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Cover Page Footnote

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Staying Home While Studying Abroad: Anti-Imperial Praxis for Globalizing Feminist Visions

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Abstract: This paper hinges on the recognition that when study-abroad opportunities are presented and perceived as a means of access to global perspectives on women and gender, they reduce the problem of US-centrism in Women's Studies to a geographic rather than an epistemic limitation. According to this logic, physical travel away from the United States can serve as an effective method for overcoming US-centrism and attending to the "global," a curricular strategy that Chandra Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander call "the cartographic rule of the transnational as always 'elsewhere'" (Mohanty and Alexander 2010, 33). This cartographic rule reinforces hegemonic representations of the United States as a unified "modern" white/Anglo nation against which the culturally Other terrain of the "global" becomes understandable. As such, the study-abroad approach to internationalizing US Women's Studies relies on the re-erasure of US Women of Color genealogies and epistemologies that disrupt the white/Anglo cultural assumptions grounding the field's central category of "woman/women." If challenging US-centrism in US Women's Studies is meant to dismantle the white/Anglo monocultural perspective of US imperialism, I argue that the geographic travel imperative of "study abroad" must be tempered by a re-inhabitation of the field through the radical genealogies and epistemologies of US Women of Color, a strategy I call the anti-imperial feminist praxis of "staying home."

Keywords: women of color, global feminism, study abroad, women's studies

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Efforts to internationalize US Women's Studies programs and departments increasingly entail institutionalizing study abroad as part of the curriculum. Although not explicitly tourist in their orientation, such university study-abroad programs attract predominantly white/Anglo students whose participation is often motivated by a desire to gain a careerist advantage in the global marketplace and/or to "satisfy a desire to travel and to have fun" (Salisbury 2010, 43; Jessup-Anger 2008, 360). While this academic travel seems, on the surface, not only professionally productive for students but also intellectually and academically "progressive" on the programmatic level, it carries with it an often unseen and unremarked Occidentalist logic.¹ That is, university study-abroad initiatives often rely on the modernist paradigm that centers a normative Euro-American "local" as the seat of modernity against which the culturally different and geographically distant realm of the "global" becomes legible. Accordingly, institutionalizing study abroad as a means of internationalizing Women's Studies curriculum risks feeding what Chandra Mohanty has analyzed as the "feminist-as-tourist" curricular model. Such a model, Mohanty argues, grounds the "local" in nationalist assumptions, reproduces ideas of center and margin along Eurocentric lines, and "confirms the sense of the 'evolved U.S./Euro feminist'" (Mohanty 2003, 239). In accordance with Mohanty's call to push against such imperialist feminist curricular models, this paper develops a politics of "staying home" that negotiates the study-abroad logics that can manifest in efforts to internationalize the contemporary field of US Women's Studies.

My paper hinges on the recognition that when study-abroad opportunities are presented and perceived as a means of access to global perspectives on women and gender, they reduce the problem of US-centrism in Women's Studies to a geographic rather than an epistemic limitation.² According to this logic, physical travel away from the United States can serve as an effective method for overcoming US-centrism and attending to the "global," a curricular strategy that Chandra Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander call "the cartographic rule of the transnational as always 'elsewhere'" (Mohanty and Alexander 2010, 33). This cartographic rule reinforces hegemonic representations of the United States as a unified "modern" white/Anglo nation against which the culturally Other terrain of the "global" becomes understandable. As such, the study-abroad approach to internationalizing US Women's Studies relies on the re-erasure of US Women of Color genealogies and epistemologies that disrupt the white/Anglo cultural assumptions grounding the field's central category of "woman/women." If challenging US-centrism in US Women's Studies is meant to dismantle the white/Anglo monocultural perspective of US imperialism, I argue that the geographic travel imperative of "study abroad" must be tempered by a re-inhabitation of the field through the radical genealogies and epistemologies of US Women of Color, a strategy I call the anti-imperial feminist praxis of "staying home."

Haunani-Kay Trask's articulate anger at and hatred for the United States as a settler-colonial state motivates my formulation of an anti-imperial praxis of "staying home."³ In *From a Native Daughter*, Trask powerfully details the neocolonial destruction of her native Hawaii by the tourist industry, making clear that global travel to her homeland has created two coexisting Hawaiis—a tourist paradise and a native Hawaiian nightmare. Trask's juxtaposition of a colonized Hawaii alongside its tourist construction exposes her homeland as fractured and, in the process, fractures the hegemonic US national imaginary. Because the colonial construction of Hawaii and the United States renders indigenous peoples nonexistent or zombified relics of a primitive past, the epistemic fracturing of this colonial construction is inextricably tied to seeing indigenous peoples as active resistant subjects whose perceptions of reality conflict with those institutionalized by the US nation-state. The epistemic fracturing enables a double vision of the United States that is anchored in the perspective of the colonized; specifically, the indigenous view of the United States as "foreign occupier" clashes against its institutionalized representation as a homogeneous unified nation of immigrants. As "foreign occupier," the United States is visible as a primary site of global violence sustained by circuits of colonial and global capitalist travel that render it dependent on the conquest, occupation, and exploitation of other peoples' homelands. From this perspective, Trask issues the following directive as a call to accountability for the non-native Hawaiian reader: "If you are thinking of visiting my homeland, please do not.... If you want to help our cause, pass this message on to your friends" (Trask 1999, 146).

One can hear Trask's directive as an anti-imperial praxis for cross-cultural solidarity that is tied to a politics of "staying home," whereby "staying home" is understood as *fracturing* the familiar ideological and epistemic boundaries that constitute one's sense of home by *re-inhabiting* one's geographic home through the lens of the colonized and racially dispossessed. The fracturing of familiar ideological and epistemic boundaries of home involved in this "re-inhabitation" requires "staying" or suspending culturally specific assumptions of self and home to enable one to employ the lens of non-dominant others on whose exclusion or distortion one's sense of "home" is built. Because the colonized and racially dispossessed are historically constructed as outsiders in their own "home," re-inhabiting "home" through their lens would necessitate engaging, for example, disjunctions and confrontations between indigenous and settler colonial histories. In this formulation, an anti-imperialist politics of "staying home" refuses tourist travel or nomadic flight from

the consciousness of one's complicity in located histories of struggle and demands a historical awareness of the locus informing one's basic assumptions of self and other, home and away. Employing such a politics in efforts to internationalize US Women's Studies curriculum would dismantle homogeneous or innocent narratives of "home" as the seat of modern progress from which the knowing US feminist must travel to discover, to consume, or to save the cultural Other.

The politics of "staying home" that I elaborate here builds on Mohanty's "feminist solidarity" curricular model, which conceives of the local and the global as relationally forged through colonial histories and thus emphasizes the interconnectedness and co-implication of histories, experiences, and struggles of different women within and across national borders (Mohanty 2003, 242). An anti-imperialist feminist politics of "staying home" incorporates these principles as well as Mohanty's later emphasis on making US imperialist feminist complicities visible by challenging the role of hegemonic second-wave white feminist epistemologies and genealogies in US Women's Studies (Mohanty 2006, 17). Because I seek to address the Occidentalism that manifests in study-abroad logics, I especially heed her analysis of the need for US Women's Studies to counter citizenship narratives that uphold the US self-image as "that of a benevolent, 'civilized' white paternal nation bringing democracy to the rest of the world" (Mohanty 2006, 10). I thus offer the politics of "staying home" as one of many methodological tools that can enact Mohanty's anti-imperialist feminist praxis in efforts to internationalize US Women's Studies curricula, particularly those keen on incorporating study-abroad programs.

