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Since the era of slavery and post-emancipation, Black civil rights figures of all stripes have emerged from communities around the United States to organize around social issues facing African Americans. While many of the most recognizable figures were cisgender, heterosexual men, many others were not. In particular, gender nonconforming legal scholar and activist Pauli Murray, presidential candidate Shirley Chisholm, and trans rights activist Marsha P. Johnson were integral in radically rethinking justice in the United States. However, they are rarely acknowledged as such, despite their pivotal roles in landmark events. Murray’s legal strategies helped to end school segregation in the 1954 Supreme Court case Brown v. Board of Education; Chisholm became the first woman and African American to make a major-party run for the U.S. presidency in 1972; and Johnson helped to ignite the Stonewall uprising in 1969 that ushered in the modern gay and lesbian liberation movement.

In this chapter, I ask: how does the erasure of unrespectable, queer, gender nonconforming, and trans women and non-men shape our notion of feminism, rights, and activism? Moreover, what does their erasure imply about the role of the archive? I argue that important figures, like Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson, are frequently excluded from the archives of Black civil rights history primarily because of their non-traditional, anti-establishment methods. These characteristics are coupled with their gender, sexuality, and physical embodiment, which do not comport with the class-based and gender-based expectations of mainstream social justice and political leaders. A case in point is the historical erasure of unwed pregnant teenager Claudette Colvin, who refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama nine months before Rosa Parks did the same on December 1, 1955. The archive thus not only functions as an artifact of historical time; it is also a site of contestation. As evidence, I rely on first-hand narratives and biography, and Black feminist and queer theory, as I meditate on Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s movements in, out, and through the annals of history.

In her 1999 book Gender Trouble, Judith Butler writes that “[i]ntelligible’ genders are those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex,
gender, sexual practice, and desire” (1999, 23). She elaborates that these forms of gender and sexuality are reinforced and reproduced through public law, expectation, and norm making, which essentially codify gender through pre-modeled forms of sexual and bodily practice (1999). What, then, becomes of genders and sexualities that fall outside designated norms? For cisgender heterosexual women whose race, class, and embodiment breach norms of feminine identity, how do their political actions shape our knowledge of feminism and activism? Moreover, for queer, gender nonconforming, and trans individuals whose struggles for liberation do not align with mainstream movements, how does history remember them, their work, and their contributions? Does it remember them at all? These inquiries animate this chapter.

Black queer and straight women, trans women, and nonbinary people: they all occupy a liminal space both in Black communities and in the subsequent movements for social and racial justice which form within them. Black feminist and queer scholars have articulated the complexity of this nuanced position. For example, Boston-based activists and scholars of the Combahee River Collective explained in their collective statement in 1977:

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. ([1977]1981, 210)

Likewise, Kimberlé Crenshaw illustrated the multiplicity of these myriad, simultaneously interlocking positions of oppression in her critical legal essays on intersectionality (1989; 1991). These philosophical contributions and interventions shape both the analyses in this chapter and the larger frameworks that it critiques.

Before the term “intersectionality” had entered the mainstream lexicon, freedom fighters like Pauli Murray, Shirley Chisholm, and Marsha P. Johnson were forging new pathways for a Black and queer feminism that would, one day, seek to contain the fullness of blackness. Though their work and struggles were not fully appreciated in their lifetimes, new attention to Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s legacies highlights how prescient their visions of Black liberation truly were. While the archives of Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s deep contributions to liberatory politics in their generations remain scant, I suggest that this is no indication of the impact or magnitude of their work. Rather, I argue, it is significant that the mainstream archivists of their eras failed to fully record Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s activism and ideological interventions; yet their ideas and actions still seeded today’s movements. Thus, these three forerunners show that the archive does not, in fact, have the final word when it comes to the liberation and memory of all Black people.

