Media Matrix Mapping: A Feminist Small Data Methodology for Digital Media Ecologies

Brianna I. Wiens, University of Waterloo

This chapter asks what a feminist digital humanities approach to media analysis can look like that takes seriously the ways in which design research and practices are necessarily entangled with political, social, and technocultural structures. Expanding my previous individual and collaborative work on virtually dwelling with small data (Wiens 2021a, Wiens and MacDonald in press), embodied digital methods (Wiens 2022; MacDonald and Wiens 2021), and remixing digital data (MacDonald and Wiens 2023, 2022, 2021; Wiens et al. 2020), I offer the small data methodology of *media matrix mapping,* situated at the nexus of intersectional feminism (Collins 1990, 2015; Crenshaw 1991), feminist posthumanism (Åsberg and Braidotti 2018; Barad 2003; Braidotti 2013; Haraway 1996), new materialism (Alaimo and Hekman 2008; Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010), and queer affect studies (Ahmed 2004; Berlant 2011; Cvetkovich 2003), to expand the conversation around these critical fields of study within the context of feminist design praxis and small data methods for the digital humanities and feminist media studies more broadly. Such a methodology, this chapter will argue, needs to leverage theories that have been applied across other domains to understand the complex and moving relationships, ranging from personal affective encounters to global movements that rely on corporate, platform infrastructure.

Foregrounding the importance of "deep data" (Brock 2015) rather than the size of data sets, media matrix mapping not only acknowledges but actively incorporates an approach to analyzing the systemic, structural sites within digital spaces in order to reimagine design's role for more sustainable, feminist futures. Deep data emphasize the significant labour, analysis, and relationships that goes into working with datasets, which I suggest best illustrates the relationship

between feminist situated knowledges (Haraway 1988), affect, and materiality. Small data, then, in contrast to big data, "provide an alternative to large data output and collection and the nuances that big data can often obscure. They are the dynamic and lively particularities and relationalities between individual feminist activist posts and the comments to these posts, and images, memes, and gifs that might be part of the aggregate dialogue or merely a reference in it, in addition to the specific paratextual social, political, and technological contexts they circulate within" (Wiens and MacDonald in press). Small data, as I've argued elsewhere, focus attention on: "(a) the relationship between or "intra-actions" (Barad 2003) of the researcher, participants, stories, affects, and sociopolitical and technocultural contexts; (b) the stories found through small data, not just the broader themes or trends; and (c) better conceptualizations of the interconnected domains of influence between individual spheres and their relationship to collective and structural levels" (Wiens 2021b, 30). Using #MeToo as an example of how design intersects with politics, society, technology, and culture, this chapter takes a small data, feminist media studies perspective to delineate the utility of media matrix mapping for recognizing researchers' own situated knowledges (Collins 1990; Haraway 1988; Harding 1993) and lived experiences that inevitably shape our understandings of design and data and the ways that power operates at the structural level of digital spaces.

To do so, this chapter first explains how, as a feminist small data methodology, media matrix mapping offers an approach to analyzing how social media participants' stories critique larger governing structures as they intersect with other pressing social issues, whether institutional or technological, despite the inequitable design of social media spaces. I then offer three steps for engaging media matrix mapping: (1) *articulate structures of power* through dwelling in virtual space; (2) *identify possibilities and constraints* to uncover how new feminist

possibilities for expression and action must be understood in relationship to the intersectional structural limits of what the hashtag movements that circulate through platforms can include— even as they offer important insights into how feminists take on structural inequalities; and (3) *explore re-futuring and re-designing avenues* through interrogating normative understandings of will (Ahmed 2014) and memory (Barad 2015) to reveal how it is the willfulness of social media stories that prompts these stories to be remembered and then re-membered or re-designed and re-told from previous stories that were designed and disseminated through heteropatriarchal structures. Each section uses #MeToo to guide readers through the theoretical conceptualization of the step being explored and to simultaneously interrogate the cultural assumptions of a "post #MeToo era," ending with a set of questions that readers can apply to their own analyses as they interrogate critical design inequities and feminist resistance at the structural level. Ultimately, I suggest that examining the structural design functions of digital platforms and movements offers an opportunity to articulate their limiting and creating characteristics and to critique social and political inequities that point to larger infrastructural and technological design flaws.

Context: Feminist Media, Digital Activism, and Infrastructure

Within the last decade, feminist media activist-academic work has paved the way to consider expansive approaches to feminist media studies. Such feminist media studies approaches to hashtag activism have contributed important knowledge around digitally mediated social movements, analyzing how feminists use digital technologies and platforms to document and respond to discrimination and oppression across networked contexts, arguing that we need to continue analyzing the entanglements of power, privilege, and possibility that exist in online spaces and that materially affect daily life, especially for people who are marginalized (e.g., Baer 2015; Banet-Weiser 2018; Conley 2017; Daniels 2016; Gajjala 2019; Rentschler 2017; Singh

2018; Williams 2015). The diversity of methodologies and areas of focus across these domains of research highlights the need to develop practices that attend to the complexities of mediated space and place in holistic ways, resisting the reduction of digital phenomena to mere text, object, or event to consider these entanglements of inquiry, power, and materiality at play and to think through the affective relationships that hold them together. This chapter offers one such approach for how to orient to the ways such affective relationships effect material change, queering heteropatriarchal and white supremacist norms within and across structural entanglements.