Methodologically, an anti-imperial praxis of "staying home" in US Women's Studies involves two simultaneous and interdependent epistemic shifts: *fracturing* the central universalized concept of "women" and the hegemonic/white "waves" genealogy that ground mainstream US feminism by *re-inhabiting* the geography of US feminisms through the genealogies and political perspectives of US Women of Color.⁴ Specifically, I highlight the following US Women of Color feminist genealogies and methodologies that jam the study-abroad logics of US academic feminist global initiatives: (1) the Third World Women's Alliance of the late 1960s and early 1970s; (2) the coalitional politics of connecting through non-dominant differences; and (3) the geo- and body-politics of reading and inhabiting contradictions.⁵

An early Women of Color political formation of the 1960s and early 1970s, the Third World Women's Alliance emphasized critiques of US imperialism and transnational connections between struggles against oppression in the United States and those waged by women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Women of Color Resource Center 2008). Remembering this radical US Women of Color genealogy disrupts the "chronopolitics"—or Eurocentric evolutionary logic—of the hegemonic "waves" periodization of US feminist history.⁶ As Andrea Smith argues, this hegemonic feminist genealogy centers white/Anglo women's actions as the evolutionary motor of feminism, with Women of Color feminism emerging as a transitory "phase" in the 1980s (Smith 2006). The contemporary push to internationalize US Women's Studies curriculum follows the logic of this evolutionary motor when it eclipses US Women of Color politics on the justification that it is time to move on to the more expansive concerns of a "global" feminism. Key to dismantling this colonial modern narrative of US feminism and US Women's Studies is fracturing the unified and universalized category of "woman/women" that anchors mainstream feminist genealogies and epistemologies. Because white/Anglo cultural standards of intelligibility define the universalized category of "woman/women" anchoring US Women's Studies, white/Anglo women and their stories constitute the central subject of concern in studies of "women's history" or "women's issues" (Barkley Brown 1991). An investment in concepts like "women in general" as the primary subject of US Women's Studies thus contributes to the forgetting of US Women of Color genealogies as well as to the imperialist assumption

of a white/Anglo feminist protagonist who must now go “global.” To counter this epistemic imperialism, US Women of Color theorize and enact a politics of cross-cultural solidarity grounded in non-dominant differences (rather than sameness) amongst women and a commitment to inhabit and read (rather than resolve) epistemic contradictions born of uneven historical relations of power.

To the non-indigenous inhabitant of the US mainland, Trask’s political directive invokes many contradictions, including learning to hate one’s own geopolitical “home” (for its colonial foundations) without recourse to a geographic or epistemic escape from that “home.” Politically identified US Women of Color actively inhabit and theorize these historical, political, and epistemic contradictions and thus provide a particularly strategic locus from which to imagine a global feminist politics that does not re-inscribe hierarchical imperial dichotomies of “us” and “them” in the way that study-abroad rationales and rhetorics often do. Affirming non-dominant differences, contradiction, and historical relationality, US Women of Color politics fractures mainstream US feminism’s emphasis on singular, coherent, and categorial constructions of “women’s” struggles across time and space and thus methodologically challenges an imperialist measure of others against a white/Anglo US standard.⁷

Occidental Trajectories of Global Feminism and “US-Centric” Elisions of Women of Color

Before I examine the logics of study-abroad initiatives themselves, I must first map out the eclipsing of Women of Color feminisms by the supposedly “global” turn in US Women’s Studies to show how its erasure impacts the (anti)imperialist orientations that travel-abroad programs can take in US Women’s Studies. The centrality of US Women of Color politics to an anti-imperial, anti-US-centric global feminist perspective rests in its persistent fracturing of mainstream US feminism’s fundamental category of analysis, namely “woman” or “women.”⁸ Sojourner Truth’s famed rhetorical refrain, “Ain’t I a woman?,” punctuating her speech at the 1851 Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio, is a clear early recognition of racist exclusions from the white/Anglo bourgeois construction of “woman” and the limited feminist campaigns that this category mobilized and continues to anchor (Davis 1983). The 1960s emergence of US Women of Color as a coalitional political formation saw further theoretical elaboration of Truth’s insight. African, Asian, Arab American, and Latina women forged political organizations like the Third World Women’s Alliance and developed concepts like “double jeopardy” and “triple jeopardy” to explain their simultaneous experience of racism, sexism, and capitalist exploitation (Women of Color Resource Center 2008). Excluded from a white/Anglo women’s liberation movement and marginalized within masculinist community-based mobilizations for racial and economic justice, Women of Color refused the assumption that gender or race, as singular and separable categories of identification, could serve as the basis for any political unity without mandating racist or sexist exclusions (Lowe 1997; Burnham 2001; Women of Color Resource Center 2008).

By fracturing “woman” as a universally applicable category of analysis in feminism, US Women of Color politics unsettles the search for universal truths and encourages, instead, a consciousness of one’s own epistemic limits across unfamiliar sociohistorical and cultural terrain. Taking seriously this epistemic uncertainty, the desire to know about “women” across racial, cultural, class, sexual, and geopolitical boundaries would require asking basic questions such as those formulated by Oyeronke Oyewumi in her book *The Invention of Women: Making African Sense of Gender*: “Who qualifies to be women in this cultural setting, and on what bases are they to be identified?” (Oyewumi 1998, 16). US Women of Color theoretical interventions motivate these very questions in their challenge to the fundamental unit of analysis—“woman”—in mainstream/white US feminism. Consequently, the dismissal of Women of Color theories and of women of color as “US-centric” subjects from the “global turn” of study-abroad programs in

US Women's Studies forwards a dangerously invisible imperialist indifference. The recognition of such an elision makes legible the culturally limited epistemic tools that continue to structure the (mis)diagnosis of problems and prescribed solutions for the plight of "women" across time and place.

In her essay, "Feminist Scholarship and the Internationalization of Women's Studies," Mino Moallem argues that an unwillingness to let go of universal truths about "women" produces internationalizing efforts that render feminism complicit with the logic of colonial modernity. Through a review of feminist volumes with an international focus published in the last decade, Moallem identifies a strong tendency to advance an avant-garde feminist subject/discourse motored by a rational will to universal truths (e.g., women's liberation globally depends on x). She notes that even feminist scholarship critical of imperialist formulations of "global sisterhood" relies on a feminist framework that proposes a universal map that can lead all women—including and especially the "most marginalized"—to liberation from all structures of oppression.⁹ Such scholarship upholds the colonial modern "myth of progress" in which the non-Western "other" must always exist as a victimized subject in need of (Western) saving, mobilization, or illumination.¹⁰ Consequently, those outside the non-West become the primary subjects (in need) of internationalizing initiatives, while feminists in the West become the ones who must "go global" and orchestrate the criteria and terms of the internationalization progress. According to this logic, study abroad literally enables the US feminist scholar to "go global" and thus becomes a fulfillment of the (colonial modern) "transnational imperative" in US Women's Studies.¹¹

Although Moallem concludes that feminist departures from the logic of colonial modernity require attention to the complicit and discontinuities between "women" and their feminist enactments, she distorts—however unwittingly—the potential role of US Women of Color politics in accomplishing this methodological intervention. Her brief mention of US Women of Color comes in her critique of Adrienne Katherine Wing's generalized use of the identity in the anthology *Global Critical Race Feminism*. Wing uses the identity as a lens to read the different ways "women" are simultaneously oppressed and privileged through multiple social categories like race, gender, class, nationality, and so on. This generalization of a historically and geopolitically specific identity not only distorts understandings of "women" in locations where gender and racial violence manifest distinctly but also falsely reduces Women of Color to an oppositional identity politics overdetermined by dominant logics of categorial exclusion.¹² While Moallem identifies Wing's "US-centrism" in her failure to interrogate the shifting meaning and salience of these social categories across geopolitical contexts, she overlooks how Wing's distortion of Women of Color identity, via its generalization, is also an enactment of US-centric thinking. That is, the politics that historically grounds Women of Color identity challenges the mono-logic of U.S imperialism and thus rejects the universalization of culturally and sociohistorically specific identities. By not clarifying this, Moallem risks furthering the assumption that Women of Color—as a subject or analytic of feminism—always inevitably produces US-centric formulations of internationalism. If Women of Color is a political identification committed to challenging US imperialism, then Wing's abstracting of the identity from its geopolitical context is a US-centric act that contradicts the politics from which it emerges.

