



Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995

Cheryl Higashida

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Black Internationalist Feminism examines how African American women writers affiliated themselves with the post-World War II Black Communist Left and developed a distinct strand of feminism. This vital yet largely overlooked feminist tradition built upon and critically retheorized the postwar Left's "nationalist internationalism," which connected the liberation of Blacks in the United States to the liberation of Third World nations and the worldwide proletariat. Black internationalist feminism critiques racist, heteronormative, and masculinist articulations of nationalism while maintaining the importance of national liberation movements for achieving Black women's social, political, and economic rights.

Cheryl Higashida shows how Claudia Jones, Lorraine Hansberry, Alice Childress, Rosa Guy, Audre Lorde, and Maya Angelou worked within and against established literary forms to demonstrate that nationalist internationalism was linked to struggles against heterosexism and patriarchy. Exploring a diverse range of plays, novels, essays, poetry, and reportage, Higashida illustrates how literature is a crucial lens for studying Black internationalist feminism because these authors were at the forefront of bringing the perspectives and problems of black women to light against their marginalization and silencing.

In examining writing by Black Left women from 1945–1995, *Black Internationalist Feminism* contributes to recent efforts to rehistoricize the Old Left, Civil Rights, Black Power, and second-wave Black women's movements.

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