

OUT[®] FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

LGBTQ+ History Lesson

Inquiry Question: Through analyzing Audre Lorde's essay on multiple identities and systems of oppression, how do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?

Standards: 11.11; 12.2; 12.2.5; 12.3



Inquiry Question:

Through analyzing Audre Lorde's essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" on multiple identities and systems of oppression, how do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?

Hala Dillsi,
Grover Cleveland High School

Content Standards:

HSS 11.11: Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

HSS 12.2: Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

HSS 12.2.5: Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.

HSS 12.3: Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

CCSS Standards:

Reading, Grades 10-11

- CCSS RI 8 – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

Writing, Grades 9-10; 11-12

- CCSS W.1 – Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Overview of Lesson

In this lesson, students will familiarize themselves with the concept of intersectionality—how intersecting identities and oppressions shape perspectives and experiences. Through the close reading and discussion of the article "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" featured in the influential book *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde, students will think critically about how multiple identities and systems of oppressions impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions. Audre Lorde, Black lesbian poet and feminist writer, signed a contract with The Crossing Press on November 19, 1982 to publish her monumental book *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. *Sister Outsider* is celebrated as a historic piece of literature exploring the intersections of race, sexuality, gender, poverty, and politics.

Learning Goals:

- Students will be able to understand the concept of intersectionality through analyzing the writing of Audre Lorde.
- Students will be able to evaluate the arguments made by Audre Lorde through writing a Power Paragraph.
- Students know that all their group identities and the intersection of those identities create unique aspects of who they are and that this is true for other people too.

Sources

- Graphic and Quote
- Essay
- Biography
- Video Clips
- Photos
- Cartoon on Intersectionality

Procedures:

Day 1:

1. Teacher will review the objectives of the lesson and introduce the inquiry questions, essential questions, and learning goals:

Inquiry Question:

How do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions? What impact did Audre Lorde have in critically examining her own multiple identities?

Essential Questions:

- *How does intersectionality relate to identity and justice?*
- *How do our intersecting identities shape our perspectives and the way we experience the world?*
- *How do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?*

Learning Goals:

- I will be able to understand the concept of intersectionality through analyzing the writing of Audre Lorde.
- I will be able to evaluate the arguments made by Audre Lorde through writing a Power Paragraph.
- I know that all my group identities and the intersection of those identities create unique aspects of who I am and that this is true for other people too.

2. Quick Write: Project an image of Audre Lorde's quote on the graphic. It reads "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." – Audre Lorde. Ask students to reflect on whether or not they agree with this statement and to explain why. After students share, say that the meaning behind this quote will guide us through this lesson.

3. Ask students to deconstruct the concept of the word "intersectionality" and to make inferences of what it may mean based on it.

- Project the word "intersectionality" on the board.
- Ask students if they can identify any prefixes, suffixes, or word parts.



- What can they infer what the words mean based on what they've identified?
- Following a brief class sharing and discussion on their answers, show the video clip "Intersectionality 101" by Teaching Tolerance:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2lyYjE>
- Based on what students learn, have them write down a definition of "intersectionality" and use it to write a class working definition of the term.

Give a brief historical context of the term:

Law Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" as a framework to explore the dynamic of between co-existing identities (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) and connected systems of oppression. The idea says that prejudices have the same root, growing from dominant power structures, and challenging only one aspect of structural power alone is ineffective. All aspects of identify and oppression must be analyzed and challenged. For effective movement making, all roots of oppression and inequality must be tackled. In the words of Audre Lorde, "there can be no hierarchies of oppression." While Audre Lorde wrote about the concept of intersectionality before the official term was coined by Dr. Crenshaw, her body of work analyzes her own experiences as a Black woman, lesbian, mother.

4. Provide students with a history context of Audre Lorde, by sharing a short biography about her. (See attached document for a paper version.)

