

Introduction

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Abstract: The guest editors of a special issue of *Race & Class* 60 no. 3 (2019), 'Solidarity here and everywhere: the lifework of Barbara Harlow', provide a short biography of Harlow and discuss her key works: *Resistance Literature; Barred: women, writing and political detention*; and *After Lives: legacies of revolutionary writing*. They explain the importance of her work as 'a critic of both the world and the text' across disciplines, in establishing new fields of study, and as a reviewer. A symposium in October 2017 of former students had commemorated her path-breaking work in terms of decolonisation, imperialism and literature. Two of Harlow's unfinished book projects – on anti-apartheid activist Ruth First and on the challenges of drone warfare – as well as tributes from those who had been influenced by her teaching are flagged up. The authors explain why they choose the phrase 'solidarity here and everywhere' from Edward Said to title the issue.

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Race & Class

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10.1177/0306396818812671 journals.sagepub.com/home/rac

Keywords: Barbara Harlow, Cairo, drone warfare, resistance literature, Ruth First, 'Sequels Symposium', University of Texas, Austin

On 28 January 2017, Barbara Harlow, Louann and Larry Temple Professor of English Literatures in the English Department at the University of Texas, died of cancer, surrounded, as she often was, by friends and family, who, vodka tonics in hand, toasted her resilience and the political struggles to which she was dedicated. Barbara was an old friend of the Institute of Race Relations and a valued member of the editorial working committee of *Race & Class*. This special issue of the journal honours her work and her life.

Barbara Harlow was born in 1948 to Lawrence and Lucille Harlow in Cleveland, Ohio and remained close to her family, including her sisters Ann Harlow and Karen Kelleher and their families. She completed her undergraduate studies at Simmons College in French and Philosophy in 1970, and received a Master's degree in Romance Languages and Literatures from the University of Chicago in 1972. After time in Paris at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and at the École Normale Supérieure and in Berlin at the Freie Universität, she received her doctorate in 1977 from the State University of New York at Buffalo with a dissertation on 'Marcel Proust: studies in translation'. Her first academic appointment was in Egypt at the American University in Cairo (1977–1983), where she returned as Visiting Professor and acting Department Head again in 2006–2007. She taught at Wesleyan University, Yale University, and Hobart and William Smith Colleges before she arrived at the University of Texas, Austin (UT) where she remained until her death.

Over the course of her career, Barbara published three single-authored books, *Resistance Literature* (1987), the first English-language study of the fiction produced during Third World national liberation struggles; *Barred: women, writing, and political detention* (1992), a study of writings by and about women political prisoners in Northern Ireland, El Salvador, Israel, Egypt, South Africa and the United States; and *After Lives: legacies of revolutionary writing* (1996), which focused on the works of assassinated political writers Ghassan Kanafani (Palestine), Ruth First (South Africa) and Roque Dalton (El Salvador). In addition to hundreds of articles, essays and book reviews, Barbara was an important translator and editor. She translated French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's styles* in 1979 and Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani's *Palestine's Children* in 1984. Barbara's work as an editor was prodigious, producing six co-edited volumes: *The View from Within: writers and critics on contemporary Arabic literature* with Ferial Ghazoul (1994); *Palavers of African Literature: essays in honor of Bernth Lindfors, Vol 1* and *African Writers and their Readers: essays in honor of Bernth Lindfors, Vol 2* with Toyin Falola (2002); and three major documentary collections with Mia Carter: *Imperialism and Orientalism: a documentary sourcebook* (1999), *Archives of Empire: from the East India Company to the Suez Canal, Vol 1* (2003) and *Archives of Empire: the scramble for Africa, Vol II* (2003).

The enthusiastic reception of *Resistance Literature* led to numerous international speaking engagements and visiting professorships, including in South Africa and in Ireland, which Barbara, with her love of travel, took up with great enjoyment. While she had graduate students in many parts of the world, her teaching life was centred at the University of Texas, Austin. Arriving in 1985, only a year later in 1986, with her colleagues Bernth Lindfors, Wahneema Lubiano, and Ramon Saldívar, Barbara founded the Ethnic and Third World concentration, E3W (and its graduate-student journal *E3W: Review of Books*), which was dedicated to studying the literature of recently decolonised nations alongside the literature of ethnic minorities in the United States. As her colleagues described her:

Barbara's ethical humanism, commitment to liberation, and unswerving concern for the wretched of the earth became the common moral backbone for generations of graduate students who followed her into this comparative and cross-disciplinary field of study ... Working across disciplines, regions, and national languages – in close collaboration with colleagues in African Studies, the South Asia Institute, Middle Eastern Studies, and the School of Law – Barbara demonstrated the vitality and necessity of the Humanities in understanding the crises of the contemporary world, and building intellectual foundations for resisting them.¹

