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ISLAM, FEMINISM, AND ISLAMIC FEMINISM

Between Inadequacy and Inevitability

Fatima Seedat

This essay argues for maintaining a critical space between two intellectual paradigms that inform Muslim women's anticolonial equality struggles in the neocolonial present, Islam and feminism. Seedat distinguishes between scholarly trends that preclude the convergence of Islam and feminism, that argue for a necessary convergence, and finally, those that make no argument for or against the convergence but "take Islam for granted" using feminist methods suited to various reform aspirations. The last group may consider their work the natural continuation of historical Muslim consciousness of the treatment of women or as redress for the historical absence of sex equality in Islam. This article argues that Islamic feminism may appear to be the inevitable result of the convergence of Islam and feminism yet it is also inadequate to concerns for sex equality in Islam. Not only do some scholars resist the naming but, as an analytic construct, Islamic feminism also precludes new understandings of sex difference originating in non-Western and anticolonial cultural paradigms.

Before Islamic Feminism

This essay builds upon my earlier essay on the convergence of Islam and feminism, and the theorization of that convergence as "Islamic feminism" where I have argued for a tentative and careful reading that neither inflates nor conflates the space between Islam and feminism.[1] In this essay, I argue that because work toward sex equality is easily assimilated into a feminist analytic paradigm,

[1] See Fatima Seedat, "When Islam and Feminism Converge," *Muslim World* 103, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 404–20.

Islamic feminism may appear to be the inevitable result of this convergence. However, Islamic feminism as an analytic construct is also inadequate to concerns for sex equality in Islam.

In the 1990s, scholars such as Leila Ahmed, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud instigated a new trajectory of thought that implicated early Muslim societies and contemporary Muslim practice in the decline of Muslim women's status.[2] This discursive shift and subsequent work which brings feminist analysis to bear upon Islamic thought has come to be theorized as "Islamic feminism." I argue that this is not the necessary or ideal understanding of the convergence of Islam and feminism.[3] Furthermore, the naming of the convergence Islamic feminism has not gone unchallenged, with the most revealing contestation being an exchange between Margot Badran and Asma Barlas.[4] Badran promotes Islamic feminism as an analytic construct, while Barlas resists Badran's characterization of her work thus. This paper draws heavily on their exchange and uses it as a starting point for further theorizing the intersections of Islam and feminism to understand when the intersection maintains or erases difference across gendered intellectual paradigms.

Note that it is not my intention here to propose an alternate history for the encounter of Islam and feminism, nor is this a project to question the viability of feminism as a tool for gender struggles and equality work in Muslim societies. As will become evident, Muslim women have already done valuable work along feminist lines, which preclude such doubts for me. Instead, the questions I raise here are prompted by the apparent need to find equivalence between Muslim women's equality work and feminism and furthermore, by the seemingly difficult task of resisting the hegemony of the European intellectual heritage. My concern is with the particular project of naming the convergence of Islam and feminism "Islamic feminism"—a project that, in my analysis, is more amenable to producing sameness than allowing diversity in the cultural contexts and intellectual paradigms that we may draw upon for equality work.

I come to my task through reading Barlas, her long-standing engagement

[2] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1991), reprinted as Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, Harem Politique (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1991); and Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992).

[3] While the naming of Islamic feminism has perplexed me for some time, I owe inspiration for this analysis to the work of Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas.

[4] Margot Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism: A Look at the Middle East," in *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/Ate Societies*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Asma Barlas, "Keynote Address: Provincialising Feminism as a Master Narrative," in *Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives* (Finland: Centre for the Study of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity, 2007).

with Badran, and eventual unwilling association with feminism. Barlas's critique speaks to my own discomfort with the assumption that the intersection of Islam and sex-equality work must result in Islamic feminism. My concerns stem to the 1990s and soon thereafter, when I was not yet familiar with feminist theory but all too familiar with feminist hegemony. About that time, Badran visited South Africa and took to naming local Muslim gender activism "Islamic feminism," even though this was not how we named our work. It was then, too, that Naeem Jeenah, a fellow South African, interviewed me similarly intent on arguing for Islamic feminism in South Africa. These two moments continue to raise unanswered questions for me even as I have come to embrace a feminism of my own. My questions relate to asking, What is at stake when Muslim women's equality analysis is called Islamic feminism? What histories and politics are being negotiated, what intellectual traditions are called upon or centered and which are set aside or marginalized in this naming? Finally, what are other ways to envision this convergence that are first, meaningful for women who work at the intersection of Islam and feminism and second, conscious to maintain the difference that Islam and other systems of non-Western thought represent to feminism?

Stumbling upon Barlas's exchange with Badran in 2007 resurfaced my concerns but thankfully also provided some relief. I am interested in two aspects of her critique, first, the labeling of her work and second, the extent to which feminism as a discourse forecloses the possibility of theorizing sex equality from alternative cultural and intellectual paradigms. Drawing upon her analysis I argue that, as a discursive intervention, the formulation of Islamic feminism as the necessary outcome of the intersection of Islam and sex-equality work serves as what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls a "triumphalist moment of modernity" over Islam. Even as some Muslim scholars use feminist methods to read Islamic sources for equality, they resist being co-opted into an uncritical feminist framework. Their resistance, I argue, stems from the ways in which Islamic feminism, as an analytic construct, claims Muslim women's struggles (historically and presently), and furthermore from the potential Islamic feminism holds to erase the differences between Muslim and other women's struggles for equality. Accordingly, this essay challenges Islamic feminism as a singular or necessary framing for the convergence of Islam and feminism. I suggest that it is indeed possible to theorize sexual equality from alternative paradigms even as we work with feminist methodologies. Furthermore, I suggest that we maintain a critical space between Islam and feminism so that their coming together recognizes the different and specific history and politics of Muslim women's equality work. More generally, I am arguing for an approach that values and maintains difference in feminist endeavor.

