Encountering Expertise in Intersectional Health Series - Framing Women's Health through a Decolonial, Intersectional lens: Reflections from research on gendered and sexual violence

with Floretta Boonzaier and Colleen Norris - 15 September 2022

Sarah Dorow: Hello, everyone! Good morning! We'll let people sort of join here, and we'll give people about a minute to be able to join the zoom conversation, and then we'll get started. So welcome.

Sarah Dorow: As people are joining us. We'll get started with today's today's fantastic event, which I'm very much looking forward to. Good morning everyone - my name is Sarah Dorow, and I'm a professor in Sociology, University of Alberta, and also the Associate Director of Intersections Gender. The Intersections of Gender research signature area here at the UofA respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems, and cultures of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and nations. As part of that commitment we acknowledged that the UofA is primarily located on the territory of the Néhiyaw, Niitsitapi, Métis, Nakota, Dene, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe lands that are now known as parts of Treaties 6, 7, and 8, and homeland of Métis.

Sarah Dorow: This morning I was thinking about this list that we usually include in our land acknowledgments of the people who lived on and continue to live on these territories. And it made me think of last week being at the language revitalization event here at the University of Alberta, which included, interestingly enough, a partnership between universities in Canada and South Africa. And one of the conversations there was about moving from revitalization to reclamation. That this isn't about revitalizing, but reclaiming languages that were often taken and sometimes violently. In fact, one of Floretta's colleagues from the University of Cape Town, June Bam, talked very eloquently about that history in South Africa, as well, of language being violently taken. And so, you know, even the terms we use and where they've come from, how they've been taken, is so important to thinking about the histories of colonialism and their ongoing impact and the incredible work people are doing to reclaim rights and sovereignty around language and culture.

Sarah Dorow: So welcome all of you to today's event. This is part of the Encountering Expertise in Intersectional Health Series, which is a joint effort between the Intersections of Gender and the Women and Children's Health Research Institute here at UAlberta. So there's been a series of sessions that are looking at health - panelists from health sciences, social sciences and humanity coming together to provide all kinds of information and exploration of health research and what researchers are doing. So in this session we're really glad to be welcoming Dr. Floretta Boonzaier and I'll soon be introducing the person who will moderate

today, Dr. Colleen Norris. So just quickly, so you know how this will go today, Colleen will introduce Dr. Boonzaier, and then we will have time for audience questions at the end, and you'll be able to put your questions in the Q&A, or if you prefer in the chat, and then Dr. Norris will monitor and curate that. So welcome and very much to all of you. So it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Colleen Norris, who is a professor and clinician scientist with the University of Alberta's Faculties of Nursing, Medicine, and School of Public Health; Associate Dean of Research, Faculty of Nursing; and Cavarzan Chair in Mature Women's Health, Faculty of Medicine; and part of the Women and Children's Health Research Institute. So there is just a piece of the wonder that Dr. Colleen Norris is - so over to you, Dr. Norris and thank you!

Colleen Norris: Thank you so much - a lot of years behind that, I remind people! One of the things I just wanted to mention before I introduce Dr. Bonzaier is the fact that it's been new to me the last couple of years, integrating with social sciences, and I have learned more in those integrations and conversations with social scientists to advance women's health than I think ever possible, had I not been part of a discussion group in a women's studies course.

Colleen Norris: So, Dr. Bonzaier is a professor of psychology at the University of Cape Town, and she's co-director of the Hub for Decolonial Feminist Psychologies in Africa, she's also the incoming president of the Psychological Society of South Africa, where she's noted for: her work in feminist critical and post-colonial psychologies, her research on subjectivity in relation to race gender and sexuality, and her work on gendered and sexual violence and decolonial research methodology. She's an associate editor for the South African Journal of Science, and past editor in chief for the Journal of Psychology in Society. She is the past UCT Mandela Fellow at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University. I'm sorry there's so much here, and I want to get it all in, because all of it contributes to what you've done, and where you're at. Finally, she is a researcher in the social sciences and humanities, and serves on the Board of Mosaic Training, Services and Healing Centre for Women in Cape Town and the African Gender Institute and Huma Institute at the University of Cape Town.

