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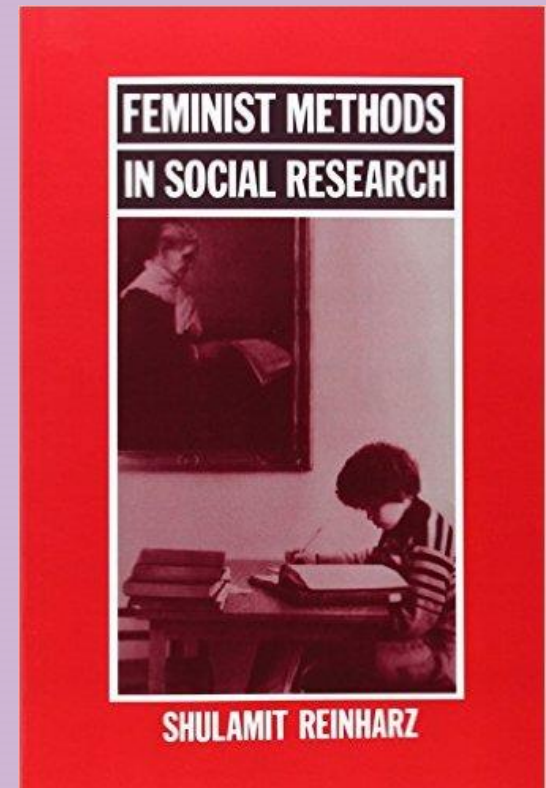
RHETORICAL (TECHNO)FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES FOR A DIGITAL AGE

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

REINHARZ'S FEMINIST RESEARCH TOP 10

1. Feminism is a perspective, not a research method
2. Feminists use a multiplicity of research methods
3. Feminist research involves an ongoing criticism of nonfeminist scholarship
4. Feminist research is guided by feminist theory
5. Feminist research may be transdisciplinary
6. Feminist research aims to create social change
7. Feminist research strives to represent human diversity
8. Feminist research frequently includes the researcher as a person
9. Feminist research frequently attempts to develop special relations with the people studied (in interactive research)
10. Feminist research frequently defines a special relation with the reader

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press. pg. 240

1. (RE)CENTERING
'FEMINISM IS A PERSPECTIVE, NOT A RESEARCH METHOD.'

"The tenets of feminist theory drive the kinds of empirical questions I pursue. Gender often provides the jumping-off point for my scholarship on politics and religion. For example, in studying religious disaffiliation, individuals' identification with non-religion follows distinctly gendered lines. Rather than being less likely to be non-religious altogether, women are actually more likely than men to call themselves "spiritual, but not religious." This critical orientation has allowed me to challenge truisms in my field and advance theoretical explanations by bringing gendered agency back into the picture. In this way, sometimes innovative research isn't about finding "new" information, but exploring existing phenomena and addressing how other scholarship isn't quite explaining those phenomena from different gendered (or racial, ethnic, classed, etc.) perspectives."

Evan Stewart, PhD Candidate, Sociology, Minnesota

2. (RE)MIXING
'FEMINISTS USE A MULTIPLICITY OF RESEARCH METHODS.'

"I advocate for feminist game design. I've spent a lot of time with the game *State of Decay* and am developing a project around that game as a model for feminist game design. To create that, I've come at the game from a **variety of angles**: creating quantifiable data on how the characters are dressed, as that's a much debated topic in post-apocalyptic games, but also cataloguing race, gender, and body type, ability level. Rather than stopping there, though, I've expanded with characters' positions within the game world, both persistent (rank, role) and player-dependent (who gets used as leader, etc). Also important is back story, how these characters fill this world and create it. **Micro-, meso-, and macro-level analysis are all important**, which is why insight needs to be built from multiple angles through triangulation of methods."

Alisha Karabinus, PhD Student, Rhetoric & Composition, Purdue

3. (RE)VISING
'FEMINIST RESEARCH INVOLVES ONGOING CRITICISM OF NONFEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP.'

