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Feminist Rhetoric in the Digital Sphere: Digital Interventions & the Subversion of Gendered Cultural Scripts

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> *"Women's rhetorical lives have always existed, among the innumerable, interminable, clear examples of public, political, agnostic, masculine discourse."*—*Cheryl Glenn, Rhetoric Retold,* 175

In the summer of 2013, the Austin, Texas State House garnered the attention of many beyond Texas' borders as an online live stream of Senator Wendy Davis's thirteen-hour filibuster, an attempt to delay the passage of a restrictive abortion bill, swept across the Internet.[1], The #StandWithWendy hashtag became an enlivened trending topic on Twitter and the capitol building spectators chanted, "Let her speak!" as Davis entered the final hour of filibuster, only to be halted by a third "strike" for allegedly breaking the filibuster rules.[2] Though a vote seemed to be imminent, a secondary delay saw fellow senator Leticia Van de Putte take to the podium near midnight, raising a question that created a shock wave through the audience of virtual and in-person observers: "At what point must a female senator raise her hand for her voice to be recognized over the male colleagues in the room?" (Barro, 2013).

Van de Putte's now famous rhetorical question has been at the forefront of oral cultural interactions for decades, if not centuries, as women have been relegated to the background of public speech or silenced altogether by a patriarchal structure of discourse. The utterance also held great weight for digital culture; the initial promise of the internet peddled a forum in which one can interact freely, without worry of restrictions based on one's gender, class, race, or other identifiers. However, this is not the reality of online spheres, as the digital often reflects the social frameworks of our everyday cultural realms: instances of Twitter shaming and commenting sections on stories written by or about women are often the most flagrant, with back and forth accusations of "slut", "whore" and much worse.[3]

Attack, dissent, and harassment arise online when women speak/write/act outside of the expected cultural codes. At what point must a woman speak online in order for her voice to be recognized? More specifically, women of different backgrounds and contexts often experience different harassment when speaking outside these codes (Cottom, 2015; Cooper and Rhee, 2015). Most recently, interim CEO of the popular site Reddit, Ellen Pao (an American woman of Chinese descent), experienced a large volume of

harassment after banning and censoring the forum's most hate speech-focused subreddits, eventually stepping down from her position[4].

In her public sphere, Davis was firstly, a female senator enacting a filibuster to halt a restrictive bill in a largely male forum of the Texas Congress. Her social media presence and coverage of the filibuster enabled her message to reach a wider audience, but also caught heavy criticism from her political opponents. Shortly after the filibuster, conservative commentator Erik Erikson called Davis "abortion Barbie," slinging the insult toward Davis's filibuster topic and her bodily appearance (white, female, and blonde). With Davis' filibuster and the online response to the act in mind, I will examine how historic and contemporary feminist interventions work around cultural scripts of gender, claiming new spaces for silenced feminist rhetoric. I argue that recent feminist rhetoric wields a disruptive technology, enabling a subversion of patriarchal structures to shape new spaces of interaction for feminist voices in a restrictive sphere. These subversions are allowing feminist rhetors to reclaim a bit of their material experience that so often comes under attack in spaces where the body is not immediately present, raising their hand and their voices, in a sense.

Firstly, I define feminist rhetoric as any written or spoken act about feminisms[5] within the context of feminist interventions online, for the purpose of this essay (specifically hashtags, which I explore below). Vicki Collins calls upon the Greek roots of rhetoric, asserting, "'the word rhetoric can be traced back ultimately to the simple assertion I say (*eiro* in Greek)'" (Young, Becker, and Pike qtd. in Collins, 1999: 148). Secondly, the public sphere can take on many meanings, and I argue the Internet and face-to-face society both function as "the public" in that most rhetorical acts are available publicly. Yet, these spheres function upon authority, meaning that who is speaking must first have the authorization to speak within the public—a status that is not bestowed on every rhetorician (Collins). In regard to feminist rhetoric in traditionally male spaces, the model of authority is built upon a rhetorician being male. In her work unearthing feminine histories in rhetoric, Glenn likens this reality to an "X + 1" model of shaping feminist rhetoric for recognition in the public sphere:

> *Whenever a woman has accomplished the same goals as her male counterpart (theorizing, public speaking, successful argument, persuasive letter writing, for example), the stakes immediately rise. She may have achieved X, but she needs X plus 1 to earn a place in rhetoric (15).*

