



# Feminist epistemologies

ECIU University

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*Bruna Alvarez – SexAFIN*

*Estel Malgosa - SexAFIN*

*[afin-barcelona.uab.cat](http://afin-barcelona.uab.cat)*



# Feminist epistemologies

A reflection on power relations during research

How scientific knowledge is produced, and which inequalities it reproduces?

- Who?

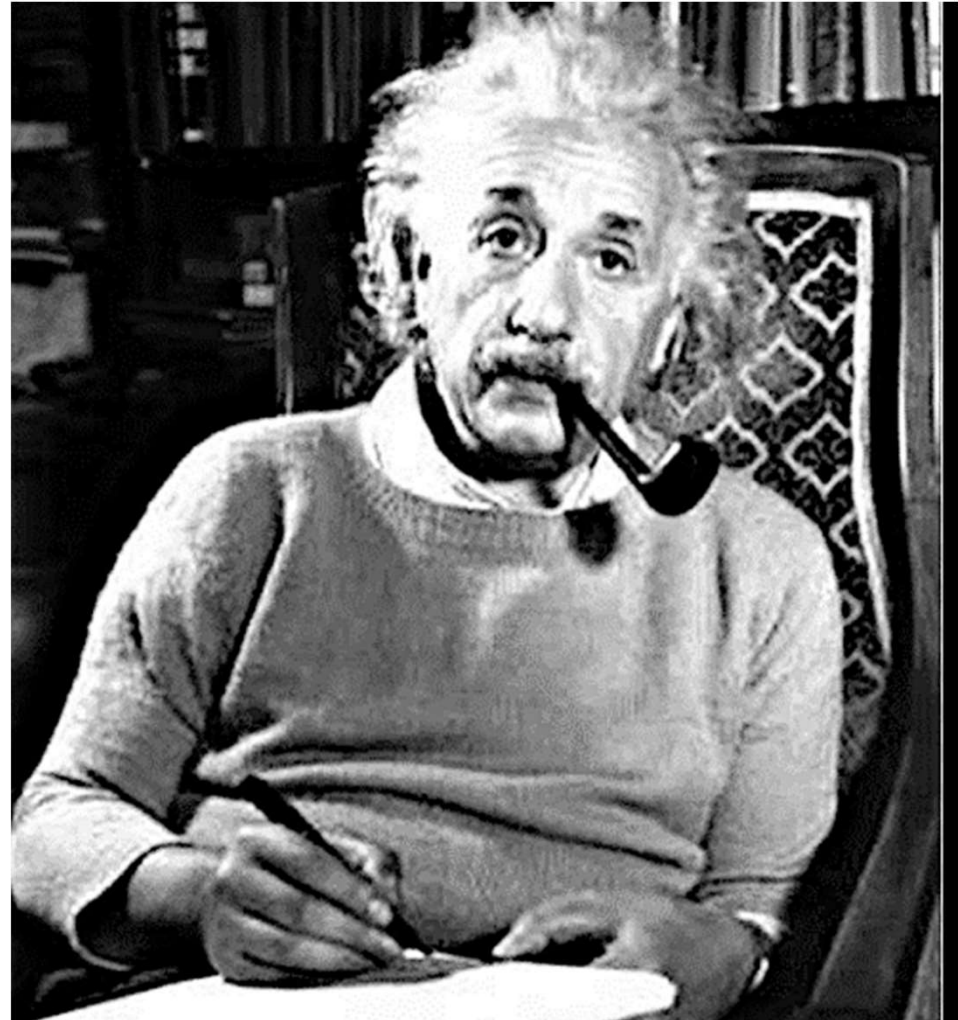
# Haraway, Donna (1988)

- They – embodied others
- objectivity is the ideological frame of power relations in research
- Who is she?



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# Haraway, Donna (1988)

- They – embodied others
- objectivity is the ideological frame of power relations in research
- Who is she?
- Mileva Marić
- Do you know her?
- Why we know her ex-Husband contribution in science, but we don't know what she did?



# Engineering and gender

- [Dr. Sarah Ssali: Why Gender Sensitive Research is Important: Engineering and Infrastructure Examples](#)
- In this example “abstract masculinity” is the necessity of building a road.
- The embodied others take into account the consequences in people’s life if the road cross the village
- Do you think that there are other ways of building the road? What would you do?

## Haraway, Donna (1988)

"Objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment" (Haraway, 1988: 582).

"The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. All Western narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility. **Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge**, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allow us to become answerable for what we learn how to see (Haraway, 1988: 583).



