Rosemary Hill

Advanced Qualitative Methods (AQUALM) training

In this training, we discussed different ways of using the visual in research alongside one key epistemological theory of understanding what it means to look at the world. We used our own experiences of looking and feeling to consider what visual methods can contribute to our research.

This session was led by Rosemary Hill whose background is broadly within Media Studies

A key interest is females and music fandom

She has done research about female metal fans

She used examples from the project 'seeingdata'

Aim= how do people engage with data visualisations

Relationship between numbers and visuals

Good example project for teaching because the project did a lot with visual analysis: Elicitation, making visuals , used visual in their analysis

In the session we were reminded that Visual methods not just about analysis

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The session was split into 3 sections:
In the first we explored Social semiotic analysis then we did activities around visual elicitations/ then it was more of a lecture about theorising vision in line with feminist thinking around situated knowledges

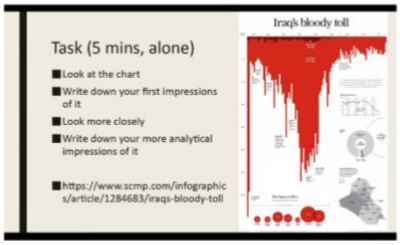
1. **Focus on Social Semiotics** :

Used 'Iraq's bloody Toll' data.

This was a piece of visual data (some might call this an info-graphic) It was an upside down bar chart which was meant to resemble blood.

This was an effective teaching tool as it was quite easy to look at connotations and how these functioned to portray emotive messages.

ession was recorded and is available below:



Rather than looking at the data the focus was to look at the images here

What are the fundamental things we can see on the page here?

- Monochrome
- Blood
- Red
- Text very small

Connotative level

- Metaphors?
- What's the story being told here?
- What's the relationship between inside the image and the view?
- What story is being told in Iraq's bloody toll?

Could this being something to practise independently?

SOCIAL SEMIOTICS

CAN BE SPLIT INTO

PRODUCTION//

IMAGE//

AUDIENCE

Some general questions for this type of analysis:

- What kind of approach has been taken in terms of the fundamental things on page here?
- What has been done?
- What is the impact?

In terms of Production

- Conventions guiding how it's made –
- what conventions have guided the choices that have been made?
- It is working in the **conventions of data visualisation-** clean lines, simple shapes, white space works in a modernist way you will not see watercolour for example

Image

How conventions are used?

Visual and textual discourses

Why have they turned the bar chart upside down?

Subtle discourses working in the backs of our minds

Audience

Who is It made for?

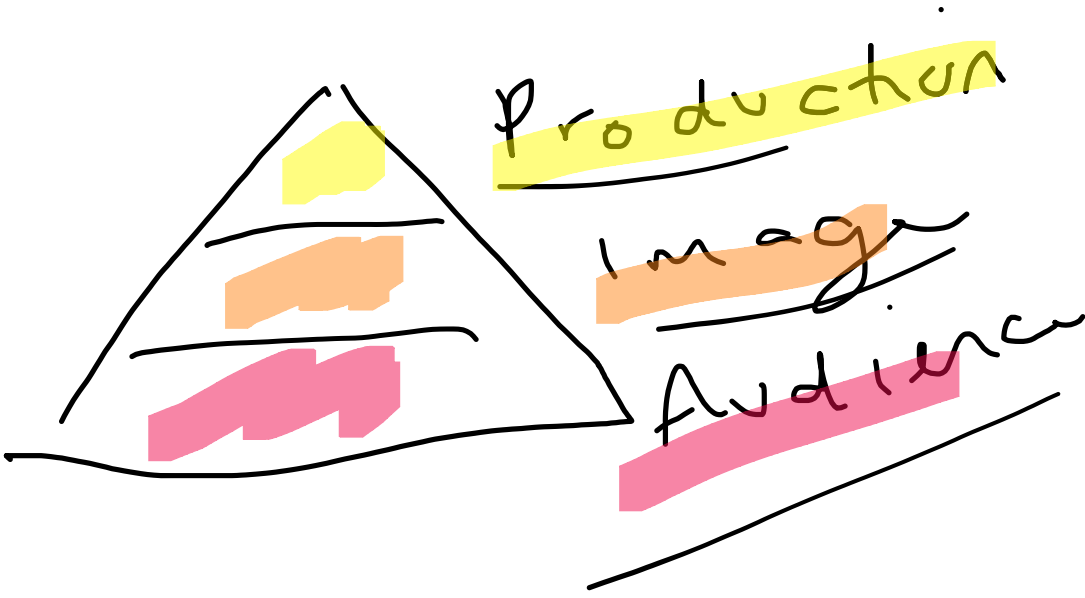
How do people receive it?

