

Anti-Racism is Never Not Intersectional
December 9, 2021

ANNA KIRKLAND >> Good Afternoon, and welcome to Anti-Racism is Never Not Intersectional.

Our last event here this semester from IRWG. My name is Anna Kirkland and I'm the director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, here at Michigan. I am a white woman, in a black top with glasses, and my pronouns are she and her.

Brief descriptions of ourselves and pronouns help us recognize each other appropriately especially on Zoom.

Thank you for joining us today along with our co-sponsors the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and the Anti-Racism Collaborative at the National Center for Institutional Diversity here at Michigan.

Thanks to IRWG and NCID staff members, Heidi Bennett, Mary Rose, and Rebecca Irvine who are helping to run the event behind the scenes.

Before we begin, I would like to share a few reminders with you all.

Closed captioning is available.

Click on the cc icon and select view or hide subtitle.

Please submit questions or comments using the Q and A icon in your Zoom toolbar.

Your name may be read aloud so please indicate if you wish to remain anonymous.

The session is being recorded and a link to the recording will be E-mailed to everyone who registered within a few days.

We're also pasting a link to IRWG's chat monitoring guidelines into the chat.

I'm pleased to introduce our panelists.

Elizabeth Cole is Faculty Associate Director at the National Center for Institutional Diversity and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Psychology and Afroamerican and African Studies.

SaraEllen Strongman is Assistant Professor of Afroamerican and African Studies, and Ruby Tapia is Chair of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Associate Professor of English Language and Literature.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth Gonzalez from the Spectrum Center is ill today and was unable to join us. We'll miss hearing her insights and wish her a full and speedy recovery.

We'll begin with a conversation among the panelists and then have time for questions from the audience.

Please post your questions in the Q and A as you think of them.

The impetus behind the panel is the recent release of two major reports in the college of LSA.

One on antiracism and racial equality and another on Preventing Sexual Harassment.

The events that gave rise to these working groups and reports are critical to acknowledge.

These include the high profile cases of sexual misconduct, by former provost Martin Philbert and former athletic physician Robert Anderson.

And the national conversation as prompted by the killing of George Floyd and so many others.

These efforts aim at distinct problems, yet may be interpreted as reiterating a mistake that antiracism and antisexism are possible without each other.

As feminist scholars we wanted to have this community conversation at this moment to intervene in it, and to advance our understanding of intersectional approaches to antiracism and antisexism.

It has been a very hard year.

Or even longer than a year for many of us.

I hope we can take strength from each other today and enjoy thinking together.

>> I'll begin by asking each panelist to briefly introduce yourselves, including a visual description and share how your work relates to the issues we're discussing today.

LIZ COLE >> I'll start. Hi, I'm Elizabeth Cole. Thank you for being with us here today. I'm a light skin black woman with curly gray hair. I'm wearing black glasses and a black jacket, and my pronouns are she and hers.

I'm a professor of Psychology, Women's and Gender Studies and African and African American studies.

And my scholarship really the broad theme is how to translate this idea of intersectionality which comes to us from feminist and critical race theories to social science research on race, gender, social justice, and I write about that both theoretically and I do empirical work I intend to demonstrate those approaches.

As an administrator, I've been a department chair, an associate dean and an interim dean and I was involved in the development and implementation of LSA's DEI plan.

I was also responsible for administering university policies related to harassment and sexual misconduct.

As an instructor I've been a longtime teacher of R and E courses. I sometimes teach for IGR.

And I am currently a facilitator for an NSF program called game-changer academies which is training panelists who review applications and group dynamics, cognitive bias and social identity.

SARAELEN STRONGMAN >> Hi. My name is SaraEllen Strongman.

I'm a black woman with curly hair and I'm wearing a green sweater.

My pronouns are she/her.

I am currently an Assistant Professor in the department of Afro-American and African American studies here at University of Michigan and Ann Arbor.

This is my fourth year at Michigan.

I spent two years as a LSA collegiate postdoctoral fellow here prior to starting the tenure track.

I work broadly on intellectual genealogies and histories of black feminist organizing and theorizing. In particular, I'm interested in the 1970's, and 80s and the moment when black woman begin calling themselves black feminism and developing consciously and autonomous social movement and body of thought for themselves.

At Michigan I teach courses on black feminism and more broadly an African American studies. Looking at intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

And so part of my research is looking similar to Liz at the ways in which race, sexuality and gender are mutually constituted in both history and our analyses of power.

RUBY TAPIA >> Hi everybody, I'm Ruby Tapia. I'm a chair of Women and Gender Studies here at the University of Michigan.

