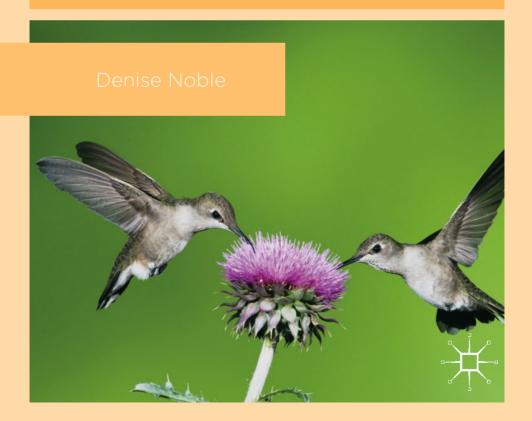
DECOLONIZING AND FEMINIZING FREEDOM

A CARIBBEAN GENEALOGY



Thinking Gender in Transnational Times

Series Editors

Clare Hemmings London School of Economics and Political Science London, UK

Kimberly Hutchings Queen Mary University of London London, UK

Hakan Seckinelgin London School of Economics and Political Science London, UK

Sadie Wearing London School of Economics and Political Science London, UK Gender theories have always been important, but no more so than now, when gender is increasingly acknowledged as an essential focus for economics, policy, law and development as well as being central to a range of fields in the humanities and social sciences such as cultural studies, literary criticism, queer studies, ethnic and racial studies, psychoanalytic studies and of course feminist studies. Yet while the growth areas for the field are those that seek to combine interdisciplinary theoretical approaches with transnational arenas of inquiry, or integrate theory and practice, there is currently no book series that foregrounds these exciting set of developments. The series 'Thinking Gender in Transnational Times' aims to redress this balance and to showcase the most innovative new work in this arena. We will be focusing on soliciting manuscripts or edited collections that foreground the following: Interdisciplinary work that pushes at the boundaries of existing knowledge and generates innovative contributions to the field. Transnational perspectives that highlight the relevance of gender theories to the analysis of global flows and practices. Integrative approaches that are attentive to the ways in which gender is linked to other areas of analysis such as 'race', ethnicity, religion, sexuality, violence, or age. The relationship between theory and practice in ways that assume both are important for sustainable transformation. The impact of power relations as felt by individuals and communities, and related concerns, such as those of structure and agency, or ontology and epistemology In particular, we are interested in publishing original work that pushes at the boundaries of existing theories, extends our gendered understanding of global formations, and takes intellectual risks at the level of form or content. We welcome single or multipleauthored work, work from senior and junior scholars, or collections that provide a range of perspectives on a single theme.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/14404

Denise Noble

Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom

A Caribbean Genealogy



Denise Noble Sociology Birmingham City University Birmingham, UK

Thinking Gender in Transnational Times
ISBN 978-1-137-44950-4 ISBN 978-1-137-44951-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-44951-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016956075

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

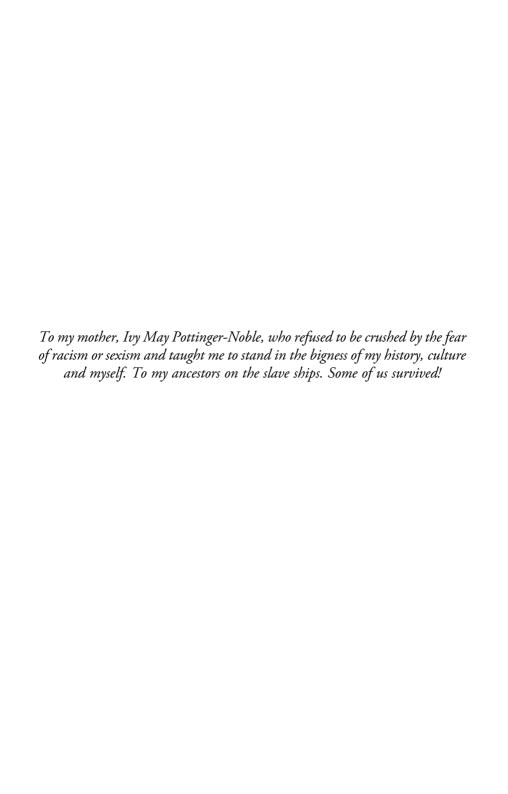
The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover image © Rolf Nussbaumer Photography / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom



Acknowledgements

As with writing any book, there have been many moments when this felt like a lonely enterprise, one that isolated me for long periods from family, friends and even life. Those are the feelings that one has when one is deep in the valleys, trying to scale the steep slopes of reading, data analysis and writing, rewriting and then rewriting again. And then one day you look up and find you have travelled so far up the mountainside and have re-emerged into the sunlight, able to see the process for what it really is—that is, one in which one was always surrounded by others and immersed in life. This book, like all books, would have been impossible without the community of scholars past and present, friends, family, adversaries and detractors. It is the realities of everyday life, the people in it, the complexities of the world and times in which the scholar lives that gives research meaning, relevance, importance and possibility. Writing a book takes place in the world, not merely in one's room or a library, or one's head. First, there is the world that formed the researcher and their choice of research topic. My world as a Black British woman scholar brought up in a Jamaican family living in London was shaped by my Jamaican parents' stories of 'back home', their pride in the dignity of Caribbean culture and Black history, and my mother's deep political commitments to anti-colonialism abroad and anti-racism in Britain. So I must thank my parents, Ivy Pottinger-Noble and the late Eddie Noble, who gave