Given the history of whiteness and patriarchal control over technologies (Benjamin 2019; Nakamura and Chow-White 2012; Nakamura 2014; Noble 2018; Wajcman 2004), including their theorization and their use, a key question to consider is how we can understand current efforts to challenge normative and hierarchical relations and ways of thinking. One way is to interrogate the platform logics that have come to parallel the inequitable infrastructural logics of our time. As Platin, Lagoze, Edwards, and Sandvig (2020) make clear, as social media platforms become more widely accessible, offering services that have, in the past, often been government regulated, they begin to take on the characteristics of infrastructure and, conversely, infrastructure begins to be reorganized on the basis of platform logics. Within this context of concomitant infrastructural and platform logic, we can begin to see more clearly how, as Chun (2021) argues, technological developments reproduce "the mistakes of a discriminatory past," since "people in power assume that the best way to fight abuse and oppression is by ignoring difference and discrimination" (2). With the rise of Web 2.0, which, ironically, began with the promise of democratization, we witnessed a shift in the ways that information was spread and received, including who gets to spread and receive information, and how quickly it can be taken up. Previously, a heavy reliance

on information-sharing via news channels like newspaper, magazines, radio, and television ensured a certain degree of integrity, tied to journalistic standards and codes of ethics.

However, with the rise of Web 2.0 came the rise of prosumers, someone who both produces and consumes digital content, and the drive for monetization, capitalization, and freedom of speech, starting with blogs and YouTube before moving over to other social networking sites and podcasts—all with very little governance. Codes of ethics now continue to be easily manipulated, as seen through Elon Musk's use of X (formerly Twitter), and governing "bodies" of social media respond to profit, foreclosing any meaningful regulation and pre-determining what platform algorithms should prioritize. Ideologies of white supremacy, toxic masculinity, misogyny, and ableism "dominate scientific and technological fields and institutions," defining what languages, skills, and practices are taken up as technologically proficient and thus producing a very "different impact on men and women" (Wajcman 2004, 42), gender non-conforming, racialized, and disabled people. As such, there are very few repercussions for what many individual users post online, but the stakes are high for the functioning of our democratic institutions, communities, activism and, ultimately, for the functioning of infrastructure and platforms.

Given this context, media matrix mapping advances an understanding of spaces as porous, challenging the assumption of an oppositional binary between digital and non-digital to instead recognize various temporally and spatially mediated spaces (Couldry and Hepp 2013). As such, this methodology enables scholar's to pay attention to the design choices of a digital space to understand how humans are embroiled in intricate affective and material relationships (Ahmed 2004, Berlant 2011; Cvetkovich 2003; Paasonen, Hillis, and Petit 2015) within a highly mediated world, and emphasizes the need to pay attention to the connections and tensions

between sociopolitical, embodied, and technocultural actions, influences, and ways of knowing and communicating.

Media Matrix Mapping: A Feminist Small Data Methodology

Media matrix mapping responds to the rapidly changing digital media environment used for activism, offering a way to orient to networked movements at the structural level through the impacts of power, resistance, and possibility. I offer this as methodology, bringing together intersectional feminism, new materialism, posthumanism, and queer affect, rather than a model or prototype because such methodological praxes "are strategic and intentional, directed at structures that need to be changed, requiring action, reflection, and criticality" (Quigley and Mitchell 2018, 82). Theoretically, while new materialism and feminist posthumanism pay attention to the ways that various networks and ideas come together and impose on each other, intersectional feminism necessarily focuses on enmeshed systems of power and their effect on people—i.e., feminist new materialisms and posthumanism position us to follow the broad stories of social movements with their various time and plot lines and characters as they move throughout and between spaces via different kinds of assertions (textual, verbal, or something else altogether), while intersectional feminism demands that we simultaneously focus on the ways that race, class, gender, and other categorizations are situated within interlocking systems of power, privilege, resistance, and oppression. In developing media matrix mapping for attuning to structural entanglements where the important work of intervention can happen, this methodology articulates the re-design work that stories do to reproduce or challenge dominant systems of power.

The entanglements of power, resistance, and possibility that this methodology offers suggests that impacts are made not only on human bodies, but also bodies of knowledge and

technological bodies as these various bodies interact on a material plane, paying special attention to what Patricia Hill Collins's (1990) calls the "matrix of domination" —four interrelated interpersonal, hegemonic, disciplinary, and systemic arenas that organize power and shape human interaction where resistance and domination take place—as it produces variations of queer affective relationships. Taking seriously intersectionality (Collins 1990, 2015; Crenshaw 1989), we can begin to see how unjust systems like heteropatriarchy and white supremacy maintain their hold because of how effortlessly their ideologies and impacts circulate within individual interpersonal relationships, collective groups, and structural institutions and policies. As Collins (2015) writes, intersectionality's "essence lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities," explaining race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age are reciprocally constructing phenomena" (3). As a methodology based in intersectional feminism, media matrix mapping highlights the importance of acknowledging and following the stories from social justice movements[1] like the "me too." Movement[2] as they circulate and become entangled within overlapping mediated spheres of power, politics, and community at structural levels. By examining the movement of stories from the "me too." Movement, this methodology helps to highlight the relationships between these individual, collective, and structural spheres to reveal not only how inequitable relations are perpetuated, but also how systemic inequitable heteropatriarchal white supremacist ideologies can be resisted.