Barbara Harlow was an exemplary institutional citizen at the University of Texas (UT), Austin and beyond. In addition to co-founding the E3W program, in her last decade at UT she played an important role in the establishment of interdisciplinary undergraduate human rights curricula, where she led the human rights bridging discipline program and served as a steering committee member for thirteen years and as acting director in 2009 of the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice. Committed to the study of the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, there were very few corners of the social sciences and humanities on campus that did not benefit from Harlow's intellectual and organising energy. Barbara was a selfless and tireless fighter for the causes she believed in and for their institutional thriving in the academy. She wrote dozens of promotion and tenure letters over the years to ensure the establishment and continuity of Ethnic and Third World studies in university curricula, co-founded journals, served on editorial boards, and was a superb mentor to graduate students and junior faculty at UT and in the wider profession. As her good friend and frequent collaborator, Toyin Falola, the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin, noted: 'She fought the good fights and she did so with acerbic wit that made you pray she'd be on your side.'

While she had experienced serious health problems in the summer of 2015, her death in January 2017 came as a shock to the multiple communities that she had nurtured and helped to flourish over the decades. In the year following her untimely passing, memorial conferences were convened in New York by

her former students Emily Bloom, Joseph Slaughter and Jennifer Wenzel, now teaching at Columbia University; in Cairo, organised by Ferial Ghazoul and colleagues at the American University in Cairo, and in Austin by Barbara's colleagues at the University of Texas.²

On 27–28 October 2017, family, friends, colleagues, students and former students of Harlow's convened at a symposium entitled 'Barbara Harlow: the Sequel' to commemorate and celebrate her extraordinary life and achievements and to imagine how her path-breaking work will continue. In her last seventeen years at the University of Texas, Austin, Barbara had organised annually a 'Sequels Symposium', where distinguished alumni of the Ethnic and Third World Literature graduate concentration in the English department came back to speak about their current research and their personal, political and career trajectories since graduation. Over the years, it became Barbara's signature event, one that looked both forwards and backwards, that celebrated and anticipated, that honoured work done and held open space for work to come. This foundational capacity for reinvigorating the past in the service of the future was one of Barbara's many gifts and it was this spirit that animated the symposium. The Austin memorial – 'The Sequel' – with the large presence of so many former students, including Hosam Aboul-Ela, and some key colleagues from elsewhere, including Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Avery Gordon, was a deeply moving testament to Barbara's importance as an educator. Co-sponsored by the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice and its founding director, Karen Engle, the conference mourned Barbara's passing and celebrated her vital legacy. The event began with a trip to the new Barbara Harlow library, donated to the Arab American Educational Foundation, which is run by Aziz and Arwa Shaibani and located in Lincoln, Texas. And it ended with a living map of the geography of Harlow's influence as a generous but exacting scholar-activist of literary studies. Further testimonies and obituaries in venues as divergent as *Jadaliyya*, the *New York Times* and the website of the Institute of Race Relations grappled with the significance of Barbara Harlow's scholarly and activist contributions.³

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The testimonies on the IRR website and by IRR Director Liz Fekete reflect Barbara's importance to *Race & Class*. Barbara joined the editorial working committee of *Race & Class* in 2004, but she had been intellectually connected to the Institute since her first publication in the journal in October 1984.⁴ 'Palestine or Andalusia: the literary response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon' begins with the suicide in 1982 of Lebanese poet Khalil Hawi days after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut and shortly before the massacres at Sabra and Shatila. It traces, with Barbara's characteristic sophistication, the 'reinterpretation, crucial to Arabic literature, between poetry and resistance' this critical historical moment inaugurated. The combination of erudition, astute interpretation, political urgency and contemporary relevance in this early review became

hallmarks of Harlow's critical praxis and attest to Barbara's artistry as a book reviewer. She was nothing less than an extraordinary reviewer, a real crafts-woman, and prolific too: between 1984 and 2017, she wrote a total of thirty-two reviews and review articles for *Race & Class* alone, her final one written weeks before she passed away. As her bibliography attests, she wrote over seventy-five book reviews and review essays over her career. As both book reviewer and editor, Barbara made a significant and long-lasting contribution to defining the journal's distinct orientation to publishing articles that connect theory to the struggle against racism and imperialism. As *Race & Class* editor Hazel Waters said of her, 'she was singing from the same hymn sheet' and was always 'a joy to work with, professional, clear-sighted, and collegial'.