"I think one of the most important things for me in scholarship is to **amplify the voices of those whose histories are erased by dominant narratives** of technology. recently, I've been working on code studies, and it's turned into a paper on the Navajo codetalkers of WWII as coders before the ARPANET systems managers of the 60s/early 70s. Instead of using the work of an often-cited male scholar in my field to talk about ambience, I use the work of a feminist media theorist, and this has turned into a theoretical framework for thinking about teenage girls' Web 2.0 practices. I cite who isn't usually cited. I **legitimize underrepresented voices using their own terms and conditions for academic work. And I seek out those stories that aren't told, or are told as less than**."

Krystin Gollihue, PhD Student, Digital Media, North Carolina State

4. (RE)VALUING
'FEMINIST RESEARCH IS GUIDED BY FEMINIST THEORY.'

"I try to honor the knowledge of everyone, **to see myself and everyone as starting from a middle place, the middle of a story that has important before-stories that help us/them move forward in meaningful and purposeful ways**... [this is a storytelling] approach grounded in an attention to relational work, or work that draws attention to the complex relationships among people, ideas, places, events, institutions, and things... However, within Professional and Technical Communication (PTC), the power of stories seems to have been overlooked or downplayed..." *(quote excerpted from Moore, 2013)*

The revaluation of marginal research practices, like storytelling, represents a feminist movement to bring partial and situated knowledges to the center of scholarly work.

Kristen Moore, Assistant Professor, Technical Communication, Texas Tech

5. (RE)CONNECTING
'FEMINIST RESEARCH MAY BE TRANSDISCIPLINARY.'

"One of the strengths of the program where I did my PhD work is that they're **not trying to create ideologues in their discipline**. While I feel like I have a very firm foundation in the field of writing studies, I draw broadly on training from gender studies, feminist STS [science/technology studies], digital humanities, and technical communication. That transdisciplinary training has really shaped the way that I see writing in situated contexts, and I that benefits my students and my research partners greatly. There are few people that have had enough experience in all these spaces to be able to anticipate the problems that arise when you put these transdisciplinary teams together. That is my area of expertise: **I see myself as an intercultural communicator between these disciplinary and industry partners**."

Dawn Opel, Assistant Professor, User Experience, Michigan State

REINHARZ (RE)VISITED ♀♀♂

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PHD STUDENT, RHETORIC & WRITING, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

In 1992, sociologist Shulamit Reinharz (pictured right) wrote *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, which is considered a foundational text on feminist research methodologies, detailing a variety of methods from ethnography, to interviews, to content analysis, to action research. In the book, Reinharz identified ten overarching themes that guide feminist research.

Now, nearly 25 years later, feminist methodologies are undergoing an expensive and pluralistic reinvention through the circulation of new feminisms through participatory, user-driven web 2.0 platforms. Here I update Reinharz's ten themes through the writings, research, and methodological commitments of 10 early career scholars who engage in feminist work on and with technology. In HASTAC's spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration, I highlight the work of scholars from many different academic homes. Their reflections provide insight into the state of feminist research in a digitally networked age, as well as practices that readers can adapt for their own research and teaching.

Shulamit Reinharz, Professor, Sociology, Brandeis University

6. (RE)SISTANCE
'FEMINIST RESEARCH AIMS TO CREATE SOCIAL CHANGE.'

"My research is feminist because I **consider the societal power structures contextualise the thing I'm studying**, with my fieldwork notes including attention to issues of race/gender/sexuality/etc. power dynamics.

While conducting fieldwork for my dissertation on environmental peacebuilding, **I have participated in various projects to aid my partner organizations**. The research itself is intended not only to inform discourses of environmental peacebuilding but also to advocate for the power of local forms of activism and to share the potential of environmental peacebuilding work for positive change. Throughout the process, special attention was paid to the voices of the marginalized, & the way the work can be leveraged to help local groups."

Rebecca Feinstein, PhD Candidate, Geography, King's College London

7. (RE)PRESENTATION
'FEMINIST RESEARCH STRIVES TO REPRESENT HUMAN DIVERSITY.'