Media matrix mapping orients scholars to how digital artifacts circulate at the structural level of the entanglement, considering the systemic factors that are present across the individual

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[1] Sidney Tarrow (2011) describes social movements as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (57), which is how this dissertation understands social movements, regardless of the degree of mediation.
[2] I write out '"me too." Movement' because this is how Tarana Burke, the original organizer, writes out the name of the movement when she references "me too." I use this way of writing "me too." unless I refer to the hashtag movement (#MeToo) to explicitly credit Burke and her work—a decision that reflects my commitment the women who have been organizing since before the movement gained greater visibility on Twitter in October 2017.

and collective. This methodology necessarily considers how possibilities for sustainable and more equitable futures operate within systems of power that work against transformation, indicating how any intersectional analysis of the digital must consider both its embedded biases and its possibilities for change. Media matrix mapping elucidates how the internet grants a particular kind of visibility based on the algorithmic filtering and design of the platform, as well as based on those who choose to post (stay tuned, more on this to come in Step 2). At the same time, these factors also signal a lack of access and invisibility, since platforms favour certain posts and accounts over others based on the ingrained assumptions and biases of the designers themselves, which show up in the design of the platform and its algorithms. These kinds of biases influence how people can participate in social media activism, and on social media sites more generally, and point towards factors that influence how participants of social media come to understand campaigns like #MeToo.

The idealism of naming hurts, and experiences and witnessing stories of confession and disclosure is necessarily challenged when we consider the assumptions that we make when we engage in our social media feeds—feeds that have been customized based on what prejudicially-created algorithms decide individuals want to see. Under the example of the "me too." Movement, media matrix mapping foregrounds the movement's capacity to critically and practically re-orient how we use and understand the complex social, political, technological, and cultural systems that stories of "me too" flow through and that we are enmeshed within. It recognizes the power of the "betweenness" of our sociopolitical and technocultural spaces—specifically, the knowledges and relationalities that exist between the material realities of hashtags, stories, technologies, people, communities, and institutions.

As a movement of entangled stories, contexts, and technologies, the use of digital practices was critical for the success of #MeToo—even as we recognize the ways that these practices constrain the full potential of the movement. Feminist digital organizing practices recognize the possibilities that emerge from treating women and gender non-conforming people, their experiences, and their memories as the jumping point from which revolution might take place. Current systems of power that obscure the harms of sexual violence recall white supremacist capitalist colonial heteropatriarchal norms and memories, systems that lend themselves to the construction of the present conditions that perpetuate violence. Media matrix mapping asks that we draw our attention to these systems of power as stories circulate throughout them, as well as to the ways that they undergird our sociopolitical culture. It embraces the premise that the creation of new practices, or the queering of previous practices for new uses, offers possibilities for instigating transformation, reframing memory, and re-constituting the ways that we understand the past, present, and possible futures.

Step 1: Articulate Structures of Power

Since its viral surge in 2017, the forms of solidarity, consciousness-raising, and connection shared through stories from #MeToo have been seen, building feminist communities of support and offering highly visible forms of organizing and story-circulation that shift the terms of contemporary discourse (e.g., Clark-Parsons 2018; Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller 2018; Rentschler 2017). #MeToo has offered a reorientation of the boundaries and expectations for gender equity and sexual violence within our sociopolitical relationships. This has, in turn, provided practices and relationships through which women and queer and racialized communities bring into being new ways of engaging the world through visual, textual, and on the ground resistance. At the same time, for all the work that #MeToo has done to change

perspectives on gendered violence and to create awareness, it still works within power structures that have excluded people from the movement. #MeToo counterpublics, structured through digital technologies and brought together through the "intersection of people, technology, and practice" (boyd 2010, 39), must then contend with these tensions. Let's consider the following example of entangled of media infrastructure, platform policy, design choices, misogyny, and white supremacy as they manifest within official and participant Twitter responses to the #MeToo movement and to COVID-19 where these issues intersect.

Three years after the viral launch of the #MeToo movement on social media, an extension of Tarana Burke's 2006 "me too." Movement, Donald Trump's viral COVID-19 diagnosis and Twitter's (now X) subsequent defense of him showed both progress and a lack of progress. On October 2, 2020, Twitter participants took to the platform to react to an announcement made earlier that morning that Trump, the 45th President of the United States, had tested positive for COVID-19. Their comments pointed to the irony of his diagnosis—ironic, that is, given the ways that Trump had used the platform to spread disinformation about the virus, contributing to vaccine hesitancy, anti-vaccine sentiments, and alt-right discourse, effectively diminishing the experiences of the millions of Americans who had tested positive and the over two hundred thousand who had died. In a tweet that was liked 14.7k times, one Twitter participant wrote:

> @TwitterUser: I was just told by some people that it's wrong to be happy that the president who said that COVID is a hoax has COVID and to them I'd like to say, from the bottom of my heart, fuck you (October 2, 2020).