Murray’s posthumously published memoir Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of an American Pilgrimage and Chisholm’s autobiographical work Unbought and Unbossed are central entry points into analyzing how their experiences at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and physical embodiments influenced their social and political lives. For Johnson, much of the contemporary work on her life and legacy have been exercises in reclamation; thus, the archive remains quite thin. I ruminate on this in what remains of this chapter. I start by providing three theoretical frameworks, which anchor this analysis. Then, I articulate how Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s lives and work show the fissures and discontinuities of Black activist struggles for justice. Finally, I close the chapter by providing a vision for the future of queer, trans, and gender nonconforming-centered movement work.
Queering gender and politics

In this chapter, I rely on Cathy Cohen’s notion of queerness as a site of resistance and coalition building that pertains to not only the sexual practices of individual queer group members but also the political agendas, ideas, and actions those individuals espouse with respect to social organizing and political change. For instance, some heteronormative African Americans’ lives, while not sexually queer, are indeed politically queer with respect to singular narratives of sexual identity. By highlighting myriad forms of “nonnormative heterosexuality,” Cohen underscores how various marginalized people (like poor women, “welfare queens,” and other deviant African Americans) have long been demonized for their sexual and political choices (1997). Underlying this framework of queerness, and social organizing, is an effort to destabilize both queer politics and heteronormativity. As Cohen states,

Thus, if there is any truly radical potential to be found in the idea of queerness and the practice of queer politics, it would seem to be located in its ability to create a space in opposition to dominant norms, a space where transformational political work can begin. (1997, 438)

It is this site of transformation that, I argue, Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson leveraged in their enduring struggle for Black liberation.

In this way, by examining how Black queer, trans, and gender nonconforming individuals recognize and organize around their multiple deviations from normative identity, this chapter elucidates how the queer sexual and/or political identities of activists like Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson intervened in the existing social movement regime. Furthermore, their mobilization around these queer identities undermined the status quo, making their work and political actions particularly salient among multiply marginalized populations.

Respectability

In 1993, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham coined the term “politics of respectability” in her book Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920. Higginbotham writes that “[t]he politics of respectability emphasized reform of individual behavior and attitudes both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations” (1993, 187). These efforts toward individual behavior reform fell hardest on African Americans who were deemed furthest from the mainstream norms of white Americans, like poor, queer, and sexually “deviant” individuals. According to Higginbotham, during this post-bellum era, it was believed in religiously conservative, Black Baptist circles that adhering to a politics of respectability would subvert societal subordination of African Americans and ideally, shift the racial order (1993). Artifacts of class and access like clothing, hair style, and even odor were judged in this set of politics. And, just as today, “respectable Negros” were clearly set apart from their unrespectable social group members.

In the vein of Higginbotham and building upon her claims about the role of queerness in creating sites of transformation for marginalized Black people, Cathy Cohen articulates how deviations from societal norms of gender and sexuality become pivot points for larger social judgements about who is and who is not a respectable subject. Cohen explains:

For me this is the process of the queering of Black studies: making visible all those who in the past have been silenced and excluded as full members of Black communities—the poor,
women, lesbians and gays—those people on the margins of society and excluded from the middle-class march toward respectability.

(2004, 42)

Here, Cohen makes clear that queer identities and politics, which frequently fall outside normative ideas of gender and sexuality, must be incorporated into full membership in Black communities. What's more, this incorporation must include a reckoning with how these deviations have been used to justify exclusion and isolation of nonnormative group members due to ideas of respectability (Cohen 2004). For Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson, their nonnormative personal identities, coupled with their nonnormative political struggles, make them all unrespectable subjects. Therefore, their contributions to social and political history require deeper investigation and analysis.

Erasure in the archive

For all intents and purposes, the archive is assumed to be chronologically accurate and all-encompassing. However, it does not account for ruptures that occurred prior to the point of archiving. Hortense Spillers' 1987 essay “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe” elucidates how, because African Americans’ lives are defined by the disjuncture of forced migration from the African continent to the Americas, the manners in which they live, experience gender and sexuality, and function as political subjects is rooted in a phenomenon called “American Grammar.” Spillers writes:

The symbolic order that I wish to trace in this writing, calling it an “American Grammar,” begins at the “beginning,” which is really a rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation. The massive demographic shifts, the violent formation of a modern African consciousness, that take place on the subsaharan Continent during the initiative strikes which open that Atlantic Slave Trade in the fifteenth century of our Christ, interrupted hundreds of years of black African culture.