Colleen Norris: We were just chatting before, and it's so interesting to think that South Africa is just finishing their spring, and they're going into summer. Where we're on the other tail end - we're starting our fall or actually, in Alberta, we're going into winter pretty quick here. I'd like to welcome you, and thank you so much for sharing your information with us today!

Floretta Boonzaier: Thank you so much Dr. Norris for the introduction and thank you to colleagues at the Intersections of Gender signature area for the invitation to engage with you all today. Thank you also to everyone in the audience who made this very early meeting. It's evening in Cape Town. So I appreciate you all taking the time to join the conversation today.

So the work I'm presenting on emerges from work we've been doing in the Hub for Decolonial Feminist Psychologies in Africa, based at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town. As well as on a project we call the "Unsettling Knowledge Production" project on gendered and sexual violence, which I'll speak to a bit later.

This is just a brief outline for my talk today. Start with a bit of location of myself, and the work I've been doing. And then talking about the problematics; why we need to think differently about women's health. Thinking also about intersectionality and decolonial feminism as theoretical tools to work against the status quo in terms of opening up possibilities for research on women's health; and drawing on some examples of how we've been trying to do that in the work that we've been doing - so opening up space in women's health research for decolonial and intersectional interventions.

So just about myself, I've been working as a critical feminist decolonial psychologist for a number of years, and I talk about working on the margins of the discipline of psychology, which operates quite in a kind of mainstream way. So the work that I do does feel like it's situated on the margins of the discipline. I've been working on questions of identity, subjectivity and specifically, you know, two decades of work on gendered and sexual violence has led me to reflect on thinking about the longer histories of colonization and slavery, and how that has produced the current situations that we're trying to tackle in relation to gendered and sexual violence.

This has also led me to think critically about knowledge production. You know the kinds of knowledge that we produce around, for example, gendered and sexual violence, and how that perpetuates a kind of recolonization and perpetuates particular stereotype about groups of people. So that all of this is what brought me to kind of thinking more about decolonizing psychologies and decolonial work in relation to thinking about gendered and sexual violence. So, the problematics - and I don't think I need to say this to you all as an audience - but when we talk about contemporary research in women's health, we do need to think about the history of race in medical research and thinking about western medical sciences as part of the machinery that produces scientific racism, and how scientific racism was produced as a result of the kind of colonial obsession with the bodies of black people, bodies of black women in particular, like Sarah Baartman, pictured on the screen. And the kind of colonial obsession with black people's bodies, and of course, the long history of unethical medical experimentation on black people and the poor. And so it is worth thinking about this history, calling to mind this history, when we think about contemporary problematics in relation to research on women's health.

So we see, for example, contemporary racial disparities which are now quite established in health and health care delivery. Health outcomes we see being shaped by a range of global and local inequalities that includes where you were born, geopolitical relations of power in terms of former colonies, income inequalities, environmental factors, histories of colonization, and a range of other issues. Healthcare disparities are also shaped by equities of race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship status, as well as a range of institutionalized discrimination. And so we need to think about health disparities in relation to interpersonal, institutional and structural forms of racism. And by structural racism we talk about the ways in which discrimination is possible through policies on housing, education, employment, incarceration, health care, for example. And for women in particular, black women in particular - maternal care - and the disparities associated with it are of huge concern.

We see from research, that you know, black women in the US, their experiences in healthcare are shaped by discourses around the strong black woman. Which also has a longer history, right? So they report how symptoms are trivialized or dismissed. Their pain is dismissed. Their concerns are undermined. And we see the amplification of the experiences of gendered racism. In the US, black women are more likely to die from pregnancy related complications than white women. And in a study by Mehra et al, we find that women reported around racialized discrimination during pregnancy; we found that women um encountered assumptions that they were poor, that they were single, and that they had multiple children, regardless of their lived realities. And that they encountered the stigma in everyday situations, in health care, in social services, and in housing contexts, and it was described as a source of stress for them. So those are some of the problematics in thinking about women's health; the kind of intersection of racialized and gender discrimination that women face. And so then on to thinking about intersectionality and decolonial feminism as theoretical resources.

