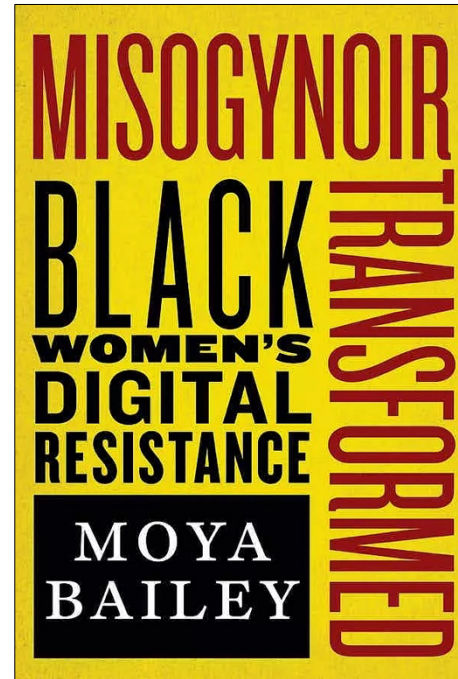


Moya Bailey, **Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women’s Digital Resistance**, New York: New York University Press, 2021, 248 pp., \$45.00 (hardcover), \$16.95 (paperback).

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Moya Bailey’s **Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women’s Digital Resistance** maps how “Black women and Black nonbinary, agender, and gender-variant folks” (p. 22) use digital alchemy as a praxis to transform their negative representation in mainstream and social media. Misogynoir affects public discourse against Black women and systemic health problems of Black queer and trans women. The book traverses compelling stories across social media platforms, deeply unpacking how they contribute to transforming “misogynoir” defined as “the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience, particularly in U.S. visual and digital culture” (p. 1). Furthermore, it links these stories to critical societal issues that sculpt gender and racial norms and stereotypes. While focusing primarily on Black women (defined inclusively within this text) in the United States, the book also suggests how the transformation made in digital public space can influence the tangible world we inhabit. Bailey argues that through new content creation, processes, and practices, Black women engage in a form of digital resistance that mitigates the harm of problematic images that society reinforces.



Bailey contends that misogynoir affects a multitude of vantage points of Black women’s lives. In the opening chapter, “Misogynoir Is a Drag,” the author investigates the denotative and figurative dragging of Black women and girls. The chapter navigates multiple levels of the dragging, which is constructed by racialized and sexist violence against Black women—“as an inseparable amalgamation of toxicity” (p. 37). Bailey critiques the use of Black women as vehicles of laughs, and they are often caricatured by Black men in drag—an embodiment of toxic masculinity. The perpetuation of misogynoir amplifies this toxic masculinity, leading to further internalization of misogynoir among Black women. Bailey observes that “social media has made it all too easy” (p. 45) for these harmful depictions to gain traction, ultimately leading to both physical and digital dragging of Black women and girls.

In chapter 2, “Transforming Misogynoir through Trans Advocacy,” Bailey delves into the concept of “realness.” The term defined in this book refers to “the repetition of behavioral and sartorial choices” (p. 67) that trans and queer people of color “embody” to make them indistinguishable from cis and straight people rather than “perform.” The author navigates hashtags such as #GirlsLikeUs and #FreeCeCe on social media to illustrate how misogynoir is transformed by generative digital alchemy using digital media and establishing a networked connection. Using Gephi for data analysis, Bailey reveals how these digital movements

contribute to a broader community building and transform “real representations of trans life” (p. 82), including critical areas like healthcare, housing, and employment issues.

The third chapter, “Web Show Worldbuilding Mitigates Misogynoir,” examines three web shows—*Between Women* (2011–), *Skye’s the Limit* (2013), and *195 Lewis* (2017)—that highlight the lives of Black queers without catering to a normative audience. These series not only center on the experiences of Black queers but also reveal how misogynoir is interwoven into their everyday lives. Bailey underscores that media “provides a little distance from the difficult topics people struggle to address in their own lives” (p. 131), allowing audiences to engage with and reflect on these real-life struggles. Significantly, the shows describe nonromantic relationships where audiences can engage more with their lives. Nevertheless, the author suggests that toxic masculinity should be elaborated far more thoroughly, as it still exists in Black queer communities and is not transformed into a reimagined concept of female masculinity. The importance of these web shows in the process of creating new content that challenges misogynoir is thus underscored.