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/audre-lorde>

5. Pass out copies of "Age, Race, Class, Gender: Women Redefining Difference." (See attached PDF.)

- Read the first paragraph out loud with your students and model a "close reading" strategy, annotating the text and having student follow and do the same on their packet. Focus on key terms, main ideas, connections that are important to the text. Identify what you would like students to retain and focus on those key terms and concepts.
- Reading Focus Questions: How does Audre Lorde describe her experiences? How does intersectionality relate to identity and justice? How do our intersecting identities shape our perspectives and the way we experience the world? How do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?
- If more time is needed, assign the rest of the close reading for homework. Have students annotate the text and be ready to discuss in class the following day

Day 2:

1. *Save the Last Word For Me* Protocol: Now that students have the read and annotated "Age, Race, Class, Gender: Women Redefining Difference", split students into groups of four and use the *Save the Last Word for Me* Protocol. This discussion technique encourages meaningful classroom conversations by eliciting differing opinions and interpretations of the text. Asking students to think about their reading stimulates reflection and helps to develop active and thoughtful readers. *Save the Last Word for Me* also prompts classroom interaction and cooperative group discussion. (See attached document for a paper version.) Walk around to monitor and listen to key points students are extracting from the text.
2. Debrief and lead students into *Power Paragraph* assessment.



Assessment

Students will construct a power paragraph responding to the follow prompt and will draw textual evidence for their claim based on their notes of “Age, Race, Class, Gender: Women Redefining Difference” by Audre Lorde using the following prompt:

Through analyzing Audre Lorde’s essay “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” on multiple identities and systems of oppression, how do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?

See attached *Power Paragraph Rubric* to assist in assessing students’ responses.

Primary Documents:

- Pictures #1 and #2 of Audre Lorde by Stephen Stewart, Provided by ONE Archives

Bibliography

All primary sources courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive, <http://one.usc.edu/>

- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.
- Short biography on Audre Lorde: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/audre-lorde>
- Video clip on intersectionality by Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2lyYjE>
- “Toolkit for ‘Teaching at the Intersections’” Article by Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/toolkit-for-teaching-at-the-intersections>
- Website: Intersectionality—a Definition, History, and Guide: <https://sisteroutrider.wordpress.com/2016/07/27/intersectionality-a-definition-history-and-guide/>
- Website: An Open, Digital Classroom on Gender, Intersectionality & Black Women’s Rhetorics: <http://www.blackwomenrhetproject.com/focus-on-intersectionality.html>
- Save the Last Word for Me Protocol, adapted from School Reform Initiative
- Website: Power Paragraph Structure: Liberty High School <https://liberty.asd20.org/writingcenter/Pages/Power-Paragraphs.aspx>
- Power Paragraph Rubric made by Cleveland Humanities Magnet High School
- Audre Lorde Quote Graphic retrieved at <http://outnowyouth.org/on-intersectionality/>.
- Video clip “5 Tips Being an Ally”: (Optional Resource) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dg86g-QlMO>

Additional Optional Resources:

- Cartoon Infographic on Intersectionality (Optional Resource—See attached document) <http://www.blackwomenrhetproject.com/focus-on-intersectionality.html>



A black and white portrait of Audre Lorde, a Black woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing glasses and a dark jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression.

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde



Source B: Audre Lorde short Biography retrieved at <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/audre-lorde> on 10/1/2018.

Audre Lorde

1934-1992 , New York City , NY , United States

 Poet, essayist, and novelist Audre Lorde was born on February 18, 1934, in New York City. Her parents were immigrants from Grenada. The youngest of three sisters, she was raised in Manhattan and attended Catholic school. While she was still in high school, her first poem appeared in *Seventeen* magazine. Lorde received her BA from Hunter College and an MLS from Columbia University. She served as a librarian in New York public schools from 1961 through 1968. In 1962, Lorde married Edward Rollins. They had two children, Elizabeth and Jonathon, before divorcing in 1970.

