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Part 1

Bridging History,
Theory, and Practice

Chapter I

Historicizing Intersectionality as a Critical Lens

Returning to the Work of Anna Julia Cooper

Vivian M. May

Scholars of intersectionality, historically and presently, start from the premise that both lived identities and structures of power and privilege should be understood as interwoven and not as additive factors or as separable dynamics. Intersectional approaches therefore entail a significant shift in epistemological, ontological, and methodological frames: fundamentally emphasizing simultaneity, scholars of intersectionality employ “tactics, strategies, and identities which historically have appeared to be mutually exclusive under modernist oppositional practices.” Because this alternative mode of reasoning can readily lead to charges of illogic, as Kimberlé Crenshaw has discussed at length, those who employ intersectionality frequently confront being misread or misunderstood.¹

For example, intersectional models of “both/and” thinking and simultaneity are frequently characterized as too complex or as impossible to engage in, and although intersectionality is widely acknowledged and even lauded as pivotal to feminist studies today, the degree to which the basic premises of intersectionality are understood and its intellectual contexts and history are engaged with and known are highly uneven: it is often interpreted reductively or used acontextually. As Stephanie Shields documents, for instance, “In conventional social and behavioral research, intersectionality frequently becomes redefined as a methodological challenge. . . . [Researchers] have typically responded to the question of intersectionality in one of three ways: excluding the question; deferring the question; limiting the question.”² Thus, despite soaring rhetoric suggesting intersectionality is *de rigueur* in contemporary feminist research, it is too often instrumentalized—as a descriptive or demographic factor, for example, but not employed to develop research questions or to inform theoretical or empirical analyses.³

In addition, the rather common notion that intersectionality is a recent development in feminist thought relies on a truncated theoretical genealogy. While the late twentieth century certainly marks the emergence in the critical lexicon of the term *intersectionality* by Crenshaw, and while the 1970s and 1980s were shaped by wide-ranging discussions of the interplay among systems of race, gender, class, and sexuality, it is inaccurate to suggest that the past forty years constitute the only historical moment in which the examination of *intersections* among systems, identities, and politics has been pivotal in the history of feminist thought in general and within black feminist thought in particular.⁴ To clarify, in arguing for a more adequate intellectual history of intersectionality, I am not suggesting that Crenshaw's coining of the term was insignificant. The metaphor has provided a concrete way to name and trace a mode of inquiry that has been long-standing in black feminist thought.

Crenshaw herself acknowledges this longer trajectory when delineating the concept in relation to the law and the limits of single-axis models of redress and rights: she suggests that a matrix worldview informed the work of earlier nineteenth-century black feminist theorists, including Anna Julia Cooper and Sojourner Truth, who laid the foundations for what we would now recognize as intersectional analyses and methods.⁵ Presentist approaches to the concept therefore erroneously imply that theorizing by women of color constitutes a later theoretical development (to be tacked on to an extant and unrevised timeline of feminist thought); it can also reinforce the rather problematic (and widely critiqued) wave model of historicizing or periodizing feminism.⁶

Moreover, as Beverly Guy-Sheftall has amply demonstrated in *Words of Fire*, in which she documents two hundred years of black feminist thought, analyses starting at and asserting the need to examine the nexus of race-gender-class have long been offered forth as necessary to realizing more adequate models of personhood, politics, and liberation.⁷ Intersectional theories and methods have been developed by black feminists as a means to foreground race as a central factor shaping gendered experience and gender's impact on raced experience; to emphasize that addressing racism is fundamental to feminism and vice versa; to contest the false universalization of gender or womanhood as monolithic, as with the false universalization of race and racialized experience; and to highlight and address gaps, erasures, and silences in the historical and political record resulting from such false universals.

Unfortunately, this longer history is too often unknown or ignored, even as intersectionality may be widely celebrated today. Paradoxically, these nineteenth-century origins and applications are more visible as prior instances of intersectionality (albeit without the terminology developed by Crenshaw) when the historical or theoretical research itself *starts from an intersectional lens*. Utilizing an intersectionality framework therefore aids in understanding more fully not only the relationship among systems of oppression in the present day but also how and why the concept itself (and the interconnectedness it seeks

to name and examine) remains relatively invisible within prevailing analytic frameworks. In other words, an intersectional approach is pivotal to uncovering and understanding intersectionality's precursors as well as ongoing resistance to the insights an intersectional model of knowing has to offer.

Moreover, as a historiographic tool, intersectionality can be particularly useful as a metahistorical lens through which to lay bare issues of power and inequality and to question conventional historical terms, timelines, and values. In other words, it is invaluable for plumbing history's silences; for understanding oppression as having a history and as existing within a set of cultural, political, and social conditions; and for unearthing a vision of historical agency for those whose personhood and agency have been denied. As black feminist lawyer and activist Pauli Murray so aptly put it, "The lesson of history [is] that all human rights are indivisible and that the failure to adhere to this principle jeopardizes the rights of all."⁸ For early black feminist scholar and educator Anna Julia Cooper, such an intersectional vision of history and approach to liberation informed her body of work (though no specific term such as *intersectionality* appears, per se, in her scholarship). Cooper's writings are therefore pivotal to tracing the genesis of intersectionality as a theory and method long before its late twentieth-century iterations.

Who Was Anna Julia Cooper?

Born into slavery in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1858, and living to the age of 105, Cooper was an internationally known African American feminist educator, activist, and scholar.⁹ Postemancipation, Cooper was one of two girls to enroll in the first class at St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute (founded in 1867), which opened its doors in January 1868 in Raleigh. Cooper received a scholarship upon entry and, around age ten, began tutoring other students to help supplement her scholarship, thereby beginning her long career as an educator. She fought for entry to the "gentlemen's" courses (including Greek, Latin, and mathematics) and earned her high school diploma in 1877, also the year she married George A. C. Cooper, a St. Augustine's theology student from the Caribbean.

Cooper continued studying beyond her high school diploma and teaching at St. Augustine's until 1881, two years after George Cooper's untimely death in 1879. She then applied to Oberlin and was granted entry in the fall of 1881 with a scholarship and employment as a tutor: Mary Church (Terrell) and Ida Gibbs (Hunt) were also in her class. Cooper earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1884 and became chair of Languages and Science at Wilberforce for a year before returning in 1885 to St. Augustine's as a professor of math, Latin, Greek, and German. Due to her college-level teaching experience, Oberlin awarded Cooper a master's degree in mathematics in

1887, the same year she was recruited to teach math and science at the Washington (Colored) Preparatory High School in Washington, DC (known as the M Street High School), where she would work for over thirty-five years of her teaching career.

While teaching at M Street, Cooper was engaged in community activism, publishing, and speaking on the lecture circuit (at home and abroad—she was one of two African American women to speak before the first Pan-African Congress in London in 1900).¹⁰ For example, she wrote columns in the black press on issues from folklore to black women's unpaid labor in the home, helped to found many important organizations in the Washington, DC, area (such as the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, the Colored Women's League, the Washington Negro Folklore Society, the Colored Settlement House, and the Bethel Literary Society), and wrote several books during her teaching career, including *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1892), which Mary Helen Washington characterizes as “the most precise, forceful, well-argued statement of black feminist thought to come out of the nineteenth century.”¹¹

In January 1901 Cooper was promoted to principal of M Street when Robert H. Terrell stepped down to take a judicial appointment, but her appointment was to be controversial and short-lived because Cooper's educational leadership was both rigorous and unwavering. She rejected the racist textbooks assigned by the board, ensured that M Street students scored well on district-wide tests (often better than white students), sought and earned accreditation for M Street diplomas for college-entrance equivalency, and refused to separate vocational and liberal arts curricula. Cooper believed all students deserved a well-rounded education: M Street offered full college preparatory as well as industrial and vocational curricula. Her battle with the board was made public, drawn out, and covered at length in the press: her ethics and professional skill were questioned, her pay denied, and her leadership challenged. Cooper eventually lost her employment by the fall of 1906 at M Street (whereupon her contract simply was not renewed) but won the curriculum fight: M Street's comprehensive curriculum remained intact. After working out west for a few years, Cooper was invited to return to M Street in 1910 and remained on the faculty for twenty more years.

Shortly after returning to work in DC, Cooper began traveling to France, studying French literature, history, and phonetics at the *Guilde Internationale* in Paris in the summers of 1911, 1912, and 1913, prior to applying for entry to Columbia University to pursue a doctorate in Romance Languages: she would engage in doctoral studies there during the summers of 1914 through 1917. However, Cooper could not fulfill Columbia's residency requirement due to the fact that she was working full-time as a teacher and could not give up her position, having taken in five nieces and nephews (and therefore also having bought a house in the Washington neighborhood of LeDroit Park near Howard). The advent of World War I also posed an impediment: Cooper got

involved in war work summer camps and other activities. Determined to earn her PhD, after the war Cooper sought the aid of Abbé Félix Klein, a longtime friend in Paris, for help in transferring the Columbia credits to pursue a doctorate in history there.¹² Cooper was the first African American woman to earn a PhD at the Sorbonne and the fourth African American woman to earn one in the United States.