Indispensable and Inadequate

"How do we think about the global legacy of the European Enlightenment in lands far away from Europe in geography or history? How do we envision or document ways of being modern that speak to that which is shared across the world as well as to that which belongs to human cultural diversity? How do we resist the tendency in our thinking to justify the violence that accompanies imperial or triumphalist moments of modernity?"[5]

By the time Chakrabarty posited these questions, the hegemony of liberal feminism had come under enough fire to prompt a reflexivity that gave way to forms of feminism in the 1990s that were more responsive to difference. Chandra Mohanty's now canonical critique of the hegemony of Western feminisms illustrates how hegemonic feminist discourses subsume the differences of other women. Western feminism discursively colonizes "the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world" and produces a single or a simple construct of third-world women.[6] Furthermore, through the production of "third world difference, Western feminisms appropriate and colonize the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives of women in these countries."[7]

Third-wave feminism establishes itself upon new sensitivities to difference not only with regard to the function of sex and gender but also with regard to differences among women. In its wake, the development of a host of new feminisms suggests the inclusive nature of the feminist project. They suggest attention to the politics of difference and accountability for the multiplicity of experiences attendant to sex and gender. Postcolonial feminism, however, has challenged the way difference has been incorporated into feminism, arguing that in the recognition of other women's differences there is also a relic of the imperial dynamic of feminism's hegemony.[8] Acknowledging different ways of being potentially serves to show that there is value in those differences. However, recognition of difference among women in feminism has in some, though not all, instances also worked to erase difference.

Though intended as a corrective to the homogenizing effects of the second wave, third-wave feminism frequently returns instead to posit white liberal ways of being woman as universal ways of being woman. And so the charge of hegemony against second-wave feminism appears to stick equally well to the third wave even as it tries to redeem itself through other feminisms, meaning that whereas the third wave was intended to recognize difference and so to avoid

[5] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xxi.

[6] Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 39 (Autumn 1988): 61–88, quotation on 62.

[7] Ibid., 63.

[8] Ibid.

prescriptive determinates of other women's struggles, instead the recognition of difference has unfortunately amounted to a universal confirmation that other women too need feminism, in some or other form.

The problem is one of cultural translation where ideas and experiences are translated among intellectual, geographic, and cultural spaces. Naoki Sakai understands translation as a process that transforms incommensurability into difference, in contrast with the more conventional view of translation as the production of equivalence out of difference.[9] Similarly, Gayatri Spivak's approach to language argues that translation must "respect the irreducibility of otherness . . . the liberal humanist 'she is just like me' position is not very helpful when translating." Rather than sameness, the translator must seek 'maximum distance.' "[10]

Chakrabarty also shows that, in the face of a pervasive European intellectual paradigm and the current strength of Eurocentric historicism, translation from one culture into another is thought to produce transparency between cultures in the sense of equivalence, and an understanding difference that is premised upon a sense of "like-ness" or sameness. Yet, it is distance which makes for the best illustration of the rhetorical strategies of language.[11]

In cultural translation, it is similarly an illusion that the translation of other, "diverse forms, practices and understandings of life" may result in a transparency between Europe and its others. The more realistic and preferred outcome is translucence between non-European and European thought and analytical strategies.[12] The value of translucence lies in recognizing different histories of modernity and reason, and in maintaining different ways of being modern.

Political modernity traces its roots back to pervasive categories and concepts whose genealogies are embedded in the intellectual and theological traditions of Europe.[13] As a result, contemporary ways of being are only considered modern when they align themselves with European intellectual tradition. The danger of associating modernity with European ways of being is the consequent devaluing of other, non-European ways of being. In other words, non-European ways of being are required to align with European ones and European intellectual traditions are posited as necessary points of reference for viable ways of being modern.

[9] Meghan Morris comments on this approach in her forward to Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[10] Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London: Routledge, 1996), citing Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 183.

[11] "There is a way in which the rhetorical nature of every language disrupts its logical systematicity" (Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 180).

[12] Ibid., 17.

[13] Chakrabarty, *Provincialising*, 4.

In response, Chakrabarty suggests that European thought "is both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the various life practices that constitute the political and the historical in India."[14] Guided by Barlas, who uses Chakrabarty's analysis to illustrate her objection to Badran's characterization of her work as Islamic feminism, I too find Chakrabarty's analytic framework useful to make visible what lies at stake in discussions on the intersection of Islam and feminism.[15]

Feminism has strong associations with political modernity, is similarly a construct associated with European modernity, and the genealogy of feminism is intimately associated with the "intellectual and theological traditions of Europe."[16] Extending Chakrabarty's analysis of India and Barlas's insights on Islamic feminism to the broader discourse on women and Islam supports my argument that the discourse that names Muslim women's equality work Islamic feminism is implicated in a project that seeks to produce sameness or equivalence between feminism and its Muslim other, even as the project is premised upon recognizing the otherness of Muslim women's experiences.

As an Enlightenment tradition, feminism comes to be similarly "both indispensable and inadequate in helping us think through the various life practices that constitute the political and the historical" in the discourse of women in Islam. Muslim women who resist the label "Islamic feminist" also resist the genealogical heritage of Europe and challenge us to work across intellectual, cultural, and geographic spaces in a manner that recognizes difference without attempting to erase it. In addition to formulating the convergence of Islam and feminism as Islamic feminism, there are other approaches that use feminist methods but resist feminist political hegemonies and others still that "take Islam for granted" with or without advancing a historical Muslim consciousness and struggle for sex equality.

Islamic Feminism

Summarily, scholarship on the convergence of Islam and feminism includes first, denying the possibility of a convergence and keeping the two apart, as do Zeenath Kausar, Haideh Moghissi, and Reza Afshari, and second, naming the convergence "Islamic feminism," as have Badran, miriam cooke, and Jeenah.[17]

[14] Ibid., 6.