Moallem's critique of Wing's deployment of María Lugones's notion of "world-traveling" further obscures the politics of Women of Color theory. Wing argues that "world-traveling," which she glosses as a way of re-seeing one's self in historical context through the eyes of cultural others, can be employed as a methodology for understanding gender and law in a global context. Moallem cites Wing's definition of "world-travel" as "demanding that we see ourselves in historical context, as the 'other' might see us, and see the 'other' within her own complex cultural context" (Moallem 2006, 346).¹³ Her critique of such

“world-traveling” is that it is then imagined as an act only the privileged can accomplish and thus becomes a “romantic way of dealing with ... global power relations, where movement and mobility do not happen outside ‘the histories of the production of colonial discourses’” (Moallem 2006, 246). However, Moallem herself reduces Lugones’s methodology to geographic/physical rather than epistemic travel. By contrast, as I explain in more depth later in this essay, Lugones’s concept of “world-traveling” references an epistemic skill in which the oppressed are fluent: they must involuntarily “travel” to the oppressor’s “worlds” in order to navigate the hegemonic order of mainstream society. But more to the point, at least in terms of my discussion of the logics that often undergird study-abroad programs in Women’s Studies, is that Lugones develops “world-traveling” as central to the politics of Women of Color. According to Lugones, the methodology of “world-traveling” demands cross-cultural and cross-racial coalitional identifications that recognize interdependence with others without reducing the other to a version of one’s self. Moallem’s inadvertent reduction of “Women of Color” to a US-centric racial and gender identity descriptor blocks recognition of the ways in which Lugones’s “world-traveling” speaks to her own demands for cross-cultural feminist theorizing of multiple and contradictory perspectives of interrelated realities forged through interdependent histories of domination and resistance. In doing so, she blocks the multiple tools offered by Women of Color politics to counter the colonial modern study-abroad logics employed in efforts to internationalize US Women’s Studies curricula.

According to Sandra K. Soto, this erroneous reduction of Women of Color to a US-centric identity derives from a failure to distinguish “the critical work produced under the sign of ‘women of color’ from the ways that women’s studies has responded to and utilized that work” (Soto 2005, 117). Because Women’s Studies scholars have primarily responded to substantive Women of Color critiques by token inclusions of “women of color,” the identity has circulated primarily through this institutionalized misrepresentation. As Soto clarifies, the actual critical work by feminists who politically identify as Women of Color rejects essentialized racial-gender identity politics and challenges the field’s foundational investment in the universalized Western bourgeois white/Anglo category of “woman” (117). The refusal of mainstream feminism to engage with and see Women of Color as producers of knowledge rather than guilt-inducing symbols of racial difference accounts for the dismissal of Women of Color as passé subjects of a less sophisticated US-centric identity politics. Soto thus makes clear that it is racist US feminist (mis)representation of Women of Color that justifies their re-erasure in the name of transnational feminism.

US Women of Color have historically borne the burden of questioning white/Anglo racial-cultural competence in the field of US feminist studies. Consequently, dismissing the politics and subjects of Women of Color as US-centric in the move to a “global feminism” can easily be seen as strategic evasion of local critiques that would decenter white/Anglo perspectives and knowledges still anchoring the field (Holloway 2006; Kaplan 1995; Chowdhury 2006). Yet this dismissal is inextricably tied to upholding Occidentalist formulations of global feminism that conceive of difference and diversification primarily as a quantitative issue measured geographically (in terms of representational samples or discrete case studies funneled through a singular epistemic framework) rather than a political issue measured through epistemic capacities (in terms of one’s ability to perceive others through their own cultural logic). Accordingly, geographic—not epistemic—travel becomes a primary method for internationalizing perspectives in the field of US Women’s Studies, a process most obviously institutionalized through study-abroad programs.

Global Feminism and the Logic of Study Abroad: Institutional Amnesia and the Re-Centering of White/Anglo Faculty and Students

Just as internationalization efforts in Women's Studies re-center white/Anglo theorizing by jettisoning Women of Color feminism as a narrow US-centric identity, the institutionalization of study-abroad approaches to globalizing perspectives on gender also re-centers white/Anglo students as consumers and knowers of cultural diversity. An assumed connection between "study abroad" and "internationalization" implies that geographic travel away from "home" is either necessary or necessarily beneficial to achieving a "global" feminist perspective. This assumption erases the presence of culturally and racially different inhabitations of gender amongst US people of color. Consider, for example, UC Santa Barbara's advertisement for study abroad in the field of Feminist Studies:

Feminist Studies has increasingly moved from a primary focus on the United States to a more global vision of the ways that gender, in interaction with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, nationality, religion, ability and other differences, shapes the lives of people everywhere. What better way to understand one's own society than to explore the ways that other cultures organize gender relations differently? (University of California Santa Barbara)

According to the above advertisement, a "more global vision" of gender is hindered by a primary focus on the United States and thus requires geographic travel outside US borders (study abroad). If to be "more global" in one's feminist scholarship involves a quantitative increase in the amount of nations or territories one studies, then "global" becomes a marker of scale, not methodology (Lal et al. 2010, 16). One therefore needs to increase knowledge about women from different geographic locations but does not necessarily need to adjust the frame through which this knowledge is produced. The advertisement assumes this frame to be monocultural, since one must travel outside the United States to "explore" *other* cultures, and it is reasonable to assume that this US monoculture is white/Anglo, given the hegemonic racial-cultural identity of a presumed monocultural "America" (Haney López 1994). In this frame, women of color—including and especially Native American women—disappear as US peoples with heterogeneous cultures and racial identifications, as do the US histories of genocide, enslavement, indentured servitude, colonization, and military occupation from which this cultural-racial plurality emerges.

The marriage of global feminism to study abroad thus shifts the objectifying gaze of white/Eurocentric disciplines from the "domestic minority" to the geographically distant "foreign" cultural other. Many Women's Studies advertisements that link study-abroad opportunities to the development of a global feminist perspective reveal a reduction of the "global" to something one "experiences," a move reminiscent of the reduction of US Women of Color to portals of experience or case studies to which white/Anglo feminist theory can be applied (Alexander and Mohanty 1997, xvii; Soto 2005, 120).¹⁴ When qualifiers like "global" and "of color" turn the subjects to which they are attached into "evidence" that support or illustrate Eurocentric epistemologies, they effectively reproduce the colonial modern logic that would affirm Western Europe and white/Anglo America as the only legitimate base for universalized knowledge production. They thus deny Women of Color and "global" women (read non-US and non-white women) as capable of making methodological and epistemic interventions in US feminist studies.

The UC Santa Barbara's Feminist Studies study-abroad advertisement referenced above provides a glimpse of this colonial modern trajectory in Women's Studies via its connection between "study abroad" and "globalizing" perspectives on gender. Similar Women's Studies advertisements abound across US universities. At St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, Women's and Gender Studies faculty are

encouraged “to incorporate *global* perspectives in teaching and scholarship by way of developing *study abroad* programs to provide diverse global and cultural *experiences* for students” (St. Cloud State University website; emphasis added). Virginia Commonwealth University also describes “study abroad” as a means of providing “students with an *international experience* that focuses on global feminism and *the lives of women around the world*” (Virginia Commonwealth University website; emphasis added). Both university programs equate gaining “global perspectives” with geographic travel away from the United States, link global feminism to learning about the “lives” (rather than the worldviews) of women around the world, and reduce the “global” or “international” to a portal of personal “experience.”

Besides reducing the term “global” to a scalar increase in the amount of knowledge one has about women’s experiences, the institutional marriage between “study abroad” programs and “global feminist studies” recalls the imperialist institutional genealogy of area studies. For example, the journal *Women in Higher Education* features an article in which the director of the Women’s Studies program at St. Ambrose University in Iowa explains how efforts to internationalize Women’s Studies have been linked to “the development of courses connected to study abroad programs” as well as to “opportunities for international activism and service such as sponsoring a local refugee family” (Santovec 2008, 23). Internationalization in this case is not only scripted in terms of geographic travel outside the United States via study-abroad programs, but also in terms of “helping” the foreign others who have found refuge in “our home”—the United States. This initiative contains echoes of the “missionary imperialism” grounding state-funded area studies in the United States (Schueller 2007, 43). These echoes become louder when the director also goes on to frame the St. Ambrose program’s efforts to internationalize as a strategic means of making Women’s Studies more viable within an institution always facing budget cuts. That is, as the US state cuts funding to higher education, proving viability as a disciplinary program tempts accommodation to state-funded initiatives for educational programs that support US state interests in “globally competent” citizens (Santovec 2008, 23; Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship 2005). While concern for program or departmental survival is pressing, the survival technique proposed not only situates study-abroad programs as an extension of US nation-state ideologies, but also relies on an institutional amnesia of the connection between “area studies” and US imperialist investment in knowledge production that furthers neocolonial globalization.