In addition to several short essays, pamphlets, and speeches published across her career, in 1925 Cooper would publish *Le pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (*The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne*, a translation of the epic poem from the medieval to the modern French, which was to have been her doctoral thesis at Columbia) as well as her Sorbonne dissertation *L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la Révolution* (France's attitude toward slavery during the Revolution).¹³ In 1930 she retired from M Street to become president of Frelinghuysen University, an alternative postsecondary educational institution for working adults who could not attend full-time at Howard, the only other postsecondary educational institution open to African Americans in Washington.¹⁴ After stepping down from the presidency of Frelinghuysen but still working as its registrar, Cooper took up some other scholarly projects. Her two-volume set, *The Life and Writings of the Grimké Family* and *Personal Recollections of the Grimké Family*, was privately published in Washington, DC in 1951. During the 1950s Cooper also asked the historian Ray Allen Billington to edit Charlotte Forten Grimké's teaching journals and to help to get them published: they were published in New York by the Dryden Press in 1953 as *The Journal of Charlotte Forten: A Free Negro in the Slave Era*.¹⁵

Cooper and Intersectionality

As this brief biographical snapshot illustrates, Cooper was a committed educator, engaged activist, and talented scholar. She took up many different causes and interests throughout her long life, but central to much of her work was her multifaceted vision of justice and rights. In her scholarship, Cooper used critical tools that anticipate what we would currently describe as an intersectional approach to reveal how, for instance, both sexism and racism are systemic in nature (and interrelated) and to argue that these systems have a history that needs to be named and examined.¹⁶ Moreover, she developed an interdisciplinary lens to highlight how historical actors are multiply situated and to underscore the significance of location on one's worldview. Simultaneously, Cooper named obstacles to telling a more inclusive history: bias and arrogance built into normative modes of recounting the past (and of analyzing the present) can mean that views from the margins are often devalued or simply missing altogether from the textual or historical record.

In her earlier work (1892–1913) Cooper emphasized the centrality of race to gender and vice versa, with issues of class, capital, geographic region, and nation taken up intermittently within her analyses of race-gender matrices. Cooper argued that this (unacknowledged but nonetheless formative) history of the interlocking structures of both racism and sexism continued to shape American cultural narratives and to impact the nation’s operative assumptions about (and legal frameworks concerning) personhood, agency, and citizenship. In an attempt to highlight who has been ignored or forgotten, for instance, Cooper queried, “who shall recount the name and fame of the women?” and referenced women who were generally forgotten or dismissed, from Ruth to the Amazons, Sappho to Madame de Staël. Cooper also pointed to black women artists and activists who were her contemporaries yet were also often overlooked “sisters in the service” of humanity, among them Frances Watkins Harper, Sojourner Truth, Charlotte Grimké, and Hallie Quinn Brown.¹⁷

In her later work, especially in her Sorbonne dissertation, which she completed at age sixty-six while working full-time at the M Street High School, Cooper’s focus became increasingly comparative and international and attended more deeply to questions of class and capital.¹⁸ Here again she illustrated how an unacknowledged history and an epistemological absence can have an immense impact on world events, even as they may be willfully ignored or dismissed as irrelevant. Cooper exposed how France’s notion of the citizen-subject during the revolutionary era remained so deeply tied to ideals of capitalist profit and to notions of white superiority that the French were in many ways incapable of truly achieving the full potential of their republican vision of democracy. Moreover, in tracing connections between capitalism, citizenship, and race in her Sorbonne thesis, Cooper took up questions of within-group differences (e.g., differences in terms of capital, class, and citizenship status) among blacks in Saint-Domingue; she refused both to homogenize blackness and to rely on reductive binaries of race (white/black) and of empire (metropole/colony) for her analysis.

Thus, in both of her major works, *A Voice from the South* and *L’attitude de la France*, Cooper confronted a key methodological and political problem: since the ways in which the historical meanings of personhood and citizenship are racialized, gendered, and classed are usually ignored, or denied altogether, a flexible and dynamic method was necessary to break open cultural silences, expose the systemic workings of power, and offer an alternative worldview. Cooper delved into absences, straddled disciplinary boundaries, refused harmful cognitive and epistemic norms, and spoke up from history’s fissures. I want to underscore that Cooper was not alone—she worked in dialogue (though not always in full agreement) with many other men and women of her time (including W. E. B. Du Bois, Fannie Barrier Williams, Ida B. Wells, Charlotte Forten Grimké, Nannie Helen Burroughs, Walter White, Martin Delaney, Kelly Miller, and many more) who were likewise engaged in thinking through the

politics of knowledge, reexamining the past, theorizing resistance, and envisioning liberation strategies.

Nevertheless, Cooper's work is especially central to tracing a more comprehensive history of intersectional thought and politics not only because her approach was highly innovative in terms of her inclusive and nonhierarchical notions of freedom and of personhood (i.e., of rights and of ontology or identity) but also because she combined this matrix model of race, gender, region, and class with a highly interdisciplinary methodology. Epistemologically, her work stands out for the ways in which she consistently sought to reshape norms of logic and rationality from the standpoint of black womanhood.¹⁹

To illustrate in more detail Cooper's contributions to the history of intersectional thought, I will discuss some examples from her 1892 *A Voice from the South*, the first book-length example of black feminist theory in the United States. I shall also draw from other short speeches and essays by Cooper from the period 1892–1913. In these earlier writings, Cooper broke open the all-too-common false universalization of race and womanhood at play in the wider body politic by starting from the analytic and political standpoint of black southern womanhood. Using simultaneity as her lens, Cooper insisted that the fullest sense of freedom, personhood, and autonomy could be arrived at collectively only by seeking to eradicate all forms of domination simultaneously. Exposing myriad ways in which marginalization (whether by race, gender, region, or class) is socially enforced and not an ontologically fixed state of being, Cooper developed a theory of resistance and a view of historical and cultural representation grounded in everyday experience.

Next, I examine Cooper's analysis of race, class, and capital in her 1925 Sorbonne dissertation, *L'attitude de la France*, as well as in her dissertation defense, or *soutenance*, papers.²⁰ In her thesis she highlighted the racialized workings of modernity, capital, and revolution. She pointed to the politics of historical understanding by exposing the limits of conventional approaches to the age of revolution and by identifying silences within extant historical studies and archival materials. Cooper also laid bare the reciprocal, transatlantic workings of history in the way she approached her subject in that she presented enslaved and free blacks as agents of history, not imitators of European Enlightenment.

In developing a framework of reciprocity rather than one of mimesis and by addressing race, class, nation, and citizenship as interdependent factors, Cooper highlighted how the revolutions in France and Saint-Domingue were interlaced. She also illustrated how notions about race and racial hierarchies shaped Enlightenment ideas about citizenship, agency, and personhood, while, simultaneously, ideas about property, capital economy, and social class impacted intraracial and interracial politics in both France and Saint-Domingue. Cooper suggested that without the uprising of the slaves and free blacks in Saint-Domingue, the French republic would have remained mired in an illogical attachment to hierarchy, exploitation, and dehumanizing oppression: she positioned black and

transatlantic history at the center of French history, shifting the epistemological contours and political boundaries of revolutionary history.

Having Her Say: *A Voice from the South* and Other Early Works

As the title *A Voice from the South* suggests, issues of voice (from the politics of raising or lifting one's voice to the politics of being heard) and questions of the meanings of location permeate her book. Not only does the motif of voice shape the structure of the volume (e.g., the first part is titled "Soprano Obligato" and the second "Tutti ad Libitum," such that the solo voice leads to the collective voicing in coalition), but Cooper also modulated her writing voice and style throughout the text. In the preface, she paralleled black women's collective voice to a "muffled chord," a "mute and voiceless note," and an "uncomprehended cadenza"—suggesting right off that questions of voice entail more than a lack of speech or problem of silence at an individual level, but also a lack of rhetorical space into which to speak and be understood collectively (i).²¹ As the text unfolds, readers are asked to attend to a more nuanced politics of voice and reception and to think through the many obstacles to being heard. For instance, Cooper urged readers to acknowledge that "rhetoric" alone cannot "annihilate" inequality since "the man who is dominated by the sentiment of race prejudice," she found, tends to be "impervious to reason" (232).

Cooper's shifting rhetorical tone and her tactical uses of humor, sarcasm, and irony amid theoretical and political analyses are important for thinking about how she developed and utilized intersectionality in her work, for these modulations mark the writing and analysis as embodied and located (rather than detached or remote). Cooper emphasized that she spoke to and took up universal issues and questions from a particular location as a black woman who is also of the South: she contended that all knowledge, including her own, is particular, contextual, and located within a time, place, body, and set of social relations—her ideas have come, she argued, from her own "peculiar coigne of vantage" (138).

Moreover, Cooper understood fully that men do not see the world from women's standpoint, nor do black men, in their "busy objectivity," necessarily view reality as black women do (122, ii). She wrote, just "as our Caucasian barristers are not to blame if they cannot *quite* put themselves in the dark man's place, neither should the dark man be wholly expected fully and adequately to reproduce the exact Voice of the Black Woman" (iii). Cooper underscored the centrality of social location and of lived experience to knowledge production. She therefore demanded that the "truth from *each* standpoint be presented. . . . The 'other side' has not been represented by one who 'lives there.' And not many can more sensibly realize and more accurately tell the

weight and the fret of the ‘long dull pain’ than the open-eyed but hitherto voiceless Black Woman of America” (ii). Though not usually consulted, black women, she contended, can better analyze and understand social structures because of their social location and lived history. Likewise, she suggested, those who have had access to more power and privilege may be *less reliable* knowers due to *their* social location: just as marginality can yield insight, access to power can skew perception.²²

In addition to underscoring that black women have long been “open-eyed” knowers, throughout *A Voice from the South*, Cooper reminded readers that, due to their social location at the nexus of compounding structures of oppression, black women have had extensive experience confronting indifference, ignorance, and silence. She underscored that the “colored woman of to-day occupies . . . a unique position in this country. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both” (134). Cooper repeatedly affirmed that knowledge gained from marginalization is equal to if not more adequate than dominant modes of knowing. She often used humor to get at this idea, as in the following passage, in which Cooper positioned herself as a male patient awaiting his diagnosis: “the doctors while discussing their scientifically conclusive diagnosis of the disease, will perhaps not think it presumptuous in the patient if he dares to suggest where at least the pain is” (36).