viii Acknowledgements

me the gift of Black pride, in the face of all that would have us feel ashamed and underserving; survival, in the face of all that would tell us that Black lives do not really matter; and an indefatigable overcoming spirit, in the face of the obstacles placed in the path of individual self-fulfilment and collective Black liberation by racism and social injustices of all kinds. In particular, it is from my mother, and her unswerving passion for social justice and refusal to be brow-beaten by racism, patriarchy or British class elitism, that I acquired a sense of my deep embeddedness in a multigenerational community of warrior women of the Caribbean and African diaspora. It is the self-liberation ethos of these women that both inspired this research and provided its ancestral spiritual sustenance. One ancestral spirit that I frequently called on was that of my maternal great-grandmother, Vera Reid, a woman who died before I was born but whose picture was on my desk and accompanied me, in my bag, to my PhD viva exam. It is to the memory of these women that this book is dedicated, and it is to them that I give thanks, because in surviving capture, the Middle Passage, slavery, colonialism, immigration and racism, they impelled me to write this book, and provided an example and template of bold womanhood, both for me and for the women who participated in this study. I feel deep respect for, and give thanks to, the Black British Caribbean women who donated their time, experiences, knowledge and defiant womanish culture of freedom to this research. To those women, I hope I have represented you in ways that you recognize, and which will inform and be useful to you and others.

Thanks also go to the community of scholars at Goldsmiths, University of London, where my research skills and theoretical knowledge were sharpened by the excellent interdisciplinary team of scholars in the Department of Sociology, in particular Celia Lury, Les Back, Michael Keith, Paul Gilroy, Paul Filmer and Nikolas Rose; and to Meeta Rani Jha, Monica Figueroa-Moreno and Yasmeen Narayan, who became friends and, at different moments intellectual conspirators—he richest discussions occurred with you as we grappled, agreed and disagreed over questions of race, gender, sexuality, postcoloniality and Black identity, in ways that often exceeded the remit of how these topics were being discussed around us.

Being a Black scholar in Britain can be very isolating and alienating experience, one that for me was mediated and soothed by my contacts with these fellow students of postcoloniality and with Black scholars in

other parts of the world who reassured me that I was neither working in the dark (as it often felt) nor speaking into a void from which no one could hear me. In this regard I am deeply appreciative of the group of scholars who organized and participated in the Diasporic Hegemonies series of conferences that took place in the USA and Canada in the early 2000s. Particular thanks go to Tina Campt, Deborah Thomas, Ronaldo Walcott and Ben Carrington. Those conferences took place while I was still completing doctoral research on this study, and these forums in many ways saved my intellectual life by bringing me into transnational networks of scholars who not only shared my research interests but also, in recognizing the value of my work, supported, encouraged and inspired me. Thanks go too to Lisa Lowe, whose work proved invaluable at a decisive point in this research and who graciously offered me her time and expertise. To this list I must add two ex-patriot Black British academic refugees from British academia, whose friendship and mentoring, as well as their scholarship, were invaluable and sustaining for me at different points of realizing this project. No words can convey my debt to Mekada Graham, who has been more than a colleague, discussant and friend. During my time in the USA she was also a surrogate sister. Likewise, Barnor Hesse's intellectual contribution to this work is incalculable. I have the deepest appreciation for his mentorship and for our intellectual alliance. He continues to be a beacon for many of us in Britain who are struggling for epistemic justice. All of these scholar-friends have taught the vital importance of not only global but, specifically, African diasporic scholarly connections for Black British and Black European scholars, who often experience intense forms of social and intellectual marginalization in European academia. Audrey Edwards provided and patient and invaluable administrative assistance at an early stage of this project as well as practical reliable friendship of the kind every working mother needs from time to time to keep the wheels of family life turning.

Gratitude and respect go to the faculty, staff and students of the Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS), at Ohio State University (OSU), where I taught from 2010 to 2016. The department provided invaluable financial and material support for my research. Various OSU faculty members, such as Ike Newsum, Tanya Saunders, David Crawford, Ken Goings, Franco Barchiesi, Miranda Martinez and Sarah

x Acknowledgements

Van Beurden, have also contributed to the development of this work in a range of ways: through discussions, feedback, encouragement or simply friendship.

Additionally, there are so many AAAS students who deserve thanks for regularly underscoring for me just why this work matters, and demonstrating the innumerable ways in which Black studies saves lives by contributing to human flourishing. Their names are too numerous to mention, but some individuals cannot go unacknowledged: India Pierce, Brice Williams, Theo Foster, Jasmine Stephenson, Theresa Thompson, Sheneese Thompson and Navid Farnia, who reassure me that the future of human liberation and Black scholarship, in their manifold spheres of unfolding, are in good hands. This book would not have developed as it has without the privilege of teaching these and other students, having the opportunity to share their lives, struggles, creativity, thoughts and accomplishments, and to put into practice with them our everyday acts of freedom in the Black studies classroom.

Finally and most importantly, to my two children, who grew up during the course of my researching and writing this book, thank you for hanging on in there and putting up with it all. I know it was not easy.