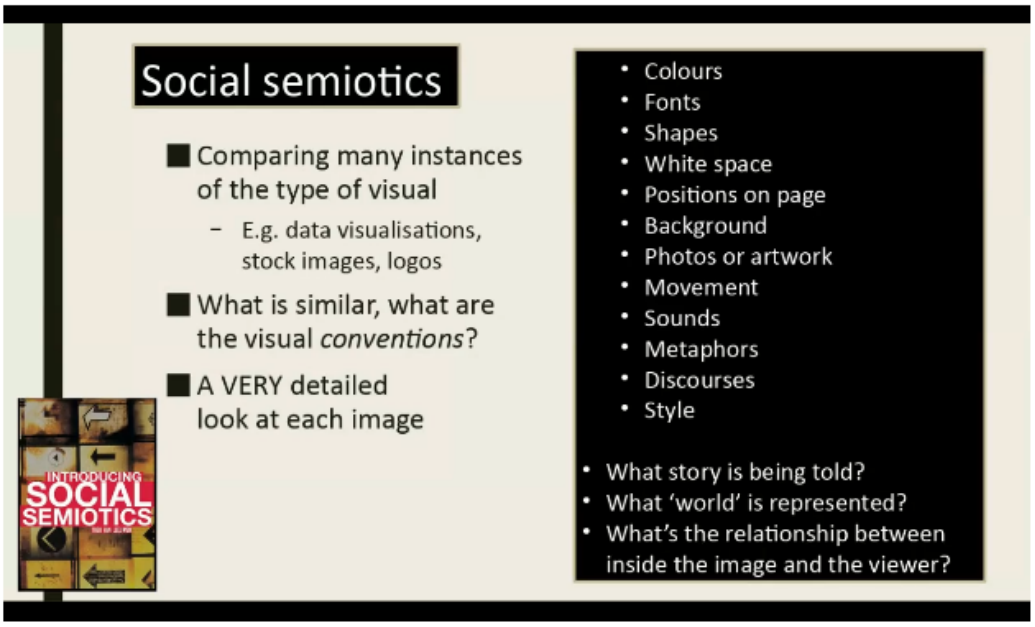
Triangle

Production

Image

Audience





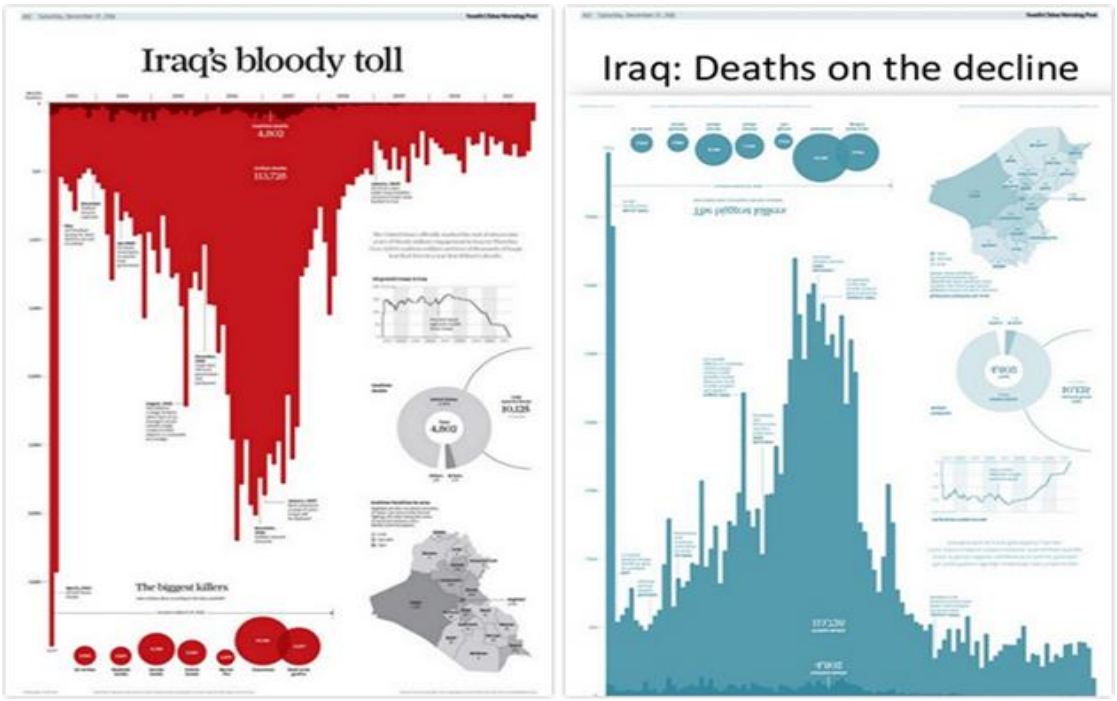


Image on left = Iraq's Bloody Toll from South China Morning Post
https://www.scmp.com/infographics/article/1284683/iraqs-bloody-toll

Image on the right someone who works in data visualisation recreated the image to a very different effect.

ACTIVITY PHOTO ELICITATION

What we did:

We were in pairs bought a photo and role-played researcher and participant. We each brought a photo with us to share.

- Participants bring **own** images to discuss
    - photos to **prompt memory**, discuss **significant moment** in life
- (2) Researchers present participants with images to elicit responses, drive discussion

Context of image production, even after existence in data collection

- Who created the image?
- What was done with it?