Drawing on her own experience, Cooper also argued that what may appear to be intrinsic characteristics are often, in fact, socially constructed. Taking on biological determinists of her time by arguing that “there is nothing irretrievably wrong with the Black man’s skull,” Cooper further explained that “race, color, sex, condition, are . . . the accidents, not the substance of life” (125). By this she did not mean that race or gender have no meaning (i.e., that they are insubstantial); rather, their meanings take shape within sociocultural and historical contexts. Thus, Cooper derided the pseudoscientific notion that the “shape of the female cerebrum” is incompatible with higher education and showed instead how women’s secondary social status has been both legally enforced, socially encouraged, and rationalized to seem natural (65).

She also argued that women themselves have been pushed to be a “mere toy,” whose value in the world is ascertained by their capacity to please men: moreover, they have been wrongly “compelled to look to sexual love” as their only path to fulfillment, while being denied access to an education as well as the right to own property. As a black woman, Cooper remarked, she has had to “struggle” especially hard “to fight [my] way against positive discouragements to the higher education” (65, 68, 77). Recalling some of her more difficult moments at St. Augustine’s, particularly her conflicts with the Reverend Dr. Smedes, who did not think it necessary for her to study the full curriculum (since he assumed she was there only to find a husband), Cooper wrote, “I constantly felt . . . a thumping within unanswered by any beckoning from without” (76).

In addition to emphasizing her own social location, Cooper deftly exposed how the partiality of those who speak or write from dominant locations is rarely pointed to, even when their bias and arrogance are glaring, as Cooper suggested was the case with William Dean Howells's plying of trite racist/sexist stereotypes in his various literary endeavors, particularly his 1891 novel, *An Imperial Duty*, "which he ha[d] no right or authority to hawk" (206). When it came to African American life, Cooper contended, "Mr. Howells [did] not know what he [was] talking about": his work, steeped in "vulgarity," was "superficial" regarding racial matters. Though Howells's point of view was "precisely that of a white man who saw colored people at long range or only in certain capacities," he would pay no price for his narrowness and would never be asked to account for it in any way (201, 203, 206).

In contrast, Cooper illustrated that she must dance around the presumption that her writing will be biased or overly emotional (and thereby less rational) on account of both her race and gender status. For example, in the midst of an argument about the central role black womanhood will play in the future of the race, both in theological and educational causes, Cooper paused, "may I not hope that the writer's oneness with her subject both in feeling and in being may palliate undue obtrusiveness of opinions here" (42). She also exposed how the biases and emotions of those in power are usually denied outright (though she aimed to make them visible, hence her recasting "Anglo-Saxons" as "Angry Saxons" in a later essay) or are obfuscated through powerful theoretical traditions, such as that of taking on a mantle of objectivity to mask fundamentally narrow-minded thinking.²³ For example, the philosophical movement known as positivism, for all its claims to pure objectivity, she suggested, is inherently biased against women, since within the theoretical framework, women can occupy only the position of the contemplated (or worshipped) object but cannot engage in contemplation itself (since they are the objects, not the subjects, of knowledge) (292).

Cooper's focus on the politics of location as it intertwines with the politics of knowledge and voice is especially significant in relation to understanding how her work presages what we would now characterize as intersectionality, because scholars of intersectionality demand recognition of how power asymmetries impact rhetorical space and thereby not only constrain public discourse but also hinder access to full recognition and rights as citizen-subjects. As with contemporary theorists of intersectionality, Cooper's focus on voice and location draws our attention to the margins as a site of knowledge and resistance and to lived experience as a criterion of meaning. As her insights illustrate, an intersectional approach considers marginalization both in terms of social structure and lived experience. This dual focus is a hallmark of black feminist theorizing and, as Patricia Hill Collins has argued, it entails analyzing resistance within the margins and redefining "marginality as a potential source of strength," not merely "one of tragedy."²⁴

The epistemological shift at work in Cooper's analyses is important, because she debunked a "god's-eye" view, challenging the might and power of the eye of the iconic American eagle with the voice and song of the "starling," offering alternative views on social reality and historical circumstance that pushed readers to shift away from the prevailing viewpoint of the eagle.²⁵ For instance, Cooper revised the nation's origin story. Rather than the usual account of Pilgrims, Thanksgiving dinners, peaceful settlement, unjustly imposed tea taxes, and revolutionary uprising, she offered a different genealogy: "Uprooted from the sunny land of his forefathers by the white man's cupidity and selfishness, ruthlessly torn from all the ties of clan and tribe, dragged against his will over thousands of miles of unknown waters . . . the Negro was transplanted to this continent in order to produce chattels and beasts of burden for a nation 'conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.'"²⁶

Cooper also made clear that the meanings of our positionality and even our embodiment are not fixed but variable and contextual. This is of course implied in her argument that race, gender, and class are better understood to be the "accidents" and not the "substance" of life. But she also illustrated this concept more completely when discussing her own travels abroad: she recalled what it felt like to be outside of the Jim Crow United States and spend time in Toronto (where she traveled in 1891 on a teacher exchange with friend and colleague Ella D. Barrier). Referencing herself in the third person as "the Black Woman of the South," Cooper remarked on "a hospitable, thawing-out atmosphere everywhere—in shops and waiting rooms, on cars and in the streets" that not only made her see her own "countrymen" in "unfavorable contrast" but also impacted her own internal sensibilities. Cooper became aware of the ways in which, in the Jim Crow South and in the nation's capital, she lived with a "whipped-cur feeling," but in Toronto she found she not only had to negotiate different attitudes in others but also had to confront a degree of internalized oppression within herself (88–89).

Thus far, I have focused more on epistemological questions and rhetorical approaches in *A Voice from the South* as a means of highlighting Cooper's uses and development of intersectionality. But she also applied an intersectional lens to debates about rights and freedoms, especially with regard to questions of black liberation and women's liberation at the turn of the last century.²⁷ As her remarks before an audience of white feminists at the 1893 Chicago World's Exposition illustrate, the black feminist worldview she drew on and fleshed out was collective and grounded in a vision of solidarity. Cooper stated, "We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life. . . . The colored woman feels that woman's cause is one and universal . . . not the white woman's, nor the black woman's, nor the red woman's, but the cause of every man and of every woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong."²⁸ Hazel Carby contends that, as with other black feminists in her time, "Cooper . . . exposed the historical

and ideological framework within which white women defended their own class and racial interests.”²⁹

By starting from the premise of the indivisibility of all aspects of the self, as well as from the insight that systems of oppression are interlocking, Cooper advocated a matric model of rights and activism, rather than what Crenshaw in the contemporary period has negatively characterized as a “single-axis” model.³⁰ Cooper offered an early example of the limits of single-axis thinking in her sharp critique of “Wimodaughsis (a woman’s culture club whose name was created using the first few letters of *wives*, *mothers*, *daughters*, and *sisters*).” Too often, she wrote, it is as if “Pandora’s box is opened in the ideal harmony of this modern Eden without an Adam when a colored lady, a teacher in one of our schools, applies for admission to its privileges and opportunities.” Cooper astutely rechristened the Kentucky women’s club “Whimodaughsis,” both to reveal and to discredit the tacit whiteness at the heart of this club (80–81).

Cooper named other examples of white feminists’ adherence to race supremacy on the path to “women’s” liberation. She illustrated how “Mrs. Mary A. Livermore . . . was dwelling on the Anglo-Saxon genius for power” and not on a vision of liberation for all peoples when, in a speech, she seemed to make light of the fact that an “unoffending Chinaman” was beaten on the streets because he was perceived as effeminate and weak (53–54).³¹ Cooper also challenged Anna Howard Shaw (who would later become president of the National American Women Suffrage Association from 1901 to 1915) for her exclusionary politics and myopic thinking. Shaw posed the problem of “women’s” rights as that of “Woman versus the Indian” so that, according to Cooper’s point of view, women thereby made themselves plaintiffs in a fictional lawsuit Cooper fittingly named “Eye vs. Foot” to highlight the absurd and racist logics of white feminist frameworks.³² In response, Cooper queried, “Why should woman become plaintiff in a suit versus the Indian, or the Negro or any other race or class who have been crushed under the iron heel of Anglo-Saxon power and selfishness?” (123). Furthermore, she asserted, “It cannot seem less than a blunder, whenever the exponents of a great reform . . . allow themselves to seem distorted by a narrow view of their own aims and principles. All prejudices, whether of race, sect or sex, class pride and class distinctions are the belittling inheritance and badge of snobs and prigs” (118).