(1987, 68)

Here, Spillers underscores the contradiction of Americanness as something that begins at the “beginning,” when in fact, for African Americans, Americanness is necessarily rooted in a restarting of identity. Thus, while this “American Grammar” becomes the typesetting for the archive of Black experiences, it is fundamentally rooted in the absence of true history, the overlooking of pasts not associated with the desired “American” future, and the loss of critical linkages to an African tradition and history that might more expansively depict the genders, bodies, and identities of Black Diasporic peoples.

As Spillers explains, the archive is not one thing but many. And for those individuals whose identities lie at multiple intersections, the archive rarely provides a full or complete picture of the attenuated circumstances and constrained agency that typically mark the lives of marginalized people. Marisa Fuentes illustrates this contention in her deep analysis of the life of Rachael Pringle Polgreen, a freed woman in Barbados in the late nineteenth century who is recorded as having used her position as a brothel owner to enslave and sexually exploit other Afro-descendant and Black Diasporic women (2010). What Fuentes brings to the fore is that white colonialists and enslavers were the primary recorders of Polgreen’s life, actions, choices, and utterings. Instances of violence that Polgreen exhibited in the presence of colonial officers were more likely to enter the archive than any benevolence or quotidian, day-to-day tasks in which she may have engaged (2010). In this way, the management and facilitation of the archive
reflect the power dynamics, narratives, and societal constructs that organize life at the time the archival image is recorded (Sekula 1986). For unrespectable, queer, trans, and gender nonconforming individuals, these constraints on history-making and history-remembering are deeply erasive and limiting.

While both the logics of “American Grammar” and the power embedded in the archive vastly delimit the recorded range and depth of Black history, gender and sexuality, and lived experiences, they do not completely erase African Americans’ capacity to write their own archives, tell their own stories, and record their own narratives. The Combahee River Collective highlights this point when they write:

> [t]he fact that individual Black feminists are living in isolation all over the country, that our own numbers are small, and that we have some skills in writing, printing, and publishing makes us want to carry out these kinds of projects as a means of organizing Black feminists as we continue to do political work in coalition with other groups.


For these lesbian activists, entering and controlling the archive was not just a facile or performative element of transcribing history. Rather, their work to write, print, and publish was directly linked to collective movement and Black liberation.

**Pauli Murray and the trouble with gender**

Anna Pauline Murray was born to a “colored,” mixed race high school principal and nurse in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1910. After her mother passed away, her father entered a mental facility and was unable to care for Murray and her five siblings. As detailed in her posthumously published 1987 memoir, *Pauli Murray: Song in a Weary Throat*, Murray describes being raised by her maternal aunts and grandparents in Durham, North Carolina. Her early years were riddled with racial and gender contestation and confrontation in her neighborhood and school. While Murray had found solace during adolescence in her Aunt Pauline, her mother’s sister who raised her after she was orphaned, she struggled to find the same home among family when she left for college. After attempting to enroll at Columbia (which didn’t enroll women) and Barnard (which she was not qualified for and could not afford), Aunt Pauline and Murray arrived at Hunter College, the school where she would later matriculate. Murray moved in with Cousin Maude, a fair-skinned woman who lived among white neighbors. Murray describes her experiences with Cousin Maude, saying, “I was being made to feel ashamed of my color, a message conveyed not by the outside world, as in the South, but by the members of my own family” (2010, 89). Because of the gaze of white neighbors and societal judgements about the abilities of African Americans, Murray’s experiences with Cousin Maude were tense and strained. Specifically, Murray’s presentation as “colored” disrupted Cousin Maude’s white assimilative, heteronormative presence in the well-to-do Richmond Hill community in which she lived. What’s more, Murray’s analysis of these experiences was rooted in her knowledge of the otherness of her own blackness. For Murray, her status as both a race and a class outsider shaped her analysis and approximation of power and respectability across racial groups.