"For me, feminism is less about any specific set of policies and much more about a method for doing politics and asking questions. It's holding oneself accountable to ask one questions over and over again — and that question is, **What truth or truths are missing here? Who is not being invited to this table?** This overarching feminist question of power and representation informs my research on the Armenian genocide, in terms of: 1) what are we saying about this phenomenon on multiple levels?; 2) what's the relationship of the people contributing to this conversation to what they're discussing, and what do they stand to gain or lose from their argument; 3) what's not being said; and 4) how are we using language to avoid conversations or shield the public from particular justice and equity concerns?"

Robin Danielsdottir, PhD Student, English, Illinois Arizona

8. (RE)FLEXIVITY
'FEMINIST RESEARCH FREQUENTLY INCLUDES THE RESEARCHER AS A PERSON.'

"Feminist research recognizes that the investigator cannot bracket their standpoint or subject position: there is no such thing as value-neutral, objective research. Instead, you must be upfront about your role in your scholarship.

I've found that a great way to engage with my own position in my work is to **keep research memos or a research journal**. When conducting my master's thesis research on internet porn, I employed a talk-aloud protocol and audio-recorded my reactions to the content I was watching. Not only did it enable me to keep a critical eye toward my own position in the work, but it also helped me to practice self-care as I closely analyzed pornographic content for potentially triggering elements like violence and misogyny."

Allegra W. Smith, PhD Student, Rhetoric & Writing, Arizona State

9. (RE)CIPROCITY
'FEMINIST RESEARCH FREQUENTLY ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE STUDIED.'

"As a scholar who works directly with people by listening, collecting, preserving, and analyzing their literacy narratives, I am often concerned with research ethics. Am I **working with the storyteller to ensure that their stories are represented in a way that illustrates their material realities?** Am I decentering my own opinions to give them the attention they deserve? To address these questions, I turn to rhetorical listening, invitational rhetorics, and feminist ethnographic methods for collecting narratives. They remind me of how important it is to continuously question my epistemology, my methodology, and my ethics when I am invited into communities and they share their stories with me. Listening helps me to seek to understand, not just document, their stories."

Gavin Johnson, PhD Student, Rhetoric, Composition & Literacy, Ohio State

10. (RE)LATIONSHIPS
'FEMINIST RESEARCH FREQUENTLY DEFINES A SPECIAL RELATION WITH THE READER.'

Readers can (and many would argue, should) involve members of the community beyond the walls of the university.
"The main reason that my research is feminist is because it actively depends upon the relationships I have with other women who are community members of this project: The ART of Infertility. In *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* (Royster & Kirsch, 2013), critical imagination emerges as an inquiry tool that invites one to 'see the noticed and the unnoticed, rethinking what is there and not there, and speculating about what could be there instead.' **Participation of community members can reorient our expectations of who should occupy academic spaces and further what knowledges count as valid or can be heard in those spaces. This is why I bring my community partner to academic spaces.**"

Maria Novotny, PhD Candidate, Culture, Rhetoric & Technology, Michigan State

REINHARZ, REVISITED

(Re)centering

(Re)sistance

(Re)mixing

(Re)presentation

(Re)vising

(Re)flexivity

(Re)valuing

(Re)ciprocity

(Re)connecting

(Re)lations

Methodological Tactics

(Re)centering
(Re)mixing
(Re)vising
(Re)valuing
(Re)connecting
(Re)sistance
(Re)presentation
(Re)flexivity
(Re)ciprocity
(Re)lations

REINHARZ, REMIXED

(RE)PRESENTATION
of marginal lives, perspectives, & communities

(RE)VALUING
digital stories & practitioner theory

TECHNOFEMINIST METHODOLOGICAL TACTICS

(RE)CIPROCITY
through participatory design & data coding

(RE)FLEXIVITY
mapping positionality, engaging in embodied interpretation

(RE)PRESENTATION

- Bringing partial or situated knowledges to the center of scholarly work

- Asking "What truth or truths are missing here? Who is not being invited to this table?"