But to talk about again, just briefly, to talk about the distinction between colonization on the one hand, which refers to a specific historical period that denotes political and economic relations in which the sovereignty of the national people rests on the power of another nation; whereas we talk about coloniality as a manifestation of these ongoing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism. And how coloniality is survived and is present as part of our modern experience.

So we do require the tools to work against the status quo in terms of thinking about the ways in which marginalized groups have historically been erased, silenced, neglected, and violated. And intersectionality helps us to understand women's lived experiences as emerging from a range of intersecting identities and oppressions, and how these may be shared by a range of forms of power which include interpersonal, institutional, structural, representational or symbolic power.

Then, thinking about decolonial feminism as a resource, it allows us to amplify the ways in which the past continues to resonate in the present. It allows us to open up conversations about more expansive understanding of what constitutes violence, which I'll give some examples to a bit later. But also expansive understandings about resistance, which is often obscured, right? When we think about the historical record we see multiple examples of violence, but we don't often see examples of the ways in which Indigenous communities have always resisted. It also allows us to counter epistemic erasures and epistemic forms of violence, which include silencing of particular experiences. It allows us to critically interrogate knowledge production, and how centuries of knowledge produced has worked in the service of coloniality. And to think about scientific racism that justifies colonization and discrimination, and how that may have continued on in knowledge production. And it offers a more expansive understanding of contemporary health and other realities, amongst other things.

So talking about decoloniality, Nelson Maldonado Torres, a writer in the field of decoloniality, talks about efforts to re-humanize to break hierarchies, hierarchies of difference that continue to dehumanize subjects and community. Thinking about counter discourse, producing

counter-discourses, counter-knowledges, counter-creative acts and counter-practices that dismantle coloniality as it shows up in our contemporary world.

And then specifically around decolonial feminism - it's a recognition that in contemporary discourses around decolonization, the question of gender and gendered power, as well as its intersectionalities, has often been marginalized, right? So that discourse on decolonization has in the main focused on racialized subjectivity. So decolonial feminism brings in questions of gendered subjectivity. And Maria Lugones is a writer in the field of decolonial feminism, and in her work she says: I call the analysis of racialized, capitalist - the intersection of these - racialized, capitalist, gender oppression, the coloniality of gender. I call the possibility of overcoming this, decolonial feminism.

So now on to some examples of how in the work that we've been doing at the University of Cape Town, and in collaboration with other colleagues around gendered and sexual violence, in particular, we've begun to think about opening up space for decolonial feminist intersectional kinds of interventions in research, in knowledge production. And the first of these is a question - that I think it was my second first graduate degree - it's a question that occupied me, because it was very prevalent in the literature at the time. The question was, Why do abused women stay? And it occurred to me at that time that this question was a kind of..that thinking about this as a research question even was, you know, a kind of re-inscribing of a victim blaming discourse, right? The question focused on the behavior of women who had been abused, and that the question also had no recognition of the context of the lives of abused women. And so it's important, I think, to think about the kinds of questions that we ask and what these imply about the individuals and the communities that we work with.

We also see that when we review media discourse, but also academic discourse, around gender-based violence that often it is constructed as a problem only for black and poor people. And so this is the kind of result of decades of research has produced a particular problem where we see that gender-based violence as a black fact from decades of research that explores, you know, questions of race socioeconomic status and its relationship with violence, and obscures other forms of violence. So epistemic violence in this regard then we argue from racist research that goes beyond the intentions of the researchers, and includes the harm of searching for difference. In psychology, the people have built careers on looking at sex differences in research, for example, um along a whole range of capability. And so this is something that from a decolonial feminist perspective we critique, and that we argue that it produces a particular kind of harm that stems from symbolic representations of how particular groups of people are represented through our research.

