



ATGENDER - ECRs SERIES 2 - EVENT 1

Tips and Tricks on Writing

March 21, 4.00-5.30 pm CET

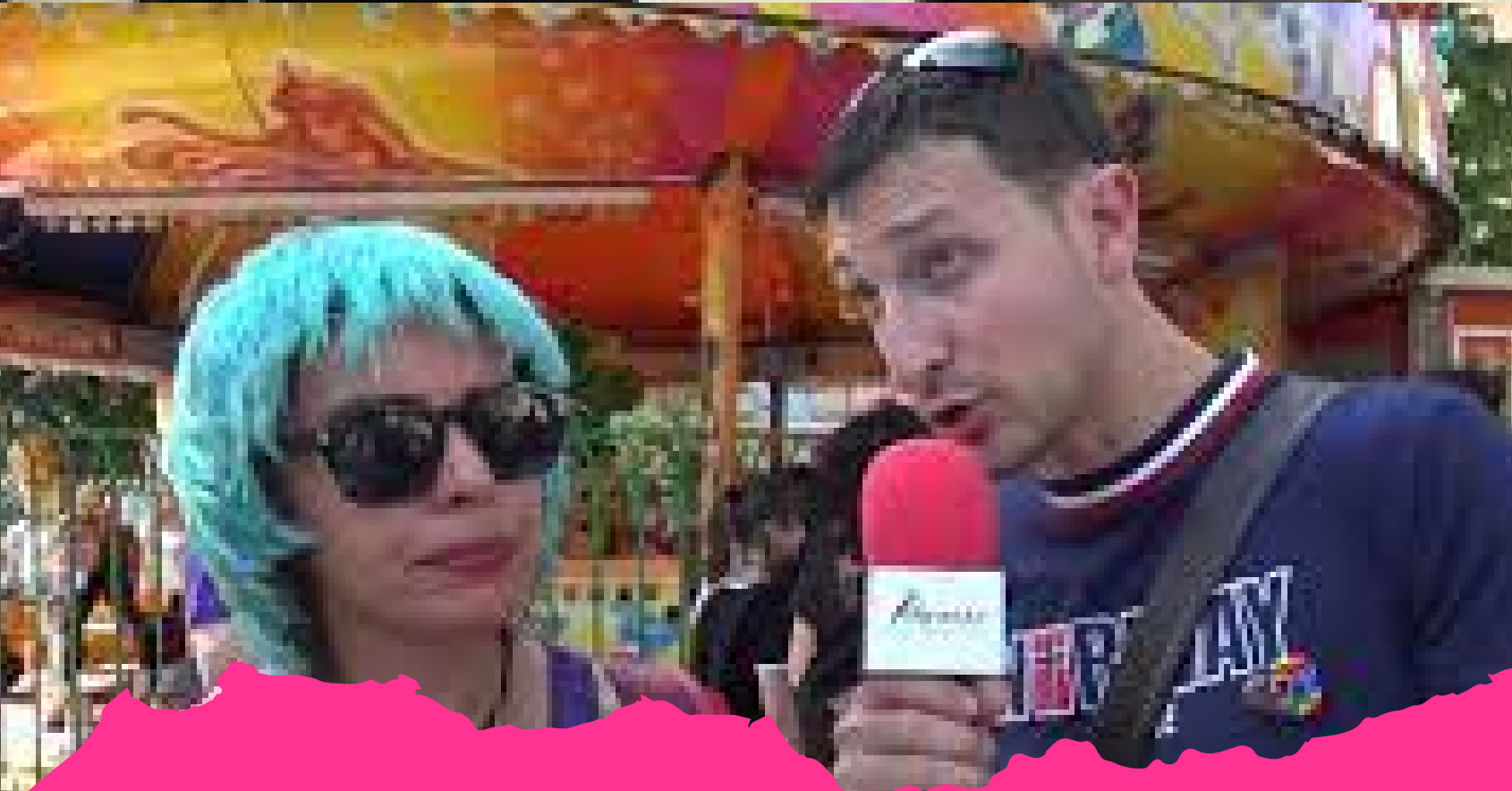
**GIOVANNA
VINGELLI**

Centro di Women's Studies "Milly Villa"
Università della Calabria



WHO AM I?

This talk is presented by a white, cisgender feminist sociologist. I am from one of the South of the world - a 'marginal' university.