Malini Johar Schueller reminds us of this institutional genealogy of studying cultural others, noting the “missionary imperialism” of the 1843 American Oriental Society, a precursor to the formal establishment of area studies in US universities (Schueller 2007, 43). Title VI of the 1957 National Defense Education Act provided the primary funding for university area studies, explicitly recognizing “that the defense and security of the nation were inseparably bound with education” (Schueller 2007, 43-44; Scarfo 1998, 23). The institutionalization of university-based studies that focus on gaining knowledge about “foreign” territories thus emerged explicitly with US imperialist state interests to know, in order to control or combat, their “foreign” enemies. Remembering imperialist state investments in funding global-education initiatives should caution minoritized academic fields, like Women’s Studies, from an unquestioning embrace of institutional celebrations and support for study-abroad programs.

Indeed, given the lack of US students of color who participate in study-abroad programs, institutionalizing study abroad as a method of internationalizing US Women’s Studies further privileges white/Anglo students as the consumers and producers of knowledge in the field. The hierarchical racial classification of the world’s population in correspondence with access to institutionalized wealth and power (what Aníbal Quijano calls “coloniality of power”) explains why those who are most likely to (believe they can and are

entitled to) access the upper echelons of the global marketplace and afford vacations abroad are primarily white/Anglo (Quijano 2000). The overwhelmingly and disproportionately white/Anglo demographic of university study-abroad participants further justifies this claim (Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella 2011, 123). For these students, “global competence” is more readily understood as a careerist asset, as well as an excuse to consume the “foreign” or “exotic,” than it would be for US students of color whose daily encounters with racism and ethnocentrism make them painfully competent in issues of diversity and cross-cultural difference. In their investigation of the discrepancy between white/Anglo and racial minority student inclinations to participate in university study-abroad programs, Mark Salisbury, Michael Paulsen, and Ernest Pascarella reveal that an interest in diversity greatly increased white/Anglo students’ decisions to study abroad, while it had no effect on racial minority students’ desire to do the same. As the authors suggest, students of color “don’t need to seek out cross-cultural experiences by traveling to another country because in most cases—especially as students at majority white postsecondary institutions—they already interact across cultural differences every day” (Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella 2010, 143). Therefore, in addition to eliding the place of Women of Color theory, study-abroad logics that equate knowledge of other cultures with geographic travel outside the United States also erase the subordinated cultural differences inhabited by US people of color by ignoring their cross-cultural competence and, by the same token, their everyday experiences of racism. Framing the “global” in terms of study abroad redefines “global competence” as the domain of white/Anglo knowers. As a result, efforts to internationalize the curriculum in terms of geographic travel away from “home” reveal an institutional disregard for US communities of color as crucial sites of cultural diversity from which the field of Women’s Studies has much to learn.

I am not discouraging study abroad. I do, however, seek to raise critical questions about the link between “global feminism” and “study abroad,” insofar as “globalizing” feminist perspectives on gender becomes synonymous with a focus on geographic (rather than epistemic) travel outside US boundaries. When study-abroad programs are equated with “diversifying” knowledge about women and gender across cultures, they illuminate the existence of a significant programmatic and ideological faultline. Ultimately, this linkage demonstrates that perspectives on gender have failed to be diversified within bounds of US educational institutions. Rather than expanding students’ understanding of transnational feminisms, this disciplinary failure will simply reproduce itself in studies outside the United States. The National Women’s Studies Association’s (NWSA) 2009 and 2010 annual conferences—“Difficult Dialogues” and “Difficult Dialogues II”—highlight this point. Under the direction of prominent US Black feminist scholar Beverly Guy-Sheftall, these NWSA conferences re-centered the unfinished US feminist work of shifting away from thinking of gender as a stand-alone category of identification and recognition. Refusing to let fade away the memory of NWSA as a site of contentious feminist dialogue on issues of race and racism (Sandoval 1990), Guy-Sheftall and Vivian May explain the need to foreground “Difficult Dialogues” in US Women’s Studies: “Despite claims that ‘everyone’ now ‘does’ (or has always ‘done’) Women’s Studies from intersectional and transnational perspectives, many of the ways in which the politics of both race and nation have been taken up in the field have been more nominal than transformative” (National Women’s Studies Association). Guy-Sheftall and May reference Johnella Butler’s essays as the source of inspiration for the conference title. In their words, Butler’s work explored the “reluctance to engage questions of gender and sexuality in Black Studies and Ethnic Studies, and a reluctance to engage with questions of race and class in Women’s Studies” (National Women’s Studies Association). The “difficult dialogues” that Guy-Sheftall and May reference involve confronting the stubborn reluctance of the majority population in US feminist studies to engage *racialized gender politics within the United States*. This call to account for US racialized gender politics does not,

however, exclude transnational perspectives in feminism. Indeed, one of the thematic areas highlighted in the conference is “reconceptualizing Women’s Studies within the Transnational.” The “Difficult Dialogues” called forth by the conference title invoke a subalternized genealogy of global feminism, one that has always conceived the “global” as inseparable from addressing the feminist politics of the “local.” It is to this US Women of Color genealogy and its methodological interventions that I now turn.

Subalternized Genealogies of the Transnational Imperative: The Third World Women’s Alliance

As outlined at the beginning of this essay, US mainstream feminism’s historical narration in terms of a first, second, and third “wave” centers white/Anglo women as the feminist protagonists who encounter Women of Color in the “third wave” and then move on to the more pressing concerns of “global” women. This narration of feminism’s history assumes a colonial modern frame of evolutionary history, in which Western Europe and Euro-America initiate civilizing and modernizing progress while the racialized peopled geographies of the Americas, Asia, and Africa remain frozen in a “primitive” past, in need of modernization yet always incapable of it. US Women’s Studies, however, is not the only discipline to organize its historical narrative through a colonial modern lens. Colonial modern epistemic frameworks are core to the emergence of most US academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, the evidence for which lies in their predominantly masculinist Eurocentric canons defining the parameters of core disciplinary knowledge.

In the 1970s, race-based ethnic studies programs emerged in the United States to counter this institutionalized disciplinary erasure of knowledge by, about, and for those historically denied status as knowers and knowledge producers. Again, as Schueller aptly reminds us, “Restitution of subaltern knowledge ... was initiated in the United States most dramatically through racially disenfranchised students who sought both to extend the imperatives of civil rights into education and to link their struggles to those of third-world decolonization” (Schueller 2007, 46). This subaltern historical genealogy unveils an early international consciousness in local struggles against US institutionalized racism, one that is especially evident through the politicized adoption of the term “Third World” amongst US activists and intellectuals of color. Adopting what was originally a racial-economic classification of impoverished (post-)colonized nations, US intellectuals and activists of color like W. E. B. Du Bois and Angela Davis identified as “Third World” to communicate a politics of liberation that linked anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-capitalist/imperialist struggles at home and abroad (Young 2006). The 1970s student movements for inclusion of ethnic studies in universities thus operated through an understanding of anti-racism that was inseparable from decolonization and anti-Eurocentrism (Schueller 2007, 46). The goal was not simply to include a course or two on different subordinated US racial-ethnic groups, but rather to challenge the Eurocentric colonial foundations of disciplinary knowledge production. This educational emphasis on race as tied to a decolonial global politics therefore countered the simultaneous institutional genealogy of area studies, which, as mentioned earlier, established itself in universities through the 1957 National Defense Education Act with explicitly imperialist interests to preserve the United States as a global power.