[15] Barlas, "Provincialising Feminism."

[16] Chakrabarty, *Provincialising*, 4.

[17] Moghissi and Afshari's motivations are diametrically opposed to Kausar's. Zeenath Kausar, *Women in Feminism and Politic(s): New Directions Towards Islamization* (Selangor, Malaysia: Women's Affairs Secretariat [WAFA], IIUM, 1995), Zeenath Kausar, *Muslim Women at the Crossroads: The Rights of Women in Islam and General Muslim Practices* (Batu Caves, Selangor: Darul Ehsan, Thinker's Library, 2006), Zeenath Kausar and Zaleha Kamaruddin, eds., *Women's Issues: Women's Perspectives* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Women's Affairs Secretariat, IIUM,1995); Haideh

Third are those scholars who challenge how the convergence of Islam and feminism is presented, namely Wadud and Barlas, who resist the easy application of the label "feminist" to their work.[18] Finally, there is scholarship that allows for the convergence by taking Islam for granted in the application of feminist analysis. Wadud and Barlas feature in this latter group, as do other scholars such as Mernissi and Ahmed, though in different ways.

Scholars that take Islam for granted may work with the idea that consciousness of gender issues "always existed" in Muslim culture.[19] However, they may also argue against a historical notion of equality in Islamic legal thought, as have Kecia Ali and Ziba Mir-Hosseini.[20] The lines I draw here are not hard distinctions and there are obvious overlaps, but they help show the complexity and diversity of gender analysis in Muslim women's scholarship on sex equality.

Discoursing Islamic Feminism Away

Kausar offers us a glimpse of a popular Muslim approach to feminism in her first argument, which is that feminism is not a viable intellectual paradigm for Muslim women's empowerment.[21] For Kausar, the guiding principle in empowering women is the divinely inspired nature of the Qur'an and the Prophetic example and a number of the scholars I cite here would likely agree; however, Kausar's analysis relies on a narrow vision of feminism. Kausar considers feminism only in opposition to Islam and her approach betrays a willful naïveté of the breadth and depth of feminist thought. Its major shortcoming is the assumption that feminism cannot or has not developed over time to manifest in a host of both secular and religious trajectories embraced by colonized, colonizing, and anticolonial communities, Muslim and non-Muslim actors alike.

Kausar's position is surprisingly close to Moghissi's in that both refuse the

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Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Reza Afshari, "Egalitarian Islam and Misogynist Islamic Tradition: A Critique of the Feminist Reinterpretation of Islamic History and Heritage," *Critique* 4 (1994): 13–33; Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism"; and Naeem Jeenah, "The National Liberation Struggle and Islamic Feminism in South Africa," *Women's Studies International Forum* 29 (2006): 27–41.

[18] Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Kausar, *Islamization*, Kausar, *Crossroads*, Kausar and Kamaruddin, eds., *Issues*; Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Karachi: SAMA, 2002), and Barlas, "Provincialising Feminism."

[19] Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Women and Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran: Divorce, Veiling, and Emerging Feminist Voices," in *Women and Politics in the Third World*, ed. Haleh Afhsar (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

[20] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Feminism in an Islamic Republic: Years of Hardship, Years of Growth," in *Islam, Gender, and Social Change in the Muslim World*, ed. Yvonne Haddad and John Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Afsaneh Najmabadi, "(Un)Veiling Feminism," *Social Text* 18, no. 3 (2000): 29–45; and Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).

[21] Kausar, *Islamization*, and Kausar, *Crossroads*.

possibility of a connection between Islam and feminism, although for different reasons. In contrast to Kausar, however, Moghissi shows us that refusing to locate Islam in the Enlightenment paradigm is not always the result of willful naïveté. For Kausar, feminism is inherently materialistic and therefore irredeemably problematic for Islam. For Moghissi, however, Islam is inherently patriarchal and therefore irredeemably problematic for feminism.[22] For Kausar, there is no convergence; for Moghissi, there ought not to be a convergence.

Discoursing Islamic Feminism into (a Way) of Being

In 1999, Badran predicted Islamic feminism was necessary for Muslim women in part due to "the conundrum" Muslim women face in naming their "gender activism," to which feminism, she explained, "provides a common language," and so for analytical reasons, "the term Islamic feminism should be retained, firmly claimed and repeatedly explained."[23]

However, instead of a conundrum, the literature on the convergence of Islam, women, and feminism points to an array of individuals who seem quite comfortable with different associations with feminism and as well as a variety of analytic paradigms suggesting that Islam and feminism converge in a number of different ways. To illustrate, Wadud and Barlas have defined their work in a faith context and resist a feminist label. Other scholars and activists use a feminist analysis and define their work in a human rights framework, among them Ayesha Imam, Shaheed, Zainah Anwar, Lilly Munir, and Riffat Hassan.[24] Still other scholars, such as Mirieme Helie-Lucas, work at the intersections of Islam and feminism in a secular framework.[25]

In contrast to Badran's conundrum and her further argument that Muslim women "*need* an Islamic feminism," Moghadam's analysis of the convergence between Islam and feminism in Iran also reveals the *utility* of feminism

[22] Moghissi, *Fundamentalism*.

[23] Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 165.

[24] Ayesha Imam, "Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights and the Offense of Zina in Muslim Laws in Nigeria," in *Where Human Rights Begin: Health, Sexuality, and Women in the New Millennium*, ed. Wendy Chavkin and Ellen Chesler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Farida Shaheed, "Networking for Change: The Role of Women's Groups in Initiating Dialogue on Women's Issues," in *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World*, ed. Mahnaz Afkhami (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Zainah Anwar, "Advocacy for Reform in Islamic Family Law: The Experience of Sisters in Islam," in *The Islamic Marriage Contract: Case Studies in Islamic Family Law*, ed. Asifa Quraishi, Islamic Legal Studies Program (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Lily Zakiyah Munir, "'He Is Your Garment and You Are His . . .': Religious Precepts, Interpretations, and Power Relations in Marital Sexuality among Javanese Muslim Women," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 17, no. 2 (2002): 191–220; and Riffat Hassan, *Riffat Hassan: Selected Articles* (Grabels: Women Living Under Muslim Laws, 1994).