Channeling collective feelings of grief into humour after Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg's passing, another participant shared:

> @TwitterUser: Looks like RBG successfully argued her first case before God (October 2, 2020).

And someone else commented:

> @TwitterUser: This is literally the moment everyone on earth has waited for since March (October 2, 2020).

Others were more direct with their desires, with many tweeting their wishes for the virus to take 45 once and for all, while others countered that they hope he recovers but only so that he can be held accountable for the atrocities committed during his presidency. By the evening of that same day, Twitter Comms, the official communications account for Twitter, released the following announcement to inform Twitter participants that those who wished harm against Trump were violating the company's terms of use:

> @TwitterComms: Tweets that wish or hope for death, serious bodily harm or fatal disease against *anyone* are not allowed and will need to be removed. This does not automatically mean suspension (October 2, 2020, 7:09 pm).

With this tweet, Twitter once again revealed the reach of their mediating control in another instance of the platform's systemic discrimination. Responses to the tweet reveal that there is much more here than just company policy—it is evocative of larger ecologies of structural discrimination, and Twitter participants were having none of it.

Across social media platforms that same day, participants pointed out what should be clear: the hypocrisy of Twitter's statement was all too loud given the ways in which the platform continues to remain silent when marginalized people are subject to violence, contributing to the harms they face. Filmmaker Ava DuVernay made headlines in *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Washington Post,* among others, when she posted:

> @ava: Does this also go for Black and Brown women who have long been and continue to be harassed and threatened with assault and death on this platform or nah? I think no. Because I see those same accounts still up. Still causing harm. Your *anyone* is disingenuous (October 2, 2020, 11:04 pm).

DuVernay's sentiment loudly resonated across Twitter. Within two weeks of the initial post

11.5k other participants retweeted and 53.3k participants liked the tweet. In response, actor

Poorna Jagannathan wrote:

> @PoornaJags: oh exactly. Where's this freaking notice when all the rape threats pile
> on????" (October 3, 2020, 12:43 am).

Other participants responded to the shared feelings of anger, grief, and exasperation to point out

that this is just another example of "Twitter's systemic patriarchal message" and that,

> @TwitterUser: Trump is *anyone*, but Black & Brown women are 'all people'? Twitter
> is really (inadvertently) educating people how systemic, operation racism works in
> practice (October 3, 2020).

As Twitter tried to reinforce the protection of someone who was one of the most protected

people in the world, especially in a society that privileges systems of whiteness, richness, able-

bodiedness, and (toxic) masculinity, the emptiness and hypocrisy of the platform's

announcement rang out among those who had been repeatedly marginalized by the platform and

by society more broadly.

Notably, this event was not the first time that Twitter had revealed an unabashed

complicity in broader forms of systemic discrimination. As one participant replying to

DuVernay's post reminded audiences:

> @TwitterUser: Oh, when #MeToo happened they *said* they were serious…for three
> days. Then it stopped (October 3, 2020).

Indeed, rather than coming to the aid of people being sexually harassed on its platform, five days

after #MeToo gained traction within social media spaces in 2017, Twitter Support announced,

> @TwitterSupport: While #MeToo goes viral and everyone is outraged about Weinstein,
> @TwitterSupport does not consider rape taunts a violation of their Terms of Service
> (October 20, 2017, 2:54 pm).

What this circulation of stories on social media should prompt us to ask are questions of whose interests are being served and who is harmed during these processes, reflecting Twitter's structural design and cultural biases.

Taking our cue from this example, the structural power found within different layered "research scenes" (MacDonald and Wiens 2019) can vary from political structures to ideological structures, from physical institutions to the affective states that surround and uphold those organizations. In this case, looking beyond the enthusiastic discourses of technological ubiquity, we can begin to see the sets of digital structural issues that the entanglements within this research scene are grappling with—namely, gendered violence and rape culture (both of which are preserved and encouraged by heteropatriarchy and its complicity with white supremacy) and the algorithmic oppression that privileges stories that feed these systems over others. As argued in my work on virtual dwelling (Wiens 2021a), on other digital research scenes, entanglements might point us towards systems of power that affect us at the interpersonal level, structuring digital surveillance and performances in border and airport security; the biopolitics of pharmaceutical companies; predictive policing; sexist, racist and homophobic policies by technology and telecommunications companies; and the proliferation of digital health and administrative records. In these cases, and on our research scene here with #MeToo, technochauvinism, the belief that technology is always the answer (Broussard 2018), and networked misogyny (Banet-Weiser and Miltner 2016) continue to be key players.