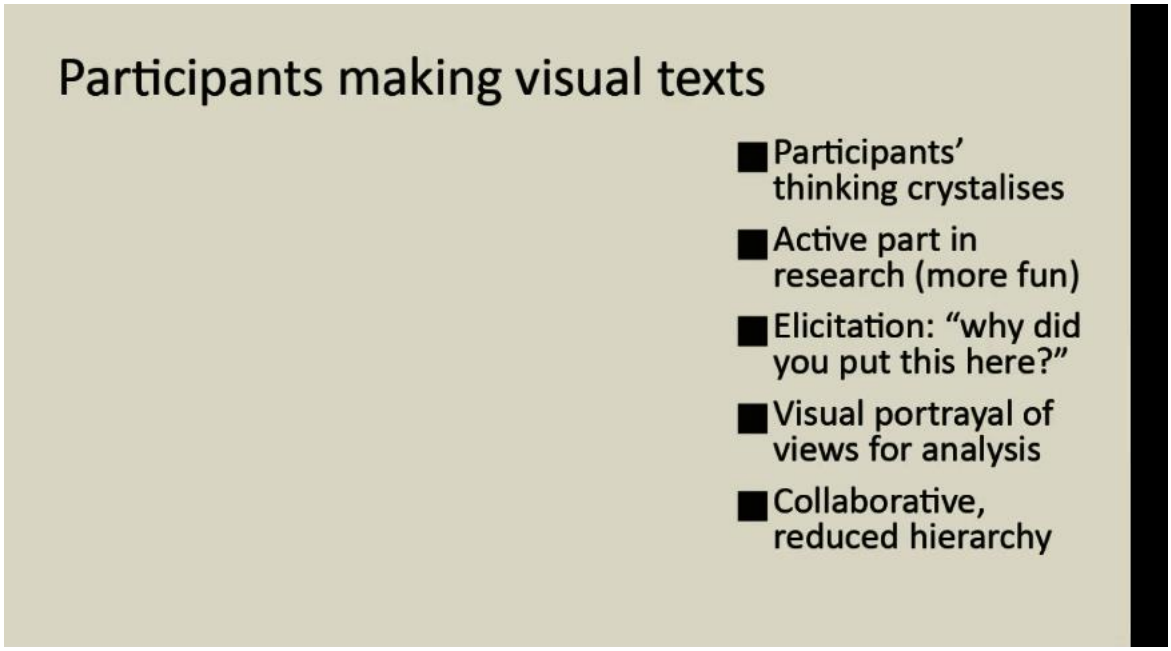
Context of looking and discussing

- What **does the research environment** mean for participants?

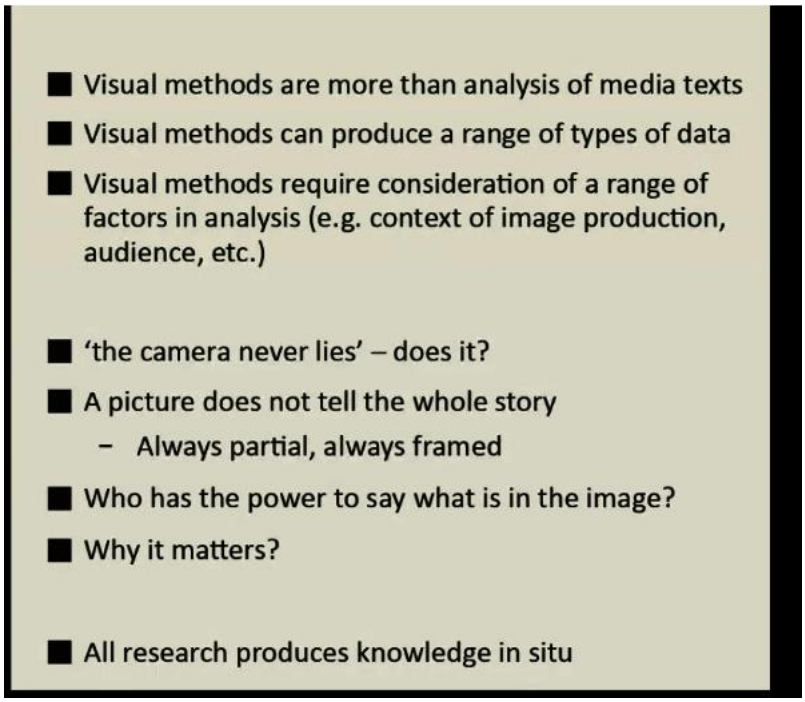
  Eg pub focus group most on screen, but then one printed one that participants had to stand up and walk o it – this was a context 'thing'
- Example from Metro – Pink/orange
- Materiality of newspaper vs screen data meant something to people

- What does the materiality of the visual media mean?