- Sano-Franchini, Sackey, and Pigg (2012) explain that the inclusion of voices typically underrepresented in academic literature helps to "decentralize the hierarchy of the academy," dismantling traditional masculine, authoritarian, and top-down models of knowledge creation

# MS. NAUGHTY & THE MALE GAZE

- <u>The Headless Dick</u>: the camera regularly cuts the male body out of the frame, focusing solely on the phallus
- <u>It's All About Her Body</u>: the camera mainly focuses on the female performer and her body parts
- <u>Always Male POV</u>: the camera typically captures sex from a male point-of-view (POV); "the woman is always looked *at*, she never *looks*"
- <u>Oral = Blowjob</u>: pornography prioritizes fellatio; cunnilingus is comparatively rare, and receives much less screen time if it is present at all
- <u>Male Orgasm is the Goal</u>: male orgasm is prioritized over female orgasm and nearly every scene ends with ejaculation, typically external, often on the woman's face
- <u>His Fantasy</u>: scenarios portrayed in porn typically reflect male, not female, sexual fantasies (Ms. Naughty, 2014)

ELLEN CUSHMAN (CE, 1999)

[When] university representatives tend to esteem their own brand of knowledge more than popular forms of knowledge, they deepen the schism between universities and communities... the production of legitimate (specialized, publishable, esoteric, academic) language... gains material, cultural, and symbolic capital by implicitly devaluing nonstandard (colloquial, vernacular, common, vulgar) language...