Cooper also refuted false equivalencies between blackness and masculinity. With reference to Martin R. Delaney, Cooper admonished, “no man can represent the race,” even if he is a self-proclaimed “unadulterated black man” (30). Asserting that the “dark man [should not] be wholly expected fully and adequately to reproduce the exact Voice of the Black Woman,” she insisted that black men—including Alexander Crummell (whose famous pamphlet she here referred to and responded to)—should not venture to speak for black

women (iii).³³ She contended, “We might as well expect to grow trees from leaves as hope to build up a civilization or a manhood without taking into consideration our women” (78).

Cooper added that black women’s needs and issues should be considered at the *center* of what constitutes race politics and liberation, rather than secondary or marginal, but she found that the fundamental enmeshment of race and gender politics was too often ignored by black men, leaving “the colored woman . . . hampered and shamed by a less liberal sentiment and a more conservative attitude on the part of those for whose opinion she cares most” (78, 135). She called black men to task for holding onto the patriarchal romantic notion “that women may stand on pedestals or live in doll houses, (if they happen to have them) but they must not furrow their brows with thought or attempt to help men tug at the great questions of the world” (75). Instead of asking black women to silence their voices and dull their intellects, she argued that black men should recognize that the black woman “finds herself in the presence of responsibilities which ramify through the profoundest and most varied interests of her country and race.” Cooper concluded, “Such is the colored woman’s office, she must stamp weal or woe on the coming history of this people” (142, 145).

In critiquing both white women and black men for foolishly emulating or seeking access to white patriarchy rather than dismantling interconnected systems of inequality, Cooper exposed how privilege and oppression are not mutually exclusive but simultaneous and relative. She therefore advocated a different model of thinking about the meaning of freedom and the notion of rights. In other words, connected to Cooper’s view of the human subject as multiply situated was her advocacy of an alternative approach to difference as a starting point for a more adequate vision of the body politic. Cooper explained, “Caste and prejudice mean immobility. One race predominance means death. The community that closes its gates against foreign talent can never hope to advance beyond a certain point. Resolve to keep out foreigners and you keep out progress” (160).

Cooper argued that differences should not be opposed, nor should they be ignored or erased: they should be balanced in a state of “universal reciprocity” rather than placed in a hierarchical relationship (165, 168). The alternative, she suggested, would be a society that suppressed differences, entered “the passivity of death,” became mired in “stagnation,” and pursued tyrannical “unity without variety,” resulting both in xenophobia and ethnocentrism (149–50, 152, 160). By beginning from the premise that “no one is or can be supreme. All interests must be consulted, all claims conciliated,” Cooper could then insist that the “co-existence of . . . racially different elements” should be considered to be at the core of America’s potential, not its so-called problem (164, 151). More than thirty years after first positing this notion of the meaning of democracy founded in multiplicity (and not false

unity), Cooper embarked on a historical study of the French and Haitian Revolutions: in this work, she built on her earlier intersectional approaches, including her vision of differences as fundamental to meaningful freedom, but shifted her attention to a transatlantic lens and to questions of how class and capital intersect with race and citizenship.

Shifting Mindsets, Examining Attitudes: Cooper's Sorbonne Dissertation

If Cooper's dissertation is referenced at all in contemporary feminist scholarship, the question often is raised as to why Cooper appears to have "dropped" her gender analysis in this later major work, and whether, therefore, her dissertation should be considered to be feminist. The answers are quite complex, but in brief let me first emphasize that her archival materials had little if any documentation about women—free black, enslaved, white, or *gens de couleur* (people of color)—in Saint-Domingue (or in France for that matter). Using France's military archives and having few studies on hand focusing on women on either side of the Atlantic during the revolutionary era meant that Cooper's primary and secondary materials did not include gender content per se. It is therefore hard to imagine how she might have engaged in a project examining the politics of black womanhood in the age of revolution. Nevertheless, Cooper remained interested in challenging false universals, refuting simplistic binaries, shifting the analytic focus to the margins, and thinking through matrices of power, consistent with her earlier writings.

Moreover, in her dissertation Cooper continued to explore questions of liberation, to trace the origins of supremacist modes of thinking, and to address silences in the historical record. This is in keeping with her earlier analyses, though she attended to the nexus of race, class, and nation in the dissertation rather than her focus on race, gender, and, to varying degrees, class, region, and nation in *A Voice from the South* and other early works. In addition, times had changed. From the 1890s to the 1920s space for black feminists in the public sphere shrank intensely: a sharp rise in xenophobia, racial backlash, empire building, and lynching marked this period. On a personal level, Cooper's struggles with Oberlin College in the 1920s help to illustrate how institutions that formerly had been proudly inclusive became quite hostile in terms of race relations.³⁴ The suffrage movement had also further cemented a false divide between women's rights and racial equality, while at the same time, the masculinist focus of civil rights organizing (e.g., the Niagara Movement) intensified during this period. Finally, black feminists have long taken up issues that do not necessarily appear to be feminist from a conventional (and white-centered) view, but that are, in fact, central to women's liberation writ large (lynching; access to food, employment, and housing; welfare rights; poverty;

incarceration and the prison-industrial complex, to name a few). I suggest that Cooper's dissertation can be read within this larger frame (and in conversation with her larger body of work).

Thus, while most scholars have focused primarily on *A Voice from the South*, Cooper's 1925 Sorbonne dissertation, *France's Attitude toward Slavery during the Revolution*, deserves more attention than it has received to date.³⁵ In her thesis, Cooper analyzed the dialectical nature of the Haitian and French Revolutions and contended that these political moments arose out of a transatlantic consciousness, not merely out of French intellectual or political innovation. Writing during the United States' military occupation of Haiti (1914–35) and having at her disposal a definitively Eurocentric data set, Cooper spoke out against imperial expansion (past and present).³⁶ By recounting some of history's suppressed stories to offer a different reading of the revolutionary era, and of the French Revolution in particular, Cooper situated both black history and French history within an international, transatlantic framework.

To put it mildly, France's parliamentary and military archives (from which Cooper drew her materials) are imbalanced. As Frances Richardson Keller has documented, "of the thousands of published cahiers . . . only . . . eleven demand the eventual abolition of slavery. Twelve ask for improvement in the condition of the slaves, but are indefinite as to what should be done. One cahier expressed concern with the condition of free [Blacks]."³⁷ Is it any wonder that, much as she characterized the state of the black woman at the opening of *A Voice from the South*, in her dissertation Cooper described the suffering of the blacks in Saint-Domingue, and particularly of the slaves, as, likewise, "silent"?³⁸ Nevertheless, as in her earlier works, Cooper found ways to make this silence speak. Carefully sifting through these materials, she uncovered evidence to support her claims that slaves and gens de couleur in Saint-Domingue were agents of political consciousness who pushed the emerging French republic to take up a more comprehensive vision of democracy.

Unlike other works on the Haitian Revolution written by more widely recognized black male scholars (e.g., C. L. R. James's 1938 *The Black Jacobins* or W. E. B. Du Bois's 1938 *Haiti: A Drama of the Black Napoleon*), in her dissertation title (*L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la Révolution*) Cooper did not frame the actions in Saint-Domingue as black versions of French politics or as imitations of French resistance, which both James and Du Bois implicitly did do, with their metaphors of the "Jacobins" and of "Napoleon," respectively.³⁹ In the title, as throughout the study, Cooper never limited the "Revolution" to denote the French Revolution alone; she left the referent open-ended, perhaps to allow her (potentially biased) readers at the Sorbonne (including her chief examiner, the renowned civilizationist sociologist Celestin Bouglé) to *presume* that Cooper was referencing the French Revolution alone, while at the same time, she created space in which to advance her argument

that the Haitian Revolution was as much a part of the age of revolution as the political upheavals in the United States or in France.

Certainly Cooper was writing against the grain, in her own time and even by current measures. Prevailing approaches have tended to imply that the root source of liberation and political action in Haiti was European. Analogously, as Laurent Dubois has illustrated, the Enlightenment is often deemed to have occurred only within the bounds of Europe “proper,” rather than in an Atlantic context of cross-fertilization.⁴⁰ In contrast, Cooper’s intersectional method allowed her to highlight a wider array of forms of agency or resistance. While she acknowledged that the French Revolution offered a fruitful environment for the Haitian Revolution, she also clarified that it should not be characterized as its *source*: it was one cause, but not *the* cause.⁴¹ The prime source of revolt in Saint-Domingue was, for Cooper, the “divine Spark,” meaning agency and the desire for freedom are intrinsic and cannot simply be granted or taught by other, more “advanced” nations, as a paternal (or maternal) rescue narrative or as the concept of the “white man’s burden” would suggest (both popular rationales for imperial and colonial expansion).⁴²

Although the agency of the *noirs* (or blacks—free and enslaved) was generally disregarded in France and in Saint-Domingue, Cooper illustrated that they had played a pivotal role. Even as they had been absented from history, she argued they were an “active element of the insurrection” and documented how slaves and maroons had resisted in the century leading up to the revolution: prior to the uprisings of 1788–91 were those of 1679, 1691, 1703, and 1758. She also uncovered references to slaves using work stoppages to undermine the sugar trade and slave labor systems. Cooper carefully unpacked the archival materials to illustrate how, despite ample evidence of organized resistance, and even after François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture and his army of twenty thousand engaged in battle, the colonists and the French continued to erroneously describe both the enslaved and free blacks as submissive and obedient, even when the revolution in Saint-Domingue was well underway.⁴³

Cooper’s study also departs from conventional approaches to the French Revolution in that she opened her thesis by discussing Spanish and Portuguese conquest in the Americas, by highlighting unrestrained exploitation in the “Age of Discovery,” and by decrying the heinous rise of racial slavery, after the genocide of Native populations, to satisfy voracious European empires.⁴⁴ Contending that the development of racial slavery in the Americas had as its only principle an “abuse of force” that was “without cause or excuse” other than “the imperative of the most powerful,” Cooper shifted her focus to the margins and accentuated slaves’ excessive mortality rates—nearly triple the birth rate—and documented how, for every slave brought to the colonies, four would die. By starting with a different timeline and geopolitical framework and by seeking out evidence that others had been unable or unwilling to appreciate, Cooper stressed ontological power asymmetries of race and class and highlighted the

complex cartographies of power at work in the colony.⁴⁵ She used this comparative method to direct our attention to many suppressed aspects of the history of revolution. Starting from the basic facts of racial slavery and colonial domination (rather than ignoring or minimizing their historical significance), she pointed to the subsequent supremacist political, economic, and philosophical legacies of conquest and attended to the pivotal role of race politics in the French Revolution.