This "plus" portion of the equation is central to my focus: how might exhuming lost or underrepresented feminist histories speak to today's applications and expressions of feminist rhetoric? What does today's equation include, now that digital writing and voice mediate our public utterances? Today's feminist rhetoricians are in the midst of seeking alternative avenues of shaping their voices. I examine these alternative rhetorics as emergent rhetorical subversions online that are advancing feminisms, a tactic that hearkens back to representations of concealed or erased feminist histories. Today's rhetorical subversions, though owing much to the early cyberfeminists, are made more public through the media's echoing of hashtags, social media's omnipresence, and the online worlds that these different platforms enable feminist rhetoricians to build. Feminist rhetoric is advancing feminisms online— a distinction that is important to make from "women's rhetoric," which is restricted to only women and does not capture the experience of feminist activists that might identify differently. In this essay, my aim is to examine the historical roots of gendered cultural scripts, highlight cases of historical subversion, and consider how online feminist activist movements might enable broader alternative avenues for feminist rhetoric today. Online, this takes the shape of many forms, but I will specifically look to Twitter hashtags and feminist grassroots organizing efforts aimed toward building a collective ethos of sustaining feminist rhetoric. Just as Glenn's equation of rising stakes for feminist rhetors points to historical instances where women had to subvert cultural scripts to assure inclusion of their own histories, I argue that such stakes are present online and result in feminist rhetorical interventions emerging in an effort to strengthen the presence of feminist rhetoric in online discourse.

Intersectional issues that we carry into digital spheres color each interaction, for better or worse. The cultural structure of online worlds are reflected and recycled from our in-person interfaces, reiterating "the issues of power in cyberspace [as] similar to the issues of power in physical space" (Fredrick, 1999: 187). Social media's seemingly open environment of commenting, sharing, and recirculating information is a network primed for abuse of such power. Just as Davis experienced backlash during her filibuster via interruption, she also experienced harassment online through social media (see Erikson instance above). Classical scholar Mary Beard faced abuse by way of her Twitter page after appearing on a popular British intellectual talk show. Often, Beard recounts, the abuse "…promises to remove the capacity of the woman to speak. 'I'm going to cut off your head and rape it' was one tweet I got. 'You should have your tongue ripped out' was tweeted to another journalist. In its crude, aggressive way, this is about keeping, or getting, women out of man's talk" (Beard, 2014). Such refrains are

all too common in the public sphere, especially online. Digital representations of the body (profile pictures, usernames, biographies,) cannot be divorced from the speaker's voice, and even when a speaker's presence is seemingly neutral, gendered attacks are hurled at an assumed body. When only words remain illuminated on a webpage, the ethos and structure of online spaces can often exacerbate disparities and enable harassment as power dynamics bleed over from the public sphere and into language (Frederick, 1999: 188). Below, I examine efforts and strategies feminist rhetoricians are taking on to challenge such attacks using social media to guard against harassment.

Disruptive Technologies: Historical Materiality & Embodying Digital Rhetorics

Glenn identifies our oral history as fissured, mainly because "for the past twenty-five hundred years in Western culture, the ideal woman has been disciplined by cultural codes that require a closed mouth (silence), a closed body (chastity), and an enclosed life (domestic confinement)" (Glenn, 1997: 1). Fifteen years into the twenty-first century, feminists face such cultural challenges rooted in these expectations. Who is allowed to "speak" publicly? What effect do cultural placement and bodily presence have upon feminist rhetoric? As Van de Putte highlighted in her senate chamber accusation, feminist rhetors must work harder to be noticed at all. The "closed mouth" and "closed body" dichotomies that Glenn brings to light are of great importance when women speak or write in public, because it is the body that is harassed or attacked when women resist the cultural expectations of silent or docile speakers. Increasingly, feminist activists have begun to explore disruptive technologies and to assert a powerful voice in commonly exclusive public spheres. Davis's filibuster, itself an act of traditional political subversion, was further enhanced and made visible through its digital live stream and accompanying social media hashtags that became viral. It can be argued that if Davis and Van de Putte had not been speaking on the congressional floor, the backlash against her filibuster and question would not have occurred and Van de Putte would not have had to enact such a bold plea to "let her speak." Essentially, Van de Putte enacted a feminist rhetoric of intervention (her calm, impactful question caught on digital live stream) to subvert a traditionally regimented forum, enabling her to reach a wide audience that would have normally been relegated to just those within a congressional chamber. It is only by subverting the patriarchal structures of what is allowed as "speech" has the public voice of women gained attention and audiences.