Taking its lead from the 1970s radical race-based movements for decolonizing the university, the growing US women’s movement also fought to establish Women’s Studies in universities to counter masculinist exclusions central to Eurocentrism (Lutz 2000, 642). Yet the link between the establishment of Women’s Studies in the 1970s and the anti-Eurocentric race-based politics that laid the ground for its emergence fades in the mainstream “waves” periodization of US feminism. This historical narrative mirrors that of colonial

modernity's chronopolitics foregrounding the white/Anglo subject in her march towards emancipation, each wave building on the advances of the previous one. Andrea Smith explains:

In the United States, the first wave is characterized by the suffragette movement; the second wave is characterized by the formation of the National Organization for Women, abortion rights politics, and the fight for the Equal Rights Amendments. Suddenly, during the third wave of feminism, women of color make an appearance to transform feminism into a multicultural movement. This periodization situates white middle-class women as the central historical agents to which women of color attach themselves. (Smith 2006, 16)

If the periodization of US feminism centered the genealogies of US Women of Color, this coherent narrative of white/Anglo feminist chronopolitics would not hold. As Smith notes, "if we were to recognize the agency of indigenous women in an account of feminist history, we might begin with 1492 when Native women collectively resisted colonization" (Smith 2006, 16). Likewise, if we were to read US feminism through the eyes of enslaved Black females, Sojourner Truth's 1851 "Ain't I a Woman" speech would be recognized as a burgeoning methodological articulation of intersectionality and the coloniality of gender, instead of a token add-on to the bourgeois middle-class white suffrage movement.¹⁵ But most importantly to the argument of this essay, Women of Color would not emerge as a brief stage in US feminist history, a moment in time now superseded by the new and improved focus on a "global feminism" that (Anglo) Women's Studies students must travel abroad to encounter.

Ultimately, then, the amnesia that prepares the ground for unwitting collaborations between global feminism and Western imperialism in US Women's Studies includes a forgetting of both institutional and subalternized genealogies of internationalization. The institutionalized dismissal of feminists-of-color politics is evidenced by the fact that the contemporary institutional preoccupation with "globalizing" feminism in the field of Women's Studies emerged in the 1990s, several decades after US Women of Color politics had developed global analyses of power and mobilized organizations to connect local struggles at home to those happening abroad (DuBois and Oliviero 2006; Women of Color Resource Center 2008). A clear example of this ignored genealogy is the Third World Women's Alliance, an early US Women of Color political formation that emerged in the 1960s yet is often erased by the hegemonic US periodization of "second wave" feminism. Born of the 1960s radical race-based movements, the Third World Women's Alliance centered the concerns, experiences, and perspectives of Black, Asian American, Chicana and Puerto Rican women who were critical of the masculinist ideologies infiltrating the community movements for racial justice to which they were committed. The adoption of the political identification "Third World" to name an organization composed of US Women of Color signaled their solidarity and sense of connection with struggles against European colonization and US military occupation taking place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

From 1971 to 1975, the Third World Women's Alliance produced a newspaper, *Triple Jeopardy: Racism, Sexism, Imperialism*, which consistently featured articles by and about women revolutionaries participating in grassroots liberation movements in places like Puerto Rico, the Philippines, China, and Chile (Women of Color Resource Center 2008). These stories were juxtaposed with political analyses of the struggles against poverty, racism, misogyny, and political imprisonment facing US Women of Color and their communities. Always making transnational feminist connections between struggles at "home" and abroad, the Third World Women's Alliance emphasized a need to learn from women struggling for self-determination in different geopolitical locations. In this regard, the Third World Women's Alliance implied that the "travel" necessary to globalize feminist agendas was less geographic than epistemic or, at least, it implied that geographic travel was to be undertaken to expand one's epistemic capacities for cross-

cultural understanding. Peoples of colonized geographies outside the United States and Western Europe were engaged as historical protagonists and knowing subjects rather than backward victims in need of Western saviors. This reversal exposes a direct challenge of colonial modernity's chronopolitics. Consider the following excerpt from a speech published in *Triple Jeopardy*:

The main objective of women in other Third World countries is the liberation and self-determination of their peoples. They understand clearly that there is no liberation for them as women unless everyone is free. Our goals here should be the same—self-determination and the liberation of our people; freedom for all. In this way *we will bring ourselves up to the level of our African, Latin American, and especially our Asian sisters*, while at the same time giving new impetus to our struggle. (Third World Women's Alliance; emphasis added)

This statement positions women struggling in "other Third World countries" as leaders in the mobilization against global oppression and as people from whom those in the United States have much to learn. Instead of backward passive victims with little to no feminist know-how, "African, Latin American, and ... Asian sisters" become models of humanizing progress to which US feminists must "bring ourselves up." Yet there remains a respect for the specificity of different geopolitical struggles, as the author adds that aspiring to the goals of the struggles led by Third World women outside the United States would "give new impetus to our struggle." Bringing one's self up to the level of other Third World sisters does not demand an unthinking assimilation or imitation as much as it suggests a political shift in how one conceives the parameters, politics, and desired outcomes of these struggles. In other words, "our struggles" (US-based feminist struggles) remain distinct, though we have much to gain from sharing knowledge and insight with those waged in different geopolitical and cultural contexts.

Centering subalternized US feminist genealogies like the Third World Women's Alliance accomplishes Minoo Moallem's suggestion that US Women's Studies engage, rather than evade, discontinuities and complicity between different manifestations of feminist/women's resistance across time and space. Instead of a coherent unified movement always improving upon itself (always moving forward), US feminism narrated through Women of Color genealogies multiplies its historical origins and reveals discontinuous and incongruous trajectories. These discontinuities disappear when US Women of Color emerge solely as a 1980s "third-wave" manifestation of multicultural feminism, which has now yielded to US feminism's (inevitable) forward-moving expansion beyond the United States: global/transnational feminism.¹⁶

The Third World Women's Alliance therefore effectively jams the logic of colonial modernity by situating "global" non-US/non-white women as historical protagonists in the civilizing mission to end all forms of violence against women and their communities; exposing the investments of US feminists of color in global dimensions of gender violence long before the predominantly white/Anglo institutionalized academic field of US Women's Studies issued its "transnational imperative"; and articulating a global feminist politics that decenters Eurocentric conceptions of gender and centers subalternized cultural logics of resistance as the ground for transnational feminist connection. According to this formulation of global feminist politics, transnational connections and cross-cultural solidarity foreground the voices, politics, and ways of knowing of those with whom one seeks to struggle as comrades. The attraction and motivation for building solidarity across cultural and geopolitical terrain emerges from an inspiring vision of fierce women revolutionaries with an arsenal of resistance strategies that can be shared, adapted, and multiplied.

The version of a globalized feminism that emerges through the Third World Women's Alliance relies on two crucial methodological interventions that ground US Women of Color politics: forging solidarity across non-dominant differences (rather than commonalities or sameness of oppression) and a commitment to reading and inhabiting contradictions produced by multiple interconnected oppressions. Now that we have

explored how a centering of US Women of Color genealogies can help jam the colonial modern logic of the “study-abroad” approach to global feminism, let’s consider the uses of these particular methodological tools for enacting an anti-imperial praxis of “staying home.”

The US Women of Color Politics of “World”-Travel: Connecting across Non-Dominant Differences

Because challenging Occidentalist formulations and modernist frameworks of global feminism requires attending to differences, discontinuities, and incommensurability between “women” and feminist models of resistance and liberation, methodologies that offer tools for navigating plural ways of knowing and seeing the world are crucial to anti-imperialist global feminist praxis. US Women of Color—in their rejection of “simple unity” as the grounds for cross-racial and cross-cultural coalition—become a crucial site for accessing such methodologies.¹⁷ Indeed, a fundamental methodological intervention of US feminisms of color has been the elaboration of a conceptual shift to enact solidarity motivated by difference rather than commonality. This methodological intervention is best articulated by Audre Lorde’s now-famous edict: “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (Lorde 1984). Although frequently assigned in many an introductory Women’s Studies course, readings of Lorde’s “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” rarely engage the text as offering a fundamental epistemological strategy for enacting cross-cultural solidarity in accordance with an anti-imperial global feminist praxis. Here I offer such a reading by underscoring María Lugones’s elaboration of Lorde’s concept of connecting across non-dominant differences as central to non-colonizing ways of coming to know and identifying with cultural others.

