FEMINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY AS METHODOLOGY
## The Absence of International Perspectives

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The recurring methodology of feminist historiography in technical and professional communication (TPC) documents women's contributions to TPC. This article, based on qualitative content analysis with scant quantitative analysis, highlights what is missing in that body of feminist historiography research: an international perspective, especially from varied viewpoints and contexts. Feminist historiography in TPC has ignored women of color and women of the Global South. TPC has fully embraced white, middle-class feminism from a historical perspective, leaving behind more inclusive, nuanced, and fair understandings and depictions of global women historically. Proposed solutions include expanding methods of feminist historiography beyond content analysis to include flexible methods, including interviews and oral histories, that complement global sites and contexts. Furthermore, TPC scholars must enlarge views of which histories are worthy of study and critique dominant narratives of women from Euro-western perspectives. The invisibility of international perspectives in feminist historiographies suggests that there is vital work to be done in reclaiming and documenting the global history of women in TPC.

In technical and professional communication (TPC), Spinuzzi (2003) has distinguished between a methodology and a method, explaining, "A *method* is a way of investigating phenomena; a *methodology* is the theory, philosophy, heuristics, aims, and values that underlie, motivate, and guide the method" (emphasis in original, p. 7). One recurring methodology in TPC is feminist
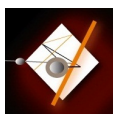
historiography, what Skinner (2012) defined as "[h]istorical studies of women's technical communication . . . [that] seek to contribute to the recovery of women's technical communicative practices" (p. 308). This sort of research, according to Lippincott (2003), "documents the kinds of work that people have done and valued, recovers examples of who had the recognized authority and experience to write, and contextualizes the discourse communities that have shaped rhetorical strategies" (p. 10). Despite the ubiquity of this methodology, my data reveals that this body of work in TPC is missing an international perspective.

This study examines the methodology of feminist historiography in TPC by looking at the research methods, research questions, and artifacts used by feminist scholars. Most salient, I ask what an examination of feminist historiographies reveals as missing? What have feminist scholars done and what do they continue to do in terms of historiographies? Which research methods could improve this methodology from an international perspective? I answer these questions by analyzing the body of feminist historiographies within TPC, from eight major journals and several edited collections. The data collection yielded 63 articles for analysis, covering dates consistently from the 1400s to present. As shown in Figure 1, the English Renaissance is the most studied site of international scholarship with 14 studies, while other eras of the United Kingdom/England have eight articles. France and Canada each have three feminist historiographical articles in those regions, and Germany has two. The majority of articles (40 of them) are located in the United States, and these articles do not discuss location. They frame analysis without considering whether or not a reader would automatically locate scholarship and artifacts within the United States. Feminist historiographies in TPC are U.S.-centric, so much so that we have failed to even consider whether or not the United States is the center of all historical (or present) TPC activity.

Based on the results of my analysis, the exclusion of international perspectives and contexts (especially outside of Euro-western areas) is the most problematic feature of feminist historiography as a methodology. The methodology also lacks varied research methods, such as oral history and interviews, which would allow for data collection in communities without

extensive historical documentation or archives. The data exposes what we are missing in feminist historiographical research and "the power-knowledge nexus of feminist cross-cultural scholarship expressed through Eurocentric, falsely universalizing methodologies that serve the narrow self-interest of Western feminism" (Mohanty, 2003b, p. 501). Feminist historiography in TPC has

Figure 1

Concentrations of feminist historiographical scholarship by region

Source: Created by author

ignored the concerns of women of color, women of varied cultural contexts and countries, and women whose knowledge work may not be documented in traditional ways.

Literature Review

Historical research in technical communication has flourished; many scholars have compiled bibliographies of the work that has been done (Malone, 2007; Thompson & Smith, 2006; Moran & Tebeaux 2011; Moran & Tebeaux 2012; Connor, 1991). Malone (2007) reviewed the themes of TPC's historical research over the past fifteen years and found distinct types of historical studies, including those on practitioners, artifacts, genres, movements, techniques, events, and the profession. Scholars have additionally delineated historical methodologies for research and pedagogy (Connor, 1991; Kynell & Seely, 2002). Malone (2007) noted, "scholars concerned with research methodology have emphasized the practical as well as the theoretical value of historical research" (p. 337) and claimed four major roles for this kind of research: invention, precedent, distance, and context. The point is to offer "a retrospection and guide to historical research . . . to facilitate greater coordination and awareness among those in technical communication who are interested in historical research" (p. 344). Many historical studies produced need "greater coordination among scholars and a better awareness of the areas that have already been studied" (p. 344).

I aim to increase this awareness by focusing on feminist historiography as a subset of TPC's historical research that lacks an international perspective. Because this historical research has seen "a shift from studies of well-known to lesser-known figures and an increased interest in women as technical communicators," I see feminist lenses, theories, and scholars as a major part of this shift (p. 334), and we have not finished investigating how the discipline considers gender and sex (Moeller & Frost, 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, based on a shift toward social justice and paying attention to the Global South, we see a dearth of historical studies in international contexts. Scholars are focused on defining social justice (Agboka, 2013; Walton & Jones, 2013; Agboka, 2014;

Colton & Walton, 2015; Colton & Holmes, 2016) and recognizing the value of TPC within international contexts (Crabtree & Sapp, 2005; Dysart-Gale, Pitula, & Radhakrishnan, 2011; Dura, Singhal, & Elias, 2013; Medina, 2014), but scant historical work has been done to acknowledge the role that TPC has played globally over time. The only quasi-historical study of which I am aware of non-Euro-western international TPC is Natarajan and Pandit's (2008) article about the past, present, and future of outsourcing in India. Based on the data I present in this article, we know that there are no articles about women in non-Euro-western contexts. A better understanding of shifts in TPC theory and practice will emerge from international historical research.