[25] Mirieme Helie-Lucas, "What Is Your Tribe? Women's Struggles and the Construction of Muslimness," *WLUML Dossier* 23–24 (2001).

for Muslim women.[26] Wadud demonstrates this utility when she uses feminist methods and distances herself from feminism's political hegemony.

The difference between utility and need is fine but significant in the convergence of Islam and feminism. Badran is, however, aware of these objections—both the various uses of feminism in Muslim women's scholarship and the politics attendant to making some identities visible over others.[27] Yet her argument "toward Islamic feminism" works at formulating what Islamic feminism is or ought to be. While Badran acknowledges the contestations, she also resists them and insists on Islamic feminism as a conceptual construct for the convergence of Islam and feminism.[28] Her insistence results in an Islamic identity for Muslim feminist thought and a feminist identity for Muslim women's equality work. Yet feminist identity is the point at which there has been the most resistance, for even when scholars do feminist analysis they may not subscribe to the political associations of historical liberal feminism. Primarily, they would not associate themselves with the historical use of feminism in the colonial enterprise and more recently with feminist entanglements in the so-called war on terror where liberal democratization policies premised upon the rhetoric of liberation for Muslim women have produced neocolonial outcomes and new modes of empire in Muslim-majority nation-states.

Further among the charges against Islamic feminism is that feminism is a Western construct contrary to Islamic interests. Badran responds that feminism is produced in various spaces, beginning with the concept coined in the late 1880s in France, spreading to various locations, including the initial movements out of France and into Britain and the United States until it becomes part of the Egyptian milieu in the 1920s. She argues further that while the term originated in France, it is not Western, noting that many communities have a history of feminism evident in egalitarian practices.

I concur with Badran that feminism has spread in different ways to different societies and emerged in hues and forms as varied as the nation-states that give it shape. I also agree that we can locate gender-egalitarian practices in a variety of historical contexts. But to talk about feminism is to talk about that

[26] Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 164, emphasis added; and Valentine M. Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Towards a Resolution of the Debate," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1135–71.

[27] Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 161.

[28] Badran says that Hassan, having first resisted the term, subsequently came to accept the designation of Islamic feminist. I detect in Hassan's movement between these two positions a resignation rather than a voluntary claiming, which is how Badran frames it (ibid.). Badran also claims that she found Islamic feminism in the writings of Muslim women, namely, Najmabadi, Mir-Hosseini, and Shemima Sheikh of South Africa (ibid.). Najmabadi and Mir-Hosseini, as I show above, were both circumspect in their use of the term, citing the reluctance of Muslim women to use it. Sheikh herself only used it once, three weeks before she passed away. Others in the South African milieu did not use the term at all and Jeenah confirms this in personal interviews. They do not use the term at present either.

term first coined in 1880 and then aligned with an analysis, a movement, and an identity that emerged most prominently in Europe and North America, and which was first part of colonial civilizing practices in the non-Christian world and in its most recent incarnation has become complicit in the war on terror and the democratization of the Muslim world at the expense of stability and independence of Muslim nation-states. A reading of feminism that ignores this troubled history and equates feminism, the civilizing practice, with feminism, the analysis or practice of sex equality or the state of gender consciousness, is an incomplete reading of feminism.

The distinction between the civilizing and consciousness aspects of feminism is more difficult to uphold when feminism becomes the term used to describe all efforts toward sex equality. However, the distinction between the two is necessary. It allows scholars to use feminist analyses while they resist feminist hegemonies. The scholars whose resistance Badran must overcome read Islam for equality but refuse the neocolonial hegemony of feminism. Maintaining this important distinction allows Wadud to say that she embraces feminist methods but not feminism's hegemonies.

Finally, insisting on Islamic feminism as the necessary analytic outcome of the convergence of Islam and feminism is further limiting in that it precludes the possibility of these two modes of analysis converging in other combinations. An alternate approach might nurture both the contestations and the affirmations of Islamic feminism and allow the productive and creative potential of the convergence to continue to develop rather than become confined to a singular articulation.

Feminism's Others

Barlas points out that feminism functions as a metanarrative that assimilates other "conversations about equality"; her concern is with how this metanarrative others Muslim women.[29] In third-wave feminism, the gaze that apprehends other women remains a colonial one, benevolently intent on extending itself to incorporate other women's struggles. Implicit in the gesture of extending feminism to other women is a misplaced magnanimity that assumes that other women also need what Western women have needed—in other words, feminism—as Badran tells us Muslim women need feminism.[30]

When feminism extends itself to other women, it also extends its relevance to other women. Paradoxically, in this equation, Western women and liberal feminism remain the normative standard while other women and different feminisms remain othered. Once others are proscribed thus, there is little opportunity to reframe an identity without reference to the mainstream norm. The gaze that turns inward, as other women theorize their otherness, is informed by the

[29] Barlas, "Provincialising Feminism."

[30] Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 164–65.

preexisting imperial relationship between Western women and other women. Unless other women consciously resist this relationship, in an anticolonial context the relationship perpetuates the perspective of the retreating colonizer. Only now, the perspective has become the gaze adopted by those who were once colonized. Marnia Lazreg explains how this works. Standpoint knowledge, she says, is a representation of activity instead of the situated truth it purports to be. It is, she explains, "an activity that is above simply valuing the experiences of different women, used by racialised women; it yields an 'inverted double representation.' They represent themselves in terms that already subsume and contain their representation."[31]

And when feminism insists on incorporating others, two things happen. First, it affirms its own inclusiveness and second, it exercises its power to legitimize other women's equality discourses. So, when Barlas asks, "do we redeem feminism when we locate it in the Qur'an?" we may answer affirmatively. By including the Muslim other, feminism affirms that it can accommodate the other. The inverted double representation ensures that when including other women, feminism affirms itself at the same time it legitimates the equality work of other women.