We also need to open up space. This relates to the previous point about epistemic violence, right? When Gayatri Spivak spoke about epistemic violence, I think that was the first time it was used; she was providing a commentary in the paper *Can the Subaltern Speak?,* she was providing a commentary on women in the Third World, you know, and whether they can, you know, speak for themselves in relation to the hegemony of white Western feminism. And so it is about who speaks for whom, and the silencing of particular kinds of discourses right? And so,

countering epistemic violence means opening up conversation, and I want to use an example of the work that we've been doing, thinking about the lives of black men who are violent towards women, right? And thinking about, more expansively, about the lives of black men who are violent, about the violence of black men against women, in contexts where they continue to be subordinated within a white hetero-patriarchal hyper-capitalist system. And how black masculinities continue to be constructed in ways that draw on colonial, racialized stereotypes of blackness and black male sexuality. And so thinking about poor black men as products of, and actors in, violent, oppressive, local and global structures. And so, holding some kind of complexity in thinking, without excusing the violence that men perpetrate against women, but thinking more expansively about context, broader contexts, that also produce violence.

I think we also have tried to, through de-colonial feminist kind of intersectional interventions, to think about more expansively about what counts as violence, right? To open up conversations about history, structures, institutions that perpetuate violence. And I'm using two examples here from research that we've done. The first is in a life history interview with a woman I call Myriam, who talks about violence in the area where she lives. So she's talked about intimate partner violence, which is the reason that she was in the shelter she was living in at the time, but she's locating that the violence in her relationship was in a context of violence, right? Community violence. She says, “Yeah, it's violence, gangsterism, drugs. hat's the way you live here.” In the second quote it's a woman also talking about intimate partner violence, from her partner, who she says is a white man, German, and his family didn't want her to be with him because she was a black woman. And you can see in the talk here, she's drawing on kind of colonial discourse - it's about black femininity, “You know you picked up on the street this prostitute who put her family in shame”. And so she's drawing that into the conversation about her experience of intimate partner violence.

So thinking more expansively about what constitutes violence, and not focusing on only one aspect of the violence, in this case intimate partner violence, allows us to think about intergenerational context of violence, to think about historical trauma, to think about that in relation to ongoing trauma and violence that people are subjected to, to think about structural forms of violence and systemic disadvantages, and how that shapes a context of violence that people navigate in their lives.

Then more explicitly it also, I think, allows us to kind of unpack institutional discourses um, and in some work we've done, we've looked at how institutions, like universities, draw on problematic discourses around gender-based violence that kind of reinforce notions of victim blaming notions of women's responsibility. Iin particular we looked at the University, our University's communication around around sexual violence at a time when there were reported rapes on or near Campus, and we find that the ways in which the University communicated about sexual violence was, you know, reinforcing ideas that it is a woman's problem; that you have to take the responsibility to protect yourself from being violated. And we see, if we think about the media as an institution, we also continue to see narratives that blame women for their own victimization, but also how media discourses perpetuate coloniality in the ways, in particular, in which they report on the lives and on the death of black women. How there's some

kind of obscuring of the lives that women lived in its full complexity, but also how there's an almost obsessive focus on in particular, in cases where women had died, obsessive focus on the bodies of women who had died, which can be linked to kind of this colonial obsession with the bodies of black women.

We also need to talk about creating discourse of space for the participants that we engage with in our research. How do we open up space in our research in our interviews, for example, for stories to be told, for stories that allow a narration of the full complexity of peoples' lives. And in this quote, it was written in a chapter I wrote in 2014, where a woman talks about being frustrated, right? From the violence that she experiences from her partner, but she draws in questions of economic dependency - like she's dependent on food, and if she had to find a job she wouldn't have to live in a way that she does. And so we've been exploring narrative methodologies, narrative interviews as a way in which to create space for these expansive conversations about the complexity of people's lives. In this chapter, in particular, I argue that when given that space, women bring the intersection of their lives into the conversation about intimate partner violence in particular, right? When the interviewer creates this discursive space to open up conversations about violence. We've also been exploring live history methodologies as a form of narrative research to kind of create this space in the research that we do. We've also been using photo voice methodologies because we also realized the limits of language or articulating experience, especially traumatic experiences, and so exploring kind of more creative methodologies, photo voice that involves photography for unpacking and exploring questions of violence in particular.