In the last decade, and especially within the last five years, important scholarship has brought to light the uneven distribution of power and access inherent to the design of technologies and platforms (see, e.g., Benjamin 2019; Broussard 2018; Costanza-Chock 2020; D'Ignazio and Klein 2020; Noble 2018). Indeed, those invested in critical feminist information

studies and technology studies understand that current technologies and digital cultures are overflowing with forms of mediated misogyny and racism that promote intimidation, harassment, and "alarming amounts of vitriol and violence" online (Banet-Weiser and Miltner 2016, 171). Moreover, platforms and those who use them function as gatekeepers in who they cater to, what they value, and what they present to us as viewers and participants. Not only are algorithms filtering out what social media participants do and don't see, but the online groups that these participants choose to engage in create the digital conditions for algorithmic learning and the content that participants can interact with. For example, if participants choose to join a particular group, and only that group, then only the content posted by members of that group will be viewed, and then subsequently interacted with and understood.

Media matrix mapping thus requires that we first outline the current systems or structures of power that we are faced with, and, as such, this set of reflections, initiated through dwelling on the research scene and attuning to communities and to stories, sets the stage for the first question we might ask when employing media matrix mapping: What systems of power are participants on the research scene facing in terms of both domination and their resistance to this domination?

Step 2: Identify Possibility and Constraint

Alongside the hashtag's early and continuing assembling of voices via feelings of hope, recognition, refusal, and solidarity among those who have experienced forms of harassment and assault, equally powerful statements of what is missing in the dominant discourse of #MeToo gained prominence. A consideration of the constructive and limiting forces of social media and social media activism is crucial for effective future actions. This is particularly the case within the "economy of visibility" (Banet-Weiser 2018) of social media given the emphasis that is

placed on popularity and taking up space with the goal of being seen and to make an impact. While perhaps bringing attention to issues of inequality, activism within an economy of visibility sees very little active follow-through and, as Clark-Parsons (2019) notes, "does little to transform structures of inequality" (3). Within an economy of visibility, media matrix mapping helps to show what steps are taken to push ahead, to separate from the unjust status quo and call attention to individual actions taken. Within the #MeToo movement, especially within the beginning days of its viral uptake on social media platforms, white cis celebrities were seen as the spokespeople for the movement, leaving behind the experiences of others.

Here, we can begin to see where entanglements make known their limiting and creating tendencies, seeing where algorithmic bias and culture of social media platforms affects whose voices and experiences flourish. On social media, especially in 2017 when #MeToo went viral, the voices of white celebrities were centered—a fact we know, in 2023, know to be true. As a result, the foundational work of Tarana Burke, who had started the efforts of "me too." eleven years prior to the hashtag's take-off on social media, and her work within Black communities was largely erased during the initial stages of #MeToo's rise to prominence. On the one-year anniversary of #MeToo's viral appearance on Twitter, Burke wrote:

> @TaranaBurke: A year ago today I thought my world was falling apart. I woke up to find out that the hashtag #metoo had gone viral and I didn't see any of the work I laid out over the previous decade attached to it. I thought for sure I would be erased from a thing I worked so hard to build (Twitter, October 15, 2018, 7:22 am).

Although the whitewashing of #MeToo began with the silencing of Black voices like Burke's, the oversight gave way to larger discussions of the history of whitewashing in media, including the normalization of ignoring racialized, queer, trans, and disabled women and the appropriation of racialized women's work by white women. As activist-scholar Dr. Stacey Patton wrote,

@DrStaceyPatton: Black women have been saying #MeToo since slavery (October 27, 2017, 7:24 pm).

This continues to demonstrate the ways that structures of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy are deeply intertwined and work together to maintain power. Within digital spaces this becomes further entrenched through the compounding effects of marginalization.

Indeed, following the entanglements of "me too." illuminates how heteropatriarchy, including its normalization of rape culture and sexual violence, is intertwined with many axes of oppression, including white supremacy and transphobia, and social media took note of #MeToo's erasure of trans people:

@TwitterUser: #MeToo but let's remember to not center this around white cis women and to uplift marginalized folks (October 16, 2017).

To this day many of the conversations taking place around #MeToo focus on ciswomen, ignoring gender non-conforming, non-binary, intersex, and trans people who experience heightened rates of gender violence—a problem #MeTooTrans has been working to bring attention to since November 2019. The above tweet reflects an intervention into the reliance on white cis-feminist perspectives in understanding the stakes and conditions of the movement and a call to share space. D'Ignazio and Klein (2020) make clear why this is the case, as "seeing oppression is especially hard for those who occupy positions of privilege," even more so, perhaps, when those positions of privilege still result in some forms of discrimination, for instance, being the target of sexism as a white woman (24). Many white cis feminists involved in the early moments of the campaign may not have noticed the centring of white cis voices and it is likely that reading the tweet above might have stung a bit within the context of a highly charged political, social, and emotional moment. Bringing attention to the prevalence of transmisogyny here is especially important, particularly given the lack of reporting on the sexual assault of trans people and

subsequent lack of convictions because of transphobic policies and laws, something that

dominant discourses surrounding #MeToo do not often comment on but that we are able to see

through these posts. Using a pen name, one Twitter participant wrote:

> @TwitterUser: (Part 1) I was 18 when this happened, and it took me four years to talk about it on record. I was raped by the ones who were meant to protect me, and I never had a law protecting my rights. And I still don't see one. #MeTooIndia #MeTooTrans #MeToo #StopTransBill2019.
>
> @TwitterUser: (Part 2): Let me remind you, even after having laws that punish rapists of ciswomen for 7 years, we still have a nation where gang rape cases appear on our phone feeds as frequent as notifications of sales from Amazon or Flipkart (December 2, 2019).

