

Dissident Feminisms: Inaugural bell hooks center Symposium

Sponsored by the bell hooks center and the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Berea College

June 16th-18th, 2023
Berea College
Berea, KY

bell hooks's life and works engage in feminist thought and action that disrupts hegemonic systems of domination, including the cultural norms that hold these systems in place. She calls this dissident feminism a "talking back," a "moving from silence into speech," a "stand[ing] and struggl[ing] side by side [as] a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible" (*Talking Back* 9). Her writings envision feminist theory and praxis as transformational politic and movement—one that demands the provocation and audacity that hooks also represented in her person. Beverly Guy-Sheftall describes the oppositional voice of bell hooks as "loud and unrelenting" in her keynote address for the bell hooks center launch in September 2021. Indeed, hooks's radical thought and action reimagine feminism as a sociopolitical movement that is "fundamentally anti-racist," which "has no gender," and which "is for everybody."

hooks's naming of "imperialist white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy," which she later, in conversation with Laverne Cox, revised as "imperialist white supremacist capitalist *cis-hetero* patriarchy," pointedly critiques the politics of domination that govern this world. hooks's ordinary upbringing as a young Black girl in Appalachia, specifically, in the "Kentucky backwoods," grounds her critique in space and place. It animates her radical interventions and deep commitment to liberatory world-making. While maintaining the connection between a love ethic and critical consciousness, hooks calls on us to cultivate visionary spaces, beloved communities, outlaw cultures, and radical undercommons in which oppositional worldviews are rooted in the experiential.

In honor and celebration of her life, works, and legacy, the Inaugural bell hooks Symposium at the bell hooks center at Berea College holds collective space for continued engagement with dissident feminisms. This symposium encourages theory, praxis, poetics, and aesthetics that move hooks's interventions into the present moment while challenging the co-optation and de-politicization of her work.

We invite proposals from activists, scholars, artists, community organizers, and public intellectuals engaged in thought, action, and cultural production that attends but is not limited to the following:

- Alternative networks of community and care
- Feminist abolitionisms, liberation, and futurity
- Archaeologies of change
- Critical consciousness and embodiment
- Decolonization beyond metaphor
- Feminist archiving
- Radical love and healing justice
- Feminism beyond binaries (male/female, hetero/homo, abled/disabled, etc.)
- Transgressive pedagogies
- Public intellectualisms
- World-making and beloved community
- Critical Youth Studies
- Black girlhood geographies
- Alternative masculinities
- Intersectionality and its dis/contents¹
- Feminist activism and coalition-building
- Alternative forms of parenting and family structures
- Feminist intimacies and pleasures

Possible formats for individual and/or group submissions are as follows:

- Roundtable conversations
- Community and campus workshops
- Individual essays
- Panel presentations
- The displays of works of art, including but not limited to exhibitions, installations, performances, visual works, and musical stylings

We also encourage creative proposals that merge one or more of these categories, or which do away with categorization altogether.

¹ Nash. Jennifer C. "Intersectionality and Its Discontents." *American Quarterly*, vol 69, no. 1, March 2017, pp. 117-129.

If interested, please submit a 250-300 word proposal to <https://tinyurl.com/bhcsymposium2023> by **September 15th, 2022** with the names, contact information, and bios of participants included. Artist submissions should also include samples of work. Please submit proposals as PDF, .jpg, and .mov files. For questions, email: bhcsymposium@gmail.com.

As the location of the bell hooks center, the bell hooks Institute, and hooks's archives, we welcome rigorous engagement with her scholarship.

Symposium Organizers:

M. Shadee Malaklou

Founder and Inaugural Director of the bell hooks center at Berea College; Chair of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Associate Professor of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department

fari nzinga

Inaugural bell hooks center Teacher-Scholar in Residence at Berea College

Megan Feifer

Inaugural bell hooks center Teacher-Scholar in Residence at Berea College