And then thinking about narrative, following on from the theme before, thinking about narrative intersectionality and narrative as theorizing right? In some work we've done in collaboration with colleagues in the UK, Brazil and Zambia we looked at how people living with HIV, in this context, narrate, talking about the experiences - sorry during the pandemic, during in Covid, a second pandemic - and we theorize the narratives as theorizing, when the understanding behind narrative is that as people talk about the experience, it's a form of making sense of this experience. And so we find that narratives open up space for participants who have been socio-economically and bi-politically marginalized such as people living with HIV. We show how narrative moves between subjectivities and understanding and a theorizing of the self in relation to structure. And this moving between subjectivity and structure allows us to trace inequalities and intersectionalities, and how they manifest in people's lives. And we see in this work how people living with HIV, facing another pandemic, show us how their lives are shaped by history, geography, and a range of intersecting multiple, institutional, structural and social factors. And so thinking in this way about people as pandemic experts in this instance, thinking about narrative, and theorizing also allows us, from a decolonial perspective, to think about, to reconsider where the expertise lies, right? Not with us as researchers, but with people who are theorizing and talking about their everyday experiences. And also offers space for us to think about: narrative methodologies alongside intersectionality and decoloniality.

Then we've also been thinking and working with this idea of refusal, thinking about how academic, following Tuck and Yang's work, thinking about how knowledge production in

academia could be considered another form of colonization. How we appropriate people's stories, and how often these stories are pain-damage-centered pain-based stories, and that we act as the authority and the control of a people's stories, as bell hooks says, “no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself”. So we've been thinking seriously about what kinds of knowledges are we producing about violence in the lives of black, marginalized and historically oppressed persons.

And then to counter this, we've also been thinking about, how do we open up space for desire? What Tuck and Yang talk about as a counter to the damage-centered focus that academic research often takes. How do we open up space for desire, for resistance that's often been silenced, as I've indicated, for pleasure and for joy. And I want to, by way of example, talk about what we've been doing on the Unsettling Knowledge Production Project, where we turn the lens on ourselves as researchers. So it's a project that also investigates reflexivity in quite a different way. But to say, as a team of researchers, myself as supervisor and a whole range of my students, what does it mean for us to be doing research on violence and trauma. Like, how are we thinking about this work that we're doing on violence and trauma? How do our own histories come into doing research on violence and trauma? And in April of this year we spent some time at a retreat together that involved art, Lego, pottery, painting, drawing, and a whole range of other activities to think about like, you know, what does it mean? This is an ongoing project that we continue to be working with. What does it mean to be doing work on violence and trauma, but also, where do we create these spaces for joy, for pleasure or desire for resistance in community with each other, and how do we do that work?

And so, finally, I've given some examples of the work that we've been doing, and I just want to add a few more without example, but I don’t have time. I think, opening up space for decolonial feminist and intersectional interventions in our research means that we need to think about how do we hold on to complexity - like, how do we counter reductionism, in our in our work, how do we hold on to complexity in our writing about lives that are complex? And how do we do this reading from the perspective of the most marginalized. How do we humanize? Because the project of colonization was so fundamentally about dehumanization. How do we re-humanize ourselves and others, primarily others, but also ourselves, right? Part of thinking about reflexivity, which I think is also centered in feminist and decolonial work, is about countering the alienation, so especially as a black woman in academia there’s a particular kind of alienation that happens. We alienate from ourselves our history in order to advance in academia. And so how do we humanize ourselves in the work that we do?