I acknowledge my many unearned privileges, with shape my ability to present this information, and remain indebted to friends, colleagues, activists who have shaped my understanding of these issues

ACADEMIC WRITING



The expository, argument-based text adherent to disciplinary conventions and ‘performing’ for an audience

Writing and style manuals number in the hundreds, from classics like E.B. White and William Strunk Jr.’s *The Elements of Style* (1909) to more recent guides like Arthur Plotnik’s *Spunk and Bite: A Writer’s Guide to Punchier, More Engaging Language and Style* (2005) and Umberto Eco, “How to write a thesis” (2015) (it. *Come si scrive una tesi di laurea*, 1977).

These guides exist both for student writers hoping to learn a brand new skill and for professional academics seeking help in publishing their work

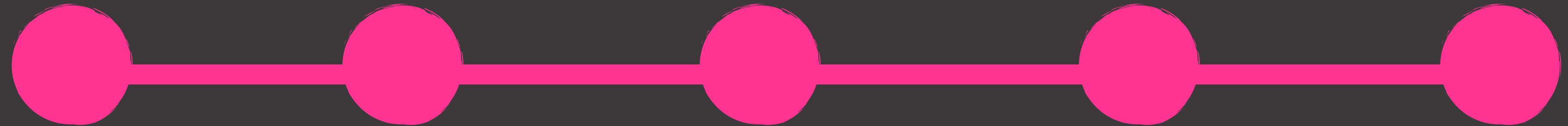
HOW TO WRITE (ECO, 1977)

Once we have decided to whom to write (to humanity, not to the advisor), we must decide how to write, and this is quite a difficult question. If there were exhaustive rules, we would all be great writers. I could at least recommend that you rewrite your thesis many times, or that you take on other writing projects before embarking on your thesis, because writing is also a question of training. Some general suggestions:

1. DO NOT WRITE LONG SENTENCES
2. BEGIN NEW PARAGRAPHS OFTEN
3. WRITE EVERYTHING THAT COMES INTO YOUR HEAD (BUT ONLY IN THE FIRST DRAFT)
4. USE THE ADVISOR AS A GUINEA PIG
5. DO NOT INSIST ON BEGINNING WITH THE FIRST CHAPTER
6. DO NOT EXPLAIN IRONIES
7. ALWAYS DEFINE A TERM WHEN YOU INTRODUCE IT FOR THE FIRST TIME

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

AND WRITE!



1. PICK AN INTERESTING TOPIC

2. DO PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

- what research is already published in the area?
- what questions are being raised in the research?
- where are the gaps?

3. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who are they?
- Is the question of interest to them?

4. START ASKING QUESTIONS

- Open ended how and why questions to narrow the focus

5. EVALUATE YOUR QUESTION

- Is it clear?: Is it understandable and will be able to provide direction to the researcher?
- Is it focused?: Is the question narrow enough to be answered in the paper/essay?
- Is it complex?: Does it go beyond a simple "yes" or "no" question to require research and analysis?