The “master’s tools” referred to in Lorde’s political directive comprise the divide-and-conquer logic of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy (or the “master’s house”). In the “master’s house,” only one way of being, seeing, and living in the world can be valued over and against others. The “master’s tools” thus always turn difference into hierarchy whereby being “different from” the master’s criteria marks one as suspicious, threatening, subordinate, and marginal. Lorde thus argues that any feminist politics truly committed to cross-cultural and cross-racial solidarity would need to re-see “difference” amongst women in “non-dominant terms.” Without this epistemic shift, unity amongst women would always require those who were not of the wealthy, white, heterosexual bourgeoisie to shed their differences or accept marginal and token positions within the feminist movement. In other words, Lorde explicitly articulates the need for epistemic decolonization in US feminism—a way of knowing that departs from dominant Western cultural logic that always scripts difference in negative and hierarchical terms. Such a move, Lorde insists, is crucial if feminist solidarity is not to reproduce the imperialist and colonialist mandates of assimilation or exclusion.

María Lugones develops this methodology of shifting to non-dominant perceptions of difference in cross-cultural and cross-racial feminist coalition building through the concept of “playful ‘world’-travel” (Lugones 2003). “World’-traveling” is an epistemic shift to see one’s self and the world through the eyes of cultural and racial others, a task Lugones explains is necessary for most US people of color who must see through the oppressor’s eyes in order to navigate the dominant racial order of things. Because “world’-travel” is often an involuntary activity for US people of color who must travel to hostile dominant white/Anglo worlds, Lugones notes that it is not easily recognized as a valuable skill.

Yet Lugones argues that the same skill developed to survive in dominant white/Anglo culture can be used to enter the non-dominant worlds inhabited by subordinated others. Because these worlds lack the institutionalized power to coerce others to abide by their rules and logics, one can enter them “playfully,”

with an “openness to surprise, openness to being a fool, openness to self-construction or reconstruction and to construction or reconstruction of the ‘worlds’ we inhabit playfully” (Lugones 2003, 98).¹⁸ “Playful ‘world’-travel” thus involves a suspension of our own familiar ways of perceiving and making sense of the world, allowing us to see subordinated others in their resistant self-constructions, as they see themselves through their own eyes, according to their own cultural logics.¹⁹ We also see ourselves through the other’s eyes and thus multiply our sense of ourselves in relation to others. Often this perception can challenge our sense of innocence or isolation from differently subordinated peoples. This multiplication of how one perceives and knows across difference thus disallows evasion of complicity in the oppression of others and counters the tendency to approach those unfamiliar to us with certainty or a desire for mastery, all of which is crucial to anti-imperialist processes of internationalizing Women’s Studies. In other words, an anti-imperialist incorporation of study abroad to internationalize US Women’s Studies would emphasize study abroad as necessitating not only physical travel to other geographic sites but also Lugones’s epistemic travel to the worlds of non-dominant cultural others.

Acknowledging the above, Caren Kaplan identifies Lugones’s “playful ‘world’-travel” as a “critical transnational feminist practice” that challenges “global feminism’s vision of a unitary world of women” as it “reinscrib[es] the centrality of white women’s position within Western feminism” (Kaplan 1995, 141). Kaplan highlights the elision of US Women of Color in this formulation of global feminism and acknowledges its “suppression of discussions of differences between white women and women of color within the geographical boundaries of the United States in favor of a new binary—North American white women and the victims of North American foreign policies” (Kaplan 1995, 141). Because “world”-traveling involves relational knowing of multiple selves and multiple others, through histories of power, Kaplan advocates it as a way of feminist knowing within and across different locations that does not appropriate or assimilate the differences encountered.

Although María Lugones is an Argentinean immigrant to the United States, she emphasizes her development of “playful ‘world’-travel” as connected to her participation in the US politics of Women of Color. Lugones makes this clear in the opening of her essay, explaining that “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling and Loving Perception” emerges from her “coming to consciousness as a daughter and [her] coming to consciousness as a woman of color” (Lugones 2003, 77). Lugones clarifies for the reader her use of “woman of color” in its specifically US political coalitional identification and includes an entire section on “Identification and Women of Color.” In this section, she unpacks the coalitional logic of Women of Color identification as one that necessitates Lorde’s “epistemological shift to non-dominant differences” and conceives of “playful ‘world’-travel” as a means of enacting this shift (Lugones 2003, 84). She writes, “To the extent that identification requires sameness, this coalition is impossible. So, the coalition requires that we conceive identification anew” (Lugones 2003, 85). From this impetus to conceive Women of Color coalitional identification against the demands for sameness, Lugones theorizes “playful ‘world’-travel.”

While Kaplan does include Lugones’s attention to Women of Color in the elaboration of “world”-traveling, noting Lugones’s argument that “women of color must value this familiar form of ‘travel,’” she does not explain that it is within a genealogy of US Women of Color politics (methodology and knowledge production) that Lugones develops the concept of “world”-travel. By identifying US Women of Color theoretical intervention as central to this critical transnational feminist practice, Kaplan would more powerfully intervene in the dismissal of US Women of Color as incommensurable with an anti-imperialist global feminist praxis. But more importantly, identifying the epistemic connection between Women of Color politics and Lugones’s “world”-travel would underline the necessity for white/Anglo feminists to

“world”-travel to Women of Color “worlds” as crucial preparatory ground for anti-imperial “global” travel undertaken in the name of diversifying perspectives on “gender” and “women.”

For the purposes of enacting an anti-imperialist feminist praxis, “world”-travel to US Women of Color “worlds” would address Haunani-Kay Trask’s call to re-see the United States in terms of its racial-colonial fractures and thus disable Occidentalist perceptions of the “West and the Rest.” US white/Anglo women who practice “world”-travel to US Women of Color “worlds” would re-see themselves and the United States as complicit in histories of racial dehumanization, cultural imperialism, and colonial takeover. Such dark construction of the self may exist simultaneously and in contradiction with affirming positive constructions of a feminist self forged in their own “worlds” of sense making. As Lugones mentions, US people of color are skilled in sustaining and inhabiting these multiple and contradictory conceptions of self, particularly as they must navigate racist constructions of themselves in the mainstream organization of US life. Inhabiting these contradictions is uncomfortable yet hopeful when recognized as evidence of the historical and social construction of oppressive realities and the simultaneous presence of counter/resistant realities. That is, consciousness of our inhabitation of multiple selves—through dominant racist-(hetero)sexist-colonialist-capitalist-imperialist culture *and* through different cultures of affirmation-resistance-empowerment—exposes the workings of power and the ability to jam their operation rather than be trapped in their logics of domination. Such consciousness is possible only through a willingness to dwell in, rather than resolve, contradictions and to see geopolitical and embodied contradictions as significant sites for knowledge production against the imperialist logic of cultural domination. This leads us to the second US Women of Color methodological intervention useful to an anti-imperialist global feminist praxis: the geo- and body-politics of reading and inhabiting contradictions.

“Homesick at Home with Nowhere to Go”: The Geo- and Body-Politics of Reading and Inhabiting Contradiction

Thus far, I have elaborated the Occidentalist and modernist underpinnings of global feminism framed through study-abroad logic in the field of US Women’s Studies and illustrated its imperialist institutional re-centering of white/Anglos as primary knowing subjects. Because Occidentalism relies on homogenized conceptions of “home” in relation to equally homogenized and subordinated conceptions of “away,” disrupting US geopolitical conceptions of a monocultural and mono-racial “home” is a necessary step to developing an anti-imperialist feminist praxis. Centering US Women of Color genealogies like the Third World Women’s Alliance and epistemic interventions like “playful ‘world’-travel” disrupts singular coherent models of feminist politics, revealing multiple cultural and racial logics of oppression and resistance within and across geopolitical sites. As such, it reveals fractures in the conception of one’s “home” that can be unsettling. Accordingly, I suggest that an anti-imperialist praxis of “staying home” in US Women’s Studies must involve centering another fundamental methodology of US Women of Color: the geo- and body-politics of reading and inhabiting contradiction.