Public intellectuals challenge the value system of academe by starting with the assumption that all language use and ways of knowing are valuable and worthy of respect.
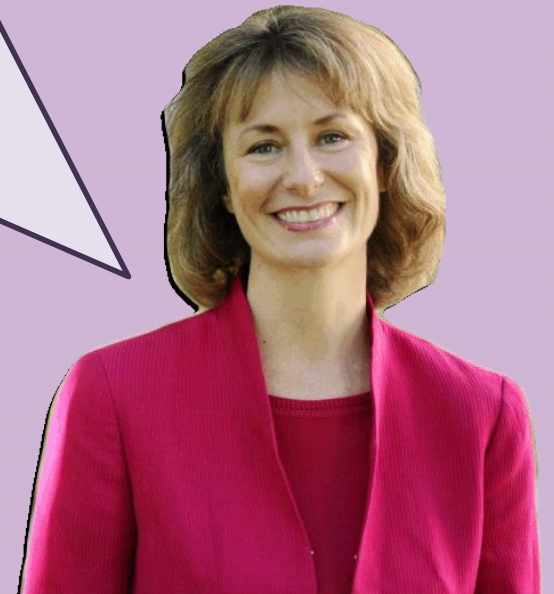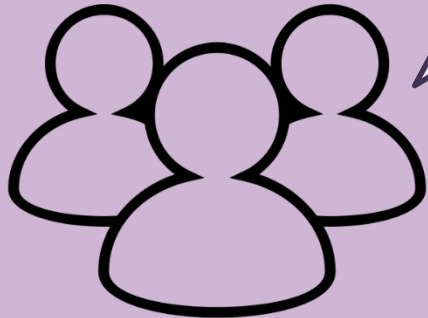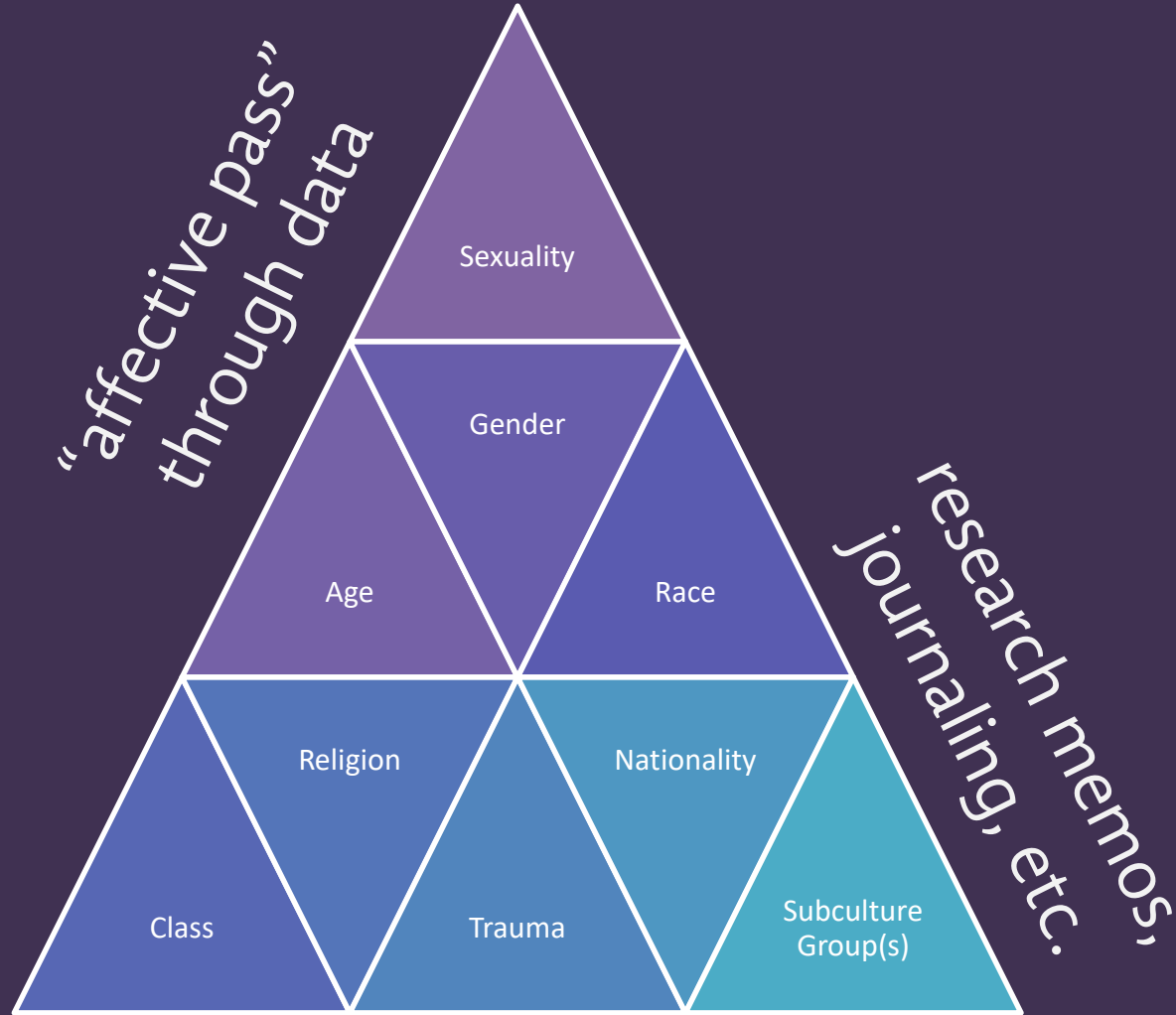
Participatory design means recognizing that the designer does not know all, and that they cannot create the ultimate deliverable that works for everyone... while designers may have certain expertise, users hold expertise too... Part of that is being able to help people articulate what they need. If you listen empathetically, oftentimes you can figure out what they're doing. You have to work together.

"affective pass" through data

research memos, journaling, etc.

Sexuality

Gender

Age

Race

Religion

Nationality

Class

Trauma

Subculture Group(s)

- Methodological tactics // tactical methodologies
    - Remixing heterogeneous methods to create change from below—to challenge institutional hierarchies, and to amplify the voices of those typically underrepresented or underserved by the academy

Questions? Ideas? Want to contribute?
Let's chat. @argella / allegra-w-smith.com

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