

Violence Against the Global Majority: Intersectional Perspectives.

This is not an essay. It is not a paper. It is a manifesto. It presents a set of theses followed by a conclusion that is a demand for action and accountability.

Introduction

A few orienting terms:

Womxn: a Black feminist, gender expansive term used to honor those who may have the lived experience of womxnhood, but may also be excluded by the gender binary

LGBTQ+ people: Those who exist on the gender and sexuality spectrum outside of the cisgender, heteronormative binary. Meaning, with or without a specific label referring to their gender or sexuality. For the purpose of this manifesto, I will be mainly focusing on the LGBTQ+ community as it intersects with PGM identities.

PGMs: People of the global majority represent the Non-White, Black, Asian, Brown, Caribbean, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, Arab, Middle Eastern, African Diaspora, Latin American, and Mixed-Race populations. This term recognizes both ethnic and racial groups under the umbrella. It is not only accurate to the demographic being discussed, but it also distances them from the marginalization faced in everyday life. Being a person of the global majority myself, this terminology shift helps to embolden my perspective.

Now.

Womxn and LGBTQ+ People of the Global Majority have been braving constant marginalization for centuries in the US. The narrative against our autonomy has persisted through media and governmental policy. This has caused a steady increase in violent victimization towards the intersectional identities of PGMs

As womxn, we are consistently silenced, as LGBTQ+ individuals, we are constantly overlooked, and as PGMs, we are marginalized. When will the hydraulic press be stopped? We are taught to be docile, to obey, to find a way to maintain that unique identity while fitting into the illusion of equality in the United States. When considering urban areas, it is easy to see how they stand out as hotspots for these victimizations. The high population, coupled with a tragic social hierarchy, creates a cage with high buildings and bustling streets. The ever-expanding weight of the world crushes us all, and yet we are indoctrinated to think that it is better to use our hands to cover our mouths and stay silent, so that we can be fed by the machine built to kill us. Instead of reaching out our hands to help those around us, we stray so far from our intended purpose. Historically, humans are social and thrive in cooperation. Yet these aspects of our species are stomped out under the weight of existence in our modern-day America. This evidence is in the described reality. Who are we talking about? How are we talking about them? Who is leading? Who is listening? Will anything ever change? If it will, there is just one way to do it, through Black Feminism and the triple consciousness.

Thesis 1: The Analysis Must Be Black Feminist

In order to answer my questions about queer PGMs, the orienting lens must be Black Feminist. It must sit at the ideological, theoretical, and empirical intersections of gender and race. It must be both. It can't be either. It certainly can't be neither.

Every time you breathe, there's more negativity being spoken about marginalized communities. Everywhere you look, someone is being oppressed and victimized; everywhere you go, you have to question your safety, and that is not the ideal way of living. The ideal way of living in America is that of peace, that of freedom, that of autonomy. Scholars have outlined this aspect of society explicitly throughout history. But, there are those of us who are the most at risk of facing all of these obstacles, Black womxn.

In the White feminist movements of our past, specifically in the push for womxn's suffrage, there was a level of outrage amongst the Non-Black feminists that came with Black men receiving the right to vote before them, in 1869. The result of this outrage was a shift in the movement where White women separated themselves from the rest. Arguing that their racial separation from Black womxn made them more deserving of these rights, despite common oppression that they face as womxn. Resulting in a long battle for the suffrage of Black womxn that was only technically ended in legislation by 1965. Black Feminism, on the other hand, is naturally inclusive by necessity. Black feminists are the pioneers who have paved the way for the equitable treatment of all womxn, regardless of race. It cradles those who have been

ousted from the collective of other movements, and centers values like empowerment and community care. Since the treatment of Black womxn has shaped the way other PGMs are able to exist, it only makes sense to use the principles of Black feminism to address issues of intersectional victimization. Black Feminism represents the high tide that could carry all of our vessels from the shores of the oppressive systems that are in place.