Her first volume of poems, *The First Cities*, was published in 1968. In 1968 she also became the writer-in-residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, where she discovered a love of teaching. In Tougaloo she also met her long-term partner, Frances Clayton. *The First Cities* was quickly followed with *Cables to Rage* (1970) and *From a Land Where Other People Live* (1973), which was nominated for a National Book Award. In 1974 she published *New York Head Shot and Museum*. Whereas much of her earlier work focused on the transience of love, this book marked her most political work to date.

In 1976, W. W. Norton released her collection *Coal* and shortly thereafter published *The Black Unicorn*. Poet Adrienne Rich said of *The Black Unicorn* that “Lorde writes as a Black woman, a mother, a daughter, a lesbian, a feminist, a visionary; poems of elemental wildness and healing, nightmare and lucidity.” Her other volumes include *Chosen Poems Old and New* (1982) and *Our Dead Behind Us* (1986). Poet Sandra M. Gilbert noted not only Lorde’s ability to express outrage, but also that she was capable of “of rare and, paradoxically, loving jeremiads.” Although her work gained wide acclaim, she was also sharply criticized. In an interview in the journal *Callaloo*, Lorde responded to her critics: “My sexuality is part and parcel of who I am, and my poetry comes from the intersection of me and my worlds. . . . Jesse Helms’s objection to my work is not about obscenity . . . or even about sex. It is about revolution and change. . . . Helms knows that my writing is aimed at his destruction, and the destruction of every single thing he stands for.”

Lorde was diagnosed with cancer and chronicled her struggles in her first prose collection, *The Cancer Journals*, which won the Gay Caucus Book of the Year award for 1981. Her other prose volumes include *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*

(1984), and *A Burst of Light* (1988), which won a National Book Award. She received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1981.

In the 1980s, Lorde and writer Barbara Smith founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. She was also a founding member of Sisters in Support of Sisters in South Africa, an organization that worked to raise concerns about women under apartheid.

Audre Lorde was professor of English at John Jay College of criminal justice and Hunter College. She was the poet laureate of New York from 1991-1992. She died of breast cancer in 1992. *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde* was published in 1997.



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

Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), pp. 114-123.

Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*

MUCH OF WESTERN EUROPEAN history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior. In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people who, through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior. Within this society, that group is made up of Black and Third World people, working-class people, older people, and women.

As a forty-nine-year-old Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself a part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong. Traditionally, in american society, it is the members of oppressed, objectified groups who are expected to stretch out and bridge the gap between the actualities of our lives and the consciousness of our oppressor. For in order to survive, those of us for whom oppression is as american as apple pie have always had to be watchers, to become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting them for some illusion of protection. Whenever the need for some pretense of communication arises, those who profit from our oppression call upon us to share our knowledge with them. In other words, it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes. I

* Paper delivered at the Copeland Colloquium, Amherst College, April 1980.

am responsible for educating teachers who dismiss my children's culture in school. Black and Third World people are expected to educate white people as to our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbians and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade responsibility for their own actions. There is a constant drain of energy which might be better used in redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future.

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion.

Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation.

Racism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance. Sexism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. Ageism. Heterosexism. Elitism. Classism.

It is a lifetime pursuit for each one of us to extract these distortions from our living at the same time as we recognize, reclaim, and define those differences upon which they are imposed. For we have all been raised in a society where those distortions were endemic within our living. Too often, we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable barriers, or that they do not exist at all. This results in a voluntary isolation, or false and treacherous connections. Either way, we do not develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change

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within our lives. We speak not of human difference, but of human deviance.

Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a *mythical norm*, which each one of us within our hearts knows "that is not me." In america, this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure. It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society. Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be practising. By and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist.