I also have an appointment in the department of English. I work in feminist theories of photography, trauma theory, carceral studies, focusing on abolitionist studies.

I'm writing a book right now called "The Camera in the Cage" which is about representations of what the public regards as more sympathetic carceral subjects in exploring how that sympathy that we learn through photographic visualities actually doesn't incite change with respect to carceral logics and

thinking about what we need to do in order to transform the carceral state.

I've long been involved in diversity, equity, inclusion and justice initiatives at the University of Michigan.

I was a cofounder of the MICHHERS summer research program which is a pipeline program that encourages and supports people interested from underrepresented groups and communities in academia to consider graduate school especially within the humanities.

I was a member of the college commissioned anti-racism task force that wrote the report that circulated a while back and that we attached to this event announcement.

I've long been involved in efforts to understand and disrupt gender to violence and sexual harassment on the university campus through various community organization groups coalitions, ad hoc committees, and also as founder of various funding initiatives for research on the part of our students, undergraduates and graduates, that are specifically focusing their work and their efforts in activism and summer internships for example. And working in spaces that combat gender-based violence.

My work in carceral studies has led me to really understand the ways in which racism, sexism, and sexual violence intersect in carceral spaces. And it was really illuminated for me how profoundly relevant race is to considering sexualized violence and gender-based violence and how "solutions" that are complex historically and contemporarily.

I'll stop there and I'm excited to be here and in conversation and glad this is being hosted by IRWG and NCID, thank you.

ANNA KIRKLAND >> Where do you all see points of convergence and divergence in terms of the recommendations and desired outcomes?

I skipped the wrong question, let me go to the first question.

What were some of the things that were really important to you as you were working on the committees that you and the initiatives you worked on?

RUBY TAPIA >> I can start and try to get things over with. You know so I'll start if you don't mind.

I would like to talk about my participation on the anti-racism task force, which produced a report that was a lot longer than any of us thought we were going to produce.

But in the end turned out to be more than exactly what we needed, which probably shouldn't have surprised anybody.

So something we struggled with and really attempted to address but found ourselves deeply challenged by and I think that it's something we're all challenged by is not just in intellectual spaces but in spaces especially of policy discourse and legal and popular discourse.

Where folks are trying to make changes to the fact that our language for talking about these issues and specifically how language has not been made to account for the implication of race and gender with one another when we talk about racism or sexism.

And I'll talk in a second how it is that we tried to address that but how it doesn't quite work. We know and we knew when we were working together on the task force report we can't leave out gender. We wouldn't want to leave out gender harassment, gender-based violence when we talk about justice entered spaces, that are focused on accounting for racism.

But we are still stuck speaking in additive ways. We all are. And we all are in our intellectual spaces. You know that there is always that one person who has to say well let's not be sure to leave out considerations of class here.

Or let's not forget how this affects transgender students or disabled students.

So this is a problem that produces vastly different experiences and that's the conversations in our spaces so when we're charged with creating and manifesting antiracist projects and environments and that's the charge we're always having to make these additions.

So we say this to one another in our working groups, DEI committees, activist communities, we push for change with all of this in mind.

But especially in institutional spaces we're often forced to try to imagine these changes in the vein of, or the transformations, the task at hand we're forced to imagine them in the vein of response, reaction, defense, and maybe if we're lucky, repair, to what our apparently very specifically targeted harms.

And they're not that specific. So they're systemic. And when I say systemic I really want to be very clear I'm not meaning that they touch every part of our systems.

But that they derive from a particular system. That's a different framework. That's a different angle.

They are all encompassing and ultimately opposed to and degrading of anything that doesn't reinforce white supremacy and heteronormativity across the board.

When we start there, we're starting with the systemic problem, and I believe that abolition and that's why I wrote in section 10 of the antiracism task report.

And if you look at section 10, it's focused on policies and how it is that the university supports carceral logics through some of its practices.

So abolition is something that is a word and I'm going to stop in two minutes is a word in a concept that is circulating much more widely since summer of 2020. It's not necessarily a term that we all necessarily understand and definitely not necessarily something that we all always tend to get behind and I had, I was ready to share but I'm not seeing my little slide now. I'll come back to it.

Basically, abolition is theorized by those who are working to have communities understand and implement it.

As something that is not an absence and doesn't call for an absence, only just to tear down jails or prisons but calls for the presence of social structures that prevent the kinds of social problems and inequities that lead to poverty, the criminalization of it, crime, and etc.

Focusing on building, focusing on having mental healthcare provided for everybody, focusing on people having what it is they need in order to live livable lives.

So abolition is actually about fundamental transformation of everything and prominent abolitionists whose name you might know, Ruth Wilson Gilmore's book that is about to be published is fittingly called "Change Everything."