Angela Davis in *Are Prisons Obsolete?* outlines a system of currency based on the bodies of womxn. She talks about how chattel slavery, and therefore our current government, has weaponized reproductive rights and taken control of them due to the economic incentive. Enslaved womxn were used as objects for breeding, trade, entertainment, and sexual gratification. They were viewed as even less than sub-human, purely as a 'tool' for a purpose. Davis accounts how they were abused in such horrific ways that still sought to protect the womb only for the monetary value that the life inside would have. This system of human currency has shaped our society in such a way where one's life is only equal in value to that of their labor. Overlapping analyses in *Black Liberation and Socialism* by Ahmed Shawki explain the oppressive environment that we see in our modern day in the historical context of how Black womxn were treated in comparison to the rest of society.

Beth E. Richie in *Arrested Justice Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* attests that:

“In the most basic sense, the extent of the problem is underestimated and the corresponding public policy and interventions that have been designed to respond to the problems are inadequate. The tremendous unmet needs of women who fall outside of the common understanding of violence” (p. 23).

We have many examples of this today, such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This has spiked maternal mortality significantly in the years since and disproportionately affects birthing people of color. The relationship between labor and monetary value, which is the basis of capitalism, has “unintentionally” enforced a system where the potential for a non-sentient life has greater value than the existing one of the mother.

Our Executive branch has also worked diligently to remove Diversity Equity and Inclusion from federal policy. This was said to be necessary under the basis of the "racially discriminatory DEI activities" according to the White House website. In that same vein, we have government institutions such as ICE being deployed in our cities in hordes and militarizing our streets. They received a reported “\$45 Billion” for detention centers. As well as a modern bill akin to the makings of a poll-tax, being stalled in Congress in the form of the SAVE America Act. This legislation would require more documentation (passport, REAL ID, etc.) to verify the identity of voters, which at first may not sound harmful, until it is acknowledged that more than half of the PGMs in America do not have their passports or the resources needed to get one quickly. *These are only a few of the countless examples of how the throughline peeks through the veil in our everyday life.*

Richie also describes the view of Black womxn from that same structure created during chattel slavery, through the lens of deviant womxnhood. “Black women have typically represented ‘deviant womanhood’... Black Feminist Theory understands that there are varying images of Black womanhood that shape Black women’s identity and social positioning. So, for example, Black women can be strong (and therefore not at risk of violence)...or criminal (and therefore unworthy of protection or support)” (p. 130). This is directly linked to the violence aspect of the victimization of PGMs and womxn in the U.S. The standard maltreatment of Black womxn that was established during chattel slavery was solidified both in policy and the social consciousness, allowing the infliction of violence upon them to go without the same level of consequence. Richie states,

“According to most national studies, African American women are disproportionately represented in the aforementioned data on physical violence against intimate partners. In the Violence Against Women Survey, 25 percent of Black women had experienced abuse from their intimate partner, including “physical violence, sexual violence, threats of violence, economic exploitation,

confinement and isolation from social activities, stalking, property destruction, burglary, theft and homicide.”(p. 26)

The acceptance of Black womxn being inherently less-than and therefore deserving of mistreatment is the same idea that White supremacy inflicts onto other marginalized identities. The difference is that in the other marginalized communities, there is value in the separation or distance from blackness. This creates a social hierarchy where one can occupy multiple marginalized identities, yet still be able to operate from a position of privilege depending on the separation from blackness.

There is this immense weight of existence, the fear for my bodily autonomy in the way that it is threatened constantly. There is also the weight of the anger that lingers in my body from the persecution and the prejudice that it has endured. While it is true that I have witnessed and been victim to the same injustices I'm writing about, you don't have to fill either of those criteria to understand the systemic injustices that affect us. All that is required is openness, motivation to learn, and willingness to reflect on your own positionality. The real question that needs to be asked is what are you willing to do for yourself? Because whether you are able to understand it or not, the ways that the most marginalized people are treated are a reflection of the moral standards of society. Those standards can and will end up affecting all of us; it's only a matter of when.

Thesis 2: People of the Global Majority Must Interrogate Themselves. Accountability Not Immunity.

