of color feminist history in digital spaces which were not intended

for that purpose, *Women of Color, in Solidarity* shapes the sharing and reception of these activist histories online.

Such self-conscious genealogy-building has roots in women of color feminist praxis. Maylei Blackwell describes how early Chicana feminist organization the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc deployed "retrofitted memory" as "a form of countermemory" that collected and recovered untold herstories of Mexican and Mexican-American women's activism, reintegrating them where they had been erased from the larger historical record. According to Blackwell, such herstories were not merely recuperated, but "retrofitted into new forms of political subjectivity that may draw from one historical or geographic context to be refashioned in another" (2). We can understand the work of *Women of Color, in Solidarity* as a form of retrofitted memory: one which retrofits older feminist histories through not only citation, but the active translation of such feminist histories into forms that circulate on Tumblr. By posting photographs, biographical information, and quotes, the blog refashions women of color feminist history into a set of social movements, actions, and people that resonate in the contemporary moment. Such a "radical act of re-membering" (11) forges a new historical record which centers women of color activism in the larger fight against injustice.

Despite the potential benefits of citing these activist histories online, it is also important to question the mode in which they are cited. Although I have spent much of this dissertation extolling the virtues of peer-to-peer online learning via Tumblr, such forms of circulation can miss important contextualizing information. For instance, Audre Lorde's warning that "[y]our silence will not protect you" is one of dozens of her frequently circulated quotes on Tumblr. But how do these words signify when divorced from the larger context of her essay, "The

Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," where the statement originates? Indeed, the essay goes on:

> But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences. And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength and enabled me to scrutinize the essentials of my living. (Lorde 41)

Not only does silence does not protect us, Lorde argues, but daring to speak actually *connects* us to one another – itself a form of protection. But the excerpted Tumblr quote stops short of this connection to a larger community, feeling of solidarity, and shared sense of struggle. Indeed, speaking has the potential to protect us even when we are at the "risk" of being "bruised or misunderstood" (40). Without this greater context, the Tumblr quote risks collapsing "silence" into an individualist struggle against society – *my* speech versus society's silence – rather than a communal march towards dignity for all. Without the larger context of the essay, Lorde's injunction can be misinterpreted – indeed, weaponized against those who must choose temporary silence out of necessity.

Given this potential for a warping of the original message, we ought to pause and ask: Is women of color feminist political thought served by being circulated in short snippets, devoid of context? What are the consequences of such surface-level engagement for activist praxis? The circulation of Tumblr quotes does not automatically result in a deeper commitment to women of color feminist *study*. Given this, such disembodied quotes run the risk of being evacuated of their most radical implications.

Translating coalition theories into Tumblr speak and theoretical praxis

Another way that *Women of Color, in Solidarity* translates women of color frameworks onto social media is by grappling with the tensions of women of color feminism. The term *women of color* was mobilized throughout the 1970s and 1980s as a cross-racial, coalitional identity to build solidarity among American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Chicana/Latina women in the United States and internationally. One of its constituent tensions is an understanding of women of color's similar positioning in U.S. white supremacist imperialist patriarchy, on the one hand, and their different and specific experiences of racialization, on the other hand (Keating; Sandoval). Women of color feminist frameworks, therefore, prioritize self-reflection, difference, and the constructedness of women of color as a political identity (Anzaldúa and Moraga).

Women of Color, in Solidarity foregrounds this tension in its Frequently Asked Questions page. The blog's answer to its first question — "Who counts as a Woman of Color?" — succinctly guides readers through women of color feminist coalition theories (Wocinsolidarity, i). Moderators Aiesha, Jennifer, and Attanya write: "First things first: 'Woman of color' is not a biological determiner. It is both a ethnopolitical and a sociopolitical identity." In other words, the identity woman of color is not prescribed by one's DNA or racial ancestry, but rather, is a political choice rooted in one's lived experience. They contextualize this articulation through reproductive justice activist Loretta Ross's account of the birth of the term "women of color" at the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, as well as further language on "the important possibility of coalition building" from ethics scholars Nikki Young and Robyn Henderson-Espinoza. The moderators end their FAQ answer with a quote from Afro-Caribbean lesbian feminist scholar M. Jacqui Alexander: "TLDR: 'We are not born women of color. We

become women of color.'" These citations emphasize the term's history as a grassroots coalitional identity, its constructedness as a political (rather than biological) identity, and its injunction to build solidarity between dissimilar groups of people. Through this FAQ answer, the moderators not only offer a rich interpretation of women of color feminist coalition theories, but they actively align the blog's work with the history of activist coalition-building amongst women of color. In effect an extension of their citational work throughout the blog, this FAQ answer bridges generations of feminist work to bring these coalition theories into the digital present of wocinsolidarity's political project. Their emphasis on the constructedness of the identity and its emergence in a particular historical moment, as a particular expression of solidarity, emphasizes nuance, context, and citation. Foregrounding the tension between solidarity, difference, and critique here is significant. Capturing this dynamic in a public, online space and in clear language broadens its audience reach significantly. It crystallizes complex ideas into readable soundbytes; draws together source material across several authors and fields of study; and offers a cohesive political framework for the blog's curation and collection.

Furthermore, we can understand the feminist labor of this FAQ answer as an embodied praxis inspired by the very theories they engage. For instance, their citation of feminist foremothers is not merely a reproduction of information available in print mediums, but an act of translation into digital terms, mediums, and significations. Indeed, each part of their FAQ answer contains a digitally mediated reference point: their Loretta Ross citation is actually a link to a YouTube video of her speaking at the Western States Center; their quotation of Young and Henderson-Espinoza links to an original post which cites their text at length and includes the moderators' further elaboration on it; and their citation of M. Jacqui Alexander links to the blog's repost of a longer excerpt from her essay. By peppering their answer with links to

YouTube videos and short excerpts found elsewhere on the blog, this FAQ answer does more than reiterate women of color feminist theory verbatim: it synthesizes and translates it. Their multimedia and excerpted approach to citing theorists meets the discursive norms of Tumblr as a mode of digital writing — they translate complex theory into something people on Tumblr will actually read. Concise and accessibly written, with textual and video entry-points for further reading, the post presents not only a definition of "woman of color," but an invitation to read and listen further. Moreover, its casual reference to internet slang like TLDR ("too long; didn't read") deflates the potentially intimidating edge of academic language like ethnopolitical with the cheekiness of Tumblr's typical discursive realm. We might argue that the moderators are simply doing what any good writer does: speaking to their audience. In this case, though, that requires a self-conscious transformation of the original texts into language and forms that make sense on Tumblr. This translation work not only makes their claims more effective for their audience, it embodies the spirit of readability and accessibility that permeates much of women of color feminist writing. Here, then, *wocinsolidarity* aligns itself in theory and in practice with a women of color feminist intellectual genealogy.

This translation into internet discursive norms can be seen as a translation of women of color feminist conceptions of theory and practice into the digital realm. In the 1990 anthology *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, the question of theory — how it's defined, how it sounds, and who can claim and reclaim it — is central. Both Gloria Anzaldúa's introduction and Barbara Christian's classic essay "The Race for Theory" (re-published in the anthology) take up the question extensively. Their essays reject not only academic theory's disembodied abstraction and purported objectivity, but also how by 1990, theory had become "a commodity which helps determine whether we are hired or

promoted in academic institutions— worse, whether we are heard at all" (Christian 1990, 335). According to Tey Diana Rebolledo's essay in the same volume, this commoditization partly resulted from an "internaliz[ation of] the dominant ideology" where theory was "constructed as a superior form of logic" — one with the sole power to pronounce "our literature and our cultural practices...as 'legitimate'" within the "traditional academic canon" (Rebolledo 1990, 348). For all its deconstructive dexterity, then, theory had become yet another gatekeeping arbiter of institutional and social power.

However, according to Anzaldúa, "what is considered theory in the dominant academic community is not necessarily what counts as theory for women-of-color." She proposes instead an alternative framework, arguing that "by bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorizing space" (Anzaldúa 1990, xxv). Asserting that "'high' theory does not translate well" to mass audiences, Anzaldúa explicitly calls for us to "de-academize theory and to connect the community to the academy" (xxvi) by expanding what counts as theory. Like other women of color, Anzaldúa's intention here is to call forth a critical revisionining of the project and purpose of theory (see also hooks). Like Cherríe Moraga's earlier conceptualization of theory in the flesh, "where the physical realities of our lives… all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity," (Anzaldúa and Moraga 2015 [1981], 19), Anzaldúa calls for theories based on experience over abstraction, and on the *application* of theory to the "physical realities of our lives." This emphasis on praxis revises the imagined subjects of theory and calls for theorizations through lived experience and accessible language.

Within the context of this theoretical tradition, then, *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s FAQ answer to the question "Who counts as a woman of color?" draws directly upon that legacy. By citing and reposting women of color feminist theories on Tumblr, they "connect the

community to the academy," (Anzaldúa 1990, xxvi) to speak in broad strokes — they connect young women of color followers to feminist of color theorists both inside and outside the academy. Further, they de-academize feminist of color theory through the use of multiple media forms, excerpted citations, and internet slang which discursively bridge the theory with Tumblr norms. Thus, the blog embodies a commitment to accessibility in the broadest form, and uses social media to promote that access on a much larger scale.

We can read this translation work as a kind of theory in the [digital] flesh — a revisiting of Moraga's place where the "physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politics born out of necessity" (Anzaldúa and Moraga, 23). For *Women of Color, in Solidarity*, what matters is not only the physical realities of their lives, but the material technological realities: the reality of how many people online could benefit from feminist of color knowledge; the reality of the reach and scannability of a byte-sized Tumblr excerpt versus a 20-page document. By translating full-length theories into concise, catchy language that people online will read, *Women of Color, in Solidarity* is attentive to the realities of audience reading practices online. Rather than directly posting full-length articles, then, the blog emphasizes multimedia posts — images, YouTube videos, and excerpts — and practices *synthesizing* and simplifying complex theories for their internet audience. This can be seen as a form of remediation, or an "active mode of critical memory that takes existing knowledge forms and reshapes them to derive new meanings" (Cotera). By literally reshaping existing knowledge forms — like taking byte-sized excerpts from full-length essays — *Women of Color, in Solidarity* expands the reach and potential impact of such theories online.

Reconceptualizing contemporary current events

Another key aspect of *Women of Color, in Solidarity* as a political project is its interpretation of current events through the lens of women of color feminist solidarity — that is, through a feminist of color lens analogous to Cherríe Moraga's reconceptualization of the Egyptan revolution as her own. By defining the stakes of cultural moments for women of color through the use of multimedia objects and straightforward, Tumblr-like language, *Wocinsolidarity* translates these events into ones that signify and build the capacity of the blog's women of color feminist framework.

Two of the Tumblr's popular posts, reaching 13,000 and 120,000 reblogs respectively, exemplify this subtle political work: both posts appeal to the specificity of particular racialized experiences while also gesturing towards a larger women of color feminist collective. One popular post is a reblogged gifset, or several consecutive gif frames, of a scene from the third season of Shonda Rhimes' popular political drama, Scandal. The scene features the disappointed father, Rowan, and protagonist Olivia Pope in an airplane hangar, and reads: [Rowan] "How many times have I told you, you have to be what? You have to be what?" [Olivia] "Twice as good." "WHAT?!" "TWICE AS GOOD." [Rowan] "Twice as good as them to get HALF of what they have." Underneath the gifset, another user has added a comment that reads: "Every POC got this lesson." The dialogue refers to Olivia's experiences as an African American woman in the predominantly white world of elite Washington DC politics. Rowan Pope forcefully reminds Olivia that as a Black woman, she will have to be "twice as good" as her white counterparts to get "half of what they have."

Women of Color, in Solidarity's most popular original post (Bilyeau 2019) surpasses the blog's average hundred or thousand reblogs by several magnitudes: it was reblogged nearly

120,000 times. The post features a picture of a smiling woman in judges robes and a backdrop of thick textbooks, with the caption: “LET’S ALL WELCOME JUDGE MARY YU TO THE WASHINGTON SUPREME COURT.SHE IS THE STATE’S FIRST OPENLY GAY JUSTICE, FIRST ASIAN AMERICAN JUSTICE, AND FIRST LATINA JUSTICE, SHE IS ALSO THE 6TH WOMAN CURRENTLY SERVING AND THE 11TH WOMAN EVER TO SERVE ON WASHINGTON STATE’S SUPREME COURT.” (Wocinsolidarity, j; emphasis in original). The post links to a local newspaper article on Yu’s appointment and is tagged asian women, latina, Chinese women, Mexican women, lgbtqia, lesbian women, firsts, and yess.

Although quite different on the surface, these two popular posts share key similarities. First, they tap into shared racialized and gendered experiences among women of color in the United States. The “twice as good” mantra that Rowan Pope shares with Olivia, for example, is a well-known and often-repeated platitude within the African American community, as well as for other communities of color in the U.S. Former president Barack Obama nodded to it at his 2013 commencement speech at the historically black Morehouse College: “Every one of you have a grandma or an uncle or a parent who’s told you that at some point in life, as an African American, you have to work twice as hard as anyone else if you want to get by,” and further, that “that spirit of excellence, and hard work, and dedication, and no excuses is needed now more than ever” (Miller). While Barack Obama spins this aphorism positively, as a note of encouragement to recent graduates, the phrase’s more troubling side is borne out through a 2015 paper by the National Bureau for Economic Research, which found that “Black workers receive extra scrutiny from bosses, which can lead to worse performance reviews, lower wages, and even job loss” (White). Indeed, researchers found that black workers needed to show a “significantly higher skill level than their white counterparts” to have a chance of keeping their jobs, and that

even when black workers' productivity "far exceeded their white counterparts" — that is, when they were twice as good as white coworkers — researchers found evidence that they were still discriminated against. Unlike Obama's optimistic argument about the merits of working twice as hard, then, Rowan Pope's "twice as hard for half as much" argument is echoed in the National Bureau for Economic Research paper, as well as other emerging research, as in the telling title of 2013 American Journal of Political Science paper: "Working Twice as Hard to Get Half as Far: Race, Work Ethic, and America's Deserving Poor" (DeSante).