Shifting research is addressed in Blyler's (1995) call for research as ideology, with a move from a functionalist perspective to a critical interpretive perspective. She described this needed shift as ethical and a move toward "reflexivity and for a rhetorical view of research" (p. 287). In contrast with functionalist research perspectives—which suggest "that reality exists external to use" and that we can attain "objective, generalizable knowledge" (p. 288)—the interpretive perspective focuses "on the ways reality is constructed and given meaning by social actions" and views "knowledge as subjective and local" (p. 296). This ideological view of research aims to give "voice to groups that are underrepresented or silenced," to "recognize and bring to the fore [researchers'] immersion . . . in ideology," and "to understand how the research design and process are themselves implicated in social and institutional structures of domination" (p. 301). This research approach echoes feminist and social justice concerns, and predictably Blyler's article coincided with a flurry of feminist research in TPC.

This feminist research is thought to have begun with Lay's (1989) groundbreaking article that introduced gender studies to professional communication. Lay (2002) followed up by directly advocating the use of feminist criticism in research and noted that "feminist researchers may adapt traditional methods of gathering and interpreting evidence, or they may develop new ones" (p. 165). Overall, Lay provided categories for examining and labeling types of feminist research: "The work of those technical communication scholars who use

feminist perspectives generally makes visible previously ignored female rhetors, suggests how the field will benefit from adapting feminist perspectives, asks how the gender of communicator might affect preferred rhetorical strategies, or demonstrates how language and knowledge-making are gendered" (p. 173). Lay called for a focus on silenced voices in TPC; however, an overwhelming amount of feminist-oriented historical research continues to silence and ignore particular groups of people because of its focus on white, middle class, North Americans. While feminist scholarship is concerned with uncovering what has been forgotten and highlighting the voices of women, who historically have been marginalized, we have work to do in including and recognizing *all* women's histories.

As a result of Lay's writings, many scholars began incorporating feminist methods and foci. Not only did feminism/gender studies redefine the field, but it changed the way some scholars conducted research (see Tebeaux, 1990; Allen, 1991; Bosley, 1994; LaDuc & Goldrick-Jones, 1994). Scholars used feminism to move from "faith that some aspects of culture and society are value-neutral … to a focus on critique with its insistence that all aspects of human existence are contextualized and politicized" (Thompson & Smith, 2006, p. 196). Thompson and Smith's (2006) findings reveal a disciplinary shift to Blyler's interpretive perspective, which they called postmodern. They explained, "Postmodern feminists believe that traits as defined by attitudes and behaviors cannot exist outside of the situation that prompts them" (p. 196). This shift reflects an awareness of feminist research practices in the field.

Reflecting on the state of research in the field is common, and Moran and Tebeaux (2011; 2012) compiled two bibliographies of works on historical studies in TPC. Despite a healthy tradition of historical research, they concluded that there are "few studies that unearth technical writing or the genres that define technical writing and show their existence and development over a sustained period" (2012, p. 58). Historical research has touched on particular historical eras, but we have not yet grounded our genres and writing practices with historical depth. Moran and Tebeaux suggest that continued historical research needs "new methodologies" (p. 76). Their research on the corpus of TPC historical studies—despite a healthy tradition of historical scholarship—reveals that "the history of

technical writing still has not been written" (p. 58), meaning that TPC's history is incomplete and that there is much more to be learned. Furthermore, as my data shows, the feminist history of TPC outside of Euro-westernNotecontexts has been largely ignored.

Data Collection

I began by establishing the criteria of a "feminist historiography" to determine which articles fit the methodology and which articles did not. To cover the "feminist" aspect, I included articles that focused "on women's lives, activities, and experiences," used "methods or writing styles informed by feminist theories and ethics," or used "a feminist theoretical lens and/or pay[ed] particular attention to interplays between gender and other forms of power and difference" (Buch & Staller, 2007, p. 190). I narrowed this by focusing only on historiographies (articles about incidents, women, or artifacts that began or occurred before the year 2000) with special attention on the research lens as retrospective. This allowed me to determine which articles were historiographies and which were written about a current event or person at the time of printing.

I used eight journals in the field, based on a list of the most influential journals recommended by several university library help guides for TPC. I also consulted Lowry, Humpherys, Malwitz, and Nix (2007) and scoured several resources that provided information on citations and impact factors of journals. This narrowing of journals was done with a research methods class in a Ph.D. program and served as a guide for this study. The eight journals include:

- *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*

- *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*

- *International Journal of Business Communication* (previously the *Journal of Business Communication*)

- *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*

- *Technical Communication Quarterly*

- *Written Communication*

- *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* (previously *Business Communication Quarterly*)

- *Technical Communication*

I located feminist historiographies by searching journal databases with the terms "women + history" and reading each abstract of the search results. From there, I downloaded PDF copies of qualifying articles for coding and analysis. I also mined the following bibliographic essays about the history of the field and/or women and feminism research in the field: Connor, 1991; Malone, 2007; Moran & Tebeaux 2011; Moran & Tebeaux 2012; Smith & Thompson 2002; Thompson & Smith, 2006; Rivers, 1994. I used the reference lists of these articles to locate feminist historiographies. This yielded results in journals not on my original search list and made me aware of historiographies included in book collections.