In chapter 4, “Alchemists in Action against Misogynoir,” Bailey reminisces over the early days of Tumblr, expressing a fondness for the platform and its political significance as a conduit for Black individuals’ critical content creation. Despite its brevity-focused blogging feature and relative academic oversight, Bailey examines Tumblr’s facilitation of diversity within Blackness through interviews with users Danielle Cole and Antoinette Luna Myers. Cole articulates positive experiences on Tumblr, and Cole’s perspective posits that Tumblr is a vehicle to help Black people connect based on their affinities, which results in offline connections. Cole’s vision stands for “transformative justice principles” (p. 157), while Myers looks into visibility on the Internet, which keeps causing misinterpretations, miscommunication, misunderstandings, and misrepresentations. Myers understands Tumblr as an instrument for some users to educate a generation in social justice and is viable for making Black women’s accomplishments more recognized and celebrated to a broader audience. Through both thoughts on Tumblr, this chapter discusses how the reimagined transformation of misogynoir can be made with new tools.

The book concludes with several other cases of Black women as social media users. For Jane Oranika’s Twitter account to be suspended, the author argues a double standard reinforcing misogynoiristic content on social media, which is systemic racism. It is not yet the time to talk about solidarity as good enough. Misogynoiristic images and videos online, including the dragging of Black women and girls, are not often disputed and are circulated virally. As a result, transforming misogynoir is even more difficult, which makes them “frequent targets in the crosshairs of injustice and harm” (p. 180). The author questions the sustainability of the transformation. It can be achieved by people who keep liberating their visions. This transforming process is built on human relationships, trust, and shared values and results in the true transformation of misogynoir.

Bailey’s book is notable for its methodological rigor and insightful analysis. Each chapter methodically examines case studies in detail to track social media hashtags and activism within the context of identity politics. It implies how those disparate examples are connected throughout a more deeply rooted problem of discrimination against Black women and girls (e.g., health care and physical violence against Black women and girls). The book offers both granular and macroscopic views. It elucidates the multifaceted

nature of misogynoir and its necessary continual attention from academic disciplines like critical media studies, cultural studies, and social media studies.

Moreover, the book provides an invaluable perspective on digital culture and its practices by presenting a fascinating concept of digital alchemy as a way of digital resistance. In our digital world, harm and negativity look like they are growing by themselves; however, people make them. Digital alchemy's significance helps maintain the good, right side of digital cultural practices. It is not merely easy and quick to spread the content on social media but for those who have the same interest to duplicate it. As the book states, "Don't feed the trolls" (p. 153). Their power, these days, can be transformed into money and prevents people from navigating the flip side. Despite the sound role of digital alchemy explored in the book—"Incorporating transformative justice into a social media platform means getting the community of users to start thinking about its application in this digital space but also in their real lives" (p. 158)—its practices of making connections between digital and real worlds could be more addressed.

In addition to this, other points could be better examined. According to Cole, Tumblr is more attributed to online affinities than other social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) based on real-world relationships. However, the book, or part of the chapter, might thoroughly elaborate on those affinities and how they amplify offline connections between the different platforms to transform misogynoir as resistance in real life. These affinities can differ from generation to generation—Myers, the interviewee, mentions a great point. Different generations have different discourses, viewpoints, approaches, and practices to transform misogynoir. Affinities formulated on digital platforms might not necessarily come from the real world. This book could talk more about the different constructions of affinity and how they are related to new content creation.

The media texts analyzed by the author continually question the very notion of representational quality. The author's discourse reaches beyond the United States, echoing the struggles against misogyny encountered by women, girls, queer, and trans individuals in South Korea and its media. Merely focusing on increasing the frequency of visibility does not suffice; one false representation tends to be followed by another, often worse, creating a snowball effect, a point suggested in the book. These misrepresentations further pollute public discourse and exacerbate the struggles of these individuals, often demanding their sacrifice. Therefore, it is critical to scrutinize the media's role in perpetuating a plethora of false depictions, which serve to reinforce public misconceptions.

In conclusion, Moya Bailey's account of how digital alchemy transforms misogynoir provides thoughtful insight into the redefined realness of Black women, Black nonbinary, agender, and gender-variant folks' visibility proliferated by social structure and system and the positive discussion of digital media culture. It is a must-read book for those keenly interested in the amplification of these people on social media.