Commonplace •

Integrating pluralism

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Hello and welcome to the Commonplace Podcast. In this episode, Catherine D' Ignazio and Lauren Klein describe the process of community review for their book, *Data Feminism*. We end up discussing how and where multiple voices can constructively improve a piece of work, and how their thinking, research, and writing practices have shifted since. Hope you enjoy!

~sarah

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Music composed by Dawit Tegbaru

TRANSCRIPT (Autogenerated from Otter.ai, lightly edited for clarity)

Sarah: *Maybe we could start off with each of you introducing yourselves and then describing how you got the idea and started your book Data Feminism.*

Catherine: I can start and then yeah, it's because we have slightly different ways that we came together around the book. So hi, my name is Catherine D' Ignazio an assistant professor. And the more I'm, Where am I a professor in the Department of urban studies and planning at MIT. And but previously, I, you know, I'm pretty new at MIT. I was previously working at Emerson College, where I was teaching data journalism and data visualization. And doing a lot of sort of thinking and writing about data visualization. And this is back in, 2015, I believe. I posted a blog post called what would feminist data visualization look like? which went sort of viral in a small community of people. And through that community of people heard from several folks, including one key person, Patsy Bowden, that I really needed to meet Lauren Klein, because she had recently come to Boston and given a talk exactly about this idea of feminist data visualization. I believe Patsy introduced those. And then Lauren, I don't know if you wanna pick up the story from here, because then we got the chance to meet a person at a conference that Lauren was arguing.

Lauren: Yes. So Catherine and I, we actually both switched institutions in the process of writing this book or not because of the book, but it just happened that that's what happened. But I had been at Georgia Tech, I worked there for actually for almost a decade, and I've been organizing this conference on humanity's data. Was it that one? Or was it the design conference? Yeah, it was about humanity as data visualization. That's right. And it turns out that Catherine was already on the invite list of this conference via our mutual friends. So it's, we like to say it's a very small and nerdy world. But just to back up a little bit, to say how, a little bit more about my academic background. So I was at Georgia Tech for a lot of years, teaching in the School of literature, Media and Communication, which is essentially an interdisciplinary and applied humanities department. So I spent a lot of time speaking about how humanistic ways of thinking can have contemporary and real world applications. But then, pretty recently, for me, I switched from Georgia Tech to Emory in a position. So now I'm jointly appointed between the English department and a department called quantitative theory and methods, which is a fancy data science department, where I'm essentially doing the same thing, but it's in a different context. I move from an engineering school to university with the full range of Liberal Arts, and Catherine sort of made the reverse trajectory. So it's been really interesting. Talking about her experiences have shifted, but yeah, you know, we got in touch. And I have to credit Catherine with the first real act of feminist solidarity here, because I was like, Who is this other person who's working on the same topic? Catherine was the one who immediately was like, we should work together. And then I was like, of course, this is what good feminists do. They combined forces and bringing multiple perspectives to the table and pretty something that is better than the sum of the individual parts. So maybe I will just stop there. So that's sort of how the collaboration began. And we wrote this short paper and then colleague of Catherine's alerted her to this book series and suggested that she and therefore we submit a proposal. And that's that's how the book that's how the book happens,

Sarah: *Through that that book writing process and that program? Was it through that program, that community review came about, or was it sort of your decision to have a have a community review? So how did that process sort of start for your book?*

Catherine: I think the press proposed it to us. Because they were just really starting to work with PubPub, I don't know that it was something. I'm actually not sure that'd be the question for them as to whether it was something that they were offering to all the strong ideas, series books. But it was just something that was pumped up was just getting off the ground. And they brought the idea to us. And we discussed and I think we both really liked the idea, although I mean, I would say it's not without some fear that we entered

into the idea of publishing a draft online for community review, but I think we both really liked that idea. And I think it's also very much thought very aligned with the feminist, sort of goals of the book and feminist values around pluralism, multiple voices, and, you know, open and transparent knowledge processes, I think all those are very sort of values that align with the book.

