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# Data Interpretation and Re-presentation



# Agenda

- Check in
- Lecture and discussion
- Small group work



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**What does an ethics of representation and care look like in qualitative research and writing?**

# Sara Ahmed

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. (Ahmed, 2017)



# Things to consider

- Who's your audience?
- What's the story that you want to tell?
- What are your pragmatic goals for this research?
- What are the most evocative quotes to include?
- What theories are guiding your inquiry?



# Things to include in a qualitative report

- **Balance description with interpretation**
  - Include multiple quotes to ground your interpretive overlay in the data
- **Thick description**
  - Writing with detail to give the feeling that what you're writing about is real "verisimilitude"
- **Reflexivity/sincerity**
  - How do your multi-layered identities interact with this project? How do you represent yourself and the study design honestly and transparently?
- **Use of rhetorical devices**
  - Use of metaphors and tropes, rhythmic qualities, changes the way that people think about things, moves people to act differently

# Traditional write-up

## Theme

- Description
- Quote
- Interpretation
- Quote
- Conclusion

### Finding community and language online

The youth who participated in *WHAT'S YOUR ISSUE?* named the Internet as a space where they find community, develop language to re-name themselves, and forge solidarities. This reliance on and engagement with the Internet was particularly pronounced among those who identify as neuroqueer. Often isolated in homes, schools, and communities, young people describe relationships that blossom online. The following quote describes differences in online and in-person communities in facilitating interpersonal connections and identity development:

*Online communities are ones that you choose actively – you find, participate, and can easily leave or join, listen or speak. They provide bridges across geographic divides and allow people who might otherwise feel alone in their beliefs or identity to feel like there are many, many others like them. In-life communities tend to be more diverse, harder to leave, and harder to become a part of. They can be richer though, better illustrating all aspects of the participants personalities and selves, whereas the online versions may show only one or two facets of oneself. I feel well connected to a very specific online pagan community – it's rather niche, but it provides a rich dialogue about spiritual texts, old lore, historical writings, and archaeological finds. (White, Queer, Nonbinary, Neurodivergent, Oregon)*

Identities that constrict in-person sometimes expand online, as the borderlessness of the Internet enables both a relaxing and an opening of complex subjectivities. For many, the Internet is a bridge to identity-affirming support, validation, and language in a delegitimizing physical world. Blogs, social media, and other electronic communications help facilitate the development, naming, and performing of their many selves.

*AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network) and the online asexual community are groups I turn to sometimes when I need support. I found them when I was lost, lonely, depressed, and didn't know how to keep going. They gave me hope, gave me words to describe who I am, and made me feel less alone. (White, Asexual, Nonbinary Genderqueer, Depressed, Maine)*

*I feel the most connected online, primarily because there aren't a lot of resources available to me in my town. I would say the online community I'm a part of is equally split into mental illness and neurodivergent people and LGBTQ+ people. It's where I feel safest and can seek validation, or even just vent about everyday life. (White, Questioning, Nonbinary Genderqueer, Manic Depressed Neurodivergent, Montana)*

*I feel a connection to the LGBTQIA+ community online in the forums/social media I visit. It feels so nice to have people that can relate to you and help you understand aspects of yourself that are ignored by the general populace. (Hispanic White, Pansexual, Genderqueer, Depressed, Nevada)*

# Poetic transcription

- No single way to do poetic transcription, open to the creative process, meet scientific/artistic standards
- Data generation: 3hr life history interview and participation at social events
- Data analysis: read transcript, listened to audio recording, code and categorize data into themes, used literary devices to craft the poem, I also shared the poem at poetry circles

Verse	Transcript
I think I skipped adolescence went from 15 to 21  You grow up fast when you're on your own	Well it wasn't far before I was 16. Well let's see school was hard, but it was hard before anyway. What else... I think I skipped an adolescence really, I went from 15 to 21, and that really became a part of me. Because I would go with them [two

## A POETIC GAZE INTO OLDER GAY SOCIAL LIFE

I was 16 and my mother didn't understand  2 lesbians took me in. took me out.  We went to bars. We danced. We drank. And I met guys.  I think I skipped my adolescence... went from 15 to 21	older lesbian women] to these bars or whatever, whenever.  Well now first of all I'm 16 and I moved out. That's weird enough, it had to be, but anyway so this became sort of a routine. [My mother] wanted me to I don't know, whatever. So somehow, she found out that the two women were lesbians, but she didn't know... she had no concept of such a thing. She drives, she pulls up outside, she toots the horn and I come out and she says "I didn't know they... you didn't tell me... How? What? What do they do? What do they do?" She couldn't figure it out.
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# Class Activity

**Work independently or in small groups on mid-term assignment which must include...**

- Methods section (how did you generate AND analyze the data)
- Findings
  - Could be traditional thematic description, poem, hip-hop meditation, creative non-fiction, screenplay, etc.
  - Must show evidence of description (quotes) and interpretation (your analysis)
- Implications for social work
- Reflections