Although I looked at edited collections, I may have missed some of the feminist historiography articles found therein. I relied on the bibliographies in TPC to locate those and determine which ones "counted" as feminist historiographies. I also included some articles from edited collections in rhetoric that had not made it onto other lists of histories in the field. However, these were chosen because of their strong connection to TPC (through genre or artifact) and because TPC has a close relationship with rhetoric and the rhetorical activities of writers and speakers. I did not, however, check every collection or rhetoric journal. I relied instead on bibliographies of TPC's history to lead me to these articles and collections. Not every instance of historical rhetorical analysis of women's activities was included. This would be a different research project, one that might overlap with feminist historiographies in TPC.

The following are my results for searches of "women + history" in the eight major journals. The *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* yielded 76 results with 10 that fit my criteria. *Technical Communication Quarterly* yielded 132 results, with 16 that fit my criteria, plus one editor's introduction that alerted me to an article that my search had missed. Eighty results came from *Technical Communication*, with only two fitting my criteria for feminist historiography. The *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* yielded 100 results with one fit. I

later found four additional articles from this journal based on bibliographies and through a previous research project that I had conducted. There were no results in *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* for "women + history," while there were 19 results for "women" and 17 results for "history." However, none was about women and none fit my criteria for feminist historiography. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* yielded two results, but only one of those articles fit my criteria. By searching *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* for the term "women" only, I received 18 results with two fitting my criteria; I found two others from previous research. *Written Communication* had 75 results, with 10 fitting my criteria; however, many of these 10 were ultimately discarded because of their focus on literacy and histories of marginalized groups rather than TPC and women; I decided that these did not necessarily fit my study, although those results represent a starting place for filling the gap in feminist historiographies with articles focused on global contexts and marginalized groups. The methods and research questions in such articles may translate well to historical research on women in TPC. The *International Journal of Business Communication* yielded one result, but in a search for just "women," 33 results were returned; two of those articles fit my criteria. I also searched Google Scholar for the terms "women + history + technical communication." This gave me 5,780 results. I scanned the first 10 pages of these search returns and found three books with possible articles and three articles that fit my criteria. During these searches, I read the abstracts of all results, unless the title clearly did not fit the definition of a feminist historiography and did not offer potential as a research article suited for this study; many search results were book reviews or editorial columns.

After all of the articles were gathered, I entered the information into an Excel spreadsheet, noting the journal, author, article title, research question(s), research method, artifact/source, location, date of publication, and dates in history. I noted the research method used by identifying it (or them) from chapters in Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2007): empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemology, postmodernism and/or poststructuralism, interviewing, oral history, focus groups, ethnography, content analysis, mixed-methods, or survey research.

My goal was not necessarily to examine "the extent to which women's issues or feminist perspectives are explored in a particular medium," but instead to make sense of the way feminist histories are researched in my field and uncover what is missing from this particular methodology (p. 231).

Method of Analysis

I ended up with 63 articles. From the spreadsheet, I was able to determine which journals yielded the most feminist historiography scholarship, what methods and questions feminist historiographers in the field ask, when such research has been predominant, which periods of history have been covered, and what locations have been examined. My analysis followed the feminist research practice of content analysis. Leavy (2007b) explained this is "the systematic study of texts and other cultural products or nonliving data forms" (p. 227). This involves collecting data from those sources and analyzing that data, either quantitatively or qualitatively. I focused on a qualitative analysis, with scant quantitative analysis, to interpret the methodology of feminist historiography. My goal in this textual analysis was seeing "what is there but also what is missing, silenced, or absent" (p. 228). I also "deconstruct[ed] the text to see what is revealed, what emerges, what juxtapositions develop" (p. 228).

I coded the research questions with Lay's (2002) categories of feminist research in technical communication: 1) to make visible; 2) to explain how the field will benefit from feminism; 3) to examine how gender affects rhetorical strategies; and 4) to look at how language and knowledge-making are gendered. Because feminist historiographies are a subset of feminist research in TPC, these categories were helpful for determining where historiographies fit into feminist research and how the research questions address the issues that are already important to feminist scholars in TPC. After doing this initial analysis, I was able to see what was not there. I found that research in international contexts and research methods suited to such contexts (and that would enhance all historiographical research) were missing from what has been accomplished so far.