Unacknowledged class differences rob women of each others' energy and creative insight. Recently a women's magazine collective made the decision for one issue to print only prose, saying poetry was a less "rigorous" or "serious" art form. Yet even the form our creativity takes is often a class issue. Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical. It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, on the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper. Over the last few years, writing a novel on tight finances, I came to appreciate the enormous differences in the material demands between poetry and prose. As we reclaim our literature, poetry has been the major voice of poor, working class, and Colored women. A room of one's own may be a necessity for writing prose, but so are reams of paper, a typewriter, and plenty of time. The actual requirements to produce the visual arts also help determine, along class lines, whose art is whose. In this day of inflated prices for material, who are our sculptors, our painters, our photographers? When we speak of a broadly based women's culture, we need to be aware of the effect of class and economic differences on the supplies available for producing art. As we move toward creating a society within which we can each flourish, ageism is another distortion of relationship which

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interferes without vision. By ignoring the past, we are encouraged to repeat its mistakes. The "generation gap" is an important social tool for any repressive society. If the younger members of a community view the older members as contemptible or suspect or excess, they will never be able to join hands and examine the living memories of the community, nor ask the all important question, "Why?" This gives rise to a historical amnesia that keeps us working to invent the wheel every time we have to go to the store for bread.

We find ourselves having to repeat and relearn the same old lessons over and over that our mothers did because we do not pass on what we have learned, or because we are unable to listen. For instance, how many times has this all been said before? For another, who would have believed that once again our daughters are allowing their bodies to be hampered and purgatoried by girdles and high heels and hobble skirts?

Ignoring the differences of race between women and the implications of those differences presents the most serious threat to the mobilization of women's joint power.

As white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define *woman* in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become "other," the outsider whose experience and tradition is too "alien" to comprehend. An example of this is the signal absence of the experience of women of Color as a resource for women's studies courses. The literature of women of Color is seldom included in women's literature courses and almost never in other literature courses, nor in women's studies as a whole. All too often, the excuse given is that the literatures of women of Color can only be taught by Colored women, or that they are too difficult to understand, or that classes cannot "get into" them because they come out of experiences that are "too different." I have heard this argument presented by white women of otherwise quite clear intelligence, women who seem to have no trouble at all teaching and reviewing work that comes out of the vastly different experiences of Shakespeare, Molière, Dostoyevsky, and Aristophanes. Surely there must be some other explanation.

This is a very complex question, but I believe one of the reasons white women have such difficulty reading Black

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women's work is because of their reluctance to see Black women as women and different from themselves. To examine Black women's literature effectively requires that we be seen as whole people in our actual complexities — as individuals, as women, as human — rather than as one of those problematic but familiar stereotypes provided in this society in place of genuine images of Black women. And I believe this holds true for the literatures of other women of Color who are not Black.

The literatures of all women of Color recreate the textures of our lives, and many white women are heavily invested in ignoring the real differences. For as long as any difference between us means one of us must be inferior, then the recognition of any difference must be fraught with guilt. To allow women of Color to step out of stereotypes is too guilt provoking, for it threatens the complacency of those women who view oppression only in terms of sex.

Refusing to recognize difference makes it impossible to see the different problems and pitfalls facing us as women.

Thus, in a patriarchal power system where whiteness is a major prop, the entrapments used to neutralize Black women and white women are not the same. For example, it is easy for Black women to be used by the power structure against Black men, not because they are men, but because they are Black. Therefore, for Black women, it is necessary at all times to separate the needs of the oppressor from our own legitimate conflicts within our communities. This same problem does not exist for white women. Black women and men have shared racist oppression and still share it, although in different ways. Out of that shared oppression we have developed joint defenses and joint vulnerabilities to each other that are not duplicated in the white community, with the exception of the relationship between Jewish women and Jewish men.

On the other hand, white women face the pitfall of being seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power. This possibility does not exist in the same way for women of Color. The tokenism that is sometimes extended to us is not an invitation to join power; our racial "otherness" is a visible reality that makes that quite clear. For white women

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there is a wider range of pretended choices and rewards for identifying with patriarchal power and its tools.