Sarah: *So I get that kind of makes you wonder, based on that pluralism and having multiple voices after sort of community review process occurred, how did you sort of integrate on all the different narratives, different comments? based on the book?*

Lauren: Yeah you know, one of the things that was nice was that it seemed like it would be hard. And Catherine, and I spent a fair amount of time talking about in advance what we would do with all the comments. But then when we got them, it actually was a fairly organic process, you know, there were, I will say, different people had different approaches to commenting. So some people just went in and line edited and found all the typos. And those were amazing and appreciated. And this book has far fewer typos than any other book I've ever published because of the community review. And so those who were just to make the changes and go, another set of changes that were relatively easy to integrate, were when people who had more knowledge of a particular perspective or identity group would say, you got this wrong, or you're framing of this is backwards, or messed up, or like you're using the wrong term for us. And we really tried to take those to heart. And when someone who knew more than we did about a particular again, situation, experience identity, we were like, Okay, great, make the change. And then, you know, there were only a handful of, and I think also, you know, and this has to do with our view going into the process that Catherine and I are not the only experts here, the goal of the book, and we decided this really early on was to bring together and highlight a wide range of different types of projects that spoke to as broad a set of experiences as we could describe. And we knew that, you know, it's impossible for a single person or even two people to know about all of those experiences equally. And so we already knew that we were relying on others, and even in the process of writing the book. And I will actually also credit this to Catherine's journalism background, she made a great point of interviewing many of the artists and projects, creators who we feature in the book. So in addition to their artwork or published work, we oftentimes had quotes on the record about that particular describing their process. So we knew how to incorporate those things. So yeah, so when someone would say like, Hey, you know, this is this is the framing that I prefer, this is the framing that sounds that brings a little bit more true to us, it was a really easy to incorporate, but there were a couple of that we would sort of mark and we would discuss. And if they were unresolved, we would sort of keep them open. And we

kept the comments open on PubPub. And you could see there's a couple where we never really closed the comment because we either decided we weren't sure how to resolve it, or we decided that we wanted to resolve it in a different way. But we had thought about it and we wanted to respect that others had disagreed about the particular approach that we took. And we in those cases, we actually did go back to the puppet version and try to say that so that it was in the comments that we had thought about it and talked through it, even if it didn't show up in the final text.

Sarah: *That's sort of the power of the digital publishing right of being able to keep those comments in line with the text and sort of be able to have that transparency in the process of someone commenting and then you responding or having other people comment as well. But I guess it also makes me wonder how did you solicit people to comment to get those different types of perspectives?*

Catherine: Yeah, we were very targeted about this. I think maybe because we have experience with doing various kinds of web based and participatory projects. So one thing you learn doing participatory projects that are online and just putting something up doesn't guarantee that anybody will come see it, or engage with it or do anything meaningful with it. And so we were very, I was a personal about it and the way that we reached out, so we worked with the press so that we could solicit, I forget how many but three to five chapter reviewers, we invited certain people three or so people per chapter to review just that chapter, and make comments in the PubPub platform. And then, and then we wanted to compensate them for their time and labor. And so we would send them a book from the press in return for their review. And so those we considered those sort of our seed comments, in a way, and they were also sort of respected colleagues that we reached out to and folks whose work that we admire, and so they were folks who we really saw ourselves in dialogue with and wanting to be in dialogue with. So I think that was, that was key for us to getting a lot of the comments. But then even despite that, there were, I would say, unexpectedly, I think, a good amount of people who did come and gave us lots of comments. And that was also really wonderful and sort of unexpected, in a way. Or maybe my bar is is really low, having done a lot of participatory internet practice. I know in participates, but But in fact, actually, we had a lot of presentation. And then there was kind of interesting about it was that there was still a good amount of stuff that isn't captured on the platform. We had people who didn't necessarily feel comfortable making their comments public, but who email us sort of long, long comments over email, or there was one person who printed out the whole book from the website and not annotated the paper, gave it to us in person. It was actually really wonderful and kind of

wonderfully unexpected. I think the the amount, we both architected it intentionally. And then also, we're surprised and pleased with sort of what came back.