Even from this sample of posts, the pervasiveness of sexual assault, and particularly sexual

assault and misogyny leveraged against trans and nonbinary people, should be cause for serious

consideration of the structures that uphold and encourage rape culture and the use of sexual

violence to exert power.

#MeTooTrans is a constant reminder of the ways that structures exclude; #MeToo does

not include or represent all experiences and, often, when searching #MeToo it is incredibly

difficult to find #MeTooTrans because of the platform's algorithmic sorting. This underscores

the need to understand the tensions within intersectional entanglements, where social media

platforms and the movements that circulate within and across can be characterized as

pharmakon. In this example, while Twitter does offer a platform for making visible power

structures that have become so normalized that they seem invisible, magnified through the stories

here from Twitter participants, it also maintains those structures of domination—for example,

their own policies—through the ways that it algorithmically and conceptually excludes the

voices that seek spaces to share. This has become even more clear since Musk's acquisition of

the platform in 2022.

Recognizing the work that was needed to bring attention to and re-distribute power and agency among more participants of the #MeToo movement, public conversations quickly recognized that there were people in the workplace who could not speak out of a very real fear that they may lose their jobs, that people may be connected to their abusers, or that people did not have to speak aloud harassment to validate their experience:

> @TwitterUser: #MeToo is just tip of the iceberg. There are millions without any computer, internet access who have worse experiences of daily abuse (October 16, 2017).

This should remind participants (and scholars as participants within the entanglement) that some do not have the opportunity to even enter the digital playing field. Despite #MeToo's space as a digital counterpublic, its networked features mean that those who do not have access to the network to share stories cannot participate in the community affordances of the networked counterpublic, despite seeing themselves as representative of (or represented by) the cause. This is a direct cause of the blurring of public and private spheres, the contextual collapsing of spatial, temporal, and social boundaries, and the ease with which imagined audiences or participants are erased. Media matrix mapping is key for seeing that these are not individual or community weaknesses but are instead symptoms of the systems of power that surveil and restrict bodies throughout various mediated spheres.

Here also lie assumptions about class mobility and the ability to participate in the movement, while also indicating that the movement must continue for the same reasons.

> @TwitterUser: A reminder, #MeToo might not appear on all your social media feeds because survivors might still be virtually connected to their abusers (October 16, 2017).

Not all people who have been sexually abused or harassed are able to leave the spaces that put them at risk of abuse, including material structures like workplaces and family homes, since people still need incomes to sustain themselves and people still need homes to shelter

themselves. The ability to leave a situation is also not easy; because of the system of rape culture we operate within it can be individually emotionally, physically, and economically damaging, even while at the same time it can be empowering on individual and community scales. It is not that those who leave situations have made the easy decision, or even that they are privileged enough to walk from one home or workplace to another without fear. These situations ask that we recognize the multiple dimensions at play that work to make it so that some can find alternatives, while others may not have the same opportunities.

Because of its mediated nature and the use of technologies to circulate its stories, #MeToo has perpetuated erasures set up by systems of oppression that exist because of technology's androcentric white supremacist beginnings and the white feminist, colonial, neoliberal, and misogynistic frameworks circulated online (e.g., Clark-Parsons 2019; Keller, Mendes, Ringrose 2016; Khoja-Moolji 2015; Portwood-Stacer and Berridge 2014). As an example of these intertwined systems of power, I return very briefly to the previous example of social media reactions to Trump's COVID-19 diagnosis. On Instagram, posts were shared by various participants showing a screenshot of Twitter Comm's tweet that warned of violating the company's terms of use, many of which included a series of laughing emojis that made clear the incredulity of it all. Gif responses included a gif of Kim Kardashian sitting with her arms crossed and rolling her eyes, and another of US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar speaking into a mic to say "it's complete hypocrisy" before turning away. On Facebook, a participant wrote, "you can't be serious" accompanied by a meme of Beyoncé staring into the camera, slowly blinking her eyes in astonishment.

In response to Ava DuVernay's critique of Twitter's announcement and Jagannathan's comment on Twitter's complicity in rape culture, one participant commented:

@TwitterUser: Worse than being disingenuous it's protective of white supremacy. They're circling the wagon around a man who fuels hate and vision for his own self-interest. They're protecting his white privilege to secure theirs (October 3, 2020).

This post clarifies that individual and collective interactions taking place within digital culture often reflect the systems that structure our sociopolitical spheres, despite conversations of progress and the hopes of the internet as the "great equalizer." We can see how online interactions mirror threads of previous exchanges of erasure and violence, using the very practices used to oppress people (see, e.g., Wiens 2021a on the accusations that the #MeToo Movement was a witch hunt) to mirror harmful conversations held in different spaces. This example—from Trump to DuVernay to Twitter Comms—illustrates how, while social media platforms house important feminist conversations and stories like the ones between DuVernay, Jagannathan, and others, the companies that create and maintain the structure of these platforms continue to not only support but embody discrimination.

