

REVIEW

Cheryl Glenn. *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018. 296 pp. Print. \$40. ISBN: 0809336944

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Students enter the classroom with a diverse set of identities and interactions with the world: culture, society, history, and politics. In the face of the political upheaval resulting from Donald Trump's presidency since 2016 in the United States, students live different emotions and experiences informed by their identities, histories, and the rhetoric of this nation's leadership. Scholarship in feminist rhetoric has long argued the tenants of inclusivity, open and authentic dialogue, respect, and progress to realize a society where people of all identities have the same rights and opportunities. In her book, *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope*, Cheryl Glenn introduces the concept of rhetorical feminism through the contexts of activism, identities, theories, methods and methodologies, teaching, mentoring, and writing program administration. In each of these chapters, Glenn presents rhetorical feminism as a tactic to meet the goals of feminist rhetoric by disidentifying with hegemonic discourses of power that marginalize voices based on identity characteristics; speaking to and from these margins; respecting vernaculars, experiences, and emotions; and engaging in rhetoric that is dialogic and transactional (5). As we consider the manifestations of identity and diversity of experiences and emotions present across our classrooms, Glenn's rhetorical feminism presents a way to engage our students in collaborative knowledge building practices, prompting them to speak as authorities from their positions and intersection of identities to claim their education and create a feminist classroom alive with agency, inclusivity, and, ultimately, hope.

Glenn establishes the importance of rhetorical feminism through showcasing the work of early Sister Rhetors fighting to secure the right to vote. By sharing pieces from Maria W. Miller Stewart, Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott, and Sojourner Truth, she demonstrates the tactic of rhetorical feminism in action in the United States public political arena that silences women and those Glenn refers to as "Others," individuals who possess identity characteristics that keep them positioned in the margins. These Sister Rhetors disidentified with hegemonic discourse through their rhetoric, called on their own experiences and emotions, and established their own authority and credibility as they spoke from their marginalized positions. Hillary Clinton, similarly, filtered feminine traits through rhetorical feminism in her "Listening Campaign," using emotion, experience, and silence to listen to her constituents and call young girls and women to action (21). These Sister Rhetors used the experiential knowledge of their identity in their rhetorical feminism. Authority to speak (who can or cannot speak, or who will or will not listen) is grounded in

identity, and women are still limited in their access to the public political arena. Many subalterns, who are denied voice or audience because of their status, must rely on someone with agency through their identity to speak for them, as in the example Glenn offers of Angelina Jolie. The sociocultural power of Jolie's identity as a celebrity and Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees gives her voice to advocate for refugees. Rhetorical feminism considers such identity, agency, comparative agency, and who is speaking for whom (28), while also considering multiple oppressions associated with intersectionality. Tradition rhetorical methods and earlier waves of feminist rhetoric fail to adequately consider other identity characteristics and intersectionality, and Glenn offers her tactics of rhetorical feminism as strategic actions to fill this gap and achieve the ultimate goals of feminist rhetoric. As such, students can utilize the tactics of rhetorical feminism to approach identities "as epistemic resources for rhetorical transactions rather than as sources of contention (. . .) readily [tapping the] diverse perspectives they provide" (Glenn 48). Identities are knowledge-accruing locations, and each student is an authority on their own identity, which they can access to speak across differences and margins in the classroom to build a larger understanding through dialogic rhetorical transactions.

Rhetorical feminism embraces intersectionality and accesses identities as resources for dialogue and knowledge building. As such, it allows for more inclusivity of everyday rhetors and rhetorics. In her review of theories written by and for women and Others, Glenn maps theories to highlight how they disidentify from hegemonic discourse and speak to and from the margins to move towards a more inclusive rhetorical future. The rhetorical feminist theories Glenn covers were developing dialogic and invitational theories that prompt the reshaping of traditional rhetorical concepts to open up the field to hope for equity and inclusivity through rhetoric. Glenn reshapes the concepts of delivery, incorporating silence and listening as strategic rhetorical arts (83); the rhetorical appeals, arguing emotion (pathos) and reason (logos) are interdependent and supportive of each other (91), and argument. The goal of arguments in traditional rhetoric is to persuade the audience to the rhetor's view. Glenn describes peaceful persuasion as an alternative, where the goal is to educate and exchange knowledge rather than satisfy the argument. By introducing peaceful persuasion as the rhetorical goal in the classroom, students are offered more hope for dialogue and knowledge building through their argument (76). Further, rhetorical feminism allows rhetors to assess the power and emotion at the scene of the argument. People use strategies, woven with identity characteristics such as gender and race, to delegitimize or tear down feminist inquiry, and students can identify and negotiate these strategies through rhetorical feminism. The tactic of rhetorical feminism assesses the scene to determine what the constraints are, what the resources are, where the power is located, what the power imbalances are and where they are hidden, and what is unacknowledged or covert. From there, the rhetorical feminist classroom can bring what's hidden to the forefront, open up the possibilities of equity in arguments, power, collaboration, emotion, experiences, and knowledge (77). Glenn shares an example of such a rhetorical feminist approach to leverage power imbalances through Cynthia K. Gillespie, an attorney for battered women who killed their husbands. Gillespie understood the