Lauren: Yeah that's a really great encapsulation. I think the one thing that I'll say, and this actually echoes some of the language of what we wrote on the site, but I, you know, we wrote it first. But now I think I really deeply believe it with my body is that engagement and feedback, even the most critical feedback is such a sign of respect and generosity, because it means that the reviewer or the reader has, they think you're worth their time. You know, if you were a someone who has written something so terrible, or if you are a terrible person, it's very, it's the easier thing to do is just to say, who cares, this person is not worth my caring, this person is not worth my time to compose this email, or this comment to say, this is how it could be improved. But the fact that so many people did think that we were open to their feedback and criticism, and the times that, it was pretty direct. That really, it really didn't mean a lot to me, and I continue to carry that forward, you know, I really do think when someone feels like you are worth telling something that might be uncomfortable or difficult, or, you know, cause conflict, like they really that person has already gone through an evaluation process to decide that it's worth it for them in the long term. And I really respect to that. And it makes me just feel really grateful to all of the reviewers.

Sarah: *Yeah, I think that that can be a hard, I think psychology as well, just not taking critique, personally, and just being appreciative for people's time to actually go through and literally print off the book or go through and underline and give those types of critiques. So that's, that's really cool to that your readers even before the book was out, gave, give you guys that much attention to your work. Sort of like maybe beyond the particular critiques and comments, what sort of made sort of the community review process successful or what were some, unforeseen or perhaps expected challenges that you had?*

Lauren: Yeah, that's a good question. I just wanted to go back to one thing you said before, and I actually wanted to be more explicit about this point about being open to criticism because I think one of the things in this, you know, again, a lot of things came together. In this peer review process, and Sorry, I'm like de railing it from your question. But actually, maybe, sorry, the question, a lot of things came together in terms of the contents of the book, and the idea, the concept of the open peer review and the platform of PubPub, and they aligned in a really, really good way as and, you know, one of the things that I do want to make explicit, as you know, we read this book, it's about feminism. And it takes a deliberately and explicitly intersectional approach. And we

write against the form of white feminism that is defensive, that is, you know, associated with white fragility, white tears, all of these things. And we do this as two white women, right. And so part of the process, both the writing of the book and the being open to feedback, and the, I would say not even willingness, but necessity of listening to comments came from our desire to not be the kind of white feminists who hear a critique and then become defensive or shut down or say, but what about my feelings, right. And that's something again, that we can all read. But I think it's academics. I mean, this is where it's like, we're being a white person, and a feminist and an academic sort of clash with academics are deeply insecure, I think maybe universally, there are a few that have confidence. But I think secretly, most of us are like, I'm not really sure if I know what I know. And so I think academics do have, a quite defensive stance. And so there was I think, Catherine and I tried to be sort of prepare ourselves and be deliberate, intentional, and saying, Look, we might get feedback, that is difficult for us to hear, but we need to be okay with that. And I think because we went into it, you know, being fairly explicit about our own positionality is, it made some of that feedback, I would say, not only, I wouldn't even say it was, easy to take, like it was welcome and expect that and we were really happy to have it, right? Because we knew that like, we cannot speak for direct experience about what it's like to be a minorities person, for the most part in this country, right? If someone wants to tell us what it's like to live in the United States with black or brown skin, like we are here for that. So that's just what I wanted to I sort of wanted to say a little bit more explicitly, rather than in the abstract. I forgot what your question was, though.

Sarah: *No, no, thank you for the clarification. I think that that definitely helps and definitely makes it more concrete with what you were talking about in terms of appreciating and welcoming the community preview process. So now that makes sense to me. But um, beyond beyond receiving critique and comments from from others, what else made community the community view process that you went through successful? Or maybe, what were some challenges that you maybe did or didn't expect?*