Later, after having worked through an all-male environment at Howard Law School and deciphering the D.C. Code of 1901 that eventually dealt the “death blow” to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Murray established herself as a fixture in American civil rights (Murray [1987]2010, 286, 298). She had also coined the term “Jane Crow” to denote her experiences with racial and gender discrimination, including her denial by Harvard Law School, which didn’t admit women
In the 1950s and 1960s, on the heels of having published her 1956 autobiography *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*, Pauli Murray began working as an attorney at Lloyd Garrison’s New York law firm, an opportunity that had eluded her prior to the publication of *Proud Shoes*. In this position, Murray began as one of three women and the only African American at the firm. In time, as the other women quit the firm, Murray became the only woman and the only Black person, leaving her in an “indeterminate position,” which “sometimes created an awkwardness in office relations” ([1987]2010, 206). These experiences included her inability to build communal relationships with male co-workers and her general exclusion from corporate life. At times when she was acknowledged as an equal, Murray recalls feeling gratified that she had been accepted “as a person and a colleague” ([1987]2010, 406). As Murray recounts her struggles with white male–dominated legal institutions, she situates them as inherently linked to her race and gender. However, in *Song in a Weary Throat*, Murray provides nary a mention of her sexual identity. It is in the historical archive of her personal affairs and correspondence that these details reside.

In her analysis of Pauli Murray’s archival documents, Brittney C. Cooper notes how, during her long struggle for civil rights and justice for African Americans, Murray was also combating mental distress related to her sexual identity. Cooper writes that Murray “lamented that she could not publicly fall in love, or date, or share expressions of affection with members of the same sex” (2017, 90). Seeking assistance from medical doctors, Murray questioned whether she might actually be an intersex person who was experiencing conflict due to hormonal imbalances (Cooper 2017). Over the years, Murray experienced repeated in-patient hospitalizations related to her concerns. These struggles with Murray’s public and private identity are critical in this analysis because they were so intentionally hidden from public sight and consumption.

In Murray’s archiving of her own life in *Song in a Weary Throat*, she omits her own experiences with a desire to exhibit maleness and her performance of transgressive gender. In fact, Murray exhibited masculine-of-center, nonbinary gender performance when arrested during a protest against segregation in 1940. Cooper highlights this when she writes, “[t]he complicated gender performances that underlie Murray’s ‘respectable’ autobiographical narration of this incident evince some tensions concerning how dissemblance operates within Black women’s leadership memoirs versus how it operates in public space” (2017, 93). The absence of Murray’s personal life from *Song in a Weary Throat* begs questions about the centrality of her personal sexual identity to her organizing and movement efforts. Moreover, it illustrates that when Black women at multiple margins enter the archive, they often do so under the auspices of assimilation, legibility, and comportment to mainstream norms of identity.

**Shirley Chisholm’s fearless body politic**

Shirley Anita St. Hill (later Chisholm) was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1924 to Charles St. Hill, a native of British-Guiana, and Ruby Seale, a Barbadian. Chisholm was the oldest of three girls. As detailed in her 1970 autobiography *Unbought and Unbossed*, the St. Hills were plagued by financial insecurity. Facing the Great Depression, Chisholm’s parents decided that she and her sisters should live with their maternal grandmother, Emily Seales, back on the farm in Barbados until the St. Hills could save enough money to keep them in the States. Chisholm and her sisters were educated in predominantly white, mostly Jewish schools. It was in college that Chisholm began to see stark differences in the treatment African Americans faced as she encountered whites who “looked at [her] people as another breed, less human than they” (Chisholm [1970] 2009, 42).

In those experiences, Chisholm also noted that other Black people would often comport themselves to the expectations and behaviors associated with respectability by whites. She writes,
“Blacks played by those rules; if a white man walked in, they came subtly to attention” ([1970] 2009, 42). As Chisholm encountered these experiences, she began to develop anger and frustration at the status quo, which relegated African Americans to a place of subservience to whites. Furthermore, she became keenly aware of how her deviant positions as Black, poor, perceived as an immigrant, and a woman simultaneously regulated her ability to navigate public spaces and to fully articulate her vision for Black political outcomes. Chisholm was an intersectional subject whose interlocking identities and oppressions shaped both her political work and how the world received her.