When writing about the situation in France, Cooper placed questions of slavery, property, and rights at the center of her inquiry, departing from standard approaches to the French Revolution and to the evolution of the French republic. By using a different origin story and by pivoting her angle of inquiry, Cooper highlighted Europe's economic reliance on human exploitation and critiqued the escalating gap between theories of universal reason and rights and the abusive practices of capitalist empires dependent on slave and colonial labor.⁴⁶ Focusing on what Michel Rolph-Trouillot has characterized as an ongoing "encounter between ontological discourse and colonial practice," Cooper highlighted how, as Enlightenment ideas of universal rights became more widely accepted, the slave trade and colonial sugar economy grew by leaps and bounds; in other words, the "gap between abstraction and practice grew."⁴⁷

This "vast gulf," as Cooper described it, led to a dead-end political situation in France, wherein debates about human rights kept butting up against debates about property rights, with no end in sight.⁴⁸ In highlighting unremitting political debates that were never accompanied by any attempts at real action, Cooper illustrated that the predominant pattern of French political behavior was one of inaction, delay, and evasion.⁴⁹ She exposed the extent to which France sought to avoid questions of race and slavery, even when appearing to discuss them and even though, as she argued, they *had* to be addressed if the true principles of *égalité* were to be realized. To Cooper, France's protracted debates about race as an intellectual concept demonstrated a propensity to evade justice through rhetoric (i.e., theory for theory's sake, in contemporary parlance); abolition was thought about mostly as a theoretical conundrum or economic crisis, not as a human problem, structural issue, and moral quandary. As in *A Voice from the South*, here in her dissertation Cooper remained deeply suspicious of theories disconnected from the realities of inequity, consistent with an intersectional approach, which not only emphasizes located knowing, but seeks to connect theoretical analysis with social change or liberation politics.

As a countermeasure to such abstraction, she accentuated how enslaved blacks in Saint-Domingue were a flesh and blood "living negation of [France's] noble principles."⁵⁰ She insisted that ideals of liberation must always connect to the exigencies of lived experience and that injustice should be engaged with through action, not delay. Furthermore, she argued that without transforming the legal and economic structures of the colonial slave economy, no amount of conjecture about the meanings of liberty and autonomy could alter

the reality of a racially divided, exploitative, profit-driven society. She therefore highlighted how the *structural* economic and political relationships in place directly undermined philosophical ideas about universalism and political goals of republicanism.

To drive this point home, Cooper used an intersectional analysis of race and gender as the basis for her argument that a key issue inadequately addressed by the philosophes and the politicians was that in the French Caribbean, as well as in France, systems of “work and profits” were organized around slavery.⁵¹ In other words, capitalism’s profits, which had helped to spur change in the class and political structures in the metropole, relied on conquest and slave labor in the colonies: France’s emergent democracy depended on exploitation. She argued that this contradiction was willfully ignored because “the colonists, the rich merchants, had too much to gain from the shameful traffic in slaves to be willing even to consider the possibility of suppressing slavery”; trade with Saint-Domingue, in fact, represented almost two-thirds of France’s total trade.⁵² In addition, she underscored that most of Europe depended on the sugar produced by the two hundred thousand slaves working sugar plantations on Saint-Domingue alone. Astutely, Cooper also drew attention to the fact that the Caribbean was crucial to the geopolitical emergence of capitalism. In addition, she showed the colons’ worldview to be informed by class pretensions and an outright refusal to face the reality in front of them.⁵³

Repeatedly Cooper demonstrated that, contrary to Enlightenment ideals, what held sway was “that absolutely corrupt principle of forced labor . . . for a whole class of human beings, outrageously exploited.” Cooper argued that it was the slaves’ labor (not European intellect) that “made . . . fortunes,” both in Saint-Domingue and France.⁵⁴ Her focus on the enslaved as an exploited class is noteworthy, because they were regarded as beasts of burden (“*bêtes de somme*”) incapable of being exploited. Underscoring their extreme alienation and exploitation, she wrote that they were forced “into work that profited only others.”⁵⁵ Although Cooper framed the political conflicts that arose (both in France and in Saint-Domingue) over race, property, and rights as a class struggle, she did not reduce race to class or vice versa. After all, many of the *gens de couleur* were propertied. As Joan Dayan documents, “By 1789, they owned one-third of the plantation property, one-quarter of the slaves, and one-quarter of the real estate property in Saint-Domingue.”⁵⁶ They also made up “forty-seven percent of the colony’s free inhabitants in 1788.”⁵⁷

By starting from the assumption that the politics and structures of class, citizenship, and race are intertwined, Cooper showed that the interests of the *gens de couleur* as plantation owners and slave owners shaped their struggle for equal rights as people of color: they initially sought equality with propertied whites, not universal rights for all. Highlighting how race and class operated as shifting and entangled factors, Cooper suggested that the networks of power in Saint-Domingue and in France could not be adequately understood

if the clash over rights, the ensuing revolution, and the eventual Haitian independence were framed only as struggles of class or race in isolation. To add nuance to her comparative analysis of race and class dynamics, Cooper also attended to details about the French context that were usually overlooked or considered inconsequential. For instance, she emphasized how major French ports and maritime regions were economically dependent on and profited from slavery and the sugar trade. Rationalization of slave labor was widespread in France, not just in the colonies, and this lucrative financial system of “unbridled waste” and “oppression and excessive despotism” shaped politics and daily life as much in the metropole as in the colony.⁵⁸

Conventionally, French influence on Saint-Domingue is underlined, but Cooper shifted gears to delineate how both labor productivity and political organizing by blacks, slaves, and gens de couleur in Saint-Domingue impacted debates in France about the nature of democracy, the implications of humanism, and the meaning of citizenship. In accentuating Saint-Domingue’s influence, Cooper rejected what Charles W. Mills has, in his scholarship on the role of race in social contracts, described as the usual “*writing out* of the polity of certain spaces [and people] as conceptually and historically irrelevant to European . . . development.”⁵⁹ Cooper illustrated that without the collective uprisings of gens de couleur, free blacks, and slaves in late eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue, slavery would not have been abolished (in France and in all French colonies) so early, nor would universal political rights without distinction of race or property have come to fruition. Moreover, a new juridical order uniting the colonies and the metropole as one polity with one set of laws would have been out of the question, since both the colons and *petits blancs* (literally, the “little whites,” meaning poor whites in Saint-Domingue; *grand blancs* connoted the colons, or white colonial upper classes) preferred to sidestep the French constitution and be exempted from the “rights of man,” an evasion Cooper was particularly critical of, given the egregious inequalities made legal in the United States under Jim Crow after *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).⁶⁰ Cooper had critiqued *Plessy* in an earlier speech: she found the decision and the “re-enslaving black codes” in the United States to be a direct result of the violent “resentment and rage” of the “master class.”⁶¹ Likewise, the increasingly hysterical colons advocated “special” laws for Saint-Domingue’s “unique” local conditions, wherein it would “be necessary to modify the French constitution in favor of the colonies,” since “laws incompatible with local customs . . . should not be imposed.”⁶² Basically, white French citizens on both sides of the Atlantic fought a unified jurisdiction between France and the colonies in the name of securing “order” (a code word for slavery).