Findings

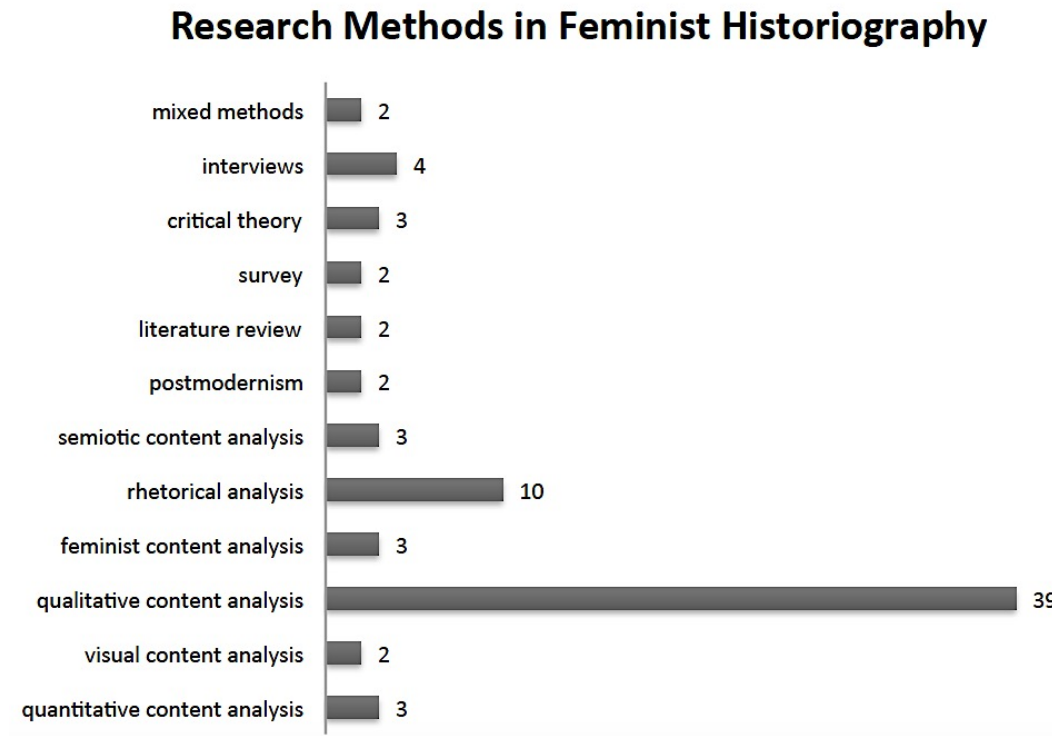## Methods of Feminist Historiography

Every article examined used some form of content analysis as the method, while most of them relied on qualitative content analysis, in which the authors allowed themes to emerge. This method is "a grounded theory perspective, [which] allow[s] the researcher to develop code categories directly out of the data … the categories actually emerge as you sift through the data" (Leavy, 2007b, p. 244). Several of the authors noted the exact type of content analysis used, and one used quantitative content analysis. Other types of content analysis specifically mentioned included rhetorical analyses, semiotic methods from cultural studies, and symbolic-analytic framework analysis. Two of the articles called their methods feminist content analysis. The amount of articles using each type of feminist research method is graphed below in Figure 2. Many articles used more than one method.

One article appears to be a content analysis of sorts, but functions more like a literature review. This is Durack's (1997) seminal article "Gender, Technology, and the History of Technical Communication," in which she argued that women have been historically marginalized from definitions of workplace and technology, claiming that we must redefine these terms in order to include women's historical contributions. Durack's groundwork is oriented to Euro-western contexts, and the data I gathered suggests we need more discussion of how women's contributions globally may be researched in unexpected places and spaces.

Durack's article is the only one that relies on the literature, rather than artifacts, to make a case. Additionally, her article is the only one not confined to a specific time period; she instead argued generally about which factors might be silencing or covering women's historical contributions. A similar article from an international historical perspective would be useful to feminist scholars interested in contributing to an understanding of global women in TPC.

Figure 2

Frequency of research methods used in feminist historiography

Research Methods in Feminist Historiography

Method	Frequency
mixed methods	2
interviews	4
critical theory	3
survey	2
literature review	2
postmodernism	2
semiotic content analysis	3
rhetorical analysis	10
feminist content analysis	3
qualitative content analysis	39
visual content analysis	2
quantitative content analysis	3

In another article, Malone relied on the content analysis of newspaper clippings, documents written by Lucille J. Pieti, press releases, photographs, personal papers, and even an interview with Pieti and her husband. He found interesting sites for research collection. More importantly, Malone (2010) described his method: "Although I focus on a historical woman in the profession and to some extent recover her contributions, my study is not a 'recovery' project, per se. I am more concerned with critiquing the social and institutional forces that frustrated her career aims and shaped her professional life" (p. 147). This method is related to postmodern feminist research, which recognizes that "grand narratives become taken-for-granted explanations about social reality … [and] rejects … binary thinking" (Leavy, 2007a, pp. 87-88). In feminist research, postmodernist study "complicates identity politics . . . [,] allows researchers to deconstruct gender

norms rather than reifying or regulating them[,] … [and] views gender identity as a result of power effects" (p. 101). Malone's caveat and feminist postmodernism advises us to be more critical in feminist historiographical research, moving away from valorizing all historical contributions and moving toward critical examinations of contexts, effects, and users. We cannot assume that all research about women historically leads to positive portrayals and advances of TPC.

In terms of method, Malone is the only researcher who used interviews for gathering data, demonstrating that this method and other similar methods must be embraced in order to continue to gather rich data and to reach people who may not have documented their experiences. He used this method for all four of his articles (2010; 2013; 2015a; 2015b) represented in this canon of feminist historiography. Because Malone's articles document modern history, he often had access to the subjects of his research while they were still alive. Malone was able to gather personal accounts of their work through them, their families, and their colleagues.

Research Questions

To code the research questions from the historiographies, I used Lay's (2002) categories of feminist research types in technical communication: 1) to make visible; 2) to explain how the field will benefit from feminism; 3) to examine how gender affects rhetorical strategies; and 4) to look at how language and knowledge-making are gendered. Many of the articles' research questions had a dual purpose; therefore, some of the articles fit into two of these categories. A few of the articles did not fit into any of these categories. In addition, I only skimmed articles and looked at the articles' research questions specifically to determine which kind of feminist perspective, as outlined by Lay, each one adopted. Upon a more thorough reading of each article, one might find different results than what I present here or more nuanced understandings of how researchers address one or more of the following categories. Figure 3 is a graph of the feminist research types of the research questions from the corpus of feminist historiography. I discuss each category after the graph.