US Women of Color politics center the insights born of peoples who are never unconditionally at ease at “home” or for whom “familiar” grounds are always vulnerable to state and interpersonal violence (Incite! Women of Color Against Violence 2006). While the pandemic of domestic violence belies common understandings of “home” as a site of comfort and safety for women of all racial, cultural, and class locations, women of color experience the interpersonal violence in the domestic space as inseparable from the state-sanctioned violence of racial profiling, police brutality, welfare-workfare, and the tracking of their loved ones into the prison-industrial complex. Feminists of color have thus taken up “home” places as sites of struggle,

where the rules and foundations must be assessed and reassess (hooks 1990, Lugones 2003). Again, Audre Lorde's claim that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" reemerges here to invoke the need for constant assessment of one's familiar ground and its foundational assumptions. The statement also implies that the master's house needs dismantling, an act that would require a creative rethinking and remaking of conceptions of home altogether. Such an implication reverberates with Women of Color feminism in its persistent critiques of the nation-state as violent against women and our communities, a stance that demands a recounting of the histories of colonialism, capitalism, and racism through which nation-states and their institutions emerged across the globe.

Writing in the immediate aftermath of September 11, Cherríe Moraga reads the "global" through the irreconcilable contradictions inhabited by US people of color for whom the always incomplete process of becoming "American" has meant both survival and death, the vibrant creation of new resistant identities, and the violent loss of land, memory, and self-determination (Moraga 2002). To simultaneously be of and not of the nation, as citizen and enemy alien, US people of color live at the ideological intersection of a falsely inclusive multicultural America and the foreign, backward, and always suspect realm of the global (Bell 1998; Chang 2000). This ideological intersection relies on the categorial separation of the "local" and the "global," whereby the United States is conflated with the former while the (post-)colonized territories of Africa, Asia, and the Americas are conflated with the latter. US people of color disrupt this binary by virtue of their racialized inhabitation of a geopolitical space where they are always potential outsiders and never complete insiders to the US national imaginary. Investigating, rather than dismissing, the disruption reveals historical subjects situated in a messy web of complicit and resistant relations to US imperialism, ethnocentric racism, and colonial legacies of global capitalism. We see forced migrants turned settlers on indigenous land and leaders of national liberation movements turned masculinist collaborators with state ideologies of heterosexual subordination. In other words, US approaches to a globalized feminism, when framed through the locus of US people of color, deny any claims to absolute innocence or victimhood in one's historical negotiations with the forces of global capitalism, colonialism, and racism.

Accordingly, Grace Kyungwon Hong argues for Women of Color feminism as a strategic "reading practice, a 'way of making sense of' that reveals the contradictions of the racialized and gendered state" (Hong 2006, x). Sojourner Truth's refrain, "Ain't I a woman?," is a popular illustration of this reading practice, exposing the seeming contradiction of the speaker being female yet not "woman" in her Blackness. Women of Color feminism does not seek to resolve this question—"yes, Sojourner, of course you are a woman!"—but rather seeks to understand its production by a racialized gender state. Angela Davis (1981), Oyewumi Oyeronke (1997), and María Lugones (2010), for example, read the contradiction articulated by Sojourner Truth's speech as an insight into the state's restriction of the gender identity "woman" to those who are understood to be human, making it inaccessible to those racially dehumanized in their classification as Black. Such a reading may hinder the inspiring connection often expressed by my (mostly white/Anglo) introductory Women's Studies students who are inclined to read Truth as singularly defending "women" in its falsely de-racialized use. Applying "Women of Color feminism" as a reading practice to Sojourner Truth's speech moves them to consider the long history of white women's complicity with the racial state's oppression and exclusion of women of color. It places a question mark on that foundational identity "woman" to which so many introductory Women's Studies female students cling in their budding consciousness of gender oppression. Yet it is such uncertainty of foundational identities that facilitate an anti-imperialist cross-cultural understanding that truly diversifies perspectives on gender. If we consider Women of Color feminism as a reading practice, then it becomes a strategy available to all US students of Women's Studies, one that can induce critical perspectives of "home" that prevent imperialist travel "abroad."

Minnie Bruce Pratt's "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" further exemplifies this reading practice as she critically investigates her "home" place to account for her own geo- and body-politics of knowledge production as a white Christian middle-class lesbian feminist. The essay is rich with details of Pratt's peopled and located process of coming to political consciousness as a woman, lesbian, anti-racist, and struggler for justice against all oppressions. Her emotional longings for the comforts of "home" are consistently disrupted by making present the lives, histories, voices, and narratives of people of color, battered women, and invisible lesbians on whose violent exclusions and erasures from humanity Pratt's sense of the familiar is built. Pratt acknowledges that the work—political and theoretical—of Women of Color and Jewish women has been central to her ability to critically reread her "home" place. She writes:

Part of this process, for me, has been to acknowledge to myself that there are things that I do not know: an admission hard on my pride, and harder to do than it sounds; and to try to fill up the emptiness of my ignorance about the lives of Jewish women and women of color. It has also been important for me to acknowledge to myself that most of my learning has been based on *the work* of these women. (Pratt 1988, 42; emphasis added)

The distinction Pratt makes between the "lives of women of color" and "the work of these women" is crucial in grasping epistemic contributions of Women of Color to Pratt's ability to now read the racist, classist, colonialist, and (hetero)sexist fractures of her "home" in the United States, seeing always dual realities of oppression and resistance to that oppression. In other words, Pratt allows Women of Color political perspectives to infiltrate her own sense of self and home instead of reading about their lives as interesting or sad instances of oppression that have little to do with her own history, experience, and possibilities.

Pratt is honest about the difficulties of this reading practice, explaining the loss of security, certainty, safety, pride, and innocence that the white/Anglo Christian middle-class heterosexual limits of her understanding afforded her. In her description of coming to feminist and lesbian consciousness, she articulates this loss in a particularly poignant and useful way: "For being a woman was the constriction that I felt. There I was in a place so much like home: grown-up and I didn't want to be there.... I wanted to go some place where I could just be; I was homesick with nowhere to go" (Pratt 1988, 24). The emotional state of being "homesick [at home] with nowhere to go" is also simultaneously an important epistemic location. It is a recognition of multiple simultaneous realities and logics, some institutionalized and dominant, others subalternized and non-dominant. Being "homesick at home" is being aware that one has a "home," is grounded and shaped by that "home," but is also aware of its violent foundations. Such an awareness is disorienting yet useful in motivating "world'-travel" to non-dominant worlds of sense as a means of arming one's self in struggles for violence-free homeplaces. Equally important is Pratt's sense that she cannot escape to another "home"—she is "homesick with *nowhere to go*." Conscious of the structural dimensions of violence, their long histories and infusion into her "skin blood heart," Pratt comes to realize that struggle against these structures and their manifestations in her own and other homeplaces is where she must reside politically, emotionally, and epistemically. In practice, this means becoming hyper-vigilant against the desire to find "home" in the identity "woman," something she describes as difficult after losing her children to a violent husband after coming out as lesbian. Reflecting on her activist work with the National Organization for Women, Pratt writes: "I understood then how important it was for me to have this new place; it was going to be my new home, to replace the old one I had lost.... I needed desperately to find a place that was mine with other women, where I felt hopeful. But because of my need I did not push myself to consider what separated me from other women" (Pratt 1988, 30). Trying to resolve the homesickness at home, make it go away, leads Pratt to evade divisions, discontinuities, and complicity produced through the "home" she sought in the identity "woman."

Given that the imperialist logic of the transnational imperative in US Women's Studies relies on homogenized conceptions of "home" that remain outside the limits of global terrain, re-seeing "home" places as sites of global struggles is a good way to begin exploring strategies for an anti-imperial praxis for feminist travel. As Pratt illustrates, centering Women of Color politics can facilitate a questioning of the foundations of "homeplaces," whether they be synonymous with the nation-state, the nation, or the neighborhood. To repeat Pratt's poignant phrase, Women of Color are well versed in being "homesick [at home] with nowhere to go" (Pratt 1988, 24). Accordingly, "going global" from the perspective of a US Women of Color politics cannot register as an escape to another "home," nor a civilizing mission to make women abroad like the women at "home."

Conclusion

Preparation for students who choose to "study abroad" often includes a segment on "homesickness." They receive literature explaining the likelihood that they'll experience sadness, loneliness, anxiety, depression, frustration, and shock at some point during their time abroad. Students are instructed that these feelings are classic symptoms of "homesickness," a temporary malady that waxes and wanes as they adjust to their new surroundings. Homesickness, in short, is sickness caused by being away from one's home. The definition assumes that one has a "home" and that this "home" is a place where feelings of sadness, alienation, anxiety, loneliness, frustration, and shock are not common to one's everyday experience. US Women's Studies should be at the forefront in preparing students to challenge this assumption if it seeks to utilize "study abroad" as a means of globalizing perspectives on gender without contributing to imperialist knowledge production.