While #MeToo made clear the ways in which heteropatriarchal discourses have been normalized and celebrated in public and private spheres, hashtag movements like #MeToo need to be understood as contributing to further marginalization given their reliance on the platform they use, and the time, money, and material devices required for participation—factors which reflect technochauvinism, neoliberalism, and networked misogyny, as well as other interrelated race, class, and ability-related factors. Analyzing the movement of stories from "me too" uncovers how this is happening, while illustrating how their circulation creates change within these larger systems. As such, the next set of questions we might ask when employing media matrix mapping is: which participants (including, but not limited to, stories, affects, people, and hashtags and the relationships between these participants) flourish and which do not on the

research scene? How is this enabled or constrained by the previously articulated systems of power, including social media platforms, institutional policies, and ideologies?

Step 3: Explore Re-Futuring Directions

The next step in media matrix mapping considers embodied and affective relationships to technical structures and the will to refuse those structures, critically considering how to make space for various futures: a re-futuring. This recognizes the structures in place that limit and encourage action to make space to imagine alternative futures. Here, I outline how the willfulness of feminists to remember and re-formulate memories that are different than current hegemonic public memories offers ways to resist and critique systems of power that create the structures that need to be intervened into. I highlight how, to follow stories within the entanglements of our media ecologies, media matrix mapping emphasizes the importance of virtual dwelling (Wiens 2021a; Wiens and MacDonald forthcoming) to reflect on our own individual and larger collective feminist memories to identify the structures of feeling that uphold dangerous ideologies. Media matrix mapping provides a lens to interpret and examine the ways the danger of current structures, drawing on reflection and re-attunement to articulate the goals of intersectional feminist activism more clearly and to ultimately create space to imagine alternative futures.

As discussed above, within the context of digital activism and hashtag feminism, design structures like algorithmic bias and the policies and cultures of social media companies are just two examples of how social media platforms become uneven terrain. Because they are entangled with our social and political worlds, digital technologies (re)create gendered and racialized dynamics due to factors like tech segregation based on data-gathering and the targeting of (quantified and datafied) bodies (e.g., Benjamin 2019; Noble 2018), and due to what Barad

(2003) calls the "intra-actions" between the gendered/raced/classed components used to create the technology. All entities are shaped through ongoing material and discursive processes where reality is made up of co-constitutive relationships of matter where phenomena materialize and agencies become possible through intra-actions. In other words, our understandings of the world merge through co-constitutive material-discursive relationships that are enacted rather than pre-existing.

As we've seen, digital technologies reify gendered, raced, patriarchal dynamics of the social world. What should be noted here is that the moment you enter any sphere, you are already participating; the act of entering changes the intra-actions between agents, opening and closing possible futures. Things, actions, and communication are co-creating our social realities, and these things interact differently for different people. We can thus intervene into the history of white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist control over technological structures by better understanding the sociotechnical relations that we are operating within. This can help us to find points to analyze in order to continue to challenge dominant ideologies and intervene along the way. Dominant ways of knowing are built on racism and patriarchy through the canonization of specific kinds of memories. Memories and ways of knowing are part of a larger ontoepistemology, and we must challenge the systems that uphold white supremacist misogynistic domination in order to challenge the technologies that come from these knowledges and to cultivate the critical vocabularies needed for a more equitable mediated world.

Challenging memories and ways of knowing requires remembering previous experiences with a new lens. In thinking through the concept of remembering, Karen Barad (2015) argues for the material importance of memory:

> Memory is a field of enfolded patterns of differentiating-entangling. Remembering is not a process of recollection, of the reproduction of what was, of assembling and ordering

events like puzzle pieces fit together by fixing where each has its place. Rather, it is a matter of re-membering, of tracing entanglements, responding to yearnings for connection, materialized into fields of longing/belonging, of regenerating what never was but might yet have been (407-8).

From this perspective, an important component of media matrix mapping is re-membering to re-future, which subverts the status quo: power is taken out of the system of oppression and rearticulated to be distributed among those doing the (re)organizing work, suggesting to those who thrive under the normalization of rape culture that there are multiple forms of expertise that do not lie solely in their domain.

Ruptures into the status quo are crucial for feminist practices and feminist organizing in that they offer new organizations of memory. The more carefully and intentionally—the more willfully—that this is done, the more clearly new ways of understanding the past, present, and future can come to be. This re-membering is not straightforward or easy. As Sara Ahmed (2014) argues in her work on willful subjects, "certain forms of will seem to involve the rendering of other wills as willful," and that "one form of will assumes the right to eliminate the others" (2). For Ahmed, will is done to "will about" a particular object or ends through embodied practice: "willing is corporeal: a willing is a bodily turn" (35). When people become impediments to the will of the status quo, force is often used to make that person willing; this we see over and over again through the use of violence to will about ends that keep power in the hands of the few, and to keep the power of will out of the reach of others. For those who have been marginalized, willfulness is something that must be eradicated, or at the very least, "straightened out" by the "steady hand" of structural power and force (75) in order to maintain white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and misogyny.