And so the last couple of things that I want to say is those who have formulated abolitionist definitions in ways that are very applicable to the intersections of race and racism and sexism are tend to be black feminists.

They are recently rightly becoming very critical of intersectionality as a term that actually provides a shorthand performative gesture towards recognizing that identities matter, but we don't actually get at the root of the fact that race is historically implicated in gender, and gender is something that actually produces race.

We can talk about historical examples if we have time. But abolition is actually where it's at. I'm going to stop there, and we can talk more, and I'll take questions about that if there are any.

>> And Liz and SaraEllen can you talk about your reaction to the different reports and are there particular impacts you're seeing in your own work?

SARAELEN >> I can answer that. I think it's really interesting especially someone who hasn't been at Michigan for an especially long time to see the administration and so many of my colleagues putting the labor into producing these incredibly rich documents with recommendations for how to have more accountability and healing and just a more, a better world for people within the world of the university and our policies related to that.

I'm struck by something Ruby just said about intersectionality and the way it's become a bit of a shorthand for good politics. In my black feminism class here at Michigan one of the things that's my personal learning goal for my students is for them to leave the class with a clear understanding of the history of intersectionality, the ways in which it has been theorized.

How the interaction and profusion of different identities and how they create the ways in which individuals and groups experience power, especially state power is something I really foreground in that course.

And while it's been exciting as I went through graduate school and now as an instructor, to think about who was coming into my classroom and what they're coming into my classroom with. And now I have in really exciting ways students coming to my class who heard of black feminism who have heard of bell hooks, or who have read Crenshaw in high school.

It's really interesting to think about the ways in which it is so hard to maintain nuance across these conversations and to think in particular ways about how what we're doing plays out.

Most recently, one of the things that's been in the news.

Anthony Broadwater is a man who recently after decades and decades had his wrongful conviction for sexual assault expunged, and it's taken up gotten picked up in the media in part because he was falsely accused of and then convicted and incarcerated for the sexual assault of feminist author Alice Sebold who wrote her famous not like -- well-known memoir "Lucky" about the, about her assault and its aftermath.

And there have been ways in which people have responded to this thinking in part because it came out, because they were making a documentary, and a movie of about her work and the producers thought that the facts weren't adding up.

People's response has been like well Alice Sebold needs to do this and Alice Sebold needs to do that in ways which do not align with the abolitionist policies that Ruby was talking to us a little bit about a minute ago.

To think about in these moments where there has been harm, especially if there is harm that we can think about, there is harm to separate out racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc., to think about what do we do going forward and also then again if at a systemic level when it's not about individual choice.

To think about what types of policies we can have both globally, nationally, and certainly within our own units and schools and universities here that cannot only seek to prevent harm, but also to figure out ways to respond to and repair it that are productive for everyone.

I don't have a really great answer about how to do that, but I think if we look at some of the recommendations from both of these reports, that we're starting to see at least an outline of the types of steps we can take as stakeholders and actors within our institution to make things better.

LIZ COLE >> Some of my reactions certainly echo things that SaraEllen and Ruby had talked about.

And it was interesting to hear Ruby say there is a critique of intersectionality because I feel like in the conversations I'm a part of and the things I've been writing I see those problems not as critiques of intersectionality, but critiques of the ways it's sometimes been traveled and interpreted as it's traveled.

I want to talk about when we talk about intersectionality and DEI work, I think there is two common problems.

And so in terms of intersectionality, as SaraEllen and Ruby I think have both touched on it often gets described casually as being about individuals that everyone has multiple identities and particularly see that in psychology where I think we have just a tendency to always go back to the individual. But the reason this is a powerful theory is because it's a theory about power and inequality.

And Patricia Hill Collins who doesn't always use the term "intersectionality" but has been one of the most important thinkers of the area, to paraphrase her, she says too often the discussion of intersectionality has been about race, class and gender, rather than about racism, capitalism, and sexism. My students I think come with this they've heard about intersectionality, they think they know what it is and it's helpful to have a definition.

There is not just one definition but to throw one out there we can play with, it's the idea that systems of oppression, like racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, work together to create specific vulnerabilities at specific social locations.

Policies that are designed to address singular problems often end up taking the experiences of the most privileged group members as the norm. So if we don't think intersectionally when we think about problems facing women, like you know when women are largely targets of sexual harassment we tend to think of it in terms of white women.

So this phenomenon makes the experience of multiple marginalized people invisible. And within psychology, there is talk and research about this idea of intersectional invisibility. And I think the irony that Kim Crenshaw which she often gets described as coining the term because there is so much writing in this before she put intersectionality as a name to it was pointing out how the most vulnerable people are often the least protected because they have this kind of invisibility at the intersection.