Davis had the benefit of a national platform; other feminist rhetors do not. Yet the public platform and digital space that Davis and her online supporters inhabited also

function as a place for abuse to occur as well. This complex reflective nature of the digital sphere is what makes feminist rhetoric so important. In what ways might women develop subversions within the digital sphere to guard against such backlashes? These subversions point to the methods women are taking up in response to negative or abusive silencing mechanisms of their public utterances. This shaping of voice is a shift in the speaking process for women and thus "begins in a different place from Aristotle's conception rhetoric.[6] Women must first invent a way to speak in the context of being silenced and rendered invisible as persons" (Ritchie and Ronald, 2001: xvii).

Columbia College's Barnard Center for Research on Women published its #FemFuture report about online feminism in April 2013, highlighting a key shift in the digital sphere as a tool for subverting normal avenues of speech and embodying feminine voice through hashtag consciousness-raising. Authors Courtney Martin and Vanessa Valenti identified the current cultural and political moment as particularly dire: "We are facing a moment of [political] challenge and [personal] opportunity unlike anything we've ever seen before," they write. "Now is the time [to unify]" (Martin & Valenti, 2013: 3). This urgency is in part carried over from previous waves of feminist initiatives to establish gender parity, but also alludes to the hostile political environment American women currently face: restrictive abortion legislation, accessible birth control debates, arguments of fair pay, and online harassment and trolling. According to the #FemFuture initiative, online consciousness-raising is one of the larger solutions proposed to bridge gender issues in the public and digital spheres. Martin and Valenti liken online feminism to a "nervous system of this modern day feminist body politic"; a body of networked reader-authors, spaces, and publics that "foster a flow of relationships, resources, ideas, and action" that, if organized carefully, could shape the future feminist movement for the better (5). Though others have noted the problems associated with Martin & Valenti spearheading a seemingly "white female" feminism (Loza, 2014), the #FemFuture report represents a concerted effort to unite online feminist discourse toward a larger activist goal. Therefore, I ask: "how might contemporary feminist scholars, historians, and digital citizens use the complicated history behind us to propel a sustainable feminist rhetoric into the future?"

By hearkening back to classical rhetoric's formative era and examining the cultural structures or presented in that time, one can begin to trace the origins of patriarchal societal codes or nomos mandating who is allowed to speak and in what space that speech can occur.[7] The Greco-Roman tradition valued masculinity and class over all

else, resulting in a centuries-long structure of authorial and oratorical expectations. To write or speak publicly, one must meet these criteria. It is a cultural perception that has only recently begun to change toward an equal spread, though Western cultural speech is far from equal. The Sophistic movement, for example, was rooted in teaching commoners and those outside of the realm of traditional education how to speak and defend themselves in courts of law. Unfortunately, the era did not sustain the dominating cultural structures of classical Greece: "The Sophists' project came to an abrupt end when their pluralistic argument and pragmatic adaptations were replaced by the monolithic patriarchal certainty of Plato and Aristotle—a certainty which in various guises still operates on modern society" (Wick, 1992: 27). Greek society was male-centric, as reflected in some of the most famous dialogues from the era. Pivotal rhetoricians used female bodily characteristics as reminders of societal scripts: coming from a sound mother, weaning, being of "good birth", and outgrowing one's nurturing to focus on an appealing body and mind were treated as prescripts to coming of age and becoming an ideal male orator in Greek society. Aristotle and Plato, in the fourth century, "appropriated feminine and particularly reproductive metaphors in order to reaffirm old patterns of dominance and to establish through new rationalization certain objects of knowledge, certain forms of power" (duBois qtd. in Wick, 1992: 27).

The very act of utterance is layered with gender and cultural codes. Using the "available means of persuasion" is itself a loaded definition that requires these means to be accessible to women in the first place. In Aristotle's classical rhetorical arena, this was not the case. According to Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald, "the discovery of the available means was for Aristotle an act of invention that always assumed the right to speak in the first place, and even prior to that, assumed the right to personhood and self-representation, rights that have not long been available to women" (2001: xvii). Similarly, Walter Ong identifies the nature of rhetorical argument and dialogue as inscribed by gender and Glenn supports this notion, reminding us that, "after all, gender is merely a concept borrowed from grammar that connotes 'a socially agreed upon system of distinction rather than an objective description of inherent traits'" (Glenn, 1997: 19). A system "socially agreed upon" by the existing power structures is problematic in who is "agreeing" upon these terms—largely male politicians.

