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Diversity, Difference and Caribbean Feminism: The Challenge of Anti- Racism:

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Abstract

The Caribbean, as with other parts of the New World, has been shaped by racialized constructs since the beginning of its modern history in the late 15th Century. Caribbean history is closely related to the emergence of modern racism, usually dated at the point of the encounter between Europe, Africa and the New World. Feminist scholars have contributed a great deal towards deconstructing the categories of 'race', ethnicity' and 'nation' and exposing their gendered character. Women, in particular, have been 'othered' in relation to each other and positioned as markers of "racial" 'ethnic and national difference. This paper analyses the changing ways in which feminist activists of the Anglophone Caribbean women's movement have addressed issues of 'race' and ethnicity. It examines how they have interacted, negotiated, and created alliances and coalitions or sought to challenge racialized hierarchies and divisions in their everyday praxis. The work of the early 20th Century feminists of the Anglophone Caribbean is addressed: women who were conscious of their African/Indian heritage at a time of great European colonial power. It also explores the anti-racist work of feminist activists at the end of that century, in the very different context of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana at the high point of the Caribbean Women's movement in the 1980s and 1990s.