# Who is Donna Haraway?

**Donna J. Haraway** is an American professor emerita in the [history of consciousness](#) and [feminist studies](#) departments at the [University of California, Santa Cruz](#), and a prominent scholar in the field of [science and technology studies](#). She has also contributed to the intersection of information technology and [feminist theory](#), and is a leading scholar in contemporary [ecofeminism](#). Her work criticizes [anthropocentrism](#), emphasizes the self-organizing powers of nonhuman processes, and explores dissonant relations between those processes and cultural practices, rethinking sources of ethics.<sup>[2]</sup>

Haraway has taught [women's studies](#) and the [history of science](#) at the [University of Hawaii](#) (1971-1974) and [Johns Hopkins University](#) (1974-1980).<sup>[3]</sup> She began working as a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1980 where she became the first tenured professor in feminist theory in the United States.<sup>[4]</sup> Haraway's works have contributed to the study of both human-machine and [human-animal](#) relations. Her work has sparked debate in [primatology](#), [philosophy](#), and [developmental biology](#).<sup>[5]</sup> Haraway participated in a collaborative exchange with the feminist theorist [Lynn Randolph](#) from 1990 to 1996. Their engagement with specific ideas relating to feminism, [technoscience](#), political consciousness, and other social issues, formed the images and narrative of Haraway's book *Modest\_Witness* for which she received the [Society for Social Studies of Science's](#) (4S) [Ludwik Fleck Prize](#) in 1999.<sup>[6][7]</sup> She was also awarded the Section on Science, Knowledge and Technology's Robert K. Merton award in 1992 for her work *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*.<sup>[8]</sup> In 2017, Haraway was awarded the [Wilbur Cross Medal](#), one of the highest honors for alumni of [Yale University](#).<sup>[9]</sup>

**Donna Haraway**



Donna Haraway (2006)



# Donna Haraway contributions

- ***Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science (1990)*** stems from Haraway's ten-year investigation of the various studies of monkeys and apes that have been conducted in the 20th century.
- **In this monumental and loosely chronological account of the history of primatology, Haraway notes the evolution of scientific views toward primates. She asserts monkeys and apes, which were once seen as nonhuman primates, are now viewed as our ancestors in part because of our embarrassment in claiming marginalized "others," like primitive African tribesmen, as ancestors. (...)**



# Donna Haraway contributions

- Haraway also discusses the concept of feminist primatology and the ways in which women researchers have taken a different approach from their male counterparts.



Lady Sapiens: the Woman in Prehistory

## Prehistoric women were hunters and artists as well as mothers, book reveals

French book and documentary coming to the UK in September seeks to 'debunk the simplistic division' of gender roles



The documentary researchers collaborated with the producers of the video game Far Cry Primal to create a moving image of a pre-historic woman. Photograph: Ubisoft Entertainment



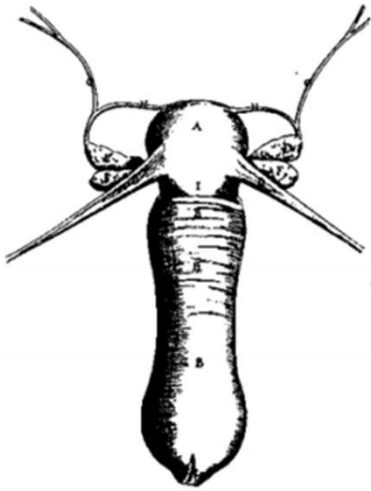
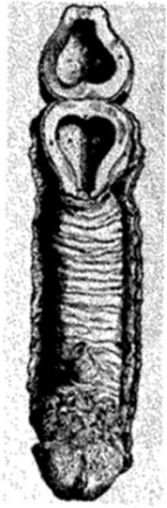
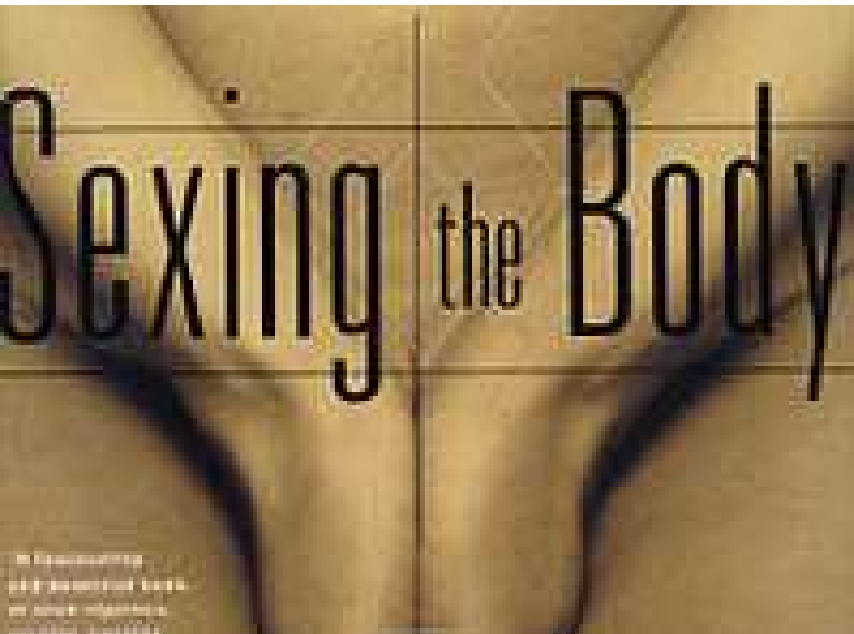