Thinking about research and writing as political acts, centering questions of justice, social justice. Thinking about ethics, beyond the regulatory framework, thinking about the whole research endeavor as involving questions of ethics. And then finally, to say that you know decolonization is an evolving conversation. It's always unfinished business. And so it's always thinking about how to - that's why I like the idea of opening up space, because it's thinking about where in the work that we do, in the research that we do, in the teaching we do, in the writing we do, where can we open up spaces for thinking about de-colonial feminist interventions?

And then just finally to say - thank you! To acknowledge all of the researchers on the Unsettling Knowledge Production Project, in The Hub for Decolonial Feminist Psychologies, and to the University of Cape Town for the funding that made some of these initiatives possible, and then details there where you can connect with us.

Thank you! I hope I didn't go too fast also, unless some of the references in the talk.

Colleen Norris: Wow! Thank you so much. I was busy, busy typing trying to keep some of these thoughts in my head as you're talking about everything that you mentioned today. A couple of people have asked for some of the references, and so I just want to let everyone know that a video of this presentation is going to be posted on the IG website, and as well as when it's posted, it''ll be noted in the newsletter that it's available because people are already asking for some of the references that you mentioned. We have a couple of questions, and I'll just read it out to you, and then we can maybe get going on talking about them:

- What would be your advice on navigating the line between silencing experiences of a particular community by not providing disaggregated data and constructing a biased representation of a certain community through research. So you know, when we present it, if we, if we leave it, disaggregated [the data disaggregated], then we're actually silencing some of those voices. But, on the other hand, if we, if we just look at specific voices, in that community, we might present a biased representation of that community. Right?

Floretta Boonzaier: Yeah. Um, Thank you. I think that's a good question. I often talk about thinking about the moment that you are speaking into, right? Or writing into. So when we think about, you know Black Lives Matter, about Me Too, you know ongoing forms of systemic racism, gendered racism, sexism, you know, deepening inequality, I would question that the whole idea of bias, you know, in this instance, because if your research is from the position of thinking about [which we don't often do], if I'm doing research, and I'm asking myself, what does social justice look like, through the work that i'm doing, right? And what responsibility do I have in relation to the moment I'm speaking into? Then I would put a big question mark around this question of bias and say it's not a biased representation, but it's about foregrounding questions of social justice. And I'm silencing and addressing questions of epistemic violence, you know. So yeah, I think that's how I would answer that question.

Colleen Norris: So on that question you mentioned violence and resistance. And how do you think we should approach trying to conceptualize our understanding of resistance?

Floretta Boonzaier: Yeah. I wonder if you could be more specific. But, I would say broadly, I think there are multiple forms of resistance, and I think that for me it's a question of paying attention, paying close attention, right? And this is where I think questions of narrative are quite important in terms of thinking about what kinds of stories do people tell about their lives, and what kinds of stories do they want to tell about, and what kinds of stories do they want to be heard, out there about their lives? And those stories aren't always stories of pain and damage, right? They are there, but there are also their stories of resistance, and I think it's about paying

close attention to what counts as resistance. You know it's also about understanding that it may not be a kind of common sense understanding of resistance, and to think about how this often happens in community as well, and not kind of individualizing questions of resistance. I hope I'm answering your question, but please add more, if you have a bit more context for that question.

Colleen Norris: Yeah, to me it's so interesting, you know, I work in women's heart health, and no matter how much we do in North America, which is a context I know, about creating awareness of saying that you know we're missing women's heart health, when you listen to the narratives of the women with lived experience, they're saying this is a systemic thing; when I arrive at the emergency department, this is how I'm being treated, and I'm being treated by however that clinician is perceiving me, you know? As I walk in the door, you know, guessing my age and guessing my race and guessing, you know, those sort of things, and I struggle as a researcher to help the world understand that narrative that it isn't just this woman, and we know women's heart disease is different from the sex-based difference, but there are gendered intersectional factors when she presents - that it's our side that's making decisions about, biases about - and it's really interesting to me that the pushback we get whenever we say that it's not the women that are at issue here, it's the people receiving them in our system, where they say, I treat all women the same as mem. And when we do narratives, or we say, this is this person's story, they said, well, that's a one-off story, when it's not. So we put them all together and say they're all reporting this, and you lose the depth of the one-off story,