Today, with the defeat of ERA, the tightening economy, and increased conservatism, it is easier once again for white women to believe the dangerous fantasy that if you are good enough, pretty enough, sweet enough, quiet enough, teach the children to behave, hate the right people, and marry the right men, then you will be allowed to co-exist with patriarchy in relative peace, at least until a man needs your job or the neighborhood rapist happens along. And true, unless one lives and loves in the trenches it is difficult to remember that the war against dehumanization is ceaseless.

But Black women and our children know the fabric of our lives is stitched with violence and with hatred, that there is no rest. We do not deal with it only on the picket lines, or in dark midnight alleys, or in the places where we dare to verbalize our resistance. For us, increasingly, violence weaves through the daily tissues of our living — in the supermarket, in the classroom, in the elevator, in the clinic and the schoolyard, from the plumber, the baker, the saleswoman, the bus driver, the bank teller, the waitress who does not serve us.

Some problems we share as women, some we do not. You fear your children will grow up to join the patriarchy and testify against you, we fear our children will be dragged from a car and shot down in the street, and you will turn your backs upon the reasons they are dying.

The threat of difference has been no less blinding to people of Color. Those of us who are Black must see that the reality of our lives and our struggle does not make us immune to the errors of ignoring and misnaming difference. Within Black communities where racism is a living reality, differences among us often seem dangerous and suspect. The need for unity is often misnamed as a need for homogeneity, and a Black feminist vision mistaken for betrayal of our common interests as a people. Because of the continuous battle against racial erasure that Black women and Black men share, some Black women still refuse to recognize that we are also oppressed as women, and that sexual hostility against Black women is practiced not only

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by the white racist society, but implemented within our Black communities as well. It is a disease striking the heart of Black nationhood, and silence will not make it disappear. Exacerbated by racism and the pressures of powerlessness, violence against Black women and children often becomes a standard within our communities, one by which manliness can be measured. But these woman-hating acts are rarely discussed as crimes against Black women.

As a group, women of Color are the lowest paid wage earners in America. We are the primary targets of abortion and sterilization abuse, here and abroad. In certain parts of Africa, small girls are still being sewed shut between their legs to keep them docile and for men's pleasure. This is known as female circumcision, and it is not a cultural affair as the late Jomo Kenyatta insisted, it is a crime against Black women.

Black women's literature is full of the pain of frequent assault, not only by a racist patriarchy, but also by Black men. Yet the necessity for and history of shared battle have made us, Black women, particularly vulnerable to the false accusation that anti-sexist is anti-Black. Meanwhile, womanhating as a recourse of the powerless is sapping strength from Black communities, and our very lives. Rape is on the increase, reported and unreported, and rape is not aggressive sexuality, it is sexualized aggression. As Kalamu ya Salaam, a Black male writer points out, "As long as male domination exists, rape will exist. Only women revolting and men made conscious of their responsibility to fight sexism can collectively stop rape."^{*}

Differences between ourselves as Black women are also being misnamed and used to separate us from one another. As a Black lesbian feminist comfortable with the many different ingredients of my identity, and a woman committed to racial and sexual freedom from oppression, I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing

* From "Rape: A Radical Analysis, An African-American Perspective" by Kalamu ya Salaam in *Black Books Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1980).

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power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living.

A fear of lesbians, or of being accused of being a lesbian, has led many Black women into testifying against themselves. It has led some of us into destructive alliances, and others into despair and isolation. In the white women's communities, heterosexism is sometimes a result of identifying with the white patriarchy, a rejection of that interdependence between women-identified women which allows the self to be, rather than to be used in the service of men. Sometimes it reflects a die-hard belief in the protective coloration of heterosexual relationships, sometimes a self-hate which all women have to fight against, taught us from birth.