A further argument is that it appears as though feminism finds it difficult to witness the work against patriarchy and advocacy for women's equality without naming this work feminist, thus claiming it as its own. As a result, feminism finds it difficult to view equality work in terms not associated with its own European intellectual tradition.[32]

The prevalence of the Western narrative of the female subject of feminism makes it seem inevitable that all women's equality struggles be perceived as feminist; that difficulty is obvious in contestations naming Islamic feminism. When Muslim women articulate a gender consciousness and offer an analysis of sex equality, the imperial relationship they occupy under feminism prompts feminists to read their consciousness and analysis as a kind of feminism. When Barlas talks about patriarchy, she is told that she is doing feminism; because she is doing it in the context of Islam, she is also told that she is doing Islamic feminism.

However, there is more than one way to view equality work, even when using the tools of feminism. Barlas shows us one way when she resists being named. Those who use feminist methods while taking Islam for granted represent another.

[31] Marnia Lazreg, "Decolonizing Feminism," in *African Gender Studies: Theoretical Questions and Conceptual Issues*, ed. Oyèrónké Oyewùmí (Houndmills, Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 71.

[32] "The very colonial crucible into which Bengali modernity originated ensured that it would not be possible to fashion a historical account of the birth of this modernity without reproducing some aspect of European narratives of the modern subject—for European modernity was already present at this birth" (Chakrabarty, *Provincialising*, 148).

And there is a difference between naming Muslim women's gender struggles "Islamic feminism," and what Wadud does as pro-feminist and pro-faith or what other scholars do when they use feminism while taking Islam for granted. The difference is between the imposition of being named, as in being given a name, and voluntarily choosing a methodology for oneself, as in choosing how to name or identify oneself. The latter is an association that, as long as it remains undefined, open, and flexible, also remains open to being made and unmade in various ways. Mernissi has no problem claiming feminism for herself and for Islam, similarly, Ali, Mir-Hosseini, and the women of Zanan.[33]

Feminist analysis appears to be easily assimilated when Islam is taken for granted and where there is little fear of having to adjust to superimposed labels or histories. Lamia Zayzafoon helps us make more sense of this distinction as the metaphoric production of "the Muslim woman" in orientalist discourse (where "the Muslim woman" is produced to illustrate alterity) and the metonymic production of "the Muslim woman" in the feminist discourse of scholars like Mernissi.

In the latter, "the Muslim woman" is "an unfixed yet situated signifier," formulated in a manner that resists closure.[34] We see some of this difference between Badran's project to name Islamic feminism and Barlas's resistance to that naming. Badran's framing occurs in the context of third-wave feminism, where the impetus to allow for difference and to enable alternative feminisms is strong.[35] Indeed the recognition of feminist possibilities for Islam, in contrast to the dominant narrative of an irredeemably patriarchal Islam, carries positive implications for the inclusive nature of feminism. And the alterity of Muslim women makes them desirable additions to the big tent of feminism.

Whereas Badran's project neatly captures the alterity of Muslim women for feminism, Barlas and Wadud resist closure on the definition of the Muslim woman. Their resistance allows for flexibility in the narrative of Muslim women and a vantage point from which Muslim women may be critical of Islam as well as third-party portrayals of themselves. It is a space from which to question the pejorative narrative that persistently frames Muslim women as victims of Muslim patriarchy.

[33] Seedat, "When Islam and Feminism Converge."

[34] Lamia Zayzafoon, *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History and Ideology* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 1.

[35] While her analysis may suggest a neo-orientalist tendency, I don't believe that Badran is naïve enough to be blindly convinced of the salvific capacities of feminism for Muslim women. However, I suspect that Badran believes that Muslim women may somehow save feminism. Her enthusiasm for this eventuality is palpable: "I believe that the new radical feminism in Muslim societies—that is, 'Islamic feminism'—will play a salient role in (1) the revisioning of Islam, (2) the constitution of a new modernity in the twenty-first century, and (3) the transformation of feminism itself. Feminism may even get a new name" (Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 165).

In contrast, the project to define Islamic feminism may be read as an attempt to define and fix Muslim women against the dominant narrative of a patriarchal Islam and in the interests of an inclusive feminist paradigm. Along similar lines, for Badran the alterity of Muslim women is a valuable addition to other feminist struggles.

Jeenah is similarly convinced of Islamic feminism as an analytic paradigm and similar processes are evident in his retrospective construction of Islamic feminism in the South African struggle against apartheid and the period soon after 1994. In Jeenah's analysis, Muslim women's alterity supports the inclusive nature of the South African antiapartheid struggle. In other words, the Muslim struggle against apartheid is defined by Muslim activism and Muslim feminist activism. This is borne out in that Muslim women's activism outside of what Jeenah defines as Islamic feminism has little significance in Jeenah's narrative of Muslim resistance to apartheid.[36]

Taking Islam for Granted

The inevitability of feminism in the transgressive work of Muslim women's struggles for equality appears inescapable. Feminism and the struggle for sex equality in Islam often share methods, analysis, and even strategies. The fact that these struggles and their theorizing also occur in the context of European languages and in Western academia makes the vocabulary, methods, and tools of feminism seem almost impossible to avoid. Almost any articulation of a transgressive gender politics, or any reading of sex inequality, appears like an ideological sibling, if not counterpart, of feminism. Furthermore, as feminism is the primary mode for theorizing female subjectivities in the framework of political modernity, and for now at least, the only vocabulary, methods, and tools at our disposal are necessarily feminist, in that they have historically been part of the collection of analytic tools that feminism deploys against patriarchy, it may mean that all struggles for sex equality in Islam will inevitably be named feminist.

