

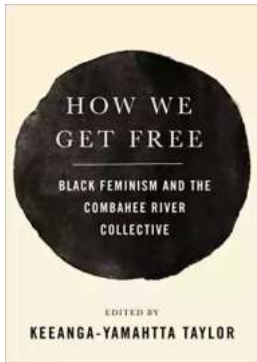
# Black Feminism And The Combahee River Collective



## The Beginnings of Black Feminism

Black feminism is a movement that emerged out of the intersectional experiences of Black women, striving for equality and justice for all. It has its roots in the struggles of African American women who, for years, had been marginalized within both the feminist movement and the Civil Rights movement. These women felt excluded from discussions and decision-making processes that primarily focused on the issues of white women or African American men, leaving their own unique experiences and struggles unheard.

One significant milestone in the history of Black feminism is the establishment of the Combahee River Collective. The collective, founded in 1974 by a group of Black feminists including Barbara Smith, Demita Frazier, and Beverly Smith, aimed to address the specific challenges faced by Black women and create a space for their voices to be heard.



## How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective

by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1642 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 183 pages
Lending	: Enabled



### The Combahee River Collective and its Impact

The Combahee River Collective is best known for their influential document, the Combahee River Collective Statement. This document, published in 1977, outlined their principles and highlighted their goals as a collective. It emphasized the importance of intersectionality, recognizing that the struggles faced by Black women cannot be separated from their racial and gender identities. It called for the recognition and dismantling of various forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, and classism.

The statement also emphasized the need for collective action and community-building. It highlighted the importance of solidarity with other marginalized groups, recognizing that the liberation of one group is interconnected with the liberation of all. The Combahee River Collective's work had a profound impact on the development of Black feminism, influencing future generations of activists and scholars.

## **Contributions to Feminist Theory**

The work of the Combahee River Collective played a significant role in shaping feminist theory. One of their key contributions was the concept of intersectionality, which recognizes that individuals experience overlapping systems of oppression based on their various social identities. Intersectionality helped to bring attention to the unique struggles faced by Black women and challenged the idea of a universal experience of womanhood.

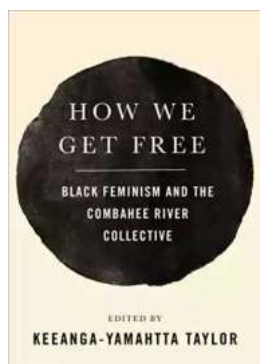
The Combahee River Collective also emphasized the importance of self-definition and self-empowerment. They advocated for Black women to define and prioritize their own needs, rather than conforming to societal expectations or relying on external validation. This emphasis on self-determination has been instrumental in empowering individuals within the feminist movement and fostering a sense of agency.

## **Legacy and Continuing Activism**

The legacy of the Combahee River Collective continues to inspire and inform contemporary activism. Their work paved the way for the development of Black feminist organizations and initiatives that center the experiences and needs of Black women. Many modern-day activists and scholars draw upon the principles and ideas put forth by the Collective to inform their own work and advocacy.

The continued activism of Black feminists is essential in ongoing efforts to dismantle systems of oppression and create a more inclusive and just society. The Combahee River Collective serves as a reminder that marginalized voices must be uplifted and centered in order to achieve true equality and freedom for all.

Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective have made profound contributions to feminism, challenging mainstream narratives and amplifying the voices of Black women. By recognizing the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and advocating for collective action, they have shaped feminist theory and ignited a movement that continues to fight for justice and equality. Their legacy is a testament to the power of intersectional activism and the importance of centering marginalized voices in the pursuit of social change.



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Black feminists remind us “that America’s destiny is inseparable from how it treats [black women] and the nation ignores this truth at its peril” (The New York Review

of Books).

Winner of the 2018 Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ Nonfiction

“If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free.” —Combahee River Collective Statement

The Combahee River Collective, a path-breaking group of radical black feminists, was one of the most important organizations to develop out of the antiracist and women’s liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s. In this collection of essays and interviews edited by activist-scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, founding members of the organization and contemporary activists reflect on the legacy of its contributions to Black feminism and its impact on today’s struggles.

“A striking collection that should be immediately added to the Black feminist canon.” —Bitch Media

“An essential book for any feminist library.” —Library Journal

“As white feminism has gained an increasing amount of coverage, there are still questions as to how black and brown women’s needs are being addressed. This book, through a collection of interviews with prominent black feminists, provides some answers.” —The Independent

“For feminists of all kinds, astute scholars, or anyone with a passion for social justice, *How We Get Free* is an invaluable work.” —Ethnic and Racial Studies Journal



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