But the colons and the Club Massaic were not the only groups with inflexible attitudes, for as free landowners, most gens de couleur were, likewise, interested only in limited modification to the law, not revolution.⁶³ As Cooper emphasized, many saw themselves primarily as “colonists of color,” with little

connection between their cause and the lives of free blacks or slaves.⁶⁴ Though later the gens de couleur and noirs would ally to overthrow the French state, for a long time the gens de couleur were uninterested in abolition or in altering the economy from which they profited. Cooper was especially critical of the well-known planter of color, Julien Raimond, who made his fortune in indigo and who “never ceased to urge his brothers to endure everything in order to preserve tranquility in the colony and to allow the whites all that they wished.”⁶⁵ Later, Raimond’s resolute proslavery attitude would prompt Toussaint Louverture to oust him from Saint-Domingue for a time. Louverture sent Raimond to France, she argued, because “he was guilty of . . . never having favored freeing the slaves, and of always having separated the question of slavery from that of political liberty of men of color.” Cooper further castigated Raimond, emphasizing how he had “carried this separation to the point of . . . [bragging] that his fortune, that of his family, and that of all the colony as well, were based on slavery.” Cooper also exposed General André Rigaud’s prejudice, for example, in choosing to take his “‘elite corps’ of mulattoes . . . to Cuba rather than surrender to a black” (i.e., Louverture).⁶⁶

By focusing on Raimond’s and Rigaud’s colonized imaginations, Cooper pointed to a more systemic problem. A supremacist way of thinking, going back to the Spanish-Portuguese conquests with which she opened her study, was so deeply entrenched in the colonies that it molded the perceptions of the colons, the petits blancs, and the gens de couleur: few could see beyond it. As she explained, “color prejudices . . . had grown so deep that they were even stronger than all the other social distinctions made between the free man and the slave since ancient times, to the point where a mulatto slave would have refused to obey a free Black, even if the latter had the audacity to buy him.”⁶⁷

In addition, Cooper pinpointed how, in France, the more politically radical Amis des Noirs, or Friends of the Blacks, advocated gradualist abolition but not full citizenship. For instance, their main goal was to ready public opinion for the *idea* of emancipation in the abstract: they had no concrete action in mind.⁶⁸ Here, Cooper identified an undercurrent of similarity between supposed political enemies. In different ways, both the elite, procolonialism, proslavery Club Massaic and the Amis des Noirs denied slaves’ humanity, for even the Friends of the Blacks insisted on an essential distinction between “natural rights” and a guarantee of political rights, a division Cooper did not accept. Of course, as Laurent Dubois illustrates, many Enlightenment thinkers “were not particularly antiracist and certainly not anticolonial. Enlightenment critiques of slavery attacked the institution as [only] a violation of the natural rights that all human beings shared.”⁶⁹ Since many of the Friends of the Blacks who supported eventual abolition still believed in a hierarchical scale of humanity, they divorced the protection of natural rights from any guaranty of (or capacity for) the full political rights of citizenship (“*droits de cité*”).

Cooper undermined these troubling distinctions through her intersectional approach. She revealed that to comprehend the political forces at work, questions of class interests and racial domination could be neither collapsed nor fully separated. Otherwise, the class interests of the gens de couleur, in which they sought their own rights but wanted to maintain slavery and keep their plantations profitable, would be obscured. Additionally, France's "excessive and mistaken patriotism" equating profit with the democratic good, or collapsing whiteness with national identity, would fade into the background.⁷⁰ This willful ignorance and widespread acceptance of human exploitation that Cooper so meticulously documented would not be captured by an analysis focusing on one system of domination in isolation.

By shifting the genealogy of republican ideas and politics, Cooper illustrated that without an adequate history of slavery and colonialism, our understanding of the culture of citizenship developed during the age of revolution remains incomplete. She countered what Sybille Fischer has recently characterized as an entrenched "Eurocentric bias against considering issues of colonialism and slavery relevant to the high history of the metropolis."⁷¹ Cooper's transatlantic repositioning and intersectional analysis exposed bias within ostensibly universal philosophical principles and broke open silences within normative historical frameworks. She thereby stretched the parameters of what counts as historically significant, rejected an internalist historical and political framework in favor of an Atlantic model of analysis, and advocated an intersectional approach to race and class exploitation.

Unfortunately, the fact, much less the content and meaning, of Cooper's Sorbonne dissertation is mostly forgotten. Like the many examples of agency and resistance Cooper uncovered in the military and parliamentary archives—historical fragments that were always there but were unseen or, if noted, discounted as irrelevant—Cooper's dissertation has been before us but remains generally unread. Even in the newly emergent area of black European studies, in the further development of black Atlantic studies, or in the resurgence of work on the Haitian Revolution, Cooper's thesis has barely been acknowledged. The same holds true in historical approaches to feminist thought and in current developments in women's studies, even as intersectionality and transnationalism increasingly shape the field.⁷²

Paradoxically, then, questions of voice and of silence—of lifting one's voice and seeking a hearing, as well as the issue of not being heard, of having no rhetorical space into which to speak—are themes that not only shape Cooper's two major works but also continue to impact the reception, interpretation, and dissemination of her work. Today, too much of Cooper's work remains unknown or is read in bits and fragments out of context.⁷³ Without attending to her larger oeuvre and by focusing mostly on excerpts of her writings in isolation, we not only miss out on Cooper's larger vision but also stifle a longer history of intersectional, radical feminist thought. This is untenable, both intellectually

and politically: a longer and more complex genealogy of intersectional feminist thought and analysis must be delineated, documented, and analyzed.

The politics of voice, silence, and reception that Cooper navigated in her time (and that continue to impact much of what is—or is not—known about Cooper’s work today) are of course not unique to Cooper. Even as intersectionality has been developed in part as a way to address what Carole Boyce Davies has described as “that condition of ‘unheardness’ to which dominant discourses . . . relegate a range of voices,” theorists of intersectionality, past and present, are too often themselves relegated to the margins or silenced.⁷⁴ The issue of being silenced or repeatedly misunderstood remains an ongoing issue for scholars of intersectionality.

Intersectionality’s “Unheardness,” Past and Present

Although black feminist theorists have repeatedly pointed to the longevity of intersectional approaches to more adequately conceptualize the meaning of identity and lived experience and to envision a wider view of liberation politics, the question remains: have they been heard? This, of course, is the question embedded within Audre Lorde’s observation more than twenty-five years ago, when she stated, “We find ourselves having to repeat and relearn the same old lessons over and over. . . . For instance, how many times has this all been said before?”⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the ability to engage with a longer view of multiracial feminist theorizing and intellectual history is often stymied because our prevailing conceptual models of feminism and of theory remain both constrained and inflexible. Paradoxically, intersectionality circulates within a kind of intellectual and political vortex, and its impact is often delimited or constrained by the very within-group power asymmetries and multiple vectors of privilege and oppression it seeks to make visible and address. I point to this contemporary conundrum regarding intersectionality’s reception and application because Cooper negotiated similar vortexes in her own time, and they impacted both the shape and the reception of her work to a great extent.

Intersectionality’s historical recursiveness should therefore not be seen as *mere* repetition. Rather, the chronic need to reiterate ideas essential to what would now be called *intersectionality* underscores how it entails a major transformation in thinking—one that remains partial and ongoing. Moreover, while useful for naming differences that have been subsumed or ignored, it is not merely the descriptive for which intersectionality was developed. Yet intersectionality is still often treated as if it were just a demographic instrument or descriptive tool, reducing it in scope and role by instrumentalizing it.⁷⁶ Intersectionality is also made to seem as if it lies outside the terrain of theory “proper,” though multiracial feminists have long

maintained its capacity to explain social reality, analyze data and social systems, and theorize change.⁷⁷

At the risk of being read as perhaps presentist or even as hagiographic in my approach to the work of Anna Julia Cooper, and despite what incomplete mappings of feminist theorizing might suggest, I contend, like others before me, that Cooper's scholarship amply illustrates that intersectionality can be understood to be a long-standing mode of analysis: its genesis cannot be adequately understood if one attends only to theoretical and political debates from the late twentieth century. Cooper developed an intersectional framework as a means of writing against the erasure of gender, race, and capital in the cultural imaginary at large (e.g., in literature, philosophy, school curricula, theology, popular culture, and liberation politics) as well as in historical analyses (e.g., in accounts of major civil rights decisions, conventional approaches to the Haitian Revolution, and studies of the historical meanings of race, gender, and class). She exposed the workings of power within history and sought to shift the focus of our historical understandings and analyses toward the margins.

At the same time, she utilized intersectionality to point to circumstances and events that she and her contemporaries found to be beyond utterance, such as black women's lived experiences of sexual violence and physical trauma that could not be adequately represented or understood through language itself—or what Cooper characterized as the “Black Woman's . . . unnamable burden inside.”⁷⁸ Cooper also identified other forms of the unsaid, including gaps in archival materials, bias and prejudice (e.g., racism or sexism) shaping the scholarly record, and the absence of black women in scholarly studies across a range of disciplines in any guise other than as ubiquitous stereotypes or as targets of remediation or cure.

The fact that the many contributions to intersectionality by earlier black feminist scholars such as Cooper remain comparatively invisible is troubling on its own, but it also points to a larger issue of undertheorization.⁷⁹ Certainly, excerpts of her work are occasionally referenced, yet the level of intellectual engagement with Cooper remains fairly nominal in nature. Paradoxically, the substance of her intellectual, activist, and educational contributions continues to be relatively overlooked, even as she was celebrated with a first-class US Black Heritage postage stamp in 2009 and even as a Cooper quotation about multifaceted justice and liberation now appears in the pages of the US passport. While I am certainly pleased to have Cooper's words and life celebrated publicly and memorialized in national documents, I remain wary, since a double tactic of honoring and commemoration on the one hand, and a narrow historical view of theory combined with subtle philosophical exclusion or marginalization on the other, constitutes a complex form of tokenism that should not be underestimated.⁸⁰

In laying out how many of Cooper's methods remain relevant to contemporary feminist scholarship, I do not want to suggest that Cooper's theorizing

should be embraced without question: there are indeed aspects of her work I find troubling (e.g., her reliance on a Christian theological framework and her ethnocentric references to Muslims or to women in China), but I do not think that these errors in judgment and analysis on her part totally undermine her analysis. Other facets of her work are, as expected, somewhat dated (e.g., much of the scientific data or theories she draws on or her nearly total silence on questions of embodiment, sexual agency, and more). In other words, I find such philosophical and political tensions in Cooper's work to be both natural (i.e., they are to be critiqued yet do not ruin her overall vision) and also fruitful, in part because they remind us in the contemporary period how much we are shaped by our times and our circumstances, even as we work to transform and radically modify the world in which we live and work.

