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Rhetorical Feminism

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1/2 (Spring, 2001), pp. 9-12

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466128>

Accessed: 18/02/2012 09:41

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remember our roots and our theoretical kinfolks. When we fail to meet in the bar and exchange stories with our cousins, we have lost something very important. Let's not forget in going forward into the future where we came from. I don't know how this soap-opera allegory will continue in this century. Just check RSA's home page on the Web or, better yet, drop by the bar at the next RSA—or NCA—conference. We'll all be there.



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**Karlyn Kohrs Campbell**  
**University of Minnesota**

***Rhetorical Feminism***

From its beginnings in the second wave of feminism, efforts to incorporate women into the rhetorical tradition and to develop critical perspectives and theory better suited to understanding women's discourse has been an interdisciplinary enterprise. Here I wish to call attention to the contributions of scholars in speech communication.

The initial efforts were the recovery of women's texts, a process that continues. That scholarship was and is important because it provides the raw materials for subsequent work. Recovery efforts began with anthologies of speeches by women edited by Judith Anderson (1984) and Patricia S. Kennedy and Gloria H. O'Shields (1983); it continued with social-movement analysis of woman's rights/woman suffrage and key texts from those movements by K. K. Campbell (1989), and continued with the two-volume reference work edited by K. K. Campbell, *Women Public Speakers in the United States* (1993, 1994), which provided basic biography and criticism along with bibliographic information about extant texts. The Greenwood series on great American orators, which combines biography and analysis with key texts, included volumes on Anna Howard Shaw by Wil A. Linkugel and Martha Solomon (1991) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton by Beth Waggenpack (1989). Amy Slagell's dissertation (University of Wisconsin, 1992) includes all extant texts of the speeches of Frances E. Willard, and Keri A. Bodensteiner's three-volume dissertation on the rhetoric of Ernestine L. Rose (University of Kansas, 2000) includes many of her previously unknown texts from the *Boston Investigator*. Both are important resources for the study of dis-

course by two extraordinary women. Susan Zaeske's dissertation (University of Wisconsin, 1997) documents the extent of women's petitioning activities, recovers a significant body of women's discourse, and argues cogently for the importance of petitioning in the development of women's political consciousness.

Equally important has been the development of critical perspectives and theory that enlarge our understanding of women's rhetoric. Lynne Derbyshire's dissertation (University of Maryland, 1997) explores the prior discourse that created an alternative subject position for women that allowed the constitutive rhetoric of the Seneca Falls Convention to succeed. Stephen Browne's *Angelina Grimké: Rhetoric, Identity, and the Radical Imagination* (Michigan State University Press, 2000) analyzes Grimké's discourse to show how an identity or "signature" was symbolically fashioned and then channeled into moral reform. In particular, Browne provides a fresh perspective by emphasizing Grimké's use of confrontation, even violence, as tools of persuasion. Michigan State University Press is an important general resource; a ten-volume series on the history of US rhetoric is in preparation. Most volumes will include chapters on women's role in that history with detailed analyses of key texts. The University of Alabama Press also has a rhetoric series, which includes *A Voice of Their Own: The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840–1910* edited by Martha M. Solomon (1991), the most detailed study of the woman's rights/suffrage press generally and of the role of specific journals in the first wave of feminism. All of the books in the Feminist Cultural Studies, the Media, and Political Culture series of the University of Pennsylvania Press are of interest. Of special note are works by communication scholars. These include Bonnie J. Dow's *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement Since 1970* (1996), which explores the interaction between the feminist movement and its depiction in television sitcoms focused on the lives of women, beginning with the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* in 1970 and ending with *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Two additional works in that series, which address the impact of mediated news and entertainment on our understanding of rape, are Lisa Cuklanz's *Rape on Trial: How the Mass Media Construct Legal Reform and Social Change* (1996) and *Rape on Prime Time: Television, Masculinity, and Sexual Violence* (2000).