Likewise, as the first Black woman elected to Congress, Chisholm’s agenda for Black liberation was unequivocally connected to her concerns about women’s rights. She writes, “Women should perceive that the negative attitudes they hold toward their own femaleness are the creation of antifeminist society, just as the black shame at being black was the product of racism” ([1970] 2009, 178). But Chisholm’s concerns about the plight of women extended beyond combating stereotypes and sexist ideas. In 1969, Chisholm became deeply concerned with abortion rights in Congress when she became honorary president of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL). Based on her experiences in Brooklyn with Black, Puerto Rican, and other Afro-Latinx persons, she saw the predominant narratives about legal abortion clinics as “male rhetoric, for male ears” ([1970] 2009, 130). Understanding that reproductive justice was not just about race and gender but also about class, Chisholm advocated for equal access to abortion and family planning resources regardless of one’s economic status at a time when the costs for such an argument were steep. For Chisholm, her own background informed her politics. Her identities and experiences were central to her activism and political work. For her, the struggles for race and gender justice were interconnected.

For Chisholm, reactions to her presence in predominantly white spaces became more critical and ad hominem when she decided to enter presidential politics, becoming the first woman to make a viable bid for the highest office in the land. In a 1972 New York Times article, Stephan Lesher wrote:

[...] though her quickness and animation leave an impression of bright femininity, she is not beautiful. Her face is bony and angular, her nose wide and flat, her eyes small almost to beadiness, her neck and limbs scrawny. Her protruding teeth probably account in part for her noticeable lisp.

Lesher then critiques Chisholm’s own accounting of herself in her autobiography when she writes, “after a skinny adolescence I had blossomed into an attractive enough quiet little girl with long hair” ([1970] 2009, 62). Lesher’s fixation on Chisholm’s speech patterns and physical appearance in such a high-profile publication represent the mainstream archival history of the times. The juxtaposition of Lesher’s editorializing of Chisholm’s physical features against Chisholm’s own understanding of her personal characteristics underscores how the facilitation of the archive frequently misnames, misrecognizes, and excludes the fullness of Black, queer, and trans individuals. Likewise, it wasn’t just Chisholm’s appearance that drew ire from critics during her run for the presidency. Just the mere fact that she was in the race at all transgressed traditional notions of respectability, femininity, and the role of women in society.

Reclamation and memorializing Marsha P. Johnson

Marsha “Pay It No Mind” Johnson was a prostitute, transgender activist, and drag queen whose adult life was centered in New York City in the 1960s and 1970s. She was born on August 24,
1945, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. While not much is known about Johnson’s early life, according to the film *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (2017), Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson started “STAR House” or the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries in 1970 to provide a place for queer and trans people to find solace and protection instead of remaining on the streets. In the film, trans activist Victoria Cruz works with the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) to reopen the case of Johnson’s unsolved death while highlighting the ways Johnson’s life fundamentally changed the gay rights movement in New York City. In the film, friends of Johnson described her clothing and makeup as at once elaborate and messy (France 2017). They also reflected on the ways she walked New York City streets in support of other queer and trans people, becoming a symbol of a growing movement (France 2017). Johnson died in 1992 under unclear circumstances when her body was found floating in the Hudson River from an apparent drowning. Her case was reopened for investigation in 2012. In *Death and Life*, while reflecting on Johnson’s life, Johnson’s long-time friend Kitty Rotolo asks Cruz, “What happens when a flower gets wilted? Does it just die away and is forgotten?” Cruz replies that hopefully that flower has “shed some seeds that will grow [into] a movement. That’s what I hope.” Now, Riviera and Johnson are both slated to be honored with monuments near Stonewall Inn (Jacobs 2019).

Directors Tourmaline and Sasha Wortzel elucidate Johnson’s gender transgressing presence and performance in the fictional film *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* (2017). In the short film, they recreate the hours before Johnson ignited the 1969 Stonewall Riots at the historic Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. Using both scripted footage and Johnson’s interviews, the directors highlight the small joys of Johnson’s life and community juxtaposed against the constant surveillance and harassment from police. C. Riley Snorton theorizes these types of gender performances as inherently liberatory. He says, “ungendered blackness provide[s] the grounds for (trans) performances of freedom” (2017, 58). These performances, of openly existing while Black and transgender, are embodiments of gender and identity that expand the ways marginalized people imagine liberation. Thus, Johnson’s freedom struggle was inherently threatening to the status quo, because her mere being transgressed all boundaries of normative identity.