Figure 3

Feminist historiographies categorized by purpose

Articles Sorted by
Lay's Categories of Feminist Research
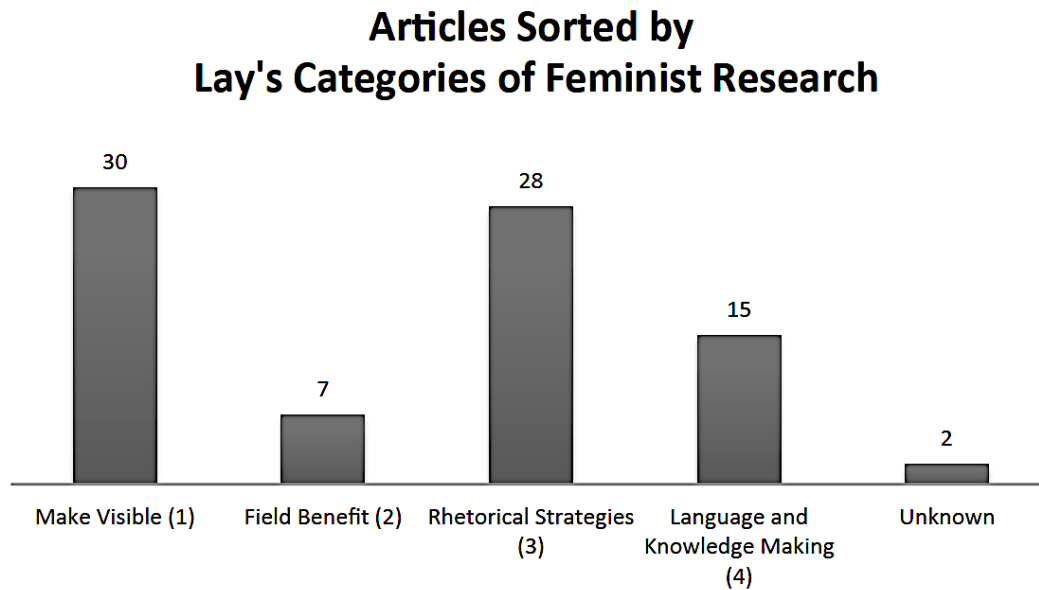
Make visible. Thirty of the 63 articles recognize a forgotten woman (or group of women) and had the purpose of making contributions visible. Of these, 15 articles also had a secondary purpose, with a balanced mixture of focusing on TPC's benefits, rhetorical strategies, or language and knowledge-making as gendered. These articles tended to focus on a single woman as a technical communicator, or a few women in the same profession, through TPC documents.

Twenty articles are about specific women, with attention to Ellen Swallow Richards (several articles by Lippincott), Florence Nightingale, Rachel Carson, Lucille J. Pieti, Elizabeth Blackwell, Priscilla Bell Wakefield, Julia W. Carpenter, Flora Annie Steel, Bertha Honore Palmer, Elsie Ray, Dorothy Wordsworth, Anne Macvicar Grant, Hildegard von Bingen, Margaret Bruin Machette, Dhuoda, Sada A. Harbarger, Elizabeth Stonor, Margaret Cavendish (two articles), Barbara McClintock, Eleanor McElwee, and Hannah Longshore. The research questions for these articles focus on recognizing an individual woman and her contributions. Before conducting this study, I was familiar with only seven of these women by name, and I knew even less about their

accomplishments. Additionally, of those seven, I had learned about three of them because of my work as a TPC scholar before conducting this study.

However, it is problematic that the names on this list are Eurocentric. By paying attention to who is not named (i.e. women from Africa, Asia, South America, the Pacific Islands, and other global contexts), we see a gap in feminist recovery efforts. The existing studies are beneficial to women in TPC and other scientific and technical fields because of the possibility of identifying role models and seeing names and faces like theirs doing work that is technical and professional. These names, while important to TPC, represent the names that should be included in interdisciplinary histories of human accomplishment. And yet, these names do not represent enough of the women who are and have been engaged in technological and communicative work globally. More of these names and more diversity of these names must be researched and represented.

Benefit field. Seven of the feminist historiographies focus on how TPC as a whole will benefit from the study. Because the field is taking a global and social justice turn (Agboka, 2013; Haas, 2012; Walton, 2016; Walton & Jones, 2013), we have exigence for understanding why researching the missing canon of international historical women's engagements with TPC would benefit the field and further contemporary examinations of global inquiry. Most of the seven articles that do focus on benefitting the field have secondary purposes, yet they do not consider the field as a global enterprise. The two articles that have the sole purpose of benefitting the field are content analyses of past journal articles on women and feminism, which we know are focused on white Euro-western women (Smith & Thompson, 2002; Thompson & Smith, 2006). The others ask how the artifact/subject studied can help us interpret future instances or how the research is beneficial to scholars and students. This is a salient question to ask, especially given Flynn's (1997) point, in referring to George Orwell, that "historical knowledge is an indispensable part of any modernist drive for human liberation, dignity, and equality" (p. 322). Applying this feminist historical knowledge to TPC should be a major concern of scholars. Perhaps this is an implied goal of this body of work; however, we are missing multicultural perspectives on how women's

historical knowledge illuminates the field. Furthermore, scholars' research questions do not necessarily need to ask how the findings will benefit the field for the research to do so.

