

## New Media and Post-feminist Critical Pathways

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As a feminist blogger, I don't see new media existing in an exclusively post-feminist cultural climate. I notice renewed interest in contemporary feminist discourse around politics and popular culture in part *because of* new media's cultural ubiquity.

Yet defining the terms of feminism has grown increasingly fragmented with the coalescence of digital communication and the collusion with feminist and post-feminist subjectivities. Thus, I wonder how feminist and post-feminist criticism's online co-existence shapes ideologies. Often, through forums like the Frisky, Jezebel, and Double XX, these identities are put in dialogue with one another, suggesting an ongoing tension with how women define gender and identity politics, as well as their relationship with feminism.

This resurgence explains the formation of online supplements to print magazines like *Bitch* and *Ms.*, the creation of sites like Racialicious, Tiger Beatdown, and the F-Bomb, and the major cultural presence outlets like Gawker's Jezebel have in disseminating feminist rhetoric and ideology, however problematic, to a more mainstream readership. It is also evident in publications and individual writers' reliance on social networking sites, particularly Twitter and Facebook as well as BlogHer and SheWrites, to circulate ideas and written material amongst interrelated nodes of people.

Though the players are important, the trading of intellectual currency is even more remarkable. These resources distribute and generate discussion around discourses in gender, age, girlhood, generation, sexuality, transphobia, class, ableism, veganism, fat phobia, race, ethnicity, and feminism's exominated Western-centric white privilege. Recent offerings from Jess Yee, Racialicious, Womanist Musings, and Feminists With Disabilities provide relevant interventions for feminism through widely-read missives on Native American and black women's relationships with feminism and the necessity of people, but particularly feminists, to acknowledge and unlearn how they understand and interact with disability.

Yet, these contributions must be interrogated, particularly in terms of how the influence agenda-setting. Privilege continues to manifest and inform conversations in profound ways. Attention must also be paid to the emphasis on Western conceptualizations of feminism. The digital divide is still a concern. In addition to how class, gender, race, and geography continue to inform access to digital media and communication, we must also consider how the sociogeographical positioning of certain blogging communities and publications help determine what is deemed socially relevant content.

SEOs and Tweeting trends also determine content as publications attempt to maximize readership. Given the relentless nature of online communication, I wonder how the pressures of

breaking stories perpetuate regressive notions of female competition, as well as determine how stories are prioritized and placed in a hierarchy.

As a blogger, I often purposely find myself waiting a few days after a story breaks to formulate my opinions before contributing them. I also tend to “slow blog,” a term used for posts pertaining to outdated subject matter. As someone who writes about convergent music culture, I often slow blog about obscure or forgotten media ephemera with deliberate intent. I believe these sorts of posts contain political import as feminists should not only write about contemporary political and popular culture, but put relevant past contributions in feminism’s larger context.

Thus, something that writers who identify with feminism or post-feminism must acknowledge is how blogging itself is a marker of privilege. Admittedly, this is a tenuous position. Many bloggers—myself included—juggle multiple free-lance posts while maintaining a full-time job or attending school. Some bloggers, like Generation Meh’s J. Maureen Henderson, focus on the uncertain class positioning of the millennial’s paraprofessional class. That said, access to a computer and possessing the time and resources to write, research, cultivate readership, and maintain a viable cultural presence online are themselves indications of privilege.

I do not believe these interactions remove the necessity of more tangible forms of political action. Nor am I interested in determining whether digital communication can create a utopian environment, I am curious about the potential cultural impact feminism and feminist writers might have online.