Lauren: You know, a couple of things. And then I'll just pass it over to Catherine, because I'm aware that I've been talking a lot. You know, the one thing that I will say that made the process easier is that both Catherine and I have been involved and committed members of our own respective communities for a really long time before we ever asked anyone for a favor. And I feel like that really matters when you're doing something like community review, which is ultimately benefiting a book that has your our names on it, right? You're really asking people for a gift. And for people to do that, they need to be there needs to be a baseline of trust and baseline of communities so that you're not just a stranger who parachutes in and says, give me your knowledge and your ideas. And I don't

think that Catherine and I had planned to do you know, a community review 10 years ago, when we decided to, you know, align ourselves with whatever our respective communities were. But I do feel like it was such a nice affirmation of those relationships. And not only our best friends, although we I think we, each of us, definitely called in some favors, and some very close friends who offered great comments in our book, but also the weak Thai community members where we've just, seen these people around for a decade, we've always thought they were super smart. And we would really value their perspective. And I think when those invitations came to contribute, the reason why many of those people said yes, because they're like, Oh, I know that person, they've been around, you know, they're good for it. And so that I that was a for me, at least was one of the most affirming things about the review process was to feel like, Oh, yeah, cuz again, cuz in academia, this is all virtual, I mean, even pre pandemic, but we all live in different places. You see each other at conferences once or twice a year. It was really nice to feel like we had an imagined this idea that we were in dialogue with these people and had been for a long time.

Catherine: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I'll just echo that and I think that's it. The comments are sort of products of this web of connectedness that we had already been sort of weaving with people that we've already been in dialogue with. And or aspirationally. I guess I was saying dialogue. It's like, when you're writing and then you're imagining you really want to be talking to this or that person whose work that you admire. I think that was the sort of nice thing about committee review is that gave us a reason to, reach out and say, Hi, we admire your work, or we cite your work. And, you know, we love to hear what you think about this, you know, this particular chapter, review the book as a whole. So it means, also, for the folks we didn't know, I think it was a good excuse to, start to know them.

Sarah: *Yeah, sort of expand the community and expand the network as well. I remember what you set this, I wrote this down, having it be a participatory project, it might have might have been me, Lauren, but I really liked that idea of having the publishing be, participatory, sort of in nature. But I imagined that they were maybe not not inherent in things being participatory. But, whenever things come into contact, there can be clashes or challenges. So I guess I'm curious if there were any, any unforeseen trickiness, whether it be with a platform, or whether it be in the publishing process? I'm just kind of curious, what were some? What were some challenges? Because I can't imagine everything was all was all rosy and perfect during the process.*

Catherine: Oh, well, I mean, we can talk about one that we have just sort of finished releasing is, it was brought to our attention by someone who does a lot of work on

disability and particular visual impairment and technology that, you know, our book is very image focused. And the, you know, the the physical book has 50 plus images and as the digital version. So there was a way in which the book was really not accessible to visually impaired or to other folks who use screen readers and things like this. So that was a project we've, we've actually just finished going through and working with a student to draft text and release that text. I don't know, Lauren, if you want to talk more about that. That's sort of a big one.

Lauren: Sure. Yeah. So the students name is Shivam Saran. And he did a really good job of working with guidelines that chancy pointed us to and going through, I would say, there's actually there's almost 100 images. There's like 98, or something like that?

Catherine: Oh, my gosh, I didn't realize Yeah, yeah, that's a lot.

Lauren: I think 100 was our cap, and I think we came in just under. But yeah, he went through every single one. And he worked off the basis of these guidelines, it came up with these alt text descriptions for each of the images, which is great. And it's definitely a practice that I plan to carry forward. And I will say also, that it was it wasn't the platform itself had to be updated, so that it could include alt text, tags associated with each of the images. And so, you know, that's, again, a situation where someone was like, hey, this, this book is not accessible to me. And thankfully, you know, told us what we could do to make it better. And we were able to try to follow through with that. So, but for those of you listening, if you are looking at the old texts, we would love feedback on them, because this is just a first draft or version one of the old text. But yeah, so that's, that's about it. But I will say it took us a semester. I mean, I think Shivam took, I don't know, upwards of there was a lot of hours that that he spent doing this work. So none of this stuff, you know, comes out of nowhere.