Robert Connors has famously called the Western paternal narrative of rhetoric "one of the most patriarchal of all the academic disciplines" (Glenn, 1997: 9). The patriarchal structure is centuries old, dating back to the locations in which Sophistic rhetorical training took place: the gymnasium. This exclusively male space, its emphasis on

sculpting ideal bodies and interest in how those bodies represented knowledge and power outside of the gym aimed toward "cultivating a citizen ethos", restricted women from this culture (Hawhee, 2002: 144). Much in the way that Debra Hawhee's "Bodily Pedagogies" explored reframing the Sophists for pedagogical concerns of gender and embodiment, I look for ways in which our revitalized approach to the classics might be reapplied to commonplace platforms of speaking and writing.

In the late 1980s and early 90s, rhetorical scholars began focusing attention toward the male-dominated histories of Greek and Roman culture, working to discover more about the women casually mentioned in dialogues or treatises. Notably, Glenn's *Reclaiming Rhetorica* aimed to "interrupt the seamless narrative usually told about the rhetorical tradition and to open up possibilities for multiple ⸤SEP⸥ rhetorics… that would not name and valorize one traditional, competitive, agonistic, and linear mode of rhetorical ⸤SEP⸥ discourse but would rather incorporate other, often dangerous moves…" (Lunsford, 1995: 6).

Though much previous scholarly work has been completed in efforts to give voice to forgotten women's histories in the fields of literature and rhetoric and composition we must build from these scholars' work and consider how contemporary feminist rhetoric might be bolstered, enhanced, and girded against erasure—specifically in the realm of digital writing and social media. ⸤SEP⸥The #FemFuture movement is a new effort toward building a collective ethos aimed at supporting and mitigating feminist rhetoric, yet the sustainability of this effort is brought into question given the transient nature of the online news cycle. What moves should feminist rhetoricians make to assure a sustainable ethos within the digital sphere?

In her March 2014 lecture, Mary Beard recounts the tale of Philomela, a onetime princess of Athens who was raped and famously maimed by her perpetrator, Tereus. When Philomela threatened to name him for his crime, Tereus responded by cutting out her tongue—quite literally robbing Philomela of a portion of her body, the muscle essential to taking part in public discourse (Beard, 2014). Philomela was eventually able to out her rapist by patiently weaving a tapestry that told the story of her plight. She sought an alternative avenue to invention; her available means included an intervention of stereotypical "women's work" that served to speak for her.

Embodiment is but another issue associated with speech, though as the story of Philomela demonstrates, we can seek ways around restrictions placed upon utterances. The Sophists emphasized the development of "knowledge of fundamentals [that]

becomes bodily rather than conscious," working to establish a connection of habituation between mind and body (Hawhee, 2002: 149). The tongue is a crucial organ in ancient rhetoric: it was trained, restricted, and worshiped for its essence of viable delivery. Moreover, Beard even points out "the best techniques of oratorical persuasion were uncomfortably close to the techniques of female seduction. Was oratory then really so safely masculine, they worried" (Beard, 2014). After all, the online abuse that Beard herself experienced threatened to "rip out her tongue," to remove the organ that allows her to verbally enact rhetoric as a woman. Perhaps to best sustain utterances and feminist rhetoric online, an ethos of subversion should present materiality as crucial to speaking and writing online. Feminist rhetoric enacted online should mirror the "feminist body politic" that Valenti and Martin point toward. Digital interventions should foster the connections between feminist rhetoric, the body of feminist histories, and collective ethos, working to sustain connections between feminist rhetoricians and contemporary resources such as digital archiving, blogging, and grassroots organizing while challenging the nomos seeking to limit feminist rhetoric. The #FemFuture cause aims to create such connections. By uniting behind organized causes such as #FemFuture, feminist rhetoricians can enact oratorical viability and visibility through subversive rhetorical acts amplified in the feminist public sphere. With this fledgling community, feminist rhetoricians can amplify instances of harassment, erasure, and abuse, reclaiming their material experience that so often comes under attack and shaping new spaces of interaction.