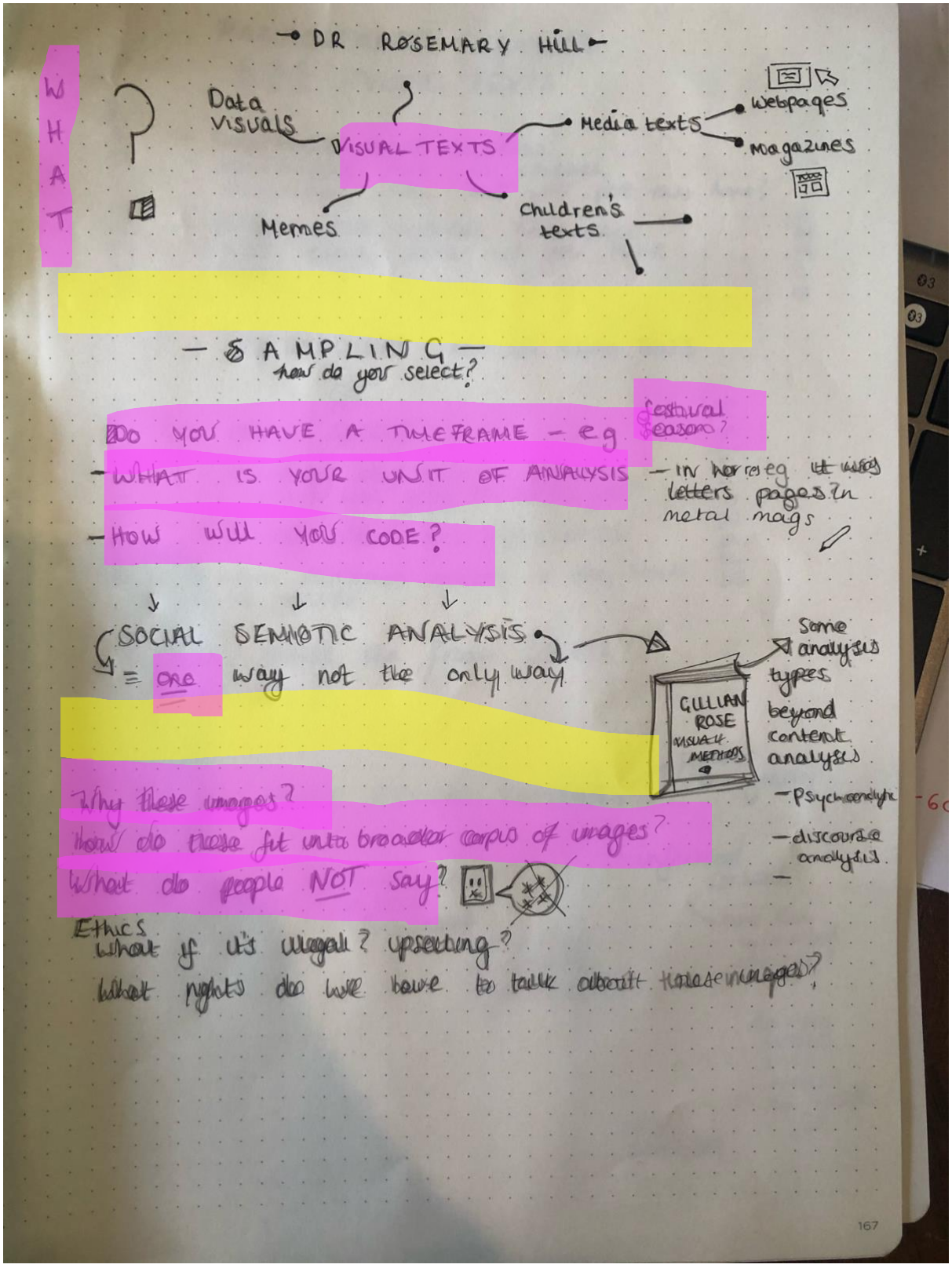
Rosemary Hill shared this slide about **ADVANTAGES of photo elicitation**



To reflect on this activity further I would say that it would have been useful for me to come up with some general questions before hand and also it would have been of Benefits to consider the **materiality** and **context** of the images. We're they digital? How did the zoom context affect the way we shared?



Important – throughout the session Dr Hill pointed us to the book Visual Methods by Gillian Rose. I ended up buying an Ebook version of this as the library one was an older version and did not have the updated section about digital methods. It seems to be a core text and of use so hopefully this will be an investment for the PhD!