Sarah: *I'm not just saying this just because I work for work for PubPub, but it is really empowering to that, sort of in line with community review. But but PubPub format as a platform is very open to critique and like as always wanting to or always wants to improve and increase accessibility in those ways to having the open GitHub repository is a really, really good way to get feedback from people and meet the needs of the communities that we're trying to serve.*

So I guess, following that, or do you have any advice for people pursuing community, more community engagement, or more community for community review for like their their works?

Catherine: Yeah, I would say, don't be too scared. Maybe it's one thing. You know, it was a little bit harrowing, I would say, to put the work out there. And I'm actually I'm embarking on the process of writing a next book. And it actually hasn't come up yet. I'm, early in the process, I haven't even it's not like I'm even talking about it yet with the publisher, but in my mind, I've thought about it. And then then I'm like, Oh, my gosh, what, could I do it if I'm alone, and I'm not with Lauren, because it was the nice thing of doing it together. So you're sort of, you're sort of both on the lab together in a way. So, but I would say, in fact, you know, the benefits far far outweighed sort of the the fear and anxiety of things not being perfect, because the reality is the work is, is never perfect. You know, it's always in a sense, a draft. And that's in a way why like the PubPub model is the, the by default, sort of assumes everything is a draft, and it's gonna have the next version or whatever is very, in line with software development. And so, you know, the, the strain that really strengthened the work, I think, to be to be putting it out there. And I think we revised in a much more substantial way than we would have done if we hadn't gotten so much feedback and diverse feedback on it. So I don't know, Lauren, do you agree with that? Like, do you feel we revise more than we would have if we just had gotten peer reviews or something?

Lauren: Yeah, 100%. I mean, anyone who's gotten a peer review knows, the reviewer, they have their agenda, and they look for the thing. I mean, one person is only one person, maybe that's the positive way to frame it as that, you know, and this is this is about the feminist point. And it's a really important one, which is true, which is that you all knowledge gains by additional perspectives, there is no way that it can't be better with more feedback about what is working and what is not working. And I will say, you know, for me, so a couple of things. We benefited, you know, not only did the quality of the project benefit so strongly because of this review process. But I think I think the book benefited for it because people knew about it well, before it was published, that he got assigned in class that the drafts got assigned in classes, before the book was out. And it allowed us to circulate material that I think in a traditional publishing process would have taken a year or more to see the light of day, because it was online, it just meant so many more people could see it, they didn't need to buy a copy of the book, again, you know, when professors are thinking about costs of textbook adoption, and even book purchases for their students, it's great that it's open access all that that was a decision made by the press. But that's been really terrific. And, Catherine, you know, I'm working on another project. It's actually it's another born digital project. But it's a more of an interactive project. It's on the history of data visualization, but it has a lot of interactions that are sort of embedded with texts. And I have already started to talk with the press that

is publishing it, about how I can do an open review before it comes out formally, for the exact same reason that we've been talking about, which is that the project just benefited so much from all of this feedback. And in a way, you know, this is another, in addition to not writing it with Catherine, I'm actually co authoring it with a team of students, which is terrific. But I don't necessarily have other domain experts, sort of in constant conversation with me, I'm the one who's writing all of the text. And I, I because I know it won't be as good, it wouldn't be as good without an open community review. I don't want it to be published without that community review. And so I'm like now I need it. And so that's a really interesting change in perspective. And then the final thing that I'll say, this goes back to sort of the habits of Atlas or of normative habits of academics, You know, we're not used to sharing work that is not polished or complete, or perfect. And yet to Catherine's point, you know, no work is ever perfect. But I also think that people are much more generous than they think, than you think they will be about recognizing that work is work in progress, if it is labeled as such, right? I mean, there are certain things that need to be accurate, and, you know, not out there on the internet, you need to have done your research and not be spouting misinformation and make sure that you are speaking about, you know, whatever it is the your topic with knowledge and informed, you know, informed expertise. But I do think that, you know, to Kevin's point earlier about, this fear, and we were really, I was really worried before we put this draft online that people would judge us for its drafting us. And that was by no means people, I mean, a couple people commented on the structure that certain parts were long or short or confusing or whatever. But far and away, people recognize it for what it was, which was a draft that we had put online, and we're able to assassinate on its own terms. And that I think, was again, like a real real was just, it was really nice.