Depending on the area you live in, it may be hard to see, but those who belong to communities that are marginalized in the U.S. typically hail from other cultures that fall under the global majority. Most, if not all, of those aforementioned people come from cultures that also have a deeply embedded sense of Anti-blackness due to colonization. For example, there was a slave trade beyond the transatlantic route from West Africa to the Western Hemisphere. There was also an Arab colonial slave trade that operated in East and North Africa. It was different in many ways, but it also created a similar social hierarchy that those countries still operate under to this day. In that social hierarchy, it should be simple to infer who was at the bottom: the Black people they had enslaved. There are remnants of the values of chattel slavery in many Latin American cultures as well. For example, in my own culture, being Afro-Puerto Rican, there are beauty standards based on complexion, hair texture, and eurocentric facial features. If you do not possess these things and instead have a more Afrocentric or Indigenous complexion, you will likely face some level of scrutiny, even at the hands of your own family members. In all of these Non-Black cultures (and in Black cultures as well), the common theme that you'll see emerging is built on White supremacy. But it's also important to question how that has shifted due to the involvement of popular media and increasing legislation over the years that have tried to “level the playing field.”

I could tell you about what white sociologists think about culture as capital. I could even cite a PGM like Nancy Leong. But as a queer PGM myself, I will explain it in the way that I understand it. The answer is the increased value of the social currency and how it differs from systemic currency. It can be thought about like money or even game tokens, something transactional. Social currency can be thought of as influencing popular culture or the social atmosphere, and systemic currency can be thought of as an economic or political benefit. In America, with the rise of digitization and the changes to our legislation, all of the discriminatory practices that disproportionately impact Black people as a result of White supremacy have had to morph into waves of subliminal messaging. Now that legislative discrimination against blackness is arguably not as overt as it has been in the past, the media has a role that's imperative to oppressing Black people. People are able to change the way they speak, perform, or their appearance to be more reminiscent of the trends that have been set by Black Americans. So people outside of Black culture are able to benefit socially from having a relationship to it in order to gain social currency, while not straying too far from the underlying White supremacist influence to maintain systemic currency. Those who are Non-Black and marginalized in the U.S. as a result of colonial standards are both perpetrators of, and victims to those standards.

A popular example of this in the media is with the emerging popularity of K-pop. Much of K-pop's musical structure and fashion design is set to emulate the Rap, Hip-Hop, and RnB genres created by Black artists, while still maintaining the White supremacist influences as well. For example, both Western and

Korean beauty standards can be very eurocentric, favoring pale skin, slim noses, etc. Yet the popular media is heavily inspired and influenced by the trends of Black American Artists. Small details like this that we see today are indicators of a larger issue that is still underlying. For the purpose of this discussion, the commodification of marginalized identities can be thought of as the branding, removal, and deconstruction of culture for financial benefit. Recalling an example of this that Angela Davis' analysis discusses in depth is the treatment of Black womxn's bodies as instruments to produce labor. It involves the same breakdown of culture that is widespread in many different ways. Traditional parts of South Asian culture, such as yoga, have been repackaged as a trendy health and fitness activity, when it really represents a much more spiritual and reflective practice. The commodification of marginalized identities separates people and things from their culture as a means of increasing their marketability to the dominant social class. Entire clothing companies, gyms, and other facilities benefit from yoga's separation from culture. The institution is able to benefit financially from the commodity that the practice now represents.

The commodification of marginalized identities can also be represented by the social currency example described earlier. With the social shift toward inclusivity, those who are socially dominant may be excluded from spaces meant to assist or uplift marginalized identities. The interaction of dominant social classes and those they oppress is also described by Patricia Hill Collins in her *Matrix of Domination*.

It is more socially valuable than it has ever been to have proximity to marginalized spaces. Artists, designers, musicians, athletes, and influencers use their identity as a way to market themselves to the general public. But the people who may not be an outlier won't be able to market themselves to those audiences. Even though there isn't a tangible benefit for these actions in systemic currency, there is a social benefit to having access to previously restricted, marginalized spaces. Whether Crenshaw's *Intersectionality*, Patricia Hill Collins' *Matrix of Domination*, or other Black Feminist approaches to layered oppression, race and gender intertwine with economic systems of class to further subjugate queer PGMs, even when there seems to be a short-term appreciation or exposure of the products of culture, the long-term fracturing continues.