And so approaching the problem of writing these two different reports, really runs the risk of engaging in this kind of behavior.

And I think there's some sort of risks and dangers in the concept of DEI, so I want to talk about that for a minute. Some of the ways DEI gets talked about has similar problems leading us to think about individuals and not systems. There are versions of DEI that focus on representation. We need to increase diversity, on an individual level attitudes, we need to work on bigotry. Everyone has to have implicit bias training. The fact is we're not going to create real change, we're not going to make this a place where everyone can have access and can thrive without transforming our institutional practices.

And I don't think higher education, especially at elite institutions, has consistently engaged with what this would mean. With what the "equity" in DEI means. Because that would necessitate that we think about the ways our current practices and policies can create barriers.

So just to give you an example that I've seen vividly in my own work. My administrative work is that the focus on DEI in graduate programs around admissions often gets taken up as the problem is that there is not a pipeline rather than having departments think about what are the practices in our program that might make it unattractive to underrepresented groups. Or lead to their attrition or lead them to complete their degrees

and opt out of academia. That would require us to take a much harder look.

So in its need to address every kind of diversity, sometimes I think DEI as a concept is not suited to address any kind of diversity fully in this kind of individualized way, or version of DEI, it can conspire with an unwillingness to look at the specificity of history, which is where structural inequality is rooted.

And I don't want to talk too much. Maybe I'll just say I think those problems of common framings of intersectionality, and these kinds of problems with the limitations of DEI as a concept, were somewhat side-stepped in these reports. I see in the antiracism report a real effort to think about systems. To think about structure. To think about justice. DEI often doesn't engage these things.

What we see in the sexual harassment report was right upfront an acknowledgment of the intersectionality of harassment and they say that as part of their charge or framing. The interesting thing is I don't think the sexual harassment report really goes so far as naming systems. There is no mention of patriarchy. They don't really address the role of misogyny except to say harassment often takes forms that are not explicitly misogynist.

And I'm interested to know if that was a matter of strategy. I think sometimes talking systemically gets less of a popular response than thinking about trainings and individual level change. And maybe that's something we can talk about later.

ANNA KIRKLAND >> We're getting a few questions in the chat. I think what I'm going to do is read those and then if you want to respond you can respond in the chat or maybe think about it for later or I'll give everyone a chance to respond to the questions if they want before we go on.

So Laura asks, can you share some resources for exploring critiques of intersectionality/refine our own understandings.

Carly says I would love to talk more about policies on prevention, and Juliana says thank you for sharing your research and committee work with us today.

How can university administration best implement your recommendations into university policy with a follow-up? What barriers exist that prevent implementation?

So I'll let any of you make any response there that you like, and -- okay great go ahead Ruby.

RUBY TAPIA >> These are really great questions, thank you to those of you who posed them.

Jennifer Nash has a book that is a critique of or just an exploration of how it is the intersectionality has been created across spaces which is what Liz was illuminating as the problem I was trying to talk about which is of course it's a -- it's -- it is in Patricia Hill Collins articulation of it having to do with systems. What I was trying to get at talking about white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. And when we start there, and the racism, and classism, and sexism.

We're not talking about individuals, we're not talking about identities, we're talking about how it is these systems that are historically based and very very entrenched, and that's what we have to understand, they're entrenched, and actually in the foundations in the material of institutional -- of just the institution itself. And especially higher education.

So we're up against something huge. Jennifer Nash has a book on it. And Liz Cole is working on this stuff herself so probably has more specific references that might be her own work, but the whole book is about that. I also wanted to speak to really quickly what barriers exist to preventing implementation, the compartmentalization one still exists.

The compartmentalization in terms of framing the problems. So here we have, attached to an event. It's about insisting that these things are not separate: racism, and sexism or racism and sexual violence. Here we have attached to that very event two separate reports.

One that deals with antiracism, and one that deals with sexism that leads to sexual harassment. So we are not resourced, we're not patient, we're not interdisciplinary enough. IRWG is, we're in a space of interdisciplinarity. But when it comes to things like grant writing, when it comes to things like getting initiatives funded even at the institutional level we have to talk in the language of deliverables. We have to talk in the language of targets. We have to talk in the language of, we have to simplify problems that cannot be simplified.

And I've often been in meetings, and this is a frustration for me, and it's certainly a frustration for everybody that sat on a committee with me that has anything to do with diversity, or racism or antiracism, is I'm making things too complicated.