Fig. 20 (izquierda).  
Vagina representada  
como pene, de  
Vesalio, *Fabrica*.  
Fig. 21 (derecha).  
Vagina y útero, de  
Vidus Vidius, *De  
anatomie corporis  
humani* (1611)

## Donna Haraway contributions

- *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1992) is a partly autobiographical account of what Haraway describes as the transformation of a "socialist-feminist, white, female, hominid biologist" into "a multiply marked cyborg feminist." The 10 essays comprising the book were adapted from various articles published between 1978 and 1989. The essays in the first and second parts of this collection explore the definition and role of gender in scientific **discovery and the ways in which the concept of both nature and the human body has been invented, altered, and redefined during the last several decades.**
- Laqueur, Thomas (1990). *Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud*. Harvard University Press.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000). *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. Basic Books.



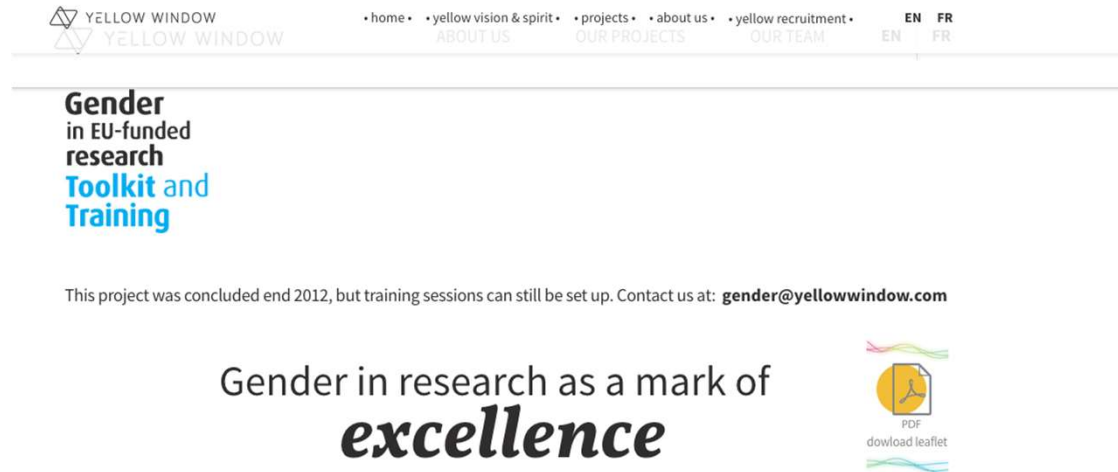
# Donna Haraway contributions

- The third section consists of "**The Cyborg Manifesto**" arguably Haraway's best and certainly her most infamous piece of writing. "A Cyborg Manifesto" discusses the problems contemporary men and women face as a result of their skewed perspective on society. Her solution, which she calls "cyborg embodiment," is to be found in the dual perspective earned by a psychic melding of man and machine, the organic and the inorganic. Haraway insists that understanding the significance of technology in shaping our lives and identities is the only way to mold technological change for worthy and emancipatory purposes. She points to the androgynous status of the cyborg as a victory for femininity.
- Haraway highlights the problems and justifications of **Western traditions such as patriarchy, colonialism, essentialism, and naturalism (among others)**. **These traditions allow for the problematic formation of taxonomies and, what Haraway calls, "antagonistic dualisms" that govern Western discourse.** These dualisms, Haraway clarifies, "**have all been systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers, animals...all those who were constituted as others.**"