***Sarah:** Yeah, that's really cool that, because it was already online and free that it was being used in classrooms and distributed in that way, too. That's really cool. And I guess it also makes me wonder if that sort of changed anything during the writing process, sort of like having that information, or sort of having that knowledge that it was being sort of used sort of immediately.*

Catherine: I feel like there was a sense of writing. To a certain extent, it's like the commenters voices, I think, for at least for me, were a little bit in my head, you know, so I think in some ways, we, sort of responded directly to specific comments, but then there were through lines of comments that through lines of comments on gender inclusivity, and being really conscious of when we enumerate genders, like men and women, that we are not only stopping at men and women, right, that were saying, men and women and non binary people, and so on, and so forth. I feel like those are voices that for me, this

kind of came out of community review, multiple comments or multiple comments. And then those are kind of in my head as we went through and like, and I, you know, it's like a, I think, a habit, I've now corrected myself to not stop at saying two genders, because, of course, when we do that, we're sort of inadvertently reinforcing the gender binary as well. So that, for me was a way that Yeah, the commenters got into my head.

Lauren: Also, more than that, we wanted to do, right, by that, you know, we wanted to feel like we had understood what their concerns and criticisms were. And so, in some cases, we reached out to individual commenters and said, you know, is this better? But in some cases, when we didn't know that person, or felt inappropriate, or whatever, we just, we really just thought, is this what they were saying? Have we accounted for it? And I think it really, it was nice. I mean, you know, I do feel, in general, I think this is true. I'm speaking for Catherine. But I think this is true. In general, I feel like we are trying we are deliberate in our framings and our choice of language and all sorts of things. But both of us are on field for these things matter. But that's often when you're writing a generalized deliberateness. Right, but with the comments or is it was very specific people were either they had said something about themselves or said something about how a particular example or framing or terminology impacted them in some way, that then became the person who we were trying to make sure felt included and not, you know, other or excluded or isolated in our writing, so, and I think in that way, it made us work harder, because the, you know, anytime there's people behind anonymity, then that I think that's the result.

Sarah: *Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, communities are made of made of people so that that's who's always on the other other end. I also really like to meet you, I think you sort of had this sentiment of, in traditional academic publishing, you're afraid to put something out there without many eyes on it. But it seems now that you're framing is shifted substantially where you're like, no, I need the eyes on it. So I guess could you describe sort of how that sort of shift happened in your own thinking and in your own writing or practice in general.*

Lauren: I feel like I'm trying to think about this, I feel like the thing that I tell myself, which may or may not be true, but this is what I tell myself is that you're your worst shot, your first drafts are not as terrible as you think they are. But the contrast is that your final draft is not as not as good as you think it is, the difference between the first draft of the last draft, I think, in my mind is like a chasm. But the reality is that they're not that far away from each other. And so, and I think, you know, again, it's sort of ingrained in academia that you do not share, at least in the humanities, which is by academic

background, you do not share until the thing is perfect, because this is the definitive edition that will be cited, and you will be taken at your word, etc, etc. But the reality is that the ideas are there, in most cases, many, many years before that final publication emerges. And I just feel so strongly that very little is gained by waiting, you know, especially because most of the ideas are fully formed years before the publication comes out. That's the reality, you know, things can spend a year plus and copy editing typesetting, things like that.

Catherine: Yeah, I mean, maybe I'll just say, to build on that. It's, there's an interesting way in which we're able to leverage the informality of kind of blogging or kind of web based publishing digital publishing, to put out the draft, have the dialogue. And then I think there are just huge benefits, we already talked about to doing that, which is that the ideas are out there earlier, it put us in dialogue with a lot more people than we had previously been in dialogue with, who then you know, whose ideas ended up influencing us and ultimately, strengthening the work. So, again, he kind of see it in relationship to this, sort of networks of kind of networks of creative ideas, networks of knowledge production. So it sort of gets it out there earlier, so that you can be in dialogue. And then, you know, ultimately, we did have a sort of polished, you know, book object come out. But it was it was enriched by two years of prior public work on that topic. So it's like a way to be in dialogue with a really broad network of people along the way of doing the project. It's like a way of working in public, that, you know, it's just really enriching for us for the project.