At the 2016 BET Humanitarian Awards, Jesse E. Williams put it best:

"Burying Black people out of sight and out of mind, while extracting our culture, our dollars, our entertainment like oil — Black gold. Ghettoizing and demeaning our creations then stealing them. Gentrifying our genius and then trying us on like costumes before discarding our bodies like rinds of strange fruit."

The action is blatant and deliberate. This consensus about blackness prevents the progression of social movements. How could it not when the exploitation of Black bodies is the foundation? Richie explains, "The evolution of the anti-violence movement toward a more conservative set of intervention strategies and public policy reforms is, in part, a reflection of a broader set of conservative social trends in the United States that occurred during the same time period."(pg.101) In this observation, Richie is contextualizing the policy reforms as an example of the social atmosphere's influence. When the dominant public influence is aware of a system and doesn't want to change it, it will be stagnant. But, when that group does want change, it will happen quickly. Objectively, the anti-violence movement that Richie describes would be a productive social movement if implemented well. But when the underlying motivation behind the policymaking is to not be inclusive, any intervention made cannot be claimed as progress in the same way. The dominant public influence may be content, but there are countless others who are left behind in the process.

To address this, those who are being left behind must first be aware of their predicament. The awareness of this could be described by Paulo Freire's theory of conscientization. This psychological framework explains that the development of critical awareness of your social positionality is essential to the process of overcoming oppressive systems. To achieve this level of consciousness, it is necessary first to reflect on your own position in the systemic power structures; the constant analysis of how the systems affect you and how you affect them. An example of this is simply asking why something exists the way it does, since ignorance is what fuels the fire of oppression. It could be as grand as our government or as individual as how you feel about yourself. Another necessary aspect of conscientization includes praxis. This is the implementation of the things that you learn, in positive ways, throughout your community.

Without the knowledge of our past mistakes, we are doomed to repeat them. The people who have been victimized the most have historically been PGMs and the LGBTQ+ community. There are numerous

ways in which change can be inspired and incited. In our current environment, we do not have consistent access to the education needed to make positive social change. The censorship of education on these important aspects of our history prevents following generations from expanding their knowledge. When people are consistently pushed aside and aren't able to learn, it reinforces the system that overlooks them. They cannot adapt. People without the knowledge of what oppresses them can also deeply struggle with their sense of self. For example, the ban on teaching what the government considers Critical Race Theory in 2020. This was a very recent example of censorship in our education, enforced by the law. The "colorblind" approach to a system that had been constructed on prejudice has not been sufficient in the past. It has created a pattern of maladaptive behavior based on the distorted worldview PGMs are taught to have. The environment we live in requires this distorted view to keep functioning.

Therefore, the first step to a positive change is deconstructing those oppressive biases within us all. This is an action that anyone can take, regardless of the level of access, because it starts with questioning the things you already know about yourself and your environment. This is not unique to race and ethnicity. Gender and sexuality add a plethora of new experiences.

Thesis 3: Intersectional Identities & Centering The LGBTQ+ Community

Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality tells us that understanding how various social and political identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, overlap to create unique, compounded experiences of discrimination is essential for the analysis of any systemic injustice. It describes how multiple, overlapping forms of inequality operate simultaneously and are not just the sum of their parts. With each layer that is included in one's identity, there is also an awareness of one's social positionality in relation to the systemic hierarchy that is needed.

The controlling policies that discriminate against and subjugate people who possess a uterus and the rest of the LGBTQ+ community have a direct relationship to the increase in violent victimizations of queer PGMs. One important piece of legislation to discuss is the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It was introduced and intended to determine "rules of general applicability—that substantially burden a person's religious exercise" according to the congress website. It has been enacted by each state differently, but it has given more discriminatory interpretations the space to emerge. From 2015 to 2017, there were a number of proposed bills that permitted the refusal of service to different identities on the basis of moral or religious beliefs. This included marriage rights, adoption through government and private agencies, hiring practices, access to healthcare services, and more. In Illinois, the 99th General Assembly Senate Bill 2164 of 2015 outlined a restriction on state and local government from taking action against one who has the religious belief or moral conviction that marriage is only between a man and a woman, and that sexuality should reflect that. This proposal directly conflicted with the Obergefell v. Hodges Supreme Court decision in favor of permitting same-sex marriage from the same year.