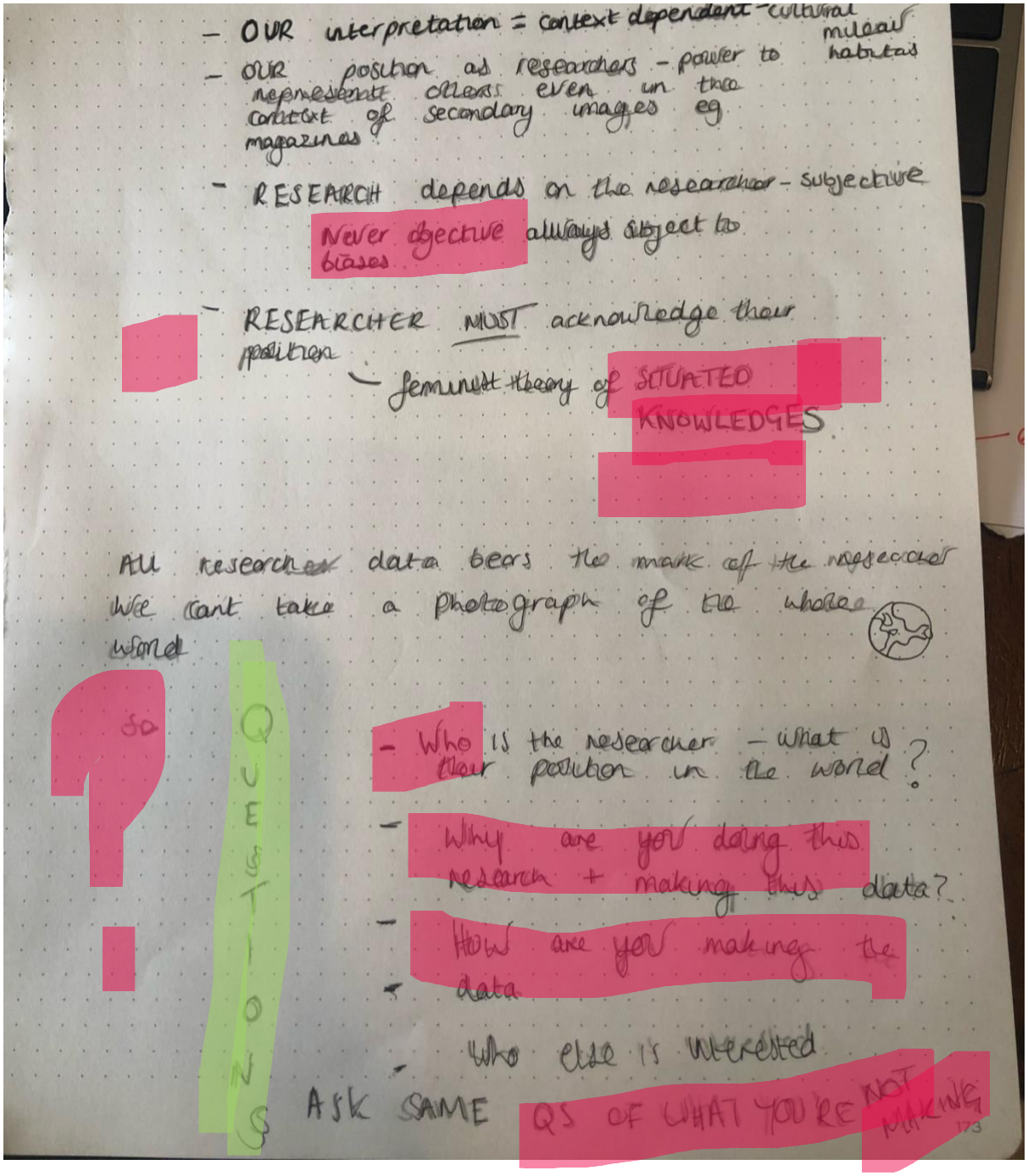
The next bit of the session focussed on Feminist Standpoint and theorising vision from this perspective.

I found that some key questions we could ask require deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher

WHO IS THE RESEARCHER ?

