

Mapping Caribbean Cyberfeminisms

Tonya Haynes

Caribbean cyberfeminisms are diverse, heterogeneous, and polyvocal. Networks may be simultaneously national, regional, global, transnational, and diasporic. Through practices of media creation, curating, (re)blogging, (re)tweeting, sharing, and commenting across multiple social media platforms, Caribbean feminist knit together an online community that is often linked to on-the-ground organizing and action. Online feminist practices are therefore rich archives for the study of Caribbean feminisms. To date, scholarly work on women's and feminist movements in the region has failed to document and analyze these practices and sites of activism. Similarly, Caribbean feminist critiques of technology and new media are not well developed. The essay attends to this gap by offering a partial and preliminary mapping Caribbean cyberfeminisms primarily through documentation and analysis of Caribbean feminist blogs.

The murder of Japanese pannist Asami Nagakiya at Trinidad and Tobago's carnival generated international headlines. The mayor of Port of Spain, Raymond Tim Kee, seemed to blame Nagakiya for her own death, couching the violence against her as a result of "vulgarity and lewdness in conduct," underscoring that "women have a responsibility to ensure they are not abused."^[1] Trinidadian women (and men) assembled outside City Hall to demand the mayor's resignation. They also shifted the public conversation on gender-based violence away from what they deemed "victim-blaming" and "slut-shaming" toward one of state accountability and respect for women's autonomy and bodily integrity. The leaders of the feminist organization womantra were among those identified as coordinating the protest action and media engagement. Womantra is one of the most vibrant, feminist Pan-Caribbean online spaces linked to on-the-ground action in Trinidad and Tobago. Such spaces serve as a key ground for mobilizing Caribbean feminist constituencies, as evidenced by their street protest and online petition with more than 10,500 signatures.

Thus, I came to the conclusion that the designer of a new system must not only be the implementer and first large-scale user; the designer should also write the first user manual.

The separation of any of these four components would have hurt T_EX significantly. If I had not participated fully in all these activities, literally hundreds of improvements would never have been made, because I would never have thought of them or perceived why they were important.

But a system cannot be successful if it is too strongly influenced by a single person. Once the initial design is complete and fairly robust, the real test begins as people with many different viewpoints undertake their own experiments.

Wibble

Blog Name	Blogger	Country	Categorization
1981: A Record of What Happened	Some of It/ DJ Afifa Aza	Jamaica	Personal-is-political, culture critic
Active Voice	Annie Paul	Jamaica	+Feminism, culture critic, witty
Diary of a Mothering Worker	Gabrielle Hosein	Trinidad & Tobago	Feminist-academic, media crossover, personal-is-political, culture critic

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Table 1 Caribbean Feminist Blogs and Bloggers

	Blogger	Country	Categorization
rd of What Happened	Some of It/DJ Afifa Aza	Jamaica	Personal-is-political, culture critic
	Annie Paul	Jamaica	+Feminism, culture critic, witty
mothering Worker G	abrielle Hosein T	rinidad & Tobago F	eminist-academic, media crossover, personal-is-politic

Table 2a Caribbean Feminist Blogs and Bloggers

Blog Name	Blogger	Country	Categorization
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Table 2b Caribbean Feminist Blogs and Bloggers

1981: A Record of What Happened	Some of It/DJ Afifa Aza	Jamaica	Personal-is-political, culture critic
Active Voice	Annie Paul	Jamaica	+Feminism, culture critic, witty
Add Fyah and Stir		Antigua & Barbuda/St. Kitts-Nevis/T&T	Personal-is-political
Amílcar Sanatan		Trinidad & Tobago	+Feminism
Antillean Media Group		Caribbean	+Feminism
The Bad Dominicana	Zahira Kelly/Bad Dominicana	Dominican Republic	curator
BattyMamzelle	Cate Young/BattyMamzelle	Trinidad & Tobago/US	Culture critic, personal-is-political
The Contessa Wears No Shoes		Trinidad & Tobago	Personal-is-political
Creative Commess	Soyini Ayanna	Trinidad & Tobago/US	Culture critic, personal-is-political
Diary of a Mothering Worker	Gabrielle Hosein	Trinidad & Tobago	Feminist-academic, media crossover, personal-is-political, culture critic
Feminist Aliens		Barbados/South Africa/US	Culture critic, feminist-academic, curator, personal-is-political
Feminist Conversations on Caribbean Life		Barbados/Caribbean	Feminist-academic, culture critic
Freedom by Any Means	Sherlina Nageer	Guyana	Media crossover, culture critic, personal-is-political
Generación Y	Yoani Sánchez	Cuba	+Feminism, personal-is-political, culture critic, media crossover
Groundation Grenada		Grenada	+Feminism, culture critic
Guyana Gyal	Neena Maiya	Guyana	Personal-is-political
The Guyanese Experience	Sara Bharrat	Guyana	Culture critic, personal is political, +Feminism
Jamaica Woman Tongue	Carolyn Cooper	Jamaica	Feminist-academic, media crossover, culture critic, witty