As the years progressed to 2018, there was a bit less legal activity compared to the previous years. There were some measures enacted, such as Oklahoma's Senate Bill 1140, which allowed adoption agencies to refuse services based on moral or religious values. Regardless of orientation, this prevented thousands of families from adopting. There was a small success with New Hampshire's House Bill 1319, expanding nondiscrimination protections. Remaining bills from the year were either left in committee, failed, or expired with the end of the legislative sessions, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Later on in the Spring of 2019, the legislative activity around LGBTQ+ rights steadily increased. Many of the proposed bills reached key decision points. There were a large number of proposals offering incomplete non-discrimination protections and/or broad religious exemptions. With Tennessee enacting Senate Bill 1297 that restricted people's access to certain facilities based on their sex assigned at birth. Even when laws are debated rather than passed, they often amplify stigmatizing narratives by framing LGBTQ+ identities as controversial or illegitimate. This can reinforce people's existing biases and embolden the individuals who already hold discriminatory views. This increases the likelihood of harassment or violence towards marginalized groups. Legislation shapes the public discourse. When policymakers introduce or support measures that target marginalized groups, it can signal to the public that discrimination is institutionally acceptable, and this is a constant theme. The policy changes and other proposals from the surrounding years enforced the political foundation for a discriminatory social atmosphere.

But what happens as a result of that social atmosphere? Beginning with a study that analyzed the

National Crime Victimization Survey from 2017 to 2019, their results stated, “We find SGMs are disproportionately more likely to be victims of violent crime than non-SGM people”. The National Crime Victimization Survey is a sweeping collection of victim-based response data from all over the country. The benefit of referencing datasets like this is that it includes both reported and non-reported crimes. This provides those who may have had an unsuccessful or challenging time reporting their experiences a chance to be counted. The study showed information on many intersectional identities that was consistent with the social and political environment at the time. “When considering race/ethnicity, results show that Black (non-Hispanic) LGBT people have the highest rates of victimization overall, followed by Hispanic.” As I’ve previously described, this is the same historical phenomenon that has disproportionately impacted the Black community and PGMs. In more recent years, we can see the rippling political effects on queer PGMs. A 2024 report from the New York State Comptroller shows that hate crimes in New York rose sharply over a five-year span. There were a total of 1,089 reported incidents in 2023. When you consider that these are only the reported incidents, from a state typically considered blue, the number is even more shocking. When you consider there are only about 1,000,000 queer people in New York State, many of whom are not Black nor of the Global majority, the number is even more shocking. This represented a 69% increase in comparison to the reported incidents of 2019, indicative of a significant upward trend in the bias-related violence across the state. The crimes and incidents that were motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity made up nearly 17% of all the cases reported.

There are fluctuations in crime statistics just as there are with everything else, but the overarching theme that emerges shows that discriminatory policies reinforce and uplift discriminatory ideals. When there is a pattern of legislation that is meant to work against a community, the social atmosphere reflects it. Discussing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community is challenging in different ways than with racial status. Racially, you are in the box that the person seeing you puts you in. It is how the world perceives you. It is an unmoving pillar of your identity because that is what America has instructed. There is infinite variability in people's experiences in their racial group, but these variances are rarely given the same acknowledgement. When a layer of oppression is added, there is a level of awareness that must be gained as well. Looking at the through-lines of victimization, the people at the highest risk for these incidents are queer PGMs.

The media portrayal of marginalized groups, policy, and changes to education censors the parts of our reality that they exist in. This heavily influences the group of people living in America, regardless of political orientation or identity. Periodically, we are given examples of how the layers of oppression compound, and yet those with marginalized identities aren’t given the tools to address it. The people within oppressed groups often have a distorted sense of self based on the societal perception of their identity.

It creates a miasma of justifiable bias towards communities. *It acts as a veil that you cannot see unless looking in a mirror.*

Thesis 4: Non-Black PGMs and Triple Consciousness

Some suggest that white people have no racial consciousness at all. It has been studied. We know how to navigate that. There is also an explicit presence of a binary color line, sometimes white versus POC, sometimes Black versus non-Black. People know how to navigate that. Where do (hetero normative) non-Black People of Color within the Global Majority fit into this?