But that is the limit of that inevitability. It is not also inevitable that the convergence of Islam and feminism must result in something called Islamic feminism. It is only one form of that convergence and it need not be the inevitable construct that we must settle upon.

The convergence of Islam and feminism as an articulation of struggles for sex equality through a discourse that "takes Islam for granted" is one alternative and a potentially more desirable construct. It appears to have been the construct that most scholars have used to interrogate the sex inequalities they encounter in their faith practice. More specifically, taking Islam for granted in

[36] I develop these ideas further in an essay currently in preparation that analyzes Islamic feminism in South Africa.

feminist praxis has produced alternate approaches to the intersection of the two paradigms.

Wadud, for example, speaks of her analysis as a "gender jihad"—a space that allows simultaneously for engaged surrender to the divine, recognition that patriarchy is not divine and advocacy for equality among all people. In addition, Jasmin Zine has proposed a "critical faith-centered feminism" that extends the possibilities for critique beyond gender and into a wide array of inequalities, race, environment, and economics among them.[37] A further alternative privileges a historically located Islamic struggle against patriarchy and sex inequality.

In this latter construct, the struggle for equality is not a new one inaugurated by modern Muslim women but a struggle with a long, Prophetic, and Qur'anic genealogy. Because of this history, the equality work of Barlas, Ahmed, Mernissi, Wadud, and others occurs through a conversation with the historical reason of Islam, through the Qur'an and the Prophet (peace be upon him). While this conversation may have implications for feminism, the conversation is really with Islam. This conversation is addressed to the women of Muslim history, namely the noble Mariam (peace be upon her), whose blessed womb bore Jesus amid social scorn; the respected Khadija (may God be pleased with her), who exposed her breasts to angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) to assure the Prophet his inspiration was divine and subsequently spent her life and wealth supporting a partner who was ostracized and maligned by his community through a monogamous marriage that lasted twenty-five years until her death; and the venerable Ayesha (may God be pleased with her), who lead Muslim soldiers into a battle contesting political leadership. The conversation gains strength from these transgressive moments; its interlocutors include the prophet Mohammad, those who preceded and followed him, the narrators who have recorded their practices, the God of the Qur'an, and the exegetes who give voice to its meaning. The conversation typically refuses the notion of a "waiting room" from which Muslims are only now emerging to become aware of matters of sex inequality. Instead, it insists that the consciousness of sex equality has always been present, if unrealized, in Muslim history. Azizah al-Hibri's analysis of women's rights in Islam is a good example of an approach to Islamic law specifically premised on an unrealized historical Muslim gender consciousness.[38]

However, taking Islam for granted as a field of Muslim feminist praxis does not always concede sex equality to Muslim history or the textual sources of Islam. For Mir-Hosseini and Ali sex equality is not a historical legal construct and therefore feminist analysis needs to account for the androcentric and patri-

[37] Jasmin Zine, "Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism: Reflections of a Muslim Scholar-Activist," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20, no. 2 (2004): 167–89.

[38] Azizah Yahia al-Hibri, "Muslim Women's Rights in the Global Village: Challenges and Opportunities," *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, nos. 1–2 (2000): 37–66.

archal nature of the Qur'an, hadith, and sharia.[39] Similarly, Aysha Hidayatullah's study of the Qur'an recognizes sexist elements in the "literal text" but does not relinquish the "sanctity and authority" of the scripture.[40]

This scholarship recognizes the contemporary nature of discourses on sex equality, individual rights, and consent, and makes a deeply reflexive analysis of the degree to which reform must challenge historical formulations of sex difference and normative faith practice. Instances of Muslim feminist practice that take Islam for granted advocate for sex equality through the lens of Islamic thought. They make recourse to the history of Islam and to reasoning drawn from Islamic sources; in Chakrabarty's words, they make recourse to an Islamic history of reason.[41]

Telling Alternative Histories of Reason

For Chakrabarty, the inadequacy of the Enlightenment paradigm for articulating alternative ways of being is a reminder that Western intellectual histories cannot tell the story or capture the histories of other cultures. The most they can do is attempt to translate these various ways of being. While the goal of this translation ought to be the illustration of difference, it is characteristically used to produce equivalence. Thus is the relevance of non-Western intellectual histories, whether recounted from popular knowledge or reclaimed from a lost archive of alternative knowledge. Reviewing the various approaches to Islamic feminism, we find more than one alternative history of reason in the convergence of feminism and Islam.

In the women's movements in Iran, as Afsaneh Najmabadi has shown, the convergence between Islam and feminism breaks down antithetical barriers and exclusivity between these two analytical frameworks. Barlas and Wadud locate an equality analysis in the text of the Qur'an and the model of the Prophet. Mernissi offers a feminist analysis of Islam that connects to a history of Muslim thought and a non-Western history of reason when she explains that the quest for dignity was always a part of the history of Muslim women.[42] Similarly, Mir-Hosseini explains that though there is no equivalent term for feminism in Persian, "as a consciousness it has always existed."[43]

In the narrative of Islamic feminism constructed as an Islamic version of

[39] Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform," *Brill* 1, no. 1 (2003); and Ali, *Sexual Ethics*.

[40] Aysha Hidayatullah, "Muslim Feminist Birthdays," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 27, no. 1 (2011): 119–22, quotation on 119.

[41] Ali, for example, notes that Muslim marriage law is framed on a contract of dominion not partnership and she reflects on the degree to which a shift might be possible through Muslim legal sources. Mir-Hosseini is part of a project with Musawah, an international advocacy group, "led by Muslim women who seek to publicly reclaim Islam's spirit of justice for all" (www.musawah.org).