power imbalance of the masculine courtroom nullified women's testimonies and, as such, rather than arguing with decisions, violations, or relaying her clients' fear, she disidentified with the practices of the courtroom and instead catalogued the instances of abuse her clients suffered. She, thus, strategically retold a story instead of arguing a case (78). By rethinking the rhetorical transaction, Glenn does not argue we would fix or overcome all and every issue, but rather these rhetorical feminist tactics open rhetoric to and from the margins and create hope.

As she reconsiders tenets of rhetoric, Glenn also returns the teaching of rhetoric to its ethical and artful goal of good speaking, writing, and being. She elaborates:

Like the goals of the *paideia*, the collective goal of feminist teaching is to articulate a vision of rigorous scholarly preparation, high scholarly expectations, critical reflection and exchange, and ethical, civic participation aimed toward progress—all anchored in a distinctly feminist politics of hope for a more equitable future across and among differences. As such, feminist pedagogy can be the performance of rhetorical feminism: it is self-aware, purposeful, invested in dismantling hierarchy, and both cognizant and respectful of the practices of women and Others. (Glenn 126)

The rhetorical feminist teacher encourages engagement of her students through their own vernaculars, experiences, and emotions, as well as calls on the knowledge they already bring to the class. She is aware of hegemonic discourse and pedagogy, unequal power relations, and the intersectional identities in the room, and creates collaborative transformation and hope through productive struggle (130). The rhetorical feminist classroom embraces the many different positionalities and intersectionality of students, understanding that these positionalities influence our experiences, are constantly in flux, and are relative to others, economics, culture, politics, and ideologies (131). Through this approach, the rhetorical feminist classroom is focused on engagement towards mastery and creates opportunity to learn from other positions, intersections, and identities (133). The teacher and students constantly see themselves as positioned subjects of race, class, sexual orientation, culture, gender, socioeconomics, and each have authority in their identity, which gives them transformative potential—potential to build knowledge, speak from and to the margins and positionalities and, through dialogue and collaboration, create hope and engage in the productive struggle to make that hope a reality.

Glenn is deliberate in not confusing hope with utopia in *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope*. While she argues for the rhetorical feminist teacher to respect vernaculars, experiences, marginalization, she cautions teachers not to necessarily expect the same in return (133): "Rhetorical feminism compels us to maintain hope. Maintaining hope is not the same as wishful thinking or mindless optimism. Rather, hope is *willful* thinking combined with willful action" (Glenn 129). As we consider the current political climate and the impact of Trump's rhetoric surrounding identity characteristics on students entering the classrooms and their identities, rhetorical feminism's hope is very much needed. Further, Glenn's approach is more pragmatic as it calls on the essence of feminism to build a world of equality, equity, and inclusivity for women and Others, and a weaving together of feminism, rhetoric, and identity to make both feminism and rhetoric stronger and more inviting. Rhetorical feminism ultimately provides tools

that students can access across varying rhetorical situations to open up dialogue. Glenn offers useful actions and rhetorical strategies for the feminist classroom that will allow our students to reach a place of hope—hope for building knowledge, hope for agency and inclusivity, and hope for empowerment through identity, intersectionality, and positionality. Feminism is not without its problems, nor is feminist rhetoric considered mainstream in rhetorical studies but, through these opportunities of coalescing rhetoric and feminism, we can move to a future where we empower each other and our students through action and hope.