Table 2c Caribbean Feminist Blogs and Bloggers

The Mongoose Chronicles	Mar/Mar the Mongoose	Barbados	Culture critic, witty
MooreTalkJa	Carla Moore	Jamaica	Media crossover, personal-is-political, witty, culture critic, feminist-academic
Negra Cubana tenia que ser	Sandra Abd'Allah-Alvarez Ramírez/Negra Cubana	Cuba	Feminist-academic, culture critic
One Nation...Many Bodies...Boundless Faith	Colin Robinson	Trinidad & Tobago	Media crossover, LGBT , +Feminism
Paula Lindo		Trinidad & Tobago	Personal-is-political
Petchary	Emma Lewis	Jamaica	+Feminism
Red Ants		Trinidad & Tobago	Curator
Repeating Islands	Ivette Romero-Cesareo and Lisa Paravisini-Gebert	Pan-Caribbean	+Feminism, feminist-academic, curator
Rewind and Come Again		US/Guyana	+Feminism
Roots and Rights	Roberta Clarke	Caribbean	Personal-is-political, culture critic
Sheroxlox	Amina Doherty	Antigua & Barbuda/Nigeria	Personal-is-political, curator
Still I Rise		St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Personal-is-political, +Feminism
Thoughts of a Minibus Traveller	Vidyaratha Kissoon	Guyana	Personal-is-political
TillahWillah	Atillah Springer	Trinidad & Tobago	+Feminism, culture critic, media crossover
Under the Satire Flag	Kei Miller	Jamaica	Culture critic, +feminism, witty
Womanish Words		The Bahamas	Poetry blog, personal-is-political
Women Speak	WomenSpeak Project	Trinidad & Tobago	Curator

Table 2d Caribbean Feminist Blogs and Bloggers

Writing “D”	Debra Providence	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	+Feminism, poetry blog
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Feminist Positionality

The ways Caribbean digital griots identify online reveal a cyberfeminist practice that intervenes in dominant configurations of both feminism and digital space as Northern/Western, white, and bourgeois and that render Caribbean, feminist, and female voices as marginal. In their “about me” pages, many of the bloggers expressly define themselves as feminist:

This is me. Caribbean. Feminist, activist, poet, academic, educator, T-shirt graffiti artist.[³²]

I am a black feminist* and womanist and I prioritize black women & girls always. I often find myself revisiting areas pertaining to race, blackness, anti-blackness, culture and identity to name just a few.[³³]

Three fabulous Caribbean feminist cousin-sisters.[³⁴]

A feminist pop culture blog focused on film, television, music and critical commentary on media representation.[³⁵]

These feminist bloggers also articulate the critical and political importance of women's voices and spaces, and by affirming “me nun tak back nuh chat,” they defiantly lay claim to their opinions, analyses, and theorizing without apology:[³⁶]

Lover and defender of my womanness, Africanness, my Caribbean heritage, my Barbados, my right to take up my space and protect our space.[³⁷]

“Woman tongue, ‘was-was’ and tamarind tree, the three worse things.” —Jamaican proverb

Translation: The woman's tongue, the wasp and the tamarind tree sting the most.

This proverb suggests the potency of the female voice as an expression of incisive social critique.[³⁸]

Men also claim and participate in these cyberfeminist spaces, asserting, “Yes, I am a Rasta, Socialist, Feminist Caribbean Man. Above all, I am an Artist.”[³⁹]

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Tonya Haynes lectures at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit, blogs on redforgender.wordpress.com, and is a founding member of CODE RED for gender justice! and CatchAFyah Caribbean Feminist Network. She holds a PhD from the University of the West Indies and researches in the area of Caribbean feminisms and Caribbean Feminist Thought. Her work has been published in *Global Public Health* and *Small Axe: A Journal of Caribbean Criticism*.