

Jauk, Haring & Mörth 2017, English transcript to film <https://youtu.be/iUOnuy2pP1Y>

## **“bloody mary-hairy!” a DIY (gaga-)feminist didactics cock\*tail tale**

### **Intro**

Welcome to our open tutorial on feminist teaching strategies (in academic and adult education settings)

We are teachers.  
We are feminists.  
We are movers.  
We are shakers.

And today we shake up a Bloody Mary (*jemand anders schreit?: hairy!*) for you, in which we put 7 feminist didactics.

Why a cock\*tail? The \* with the cock stands for all cocks, those grown out of flesh and blood, those of plastic, those of silicone, those made of old socks. It signifies the relative independence of gender from sex assigned at birth as well as the fluidity of gender and sexualities over the life course as a basic assumption for our work.

Why tale? Because 1) feminist methodology teaches us that there is no objectivity, there always are situated stories.

And 2) Teaching is about bringing in stories. Stories about inequality. Stories about empowerment. Stories from the margins.

And ultimately: THE COCK IS A TALE.

Why gagafeminist? Because we are inspired by gagafeminism as laid out by Jack Halberstam. And we try to apply and further develop his ideas for a feminist learning environment. And what is gaga feminism supposed to be?

Halberstam takes Lady Gaga as „ most recent marker of the withering away of old social models of desire, gender, and sexuality, and as a channel for potent new forms of relation, intimacy, technology, and embodiment.“ (p.25).

Gaga feminism recognizes multiple genders and should contribute to the collapse of the binary gender system. It also “borrows promiscuously, steals from everywhere, and inhabits the ground of stereotype and cliché all at the same time.“ (p. 5).

It is “a form of political expression that masquerades as naïve nonsense LIKE THIS VIDEO but actually participates in big and meaningful forms of critique” (p. xxv).

So: What are we mixing into our (gag)feminist didactics cock\*ta(i)le?

### 1. **TOMATO JUICE - Try a What If Approach**

Gaga is a form of feminism that „that lives between the ‚what“ and the ‚if““ (p.8).

In a classroom for example, ASK:

What if we gendered people according to their behavior?

What if we acknowledged that sexuality may shift over the life course?

What if boys wear skirts?

Or even Steinem’s 1978 question: What if men could menstruate?

Asking what if questions makes visible structural inequalities between genders and may also challenge hierarchies in the classroom which is a basic tenet of feminist teaching, because ... *What if we* – turn around, at least share the power and make students our teachers by project oriented learning? What if we break spatial hierarchies in classrooms with sociometric exercises or throwing out sitting protocol?.

### 2. **ICE – Apply a How weird is that Lens**

Heterosexuality gets little attention in college classrooms. The (heteronormative) assumption is that we all know how heterosexuality works, it is the invisible norm based on which we examine the “freaks” at the fringes.

(Also because they have the aura of the exotic, like our Dog ;-).

Let’s thus switch from a „be tolerant to weirdos!“ - approach to a „how weird are the normies?“ approach. The focus then is on the strangeness of heterosexuality and on normative masculinity and femininity

Feminist teaching always has an emancipatory approach. This implies we emancipate from a socially constructed and limiting “normality” and the unhealthy implications of heteronormativity for all genders, and yes, we try to make the world a better place for all sentient beings.

### 3. **LEMON - Operate from the lifeworlds of students**

Gaga critically acknowledges cyborg possibilities in a Harraway-tradition. It is about shifting and morphing and keeping up with multimedia environments – „and if you don’t go gaga soon, you may wake up and realize you have missed the future and become the past“ (p.29).

We thus advocate a tech positive feminist teaching and are willing to try out new stuff, and fail. We learn – yes! – from our students (nothing better than a “my favorite apps show and tell at the beginning of a semester).

That also includes making our teaching freely accessible e.g. on the web like this video with transcript right now.

Now, Lady Gaga is a white pop icon and maybe not the best signifier for lifeworlds of ‘students’. Students ARE diverse, lets try to not only use white young middle class pop culture and “queer” our syllabi with readings and media from ALL around the world, not only the global North.

#### 4. **CAYENNE - Honor principles and further develop gaga feminism**

Halberstam lays out a few principles or rules for gaga , further developing those might be a fun student assignment Here they are

- i. *Let go of basic assumptions of bodies, people, and desire.* For teachers, this also means -- *let go of assumptions about your students.*
- ii. *Look at the margins, don't watch the ball, watch the crowd.*
- iii. *Think counterintuitively, act accordingly.*
- iv. *Practice creative non-believing* - Gaga feminism is a dedicated „anti-christian doctrine“ (p.28) -- How to allow for a queer embrace of spirituality while rejecting fundamentalism in every faith group?

#### 5. **SALT - Learn in unusual places**

Halberstam states that „the art of going gaga“ is „a politics of free falling, wild thinking, and imaginative reinvention best exemplified by children under the age of eight, women over the age of 45, and the vast armies of the marginalized, the abandoned, and the unproductive“ (p. xv).

That means for *us* as facilitators of learning to learn in non-normative places, but also allow students to explore the margins and the unusual in order to better understand the social world around them. So what if we go out to participate in a protest instead of projecting the 67th death by PowerPoint lesson?

Also let's BRING unusual places into our classrooms, Connect to social practise and get the social world into the classroom through speakers, activists, short: creating spaces for people who are not usually seen in colleges and make our classrooms also accessible to them.

(Learning for us also means transgress textbooks, expand learning materials to artifacts, art, multimedia (here it is again, techpositive feminism!), social movements, ...)

## 6. **CHILLISAUCE - Evaluate in creative ways**

Gagfeminist teaching may also mean that we apply different evaluation criteria for the work of our students.

We may emphasize on critical thinking, creativity, and emancipatory focus in addition to academic rigor. That challenges us to develop new evaluation instruments.

## 7. **STRAW - Question yourself, self reflexivity**

Here comes the straw and it means “‘suck it up’ – this is not the final answer!”, keep questioning yourself and your teaching! It is also the straw you grab for survival as a feminist tool, THE feminist tool in philosophy of science: self-reflexivity and questions.

To speak with Sara Ahmed: “To live a feminist life is to make everything into something that is questionable.”

### **Outro:**

So please. Question yourself, and question US.

React to us, Critique us, supplement us.

Show us your personal mix.

Mesh up our video (it is open license)

Comment below

Lets continue this bloody hairy conversation

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### Further Source:

Radio Helsinki show hosted by Reni Hofmueller on “Teaching with/out the F-Word,” January 24, 2017. Available at <https://cba.fro.at/334546>, studio guests: Daniela Jauk, Sabine Klinger, Nicole A. Pruckermayer

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