Although elements of these attitudes exist for all women, there are particular resonances of heterosexism and homophobia among Black women. Despite the fact that woman-bonding has a long and honorable history in the African and African-American communities, and despite the knowledge and accomplishments of many strong and creative women-identified Black women in the political, social and cultural fields, heterosexual Black women often tend to ignore or discount the existence and work of Black lesbians. Part of this attitude has come from an understandable terror of Black male attack within the close confines of Black society, where the punishment for any female self-assertion is still to be accused of being a lesbian and therefore unworthy of the attention or support of the scarce Black male. But part of this need to misname and ignore Black lesbians comes from a very real fear that openly women-identified Black women who are no longer dependent upon men for their self-definition may well reorder our whole concept of social relationships.

Black women who once insisted that lesbianism was a white woman's problem now insist that Black lesbians are a threat to Black nationhood, are consorting with the enemy, are basically un-Black. These accusations, coming from the very women to whom we look for deep and real understanding, have served to

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keep many Black lesbians in hiding, caught between the racism of white women and the homophobia of their sisters. Often, their work has been ignored, trivialized, or misnamed, as with the work of Angelina Grimke, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Lorraine Hansberry. Yet women-bonded women have always been some part of the power of Black communities, from our unmarried aunts to the amazons of Dahomey.

And it is certainly not Black lesbians who are assaulting women and raping children and grandmothers on the streets of our communities.

Across this country, as in Boston during the spring of 1979 following the unsolved murders of twelve Black women, Black lesbians are spearheading movements against violence against Black women.

What are the particular details within each of our lives that can be scrutinized and altered to help bring about change? How do we redefine difference for all women? It is not our differences which separate women, but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences.

As a tool of social control, women have been encouraged to recognize only one area of human difference as legitimate, those differences which exist between women and men. And we have learned to deal across those differences with the urgency of all oppressed subordinates. All of us have had to learn to live or work or coexist with men, from our fathers on. We have recognized and negotiated these differences, even when this recognition only continued the old dominant/subordinate mode of human relationship, where the oppressed must recognize the masters' difference in order to survive.

But our future survival is predicated upon our ability to relate within equality. As women, we must root out our internalized patterns of oppression within ourselves if we are to move beyond the most superficial aspects of social change. Now we must recognize differences among women who are our equals, neither inferior nor superior, and devise ways to use each others' difference to enrich our visions and our joint struggles.

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The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference. The old definitions have not served us, nor the earth that supports us. The old patterns, no matter how cleverly rearranged to imitate progress, still condemn us to cosmetically altered repetitions of the same old exchanges, the same old guilt, hatred, recrimination, lamination, and suspicion.

For we have, built into all of us, old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.

As Paulo Freire shows so well in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,* the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us, and which knows only the oppressors' tactics, the oppressors' relationships.

Change means growth, and growth can be painful. But we sharpen self-definition by exposing the self in work and struggle together with those whom we define as different from ourselves, although sharing the same goals. For Black and white, old and young, lesbian and heterosexual women alike, this can mean new paths to our survival.

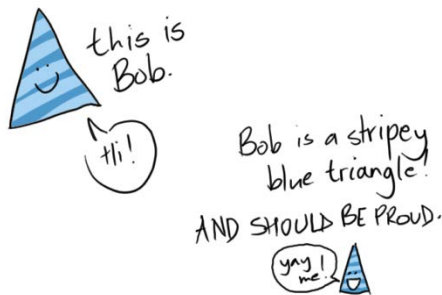
*We have chosen each other
and the edge of each others battles
the war is the same
if we lose
some day women's blood will congeal
upon a dead planet
if we win
there is no telling
we seek beyond history
for a new and more possible meeting.***

* Seabury Press, New York, 1970.

** From "Outlines," unpublished poem.

- Source D: Optional Cartoon Infographic on Intersectionality. Retrieved from <http://www.blackwomenrhetproject.com/focus-on-intersectionality.html>.