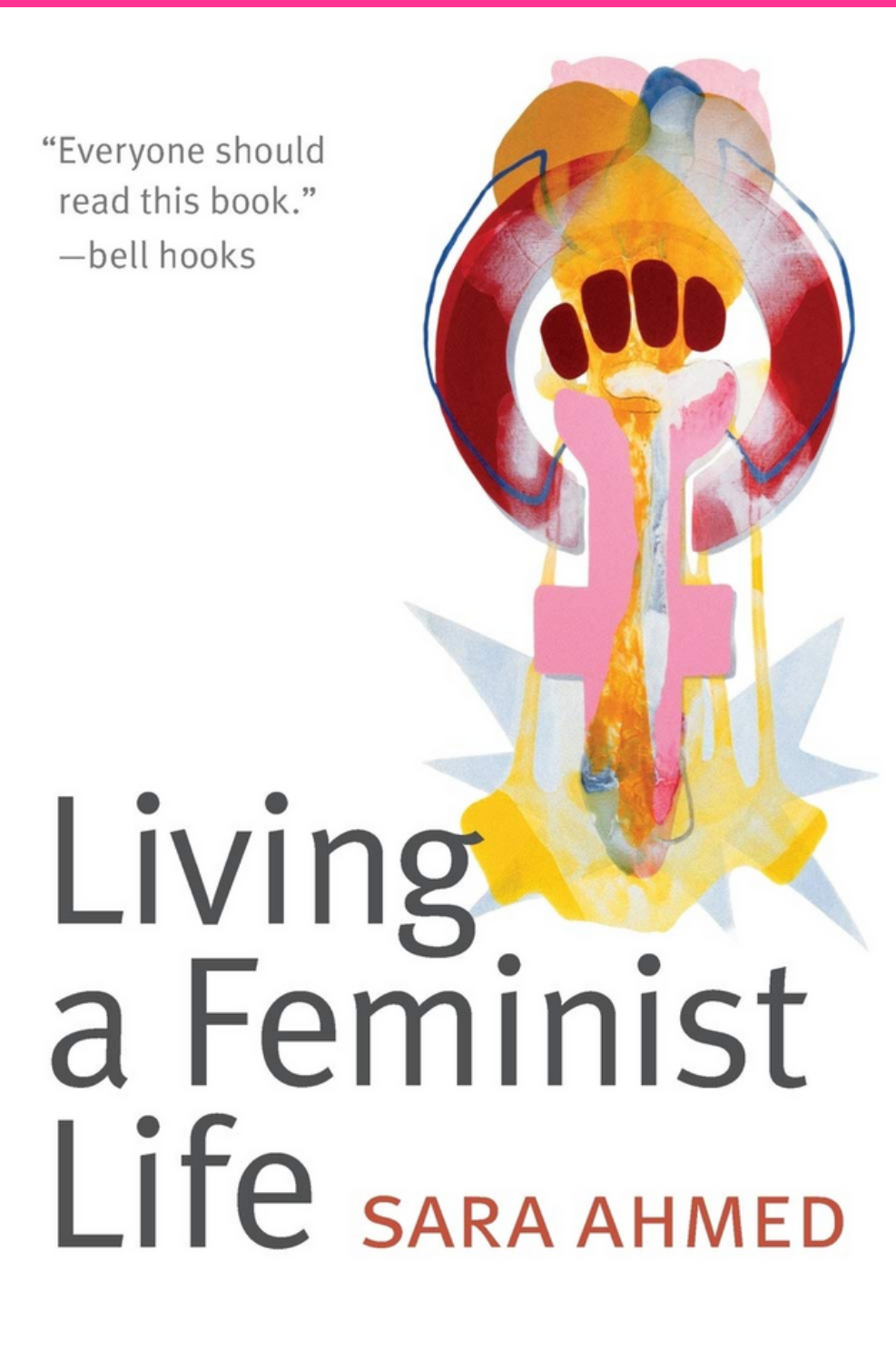
3. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

1. Performance
2. Metrics of success
3. Discursive violence

2. DO PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

1. Citing prior work in the field
2. Feminist citation practices





CITATION POLICY

"In this book, I adopt a strict citation policy: I do not cite any white men. By white men I am referring to an institution [...]. Instead, I cite those who have contributed to the intellectual genealogy of feminism and antiracism, including work that has been too quickly (in my view) cast aside or left behind, work that lays out other paths, paths we can call desire lines, created by not following the official paths laid out by disciplines. These paths might have become fainter from not being traveled upon; so we might work harder to find them; we might be willful just to keep them going by not going the way we have been directed.

My citation policy has given me more room to attend to those feminists who came before me. Citation is feminist memory. Citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow. In this book, I cite feminists of color who have contributed to the project of naming and dismantling the institutions of patriarchal whiteness. I consider this book primarily as a contribution to feminist of color scholarship and activism; this body of work is where I feel most at home, where I find energy as well as resources.

Citations can be feminist bricks: they are the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings. My citation policy has affected the kind of house I have built."

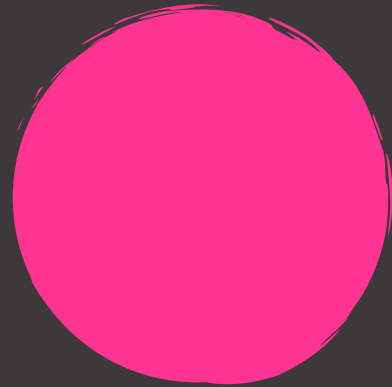
(Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 2017, 15-16)



4./5 ASKING AND EVALUATING QUESTIONS

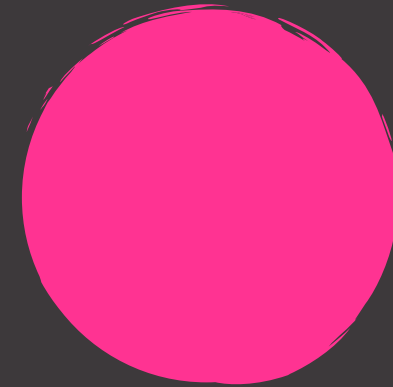
1. What type of voice, what level of intimacy, is accepted in professional, academic writing?
2. It's not the topic that defines you, but the approach and methodology you use
3. A feminist canon?
4. The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House?