Sarah: *At least I know, for myself, that being in conversation with or getting critiques also just spurs, new ideas, as well, just having having interaction, and having that sort of mean, not maybe not necessarily conflict, but just sort of encountering critique, and different comments from the people just gets you farther than maybe you ever would have on your own as well.*

Catherine: Absolutely, absolutely. And that people, you know, sending resources our way, sending projects our way. So it's sort of that kind of thing, too. It's like, I have an assignment, an unknown class at this point in the data visualization class. But where I say, getting into the flow, where I used to make the data journalism students, sign up for all these mailing lists, and, you know, subscribe to all these blogs, and newsletters and things like that, this is a really emerging area of practice is you have to like kind of put yourself in the flow of knowledge, production and debate and dialogue that's happening in these areas, and you kind of have to figure out how to connect to those information streams. And so I think, in a way, that's kind of what this the purpose of this survey is to

connecting into those information streams for folks that are caring and caring about the topic. That might be a very niche topic, but to be in dialogue, and maybe be in dialogue with a large group of people that care about a very deep topic is a wonderful thing. scholar and academically.

***Sarah:** Yeah, probably really important too, for young, early career academics to become a part of that community. I guess sort of like you mentioned the beginning, if you want the community to help you out there. So you sort of already have to have that trust and embeddedness in the community. So that seems really important to train the next generation of journalists and writers and community members. Given sort of how to do that, so that's cool. So maybe it's like a wrapping up question. I know you both sort of alluded to this, but I'm just I'm just sort of curious what sort of digital collaborative community projects are you both working on that maybe our listeners could keep an eye out for?*

Catherine: So yeah, so for my part, I'm working on a project that really arose from working on data feminism. So in the book, we talk about a woman named Maria salgueiro, who is collecting information about and then aside gender based killings in Mexico. And so I went, I was in Latin America on a sabbatical. A couple of years ago, as we were revising data feminism, and started talking with other nonprofits, activists, emulsified organizations, and found that Maria's work, while phenomenal, is also not unique. There's a lot of these sort of citizen observatories and civil society efforts to track gender based violence that are happening in Latin America, actually, also in many other places. But in any case, one of the things that we're doing in my lab is we're interviewing activists, and also thinking about how to design technology to support this sort of counter data science that they're doing this sort of, many of them monitor gender based violence by reading news, media reports, or sometimes gathering from social media. So we're looking at ways that we can potentially automate some of that work. But it's also not all about automation. So one of the things we've been discovering is that activists also really want to be in dialogue with each other and sharing knowledge with each other and building relationships. And so the myself and the two collaborators on this project, who are both based in Latin America, we've formed a network called the data against feminist side network, where we just basically are convening events. So we'll have events this November. I'm convening folks who are who want to be in dialogue with each other around this idea of using data to to challenge gender based violence. Basically, it's a that's been really interesting to think both about the sort of understanding the practices building and designing technology to support the practices, but then also, designing ways to support a network of community, sort of practitioners and relationships, as well, not

imagining that, a technology is going to do all of that, for people we still need relationships kind of at the center of this kind of work. So that's one way in which really thinking a lot about, yeah, these sort of networks of solidarity networks of support networks of teaching and learning.