Although the aphorism "work twice as hard for half as much" is primarily ascribed to African American communities, other minoritized groups anecdotally share the same sentiment: People en Español's Latina@Work survey of 500 Latina women found that Latinas were twice as likely to feel that they had to work twice as hard as their non-Latina, white coworkers because of their racial and cultural background (Chan). Too, Meizhui Liu, coauthor of *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*, writes that her Chinese parents exhorted her to do homework with a warning: "You work twice as hard to be equal!" — wisdom that Liu initially scoffed at, but later saw the veracity of when she encountered anti-Asian racial stereotypes in the workplace. She later discovered that "many other children of color had gotten the same message from their parents" (Liu).

This larger racialized context reaffirms the original Tumblr post's caption, which reads: "every POC got this lesson." Like the aphorism itself, the post as a whole signals hard-won knowledge rooted in the African American experience, extended to accurately describe the experiences of many racialized communities of color in the U.S. In the context of *Women of Color, in Solidarity,* this post implicitly argues for a shared lived experience among people of

color — particularly women of color. It is an argument borne out successfully, given the popularity of the post and how many times it has been reblogged with its caption.

Judge Mary Yu's appointment to the Washington state Supreme Court also taps into a shared experience among women of color and people of color: lack of representation in the judiciary. On the U.S. Supreme Court, self-described Bronx Nuyorican Sonia Sotomayor is the only Latinx person and the only woman of color to ever be appointed; her only fellow jurors of color are Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas, and she is only the fourth woman ever to serve. At the state level, representation is also disproportionately low. A recent report issued by the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy brought attention to the "gavel gap," or the "disparity in race and gender between those who hold judicial power and the public" (George and Yoon). In their survey of state court judges, researchers found that "women of color comprise nearly one-fifth of the overall population but only 8 percent of state judges," making them the most underrepresented group at only 40% of their relative numbers in the general population. At the level of federal judgeships, too, a Center for American Progress report found that just 7% are held by women of color. This invisibility is drawn upon not only racial and gender lines, but also upon sexuality and gender expression: according to Truthout in 2016, "out of the 340 judges who sit on state supreme courts, only 10 identify as gay or lesbian. Only two judges in the entire legal system identify as transgender, and none openly identifies as bisexual or HIV positive" (Ludwig). When state courts handle more than 90% of court cases in the United States — roughly one billion cases over the past decade — this profound lack of representation shows just how rare and significant Judge Mary Yu's appointment to the Washington state Supreme Court as a queer mixed-race woman of color is.

Both posts, then, call attention to shared experiences of inequality and invisibility — and particularly, they do so through the translation and iteration of those concepts into internet discursive norms. Gifsets, for example, are commonly used on Tumblr to share scenes from TV and film: Scandal's popularity as a TV drama makes the post immediately identifiable and thereby compelling to many followers. Judge Yu's smiling professional photograph in judge's robes beside the hyper-enthusiastic, all-caps announcement succinctly conveys news worth reblogging. The post relies on Tumblr's particularly visual orientation as a platform, as well as its informal communication style, for its effectiveness and appeal.

Perhaps even more significantly, though, both posts gesture towards a larger public of *women* and *people* of color at the same time as they hone in on the specific racialized experiences of the women represented — a balance between sameness and difference that captures the spirit of women of color feminist coalitional theory. While the Scandal gifset and its larger scene in the show hone in the specific racialized barriers that African Americans face, the comment underneath the gifset, "Every POC got this lesson," expands this scene to represent the experiences of many different racialized communities. The caption invites non-Black people of color to see themselves and their own experiences in this scene while still retaining its racialized specificity. Similarly, Judge Yu's post starts with the words, "let's all welcome." As an original post written by the *wocinsolidarity* mods, we can infer that the implied "we" behind "let's all" represents the blog's followers and, more broadly, women of color. This "we" therefore invites all followers regardless of their specific racialized background to join in on welcoming and celebrating Judge Yu's appointment. Importantly, this is not a given approach. The blog could have described this as a win for queer people, for Latinas, for Asian American women, and for mixed-race women as individual and coherent, circumscribed groups. Instead, the post is framed

— by the wording of the post as much as by the judge's own identity and the larger frame of the blog, *wocinsolidarity* — as a win for both those specific groups and for all women of color. We might think back here again to Cherríe Moraga's exclamation, "*the Egyptian revolution is my revolution!*" Here, Judge Yu's victory is seen, described, and understood as a collective victory for all of the blog's queer and women of color followers. Thus, the post encourages identification with Judge Yu's appointment regardless of a user's specific racial background and sexual orientation. The blog's framing of the post and the blog's framing of itself as a whole encourages an expansive understanding of a collective victory for queer people and for women of color. I argue that this movement between the specificity of particular racialized experiences and accomplishments and the "we" of a collective cross-racial group is a crucial part of the emergence of a coalitional women of color feminist politic.

This juggling between specific racialized experiences and broader shared experiences has roots in women of color feminist praxis. For example, sociologist Zakiya Luna identifies this kind of interplay between specificity and generality as central to the work of reproductive justice organization Sistersong Women of Color Reproductive Collective. She argues that "constructing a 'women of color' identity" as an organization "involves two different logics: 'same difference' and 'difference-in-sameness.'" Luna identifies a strategic dialectical pull between these strategies, showing how women of color organizations must "subsume internal differences just enough to enable coalition building, but not so much that one silences or even reproduces other forms of privilege within a movement organization" (Luna 785). It is this tension between identifying enough shared experience to build a coalition, while also avoiding a totalizing theory of women of color experience which glosses over racialized difference, that Luna identifies as a central premise of Sistersong organizing.

Chela Sandoval identified a similar sameness and difference dynamic during the 1981 National Women's Studies Association conference, where 300 women of color were siloed into a "Third World" women only consciousness raising group as part of the mandatory conference agenda. In her capacity as the National Third World Women's Alliance Secretary, Sandoval writes that "many of the women of color felt immediately suspicious of a conference structure which would place them under one, seemingly homogenous category" (60, Sandoval). Heated criticism of the conference ensued, as well as debates about whether the group should stay in the large group or split into groups more reflective of their identities. However, as difficult conversations about the group continued, a common aspiration emerged to "imagine a new, affirming movement" (61). Debates over the group's name — whether to term themselves Third World women or women of color — did not lead to resolutions or decisions so much as a shared orientation towards addressing difficult questions: "In spite of, and then *because* of our differences, a solidarity amongst the group grew slowly" (63). Ultimately, the Third World women consciousness raising group put forth as their "common ground" the idea of a "shared understanding of the workings of power" (63) — an understanding which encouraged connections across differences of not only race, but class, culture, and gender, and which did not privilege any of those categories. The group owed its success to the weaving together of group solidarity under a common framework, "Third World women," with individual group identities and differences between women. Although these differences initially seemed to pit them against one another, the group came to view these same differences as "a rich source of tactical and strategic responses to power" (67). Thus, the transformative work enabled by the identity "Third World women" required a flexible approach to engaging similarity and difference between groups of women.

Analouise Keating identifies a similar dialectic in the post-oppositional politics she derives from readings of *This Bridge Called My Back* and her career of collaborative work with Gloria Anzaldúa. In an extended close-reading of *Bridge* essays by Mirtha Quintanales, Andrea Canaan, Audre Lorde, Rosario Morales, and Gloria Anzaldúa, Keating calls attention to the way their writings draw upon "commonalities" between women of color, or the "complex points of connection that both incorporate and move beyond sameness, similarity, and difference." Keating argues that the power of these writings and of commonalities on the whole is that they represent a "synergistic, alchemical combination" that "offers us another entry into coalition-building and transformation" (Keating 42-3). In other words, Keating's "commonalities" framework asks us to move in the space between "sameness, similarity, and difference," where women of color are neither identical nor totally dissimilar, but somewhere within and beyond those two poles. And like Sistersong's "same difference" and "difference-in-sameness" logics, Keating's "commonalities" critically afford us "another entry into coalition-building," (43) one that is central to a coalitional women of color feminist praxis.

Seen in this light, *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s reposted Scandal gifset and congratulatory Judge Yu post both move in the tension between sameness, similarity, and difference. They identify Olivia Pope and Mary Yu's specific racialized experiences while also drawing implicit parallels to a broader set of experiences shared by U.S. women of color under white supremacy. In doing so, they practice a version of Luna's "same difference" and "difference-in-sameness" logics, Sandoval's "common ground," and Keating's "commonalities" framework. This move not only draws from the women of color feminist coalition theories cited in their FAQ answer and reposted on their blog, it also allows them to apply that coalitional framework to new political moments. In other words, the blog becomes a theory-making

enterprise unto itself, making new kinds of connections and arguments through the lens of a women of color feminist framework which both identifies specific racialized experiences and promotes an expansive, coalition-based politics.

If *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s work in their FAQ answer is to translate coalition theories online, then their work through the Scandal gifset and Judge Yu post is to *apply* those coalition theories. The blog interprets both these current events — that is, a contemporary TV drama scene and a recent news item — through a coalitional lens. It therefore remakes coalition theory into something that can be used in the present moment to build solidarity between multiple groups — between Black people and other people of color, between queer people and straight people, and between women of color. More broadly, then, the blog activates the identity "woman of color" as more than an aspiration or an ideal, but as an active theory that can be used to reinterpret current events. It therefore puts its own title, *Women of Color, in Solidarity*, into practice through this reinscription of coalition theories through current events. By actively drawing the connections between coalition theories and real-life moments where they apply, the blog practices thinking coalitionally to its audience.

Theory in the flesh, coalitions, and commonalities are explored and defined by 1980s women of color feminist theorists such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Toni Cade Bambara, Barbara Christian, and Cherríe Moraga and have continued to be invoked and retheorized by other theorists such as M. Jacqui Alexander and Analouise Keating. The legacy of this theoretical work is paid homage to and taken up by *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Through their recirculation of these theorists on social media, their translation of the theories into Internet- and Tumblr discursive norms, and their theorization of contemporary political moments through the lens of women of color feminist commonalities, *Women of Color, in Solidarity* plays two key

roles: it transforms women of color feminist praxes in digital space and transforms digital space through women of color feminist praxis. What results is a network of posts that reconceptualize movement praxis for a vanguard digital space, one which speaks directly to the contemporary moment and a new, born-digital generation of feminists. *Women of Color, in Solidarity*'s most compelling and generative new theoretical work, then, is to develop canonical women of color feminist thought and praxis into a fresh conceptual roadmap capable of making meaning in the digital age.

WORKS CITED

Alexander, Jacqui M. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Anzaldúa Gloria, editor. *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1990.

Bambara, Toni Cade. (1981) 2015. "Foreword to the First Edition, 1981" In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, xxix-xxxii. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Bilyeu, Matthew. *Tumblr Top (Wocinsolidarity)*, 5 Apr. 2019, matthewbilyeu.com/tumblr-top/blog/wocinsolidarity.

Blackwell, Maylei. *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, University of Texas Press, 2015.

Chan, Rosalie. "Latinas Feel They Must Work Twice as Hard, Survey Finds." *Time*, Time, 15 Aug. 2016, time.com/4450710/latinas-business-work-survey-people-en-espanol/.

Christian, Barbara. 1990. "The Race for Theory." In *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*, 335-345. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books.

Cotera, María. “Unpacking Our Mother’s Libraries: Practices of Chicana Memory Before and After the Digital Turn.” *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era,* by Dionne Espinoza et al., University of Texas Press, 2018, pp 299-316.

Desante, Christopher D. “Working Twice as Hard to Get Half as Far: Race, Work Ethic, and America’s Deserving Poor.” *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2013, pp. 342–356., doi:10.1111/ajps.12006.

Desmond-Harris, Jeneé. “Doubts about Inclusive Feminism Have Little to Do with the Women's March. They're Rooted in History.” *Vox*, Vox, 25 Jan. 2017, www.vox.com/identities/2017/1/25/14355302/womens-march-feminism-intersectionality-women-of-color-white-feminists.

Espinoza, Dionne. “'La Raza En Canada’: San Diego Chicana Activists, the Indochinese Women’s Conference of 1971, and Third World Womanism.” *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era,* by Dionne Espinoza et al., University of Texas Press, 2018, pp. 261–275.

Flores, Verónica Bayetti. “#KnowYourHistory: Women of Color Have Been Moving beyond ‘pro-Choice’ for Decades.” *Feministing*, 2014, feministing.com/2014/07/31/knowyourhistory-women-of-color-have-been-moving-beyond-pro-choice-for-decades/.

Garza, Alicia. “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement.” The Feminist Wire, 7 Oct. 2014, thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/.

George, Tracey E, and Albert H Yoon. “The Gavel Gap.” *The Gavel Gap*, American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, gavelgap.org/.

hooks, bell. *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. Pluto Press, 2000.

Jawando, Michele L, and Billy Corriher. “More Money, More Problems.” *Center for American Progress*, 6 Oct. 2015, www.americanprogress.org/issues/courts/reports/2015/10/26/124022/more-money-more-problems/.

Keating, Analouise. *Transformation Now!: toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change*. University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Liu, Meizhu. “Work Twice as Hard to Be Equal.” *Policylink*, Policylink, www.policylink.org/blog/work-twice-as-hard-to-be-equal.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.

Ludwig, Mike. “Where Are the Gay Judges?” *Truthout*, Truthout, 4 Oct. 2016, truthout.org/articles/where-are-the-gay-judges/.

