Postmodern Feminism, Hypertext, And The Rhetoric Of Cooking Websites

Heather Eaton McGrane, University of Central Florida

Keywords
postmodernism, feminism, hypertext, rhetoric, cooking, recipes, Web sites, user-centered

Abstract
This study explores the ways cookbooks and their rhetorical dimensions have been re-imagined using hypertext and Web technology. Using the tenets of postmodern feminist rhetoric and Web design theory, the study considers how commercial cooking hypertexts construct users' identities. Although hypertext is a potentially empowering technology, democratizing rhetoric and knowledge making practices, commercial hypertext often circumscribes agency formation and prohibits participation. Participatory, constructive hypertexts are difficult to design and costly to maintain. Of the three sites studied, Epicurious.com, BettyCrocker.com, and FoodNetwork.com, only Epicurious.com encourages meaningful communication between users and between users and designers. In many ways, Epicurious.com conceives of its users as active agents. Most of its content celebrates many knowledge making practices traditionally considered feminine and embodied. In contrast, BettyCrocker.com and FoodNetwork.com rely on closed, proprietary systems designs to maintain their authority. Users have little opportunity to participate as active agents. In small ways, however, users can begin to deconstruct the hypertexts, to resist the standards and strictures of expertly created recipes by reporting variations and opinions. The features that most reflect the tenets of a constructive feminist hypertext make possible some small movements toward agency.

Notes
If this is your thesis or dissertation, and want to learn how to access it or for more information about readership statistics, contact us at STARS@ucf.edu

Graduation Date
2007

Semester
Fall

Advisor
Applen, J. D.

Degree
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

College
College of Arts and Humanities

Department
English

Degree Program
Texts and Technology

Format
application/pdf

Identifier
CFE0001855

URL
http://purl.fcla.edu/fcla/etd/CFE0001855

Language
English

Length of Campus-only Access
None
Moya, Paula M.L. “Chicana Feminism and Postmodern Theory.” Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives. 2nd ed. Ed. Carole McCann & Seung-kyung Kim. Routledge, 2010. 463–481. Print. Originally published in 2001. In this article, Moya takes postmodern feminist theory to task for its “refus[al] to make any objective metaphysical claims—even limited ones—about the nature either… Postmodern feminism is an approach to feminist theory that incorporates postmodern and post-structuralist theory, seeing itself as moving beyond the modernist polarities of liberal feminism and radical feminism. Feminism has been seen as having an affinity to postmodern philosophy through a shared interest in speech acts, Postmodern feminism's major departure from other branches of feminism is perhaps the argument that sex, or at least gender, is itself constructed through language, a view notably