[42] Mernissi, *Women and Islam*, viii.

[43] Mir-Hosseini, "Post-Khomeini Iran," 166.

Western liberal feminism, contemporary women's gender consciousness is another stage in the historical development of Islam as a religion. Furthermore, a progressive Islam is necessarily a feminist Islam.[44] By contrast, as much as the gender critiques offered by Barlas and Wadud interrogate Islam, they work with the foundational claim that Islam entails an affirmation of women's equality with men and that the Qur'an and Prophetic example hold the means to the realization of this equality. For those who refuse to be circumscribed within Islamic feminism, Islam is only redeemable through Islam.[45] Even where Ali, Mir-Hosseini, and more recent legal scholarship argue that sex equality is not a historical Muslim legal paradigm, they advocate that equality is potentially available within the spiritual parameters of the faith. The commitment is to Islam, as an independent intellectual and spiritual paradigm, that can be, if it is not already, imbued with the spirit of sex equality. This is a significant departure from the dominant liberal feminist narrative of religion generally, and of Islam particularly, as inherently patriarchal and only redeemable through a secular transformation.

Contrary to the European history of Islam where Islamic feminism is the express wish that Muslim society may someday hopefully emerge into a secular and equality-focused future, these scholars work with the idea of a nonsecular present which is not waiting to become secular, modern, or democratic. It is faith-oriented, both presently and in the future, already modern, exists in the now, and is already feminist.

Therefore, Islamic feminism is an inadequate construct when framed in opposition to a history and continuity of Muslim struggles for sex equality. It aligns Muslim equality work with a Western intellectual paradigm: a history of reason that leads us to the history of Western liberal feminism rather than the history of Muslim thought.

Resisting Islamic feminism suggests an anticolonial politics and a refusal to be circumscribed within hegemonic Western constructs. It argues for the independence and validity of non-Western thought to define itself, to create alternative intersections for traditionally separate intellectual spaces, to take its own religious framework, Islam, for granted, and to recognize Muslim histories of equality and inequality as we work toward equality in the present.

Provincializing (Islamic) Feminism

Barlas's resistance is as a counterclaim against the illusion of transparency

[44] As the next logical step in the history of a religion, in the paradigm of Enlightenment thought, and in keeping with a narrative of historicism, religion must eventually give way to scientific reason. This narrative is modeled on the history of Christian thought and the interactions between feminism and Christianity.

[45] To demonstrate her commitment to the Qur'an as a source of equality, Barlas uses an exegetical technique—"exegesis of the Qur'an by the Qur'an"—that allows her to stay within the paradigm of Qur'anic reason.

between Islam and feminism.[46] Instead of an unhindered path of vision between a hegemonic Western intellectual tradition and a still-underrepresented non-Western history of gender, she differentiates the Western history of feminism from a historically Islamic tradition of sex difference.[47] The theoretical associations of a modern gendered subject with feminism make any articulations of gendered subjectivity appear akin to feminism; however, Islamic feminism is an inadequate construct when it claims for feminism the history of Muslim women's struggles for equality. When it is no longer self-critical, no longer aligned against empire, and no longer embedded in a broader critique of inequality and injustice, it loses its valence.

Non-reflexive Muslim and non-Muslim feminist strategies may easily reinscribe the triangular relationship between the characteristically imperiled Muslim woman, dangerous Muslim man, and civilized European.[48] The accompanying narrative of rescue resonates with colonial, democratization, and war-on-terror encounters where white women and men insist on "saving brown women from brown men."[49] Where Muslim communities present a challenge to contemporary notions of empire, the rescue is readily "annexed to the project of empire."[50] More particularly, pious Muslim women's ways of being challenge the ideals of secular liberal Western feminism as modes of empowerment for women.

At issue here is feminism's claim to know other women's ways of being sufficiently well to propose solutions to their problems, in much the same way that other women might have suggested solutions to their own problems. Instead of treating difference as something to retain and define, this approach treats difference as something that can and must be overcome. In this case, it is overcome through knowing the other or creating a sense of sameness with the other.

[46] Contrary to Badran's enthusiasm for Islamic feminism as "an expression of modernity" in the Muslim world, Barlas suggests a different history and a different reason for her struggles (Chakrabarty, *Provincialising*, 236).

[47] This is not to say that Western feminism completely veneers over difference in the name of shared feminist interests. Where it does not suit the interests of empire, Western feminism is instead prone to highlight difference, most characteristically along a modern /premodern paradigm. See Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Along the historicism of Western intellectual history, which "assigns Indians, Africans, and other 'rude' nations to an imaginary waiting room of history," premised upon the idea that "we were all headed for the same destination," some people would arrive earlier than others (Chakrabarty, *Provincialising*, 8). Lagging behind, the "rude" nations may arrive at the moment of modernity once they use the tools already developed by the already modern nations. Thus European thought makes "room for the political modernity of the subaltern classes" (ibid., 9).

[48] Razack, *Casting Out*.

[49] See Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783–90. Her reference is to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Post-colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 287.

[50] Razack, *Casting Out*, 148.

When difference must be overcome it leaves little room for others to continue being different or for others to define the terms of their difference. Instead, the effect is to homogenize, to reduce difference, and finally, to produce a sense of sameness or equivalence. Translating ideas between paradigms of thought as though we can see from one side of a divide, and through it, into the other side with a clear and unrestricted view produces equivalence. It creates the illusion that we share similar problems and may therefore advocate similar solutions. Yet the difference between societies, peoples, and different ways of being is not that easily traversed.

As translation theory has shown, the task is not necessarily the production of sameness, but of difference. No matter how well we may know the other, our view into the other side is never unencumbered and we may never claim a transparent view into the other, however well-intended we may be.[51] Instead, if not for the sake of being true to the nature of difference, then only for the sake of humility in our encounters with difference, we must always be careful enough to acknowledge that the transparency may only be illusory. The vision of the other we grasp in our mind's eye is always mediated by the space between ourselves and the other. By being attentive to this space we remain attentive to difference.