Luna, Zakiya. T. 2016. “‘Truly a Women of Color Organization’: Negotiating Sameness and Difference in Pursuit of Intersectionality” *Gender and Society* 30(5) 769-790.

Matos, Amanda R. “Supreme Court Case Threatens Unions and Women of Color.” *Feministing*, 2018, feministing.com/2018/02/28/supreme-court-case-threatens-unions-and-women-of-color/.

McKenzie, Mia. “On Adele, Beyoncé & Solidarity: Nice Words Are Not the Same As Actions.” *Black Girl Dangerous*, 14 Feb. 2017, www.blackgirldangerous.com/2017/02/adele-beyonce-solidarity/.

"Me Too Movement." *Me Too Movement*, metoomvmt.org/.

Miller, Zeke J. "Obama Discusses Race, Fatherhood, Responsibility at Morehouse College (Transcript Included)." *Time*, Time, 19 May 2013, swampland.time.com/2013/05/19/obama-discusses-race-responsibility-at-morehouse-college/.

Moraga, Cherríe. 2015. "Catching Fire: Preface to the Fourth Edition." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, xv-xxxvi. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Moraga Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa, editors. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. SUNY Press, 2015.

"Our Co-Founders." *Black Lives Matter*, blacklivesmatter.com/about/our-co-founders/.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson. 1983. "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century." In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, 356-368. New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Rebolledo, Tey Diana. 1990. "The Politics of Poetics: Or, What Am I, A Critic, Doing in This Text Anyhow?" In *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*, 346-355. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books.

Sandoval, Chela. 1990. "Feminism and Racism: A Report on the 1981 National Women's Studies Association Conference." In *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*, 55-71. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books.

Smith, Stacy L, et al. *Inclusion or Invisibility? Comprehensive Annenberg Report on Diversity in Entertainment*. USC Annenberg, 22 Feb. 2016,

annenberg.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017/04/07/MDSCI_CARD_Report_FINAL_Exec_Summary.pdf.

Tumblr Staff, 2017. “Today is International Women’s Day.” *tumblr staff*. Tumblr. https://staff.tumblr.com/post/158154030166/today-is-international-womens-day

White, Gillian B. “Black Workers Really Do Need to Be Twice as Good.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 7 Oct. 2015, www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/10/why-black-workers-really-do-need-to-be-twice-as-good/409276/.

Wocinsolidarity, a. “About Us.” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/aboutus

Wocinsolidarity, b. “JANUARY 12: Nobuko Yoshiya (1896-1973)” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/171519780309/january-12-nobuko-yoshiya-1896-1973

Wocinsolidarity, c. “Mwasi Collective: Afrofeminist resistance in France” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/171484363354/ezibota-mwasi-collective-afrofeminist

Wocinsolidarity, d. “Laura Aguilar is a Los Angeles-based…” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/171450297391/critical-objects-laura-aguilar-is-a-los

Wocinsolidarity, e. “You Can't Say Black Lives Matter Without Including Black Sex Workers” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/171415107257/you-cant-say-black-lives-matter-without-including

Wocinsolidarity, f. “Dolores Huerta” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr.

http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/84331833930/nuestrahermana-dolores-huerta-born-dolores-clara

Wocinsolidarity, g. “Because I, a mestiza…” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/46802389920/chupaflor-radicalxic-because-i-a-mestiza

Wocinsolidarity, h. “Spending the weekend in Sarasota with bell hooks…” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/79577997502/janetmock-spending-the-weekend-in-sarasota-with

Wocinsolidarity, i. “Frequently Asked Questions.” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/FAQ

Wocinsolidarity, j. “LET’S ALL WELCOME…” *Women of Color, in Solidarity*. Tumblr. http://wocinsolidarity.tumblr.com/post/86707096700/lets-all-welcome-judge-mary-yu-to-the-washington

CHAPTER IV

Meditation on Digital Precarity: The Ephemerality, Erasure and Preservation of Women of Color Feminist Digital Content

Figure vii: A scrolling list of "sister" Tumblrs on the Tumblr page Angry Women of Color United.

Figure viii: Tumblr's 404 error message. White text reads: "There's nothing here. Whatever you were looking for doesn't currently exist at this address. Unless you were looking for this error page, in which case: Congrats! You totally found it."

Page left above, I scroll through the linked "sister" blogs on the Tumblr page *Angry Women of Color United*. These sister blogs are listed prominently on *Angry Women of Color United's* sidebar, alongside their About me, FAQ page, and post submission space. The list rhetorically pronounces these 89 blogs "sisters" to mark them as ideologically similar, with comparable missions and interventions into Tumblr's networked discursive space: a kind of digitally mediated sisterhood. Most of the blogs are about women of color, either as a coalitional group identity — such as *Women of Color in Solidarity*, the focus of my last chapter — or a specific identity within that group, such as *Native Women Rock* or *Black Women World History*. These blogs cover not only every major group identity under the category women of color — East and South Asian, African American and parts of the larger Black diaspora, Native American or indigenous, and Latinx — but also intersections with other marginalized identities, like fat, disabled, and queer. Lists like this are a crucial way that women of color blogs link to each other: they not only direct followers to similar blogs, but they also hail a larger women of color feminist Tumblr network. Thus, resource lists capture a snapshot of the landscape of women of color feminist and social justice Tumblr. For this reason, they are good metrics of those networks' vitality.

But clicking through the listed Tumblr pages, we find that several of the links are dead and over half of the blogs are inactive. Some have been deleted by their owners — a move which produces Tumblr's trademark 404 error message, page right. Other blogs have been hacked, their posts deleted and replaced with revenge messages from trolls or with nonsensical advertisements. Other blogs have been formally closed by their owners, with a hiatus or good-bye message. And finally, many more of the blogs have simply gone inactive, with their post frequency trickling down over several months and then ceasing.

On the one hand, the phasing in and out of particular blogs is emblematic of the ebb and flow of social media accounts. Who among us is still active on all the platforms we've ever used — our Goodreads, Myspaces, Flickr accounts? Blogs grow and wane in popularity as users age out of platforms or migrate to new ones. Their old accounts languish and eventually get deleted or hacked. This healthy ebb and flow can signal a platform's resilience, as newer users and pages take the place of old ones.

On the other hand, this generational turnover — the gradual obsolescence of these blogs, especially how they seldom stay in their original form as time passes, but rather have a tendency to break and get hacked — is significant for women of color feminist praxis. If we have here a record of women of color feminist interventions on a major social media platform, then these networks of Tumblrs represent a valuable *archive* of women of color's political practices online.

Here, I draw from multiple definitions of archive. First, Tumblr itself holds a valuable corpus of women of color feminist writing and organizing because it has been adopted as a platform for such work. This corpus is a living, constantly expanding, and as I argue, inherently fragile archive. Second, this chapter argues for the importance of *preserving* these women of color feminist writings on Tumblr and other platforms — archiving in the more traditional sense. Following Ann Laura Stoler's concept of "archiving as dissensus," this archive would be a "visceral, living space of contestation" with the "capacity to make new objects available to thought" — a kind of "counter-archive" (Stoler 46). Counter-archives speak back to the "founding violence" of institutional archives of slavery and colonization (Hartmann 10) where Black and radical women of color are dehumanized and erased.

Such a counter-archive would have value for both research and history. A social media counter-archive would produce new narratives of women of color's participation in radical

politics online. It would show us how women of color construct identity and create community online. It would tell us how youth define and mobilize political concepts like "solidarity" through digital technologies. It would represent proof of women of color's existence online and a concrete history of Tumblrlogs which defy invisibilization and erasure. But if we lose these blogs in another three years to 404 messages or hackers, we lose our chance to create such a counter-archive.

However, at a bigger conceptual level, I also grapple with the realities of failure. If we fail to archive these networks, do they still leave a trace? If we don't preserve them, do they still matter? This chapter connects precarious new digital forms like virtual resource lists with the second wave feminist forms that they echo. I juxtapose Tumblr bibliographies, recommended readings, resource round-ups, and lists of similar blogs with the bibliographies that appear throughout radical women of color anthologies and the syllabi that made up the first women of color feminist classes. This echo in forms across time suggests that women of color feminism in both the contemporary moment and the 1980s share the conditions of precarity that *necessitate* the creation of such lists.

Ultimately, my chapter reveals both the precarity and durability of social justice work online and the world-making potential that endures its own erasure. In an age where the average life of a webpage is as brief as 44 days, do our digital traces matter? While I argue that it is important to archive to whatever extent possible, I also argue that archival permanence is not the end-all, be-all of radical organizing. Rather, I show how the energy of movement-building persists, even when its digital traces do not — and that this reality challenges institutional and technological absolutist ideas about the precarity of social movements when they are not sufficiently archived.

In this chapter, I lay out the stakes of digital precarity. I investigate the ephemerality of digital content generally, as well as the specific precarity that women of color face online due to identity-based harassment and discrimination. I show how women of color feminist Tumblr productively expands our definition of the digital humanities, and how we might use digital humanities resources to create archives of marginalized digital writings. Finally, I end with a reflection on what endures about digital work if it fails to be archived.

The ephemerality of websites and data

Since the dawn of Web 2.0 — which created participatory technologies to "express [our]selves online and participate in the commons of cyberspace" — more people than ever participate online (Horrigan, 2007). Through every tweet, Instagram photo, YouTube video, and Wordpress blog, we create digital content and data. Today, we are approaching an astonishing 2 billion websites online, with over 700 million of those websites created between 2016 and 2017 alone (InternetLiveStats).

But this constant expansion of content belies its instability and ephemerality. According to the Library of Congress's 2010 National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program Report, "forty-four percent of the sites available on the Internet in 1998 were no longer in existence a year later, and the average life of a Web site is now only 44 days" (*Preserving Our Digital Heritage* 1). Although there may be an explosion in the number of websites and the amount of content online, due in part to the ease of creating content and websites, there is no guarantee of its longevity. While we often assume that digitized content is more permanent than hard-copy — after all, hard-copies can get lost, fray with time, and be damaged in major weather

events — the Library of Congress actually calls this plethora of new digital data "extremely fragile, inherently impermanent, and difficult to assess for long-term value" (1).

The stakes of this data impermanence are strikingly illustrated by the 2009 GeoCities shutdown. Founded in 1995, GeoCities was a free website hosting service where users could create homepages — a precursor to modern blogging and hosting sites. By 1999, GeoCities was the third most popular website on the internet, behind AOL and Yahoo!, with 19 million unique visitors in December 1998 alone (Marshall). It was acquired by Yahoo for 3.57 billion dollars at its peak in 1999. But just ten years later, in 2009, Yahoo announced to users that it would be shutting down GeoCities. Yahoo gave GeoCities users until the end of the year to upgrade to the site's paid subscription-based hosting service or move their websites to another domain. The websites were deleted later that year.

From a financial perspective, shutting down GeoCities made sense. The platform's popularity had waned since its peak in 1999, and despite its high traffic, GeoCities had always struggled to produce revenue. But from an archival perspective, GeoCities' shut down suddenly and unprecedentedly eviscerated millions of websites — terabytes worth of data points in a massive early Internet archive. Article headlines about the shutdown reflect how monumental the loss was: "Internet Atrocity! GeoCities' Demise Erases Web History"; "GeoCities dies in March 2019, and with it a piece of internet history"; "How GeoCities invented the modern internet" (Fletcher; Gottsegen; Manjoo). Having pioneered our ability to make websites and social profiles, GeoCities represented an important origin point for Web 2.0 and offered an undiluted view into late 1990s and early 2000s internet culture. Its deletion underscores the fallibility of all platforms, no matter how large, and the ephemerality of the data that lives on those platforms.

Unfortunately, such rapid deletions are not limited to dying platforms like GeoCities. Tumblr faced its own massive archival crisis less than a year ago. Facing pressure from Apple to eliminate child pornography, in December of 2018, Tumblr suddenly announced that it would ban all adult content, defined as "photos, videos, and GIFs of human genitalia, female-presenting nipples, and any media" involving sexual content from the platform ("Adult Content"). This was a hard turn from Tumblr's previous open door policy towards adult content, which made Tumblr a platform where "erotica and NSFW artwork and storytelling have thrived and flourished" (Romano). Because of Tumblr's progressive user base, its adult content reflected marginalized sexualities, sexual practices, and identities at significantly higher rates than mainstream adult content websites. In a VICE article, queer porn performer and activist Kitty Stryker says that "Tumblr banning adult content is a huge loss for the LGBTQ community, especially those with overlapping marginalized identities… For many, that's the one place we could find porn that represents us, made by indie performers who created their own content outside of an often racist, transmisogynist, fatphobic industry… It's a huge loss from an identity affirming perspective, from an educational perspective, from a feminist erotica perspective" (Koebler and Cole). Despite intense controversy, Tumblr went ahead with its decision: starting December 17, just two weeks after the announcement was made, all existing adult content on the website was automatically changed to "private" (and therefore invisible to others). All subsequent adult content uploaded to the website would be automatically deleted by algorithms. As Stryker argues, Tumblr had been an access point for non-normative porn and a safe place to learn about queerness, kink, and non-monogamous relationships. If Tumblr had functioned like a huge archive of non-normative porn and sex education, then that archive would, again, be deleted suddenly and with little warning.

In the wake of both announcements, collectives of web archivists such as the ArchiveTeam saved millions of GeoCities accounts and about 10 terabytes of Tumblr blog data to harddrives (Captain). But this is just a fraction of what could have been saved with more time: for example, between 82 and 91% of the total Tumblr data was lost. As ArchiveTeam leader Jason Scott argues, "[W]e are producing content at an astounding rate... in the long run, the question of what to keep and what to discard should not be made in corporate boardrooms" (Fletcher). Scott criticizes Yahoo's ultimate say over the eradication or preservation of the content that lives on its platforms. Implicitly, he asks us to reconsider whether corporations should hold the keys to our collective internet history. According to Scott, and as I argue as well, social media is not just *user content*: it's digital history — particularly for marginalized communities. Corporations and other stakeholders should be responsible for considering the history created on their platforms. But this perspective is not the norm. Scott's comment highlights the obvious tension between corporate and archivist perspectives on these questions — questions whose answers will determine which websites are still around in 15 years.