Since intersectionality as theory and method invites us to “come to terms with the legacy of exclusions of multiply marginalized subjects from feminist and anti-racist work, and the impact of those absences on both theory and practice,” attention to these legacies of exclusion must also focus on Anna Julia Cooper's larger body of work, including *A Voice from the South* and her dissertation.⁸¹ In other words, even as we may find questionable some of Cooper's analyses, we must also work to acknowledge how Cooper employed and developed innovative methods and analyses as a means to explore the politics of the unimaginable, the invisible, and the silenced. No longer should her contributions to the theoretical and methodological innovations that intersectionality provides us today be dismissed or overlooked.

Notes

1. Chela Sandoval, “U.S. Third-World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 88; Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” in *The Black Feminist Reader*, ed. Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000). In “Demarginalizing the Intersection” Crenshaw demonstrates how, because the US courts cannot engage with both/and logic when it comes to civil rights claims (e.g., 216), the notion that black women as litigants seeking recognition by the courts are *both* “unique” *and* “central”—that is, the same as *and* different from white women and black men when it comes to group claims, rights, and redress—lies outside the realm of the possible in the law's single-axis, either-or imagination (217). Reflecting on these constraints, Crenshaw writes, “Perhaps it appears to some that I have offered inconsistent criticisms of how Black women are treated in antidiscrimination law. . . . It seems that I have to say that Black women are the same [as white women or black men] and harmed by being treated differently or that they are different and harmed by being treated the same. But I cannot say both” (216). Yet she can and does say both—and asserts the logic

of her both/and analysis, but the question she raises repeatedly is, in many ways, this one: can her statements and those of other black women in the justice system be heard? Refusing the charge that her analysis lacks reason and merit, Crenshaw identifies the court's either-or "single-axis" logic as sorely lacking rather than her own (209). She concludes, "This apparent contradiction is but another manifestation of the conceptual limitations of the single-axis analysis that intersectionality challenges" (216).

2. Stephanie Shields, "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective," *Sex Roles* 59, nos. 5–6 (2008): 305.

3. For instance, Kathy Davis asserts, "At this particular juncture in gender studies, any scholar who neglects difference runs the risk of having her work viewed as theoretically misguided, politically irrelevant, or simply fantastical." See "Intersectionality as Buzzword," *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 1 (2008): 68.

4. If space allowed, numerous important anthologies could be discussed in more detail, including Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back* (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul / Haciendo carás* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990); Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1982); and Toni Cade [Bambara], ed., *The Black Woman* (New York: Mentor, 1970).

5. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection," 220–24.

6. For more on the problem with the wave temporal framework to periodize US feminism, see, for example, Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 47–53; and Benita Roth, "Race, Class and the Emergence of Black Feminism in the 1960s and 1970s," *Womanist Theory and Research* 3, no. 1 (1999), <http://www.uga.edu/womanist/roth3.1.htm>.

7. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: New Press, 1995).

8. Pauli Murray, "The Liberation of Black Women," in Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 197.

9. For more information about Cooper's life work as an educator, intellectual, and activist and for a discussion of the potential limits of a biographical focus, see Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2007), esp. the intro. (1–12) and ch. 1 (13–43); and Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *Anna J. Cooper: A Voice from the South* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1981).

10. The other speaker was Cooper's longtime friend, the black feminist activist and educator Anna H. Jones of Kansas City, Missouri. For more information on Cooper's talk at the Pan-African Congress, see Hutchinson, *Anna J. Cooper*, 110–11.

11. Mary Helen Washington, introduction to *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*, by Anna Julia Cooper (1892; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxvii.

12. Klein had first encountered Cooper on his 1903 tour of American and Canadian schools and religious institutions. Klein spontaneously visited the M Street School, where Cooper was serving as principal at the time, and observed her teaching Latin. Klein described Cooper as one of the most exemplary educators he

encountered in all his travels, a statement that did not help her in the public battle with the school board over curriculum. For more details, see Hutchinson, *Anna J. Cooper*, 58–60; May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 26; and Karen Baker-Fletcher, ‘A Singing Something’: *Womanist Reflections on Anna Julia Cooper* (New York: Crossroads, 1994), 53–54.

13. The Sorbonne required an entirely new committee-approved research topic: the translation of *Le pèlerinage* counted toward general degree credits, not her thesis. Anna Julia Cooper, *Le pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (Paris: Lahure, 1925). Katherine Shilton documents that Cooper could not secure distribution for the volume in the United States, even from Oberlin College, her alma mater, due to increasing racist and sexist backlash in the 1920s. “‘This Scholarly and Colored Alumna’: Anna Julia Cooper’s Troubled Relationship with Oberlin College,” *History* 322, Spring 2003, Oberlin College, accessed February 1, 2012, <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/History322/AnnaJuliaCooper/AnnaJuliaCooper.htm>.

14. Frelinghuysen was akin to a community college today, with night classes and satellite classrooms—some eventually held in Cooper’s own T Street home, also the location of the registrar’s office and a small library for student use.

15. Cooper was close friends with Charlotte Forten Grimké and the Reverend Francis Grimké, who gave Cooper Charlotte’s papers and journals after Charlotte had passed away. Sydney Kaplan, introduction to *From Slavery to the Sorbonne and Beyond: The Life and Writings of Anna J. Cooper*, by Leona C. Gabel (Northampton, MA: Smith College Department of History, 1982), xi–xii.

16. I would argue that intersectionality also informed Cooper’s work as an educator, principal, and college president, as well as her community activism and service. But I shall limit my discussion here to some examples from her scholarship.

17. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1892; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 129, 48–49, 140–42.

18. Cooper’s earlier work was also transnational in nature, as illustrated by her advocacy work on the organizing committee for the Pan-African Congress (e.g., they petitioned Britain to divest of colonial rule). In addition, in *A Voice from the South*, Cooper references other cultural and theological practices vis à vis women as instances of both systematized sexism and misogyny (though these analyses can be quite ethnocentric). Thus Cooper’s overall emphasis gradually shifts from thinking about inequality primarily within a national frame (and among or between women as a group) to a more comparative frame that can be seen as a precursor to a black Atlantic or black European studies framework.

19. For more about Cooper’s philosophical contributions, see Vivian M. May, “Anna Julia Cooper’s Philosophy of Resistance: ‘What Is Needed, Perhaps, to Reverse the Picture of the Lordly Man Slaying the Lion, Is for the Lion to Turn Painter,’” *Philosophia Africana* 12, no. 1 (2009): 41–66. See also Vivian M. May, “Thinking from the Margins, Acting at the Intersections: Anna Julia Cooper’s *A Voice from the South*,” *Hypatia* 19, no. 2 (2004): 74–91.

20. Cooper’s dissertation is important to bring into the conversation in that she builds on and uses intersectional frames and methods developed in her earlier work, though differently. Moreover, her approach to history in her Sorbonne thesis bridges a twentieth-century analysis of the revolutionary era, which anticipates works such as C. L. R. James’s 1938 *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture*

and the *San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989) with what John Ernest has characterized as African American historians' earlier method of "liberation historiography" (blending liberation theology with a black liberation historiographical approach). See John Ernest, *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794–1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

21. Cooper, *Voice* (hereafter cited in text).

22. In many ways, therefore, Cooper's approach anticipates what would later be named standpoint theory or standpoint epistemology, which emphasizes that all knowers are located (and thus critiques a "god's-eye" notion of disembodied objectivity); examines the impact of power structures on knowledge practices; draws on lived experience as an analytic resource; underscores that marginalization and subjugation can offer important epistemic insights; and highlights how normative models of reasoning, including dominant practices of knowledge production and justification, systemically disadvantage, silence, and objectify marginalized groups. But many strands of standpoint theory often draw on *one* structure of identity or social location as primary when thinking through the politics of situated knowledge/located knowers (e.g., social class as primary for materialist or Marxist standpoint; gender as central to feminist standpoint; blackness or race as primary for developing an Afrocentric standpoint, etc.). This single-axis approach to standpoint falsely universalizes group identity to make knowledge claims and critiques. In contrast, Cooper employs a more matrix approach to social location (drawing upon the *interacting* forces of race, gender, and region, for instance) to develop and build her analyses. For more background on standpoint theory, see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Sandra Harding, *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (London: Routledge, 2004); and Nancy Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998).

23. See Anna Julia Cooper, "Angry Saxons and Negro Education," *Crisis*, May 1938, 148.

24. Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 128.

25. Anna Julia Cooper, "The Ethics of the Negro Question," in *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, ed. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 214.

26. *Ibid.*, 206–7. Note that Cooper references, with some irony, Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address to make her point.

27. To clarify, I use the term "liberation" here and elsewhere because the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women's rights and civil rights movements, as Cooper and other black women saw them, were too narrow—focused not only on false notions of race and of womanhood but also on separable notions of rights. The concept of liberation that is cross-cutting and not demarcated by one identity or one set of rights more fully captures the intersectional vision of freedom and rights that Cooper advocated.

28. Anna Julia Cooper, "The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women in the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation: A Response to Fannie Barrier

Williams,” Cooper’s 1893 speech at the Chicago World’s Fair, in Lemert and Bhan, *Voice*, 205.

29. Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 102.