Self/other	man/woman	whole/part	active/passive	total/partial
mind/body	civilized/primitive	agent/resource	good/evil	God/man
Culture/nature	reality/appearance	builder/constructed	truth/illusion	

# Resources gender in research

- [Gender Took Kit](#)



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Yellow Window website. On the left is the Yellow Window logo, consisting of two overlapping triangles. To its right is the text 'YELLOW WINDOW'. Further right is a horizontal menu with links: '• home •', '• yellow vision & spirit •', '• projects •', '• about us •', and '• yellow recruitment •'. On the far right of the menu are language options 'EN' and 'FR'. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads 'Gender in EU-funded research Toolkit and Training', with 'Toolkit and Training' in a larger, blue font. Below this heading is a line of text: 'This project was concluded end 2012, but training sessions can still be set up. Contact us at: [gender@yellowwindow.com](mailto:gender@yellowwindow.com)'. At the bottom of the screenshot, the text 'Gender in research as a mark of *excellence*' is displayed in a large, bold font. To the right of this text is a yellow PDF icon with a document symbol, labeled 'PDF' and 'download leaflet', with decorative wavy lines above and below it.

YELLOW WINDOW

• home • • yellow vision & spirit • • projects • • about us • • yellow recruitment • EN FR

ABOUT US OUR PROJECTS OUR TEAM EN FR

**Gender**  
in EU-funded  
research  
**Toolkit and**  
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This project was concluded end 2012, but training sessions can still be set up. Contact us at: [gender@yellowwindow.com](mailto:gender@yellowwindow.com)

Gender in research as a mark of  
***excellence***

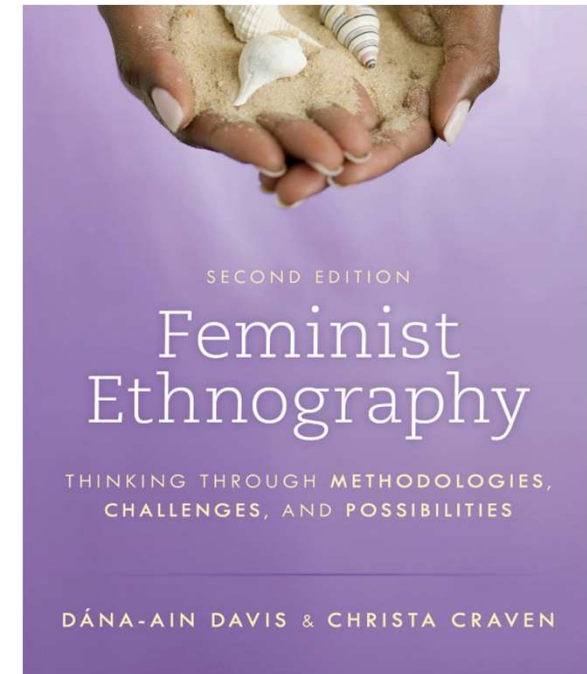
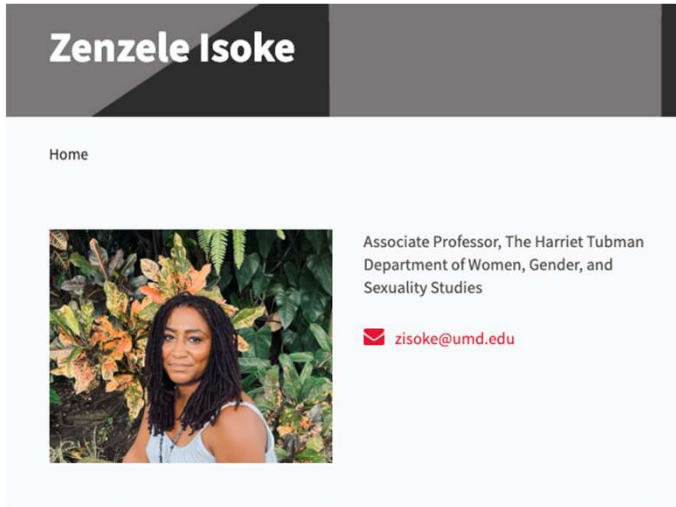
PDF  
download leaflet