Although the GeoCities and Tumblr archival crises were prompted by different mechanisms — company shutdowns versus censorship — they share key features. First, both announcements were made very suddenly, with tight deadlines for the content coming offline. Second, both announcements were met by partial archival responses by mostly freelance digital archivists. Third, despite these efforts, most content was lost. If we extrapolate these case studies into the future, when Tumblr, Facebook, and Twitter are eclipsed by other social media platforms in five to fifteen years, we will likely see history repeat itself. As the GeoCities and Tumblr shut downs show us, platforms are giant until they aren't anymore, and we may not have time to plan strategically once major shutdown announcements are made. Specific niche

communities, like women of color feminist Tumblr or social justice Tumblr more broadly, could be decimated by such a shutdown. If we do not prioritize preserving this work now, then the history, memories, and stories in each platform will be lost.

Furthermore, the height of Tumblr's popularity represents an era just before the consolidation of contemporary social media into a near-monopoly. With Google's ownership of YouTube since 2006, Facebook's purchase of Instagram in 2012 (long before Instagram became the $100 billion behemoth it is today) (Keane), and Tumblr's purchase by Yahoo in 2013 and Wordpress in 2019, major tech companies continue to buy out their competitors. In particular for Facebook and Instagram, which together represent today's most popular social media platforms, their ownership by a single parent company eliminates even the illusion of choice between competing platforms. Thus, the decline of Tumblr represents the decline of one of Facebook's last remaining social media competitors, and the beginning of Facebook's near-monopoly over social media today. As "digital technologies have helped consolidate the wealth and influence of a small number of players" (Precarity Lab), histories of Tumblr's unique affordances and ultimate downfall are especially important as chronicles of contemporary digital history.

The precarity of women of color online

In addition to the general ephemerality of digital content, women of color face particular forms of structural precarity online. I follow Judith Butler's use of the term precarity as a "politically induced condition" in which certain groups become "differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death," (Butler 2009) and experience "a heightened sense of expendability or disposability" (Butler 2018). Women of color face particularly high rates of injury and violence online (AmnestyInternational). Such violence affects women of color individually and

structurally. Individually, vulnerability to racist harassment and trolls affects women of color feminist's mental health and safety on online platforms (@amnestyinternational). Structurally, women of color blogs are vulnerable to hackers and use platforms that are less likely to be captured by existing online archival tools like the Internet Wayback Machine (Glassman). Together, these factors lead to a heightened precarity that endangers the longevity of women of color's writing online.

As my dissertation has shown, women of color build vibrant social networks on blogs and social media that push back against the invisibilization and tokenization of women of color. Countless groups create ad-hoc support networks, like Binders Full of Women and Nonbinary People of Color in Academia, a popular Facebook group for academics of color to build informal networks and celebrate one another's successes, and the #GirlsLikeUs Twitter hashtag, which creates space for the representation of trans women, builds community, and counters negative stereotypes (Jackson et. al, 2017). On Tumblr, networks of blogs like the list found at the beginning of this chapter symbolize just such spaces. Not only the blogs themselves, but the community of users who follow, comment, and reblog all participate in a shared community of Black and radical women of color feminists. What these social networks share is an investment in defying reductive stereotypes through an abundance of real-life representation, thereby pushing back against women of color's invisibilization in larger digital outlets. They also each create community between women of color, who often report feeling isolated online and in real life (Gutierrez y Muhs et. al, 2012).

But this type of online community-building, however positively construed, is not without problems. As the University of Michigan's Precarity Lab argues, "the physical and emotional labor of women and people of color has always been appropriated as a work of love, never

compensated even as a 'gig.'" Thus, while the labor of women of color feminists to build community online may have positive effects, it is always construed as *outside* what must be compensated or supported with capital. To put it simply, social media platforms depend upon the uncompensated labor of women of color to create inhabitable networks on their platforms. Without this uncompensated labor, women of color would never continue to use these platforms. Indeed, despite repeated and widespread pressure to censor white nationalist and white supremacist content, social media platforms continue to allow them to exist online. For instance, although Facebook banned white nationalist content in 2019 after years of pressure, many white nationalist groups continue to operate on Facebook, including those with ties to Richard Spencer (Wong). Rather than enforcing user safety through active policy, such as the removal of white nationalist content, social media platforms rely upon (but refuse to pay for) the labor of women of color.

As a result, it should be no surprise that women of color also receive the most harassment and attacks online. A 2018 Amnesty International report called "Troll Patrol" found that every 30 seconds, a woman received a toxic tweet. However, Black women were 84% more likely than white women to receive abusive tweets. Latinx women were 81% more likely to receive threats of physical violence. Asian women were 70% more likely to be targeted with ethnic, racial, and religious slurs. And overall, women of color were 34% more likely to receive abusive tweets (@amnestyinternational). Senior advisor Milena Marin added in a statement: "We have the data to back up what women have long been telling us—that Twitter is a place where racism, misogyny and homophobia are allowed to flourish basically unchecked" (Amnesty International). Vitriolic harassment has documented effects on mental health. Studies on adolescent health and cyberbullying find that victims of cyberbullying experience increased rates

of "depressive affect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms" and were almost twice as likely to attempt suicide as their peers (Nixon). Anecdotally, as I show in my last chapter, prominent Black and radical women of color feminist bloggers have cited trolls and threats as a time- and energy-sucking reality of feminist blogging, and even as a reason why blogs have been shut down. Guerilla Feminism nonprofit and blog founder Lachrista Greco calls this "chronic digital revictimization and hypervigilance," or the ways in which "[her]self and other survivors are inundated daily with abusive comments on social media" (Greco, Instagram). Harassment and online attacks represent a form of specific racialized and gendered precarity: a heightened threat that women of color face for their activism online as women of color.

In addition to this racialized and gendered precarity, women of color bloggers and social media users face heightened structural precarity in the form of hackers. For example, Guerilla Feminism's Lachrista Greco let the domain name expire for Guerilla Feminism, redirecting readers to her personal website, and eventually, the old page was hacked: its layout was completely wiped, its posts were deleted, and the blog was replaced by nonsensical advertisements for life insurance, construction, and travel visas (Greco, 2019). As librarian Julia Glassman writes, "autonomous publications like blogs" are in a "precarious position, as an entire blog can disappear with a lapsed domain subscription or a few mouse clicks" (Glassman). Moreover, tools like the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, which has archived 330 billion web pages since 1996, do not work for women of color bloggers: "software used by blogging platforms such as Wordpress and Blogspot interferes with the Machine's ability to archive them at all" (qtd. in Glassman). Indeed, we can look through the Wayback Machine to see Guerilla Feminism in 2016 (Greco, 2016) — but many of the posts are broken and inaccessible. Glassman's case for academic and public librarians to archive women of color feminist blogs on

platforms such as Wordpress and Blogspot hinges upon the precariousness of these blogs' contingent feminist labor, and their vulnerability to deletion. As she argues, significant pieces of feminist of color digital history get lost this way: "The originals no longer exist. Digital dust."

Similarly, Tumblrs on the "Sisters" list at the beginning of this chapter have also been deleted and hacked. Of the total list of 89 blogs, 31 were inactive, 13 were hacked, 9 were deleted, two had posted a closing blog post, and one was made private. These Tumblr blogs' infrastructural precarity —through broken links, 404 errors, deleted and hacked blogs — contributes to a general erosion of feminist of color digital spaces and archives through the constant cycling through new mediums. When we lose these Tumblrs, we lose not only a piece of our history of taking up space online as women of color, but the specific nexus of resources and information and images that blog represented and offered. Because so many of the Tumblrs represent multiply marginalized groups — like *PoC with Disabilities* and *Fat Grrrl Activism* — those Tumblrs make very specific and unique interventions. When those disappear, we run the risk of returning to earlier states of absence and invisibility.

The precarity of women of color digital writing is mirrored in the longer history of women of color writing and intellectual history. Women of color's contributions to civil rights and power movements and feminist movements during the 1960s and 1970s were often erased or minimized (Roth, Blackwell). Within Chicana/o movement organizing specifically, Chicana women's contributions were often erased, particularly at the level of archiving. Oral histories from the *Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective* document several such moments where boxes of materials get lost or go unused. Former chairperson of the Raza Unida Party, Evey Olivia Chapa, narrates a pivotal moment of the 1971 national Chicana feminist conference: when half the attendees walked out over the conference's focus on women's rights and gender

issues. Speaking about the resolutions that the walk-out contingent passed in the park that they defected to, Chapa says, "I have those resolutions somewhere. But, um, I had moved five times in...in Houston. I'm living in Houston right now to find a safe place to live. And I'm still in some boxes somewhere. I couldn't find the resolution" (Chapa, 10:45-10:54). Although Chapa's was not the only copy of the resolutions drafted that day, the precarity of her copy underscores a common narrative in Chicana feminist oral histories. Several of the women interviewed for Chicana por mi Raza store personal and movement archives in attics, basements, and garages, where it is easy to lose things in moves or due to weather damage — or simply for these documents to never see the light of day or be archived somewhere safer. Alex Escalante echoes this point when he discusses preserving his mother Alicia Escalante's legacy as a prominent welfare rights and Chicana/o movement organizer: "not that [the documents] were deteriorating but they were just sitting in the garage (laughs). You know?"

The undervaluing of Chicana women's participation in movement organizing became a form of enforced precarity: a way of ensuring, however unintentionally, that Chicana labor and voices would be omitted from the archive, and thus, the telling of the history (Trouillot) – a kind of "invisibilizing feedback loop" of omission (Cotera 2015). As Espinoza, Cotera, and Blackwell write in their introduction to the first academic anthology on Chicana feminism, Chicana women's "stories [from the movement] are mostly absent from both the archive and the secondary literature" (Espinoza et. al, 3) and represent a "genealogy of feminist praxis that has been ignored, marginalized, and sometimes actively silenced" (30). Such silences have material repercussions for the commemoration of feminist and movement histories. Writing about *Chicana por mi Raza* cofounder Linda Garcia Merchant's experience at the thirtieth anniversary of the 1977 National Women's Conference, Maria Cotera describes the "galling historical

erasure" that took place (Cotera 2018, 488). Rather than commemorate the pioneering work of Chicanas like Martha Cotera, Ruth Mojica Hammer, and hundreds more at this landmark moment in women's movement history, conference organizers failed to even recognize them. The result was that the "contributions of [Chicanas of] that generation were quickly receding from public memory as a result of scholarly neglect" (489). This revisionist whitewashing of the 1977 National Women's Conference is just one example of the impact of disappearing women of color feminist history from women's movement historical narratives.

These same disappearances could be baked into histories of the current moment, where only the most prominent feminist blogs and hashtags are remembered and commemorated in the emergence of online feminist organizing. As Kimberly Springer notes, "the ephemera, strategizing, and documentation of contemporary social movements are at risk" when that documentation resides on corporate servers like that of Facebook, Tumblr, or Twitter (Springer). Indeed, these disappearances *are* beginning to be baked into histories of the current moment. When editors Courtney Martin and Vanessa Valenti of the long-time popular feminist blog Feministing partnered with the Barnard Center for Research on Women to talk about institutional academic support for feminist blogs, their 2013 report "#FemFuture: Online Revolution" sparked serious questions (Martin). In particular, digital humanities scholar and feminist blogger Jessica Marie Johnson critiqued the report's "dangerous ignorance in assuming #FemFuture is a first, a start, or new" (Johnson). To amend this historical erasure, she lists a dozen online communities that had been "agitating online for years now," such as those built around the Allied Media Conference, Incite: Women of Color Against Violence, Critical Resistance, Quirky Black Girls, and Guerilla Mama Medicine. Johnson urges #FemFuture and other majority white feminist organizations to partner directly with Black and radical women of color bloggers rather than

sidelining their contributions to the feminist blogosphere. Like Linda Garcia Merchant's experience of the 1977 National Women's Conference anniversary, Jessica Marie Johnson pushes back against the invisibilization of radical women of color in key moments in women's movement history.

Lack of infrastructure, of archives, of support, and of safety all create a snowball of precarity that together may become a defining feature of feminist of color digital organizing: a constant disappearing of the archives of feminist of color digital intellectual labor and content creation. What sense can we make of this? How do we write about what is continually, systematically disappearing? Without recognizing the importance of the work that happens in these informal social media channels, there can be no mobilization to archive, help maintain, or otherwise preserve this invaluable proof of our existence online. As feminist of color digital organizing moves through consecutive mediums — from Livejournal to blogs, and from blogs to social media — there is an increased risk of posts getting deleted or accounts getting hacked. If women of color organizing online has shifted from blogs to social media, then we need to think broadly about archiving women of color digital networks across all major platforms.

Redefining the digital humanities through radical women of color digital projects and labor

One approach to archiving women of color digital networks is through conceptualizing them as digital humanities projects. Thinking about radical women of color feminist Tumblr as a de facto digital humanities project productively expands our definition of the digital humanities. Further, it can help us mobilize digital humanities resources toward archiving platforms and communities as needed.