K.K Bhavnani. 1993. “Tracing the Contours: Feminist Research and Feminist Objectivity.” Women’s Studies International Forum 16 (2): 95–104



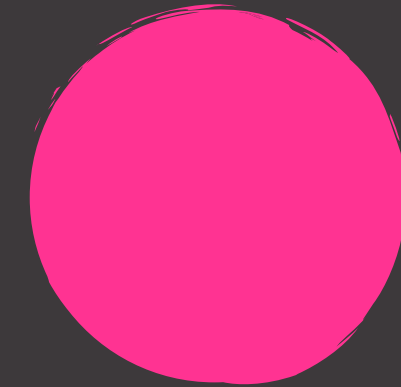
ACCOUNTABILITY

Feminist research should not ‘reproduce the researched in ways in which they are represented within dominant society



POSITIONALITY

the researcher foregrounds the micropolitical processes at play during the research encounter



DIFFERENCE

to deal openly with questions of difference in the research and its reporting

Writing critically with and from multiple, informed sources.

This does not mean that:

**YOU WRITE ABOUT THINGS
YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT**

**YOU WRITE AS IF YOU SOUND LIKE AN
ENCYCLOPEDIA**

**YOU CANNOT WRITE
OUTSIDE THE BOX**

**YOU OMIT YOUR OWN
VOICE AND PERSPECTIVE**

**YOU CANNOT BE CREATIVE
AND ENERGETIC**

**AND
HAVE
SOME
FUN
WITH
IT**





FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"While feminist researchers can strive for the ideal feminist research process, there often exists a large gap between the reality and ideal goals of doing feminist research.

While a desire maybe to promote equality in the research process [...] and to enact social change and transformation, many barriers confront feminist researchers from achieving these aims" (Brayton, Jennifer, Michele Ollivier, and Wendy Robbins. "Introduction to Feminist Research."

<https://www2.unb.ca/parl/research.htm>)

SLOW SCHOLARSHIP

1. Take into account what others don't
2. Take care
3. Make time to write differently
4. Reach for the minimum

Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., Basu, R., Whitson, R., Hawkins, R., Hamilton, T., & Curran, W. (2015). For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 14(4), 1235-1259..

BITS OF WRITING ADVICE FROM SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR AND LATINA FEMINIST GROUP

1. Write To Stay Sane
2. Be Prepared To Shock ("The second Sex")
3. Let Your Ideas Percolate ("Force of Circumstances")
4. "Writing... is a profession that can only be learned by writing" ("The Prime of Life")
5. Collaborative writing/Co-authorship
6. Writing groups
7. Value the partnerships



**BUT LET'S BE HONEST:
WRITING IS ALWAYS
DIFFICULT.
IT NEVER EVER GOES
QUITE TO PLAN.
IN FACT, WRITING SEEM
TO ACTIVELY RESIST
CAREFUL PLANNING
ATTEMPTS.**

No Gantt chart survives first contact with twin enemies of task and time. Research work (and writing) is unpredictable: experiments don't go to plan, interviews take longer to set up than you think, that archive is only open between May and September, you are simply stuck and bored... there's always something.

1. Foreseen uncertainties
2. Unforeseen uncertainties
3. Chaotic, or turbulent uncertainty

1. Ask yourself: is there any information gap?
 2. Try running parallel experiments, lines of inquiries or methods to see which will work
 3. Understand that research involves iteration and constant learning from feedback
- Recognise that most research projects cannot be fully planned in advance – but planning is still essential

Loch, C., Meyer, A. ., & Pich, M. T. (2006). Managing the unknown: A new approach to project risk management. Hoboken, N.J: Wiley. Chicago

Software for managing research

Managing literature: [EndNote](#), [Zotero](#), [Mendeley](#)
Lab books: [SciNote](#), [Benchling](#), [Rspace](#)
Mind mapping: [Scapple](#), [SimpleMind](#), [XMind](#)
Task management: [Trello](#), [Asana](#), [OmniFocus](#),
Time tracking apps: [Toggl](#), [Timing app](#), [RescueTime](#)
Writing: [Latex](#), [MS Word](#), [Scrivener](#)
Web databases: [EverNote](#), [OneNote](#), [Pocket](#)
Cloud Storage for backups: [Google Drive](#), [Dropbox](#), [Box](#)
Phone widgets: [Camscanner](#), [Anylist](#), [BOM app](#),

The background is a solid pink color. There are two large, dark grey circles. One circle is in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. They are partially cut off by the edges of the frame.

GRAZIE!

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