But how are we going to do that? What's the concrete thing? What's the step and it's like wait a second, let's meet for three more hours before we get there. We have to be resourced to do this. It is not enough to get a \$2,000 stipend to sit on a committee. People actually need to be released from teaching for

two years straight and willing to work on this. It takes that kind of time.

I'm on a RISE committee which is charged with a very small task of changing climate for faculty, across the entire university. That's our charge. So and it's really that broad.

So what we had to do is read for a year and a half because it wouldn't make sense to have that committee comprised of people who were from the same discipline. We had to read together for a year and a half almost two years and we continue to read. So that we can all be on the same page with basic definitions of antiracism. So we're very informed in our separate silos. We're not conceptually on the same page. And we're not resourced, and our institution is not brave enough to say we're going to break with whatever trends or we're going to upset this particular trend or we're going to take a risk here. And upset potential donors. Or the large group of parents who called in to that focus group to hear about the possibility of defunding and said, literally a said, my white daughter will not be safe on campus if you defund or disarm the police. And had no shame about saying that. So, I'm like okay, that's where the conversation is still. We have so much work to do. I know I said a million different things but that's what came to mind.

SARAELEN >> I'll just add to Ruby. For I think it was Laura who asked about resources for exploring critiques of intersectionality or to refine our own understandings. So Jennifer Nash's book, *Black Feminism Reimagined*, which came out in 2019 I want to say.

Pretty new book, is a really wonderful in-depth exploration of intellectual genealogies, and the way in which intersectionality has traveled. But also thinks about, and this is interesting you know for IRWG the place of intersectionality in women's and gender studies is doing a particular type of work.

Brittney Cooper has, and this is a bit older but, Brittney Cooper has a wonderful essay and I think it's either the Oxford or the Cambridge companion to feminist philosophy where she does a breakdown of the different scholars or types of scholars and different fields and what they've done.

For example I'm someone in the humanities. I don't really do quantitative work. There are people in sociology, political science, economics who have taken up intersectionality as a way in which to better inform their quantitative studies. That if you disaggregate your data or think about black women as a

separate group that is disaggregated from black people or women, that that will be helpful.

Those are really interesting. I'll also say that is really, really difficult. I think there are ways in which intersectionality presents itself or has come to be thought of as a wonderful panacea. This will fix everything. So there is ways in which people say well like you know all these signs we see at marches, your feminism isn't worth anything unless it's not intersectional. But what can it look like in practice?

One of the things that happens in my black feminisms course is just sort of a -- necessary but I think at times frustrating things for students a lot of them come from our women's and gender studies department here who have taken some courses on early first wave feminist suffragists and are like yes, these are heroes and I come in and show them other stuff that they're really interested and excited to hear but in ways that can be really disturbing.

One of the things I think that comes out of not necessarily in the reports in the same way but if we think about Kim Crenshaw's specific intervention and how she talks about what she thought intersectionality was going to do as creating intensified or new vulnerabilities for groups and people.

So I talk about in that class we do a Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings: Why is Anita Hill a bad victim? What are the cultural scripts that come into play to make her, to make it easy to dismiss her? There is one of the first foundational feminist texts about sexual assault that reimagined rape about being as power and not about lust -- Susan Brownmiller's "Against Our Will."

So important, so necessary, also has a moment in it where she says she writes about Emmett Till, and says there was in fact this horrible threat and so this young boy knew he could -- through this casual gesture threatened life or death to this person.

And so even at the time when that comes out in the 70s everyone is like what is wrong with you. We cannot come to either of these issues without that. And one of the things I was I think, somewhat struck by are that I think, some of these methods and the type of genre these reports ask for is that it's hard to do that. Especially with focus groups to try and anonymize your participants and what they're saying. And that the experiences of women or gender minority, Non-binary, trans faculty and staff and students, and the ways in which they experience gender harassment if they are not white, is probably going to be inflected differently.

So to understand or pay attention to how that works and looks and why it might not look like that, and similarly the idea that we can't think -- as Ruby said--think these things apart. So I think it becomes difficult. But I'm excited that I have so many wonderful colleagues who are pushing the institution to do better and to think as we said deeply and at length about this stuff. Because it is in fact complicated and to pretend otherwise I think does everyone a disservice.

LIZ COLE >> Well those were great answers, and I could go on about them too and I think I won't. So we have time to get to some other questions. I do want to put in a plug for another critique of intersectionality which is an article by Nikol Alexander-Floyd. She is a political scientist, and this appeared in Feminist Formations, back in 2012, and it's called "Disappearing Acts: Reclaiming Intersectionality in the Social Sciences in a Post-Black Feminist Era."