Lauren: So I guess, I'm working on two projects right now. And one of them is actually a project that I have put on hold for so long. And in part, it was the project that is money. It's came from the project that Catherine heard me present on in 2014, or whatever, about the feminist data visualization. And this is the project I mentioned earlier. In our conversation. It's a born digital interactive history of data visualization that tries to tell a new story about how data visualization emerged, you know, one that isn't just about speed, efficiency, clarity, coming only from professionals who happens to be men in primarily European locations. But trying to think about how from the very beginning, the decision to visualize data always involves a negotiation between the data that's represented and the people or the issues that the data purports to represent, and how these questions are fundamentally political questions with decisions being made every step of the way. That about with respect to what is presented, and then what is not. And so, instead of starting with William playfair, who is usually the person who he is you said to have invented the pie chart, he also perfected a lot of time series and bar chart type topologies. But people he was, he was a Scottish political economist. And people usually point to him and say, he was the father of modern data visualization. This is who Edward tufte he cites a lot. There have been some recent books, that just reinscribe that that history, I look to a couple of other images that come from right around that same time, for example, a visualization of a slave ship that was designed by white abolitionists seeking to work in solidarity with with black abolitionists and enslaved people to middling degrees of success. But that in itself is sort of an instructive story, I look at women educators who were inventing all sorts of wildly creative visual forms, but because they were usually used in the classroom, for in the classroom for young people, they tend to be overlooked in these accounts that look to, you know, journals of physics and economics and things like this. For their main examples. I have a little bit on indigenous mapping practices and counter cartography. And it goes up ends with Dubois. And Dubois is visualizations where he tries to essentially take, take and supplement US Census data, and re visualize it both in visual ways and also statistically in ways that emphasize black life black vitality, uplift in ways that in the overall US Census were just completely foreclosed on. So yeah, so that's a project I on, it's been underway for so so long, I started research on it in 2013. And that's been set aside so many times. But now I have this amazing student team, both students at Georgia Tech where I used to work at Emory now,

and additional design work by this company poly mode. And we're all we're going to try to soft release that a couple of the chapters, maybe by the end of the year. So that's that one big project. And then the other project, which also has been something I've been working on for a while, but in many ways has been reinvigorated by data. Feminism is a project that looks at the textual record associated with the abolitionist movement in the United States. And this is one you know, there's obviously there's all sorts of organizing that took place at this time to end slavery, and in general towards in the interest of racial justice more broadly. Not all of it recorded in print. But I do have a large display essentially, a big data set of newspapers that document this abolitionist movement. And I'm interested in how computational methods can let us understand things that we might not have been able to grasp at large scale before. So I'm interested for instance, can we identify certain aspects of collectivity as opposed to these individual lone actors? When we try to model this data at scale? Are there things we can tell about the networks of interaction? Are things that are there things that we can tell about how ideas traveled across these different internal constituencies? And one of the themes actually, that has, I would say, has really emerged as a focal point for me in the wake of data feminism, which I think had a lot to do with my own interrogation as a scholar and writer. As a white scholar and writer interested and invested in black feminist theory, particularly in data. Feminism, is how sort of what the role was historically between black and white women activists, men, especially the abolitionist movement, these relationships were not good. I mean, the white women, Irishness were themselves mostly deeply racist. But I'm interested again in what can we learn new from this record, when we apply these techniques of large scale data analysis to this corpus, and it's motivated again, you know, by one of the mean through lines of data feminism, which is that data, you know, has been for so long a tool of oppression, it is so often wielded by the powerful at the expense of the powerless, it is primarily positioned in a way that can extract information and resources from communities who never then benefit from any knowledge that is gained. So for all of these wrongs and harms associated with data and data science, which we catalog and explain in depth in the book, we also really do believe that data and methods of data analysis when wielded intentionally as an Catherine's project, and working with these Latin American activists, you know, when wielded intentionally and with care and with in collaboration in solidarity with other folks, we do think that there can you know, it can be used for positive outcomes in some contexts. And so I'm trying to see how this might be enacted in my historical work.

Sarah: *Yeah, I feel like the the structural power of data could be definitely its own whole podcast here. But all those projects on superduper cool, and we'll definitely be keeping an*

eye out for them and Good luck on completing them and continually updating those drafts.

Catherine: Keep writing data feminism for the rest of our lives. Right.

Sarah: *Now there's some quote that's like a draft is never done only, forgotten or neglected or something like that. Yeah, thank you so much, Lauren and Catherine, for coming on and talking about talking about your work and community review is with me.*

Catherine: Thank you. Thanks for the invitation.

Lauren: Thanks so much for having us.