Gender's effect on rhetorical strategies. Examining women's rhetorical strategies accounts for 28 of the articles. Because content analysis is heavily favored as a research method for text-based artifacts, this is an obvious way to analyze historical texts from a TPC perspective. These articles demonstrate the connection rhetoric has to TPC, especially historically. Because much of what we study historically can only be done through written records (as oral communication may have been lost, especially in cultures focused on spoken discourse rather than documentation), rhetoric becomes an important way of understanding how women acted as communicators and how documents may have silenced them. Skinner (2012) noted, "Historical studies of women as technical communicators have drawn attention to the rhetorical constraints that women have faced and to the role that constructions of femininity have played in women's implementation of the discursive features of technical communication" (p. 307). What rhetorical constraints have global women faced over the centuries? How do these restraints look different than Euro-western contexts, and because they are different, how can we best identify them? How can TPC research and methods address those constraints and investigate new and different kinds of rhetorical strategies across cultures? The articles examined in this study raise these questions, as examining particular performances of femininity or patriarchal hierarchies as constraints (Mohanty, 2003a) may not yield the best information about women's rhetorical strategies in a global context.

Gendered language and knowledge-making. Fifteen of the articles emphasize the gendered nature of language and knowledge-making. Many of these studies center on scientific and medical professions, noting that gendered terms or traditions often marginalize women. This is tied to the goal of making women visible, but instead of focusing on a specific woman as a case study, these studies look more broadly at traditions and disciplines. This is done through

manuals, reports, sewing patterns, technical books, textbooks, memos, meeting minutes, and bulletins. While texts like these are important to almost all of these articles (including visual representations), these articles display research questions preoccupied with political ideologies, communicative transactions, the values of science, the discourse of medicine, and public discourse. The focus on language and knowledge-making as gendered takes on a political and public dimension, which Blyler (1995) noted in her work on political ideology as a research methodology.

In order to more fully understand and expand feminist historiography, we are missing contextualized histories of particular contexts and cultures. We must examine ideologies, transactions, values, and discourses from various countries and eras, including women from various socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities. Diversity in feminist historiography may come in the form of examining various socioeconomic positions and work performed within those class distinctions. We may have overlooked what counts as TPC because some work is not traditionally privileged or dominant in discourses that define "work."

Artifacts. Because content analysis is the overwhelming method of choice for conducting feminist historiographies in TPC, the research relied heavily on textual artifacts for study. Recognizing various forms of documentation beyond written text and engaging in translation work will become essential to opening up artifacts for study from international contexts. Sixty of the articles used text-based artifacts, and these included corporate reports, periodicals, investigation reports, testimonies, court documents, journal articles, manuals, patents, books, letters, essays, portraits, journals, pamphlets, newspapers, medical papers, sales documents, speeches, meeting minutes, and other historical archival materials. There is no limit on the types of texts possible for use in a feminist historiography. However, because the researchers overwhelmingly relied on content analysis as an investigative method, they did not generally include interviews (if possible) or oral histories. Moreover, because scholars often rely on written texts and language to examine past cultures and contexts, a lack of research on women's historical contributions and participations in TPC may be

lost because of deterioration, a lack of documentation, or a culture whose technical work might have been documented in another form or language.

Authors. Not all researchers working with feminist historiographies are female. Eight of the authors are male, and several of those men have multiples articles represented in this corpus. Female experience and voice is critical to the history of TPC, and recognizing women's contributions through academic research is not confined to female researchers. One of the most prolific authors is Katherine T. Durack (5 articles), whose work is foundational to further understanding and redefining the artifacts and processes of TPC to include cultures and people who may work differently than what is defined as "work" in Euro-western societies. Durack's work scrutinizes sewing machine manuals and technology from a feminist perspective. Her scholarship is not as concerned with recovering individual voices as it is with redefining the way we understand TPC and its origins. I suggest that we must further redefine the contexts of where TPC occurs to include an international view.

Gail Lippincott has four articles that concentrate on Ellen Swallow Richards, the first female graduate of MIT and a chemistry instructor who championed domestic science and the sanitation movement. Lippincott highlighted Richards's use of rhetoric in her writing. Elizabeth Tebeaux's four articles paint a broad picture of women's contributions and technical writing genres in the English Renaissance; this research represents most of what we know about TPC from the 1400s to the 1700s. Similarly, Malcolm Richardson studied medieval England in four articles; his work assesses women's writing from a genre perspective and women's writing through a single female figure. Most recent are Edward Malone's four publications, mostly about individual women of the twentieth century who contributed to the emergence and establishment of TPC as a profession.

None of these researchers has dedicated time to understanding women's contributions from non-Euro-western perspectives. The extent of global historical knowledge of women in TPC outside of the United States focuses on England.

While this gives us a rich understanding of TPC from a particular historical context, it ignores the vast histories available to the tradition of TPC globally.

Dates covered. The historiographies cover dates consistently from the 1400s to present, but a postcolonial perspective on TPC from a historical perspective of women and marginalized groups is needed to understand how what we already know about historic TPC may have had far-reaching consequences. While it seems that most eras from the English Renaissance (a popular site of investigation with some 14 studies about it) have been covered, not all of the historical work has been done. The groups that may have been affected by English Renaissance TPC would be an equally important project of history and recovery, given that TPC is a user-focused field (Johnson, 1998). Were women and peoples of various countries using TPC from the English Renaissance? Were policies, procedures, or instructions stemming from Euro-western societies affecting female populations globally? We may already know the answers to some of these questions, but paying particular attention to the role of TPC in colonialism will tell a more nuanced and overlooked part of history.