The struggle to fully understand the conditions shaping the end of Johnson’s life parallels the struggle over telling Johnson’s story. According to Tourmaline, a trans activist and filmmaker, France’s film plagiarized her intellectual work, only further contributing to the erasure of Black trans women’s narratives in the archive (Ennis 2018). The ongoing struggle over the archive of Johnson’s life and story represents the persistent struggle many trans people face when seeking to control their own narratives and archives. In writing of the invisibility and erasure Johnson’s movement work faced, Tourmaline et al. write:

> although their life, fashion, and labor shared the same constitutional ground on which the entire early gay rights movement was built, poor people, mostly of color, as well as trans people who were sex workers did not find their own issues addressed or accommodated by the larger movement.

*(2017, xvii)*

Unfortunately, as *Death and Life* shows, Johnson’s death remains cloaked in secret, as the murders and deaths of trans women in the 1990s, much like now, were usually overlooked, underdocumented, and rarely covered by mainstream media (France 2017). The film illustrates how the effects of age, and the ravages of the HIV/AIDS crisis, have severely limited the numbers of first-hand narratives available to reclaim and archive Johnson’s movement work or the conditions of her death. Here, the significance of who controls the archive cannot be overstated.
Conclusion

In analyzing the lives of Pauli Murray, Shirley Chisholm, and Marsha P. Johnson, I have set out to spotlight how many Black women’s identities are fundamentally linked to the forms of political work and activism they often take up. Specifically, through the lenses of queerness and respectability, we see how these individuals, though struggling against different forms of structural racism, sexism, transphobia, and anti-blackness, leverage their identities for the liberation of others. Moreover, we see how their deviations from normative identity characteristics (like whiteness, maleness, wealth, and cisgender identity) shape their entrance to and exit from the archive.

In the case of Murray, her upbringing at the margins of race and class situated her at odds with a law career committed to ending segregation. Even amidst this monumental contribution to civil rights, her archival footprint remains incomplete, partially by her own doing. As it pertains to Chisholm, her upbringing in a Black immigrant household during the Depression animated her orientation not only to white Americans but also to other African Americans for whom respectability was a necessary coping mechanism to deal with racism and exclusion. As she entered politics, the fixation on her physical body in the archive highlighted her deviation and queerness with respect to mainstream femininity, although she was both cisgender and wed in a heteronormative marriage. And in the case of Johnson, her embodiment of transgressive gender, gender without boundaries, in a moment marked by the hyperpolicing of Black, brown, poor, queer, trans, and disabled bodies, made her vulnerable to all manner of harassment and persecution, and likely led to her unfortunate death at just 46 years old. For each of these forestrugglers, their political work and social positions were deeply entangled. Without their unrespectable, anti-establishment lives and praxes, Black movements of today might look wholly different.

A contemporary theoretical framework that indirectly takes up the charge of Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson is the Black queer feminist lens as articulated in the book *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*. Charlene Carruthers explains that

> the Black queer feminist (BQF) lens is a political praxis (practice and theory) based in Black feminist and LGBTQIA+ traditions and knowledge, through which people and groups seek to bring their full selves into the process of dismantling all systems of oppression.

(2018, 10)

This extension of intersectionality is rooted in the long tradition of leveraging identity as a unifying and coalition building force within marginalized communities. It underscores that fights against oppression must be community- and group-based rather than the work of individuals alone. Murray, Chisholm, and Johnson understood this implicitly. While Murray’s, Chisholm’s, and Johnson’s work for black liberation began long before intersectionality and the BQF lens existed, their entrances into the archive of Black feminist, queer, and trans struggles for Black freedom were critical in seeding today’s language, agenda-setting, and orientation to collective struggle. However, as this analysis shows, these entrances and exits remain constrained by time, power dynamics, and political fractures through which they struggle.

Notes

1 This is a term coined by Jennifer C. Nash to describe those individuals who are “multiply burdened” or who represent intersectional subjectivity (“Re-Thinking Intersectionality,” *Feminist Review*, pp. 1–15).
2 In this chapter, I use she/her pronouns when discussing Murray, as in her formal memoirs and autobiographical accounts of her life, she refers to herself as a woman, and her gender group membership remains consistent in her own archiving of her life.
**Bibliography**