The journal *Women's Studies in Communication* is an important source of articles analyzing women's communication from rhetorical and other perspectives. The offerings are diverse. Some articles analyze individual texts, such as Hiratsuka Raicho's introduction to the Japanese feminist journal *Seito* and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 1860 speech to the New York Legislature; some comment on broad discursive processes, such as women's invention or the dress reform movement; some focus on individual women, such as Hillary Rodham Clinton,

or groups, such as the Guerrilla Girls. The journal ably reflects the varied work being done on women's discourse of all types by communication scholars.

Articles on women's rhetoric appear intermittently in regional journals (*Western Journal of Communication*, *Southern Communication Journal*, *Communication Studies*) and national journals (*Argumentation and Advocacy*, *Communication Monographs*, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Text and Performance Quarterly*) associated with speech/communication studies. It is probably easiest to access them through authors who work in this area. Carol Blair alone and in collaboration has written incisive critiques of traditional rhetorical theory. Carol Jablonski has written about the efforts of Catholic women and has a book on Dorothy Day in preparation; Suzanne Daughton is the new editor of *Women's Studies in Communication*; she has written on Angelina Grimké and generally on women's political rhetoric. Helen Sterk has authored and edited works on the construction of gender. Diane Hope edits and writes about feminist approaches to environmental discourse and the dynamics of visual rhetoric and gender construction. Celeste M. Condit has published essays and a book on abortion rhetoric (Urbana, 1990), and she now focuses on those points at which genetics and feminism intersect. Mari Boor Tonn has written extensively on the rhetoric of women in the labor movement, particularly Mary Harris "Mother" Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Susan Schulz Huxman has traced relationships among the rhetorics of such early women as Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller, and Angelina Grimké, and has a chapter in the Michigan State University Press series linking those of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anna Howard Shaw, and Carrie Chapman Catt. Diane H. Miller has published critiques of women's speeches, but her most important contribution is *Freedom to Differ: The Shaping of the Gay and Lesbian Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York, 1998), a sophisticated analysis of the rhetorical constraints these groups face and the resources available to them. Shawn Perry-Giles has written a number of essays on second-wave feminism, including a perceptive analysis of the ways that journalistic practices have contributed to negative impressions of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Julia Wood has written extensively on gender and communication processes. Phyllis Japp has contributed a key essay on the rhetoric of Angelina Grimké.

Feminist rhetorical theory is in its infancy in communication studies, and because of the efforts of Karen A. Foss, Sonja K. Foss, and Cindy Griffin, it has taken an unusual direction. Earlier, the Foss sisters published *Women Speak: The Eloquence of Women's Lives* (Prospect Heights, IL, 1991), which explored such activities which explored activities such as gardening, quilting, and journal writing as examples of the eloquence of women's lives. That was followed by "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric" by Cindy Griffin and

Sonja Foss (*Communication Monographs* 62, 2–18), which argued for a feminine style of rhetoric to replace the combative, confrontational style traditionally associated with males. Subsequently, they authored *Feminist Rhetorical Theories* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1999), a collection of essays about women whose works the editors advance as re-visioning rhetorical theory. Those whose works are interpreted and summarized include Cheris Kramerae, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, Mary Daly, Starhawk, Paula Gunn Allen, Sally Gearhart, Trinh Minh-ha, and Sonia Johnson. In my view this approach emphasizes differences based on sex and relies on an essentialist conception that women's ways of communicating are somehow distinctive and preferable.

From my perspective the most promising source of theory is the practices of women, a direction I have taken in extracting theory from the practices of Frances Wright and hope to extend to the works of Christine de Pizan, Virginia Woolf, and others.

Communication scholars have achieved most in recovering texts and in developing alternative critical perspectives; work on alternative theory has barely begun, a situation that mirrors what I have seen of work in other disciplines.



Karlyn Kohrs Campbell is Professor and Chair of the Department of Speech-Communication at the University of Minnesota. Her research interests are historical and contemporary women's public discourse, presidential rhetoric, and rhetorical theories. She is coauthor of *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance* (1990) and author of *Man Cannot Speak for Her: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* (1989) and of essays on contemporary feminist rhetoric, including studies of the public discourse of first ladies and candidate wives. She has received a number of awards, including the Distinguished Scholar award of the National Communication Association.

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***Rhetorical Formations of Genetics in Science and Society***

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