And she's really writing about how intersectionality has not only become less about women of color and black women who were the motivation for generating this way of understanding, but that in the act of doing so, there has been an erasure of black feminist authors as well. I think it's important. I write about it a lot lately.

ANNA KIRKLAND >> Thank you for that great question and, and that very generative sub-conversation on the literature.

I'm going to get us back to giving some examples maybe from our own campus community or other examples that you can think of that can help us understand how racism can produce, shape, amplify harassment based on sex, sexuality or gender. Whoever wants to jump in there first.

LIZ COLE >> Well, I can start. So most obviously, there is racialized sexual harassment. And often that takes form of comments or touches of body parts that are racialized or construed to be part of what makes racial difference. Can be based on stereotypes of groups as hypersexual.

NiCole Buchanan at Michigan State wrote a paper in 2008 where they found--they studied black women's experiences of sexual harassment--and they said black women reported that white coworkers and supervisors often felt free to be sexually explicit or to request information about their sex lives. So that's one form that that often took.

In a maybe more or less obvious way, women of color might fear reporting because they might fear not being believed or

experiencing retaliation, especially if the harasser is someone powerful. This is probably particularly true for women who are in occupations where there is not much job protection or where their employment is precarious. And you can think of this as sort of a long tradition in black women's experience that goes back to slavery, and to black women's segregation in domestic work where they had to go into white homes.

Women of color may hesitate to make complaints against men of color because of how that will be perceived or will it be perceived as fulfilling stereotypes that people have against black men.

Although Woods, Buchanan and Settles, found that cross-racial harassment was more upsetting to Black women than same race sexual harassment. And finally, women and sexual minorities might feel like they can't rely on institutions to respond and that the institution itself may retaliate. And I took a training recently from CRLT where in one of the reenactments a black woman said that when you complain, the reaction isn't how can I help you. It's how dare you. And I thought that said it really well.

RUBY TAPIA >> I think Liz covered it. I was like do you want personal anecdotes. She covered it all. So thank you. I mean it's alive and well you know when you don't necessarily -- you know -- I've had my own naive experiences of imagining going into different kinds of administrative spaces that what would attend those spaces is more of an awareness of these things. But that's not always the case.

So yeah, and something else that I wanted to say, and I meant to say this earlier in my remarks is that there are historical reasons based in slavery for why it is that intersectionality derives from the theoretical formulations and life experiences of black women. And it does have to do with slavery. And it does have to do with the fact that is where and then the convict leasing system thereafter that is where gender was made as a racialized concept. That was where, in Hortense Spillers's terms or in reiterations of her terms where black women were degendered.

So that the limited humanity that was accorded to womanhood, and the privileges of womanhood which I know it might feel weird to talk about the privileges of womanhood right now. But the fact is that privileges do attend white womanhood and they attend womanhood that can claim access to resources in terms of socioeconomic privilege and cis-het privilege and all of that.

But slavery and then thereafter the convict leasing system and thereafter the prison and that's why I want to focus on the prison to address these intersections. Those are the systems that made gender raced and made race gendered. So you think about black women gave birth to property and not to children. What does that mean for absolutely everything? Everything.

So there is a reason why we're saying remember this history because the history is actually what reveals the systemic invocation of these things. And it's a particular history and it's a particularly racialized history. And so the critique of how intersectionality has traveled is one that really does have to be listened to because if we don't listen to it, we actually can't do this DEI work.

And Elizabeth Armstrong had a question, Anna, that I really want to speak to quickly that I think is very important. Discussions of gender-based violence and sexual harassment on campus always go towards reporting investigation and adjudication. This seems to risk falling right into punitive carceral logic. How do we think about accountability at the university in other ways?

Well one, people who survive sexual harassment and sexual violence should have a say in whether or not something punitive is what they want. Sometimes they do. And as an abolitionist, I'll be the first to say, and I'll also be the first to say that very often people are not apprised of and, not having made available to them other options, other than things that are punitive.

So the punitive impulse is not something that I think doesn't make sense. What I think doesn't make sense is that we have a profound failure of imagination and institutional resourcing for transformative justice. Not restorative justice, not where I decide I want to talk to my abuser, and face-to face in the context of OSCR. If I want to do that, I want to do that.

Transformative justice is actually an approach that is systemic, that thinks about prevention at the level of education at the elementary level. That thinks about prevention in terms of community building against misogyny. That thinks about having people who have experience who have done harm, and even done time for the harm come back into communities and play key roles in terms of modeling a transformation in conceptualizations of masculinity, for example.