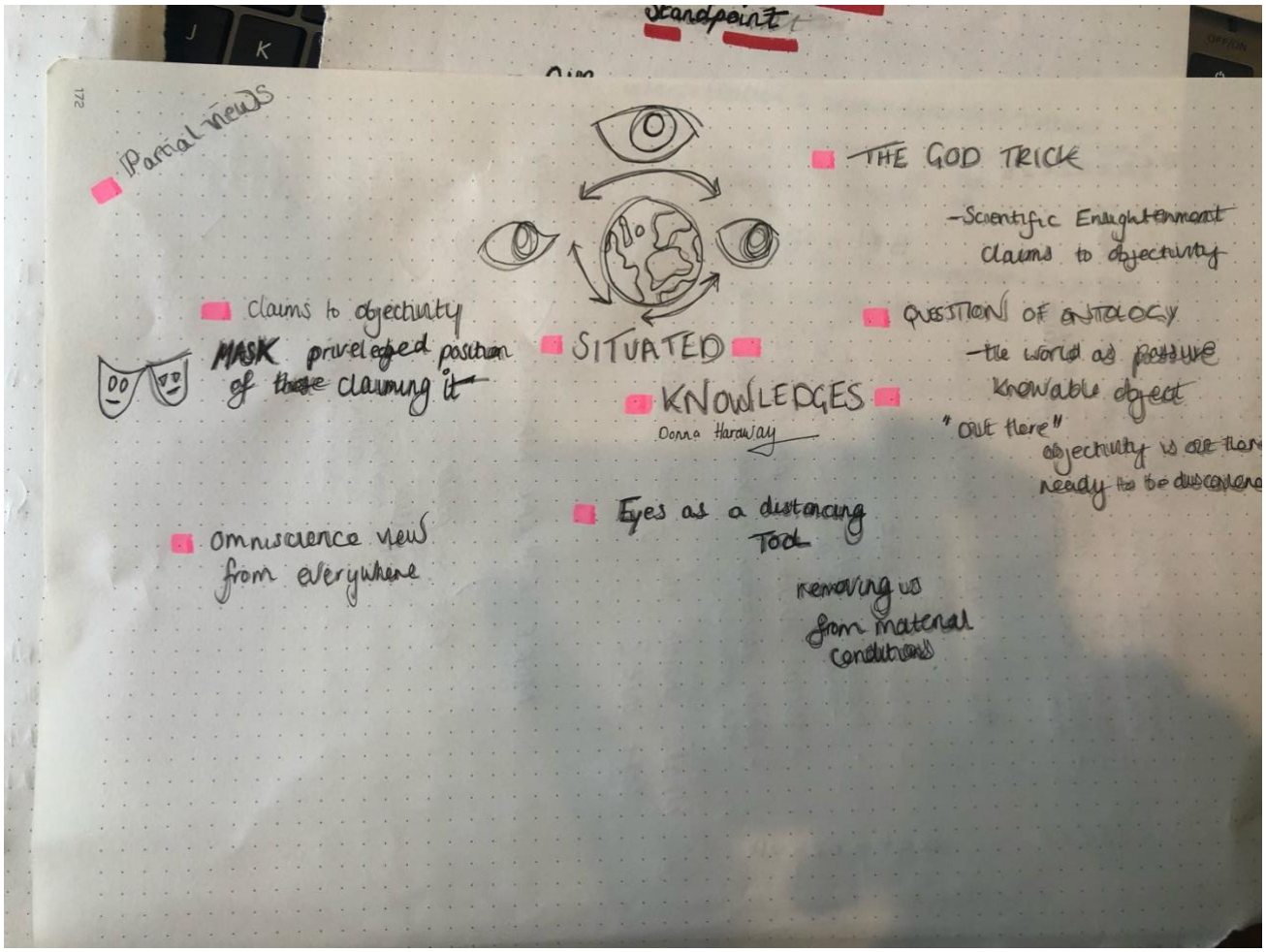
WHAT IS THEIR POSITION IN THE WORLD?

HOW ARE YOU MAKING THE DATA HERE?



****IMPORTANTLY ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS OF WHAT YOU ARE NOT CREATING/DOING/BEING ****

Who am I not? Whose worldview might I not being seeing? The answer to this is going to be the majority of the world! But this type of questioning allows a researcher to think about their positionality- for me, white, female, western, educated, middle class, privileged, in academia

How am I not making this data? What alternatives could I have used for producing this data? What could have been rationales for these?

Who is not interested in this?