Floretta Boonzaier: That's where it's also useful to, on the one hand, make connections, right? Maybe across health care services - how the kind of gendered racism that women experience across, you know? It may be helpful to kind of make connections across to say it's not only about women's heart health, but this is how black women in particular, women from marginalized groups in particular, are treated across the health care system. I think it is difficult to have those stories being heard, because it is about challenging power in some way. And I think, and I think that's where maybe you know, kind of the collective work is also quite important when you think about some of the projects we've done doing more kind of participatory action research using photography, working with collectives, and how they themselves on the one hand, you know, they know what the problems are, as you indicate with the women that you work with, they know what the problems are. It's about discrimination in-health, in health care. And so when they themselves are able to work collectively, you know, and produce these stories and images and things, and they decide how they want to raise awareness - it's quite a powerful thing. You know, in some of the work we did with young black people, lesbian women, they were talking about a whole range of discriminations that they had been subjected to at school, you know, in terms of not being able to wear the uniform they wanted, and they produce these really powerful photo stories about the experiences of discrimination, and they took it to the school. You know. They had an exhibition at the school, and they invited the very teachers who were responsible for discriminating, and the principal, you know, as a form of doing their own kind of awareness and challenging, you know, resistance to say like you know, these are our stories, and now we we need you to see and pay attention to our story.

Colleen Norris: Just brilliant. Keith King, who I work with here at the faculty of nursing, has asked a question:

- I love the work that you're doing around desire, joy, and opening up positive spaces in this difficult area of work. I'm curious about the ways in which decolonized feminism is engaging with queer trans and other sexually and gender diverse communities beyond the binary of men and women.

Floretta Boonzaier: Yes, Thank you, Keith. I didn't present some of the examples that we've been doing also in our project around the experiences of institutional discrimination that trans women experience, and then questions of hypervisibility and invisibility. But I think to answer your question at a more kind of theoretical level, I think there's engagement with the idea that the racialized, gendered, heterosexual dichotomous system is a colonial import. And so with that recognition, you know, there's an understanding that the work does have to build solidarities across struggles and that, you know to be intersectional, but also to both solidarities across struggles, that when we talk about violence, we have to talk about transphobia, you know, homophobia, gendered racism across the intersections of discrimination.

Colleen Norris: Okay, boy, I can't write fast enough. So in the chat - Dr. Boonzaier, your fellow South African woman here, how would you suggest approaching conversations at the institutional level about this? In my experience living in Canada conversations about decoloniality, and therefore its intersections with feminism makes people very uncomfortable, especially as I'm often having these conversations with white academics especially in faculties outside social sciences or medicine [I'd say in medicine, too].

Floretta Boonzaier: Thank you for your question. I think that at our University we…one example was really about building community, I think building community is so important. This work can't happen, you know, it's not an individualized kind of project. And so for us, that entailed having those difficult conversations, you know, at my university a historically white university, so the university, you know, was only accessible to white people. But the remnants of that, you know, is still felt, you know, many years later. And so to have these conversations about why we're not transforming, why is the student body transforming, why are there no black and women professors in the higher echelons of the academy, were difficult conversations, yes. But I think that so what we did was we formed a black academic caucus and it enabled us to have conversations about what does it mean to decolonize the University? And so I think some answer to the question lies at the level of building community to tackle this kind of difficult question. And we also continue to build communities with our students, who are wanting to work in you know de-colonial feminist approaches - whether it's psychology, or you know, in other social sciences or your other fields. And so it's about how we also think about, and how do we work with the next generation of scholars, involving kind of critical consciousness about these problematics.