Islamic feminism constructed as a necessary outcome of Muslim women's feminist aspirations is first, a claim to render gender struggles in Islam equivalent with gender struggles represented by historical feminism. Second, it is a claim to know Islam and the encounters of Muslim women well enough to advocate solutions to their problems much as feminism has proposed solutions to problems women experience in European societies.

Barlas's resistance is a challenge to the equivalence that Badran claims between feminism and Barlas's readings of sex equality in Islam. Furthermore, it is a challenge to the claim feminism makes to know her; feminism claims her and names her because it claims equivalence with her struggles and because it claims to know what motivates her. Yet Barlas is clear that the struggles are not equivalent, her resistance to inequality does not stem from feminism but from her belief; "faith not feminism" shapes Barlas's resistance to patriarchy.

Beyond Islamic Feminism

The broad narrative of Islamic feminism is of newly educated Muslim women who offer innovative challenges to Islam. This is only a slight departure from the historical Western narrative that explicitly associates Islam with the oppression of women. Mohja Kahf traces this narrative to historical dramas un-

[51] Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 180.

folding in the West in response to its Islamic other.[52] The drama continues today in the narrative of Islam as strict and controlling of women,[53] and the construction and naming of something called "Islamic feminism" falls easily into this ongoing drama. In her new millennial guise, the Muslim woman, once a "supine odalisque, shrinking-violet, virgin and veiled victim,"[54] awakens from her slumber to become a newly enlightened and educated advocate of Islamic feminism. She recognizes the oppressive nature of her faith and formulates her resistance to Muslim patriarchy through something called "Islamic feminism." In both narratives, Muslim women are victims of patriarchy in a historical imaginary peopled with violent Muslim men whose ideal is the docile Muslim woman.[55]

On further reflection, perhaps Badran was correct to say that Muslim women face a conundrum that Islamic feminism may solve. The term may certainly have its uses and feminism does offer the vocabulary to express concerns for sex equality in Islam. But perhaps the conundrum Badran saw was not the result of Muslim women's inability to articulate their position, nor was it a semantic question about what to call Muslim women's equality work. Rather, it was how to locate this work given the preexisting discursive frameworks that insist on claiming all struggles for sex equality in the framework of feminism.

Badran suggests to "claim and repeatedly explain" the term "Islamic feminism."[56] I have suggested instead to maintain a critical distance between the two intellectual paradigms because the challenge is not about vocabulary but about negotiating a place for Muslim women's equality work in a predetermined landscape of discourses of women and Islam. Some scholars may insist Islam and feminism remain separate, in the way that Kausar keeps them at opposite extremes, the way that Moghissi refuses their convergence, or in the way that liberal feminism preferences secular solutions over religious ones. Others may insist that Islam and feminism must converge, in the way that Badran insists they must or in the way that third-wave feminism relieves feminism of its imperial past and refashions feminism as an inclusive liberating project, with Muslim women among the prized alterities it wishes to encompass and liberate.

Some of the features of the conundrum less obvious at the time Badran was writing have subsequently become visible to us through her debate with Barlas. Badran's insistence on Islamic feminism prompted Barlas's resistance, and Barlas's critique, in turn, has provided relief for many of my own anxieties about the hegemony of feminism, even as it continues to prompt me toward a critical feminism of my own. To pay heed to an anticolonial critique of Islamic

[52] Mohja Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 8.

[53] Imam, "Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights," 84.

[54] Kahf, *Western Representations*, 179.

[55] For more on the triangle of a benevolent white man or woman, a violent Muslim man, and an oppressed Muslim woman, see Razack, *Casting Out*.

[56] Badran, "Toward Islamic Feminism," 165.

feminism is to replace the apparent transparency between the intellectual paradigms of the West and non-West with a translucence that maintains distance even as it affirms the historical imbrications and connections between Islam and feminism.

If the convergence of Islam and feminism is to be such translucence, then we must be mindful of the multiple forms of this convergence and open to the multiple ways of doing equality work that they allow for. To claim a necessary single convergence precludes other convergences and other ways of being Muslim and feminist. While the feminism of an Islamic feminism must inevitably locate Islamic feminism in a Western intellectual paradigm, the feminism of an Islam taken for granted allows for feminism to be located in an alternate history of reason; it may argue equally for a historically located Muslim gender consciousness or an androcentric Muslim past. Against the glare of the Enlightenment and the association of feminism with a Western history of reason, the latter possibilities are much harder to see, but discerning their potential and noticing their presence, even in blurred outlines, is the beginning of translucence.

I hope to have illustrated that Islamic feminism is only one product of a negotiation between feminism and Islam as two intellectual traditions. I hope to have shown further that other articulations of this convergence that do not seek to erode difference but maintain the distance between the two traditions may be more productive.

As valuable as the vocabulary of feminism is for facilitating our conversations on sex equality, feminism can also be inadequate to articulate these conversations. There are other ways of envisioning the convergence that recognize the unique challenges of a feminist reading of Islam and expand its possibilities. Feminism and the convergence of Islam with feminism have the potential to be more than merely situated variations one of the other—there is the possibility of recognizing different ways of being, different applications for feminist methods, and the possibility of maintaining these differences. These alternatives could ensure the value of difference and allow it to endure.

Finally, we are perhaps best guided by the wisdom of those who recognized the value of difference long before we knew how. Audre Lorde explains that it is not our differences that divide us but, rather, it is "our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."[57]

> Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest form of reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. Difference must not merely be tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can sparkle like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity of interdependence become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of

[57] Audre Lorde, *Our Dead behind Us* (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, Inc., 1998).

being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters. . . . The failure of academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower.[58]

[58] Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).