30. In “Demarginalizing the Intersection” Crenshaw explains how “dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis”: this “limit[s] inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group” and “marginalizes those who are multiply-burdened and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination” (208–9).

31. Livermore was an abolitionist, journalist, and leader in the suffrage and temperance movements.

32. In many ways, Cooper’s “Eye vs. Foot” analysis anticipates later articulations of this same issue by Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith, for example. In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: Crossing, 1984), Lorde queries, “Can any one here still afford to believe that the pursuit of liberation can be the sole and particular province of any one particular race, or sex, or age, or religion, or sexuality, or class?” (140). Likewise, in her introduction to *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983), Barbara Smith underscores a “multi-issue approach to politics . . . [and] institutionalized oppression” in her delineation of black feminist thought, which “has no use for ranking oppressions” (xxxii, xxviii).

33. See Alexander Crummell, “The Black Woman of the South: Her Neglects and Her Needs,” in *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Rudolph P. Byrd and Beverly Guy-Sheftall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 46–57.

34. See Shilton, “Scholarly and Colored Alumna.”

35. Frances Richardson Keller recently published a second edition of her translation into English of Cooper’s thesis titled *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006). Note there are very few remaining copies of Cooper’s doctoral thesis in French (Anna Julia Cooper, *L’attitude de la France à l’égard de l’esclavage pendant la Révolution* (Paris: Maretheux, 1925). When citing Cooper’s thesis in French, I refer to it as “*L’attitude*”; when citing Keller’s translation, I refer to it as “*Slavery*.” When citing Cooper in English, the references to *Slavery* are Keller’s translations, whereas the references to *L’attitude* in English are my own translations. I have previously and in more detail argued that her dissertation deserves more attention; see chapter 4 of May, *Visionary Black Feminist*, 107–39; and also my article, “It Is Never a Question of the Slaves’: Anna Julia Cooper’s Challenge to History’s Silences in Her 1925 Sorbonne Thesis,” *Callaloo* 31, no. 1 (2008): 903–18.

36. The occupation was fueled by the US desire to control Haiti’s customs house and banks and to alter the law (so whites and foreigners could own property there, which was outlawed in Haiti’s 1804 constitution). For a contemporary of Cooper’s view on the subject, see James Weldon Johnson’s “Self-Determining Haiti: The American Occupation,” *Nation*, August 28, 1920.

37. Keller, “The Perspective of a Black American on Slavery and the French Revolution: Anna Julia Cooper,” in Keller, *Slavery*, 20.

38. Cooper, *L’attitude*, 23.

39. Du Bois's play is not available in print, but it was performed first in New York at the Lafayette Theatre, and then in Boston at the Copley Theatre in 1938 as part of the WPA Federal Theatre Project.

40. Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 6.

41. Cooper, *L'attitude*, 18.

42. Here, in Cooper's reference to the divine, we can see how she drew on an earlier mode of interpretive thought—a "liberation historiography" tradition in African American thought, as John Ernest defines it (though his study does not address Cooper's work given that his time frame is 1794–1861), even as she simultaneously spoke to contemporary sociological and historical literatures of the period. See Ernest, *Liberation Historiography*.

43. Cooper, *L'attitude*, 22–23 ("*ils n'allaient pas manquer d'être un élément actif d'insurrection*"), 104, 72, 82. Cooper also references successful revolts organized by maroon leader François Makandal ("Macaudal"), whom the French burned at the stake in 1758 (61n1).

44. For example, studies usually open with the more immediate time frame of the revolution and focus primarily on contexts within France. Thus, they begin with a discussion of public outcry in France against the king, the nobility, and the bourgeoisie; move to discussing the 1789 storming of the Bastille, the elimination of feudalism, and the rise of secularism; and then focus on the writing of a constitution, the fall of the monarchy, and the creation of an elected, national legislature. Cooper, *L'attitude* 8–9.

45. *Ibid.*, 7 ("*sans prétexte comme sans excuse, et seulement au nom du droit du plus puissant*"), 9, 20–22, 25.

46. Cooper, *Slavery*, 70.

47. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon), 78.

48. Cooper *L'attitude*, 60.

49. See, for example, Cooper, *Slavery*, 86.

50. *Ibid.*, 35.

51. Cooper *L'attitude*, 14.

52. Cooper, *Slavery*, 37, 66.

53. Cooper, *L'attitude*, 19. The active role one plays in ignorance is emphasized more in the French with the reflexive verb *se refuser*: "*se refusaient à faire face aux réalités*" (23).

54. Cooper, *Slavery*, 57.

55. Cooper, *L'attitude*, 23 ("*au travail qui ne fructifiait que pour autrui*").

56. Joan Dayan, "Codes of Law and Bodies of Color," *New Literary History* 26, no. 2 (1995): 283–308, quote on 297.

57. John D. Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue," *Americas* 50, no. 10 (1993): 233–63, quote on 233.

58. Cooper, *Slavery*, 91–92, 43.

59. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 74, 122.

60. Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 172.

61. Cooper, "Ethics," 210.

62. Cooper, *Slavery*, 77, 80.

63. Founded in 1789 by white planters from Saint-Domingue in alliance with French politicians sympathetic to the colonists' rights (over universal rights), the proslavery group Club Massaic was formed while the French National Assembly was discussing the wording of the declaration of the rights of man. They feared that if propertied men of color were given the rights of citizenship and equality with whites, the property rights of slave owners would be eroded. In contrast, the Société des Amis des Noirs, founded the year prior, in 1788, advocated the (eventual) eradication of slavery in the colonies, as it was already outlawed in France. The Société published abolitionist literature and addressed the National Assembly about the need to end slavery. In her dissertation, however, Cooper pinpoints an underlying adherence to racial hierarchy within the Amis des Noirs's philosophical and political premises.

64. Cooper, *Slavery*, 79, 64.

65. Cooper, *L'attitude*, 106. Raimond, a free man of color and outspoken planter on Saint-Domingue, was part of a coalition of gens de couleur who addressed the French Assembly and sought the rights of citizenship for propertied men of color. He worked closely with the Friends of the Blacks and published many political pamphlets. Although abolition was not on his agenda at first, over time, he came to advocate gradualist abolition. Raimond later returned to Saint-Domingue and allied with Toussaint Louverture. Nevertheless, Cooper condemned his early short-sightedness.

66. Cooper, *Slavery*, 64, 105, 106.

67. *Ibid.*, 114.

68. *Ibid.*, 78, and Cooper, *L'attitude*, 113, 58.

69. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 58.

70. Cooper, *Slavery*, 35.

71. Sybille Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 215.

72. In addition to Keller's work on Cooper's dissertation, some examples of scholarship engaged with the dissertation include Errol Tsekani Browne, *Anna Julia Cooper and Black Women's Intellectual Tradition: Race, Gender and Nation in the Making of a Modern Race Woman, 1892–1925* (PhD diss., UCLA: 2008); Donna Hunter, "Historically Particular Uses of a Universal Subject," in *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, ed. Tyler Edward Stovall and Georges Van den Abbeele (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 129–46; David W. H. Pellow, "Anna J. Cooper: The International Dimensions," in *Recovered Writers/Recovered Texts: Race, Class, and Gender in Black Women's Literature*, ed. Dolan Hubbard (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 60–67; Stephanie Y. Evans, "African American Women Scholars and International Research: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper's Legacy of Study Abroad," *Frontiers* 18 (2009): 77–100. While he does not directly analyze her dissertation, Brent Hayes Edwards points to Cooper's influence on the Nardal sisters in Paris, especially Paulette, in his chapter, "Feminism and l'internationalisme noire: Paulette Nardal," in *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 119–86.

73. It is mostly chapters from *A Voice from the South* that are excerpted, taught, or referenced, particularly from the first half of the book; the later chapters focusing on ideologies of race and gender in the cultural imagination or on the structural ways in which inequality are reinforced are not referenced as often. Sadly, the layering of argument about the connections between race and gender, self and society, social location and structures of power—all of which emerge by reading *A Voice from the South* as a whole—gets lost. Cooper's later writings and speeches are usually ignored altogether—or referenced in passing but not meaningfully engaged.

74. Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 108.

75. Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 117.

76. Lisa Bowleg, "When Black + Lesbian + Woman ≠ Black Lesbian Woman: The Methodological Challenges of Qualitative and Quantitative Intersectionality Research," *Sex Roles* 59 nos. 5–6 (2008): 316, 323; Catherine Harnois, "Different Paths to Different Feminisms? Bridging Multiracial Feminist Theory and Quantitative Sociological Gender Research," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 813. See also Ange-Marie Hancock, "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 no. 1 (2007): 66; and Julia Jordan-Zachery, "Am I a Black Woman or a Woman Who Is Black? A Few Thoughts on the Meaning of Intersectionality," *Politics and Gender* 3, no. 2 (2007): 261.

77. Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1996): 329.

78. Cooper, *Voice*, 90.

79. For more on the concept of undertheorization, see Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," in Anzaldúa, *Making Face*, 335–45. See also Linda Martín Alcoff's essay about the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, "The Unassimilated Theorist," *PMLA* 121, no. 1 (2006): 255–59.

80. For full disclosure, I served as an academic consultant to the United States Postal Service for the 2009 Anna Julia Cooper Black Heritage Stamp collectors materials and authored the brief bio that appears on the back of the stamp as well as the longer bio that appears in other materials and releases.

81. Jennifer Nash, "Re-Thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 3.