A Fourth Wave: Subverting/Disrupting the Silence

To begin to generate a workable equation for contemporary structures of speech, there is much historical evidence to consult and lexical stances to be taken. Today, many young women—including prominent female figures in popular culture—have distanced themselves from the term "feminism", often pointing to the negative connotations of the phrase. Thus, a new movement of consciousness raising has emerged online in efforts to demonstrate the equal nature of feminist thought and activism (Martin & Valenti's #FemFuture, 2013; the UN #HeForShe campaign, 2014; Elle UK's efforts to rebrand feminism, 2013; various hashtags ranging from #YesAllWomen to #FeministNewYearResolutions).[8] Hashtags as rhetorical interventions are visually powerful, working to categorize language for readers and immediately position this language within a larger visual body of work when searched for or curated in online spaces. Likewise, hashtags contribute to a larger ethos of the language at play, building new conversations around central rhetorical tactics with which users across the globe

can identify. It is a tool with which to rapidly convey a message or cause. The feminist consciousness raising movement is driving women to consider new shapes and applications of their voices, enacting feminist rhetorics in mutable digital spaces in order to reach wider audiences. An alternative rhetoric must be defined and reshaped in order for hidden and silenced voices to be clearly heard in our contemporary public sphere. At the moment, this alternative rhetoric most often takes the shape of 140 character tweets categorized with hashtags. With digital spaces such as Twitter (and other sites such as Facebook and Instagram using hashtags) often serving as the most rapid source for news or reactionary discourse, the opportunities for feminist rhetoric to be heard and noticed is promising.

The historical exhumation work has begun, but it is the application and consciousness-raising of how voice, gender, and subversion of existing structures might begin to sculpt alternative histories, experiences, and applications of silenced voices. The #FemFuture report, though two years old at this writing, established a static stance for contemporary female voices in the digital sphere to reference. I like to consider the changing digital environment and reclaiming of digital space the feminist movement is taking as a sort of "fourth wave," but not in the tidal metaphorical sense most are familiar with. The emergence of digital feminist rhetoric and hashtag activism is "in the air" with the remnants of the third wave diminishing in culture and politics. Nancy Hewitt proposes that the waves in which we frame feminist history should follow the model of radio waves, and be "based on the size of the wave that carries the signal" (Hewitt, 2012: 659). The gradual organizing of online feminist rhetoricians best mirrors a small yet developing radio wave, making a mark on culture but not quite at the strength to overwhelm politics and history. Further, Hewitt's model is fitting for the omnipresent yet back channel nature of the digital sphere writing, "radio waves remind us that feminist ideas are often 'in the air' even when people are not actively listening" (Hewitt, 669). Yes, misogyny and patriarchal attacks against female speakers can more easily be brought to light and discussed online (take Davis and Beard for example), but a more visible and immediate space for writing and discussion itself does not yet merit a renaming of a social movement.

However, the notion of a "fourth wave" is beginning to gain some following: "what is certain is that the Internet has created a 'call-out' culture, in which sexism or misogyny can be 'called out' and challenged. It is increasingly clear that the Internet has facilitated the creation of a global community of feminists who use the Internet both for discussion and activism" (Munro, 2013: 23). The technologies available to women

writers, speakers, and audiences do enable a more fluid forum for debate and activism. But these interactions are still taking place in a mandated space rife with restrictions, including but not limited to: barriers of access such as required usernames/registration to forums, using one's actual identity on social media, the time required to participate in this discourse.

The conventions of writing, speaking, and interacting in the digital sphere must be challenged and improved. It is impossible for one approach to establish a social contract of the digital sphere, but small disruptions, networked and sustained over time can work to establish a safer, more attentive and respectful forum for voices varying in shape, race, origin, and more. Just as Philomela engineered an alternative route of speech when rendered mute and Davis and Van de Putte calmly asserted their authority by using the existing structures of speech in their spheres, a new rhetoric of proactive, subversive speech can open new potentials for feminist rhetoric online. These disruptions need to be powerful, bolstered by a digital presence and crafted with a rhetoric of awareness, activism, and engagement. A disruptive rhetoric must unify power and action from preexisting avenues and harness the rhetorical power of digital visibility.

Notes

1. See the *New York Times* article summarizing the spread of Davis' filibuster online: **http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/politics/senate-democrats-in-texas-try-blocking-abortion-bill-with-filibuster.html** (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/politics/senate-democrats-in-texas-try-blocking-abortion-bill-with-filibuster.html)

2. The offenses in question accused Davis of speaking off topic about mandatory ultrasound testing, briefly pausing her filibuster to put on a back brace while assisted by a staffer, and a final strike for veering off topic.