Following Bo Ruberg, I understand the digital humanities as a "constellation" of work which "use[s] digital tools to augment the work of the humanities or use[s] humanities frameworks to enrich the study of the digital" (Ruberg 420). While the digital humanities has surged as a field with institutional recognition, major grants, and jobs, its potential insurgency (Greenspan) or complicity with neoliberal imperatives (Kyong Chun, et. al) is still debated. Recent debates have also brought humanistic questions of power and social identity to the fore of digital humanities inquiry, challenging the ready adoption of technologies by challenging the racism of algorithms and the whiteness of the field more broadly (Bailey, 2011; McPherson, 2012; Cotera, 2018). In their manifesto on #transformDH, Bailey, Cong-Huyen, Lothian, and Phillips write that in 2011, the digital humanities "seemed to be replicating many traditional practices of the ivory tower, those that privileged the white, heteronormative, phallogocentric view of culture that our home disciplines had long critiqued" (Bailey et. al). Those traditional practices included the privileging of new technologies (such as data visualization and other coding-heavy tools) over analysis of their gendered and sometimes exclusionary nature. In addition, new digital tools have often been used to preserve and elaborate upon a highly traditional white, Western, male artistic canon. For example, recently awarded projects include the digital aggregation of John Madison's Montpelier collections, the recreation of the church acoustic conditions that J.S. Bach performed at ("Funded Projects Query Form"), and the creation of a game exploring Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (Cotera). Speaking out against the putative neutrality of technological advancements in humanistic study, scholars such as Moya Bailey argue that "the ways in which identities inform both theory and practice in digital humanities have been largely overlooked" (Bailey 1). This technologistic view of the digital

humanities, scholars have argued, ignores the role of cultural criticism in the humanities and its race, class, and gender analysis of technological access.

In addition, the same scholars have critiqued the narrow self-definition of the digital humanities, particularly its location within academic institutions at the expense of projects which bridge academic ideas with non-academic, general audiences. For Bailey, the Crunk Feminist Collective — a group of academics and activists who discuss feminist theory and current events in accessible language on social media — typifies this exclusion. The Crunk Feminist Collective and its "hybridizing of cultural production and a theoretical praxis[] falls outside the purview of mainstream digital humanities" (1), despite its clear bridging of humanistic questions with digital tools. In particular, the Crunk Feminist Collective's orientation towards accessible writing positions it as a public-facing project which productively disrupts the norm of scholarly writing directed towards other scholars. For Bailey, then, "What counts as a digital humanities project?" is more than a question of defining the digital humanities. Rather, it is about actively carving room for feminist, anti-racist, queer, and public-oriented uses of digital technology within the field.

The #transformDH manifesto further expands this definition of the digital humanities by recognizing not only the ways that academics can expand their lens outward towards the public, but also the ways that "feminist, queer, and antiracist activists, artists, and media-makers outside of academia are doing work that contributes to digital studies in all its forms" (Bailey et. al). Broadening the field of digital studies and the digital humanities outside of "institutionally recognized work," the #transformDH manifesto makes the case that these fields are not just traditional academic fields bounded by scholarly definitions, but rather, dynamic areas of engagement within and outside of university walls.

Bo Ruberg picks up on this thread in their essay "Queer Indie Video Games as an Alternative Digital Humanities: Counterstrategies for Cultural Critique through Interactive Media." There, Ruberg locates a "form of digital humanities practice" within queer indie video games, and specifically, the way that queer game-makers engage humanistic questions around power and normativity. Indeed, these game-makers produce indie video games which not only represent LGBTQ characters and plotlines, but "take[] up issues of algorithms, systems, and abstraction" — issues of central importance to the digital humanities — "and repositions them within distinctly queer frameworks" (Ruberg 418). Thus, Ruberg argues that these queer indie video games ought to be understood as "a form of digital humanities and American studies scholarship." Through this argument, Ruberg shifts the location and presumed participants of digital humanities and American studies: from academic to media-maker; from writing to creating; and from scholarly conversation to games culture. Instead of locating digital humanities and American studies scholarship solely within academia, Ruberg points towards the broader network of media-makers engaged with the questions that those fields produce. In doing so, they redefine the digital humanities as a body of work which "will not be restricted to institutional academic spaces" (Bailey et. al).

I argue that Black and radical women of color feminist Tumblr can further help us relocate the digital humanities outside its traditional boundaries: it can show us how digital tools augment humanist and radical paradigms in the hands of users outside academic spaces. Here, I focus on the ways non-academic users help circulate images, quotes, and artwork of canonical Black and radical women of color. Specifically, I highlight clips from an interview with a Black queer mixed-race Tumblr user to show how Tumblr provides networks of critical digital pedagogy that exist outside of and parallel to traditional classroom spaces.

As I discuss in chapter 2, on Tumblr, quotes, images, and PDFs of books by figures like Angela Davis, Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Assata Shakur are frequently reblogged. Tumblr user Jillian White recalls the way in which her experiences encountering these women and their theories shaped her experiences. She remarks how she "didn't actually read Crenshaw until later," after first encountering her work on Tumblr, "so when the opportunity later did come to line read Crenshaw, I feel like I had a level of — a popular understanding of it, of intersectionality, and how it works in the world." She speaks at length about how frequently she experienced the dynamic of being exposed to a theorist on Tumblr, and then later exploring them more thoroughly in school. "Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*. That was a book that came to me through Tumblr. 'Oh, people keep sharing this enough and different passages too.'" Here, Tumblr has a kind of supplementary educational purpose: providing an introduction to theorists she would later line-read in classrooms, as well as exposing her to Black feminist theory that she had not yet sought out in school. It's no accident that so many people have shared excerpts from *Women, Race, and Class* on Tumblr: the circulation of Davis's critique of the race and class limitations of the historical white women's movement continues to resonate with contemporary divisions within the women's movement. Most recently, Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza wrote about her decision to attend the 2017 Women's March, which divided feminists of color over whether to support the largely white feminist protest (Garza). Thus, the book enjoys an ideological and political longevity online for its ability to historicize and contextualize contemporary divisions within feminism.

Speaking of her exposure to both Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa on Tumblr, Jillian says: "I got more into Audre Lorde through Tumblr because in a lot of black feminist, particularly queer black feminist spaces, she is super venerated… [I] got introduced to Audre

Lorde, pulled out my copy of *Sister Outsider*, and I think I had a much deeper experience reading it than when I read it in undergrad because I was reading it in a different type of community. And we were engaging with it in a way that wasn't structured like an academic classroom. It just felt more organic to be able to resonate with something online." In other words, Tumblr provided a different kind of reading community outside of a classroom space — one that, for Jillian, provided a deeper level of support. Her new understanding of *Sister Outsider* came from both rereading the text and from Tumblr itself, which offered a less structured, more free-flowing and organic space to understand the text. Thus, Tumblr represented a kind of alternative learning space where Jillian felt more free to explore the text in ways that resonated with her.

She expands on Tumblr's unique pedagogical opportunities when she contrasts her experiences reading Zora Neale Hurston in a college course versus on Tumblr. "People would post about Zora Neale Hurston's life, and that was really inspiring to me. And I had taken a class that was on Hurston and felt pretty well-read in her body of work. But something really shifted for me when I saw people circulating photos of her talking about her as this brilliant example of a black woman doing what she wanted to do, creating a path that hadn't existed before. Hearing her talked about that way made me revisit her work." In other words, posts on Tumblr reframed Zora Neale Hurston as a *person* — or as Jillian later puts it, a possibility model. She goes on: "[Tumblr] humanized her. I feel like sometimes what academia does is it can really reduce things. It can turn things into specific types of commodities...So I think that course on Hurston actually was really really amazing. But it was something totally different to not just be picking apart the book, not just picking apart the projects she did. But to see her as a person." Here, humanizing Zora Neale Hurston enables Jillian to "shift" her perspective on Hurston and feel personally "inspir[ed]" by her work, rather than analyzing her work from a distance. She

describes how the Tumblr posts *personalized* writers like Hurston: sharing photographs and quotes by them in informal space, making them seem like ordinary people in ways that differ from a traditional classroom emphasis on texts as such. The Tumblr material also *reframed* Hurston's life in ways that fostered connection and identification as a creative black woman forging her own path. While her academic classroom space provided important lessons, then, Tumblr's supplementary pedagogy added unique additional layers and meanings to her relationship with Hurston. Particularly, Tumblr encouraged Jillian to develop a relationship not only with Hurston's books and work, but with Hurston herself.

This creative reframing of Black and radical women of color feminists is one of Tumblr's most important contributions. Every time that figures like Zora Neale Hurston, Audre Lorde, and Gloria Anzaldúa are drawn, painted, written about, historicized, quoted, challenged, and recognized, Tumblr users create shared narratives which exceed the depersonalized study of these authors. Although quotation and citation are a significant proportion of these posts, equally important is their critical reframing as *real people* rather than "commodities." As Jillian's interview suggests, in addition to exposure, Tumblr user's presentation of women of color writers often captures different, more personal elements about their lives than traditional classrooms and can help develop more personal relationships with people and theories. Of course, Tumblr's pedagogical model brushes up on its limits when this personal exploration leads to a romantic idealization or reductive flattening of particular figures. Nevertheless, Tumblr's exposure and critical reframing of Black and radical women of color feminists' work, lives, and personhood represents a valuable contribution to social justice pedagogy.

We can see these uses of Tumblr as a kind of digital humanist praxis: one which "center[s] on the intersection of digital production and social transformation through research,

pedagogy, and activism, and that will not be restricted to institutional academic spaces" (Bailey et. al, 2016). Research, pedagogy, and activism: Tumblr posts incorporate research and citation of quotes and works by writers like Zora Neale Hurston; they aim to teach about these women's lives, and they promote material by underrepresented groups. These posts dynamically include all three elements: they use "digital production" *for* "social transformation." By expanding humanistic frameworks and paradigms — here, Black and Chicana queer feminisms — and using digital tools to amplify them, Tumblr helps transform small corners of public discourse. Thus, although this work does not emanate from an academic institution, falling outside the purvey of what traditionally counts as the digital humanities, women of color feminist Tumblr meets that very definition. As Jessica Marie Johnson writes, "People—those who have felt alone or maligned or those who have been marginalized or discriminated against or bullied—have used digital tools to survive and live. That's not academic. If there isn't a place for this type of work within what we are talking about as digital humanities, then I think we are having a faulty conversation" (Dinsman).

What's more, the impact of this non-academic work is far-reaching. Jillian credits Tumblr with encouraging her to pursue an advanced degree: "Tumblr pushed me to go back to school and expanded my idea of what I could study and how it could all fit together." Jillian returned to school for a Master's where she dove into many of the readings she was first exposed to on Tumblr, eventually going on to incorporate them into her life work as a creative documentarian and Brooklyn activist. Indeed, when we first met at the 2017 National Women's Studies Association conference, we connected over the ways that Tumblr had so dramatically impacted both of our lives. I told her about how finding *This Bridge Called My Back* on Tumblr, and getting exposed to women of color feminist Tumblr, had affected my own political identity

formation and eventual study. Both of our lives stand testament to the power of feminist political exposure via peer connection on social media.

By expanding the breadth of what *counts* as digital humanities, we define our priorities within the digital humanities: where our grants are allocated and what kinds of projects receive institutional support. It helps us strategically mobilize academic institutional resources towards important work happening outside of academia. By strategically mobilizing resources, scholars can contribute to a broad social good. If we can align our funding priorities more fully with our values, as a field, we are poised to do a tremendous amount of social good. We can facilitate this radical pedagogical work by mobilizing digital humanities resources towards uplifting and archiving these kinds of connections, conversations, and reframing posts. Understanding the value of this important and unique pedagogical work reframes normative understandings about *who* is doing digital humanities work *how* — as well as its potential reach and impact in the world. As interviewee Jillian states, "Tumblr is a really great example of what happens when you put something out into the world. It just takes a new life." If we think of people on Tumblr as doing digital humanities work, we move the digital humanities outside of a purely academic enterprise. We center non-specialist practitioners online — or rather, we recognize the special expertise practiced by Tumblr users like the ones Jillian discusses. Reframing the digital humanities through the lens of such practitioners productively destabilizes the academic-centered focus of the digital humanities as it is commonly understood. And such reframing can help reorient the digital humanities' values as an emerging field and shift energy and resources towards projects on the margins of what counts as digital humanities.

Although we must be careful of the institutionalization of any radical work (Ferguson), digital networks like women of color feminist Tumblr could benefit tremendously from

institutional resources in the right hands. We can look to examples such as the multi-university collaborative project called DocNow, a Mellon-funded tool to preserve the online Twitter conversation around the 2014 killing of Michael Brown and other "historically significant events" (Bergis et. al, 2). DocNow's white papers identify and offer solutions to the key challenges of preserving social media content, such as risk to creators, surveillance, and the sheer volume of content. This kind of proactive, funded archival project is very effective at bringing together key stakeholders and content creators with professional archivists and scholars to create synergy and make effective archives happen, and it is the kind of project which could be replicated to archive women of color feminist Tumblr blogs and posts. What is needed, then, are digital humanist scholar-practitioners who can work *with* and *for* such networks, learning from the ground-up what is needed and desired and bridging grassroots digital networks with institutional resources.

Visionary steps and longevity in the face of impermanence

But what if this transformation in digital humanities values never happens, or scholar-practitioners never bring this work to fruition? Although archiving women of color digital networks is important and possible, it is not yet a priority for those with access to institutional resources. It is a reality that despite our best efforts and intentions, these digital networks may never be preserved in their original form — or that such preservation work will materialize in the future, but not in time for *this* generation of digital networks, just as we lost GeoCities networks before then. Another path takes this real possibility into account, speculating and visioning around the redemptive narrative embedded in our possible failure.

If we turn from chasing institutional legibility and towards the history of women of color feminist organizing, we are, incredibly, confronted by the persistence of radical thought despite a lack of resources to archive and preserve it in officially sanctioned ways. I circle back to this chapter's opening list and, specifically, investigate how the genres of the list and bibliography turn up repeatedly across multiple decades of feminist of color organizing, asking: why lists? What is the rhetorical and political work that they do, and why do they reappear over and over again, evolving through new technologies and modes of dissemination? I argue that lists are world-making genres of thought which reappear throughout radical women of color organizing. They exemplify the persistence and reemergence of radical thought, and how without institutionally archiving it, radical thought perseveres.