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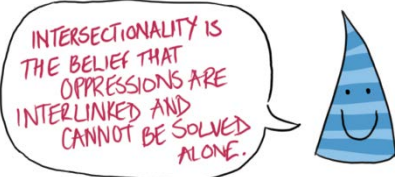
SADLY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE Bob. Bob FACES OPPRESSION FOR BEING A TRIANGLE, & FOR HAVING STRIPES.



BOB CAN'T WORK OUT WHERE TO GO.



BOB WISHES THAT THE TRIANGLES AND STRIPES COULD WORK TOGETHER



OPPRESSIONS ARE NOT ISOLATED.
INTERSECTIONALITY NOW!



Handout 1 for Exercise

Purpose

To clarify and deepen our thinking about a text

Roles

Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

Process

- The process is designed to build on each other's thinking, not to enter into a dialogue.
- Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes.
- Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.

1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
2. Each participant silently identifies what they consider to be (for them) the most significant idea addressed in the article and highlights that passage.
3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that she/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the presenter) says nothing about why they chose that particular passage.
4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
5. The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage — saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
6. The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why she/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what they heard from their colleagues.
7. The same pattern is followed until all 4 members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have the “last word.”
8. Optional open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.
9. Debrief the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?



Handout 2 for Exercise: Power Paragraph

Power Paragraph Structure:

Power paragraphs are an organizational writing model that promotes analytical thinking instead of regurgitation of facts only; this model takes writers from topic sentence, to supporting details, analysis, and conclusion sentence.

Sentence 1: Topic Sentence

Sentence 2: Support/Concrete Details

Sentence 3: Commentary/Analysis

Sentence 4: Commentary/Analysis

Sentence 5: Support/Concrete Details

Sentence 6: Commentary/Analysis

Sentence 7: Commentary/Analysis

Sentence 8: Conclusion

Sentence 1, Topic Sentence: A topic sentence introduces the subject of the paragraph. It tells the basic/controlling idea the writer plans to discuss. If there is a prompt, the topic sentence is the answer to the prompt. It should include key words from the paragraph. (Pull words from the prompt.)

Sentence 2, Support/Concrete Details: These sentences should include facts, quotations, and descriptions, but not the writer's opinion. No one should be able to argue whether these things are true or not. These facts must prove the writer's position in the topic sentence.

If using a quotation, a set-up or introduction should be included with these sentences. Without the set-up, the quotation would be marked as "floating," a mark down in points.

- * First, introduce the quotation.
- * Then, use the quotation.
- * Make sure you don't create a run-on sentence.

Sentence 3 and 4, Commentary/Analysis: This is where the writer shares his or her opinions/interpretation/inference in at least two sentences. The writer explains/explores his or her thoughts/interpretations of what he or she thinks the quotations/facts mean or how the facts support the writer's answer to the prompt or what the author/fact might be saying about the world in which we live.

Sentence 5, Support/Concrete Details: These sentences should include facts, quotations, and

descriptions, but not the writer's opinion. No one should be able to argue whether these things are true or not. These facts must prove the writer's position in the topic sentence.

If using a quotation, a set-up or introduction should be included with these sentences. Without the set-up, the quotation would be marked as "floating," a mark down in points.

- * First, introduce the quotation.
- * Then, use the quotation.
- * Make sure you don't create a run-on sentence.

Sentence 7 and 8, Commentary/Analysis: This is where the writer shares his or her opinions/interpretation/inference in at least two sentences. The writer explains/explores his or her thoughts/interpretations of what he or she thinks the quotations/facts mean or how the facts support the writer's answer to the prompt or what the author/fact might be saying about the world in which we live.

Sentence 8: Conclusion: This sentence wraps everything up. It is not a repetition of the Topic Sentence! It should reveal a new or deeper understanding of the topic, taking into account the six sentences that the writer used to prove and explain the Topic Sentence. It should include key words from the paragraph.