While Trask's directive that non-Native Hawaiians stay home (instead of visiting her homeland) is certainly direct and literal, I want to suggest that it can and should also be heard as an epistemic challenge for US feminists seeking to globalize their analyses of gender and sexual violence. That is, to "stay home" in one's anti-imperial commitment to global and transnational feminist solidarity can be understood as an epistemic commitment to see the colonial/racial fractures that shape both one's cultural, social, and political sensibilities and one's (lack of) knowledge about differently located peoples and places. For US students and faculty invested in a globalized feminist consciousness, "staying home" while "traveling abroad" would entail a refusal to position the United States as an invisible site from which one explores the "global." Instead, efforts would be made to make the United States known through the histories of genocide, enslavement, and hidden global circuits of exploitation that make possible its institutionalized power and wealth. For the field of US Women's Studies, "staying home while studying abroad" would thus require centering the genealogies and epistemologies of Women of Color as it seeks to expand its cultural knowledge of "women" and gender across geopolitical boundaries. This is not a "staying home" that reinforces ethnocentrism. To the contrary, I am suggesting an epistemic commitment whereby "staying home"—heard as a call from the colonized and racially dispossessed—entails a refusal to escape into the imagined "exotic" or to evade accountability for one's own limits in knowing and engaging cultural and racial others on their own terms.

Notes

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1. According to Fernando Coronil, Occidentalism refers to “the ensemble of representational practices that participate in the production of conceptions of the world, which (1) separate the world's components into bounded units; (2) disaggregate their relational histories; (3) turn difference into hierarchy; (4) naturalize these representations; and (5) intervene, however unwittingly, in the reproduction of existing asymmetrical power relations” (Coronil 1996, 57). Occidentalism as a representational logic supports colonial modernity's “myth of progress” discussed later in this essay.

2. Although not an exhaustive list, the following university Women's Studies program and department websites link a focus on globalized feminist visions to participation in study-abroad opportunities: University of Michigan–Ann Arbor; University of California Santa Barbara; University of California, Los Angeles; Central Washington University; University of Connecticut; University of Minnesota; University of Delaware; Guilford College; Boston College; Skidmore College; McMicken College; University of Kansas; Wells College; University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire; Old Diamond University; University of Colorado Boulder; Medgar Evers College; University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Virginia Commonwealth University; Western Washington University; Goucher College; University of St. Thomas.

3. I purposefully use the harsh terms “anger” and “hatred” to describe Trask's feelings towards the United States, because they aptly convey her unequivocal political perspective on the US as a colonial-settler state and because she explicitly uses these terms herself in an episode of the Aljazeera English series *Inside USA* in which she responds to her interviewer with the following: “Do I hate the United States? Absolutely. I absolutely hate them. And lots of Hawaiians do. And the mystique of Hawaii as soft, sweet and kind... that's all propaganda. Lots of us are really, really angry” (Aljazeera English 2008).

4. I capitalize the term “Women of Color” to mark the US political formation of the identity. I lowercase the term when using it in its reduction to a racial and gender identity description.

5. Madina Tlostanova uses the terms “geo-politics” and “body-politics” to describe a decolonial politics of knowledge production that counters colonial modernity's ego- and bio-politics of knowledge production. As she explains, the geo-politics and body-politics of knowledge “signify the geographic and body-graphic grounds of knowledge and cognition in which history, memory, and languages of people who found themselves, often against their will, at the cross-roads of imperial and colonial differences and experiences and who were refused in their belonging to modernity, and hence, to humanity” (Tlostanova 2010, 35).

6. Chronopolitics is a term coined by anthropologist Johannes Fabian to name the evolutionary temporal classification of anthropological objects of study as stuck in a different (prehistoric or ancient) time than that of the anthropologist, who is assumed to belong to a more modern, evolved, and progressive time. Chronopolitics is fundamental to the epistemic frame of colonial modernity that positions Europe and Euro-America as protagonists of a civilizing history in which Latin America, Africa, and Asia remain stuck in a primitive, underdeveloped past.

7. I borrow the use of the term “categorical” from María Lugones as she uses it to describe the conceptual separation of categories of gender, race, and class in understanding the impact of these vectors of oppression. A categorical construction of women's struggles would pull apart the gender category of oppression from the race category of oppression, privileging the dominant members within each category (e.g., white women in the gender category; men of color in the race category), and would thus falsely universalize a singular account of gender or race.

8. US-centrism, like Afrocentrism or Eurocentrism, falsely universalizes an epistemic frame anchored in hegemonic and homogenized understandings of the “US” or “Africa” or “Europe.” In this regard, US-centrism disallows the possibility of multiple logics across cultural settings. US people of color are certainly not immune to “US-centric” thinking as they cross geopolitical and cultural boundaries. Patrícia de Santana Pinho illustrates this well in her essay on

“African-American Roots Tourism in Brazil” (2008), explaining erroneous African-American assumptions of US-based conceptions of “Blackness” as grounds for commonality and connection in Brazil.

9. Moallem’s critique is based, in part, on a review of Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s careful and transformative work, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Mohanty claims to anchor her analysis in “the most marginalized communities of women” to provide “the most inclusive paradigm for thinking about social justice” (Mohanty 2003, 231).

10. “Illumination” as used here is meant to suggest simultaneously “discovery,” Western “enlightenment,” and “enlightenment” for the sake of more complete universal theories of global liberation.

11. Karla F. C. Holloway uses the term “transnational imperative” to reference the eclipsing of racialized gender politics in the United States by the popular trend to internationalize the field of US Feminist Studies (Holloway 2006).

12. Women of Color emerged as a political coalitional identity that emphasized a shift to perceiving gender, racial, class, sexual, and cultural differences against their negative categorial institutionalized representations. This politics of re-seeing difference is missed when Women of Color is reduced to an oppositional identity based on a common understanding of racial and gender categorial oppression.

13. Moallem erroneously attributes the concept of “world-travel” to Wing (Moallem 2008, 346).

14. Anti-violence feminist activist-scholar Andrea Smith spoke directly to this point in a 2003 interview with Maria Cotera at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, when she explained her reason for refusing to provide personal accounts of her feminist politics: “I’ve noticed in classes ... people always want to hear stories and novels from women of color, but they don’t want to hear our analysis” (Smith 2003, 34).

15. In “Toward a Decolonial Feminism,” María Lugones suggests that we not hear Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a woman?” question in her famous speech as rhetorical, but rather as pointing to the restriction of “woman” historically to white/Anglo bourgeois females of the colonizing class. Lugones refers to this restriction of the gender binary and gender itself to the white/Anglo colonizing bourgeois as a consequence of the “coloniality of gender,” a frame that denied gender to the racially dehumanized and used exclusion from gender to racially code the colonized as beasts fit for brutal exploitation and sexual violence (Lugones 2010).

16. Chandra Mohanty (2003), among other feminists of color, carefully distinguishes between the politics of a global feminism and the politics of a transnational feminism, the latter often understood as a departure from the early Western assumptions of an imperialist “global sisterhood.” However, the study-abroad logic motivating an internationalization of US feminism often disregards this careful distinction, generalizing each term as a reference to a feminism geographically focused outside the United States.

17. Chela Sandoval documents the 1981 NWSA Annual Conference discussions amongst women of color as they negotiated their politics of identification. Clear that they did not want a politics of unity that required “the erasure of our many differences,” the participants concluded that “there can be no simple way of identifying our enemies or our friends ... and no simple unity for feminists of color” (Sandoval 1990, 65).

18. Lugones purposefully leaves the concept of “worlds” vague in order not to reduce the complexity it references. She does indicate that a “world” is inhabited by flesh-and-blood peoples, shaped by specific material histories of oppression and resistance, and always exists in relation to other “worlds” (Lugones 2003, 87).

19. These resistant constructions are often imperceptible to those not “inside” the resistant collectivities. How one gets “inside” such collectivities thus becomes a crucial methodological question for those invested in pursuing feminist research beyond their own racial, cultural, and national locus.

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