Lists like the one that begins this chapter are rhetorical technologies. As a form of parataxis, they juxtapose different objects under the mantle of the list's title — for example, through a grouping of 20th century Chicana/o writers, or Asian American feminists, or "Sisters." But behind each list is a kind of theoretical work: the defining of who *counts*, who is worthy of being listed, and which canon of theorists will be put forward by any given list. For lists of marginalized information, then, lists are world-making tools that actively defy conventional, canonical, and exclusionary canons. They propose counter-canons and, in some cases, actively create new canons.

Appearing as bibliographies, recommended readings, resource round-ups, and lists of similar blogs, lists of all kinds act as access points for information. Bibliographies appear throughout radical women of color anthologies. For instance, in the first three editions of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, the last section is a ten-page bibliography: "Third World Women in the United States — By and About Us. A Selected

Bibliography" (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981). What follows is a series of subdivided lists: Third World Women in the U.S.: Anthologies and Collections; Third World Lesbians in the U.S.: Anthologies and Collections; followed by specific group lists: Afro-American Women — General, Afro-American Women Writers, Afro-American Lesbians, and so on for Asian/Pacific American women, Latinas, and Native American women. The final two lists are feminist and women's studies periodicals and small presses cited in *Bridge*.

The bibliography at the end of *This Bridge Called My Back*, like the anthology itself, can be read as a response to the absenting of women of color. Lists, like anthologies, are adopted as tools for marginalized communities: proof that they *do* in fact exist, and that there *are,* in fact, writings and literature by and about them. Putting together these disparate sources and readings creates a visual fullness, as if an index to an archive of literature about women of color. If the world-making potential of "radical women of color" takes place through the project of *Bridge*, it continues and fans out through the bibliography — the points of connection to the larger network of writings by radical women of color. Significantly, this is a collaborative network: the first footnote thanks Nellie Wong, Mitsuye Yamada, Merle Woo, Barbara Smith, Mirtha Quintanales, Gloria Anzaldua, and Doreen Drury for sharing their bibliographies (Anzaldúa and Moraga 251). And it also provides a roadmap for further discovery and connection: for example, another footnote recommends writing "Nellie Wong c/o Radical Women, 2661 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94110" for an extensive bibliography of Asian/Pacific women writers — "$1.75 for xeroxing, postage, and handling" (254) From a contemporary perspective, this note dates the bibliography to a time before the internet (and inflation) as we know it now — a kind of "digital decay" (Hui-Hui) in signification over time. But the note also personalizes the bibliography: it hearkens back to a living network of writers and readers who shared resources with each other.

The note invites the reader into the text, as it were, breaking down the boundaries between reader/writer by inviting the reader to reach out and connect.

Such not-for-profit and grassroots-centered lists differ substantially from Buzzfeed lists and the other corporate lists discussed in chapter two. Where the *Bridge* bibliography connects to a living community of artists and writers, Buzzfeed lists point, ultimately, towards increasing ad-revenue. The *Bridge* bibliography represents labor for other women of color, mediated through the profit of book sales but ultimately through a lesbian-centered and women of color-centered publishing platform (Persephone Press and Kitchen Table Press). Buzzfeed lists, on the other hand, rely upon a medium that is *not* run by or directly profiting women of color. Thus, while any given Buzzfeed list might be created by and read by women of color, the profit is ultimately mediated through white corporations.

Lists are also a way of attaining institutional legitimacy. In the *Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective,* a letter to Chicana activist and librarian Martha Cotera requests help compiling a bibliography for a University of Michigan class on Chicanas. In her personal correspondence to Martha Cotera, Yolanda Urbina writes: "Resources in terms of information are extremely limited. Our main problem is organizing a working bibliography on the Chicana, in general. Unless we can do this, the chances of getting the course through Women's Studies are slim" (Urbina). For the first college courses on Chicanas, bibliographies functioned as a way to prove the legitimacy and significance of Chicanas as a course topic. Once there was a working bibliography, the course could be taught. Without one, institutional spaces like college classrooms — even in putatively subversive spaces like women's studies and Chicano studies — would be off-limits. Yolanda Urbina's letter to Martha Cotera is part of the first generation of Chicana studies classes within themselves new women's studies and Chicano studies

departments. Thus, Urbina has to do two things. She must collect materials for her class, which was among the first of its kind, while simultaneously proving that there is enough material and content to merit a whole class. Thus, she must prove the existence of Chicana studies in order to teach a class on it. Urbina's bibliography therefore works its own world-making capacities: it not only creates the specific world of her Chicana class, but also legitimizes the broader written world of Chicana experiences.

Tumblr lists, such as *Angry Women of Color United*'s sister blogs, function in similar ways. They defy the invisibility of marginalized identities — not through lists of texts per se, but through hyperlinks to other Tumblrs, which provide images, videos, articles, and text. This field of visual representation directly works against the invisibilization of marginalized identities in mainstream media. Moreover, there is an immediacy to Tumblr lists that their print corollaries cannot match: instant access to every source by just clicking on the hyperlink. These lists bring not only resources, but also communities together. They make people feel seen and heard, and enable them access to resources and stories of people like them, which can be a source of identity support and reaffirmation online. Thus, communities create lists and lists create community.

Despite differences in purpose and publication, these different historical list forms share important similarities. First, although these lists are primarily meant for learning, they exist near but somewhat adjacent to or outside of mainstream institutions of learning. Yolanda Urbina's letter is meant to grant legitimacy to a fledgling Chicana studies course; *This Bridge Called My Back*'s bibliographies are compiled by artists and thinkers who are sometimes, but not always employed by universities; and *Angry Women of Color United*'s moderators identify themselves as undergraduates.

Second, each of these lists is a form of liminal knowledge-making. They respond to a desire to receive or share little-known information, since if the information was common knowledge, no list would be necessary. Thus, these lists respond to desires and needs that exist in a community that are not being met yet. As extra-institutional knowledge-making acts, they resemble *movidas*, Espinoza, Cotera, and Blackwell's term for Chicana political praxis: "*movida* often carries with it connotations of not only the strategic and tactical but also the undercover, the dissident, the illicit--that which is not part of approved and publicly acknowledged political strategies, histories, and economic and social relations." In other words, *movidas* represent "a mode of submerged and undercover activity" as well as "the generative 'other' of what is visible, accredited, and sanctioned and as a strategy of subversion" (Espinoza et. al, 2). Lists *as* movidas represent backchannel movements to share information as widely as possible — information that questions the very structures and institutions which have proven insufficient for the information's dissemination.

But lists are always breaking and becoming obsolete. As the list of Tumblrs at the start of this chapter demonstrates, lists — particularly of perishable digital items, like blogs — practically have built-in expiration dates. This is equally true of print bibliographies, which become outdated as newer texts become available and older texts fall out of print. Indeed, *This Bridge Called My Back*'s bibliographies are removed from the fourth and latest edition — a kind of extratextual detritus that falls away in consecutive iterations.

The reemergence of lists as a form in women of color feminist praxis corresponds with the precarity that women of color forms face. To be more specific: lists are considered liminal, adjacent and supplementary to the "real" work of a published monograph or anthology rather than valuable on their own terms. As long as lists are understood as transient resources rather

than important texts in themselves, lists – and the labor behind them – will continue to be shortchanged. In the academy, this is particularly tied to the division of labor between academic faculty and faculty librarians. While projects and resources are key forms that women of color use to disseminate knowledge, these forms of knowledge are seen as less-than. In an institutional knowledge hierarchy in which the published monograph and peer-reviewed article are prized above all, projects and resources are shortchanged and unsupported, no matter how far they travel or how much hidden intellectual work goes behind them (Cotera 2018). Thus, lists are always disappearing because they are devalued within an intellectual labor hierarchy – and this disappearance disproportionately affects women of color, who often perform this invisible work.

The continual disappearance of lists, and blogs more generally, can create despair. Their disappearance represents the continued disappearance of the contingent feminist of color labor behind such lists and resources. Every generation makes its own lists all over again. We make resources and then they break or become obsolete. Like Sisyphus, we push the rock up the hill, only to have to do it again, and again: an extra, unpaid and unacknowledged labor by women of color feminists and other list-making, marginalized communities.

And yet, things survive beyond their mere digital reproduction or continued digital life. We often believe that the *object* we create is the primary thing of importance: that if we lose an essay, a blog, or a book, we lose its value forever. But what if it's the *energy* of that object — its connection to real people, to movements, to changing people's thoughts and beliefs — that matters most? I contend that it is an object's energy, not its continued material existence, that bumps the needle forward indelibly toward progress. It is this energy, connection, and movement, and not preservation in an archive, that ultimately that makes it possible for new generations to pick up where the work left off.

What I'm calling energy has two components: emotional and political energy. Emotional energy corresponds with the flash of recognition in something that speaks to us: the spark of feeling mirrored. Political energy corresponds with a gradual awakening to the larger world of social inequality and our responsibility within it. In Jillian White's interview, emotional energy is ignited when she recognizes herself in Zora Neale Hurston's life. Political energy is ignited in Jillian's decision to go back to school and embrace her path as an activist and creative documentarian. Neither of these activations requires those Zora Neale Hurston Tumblr posts to stay online — indeed, she hasn't referred back to them since. Rather, it's the post's energetic qualities, alongside her own life experiences and choices, which lives on through her political awakening.

To be sure, this is not an anti-archive argument. Archives that capture radical women of color organizing in all mediums, as well as digital organizing by marginalized groups, are urgently needed. Important things *are* lost if we fail to archive this material. The specific trajectories of ideas, like intersectionality, which eventually go mainstream can't be traced backwards without the digital history alongside the longer print history. The resurgence in popularity of figures like Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, and Angela Davis cannot be fully understood or contextualized without deep analysis of the way these women's work travels through digital mediums. And our ability to write a political history of the present moment will be limited if we lose our archives every ten years to digital decay and platform turnover.

But at a deeper level, significant things remain even if we lose the archive: what I call the energetic quality of these digital political interventions. Unlike the data stored on a Tumblr server, the new understandings that people come to when they are exposed to this work does not and cannot disappear. Blogs, links, and resource round-ups come and go, but each of these things

indelibly leave their mark on our consciousness. They change *us* somehow, even if they disappear from their technological home. The energy and connection sparked in readers moves forward with or without the preservation of the specific links, round-ups, and bibliographies that first open our eyes. Thus, while it's important to archive and to get the importance of this digital work out there, the work finds its own paths forward without institutional preservation.

For example, the act of list-making — the technology of the list, as it were — is a knowledge-making *movida* that has reappeared through consecutive generations of feminist of color organizing. But lists have not reappeared because Tumblr users were inspired by Yolanda Urbina's Chicana syllabus, or even by *This Bridge Called My Back*'s bibliographies — neither of these texts enjoy sufficient circulation to be a direct model for contemporary work on Tumblr. Rather, Tumblr feminist of color lists, as in the 1970s and 1980s, are a response to gaps and omissions in the dominant narratives. But differently from the 1970s and 1980s, Tumblr users today have access to the material works *and* energetic quality of earlier organizing — the shifts in the cultural imagination that enable more and more people to question the dominance of particular racial and gender narratives. Like a snowball down a mountain, this work is cumulative. Indeed, it's precisely the creation of projects like Chicana por mi Raza and its *archiving* of Chicana feminist lists which shows us just how far back lists as a technology go. Yolanda Urbina's correspondence may have only been archived recently, but the broader impulse to make lists continues today — not out of direct *inspiration* from the past, but out of the continued invisibility which demand lists as a response. In other words, despite vastly different political and technological moments, the work's form remains strikingly similar.

What lives, then, is the energetic resurgence and the liminal knowledge-making of technologies like lists. Radical thought reappears time and time again in different contexts and

through different generations. Even when the history is not recorded or transmitted, the technology and the energy lives and perseveres *even when the history does not* because of archival silences and more. This, then, provides a fundamentally optimistic rereading of the 404 error. Blogs may become lost to the server, but they are not disappeared, not gone without a trace. The page that's now a 404 is never really gone if it touched even one person: it's in their store consciousness now, ready to be activated again by the next list, and the next list, and the next (Hanh).

This is also a perspective against technological and institutional absolutism: the belief that if the technology breaks, or if the institution or grant won't fund our archive, that the work is lost. The reemergence of radical energy puts power and self-determination back into our hands. Our work is valuable even when, even if, it disappears. Such a perspective importantly contrasts the logic of an institutional archive, which exercises its canon-forming power through the promise (or lure) of eternal preservation. If archives tell us that they are powerful because what they keep is forever, then the belief that *ideas* can be powerful even when their objects are not kept forever, is a threatening one indeed. It suggests that the creation of a digital women of color feminist archive is not the sole or most important indicator of its continuance.

That ideas can be preserved through communities, through oral history, and through generational sharing instead of merely through archives is to recognize the alternative and often grassroots trajectories that marginalized knowledges take. It is to recognize how African dance forms persist in African American dance, even though no institutional archive preserved African dance across the Atlantic. It is to recognize how indigenous healing practices are preserved and practiced without archives or other Western institutions to validate their existence. Indeed, women of color feminist Tumblr is different even than these forms of knowledge-preservation

and generational memory. Women of color feminist Tumblr users are not part of the same community, and have no natural[ized] connection or loyalty to one another. Instead of memory per se, theirs is a kind of accretive re-remembering of our collective roots as political beings. An active identity- and world-creation around a belief in the interconnectedness of shared histories of colonization and oppression.