Additionally, many of the eras researched only skim the surface, with large date spans. For example, few studies concentrate exclusively on the 1930s or the 1960s, times of great change and engagement with the workplace for women. Various studies "cover" these time periods by claiming to examine a woman's work or experiences from 1953 to 1971 or from 1940 to 1964. These date spans are large and only focused on one woman's life and work. Consequently, we are severely limited in our knowledge of the feminist historiography of TPC in those decades. Other decades suffer from similar neglect in all contexts.

Dates published. Some 29 articles were published in the 1990s, and 22 of them were published in the 2000s. As of this writing, we are six years into the second decade of the twenty-first century, and 12 articles have been published since 2010. From this data, we see that feminist historiography, while not overwhelming in numbers, is continuing. Since the introduction of gender studies and feminism to

the field in 1989, we have seen the influence of reclaiming women's voices and remembering their contributions as an important part of academic research.

Journals. **I** suspect that a search in journals aimed at rhetoric and communication, without the confined focus of TPC, would reveal a larger corpus of international feminist historiography in sister fields. Finding and identifying such scholarship in these broader fields is the next step in identifying methods and contexts for conducting international feminist historiography research within TPC. As researchers and guest editors, we can propose articles and special issues that take up a global perspective and encourage journal editors and other scholars to make international historical perspectives a priority.

Which TPC journals have been most prolific in publishing feminist historiographies? The flagship journal of TPC, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, has the distinction of printing 17 of the historiographies I identified. The *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* is second, with 12 articles. Edited collections contain seven, the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* has five (two of which are qualitative content analyses of journal articles on women and feminism), *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* has four, and the *International Journal of Business Communication* has three. *Written Communication* and *Technical Communication* each have two. Durack is responsible for both of the articles in *Technical Communication*. Finally, *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* had none. From bibliographies, I found two articles in the *Journal of Advanced Composition* and two articles in *Rhetoric Review*. I also found one article in each of the following journals: *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *Disputatio*, *Rhetorica*, *English Literary Renaissance*, *Journal of the Northwestern Communication Association*, *College English*, and *Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*.

Discussion and Implications

We must begin to consider broad forms of text to include sites of international feminist historiography. The findings of this study show that most feminist

historiographers rely heavily on content analysis, as this is an effective method for analyzing texts. Often texts are the only artifacts available for analysis when it comes to historical research. Content analysis, in its many forms, whether rhetorical, semiotic, or cultural, works effectively for feminists and historians alike, and because some of the time periods covered in this corpus have no living witnesses, texts may be all we have to examine. However, do hieroglyphics or other pictorial communication modes reveal information about women in TPC? How do various cultures' modes of communication and uses of technology need to be considered in order to make a historical study effective? What technologies have been used and developed to keep track of local histories?

I propose that feminist historiography researchers expand their methods toolbox in an effort to address the dearth of varied international perspectives. We tend to make privileged and Eurocentric assumptions about the types of methods we use to conduct feminist historiography. These methods are convenient to Euro-western contexts and to research time and funding. Yet more time and energy could be spend on the feminist methods of interviews and oral histories; they would add value to feminist historiography as a methodology and allow more insight into the experiences of all women historically. Such methods may be particularly suited to international contexts, because various forms of women's historical contributions might be best described through memory rather than archived documentation, as records may not exist. When records do exist, we ought to invest in translation. Interviews and oral histories are impossible to employ where there are no living witnesses, but for studies that involve women who may still be living, researchers would do well to speak with sources and explore historical instances through memories and the spoken word. For example, women have been denied education historically, and places and time periods in which women did not learn to read or write will therefore not have an abundance of written experiences from women's perspectives. As Mohanty (2003b) has argued, "indigenous knowledges, which are often communally generated and shared among tribal and peasant women for domestic, local, and public use" should not be subjected to corporate, Euro-western ideologies (p. 512). We must rethink our ideologies and the way we attempt to understand international

contexts in order to better employ methods that connect with the preferred methods of communication and documentation of the culture or context in which we study.

Of the 63 articles, only four used interviews as a method, all by Malone (2010; 2013; 2015a; 2015b). He interviewed the women about whom he was writing to triangulate his data and gain more insight into their experiences. While the interviews were not the sole artifact used for analysis, they were vital in establishing the veracity of his claims and including the women's voices. This is significant because women's voices are often silenced, and as Lay (2002) noted, feminist research perspectives "[m]ake visible those lives and audible those voices that might be neglected in traditional research studies" (p. 168). Including women's voices through interviews is an effective way to enact feminist research goals internationally.

While Malone's four articles demonstrate the use of interviews as a method to gain information about historical circumstances, oral histories might also be an effective way of understanding a particular historical event and in allowing participants to claim agency in telling their own stories. None of the articles surveyed used the method of oral history, which is "an intensive method of interview with anthropological roots that is also frequently used by sociologists and historians and is often associated with feminists … There is a performative aspect to oral history, because storytelling always involves a performance" (Leavy, 2007c, p. 153). Incorporating oral history research would yield rich insights into the culture, expectations, ideologies, and memories surrounding twentieth-century TPC in various contexts. For example, Lundy and McGovern (2006) researched a commemoration project in Northern Ireland that used oral testimonies and community participation to "provide a potential avenue of articulation for often excluded and alienated voices" (p. 84). They found that participants were willing to share information with the assurance that the authorities would not use it to prosecute; this led to a discussion of a hidden printing press from 1970. From the Claremont Oral History Collection, we learn that oral histories allow "people to speak openly [and] … make sense out of their traditional beliefs and their experiences" (Bushman, 2013, p. xvii). When collecting stories, Opel and

Stevenson (2015) suggested that scholars use approaches "that are local in nature, and examine how [we] might be more sensitive to non-Western narratives by creating dialogic, localized design processes" (p. 133).