# Not only gender: race, class, (dis)capacity...

- [Intersectionality](#)
- Intersectionality is a concept used to show how different axes of inequality, such as gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, functional diversity or age, are related to each other and how they shape concrete forms of discrimination and inequality (Rodó-Zárate, 2021). It aims to show the fusion and the constitutive relationship between the axes of inequality, moving away from the additive perspective of inequalities. In other words, the axes are related to each other, what is called a "relationship of mutual constitution".
- Kimberlé Crenshaw studies the axes of inequality of black women from a legal perspective. In her first article (Crenshaw, 1989) she uses the term intersectionality to explain the various ways in which gender and race intersect to cause the discrimination faced by Black women in the labor market. The situation of specific discrimination due to the combination of different causes of discrimination, were not contemplated at a legal level. To do so, he analyzed the discrimination against black women at General Motors. According to the company, they had hired enough black people - men - which implied that they complied with the legality of racial hiring, at the same time that they had also hired women - white -, and therefore also complied with the legality in gender matters. But they had not hired black women, because the law did not contemplate this double discrimination. The experience of black women cannot be understood by analyzing sexism and racism in isolation.
- In the second article, Crenshaw (1990) shows the tensions between anti-racist and feminist struggles linked to male violence. First, he documented cases that hid the violence suffered by black women, so as not to reinforce the stigma that identifies black men as violent. Therefore, some decisions taken by the "allies" reproduce structural subordination. So the first beneficiaries of feminism are white women and the first beneficiaries of anti-racist policies are black men. Black women are completely marginalized, and in addition their sexualized representation implies making them visible as the "bad guys" and the "non-victims".
- Thus, Crenshaw (1989; 1990) does not aim to create a general theory of oppression, but a useful concept to analyze a specific situation of discrimination and violence against black women.



# Feminist ethnography (2022)



*"I think of feminist ethnography as a form of community engagement and community-immersive participatory research that provides opportunity for prolonged mutual reflection on some sort of knowledge that has an ultimately emancipatory aim" (p. 8).*

*"What makes an ethnography feminist does not have as much to do with the self-definition of the researcher, as much as it has the potential to transform the lives of those who participate in the making of the research. This includes the ethnographer, the respondents, and also future generations of scholars and communities who will pick up the work" (p. 9).*

# Feminist ethnography (2022)

*"Feminist theoretical perspectives were developed in the context of diverse struggles for social justice inside and outside academy. In their various formulations, feminist theories emphasize to challenge sexism, racism, colonialism, class, and other forms of inequalities in the research process"*

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**Nancy A. Naples**  
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
Advisor, Feminist Studies Graduate Certificate, WGSS University of Connecticut Storrs, CT

PhD, 1988, CUNY Graduate Center  
MSW, 1979, CUNY Hunter College

**BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Professor Naples uses a variety of methods including ethnography, in-depth interviewing, discourse analysis, archival research, and comparative research to analyze how social actors are affected by, and resist extra-local economic and political structures and policies. In this line of research she has analyzed the historical construction and implementation of welfare, immigration, austerity policy, and rural economic development. She also explores the dynamics of community activism, globalization, feminist praxis and sexual citizenship. She teaches courses on feminist epistemologies; sexual citizenship; qualitative methodology; gender, politics, and the state; women's activism and globalization; feminist pedagogies; and gender and science. She served as President of Sociologists for Women in Society (2004), the Society for the Study of Social Problems (2007-2008), and the Eastern Sociological Society (2013-2014). She is the 2011 recipient of the Excellence in Research Award for Social Sciences from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, and the 2023 Edward C. Marth Mentorship Award, the UConn AAUP. She has also received the 2010 Distinguished Feminist Lecturer and 2011 Feminist Mentor Awards from Sociologists for Women in Society and the 2012 Scholar Activist Award from the Division of Sociology and Social Welfare and the 2014 Lee Founders Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

**Email** [nancy.naples@uconn.edu](mailto:nancy.naples@uconn.edu)  
**Phone** (860) 486-2186  
**Curriculum Vitae** [CV\\_Naples\\_20230220](#)  
**Office Location** 326 Manchester Hall  
**Office Hours** By appointment



Professor at Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi (New Zealand). She is the author of *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

[Decolonising Methods and Methodologies - Dr Linda Tuhiwai Smith](#)

# How to do feminist ethnography?

- Participant-observation relies upon detailed, recorded observations and reflection upon one's own participation in ways that allow for the collection of a large body of data for ethnographic analysis.
- There is a relationship with people you work with (I mean, people who are your research participants).
- Ethnographic interviewing:
  - "I heard you sigh when you spoke about that. Can you share more about why?"

# Contact

Bruna Alvarez:

[Bruna.Alvarez@uab.cat](mailto:Bruna.Alvarez@uab.cat)



*afin-barcelona.uab.cat*  
*Tel./WP: +34 935 814 640*  
*c.afin@uab.cat*  
*UAB CIF: Q0818002H*