This *movida* productively decenters institutional archives, which, for all their importance and their potential adaptability towards radical ends, nevertheless always exercise power through what is kept and what is not. If archives are not the end-all be-all of preservation — even for scholars in academia — then we can uplift forms of community memory and generational transmission that do not often get captured within institutional archives. And we can see that revolutionary thought persists, even when its persistence is invisible: that it may eventually show up again in the most unexpected and delightful places to capture and touch a new, bigger group of people.

This dynamic plays out in the work of queer Salvadoran-American street artist Johanna Toruño, whose posters from *The Unapologetically Brown Series* appear throughout the streets of New York City. In an interview for Nylon, Toruño recalls being incarcerated at 15 and spending the next three years on probation, during which time she "started to read about everything: the Black Panther Party, the Black Revolution, black and brown folks joining together and fighting a lot of the same fights—differently, of course" (Acevedo). She expressed her growing politicization through a desire to create space and representation for queer people of color in public. *The Unapologetically Brown Series* was born when Toruño began to glue bright, colorful posters with messages of empowerment onto bus stops, subways, and building walls in the city. Featuring messages about police brutality, brown skin, and Palestinian sovereignty (Toruño, a),

these posters also explicitly draw from activist lineages, with other posters featuring the faces and words of Angela Davis (Toruño, b), Assata Shakur (Toruño, c), and Audre Lorde (Toruño, d). Importantly, her street posters are temporary art installations: in a matter of days or weeks, they are often defaced or torn down. But it is their presence, rather than their longevity, that matters — they represent a kind of loud reclamation of public space for queer, brown, radical politics. Toruño's artwork represents not only the reemergence of radical thought through its inspiration in theorists like Davis, Shakur, and Lorde, but also an argument for the power of what is only temporary. Like Tumblr user posts which exceed the boundaries of traditional classrooms, Toruño's art exceeds the boundaries of the gallery wall or the library archive, and as a result, reaches viewers who would otherwise never benefit from or be challenged by its messages. Further, like Tumblr user posts which currently live outside the boundaries of what "counts" as feminist pedagogy, Toruño's do-it-yourself and non-institutional approach to street art exceeds the boundaries of what is institutionally funded and preserved. Thus, rather than aiming for longevity and permanence, *The Unapologetically Brown Series* carries forward the emotional and political energy of its political antecedents in an intentionally temporary public artform.

Now, with the history in front of us — building projects like Chicana por mi Raza, reading *This Bridge Called My Back*, and comparing modes and technologies then and now — we can see how all along, that ripple of activist energy extending outward never stopped, never left, never disappeared or died, but has been moving us gently forward towards liberation all the time.

WORKS CITED

"Adult Content." *Tumblr Help Center*, tumblr.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/231885248-Sensitive-content.

Alzate González, Jennifer. "Interview with Jillian White." 13 Mar. 2018.

@amnestyinternational. "Every 30 seconds, a woman is abused or harassed on #ToxicTwitter. The numbers say it all. http://amn.st/6017EJ1bl." *Twitter*, 18 Dec. 2018, 9:07 AM. twitter.com/amnesty/status/1075014570081746944

Amnesty International USA, "Crowdsourced Twitter Study Reveals Shocking Scale of Online Abuse against Women." 18 Dec. 2018, www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/crowdsourced-twitter-study-reveals-shocking-scale-of-online-abuse-against-women/.

Bailey, Moya Z. "All the digital humanists are white, all the nerds are men, but some of us are brave." *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1.1 (2011).

Bailey, Moya, et. al, "Reflections on a Movement: #transformDH, Growing Up," in Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016 Print Edition.

Bergis, Jules, et al. *Documenting The Now White Paper: Ethical Considerations for Archiving Social Media Content Generated by Contemporary Social Movements: Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations*. DocNow, 2018, pp. 1–12.

"Binders Full of Women and Nonbinary People of Color." *Facebook*.

Blackwell, Maylei. *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, University of Texas Press, 2015.

"Black Women in History." *Black Women in History*, blackwomenworldhistory.tumblr.com/.

Brianna, and G. "Sisters." *Angry Women of Color, United*, angrywocunited.tumblr.com/Sisters%20.

Butler, Judith. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University Press, 2018.

Butler, Judith. "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics." *AIBR. Revista De Antropología Iberoamericana*, vol. 04, no. 03, 2009, pp. i-xiii., doi:10.11156/aibr.040303e.

Captain, Sean. "The Frantic, Unprecedented Race to Save 700,000 NSFW Tumblrs for Posterity." *Fast Company*, 14 Dec. 2018, www.fastcompany.com/90279321/the-frantic-unprecedented-race-to-save-700000-nsfw-tumblr-for-posterity.

Chapa, Olivia "Evey." "Olivia "Evey" Chapa - Part 3." Interview by Maria Cotera. *Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective.*

Cotera, Maria. "'Invisibility Is an Unnatural Disaster': Feminist Archival Praxis after the Digital Turn." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 114, no. 4, 2015, pp. 781–801., doi:10.1215/00382876-3157133.

Cotera, María Eugenia. "Nuestra Autohistoria: Toward a Chicana Digital Praxis." *American Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2018, pp. 483–504., doi:10.1353/aq.2018.0032.

Espinoza, Dionne, et al. “Introduction: Movements, Movimientos, and Movidas.” *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, University of Texas Press, 2018.

fatgrrrls. *Fat Grrrl Activism*, fat-grrrl-activism.tumblr.com/.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Fletcher, Dan. “Yahoo! Pulls Plug on GeoCities, Erases Internet History.” *TIME.com*, 9 Nov. 2009, http://content.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1936645,00.html.

“Funded Projects Query Form.” *Program: Digital Humanities Advancement Grants*, National Endowment for the Humanities, securegrants.neh.gov/publicquery/main.aspx?q=1&a=0&n=0&o=0&ot=0&k=0&f=0&s=0&cd=0&p=1&pv=311&d=0&y=0&prd=0&cov=0&prz=0&wp=0&ob=year&or=DESC.

Garza, Alicia. “Our Cynicism Will Not Build a Movement. Collaboration Will.” *Neighborhood Funders Group*, 7 Dec. 2018, www.nfg.org/news/our-cynicism-will-not-build-movement-collaboration-will.

Glassman, Julia. “Stop Speaking For Us: Women-of-Color Bloggers, White Appropriation, and What Librarians Can Do About It.” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012.

Gottsegen, Gordon. “GeoCities Dies in March 2019, and with It a Piece of Internet History.” *CNET*, CNET, 2 Oct. 2018, www.cnet.com/news/geocities-dies-in-march-2019-and-with-it-a-piece-of-internet-history/.

Greco, Lachrista. “Anyone else deal with chronic revictimization and hypervigilance? ✋… #trauma #socialmedia #rape#hypervigilance #revictimization,” *Instagram*, 26, May. 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bx8eKSmgfVe/.

Greco, Lachrista. *Guerilla Feminism*, Internet Archive Wayback Machine, 2016, web.archive.org/web/20160324232632/https://guerrillafeminism.org/.

Greco, Lachrista. *Guerilla Feminism*, 2019, guerrillafeminism.org/.

Greenspan, Brian. “Are Digital Humanists Utopian?” *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 393–409.

Gutiérrez y Muhs, Gabriella, et. al, editors. *Presumed Incompetent: the Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. University Press of Colorado, 2012.

Hanh, Thich Nhat. “The Four Layers of Consciousness.” *Lion's Roar*, 26 Dec. 2018, www.lionsroar.com/the-four-layers-of-consciousness/.

Hartman, Saidiya. “Venus in Two Acts.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 26, June 2008, pp. 1–14., doi:10.2979/sax.2008.-.26.1.

Horrigan, J (2007) ‘A Typology of Information and Communication Technology Users’, Pew Internet and American Life, 6 May, URL (consulted May 2019): http://www.pewinternet.

Hu, Tung-Hui. *A Pre-History of the Cloud*. MIT Press, 2015.

InternetLiveStats. “Total Number of Websites.” *Total Number of Websites - Internet Live Stats*, 26 May 2019, www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/.

Jackson, Sarah J, et al. “#GirlsLikeUs: Trans Advocacy and Community Building Online.” *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 5, 2018, pp. 1868–1888., doi:10.1177/1461444817709276.

Johnson, Jessica Marie, "#FemFuture, History & Loving Each Other Harder." *Diaspora Hypertext, the Blog*. 12 Apr. 2013, dh.jmjafrx.com/2013/04/12/femfuture-history-loving-each-other-harder/.

Keane, Sean, "Instagram estimated to be worth more than $100 billion." *Cnet*. 26 June 2018, cnet.com/news/instagram-estimated-to-be-worth-more-than-100-billion/

Koebler, Jason, and Samantha Cole. *Apple Sucked Tumblr Into Its Walled Garden, Where Sex Is Bad*. VICE, 3 Dec. 2018, www.vice.com/en_us/article/a3mjxg/apple-tumblr-porn-nsfw-adult-content-banned.

Kopytoff, Verne. "5 Worst Internet Acquisitions of All Time." *Fortune*, 2013, fortune.com/2013/05/21/5-worst-internet-acquisitions-of-all-time/.

Kyong Chun, Wendy Hui, et al. "The Dark Side of the Digital Humanities." *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 493–509.

Manjoo, Farhad. "How GeoCities Invented the Modern Internet." *Slate Magazine*, Slate, 27 Oct. 2009, slate.com/technology/2009/10/how-geocities-invented-the-modern-internet.html.

Marshall, Rosalie. "Yahoo Closing Geocities Web Hosting Service." *Vmunet*, 24 Apr. 2009, web.archive.org/web/20090426073628/http://www.vnunet.com/vnunet/news/2241092/yahoo-closing-geocities.

Martin, Courtney E., and Vanessa Valenti. *#FemFuture: Online Revolution*. The Barnard Center for Research on Women, 15 Apr. 2013, bcrw.barnard.edu/publications/femfuture-online-revolution/.

Mcpherson, Tara. “Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation.” *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, 2012, pp. 139–160., doi:10.5749/minnesota/9780816677948.003.0017.

Moraga Cherríe, and Anzaldúa Gloria, editors. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981.

“Native Women Rock.” *Native Women Rock*, nativewomenrock.tumblr.com/.

Nixon, Charisse. “Current Perspectives: the Impact of Cyberbullying on Adolescent Health.” *Adolescent Health, Medicine and Therapeutics*, vol. 5, Aug. 2014, pp. 143–158., doi:10.2147/ahmt.s36456.

“Not found.” *Oppressed Brown Girls Doing Things*, oppressedbrowngirlsdoingthings.tumblr.com/

PoC with Disabilities, pocwithdisabilities.tumblr.com/.

Preserving Our Digital Heritage: The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program 2010 Report. Library of Congress, 2011, pp. i-136.

Romano, Aja. “Tumblr Is Banning Adult Content. It’s about so Much More than Porn.” *Vox*, 17 Dec. 2018, www.vox.com/2018/12/4/18124120/tumblr-porn-adult-content-ban-user-backlash.

Roth, Benita. “The Emergence and Development of Racial/Ethnic Feminisms in the 1960s and 1970s.” *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Ruberg, Bonnie. “Queer Indie Video Games as an Alternative Digital Humanities: Counterstrategies for Cultural Critique through Interactive Media.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2018, pp. 417–438., doi:10.1353/aq.2018.0029.

Springer, Kimberly. “Radical Archives and the New Cycles of Contention.” Viewpoint Magazine, 13 Jan. 2018, www.viewpointmag.com/2015/10/31/radical-archives-and-the-new-cycles-of-contention/.

Stoler, Ann Laura. “On Archiving as Dissensus.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2018, pp. 43–56., doi:10.1215/1089201x-4389967.

Toruño, Johanna, a. “Unapologetic Street Series (@Theunapologeticallybrownseries).” *Instagram*, www.instagram.com/theunapologeticallybrownseries/.

Toruño, Johanna, b. “‘Dr. Angela Davis with our “Angela” poster/print ...” *Unapologetically Brown Series*, Instagram, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bqn5Qyqj3V6/.

Toruño, Johanna, c. “‘Happy Birthday Assata...” *Unapologetically Brown Series*, Instagram, 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BlTL3PVATPL/.

Toruño, Johanna, d. “‘Happy Birthday Audre Lorde. A True Ancestor of This Work - the Guide & One That Has Helped Shaped the Blueprint. A Warrior.” *Unapologetically Brown Series*, Instagram, 2019, www.instagram.com/p/BuCnTSpD4lH/.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press, 2015.

Urbina, Yolanda. “Maria Cotera.” Received by Martha Cotera, 1974, Ann Arbor, MI. Correspondence. Accessed via Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective.

Wong, Julia Carrie. “White nationalists are openly operating on Facebook. The company won’t act.” Tech, *The Guardian*, 21 Nov 2019.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation analyzes women of color feminist Tumblr as a digital network through which women of color feminist authors, texts, and anthologies travel. By sharing artwork, photographs, quotes, and PDFs featuring women of color feminist authors and ideas, Tumblr users engage an intentional citational and pedagogical practice. Tens of thousands of posts comprise this virtual feminist network, which harnesses social media as an alternative feminist classroom space. Such a space engages the contradictions of emancipatory feminist pedagogy on for-profit social networking sites. On the one hand, women of color feminist texts that circulate on Tumblr are able to travel far further than the typical university feminist classroom, reaching more users who might not otherwise access such theories. On the other hand, the very circulation of such texts is complicit in, or at least beholden to, less savory aspects of digital capital — the erasure of feminist of color labor (Adair and Nakamura), as well as the frequent verbal harassment of users, the ephemerality of social media content, and the for-profit nature of the very platforms that they exist on. What sense can we make of this contradiction?