Transformative justice is holistic. Restorative justice is individual. Somebody who makes this distinction very clear and very helpfully is Mariame Kaba in a book called "We do this till we free us." And it's about abolition and I recommend everybody

read it. But prevention -- prevention has changed everything. There is no turning away from punitive logics without options. There is just, we have to create the options.

SARAELEN STRONGMAN >> I'll just hop in here. I'm really glad we got to that question. I sort of have two examples in my mind. We at least those of us on this call understand that the vast majority of instances of gender and sexual harassment, and gendered sexual violence are not reported, are not taken to court, don't end up in the proper criminal system.

And that when they do, we don't see under carceral logics the types of justice we ostensibly one would want. And so what Ruby is pointing to about prevention is really so crucial. And I think that where I see that showing up is sort of like we're in the aftermath like what are you supposed to do.

Pat Parker who is a contemporary of Audre Lorde -- a black lesbian, feminist poet, originally from Texas, she works out of the bay area. She has a long-form poem called "Woman Slaughter," which is about the murder of her sister at the hands of her estranged ex-husband. And part of the structure of the poem is this play on words, he's not convicted of manslaughter and not even second-degree murder because as the husband, there is this weird understanding that the judge and the prosecutors supposedly have. Also recognition that because it was a black woman murdered by a black man that the courts may not see that as particularly as a crime in and of itself. No, no "person" involved, type of situation.

But one of the things where Pat Parker ends in that poem having said that all of these things her sister tried to do to protect herself, failed. Going to the police, failed. Moving, failed. He came and he found her, and he killed her.

And at the end of it, her sort of meditation of her loss, which she's working through, and she has given interviews and written about, and--she unfortunately passed away at the end of the 1980s from breast cancer--is that she couldn't. This was such a wound for her it took her years to write the poem, much less to read the poem in public. That poem ends on this note of righteous rage. And also of coalition building. I will not be silent, I will not stand by. And I will be--it's quite graphic--in the streets with my sisters with people's innards trailing after me.

I wonder where, and I don't have the answers for this, before we get to that point what can we do, and how can we transform that type of, that incredible loss and frustration into something that is useful right now, and in Ann Arbor, not just

on campus, but in general there are conversations about, and multiple people on campus including the School of Public Health who are doing work around this on anti-carceral community and public safety projects that are thinking about providing unarmed and non-police interventions.

So this idea of we need the campus police to keep us safe. We need them to do that. Honestly, stuff happens all the time without them. What are the other options and a lot of that is education and, as we said this, trying to overcome a real lack of imagination about what the possibilities are.

And so I don't know what, I don't have a good answer at all for where to go from this. But thinking about that if this isn't working, so even before we get to carceral logics are bad for everyone. They're certainly not helping, they're not solving the problem, and not preventing anything. How can we get individual community buy-in at the level of the individual, at the level of units and departments on campus, to make these things possible? Especially in the face of as Ruby gestured towards push-back from funders, from certain types of administrators, and ideas about what safety looks like.

And I'm really glad to see at least in some ways, especially in the anti-racism report, the ways in which those avenues are left open as ways that there is not only one way to address a problem or to prevent it.

LIZ COLE >> I would just like to talk a little bit about an example of where something is happening on our campus that I think is consistent with some of the concerns that we've been talking about. I don't think it pushes it as far as it could to have a truly intersectional analysis like having undertook those two task forces jointly.

But CRLT has a new training called creating climates resistant to sexual harassment. It's been developed by Sara Armstrong and Christy Simonian Bean with consultation with Lilia Cortina who is a psychologist in our psych department, who is probably the national leader on research on psychology of sexual harassment.

So this training is aimed at teams of leaders, so departments sent teams that ideally had the department chair involved. It was a significant investment of time, they did not frame this as a quick fix. There was a whole Canvas site of pre-work. Plus a workshop. The workshop was focused on putting that team together to talk about next steps. The pre-work also had many examples from the CRLT players that many of which were framed intersectionally. And the take-away is that the key to

Preventing Sexual Harassment is not the availability of reporting, it's changing the culture. And all of this was grounded in research. So I was very impressed with this. I was impressed with how many departments sent teams. It made me hopeful that we could be undertaking this in a more effective and less violent way.

ANNA KIRKLAND >> In our last few minutes I want to read some of the remaining questions and then leave it up to you as to whether in your last words you would like to respond to some of the questions or to something that other ones of you have said.

So we have a couple of questions about DEI practice and research. Folks are interested in hearing more about how to address the deficiencies in DEI practice. Eric asks that and Katie asks how can we help to guide DEI research away from individuals. Race, class gender, to systems like racism, capitalism, sexism, in fields just coming to terms with these systemic structures, e.g. STEM. Are there resources you recommend?