Dubois describes a double consciousness as referenced in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In this work, Dubois discusses the inherent survival method of seeing yourself through others' eyes that African-Americans must have, and other aspects of oppression. *There is a separation or “veil” described between the Black and white members of society. This veil represents a mental barrier in the way that white people interact with Black people, preventing them from recognizing their own position in a system that benefits them.* He recognizes that the Black people who are affected differently by those systems can either be found assimilating to the values of whiteness or critique it. Dubois also emphasized the same need for education that Freire discussed with conscientization

Based on Intersectionality, I would develop this idea further to explain Non-Black PGMs and/or heteronormative people. What if there is room for a triple consciousness? Not Black obscured from white, but a liminal space where Non-Black POCs have a choice. Identify with blackness and feel the full power of white supremacy. Or cuddle up to whiteness and cling to it for safety. This dilemma of seeing yourself

through the eyes of others is a bit different with a triple consciousness. You have a choice. Since there is a deeply rooted element of anti-blackness within cultures internationally, it is necessary for Non-Black people in marginalized communities to be aware of not only the dominant white supremacist culture, but also the anti-blackness in their own culture as a result of this colonialism, and the unique struggles that follow with each layer of their identity outside of blackness or whiteness. I emphasize the importance of this order because, without first deconstructing the anti-blackness in your own identity, you cannot move on to deconstructing the other layers of oppression.

An example of the function of triple consciousness is the general public's reaction to ICE as a law enforcement agency versus other institutions like the police. Historically, police violence has been an extremely oppressive force on the Black community in America. Yet, the public reception of ICE as an agency is critical in ways that do not translate to the public's attitude towards police. This difference could be explained by the people who are being targeted and the depictions of violence are being publicized. Richie states, "The idea that the collective wisdom of people with shared experiences is the most accurate source of data is a frequently added element of the notion of how important everyday knowledge is" (pg. 130), highlighting the value in what is already within us. My interpretation of this quote's importance in this case is that she is reiterating a Black Feminist value of collectivism that applies to PGM. The things that people discuss on an everyday basis about their lives and memorable events are comparable to collegiate textbooks in validity. And in this case, it's about the awareness of the proximity to whiteness; in the inherent safety and privilege it provides, along with the degradation of cultural identity that it perpetuates as a condition of its benefits. This is why recognizing the value of a tool like collective wisdom and how it can be used to make change is so important. All told, the combination of white supremacy and heteronormativity not only oppresses, but divides.

Conclusion

After addressing the prominent social issues, the question of what the next steps to take arises. In our current environment, deconstructing the influence of the dominant social hierarchy can be modeled through the praxis of Black feminist principles and my notion of the triple consciousness. In western psychology, there is social learning theory. But what it really means is that the observation of others and modeling behavior are essential for people's learning. Learning can happen at any moment simply by watching the people around you and the actions they take. We see this exemplified by the number of marginalized people who perpetuate the ideals that oppress them. It is learned. The people who uphold harmful stereotypes learned to think the way they do from their environment. So if we change the way that people learn and the way they are able to think, we would be able to access new methods to address issues like the violent victimization of queer PGMs. Through this manifesto, I have asserted 4 theses about Violence Against the Global Majority that are based on the analysis of victimization patterns and social conditions. If you agree with what I have laid out, highlighting the throughlines of Black feminism and social psychology, then the conclusion that we would come to together is that we need triple consciousness activated for liberation and not as a survival strategy. We need an intersectional process that finds the gaps in the ways we serve our queer PGMs. As Patricia Hill Collins beautifully stated, "Neither Black feminist thought as a critical social theory nor Black feminist practice can be static; as social conditions change, so must the knowledge and practices designed to resist them" (pg.39). Just as Black Feminism, there is no triple consciousness without change. The pursuit of knowledge is non-negotiable. One who rejects that pursuit is shamefully rejecting an intrinsic part of themselves. No one should claim to understand the victimization of queer PGMs without first accepting the triple consciousness because you can't begin to understand someone else's existence without considering your own.

If you aren't taking action to lift your veil, I question if you are conscious at all.

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