There's a good chance that Barbara might have rolled – or might be rolling – her eyes at all the tributes, and at the attention on her and on her accomplishments, because she always insisted that what mattered most was the intellectual and political work, work that is both collective and ongoing. Barbara Harlow's scholarly research and teaching touched so many people, helped shape so many conversations that it is impossible to do it justice in a single issue of a journal. The editors have struggled with this task. We see this issue of *Race & Class* not as the final word or comprehensive, but as part of the existing and future assessments of Barbara Harlow's contributions as a critical and politically committed scholar and teacher. In the end, we decided to foreground the two large unfinished book projects Barbara was working on when she died and to ask a small number of especially qualified authors to address the main strands of Harlow's published writings: archives/texts of empire and resistance literature.

At the heart of the issue is material from two of Barbara's ongoing projects – one of long duration, and one much more recent – that connect Barbara's seminal concerns. *Looked Class, Talked Red: towards a bio-bibliography of Ruth First*, the book on the South African anti-apartheid activist, historian and educator who was assassinated in 1982 was something that Harlow had been working on for decades. Indeed, one could say that Ruth First kept Barbara company throughout most of her career, providing a kind of intellectual friendship or kinship, and perhaps too a model of sorts, what Barbara would call a 'persistent example' of the scholar activist. In the excerpt, Harlow establishes a framework and a direction for writing an intellectual biography that is also a political history, what she calls a bio-bibliography. The excerpt is introduced by Neville Hoad who provides contextual and interpretive background. A photograph of the notebook Barbara used for keeping her thoughts and notes for writing the Ruth First book, which she kept within reach on her crowded desk, appears among the other photographs presented in this special issue.

Harlow's second unfinished project, titled *The Drone Imprint: literature in the age of UAVs*, she had only recently begun. We have created an annotated proposal for the book, based on the available and somewhat fragmented materials, which gives a sense of her intention to examine how drone warfare challenges various

aspects of human rights law and both demands and produces new narratives and literary/cultural representations. As Harlow put it, 'the once generic query "who-dunnit?" proposes now a literary critical revision of the narrative of ... humanitarian struggle in the age of unmanned aerial vehicles or the "drone imprint"'. Although Barbara did not have the opportunity to publish from this project, it's clear she intended to conceptually revisit her already extensive thinking on the nexus of human rights, humanitarianism and decolonisation.

Barbara co-edited three highly influential volumes with her colleague and friend, Mia Carter. The two-volume *Archives of Empire* published by Duke University Press in 2003 consists of a diverse collection of primary materials that provide a carefully curated documentary history of nineteenth-century British and European imperialism from the Indian subcontinent to the Suez Canal to the African continent. In 'In the archives with Barbara Harlow', Mia Carter astutely and engagingly describes the pedagogy of their collaborative work as they grappled with compiling documents from the past within the urgent history of the present, a history marked by the September 11 attacks of 2001, the war in Afghanistan, and the lead-up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The archives of empire and resistance literature often meet in prison in Harlow's work. The centrality of the experience of imprisonment and prison writings to resistance movements was a key chapter in *Resistance Literature*, the focal subject of Harlow's 1992 *Barred: women, writing and political detention*, and then taken up again by her in a set of articles and reviews addressing the US military prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba where prisoners from the war on terror are still confined. In 'The subversive pencil: writing, prison and political status', Avery Gordon revisits *Barred* for its significance to her own writing and for its contemporary relevance.

Barbara Harlow was probably best known first for her groundbreaking 1987 book, *Resistance Literature* and then, second, for her 1996 book *After Lives: legacies of revolutionary writing*.⁵ The significance of the first work in providing a new and critical way to read the literature of national liberation struggles and the revisions in Harlow's approach required by the demise of those movements and changes in the geo-political conjuncture are precisely and elegantly explored in 'Radical revisions: Barbara Harlow and criticism beyond Partition' by Salah D. Hassan. Assessing her work from 1992 to her death in 2017, Hassan foregrounds partition as a 'key category' of her thought, threading together places of importance to her - Palestine and Ireland - and her lifelong opposition to 'the strategies of containment in literary criticism that ... elevated universality ... over the "here-and-now" of historical reality'.

Hassan argues Harlow's 'attentiveness to partition questioned the myth' of a unified New World Order, heralded as the 'era of globalisation', and kept her agile in revising her thinking as the political-economic conjuncture that characterised the era of deolonisation shifted. In 'Methods for a neoliberal order: views on Yemen', Hosam Aboul-Ela takes up the theme of revision and insightfully

details the methodological unorthodoxies and shifts in Harlow's work as she confronted the post 9/11 world. This unique view on Yemen affords Aboul-Ela the opportunity to connect *Resistance Literature* to Harlow's new drone project and to link the anti-colonial struggle that created the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, almost completely forgotten today, to drone warfare in southern Yemen and the possibility of Yemen's 'utter collapse'. The result is an original view, generated from 'peripheralised spaces of globality', of what the 'drone imprint' looks like and what is required to oppose it.