3. See articles about Wendy Davis as "abortion Barbie" (**http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/22/wendy-davis-abortion-barbie_n_5374101.html** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/22/wendy-davis-abortion-barbie_n_5374101.html)) commenters calling comedian Amy Schumer a "fat whore" (**http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2015/0707/Amy-Schumer-takes-on-fat-shaming-in-way-only-she-can** (http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2015/0707/Amy-Schumer-takes-on-fat-shaming-in-way-only-she-can)) and Mary Beard a troll

(http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/troll-slayer

(http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/troll-slayer)).

4. A *Washington Post* report of Pao's experience both at the helm of Reddit and at the mercy of its trolls: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-cannot-let-the-internet-trolls-win/2015/07/16/91b1a2d2-2b17-11e5-bd33-395c05608059_story.html

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-cannot-let-the-internet-trolls-win/2015/07/16/91b1a2d2-2b17-11e5-bd33-395c05608059_story.html) .

5. I cannot ignore the pluralistic nature of the many subsets of the feminist movement, including liberal feminism, black feminism, transfeminism, post feminism, and so on. Therefore, this article operates from a position of intersectional feminism, acknowledging the relation of these subsets as influential to feminism overall and inclusive of men, women, and individuals that identify differently. I'll discuss feminism as the movement organized around the belief in social, political, and economic equality for the sexes.

6. Aristotle's oft-cited definition of rhetoric describes "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion".

7. Nomos: a law or convention of a culture.

8. Hashtagfeminism.com offers curated summaries of popular hashtags, organized by date. Summaries of #YesAllWomen and #FeministNewYearResolutions provide a snapshot of the fleeting use of the tags as rhetorical acts.

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This article has been openly peer reviewed at **Ada Review** (http://adareview.fembotcollective.org/ada-issue-8-gender-globalization-and-the-digital/feminine-voice-in-the-digital-sphere-disruptive-speech-the-subversion-of-gendered-cultural-scripts/) .

Footnotes (returns to text)

1. See the *New York Times* article summarizing the spread of Davis' filibuster online: **http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/politics/senate-democrats-in-texas-try-blocking-abortion-bill-with-filibuster.html** (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/politics/senate-democrats-in-texas-try-blocking-abortion-bill-with-filibuster.html)

2. The offenses in question accused Davis of speaking off topic about mandatory ultrasound testing, briefly pausing her filibuster to put on a back brace while assisted by a staffer, and a final strike for veering off topic.

3. See articles about Wendy Davis as "abortion Barbie" (**http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/22/wendy-davis-abortion-barbie_n_5374101.html** (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/22/wendy-davis-abortion-barbie_n_5374101.html)) commenters calling comedian Amy Schumer a "fat whore" (**http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2015/0707/Amy-Schumer-takes-on-fat-shaming-in-way-only-she-can** (http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2015/0707/Amy-Schumer-takes-on-fat-shaming-in-way-only-she-can)) and Mary Beard a troll (**http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/troll-slayer** (http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/troll-slayer)).

4. A *Washington Post* report of Pao's experience both at the helm of Reddit and at the mercy of its trolls: **https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-cannot-let-the-internet-trolls-win/2015/07/16/91b1a2d2-2b17-11e5-bd33-395c05608059_story.html** (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-cannot-

let-the-internet-trolls-win/2015/07/16/91b1a2d2-2b17-11e5-bd33-395c05608059_story.html)
.

5. I cannot ignore the pluralistic nature of the many subsets of the feminist movement, including liberal feminism, black feminism, transfeminism, post feminism, and so on. Therefore, this article operates from a position of intersectional feminism, acknowledging the relation of these subsets as influential to feminism overall and inclusive of men, women, and individuals that identify differently. I'll discuss feminism as the movement organized around the belief in social, political, and economic equality for the sexes.

6. Aristotle's oft-cited definition of rhetoric describes "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion".

7. Nomos: a law or convention of a culture.

8. Hashtagfeminism.com offers curated summaries of popular hashtags, organized by date. Summaries of #YesAllWomen and #FeministNewYearResolutions provide a snapshot of the fleeting use of the tags as rhetorical acts.

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2 THOUGHTS ON "FEMINIST RHETORIC IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE: DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS & THE SUBVERSION OF GENDERED CULTURAL SCRIPTS"

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