I began this project navigating a similarly uncomfortable contradiction, which was this: that while *This Bridge Called My Back* was cited as foundational to a number of fields, scholars rarely engaged with it as a theoretical text in and of itself. Scholars close to Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga echoed this sentiment. In 1991, ten years after the anthology's publication,

Norma Alarcón argued that while *Bridge* had "problematized many a version of Anglo-American feminism… the impact among most Anglo-American theorists appear[ed] to be more cosmetic than not," and that "*Bridge*'s challenge to the Anglo-American subject of feminism ha[d] yet to effect a newer discourse" (Alarcon 357-8).

In 2000, with the publication of *Methodology of the Oppressed,* Chela Sandoval picked up this thread. There, Sandoval's comparative analyses argued for the compatibility and necessity of reading U.S. third world feminist theories alongside more recognizably academic theories such as Frederic Jameson's postmodernism and Althusser's theory of ideology. Sandoval was in part motivated by her belief that "the social movement that was 'U.S. third world feminism' has yet to be fully understood by social theorists," (Sandoval 42) and that "the shift in paradigm… represented in the praxis of U.S. third world feminism, was bypassed and ignored" (47). Sandoval's proposed corrective, then, would finally reveal that shift in paradigm to the larger feminist and social theorist academic community.

But by 2012, Analouise Keating — who coedited *this bridge called home* with Anzaldúa and published her work posthumously — found that *This Bridge Called My Back* was *still* being theoretically shortchanged. Observing that *Bridge's* "impact on the development and interpretation of twentieth-century feminist scholarship has been much less extensive than its iconic status would suggest," Keating argued that "while the book is referenced in order to illustrate a shift in mainstream feminism, it is not used to theorize or to further develop these alterations" (Keating 31). Her book *Transformation Now!* corrects this tendency through detailed close-readings of *Bridge* which form the backbone of her proposal to move past the binary oppositional stalemates of intersectionality and into what she calls a "metaphysics of interconnectedness" (30).

What Alarcón, Sandoval, and Keating's arguments about *This Bridge Called My Back* share is a sense of injury about how little it had been engaged beyond the surface-level — and a deep commitment to correcting the theoretical record. Together, these three theorists issued their own response to *Bridge*'s erasure: identifying the erasure and then developing new arguments, theoretical models, and paradigms from the interventions that *Bridge* had made.

I began this project in much the same vein, seeking to show that even if *Bridge* had been theoretically shortchanged in the academy, it had found renewed life online. I gleefully observed the contradiction between *Bridge*'s regular citation (without deeper engagement) in fields such as queer of color critique, and its high circulation on Tumblr — and not only its circulation, but also the ways in which Tumblr users expressed deep affective attachment to *Bridge* and other women of color feminist texts. I believed that Tumblr users were "getting it right," and aimed to show how new theoretical models for *digital* feminist praxis could be drawn from *This Bridge Called My Back* and other women of color feminist texts.

And I accomplished as much. Through a commitment to the comparative mode, my project identifies the synchronicities and divergences between Tumblr and earlier models of women of color feminism. Indeed, this project demonstrates how such earlier theorists comprise a foundational center for this diffuse network — a shared analytical backbone which helps define and ground the space. Each chapter functions as a meeting point between contemporary political formations on Tumblr and their hailing of older women of color feminist theories, modes, and praxes. Throughout, I analyze how the contemporary moment imaginatively hails and organizes around the past one — as well as updates, revises, and transforms it.

But I would be remiss not to admit that my perspective on *Bridge* and its status in the academy has shifted. This shift began at the 2017 National Women's Studies Association, where

I issued an informal poll to everyone I met that weekend. I asked all that would listen one simple question: Do you teach *This Bridge Called My Back*? Although my sample size was too small to hold any weight, I couldn't help but rethink my beliefs when I was met with unanimous affirmative responses. Even if the contemporary scholarship that I read wasn't visibly deep in conversation with *Bridge*, teachers certainly were.

My perspective continued to shift as I wrote my first two chapters, which delve most deeply into the theories and praxis which women of color feminist Tumblr shares with women of color feminism. These chapters showed me how deeply this Tumblr community was indebted to texts like *Bridge* — often, perhaps, without knowing it. Indeed, these chapters demonstrate how much the ethics of women of color feminist Tumblr as a digital classroom space — its commitment to accessibility, deep listening, constant political growth, and experience as the home of theory — derive from praxes first offered up by women of color feminist texts. This troubled my theory that *Bridge* wasn't being properly theorized, because if anything, I was writing about how *Tumblr* was theorizing — and practicing! — *Bridge*'s central claims.

I have realized, then, that my sense of injury around *Bridge*'s treatment in academia stemmed from a certain kind of theoretical insecurity: a belief that if *Bridge* wasn't theorized enough by academics, then it didn't matter, or had been forgotten somehow. I have been forced to give up this belief in the face of the overwhelming evidence of my own dissertation. *Bridge is* being theorized extensively and shared constantly — online. And if one truly cares about the non-academic circulation of radical thought as much as I profess to, then this digital, accessible, peer-led circulation must count for equal (if not more) weight as more traditional academic theoretical circulation. Thus, while my work is indebted to Alarcón, Sandoval, and Keating — and while I believe that dozens more articles and books could ensue from yet-unexplored

interventions in *Bridge* and other anthologies — I ultimately conclude something altogether different than them. Where they see a lack of engagement, I see a plethora of engagement. (Indeed, tens of thousands of reblogs.) Where they mourn *Bridge*'s lack of effect on the larger feminist sphere, I cite dozens of users who express the deep impact that the book has had on their lives.

Ultimately, I have abandoned all sense of injury, right or wrong as it may have been — and there are arguments on both sides. Instead, I now place all my attention on this non-academic circulation of women of color feminist texts and offer this dissertation as indisputable proof that the theoretical power of such anthologies holds as much weight as it ever has. Indeed, my dissertation suggests that *Bridge* continues to reach an even wider theoretical stage — functioning in and outside the classroom as a book which touches feminist students and life-long learners, who then go on to participate in social movements and the world at large.

My first chapter theorizes how coalitional women of color feminist anthologies inform Tumblr feminist of color discourse through both form and praxis. Through strategies such as decentering individual authors and articulating multi-identity subjectivity, I trace how women of color feminist Tumblr both imagines and expands the praxis imagined by women of color feminist anthologies. Chapter two analyzes a literal point of convergence between both feminist of color generations: the circulation of earlier women of color feminist texts on Tumblr, including quotes, images, and PDFs. In it, I show how current events such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement have led to increased interest in reading and being exposed to women of color feminist, and especially Black feminist, thought and analysis. My third chapter hones in on one particular Tumblr blog, *Women of Color, in Solidarity*, and its work to translate feminist of color theories into forms that are recognizable and intelligible on Tumblr. This

translating into the digital vernacular expands the kinds of audiences that women of color feminist theories reach. Finally, my fourth chapter analyzes women of color feminist Tumblr's precarity, drawing from research on current digital archival practices as well as historical precedents for women of color feminist precarity.

Ultimately, I argue that women of color feminist Tumblr mirrors and transforms the *theories, praxis,* and *form* of women of color feminism. Theoretically, women of color feminist Tumblr heavily reblogs and shares images, artwork, quotes, and PDFs of women of color feminist theories. With the number of shares reaching as high as tens of thousands, this citational praxis increases access to the intellectual history of women of color feminism by remediating it onto social media. Supplementing and sometimes bypassing more traditional ways of encountering women of color feminism, such as in classrooms, such online sharing represents a peer-to-peer model of information exchange. These horizontal pedagogical modes encourage more vulnerable forms of sharing, such as exclamations about a book's personal significance. These pedagogical modes also increase investment in reading the history of women of color feminist thought. By circulating quotes from books and images of authors which users identify with, women of color feminist Tumblr creates affective resonances between users and texts. Thus, users come to recognize women of color feminism's continued explanatory power in the present moment.

Women of color feminist Tumblr also expands the praxis of women of color feminism. Its anonymized and decentralized nature, a trait particular to Tumblr, encourages a diversification of voices. This anonymization and decentralization, along with the demographics of Tumblr, leads to increased online publishing by young and non-professional feminists, particularly college students. Furthermore, Tumblr users' open displays of strong affect around

women of color feminist texts elaborates upon Cherríe Moraga's theory in the flesh. This affective ownership of women of color feminist texts, especially *This Bridge Called My Back*, is made possible by a political project which rejects the mind/body split. Women of color feminist Tumblr uses' open emoting dovetails with the centrality of concepts like emotion, heart, and connection to Anzaldúa and Moraga's feminist of color praxis.

Finally, women of color feminist Tumblr's form itself mirrors earlier women of color feminist writings, and particularly the anthologies. Tumblr's multi-genre nature hearkens back to women of color feminist anthologies, which featured artwork, poetry, interviews, essays, and more. At the same time, Tumblr blasts open the limitations of print, making images and short quotes much more central to the circulation of women of color feminist ideas online. Similarly, women of color feminist Tumblr echoes older forms of subjectivity through its additive lists of identities — queer, fat, spiritual, and Puerto Rican in one example — and their reconciliation. At the same time, women of color feminist Tumblr expands its articulations of subjectivity by expanding the range of identities that are taken up in its politics while decentering race and gender.

Women of color feminist Tumblr is a salient, but ultimately singular community on social media. In expanded iterations of this project, I would track the presence of women of color feminist networks on multiple social media platforms, as well as platform changes over time. Because my fourth chapter chronicles the fall of Tumblr as a platform and the precarity of social media networks more broadly, it begs the question: What are the new platforms for women of color feminist mobilization? How do such networks look on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter? Which specifics of *those* platform architectures structure the forms of communication and community-building of their respective women of color feminist networks? Of particular note is

Tumblr's "practical barriers to research... including lack of metadata and access to big data" (Attu and Terras 528). By comparison, other platforms lend themselves better to digital humanities data-based projects. While close-reading and comparative analysis bear significant interpretive fruit, they ultimately fall short of what is possible with new digital humanities tools, which model different ways of analyzing and visualizing women of color feminist networks.

Another compelling angle would be to interview users across platforms. This would show us the number of users are new to women of color feminist networks compared to the number of users that are long-standing members of women of color feminist networks, and have simply migrated from platform to platform over time. Once a user is plugged into a women of color feminist network on one platform, how likely are they to continue to participate on another platform? Interviewing more users would also allow us to investigate the relationship between online education and real-life activism. Do users who follow or participate in women of color feminist Tumblr go on to attend protests, read contemporary radical thinkers, or support present-day social movements? Such ethnographic work would flesh out the stakes of such networks, including what their effect is not just on online discourse, but on the real-life decisions behind users' political participation.

Ultimately, spaces like women of color feminist Tumblr show us that feminist theory translates online through the right means. Tumblrs translate feminist theory by remediating women of color feminist praxis into forms which are legible online.

For this reason, this dissertation has implications beyond scholarly ones. Still more work is needed to share the words, wisdom, and examples of previous feminist of color social activism to younger generations. For instance, while spaces like Tumblr have successfully popularized the writings and legacy of theorists like Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherríe

Moraga, there are many more texts, theorists, and organizations than just these. As researchers recover and write more histories of feminist of color activism, it is imperative to communicate these findings beyond the form of specialized journal articles hidden behind paywalls. Such work must be multi-pronged, taking place at the university classroom level, in activist spaces, and through modes like social media. Just like women of color feminist Tumblr users translate women of color feminist theories into Tumblr speak, I hope to extend the pedagogical reach of such crucial work through new ways in the future.

Contemporary social movements such as the Movement for Black Lives and the #MeToo movement have increased the visibility of intersectional feminist ideas and histories (Hobson, Khan-Cullor, Roberts). For this reason, figures from women of color feminism have emerged (and continue to act) as truth-speakers, activist heroes, and guiding intellectuals for a new generation. Networks like women of color feminist Tumblr play the important role of spreading such messages. By reaching into more and more corners of the internet, particularly social media, awareness and familiarity with women of color feminist authors spreads. Thus, Tumblr spaces such as these represent a cutting-edge where young people learn the histories of feminism and the mechanics of systems of oppression.

Adopting such public feminist modes is a way of bridging the boundaries of our feminist classrooms and scholarship. Lifting up the work of spaces like women of color feminist Tumblr brings attention to the still understudied digital places that feminism gets taught, shared, passed on. But most importantly, it affirms these digital spaces' real practices of pedagogy and the real theoretical and practical impact that they have.

WORKS CITED

Adair, Cassius, and Lisa Nakamura. “The Digital Afterlives of *This Bridge Called My Back*: Woman of Color Feminism, Digital Labor, and Networked Pedagogy.” *American Literature*, vol. 89, no. 2, June 2017, pp. 255–278., doi:10.1215/00029831-3861505.

Alarcón, Norma. “The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism.” *Criticism in the Borderlands*, 1991, pp. 28–40., doi:10.1215/9780822382355-005.

Attu, Rose, and Melissa Terras. “What People Study When They Study Tumblr.” *Journal of Documentation*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2017, pp. 528–554., doi:10.1108/jd-08-2016-0101.

Bailey, Moya, et al. “ Reflections on a Movement: #TransformDH, Growing Up.” *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Lauren F Klein and Matthew K Gold, 2016.

Dinsman, Melissa, and Jessica Marie Johnson. “The Digital in the Humanities: An Interview with Jessica Marie Johnson.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 23 July 2016.

Ferguson, Roderick A. *The Reorder of Things: the University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. University Of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Keating, AnaLouise. *Transformation Now!: Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change*. Univ. of Ill. Press, 2013.

Khan-Cullors, Patrisse, and Asha Bandele. *When They Call You a Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir*. Canongate, 2017.

Roberts, Frank Leon. "'We Could Be Free': (Fall 2017 Course Version)." *Black Lives Matter Syllabus*, 2017, www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com/black-lives-matter-fall-2017/.

Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008.