Finally, we are grateful to Mehdi Mrabet, the Summer 2018 Barbara Harlow Intern in Human Rights & Social Justice at the Rapoport Center for Human Rights & Justice, for preparing the Bibliography of Barbara Harlow's works included in this special issue.⁶ Readers can also find a selection of ten book reviews Barbara Harlow wrote for *Race & Class* available for download at: http://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-rac/rac-1-barbara_harlow_selected_reviews/rac. The reviews were chosen by us to showcase Barbara's talents as a book reviewer and to complement the contents of this journal issue. In addition to Harlow's first review in 1984, the selection includes the important 2011 review essay, 'Extraordinary renditions: tales of Guantánamo', the lesser-known 2003 review of Joe Cleary's *Literature, Partition and the Nation State*, a 1991 review of *Hauling up the Morning*, very timely still today, several reviews of books pertaining to South Africa, including the 2015 omnibus review of *The Cambridge Companion to Nelson Mandela; Claim No Easy Victories: the legacy of Amílcar Cabral*, and *Ruth First and Joe Slovo in the War against Apartheid*, and a 2013 review on 'the language of Tahrir'.

The title of this special issue of *Race & Class* is 'Solidarity here and everywhere: the lifework of Barbara Harlow'. The phrase 'solidarity here and everywhere' belongs to Edward Said who asked his readers to 'remember the solidarity here and everywhere in Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia' and to also remember the 'just cause' of the Palestinians. Barbara took that phrase as the title of her memorial essay to him when he passed away.⁷ We return the title to her because like Said, she, too, was a 'worldly writer, a critic of both the world and the text', whose 'example' in commitment to the struggles for global justice, especially to the liberation of Palestine, to critical humanities scholarship, and to a life lived in harmony with her ideals also remains 'vital and vivid' today.⁸ At the Austin memorial in October 2017, Toylin Falola asked: who pays your debts when you die? Neville Hoad gave the answer in reminding the audience of Barbara's routine advice to 'pay it forward'. A debt paid forward is a debt paid not back to the one who gave a gift or a loan or something needed at the time, but rather is given or repaid or relayed to another who can use it. To pay a debt forward, in the way Barbara used the phrase, is to create a set of ties – shared interests, knowledge, objectives, and sympathies – that make of solidarity not a private possession or a pose but an ongoing and mutual labour of engagement and

political commitment *here and everywhere*. We hope that with this special issue, we are able to fully acknowledge our debt to Barbara Harlow and, along with our valued contributors, pay it forward towards the more equitable, just and peaceful future she worked so tirelessly for in her life.

References

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- 2 'Resistance literature – thirty years later ... now sponsored by the Columbia Law School', 12 October 2017 (<http://english.columbia.edu/events/resistance-literature-thirty-years-later-now>); 'Resist! In memory of Barbara Harlow, 1948–2017' (International Graduate-Student Conference) held at American University Cairo (AUC), Tahrir Campus, 24 February 2018 (<http://schools.aucegypt.edu/huss/eclt/Documents/RESIST!FinalConferenceProgram.pdf>); and 'Barbara Harlow: the Sequel', sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin School of Law, 27–28 October 2017 (<https://law.utexas.edu/barbara-harlow-the-sequel/>).
- 3 'Remembering Barbara Harlow', special segment of *Jadaliyya* (12 May 2017), available at: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/Search?keyword=Barbara%20Harlow>; William Grimes, 'Barbara Harlow, scholar on perils of resistance writing, dies at 68', *The New York Times*, 9 February 2017, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/09/arts/barbara-harlow-dead-post-colonialism-scholar.html>; 'Barbara Harlow 1948–2017', *Race & Class* blog, Institute of Race Relations, available at: <http://www.irr.org.uk/news/barbara-harlow-1948-2017/>.
- 4 Barbara Harlow, 'Palestine or Andalusia: the literary response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon', *Race & Class* 26, no. 2 (October 1984), pp. 33–43.
- 5 *After Lives: legacies of revolutionary writing* by Barbara Harlow doesn't receive the attention it deserves in this special issue. For a thoughtful treatment of the book, see Neil Lazarus's review in *Comparative Literature* 50, no. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 353–55.
- 6 The Rapoport Center established the Barbara Harlow internship in Human Rights and Social Justice, thanks to seed money willed by Barbara Harlow.
- 7 Barbara Harlow, 'Remember the solidarity here and everywhere', *Middle East Report* 229 (2003), pp. 4–7.
- 8 As Anthony Alessandrini pointed out in his affecting 'Introduction' to 'Remembering Barbara Harlow', the excellent commemorations of Harlow published by *Jadaliyya* (12 May 2017), 'the admiration between Barbara Harlow and Edward Said ... was quite mutual.... Committed critics, rare as they are, tend to recognize each other.' <http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/34274/Introduction-Remembering-Barbara-Harlow>.