And then Joanna ask how does ableism fit into this conversation.

And so it's 2:52, I think that leaves enough time for a last word from each of you on any topic of the day that you choose or a response to those questions. And thank you for dropping those questions in.

RUBY TAPIA >> I really appreciate Joanna's question. Thank you for asking it. We were talking -- we have been talking about intersectionality, and how the focus on identity is or the kind of compounding of ism's, is not always that productive, and it's important to point out that I think that the gist and the importance of this question brings us back to those systems of normativity and white supremacy, and those systems also explain and account for the drastic discrepancies and in numbers and statistics and experiences of disabled people of sexualized violence and of racism. And so where it fits in as an important primary focus as an example of vulnerable populations, and also it brings up questions of access to reporting in various ways, and so I just wanted to acknowledge how important that question is, and it is part of the systemic ism's, we mentioned earlier on and important not to ever forget that.

Katie's question: how can we help to guide DEI research away from individuals to systems when STEM is just now kind of getting their heads around this is we need more cross-college, cross-school conversations hosted, supported and resourced. We

also need to acknowledge the labor, the disproportionate labor that falls on people who have expertise in these areas. Because and figure out how to reward that, how to have us be able to tap out, etc. Because there are people who walk around with this knowledge in a lived and embodied way and also an intellectual and researched way, in a credentialed way.

Because there are people who walk around with this knowledge in a lived and embodied way and also an intellectual and researched way, in a credentialed way.

But it becomes a reiteration of the hierarchy in a certain way, some of the relevant hierarchies where we get tapped out in terms of energy and labor. And that has to be acknowledged as well.

So it's, you know it sounds like oh, my God we went to this talk for an hour, and we were going to give you all these answers and all we gave you, there are all these problems. Really the answer is that we have to see the problems in the light of the complexity in which they exist and are formed. Or we are never going to change anything.

SARAELEN STRONGMAN >> And I'll just add you know one of the, I'm hesitant to say education is the issue but that sort of framing of if we're going to make changes we have to explain stuff to people. Because having been in meetings, talking about best hiring practices, when the line is but why can't we just shortlist everyone who went to Harvard, there is a lot of stuff in between that low bar and a really transformational approach to hiring, to life, to organizing and stuff like that.

So you know this is Pat Parker wrote an essay, it's not neat, short, pretty or quick but none of this is fast. If it was fast we would have already done it. We would be good. We would have had this event, this event could have been ten minutes. But unfortunately that's not what it is. I think that's the, we can start to identify or deal with this stuff by paying attention to it. And having conversations about it.

LIZ COLE >> Well I wanted to say, I wanted to speak to something we thought about in preparing for today that isn't stemming from these questions, but I wanted to make sure this got talked about today which is, where are there divergences between the two reports that we ought to be thinking about.

The sexual harassment reports talked a lot about respectful behavior and what we can do to facilitate that and enforce a norm of that. And I wanted to bring up, there is a critique of

civility, which I think the idea of respectful behavior could play into: whose behavior gets labeled uncivil.

Are some groups more likely to be perceived as angry or threatening when they speak their minds? Can this idea of civility be used to silence dissent, especially dissent expressed with emotion? And I thought about that when SaraEllen was talking about the anger in this poem.

If you start to think about that, I start to worry that we could have instances where charges of disrespectful behavior actually get weaponized against interventions around racism. I think that's a place where having these two task forces working together could have been helpful, and I wanted to leave that as an illustration of what the stakes are.

ANNA KIRKLAND >> I think we're going to have to wrap this up. I want to thank the panelist for their time for the engaging conversation and for all the work you are doing. Thank you to everyone who attended. This was a very well attended event. Even though it's not easy we see there is a lot of appetite to discuss this. That's really terrific and a reminder that Zoom is not so terrible. We would never have been able to do this at this, at this scale, in person.

We are committed to continuing the conversation and I want to remind everyone of NCID's writing opportunity for their magazine in their upcoming series which is about understanding sexual harassment through an anti-racist lens.

The series is being curated by Dr. Elizabeth Cole, our panelist today, and you can submit pitches through January 6th. And the link with more information will be placed in the chat. And yes, Ruby.

RUBY TAPIA >> Thank you so much everybody. I noticed there was a question earlier from somebody who is trying to do some work to change hiring practices or climate with staff. And maybe in HR, and I want to invite that person to email me directly. Because I can convey their concerns to the rise committee, and we're trying to turn a lot of our attention to staff experiences of climate, so if you're still here, please feel free to write to me directly about that.

>> Great, thank you everybody. It is 3:00, thank you so much for joining us. And have a wonderful afternoon and evening.