Oral histories would also benefit studies anchored in present-day concerns because of its status as "a tool for accessing silenced or excluded knowledge … [or] the experience of oppression or being a member of an oppressed group" (Leavy, 2007c, p. 154). Oral history is "a way of bridging the personal biography of women with the social context in which that biography is written" (p. 155). While many voices of TPC's history have been lost because their experiences were not documented, we can begin to correct this by collecting the stories and memories of those who are still with us and willing to talk.

In eras without living witnesses, diaries and letters are a rich source of including women's voices about and experiences with TPC. While many scholars use such artifacts for cultural studies, TPC scholars have not turned to diaries in large numbers. Diaries contain rich information about everyday lives, and their contents may inform studies of TPC by recovering histories from the point of view of women. Where interviews are not possible, diaries or letters could be the next best artifact. In various cultures, such information might instead be contained in community histories or storytelling traditions. In order to find such records, we must think beyond pencils and paper.

One site of research I have been working on is the practice of technical writing and editing by Indian women. While conducting research in India in July 2016, I met many people who had worked to establish TPC as a viable industry in the country over the past several decades. They apprised me of newsletters dating back to the early days of the profession in the country and talked about their memories and the people who acted as "fathers" and "mothers" of technical writing in India. My interviews with women in India were about contemporary circumstances; however, encouraging founding members of TPC societies and groups, both formal and informal, in international settings to share their documented histories and recount their memories would yield rich data. The STC is a good place to start in terms of identifying communities of technical

communicators; unfortunately, according to the STC website, there are official chapters in only three countries: India, Canada, and the United States.

Part of the researcher's dilemma in doing international historical work is the lack of organization according to field-specific communities. Such research will take imagination, innovation, adventurousness, and an eye for extra-institutional TPC. Because of what we know about the history of TPC already, there are likely numerous unknown sites of TPC histories and innumerable opportunities to conduct historical research and oral histories. Researchers interested in pursuing this line of inquiry should begin paying attention to possible sites of research, be willing to travel where the research may take them, connect with colleagues globally through social networking sites and conferences, check local archives and museums worldwide, and be willing to engage in translation. Many records and archives in all languages are being digitized through family history sites, archives, and search engines. Furthermore, as a field, we should be inviting and including people from these contexts to tell their own stories and enrich understandings of TPC. We cannot tell their stories for them, as we risk colonizing them "under Western eyes [and] also within them" (Mohanty, 2003b, p. 516). Their insights into the field, told through their own frames of reference, will broaden and deepen our understanding of theories and practices of TPC.

In terms of publication, more journals could and should make feminist historiography a priority, and journals can encourage research from an international perspective by calling for special issues or recognizing the value of the research being performed internationally. In another context, that of business management, we know that "at the middle-management level, women have made substantial progress, at the top management level the statistics are still quite depressing. In 2010 only 2.4% of the U.S. Fortune 500 chief executives were female" (Toegel, 2011, para. 2-3). There is undoubtedly an untold history of business communication from women's perspectives, both in Euro-western countries and internationally. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, with no publications of feminist historiographies, should solicit or be amenable to business histories of women as an important way of recognizing and contributing

to the forgotten history of this marginalized group. Such studies may help women in today's business communication fields to find relevant role models for the work they are doing. Recognizing the forgotten female pioneers of the past in business, TPC, and other technological sites is a way of providing today's women examples of success from models that look like they do and share their lived experiences. Because international perspectives are nowhere to be found, we must make concerted efforts to document and investigate women's contributions and engagements from multiple contexts in order to give such women, working in TPC in large numbers in the Global South (especially India), models for their work and careers.

Based on the results of my analysis, I suggest that what is problematic about TPC's feminist historiography methodology is its exclusion of international perspectives and contexts and its lack of varied research methods, such as oral history, that would be useful in conducting international research. Feminist historiography in TPC is guilty of ignoring the concerns of women of color, women of various nations, and women not in positions of privilege. TPC has fully embraced white, middle-class feminism from a historical perspective, leaving behind more inclusive, nuanced, and fair understandings and depictions of global women who were and are affected by the privileged position white women claim. As Mohanty (2003b) argued, "cross-cultural feminist work must be attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes" (p. 501).

In sum, feminist historiography is an established methodology that must expand its coverage of contexts and its methods toolbox in order to continue to reclaim and document the history of TPC. By examining what is a part of feminist historiography in TPC, we see what is missing and what more can be done. While content analysis serves the methodology of feminist historiography well, there is still time and a need to capture the voices of the women involved in the historical events of the twentieth century through interviews, oral histories, and ethnographies. The expansion of feminist historiography in TPC must take into account international contexts and the contributions of women globally. ■

Note

[1] I borrow the term "Euro-western" from feminist pragmatist Thayer-Bacon (2010), who said the term is a political decision, as "without naming Western thought as European-based thought, other peoples' cultures are [invisibly] included in that category. Africa, and North, Central, and South America are continents in the Western hemisphere of our world, and yet they have their own cultures and traditions which predate European influence" (p. 136). western

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