Within the context of "me too" and the stories shared, willfulness is a rupture, a liberation from heteropatriarchal structures and institutions, and media matrix mapping seeks the vibrancy

of this will against the systems of power to articulate how this comes to be. The willful are those

who do not perform the assumed duty, rebelling against white supremacy, misogyny,

heteropatriarchy, and capitalism. Those who are willful refuse to be told to remain stagnant,

threatening reproduction of the social body and the networked systems of power that circulate.

The willful refuse, despite the high price, to be put in their place according to the current

structure of feeling. Will opposes these structures and, when willfulness tries to be straightened

out, it marks where there are weaknesses in the structures of heteropatriarchy and white

supremacy, calling for others to also assert their willfulness here:

> @TwitterUser: (Part 1) #MeToo—I was also told: do you know how this is going to look
> for our family? You can't press charges. I did anyway.

> @TwitterUser: (Part 2) I was also told on #convictionday 'Good thing that's over'—not
> even—'you will be ok', or 'you saved someone else' or 'we love you.' (October 15,
> 2017).

In these posts, we see the willfulness that Ahmed is speaking to. As she writes, "we are *willing*

not to be willing: *not willing* translated into *willing not*" (154). These are "striking bodies, bodies

that go *on* strike" in order "to aim *for* obstruction" engage in a willingness to mark the body—for

those bodies that are already marked and stigmatized (by race, by ability, by sexuality, for

instance), these bodies must be willing to bear stigmatization over again (161). One Twitter

participant who had previously felt silenced attests to this, writing:

> @TwitterUser: it's their way of dismissing us. By negating the reality of the pain, they
> caused us and denying us the right to feel that pain. WRONG" (October 26, 2017).

To which another participant responded,

> @TwitterUser: Absolutely.

This show of community, of concretely and willfully refusing to be silenced, highlights the

vitality of the #MeToo counterpublic as it claims its refusals. These tweets and their show of

willfulness and of re-membering lead us to the third question for consideration for media matrix mapping: How are lines of power moved from totalizing systems of oppression and re-distributed or re-organized among participants opposing the systems? That is, what kind of re-futuring space and potential work are unfolding within stories shared?

Conclusion

Media matrix mapping as a methodology recognizes how #MeToo calls on silenced memories to produce alternative memories that enable different forms of will in order to intervene into these power structures. The use of memory brings forth a shared reckoning of will and through sharing memories that have been silenced or completely erased. It is the shared experiences, the lasting values, and the affective resonances that make possible such retentions, with posts shared via #MeToo allowing for reflection and thus modification of previous perceptions as we affectively remember and critically dwell with that remembering. In this way, as Clark (2016) argues, the practice of hashtag resistance "empowers its users to take control of the sociocultural narratives associated with their identities and subjective experiences" (798). Gathering individual and collective memories through virtual dwelling and vibrant ethos offers the ability to participate in important forms of caring for one another. Media matrix mapping, in drawing on the affective and material vibrancy and vitality of the work done at individual and collective levels, mobilizes these memories and the will to see the systems of power that try to hinder such care, visualizing the heteropatriarchal structures that encourage only particular gendered, raced, and classed forms of being. As a methodology, media matrix mapping helps us to we critically assess what structures "me too". breaks with and how it aims to reconstitute shared communities of power in different ways.

Recalling steps one and two, the utility of media matrix mapping lies in its capacity to more clearly highlight the possibilities that the structures of social media enable outside of the bounds of the platform, while also examining how the work of dismantling misogyny and white supremacy is being done within broader networks of power and across different mediated domains. Using the methodology of media matrix mapping, we can begin to see structural critiques within stories as they move between spheres of power, and how #MeToo participants are working with the system to oppose the system. Building on steps one and two, step three elucidates how the case we're studying has created ruptures into the complacency of current cultural norms. Media matrix mapping thus reveals how testimonies and stories shared online strive towards re-futuring, which helps us to see past the false dichotomies within overlapping individual, collective, and structural spheres to notice the innate relationship between and among these spheres. Within the context of #MeToo, stories that tackle shame and rape culture specifically point towards these structural considerations, re-orienting to the status quo through showing us hidden (algorithmic, structural, and hierarchal) aspects that need further attention if we are to imagine and bring to fruition alternate futures. This approach and its methodology can be paired with a variety of communication and media studies methods to complement ongoing scholarly work in hashtag and networked feminisms and digital activisms that analyze digital infrastructure and design.

By acknowledging the relationships between humanity and technology, including the ways that technologies enable and constrain, media matrix mapping suggests that we need to reflect more seriously on how our lived experiences are deeply affected structuring forces. Considering what technologies do, and how technical practices work to reinforce a dogmatic status quo materially and ideologically helps to bring to light actions that have changed how we

think about rape culture. In understanding how discursive claims reflect material conditions, we can better understand how movements like #MeToo can directly affect social and political ideologies to create more equitable futures. A methodology of media matrix mapping that understands such entanglements within our media ecologies demonstrates how we can look to where various human and nonhuman phenomena come together within mediated systems of power at individual, collective, and structural domains to see which opportunities are foreclosed and which remain open in the pursuit of more equitable and sustainable feminist futures.

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