Colleen Norris: It's that I think it's how we work with moving it forward to. I couldn't agree more. With the people coming into the system and saying, let's change it from the grassroots:

- I so enjoyed your talk, and was struck by the prominence of art, narrative, and storytelling in terms of your methodology, which seems to resonate somewhat with health humanities, approaches. Would you be able to comment on how art might operate as a mode of decolonization in academic research.

Floretta Boonzaier: Yeah, You know the use of art in our retreat, where we were kind of doing the reflexive work about thinking about violence was a kind of, you know, emergent process. It was just a kind of, like, okay, we're going to go and spend these few days together to think about questions of like, what does it mean to work on violence and trauma? And then, you know, kind of like thinking about being creative, really. But we have been doing some work around, as I said, photovoice methodologies. . And we've also theorized thinking about photo voice methodologies as a means of doing the decolonizing work. And therefore a range of reasons, right, the one thing is about the opportunity to tell stories that have been neglected, marginalized, erased, silenced, the whole range of things. But then, also thinking about, you know these methodologies as kind of centering the experiences of people who had been marginalized and ignored. And then, in particular, thinking about photography, as I said before, as a way of storytelling that is potentially more accessible, and that is able to communicate in a way that words don't, especially as I said, around traumatic histories and ongoing kind of trauma

Colleen Norris: I think we have one more question that, well, it's really important that we have an answer to it, probably our last one.

- Thank you so much for your presentation. Regarding the North American context, there are critical, Indigenous feminist critiques, for example, Dian Millon. Are the ways that discourses of trauma and associated psychological and psychiatric knowledge, subject Indigenous people and communities to further colonial by-political intervention surveillance and management. In your own resistance to the disciplinary orthodoxies of psychology, can you speak to the institutionalist strategies you deploy to be able to do the critical work you do.

Floretta Boonzaier: Thank you Jessica, for your question. I'm not familiar with the work that you cite, but definitely will look at it. I'm gonna sound like a stuck record, in a sense, but I think that the work again is done in terms of fostering on the one hand, solidarities, right? So think about building solidarities, around questions of racialized discrimination, for example, at our institution across departments, across faculty at the University, building those kinds of solidarity. But then, also, you know, building community within a context like the department I work in, which in many ways could be considered quite mainstream in terms of the psychological work or research and practice that's done. And finding space, building space, finding space, creating space - and we talk about the Hub for Decolonial Feminist Psychology that exists in our department as both a discursive space that has allowed us to open up these conversations, the conversations across the University, across, you know, universities in the country, on the continent, and internationally too. So opening up that discursive space. But we also kind of like asserted space, we also have a physical space in the department, you know? Part of doing that work also is thinking about how to strategically utilize the resources you have access to, so that, for instance, you know you were given a grant from the university, but you know they didn't

anticipate that you would be doing the work on decolonizing the university, but you know it also involves strategic use of resources; that you know, that allows for the space to be opened up in particular ways.

Colleen Norris: I thank you so much. I know, boy, I could sure listen to you for a lot. You you've engendered so many thoughts. But we have to close it off, and I wanted to turn it over. Um, so that we can have a couple of minutes of summary.

Sarah Dorow: Thank you to both of you. Thank you to the people who attended today for your attentiveness and great questions. And Dr. Floretta Boonzaier and Dr. Colleen Norris, thank you, this has been a really wonderful and meaningful event. I have one last plug here for the next Intersections of Gender event. On October 21 at 12:15pm, we do a quick forty-five minute over the lunch hour kind of thing. And Research Fridays on that day (October 21) will be entitled “My body is my kitchen tool: disability in the kitchen”, and we'll be welcoming Alexis Hilliard, pronouns she/her, a queer and disabled Youtube creator of the show Stuffed Kitchen and self-taught vegan chef and entrepreneur. It's going to be a great event hosted by Danielle Peers, who is Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Disability and Movement Cultures here at UofA. So please join us for that. And again a final, wonderful thank you, and heartfelt thank you to Dr. Floretta Boonzaier. Thank you, everyone.

Floretta Boonzaier: Thank you.

Colleen Norris: Thank you so much.