

I ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ NETWORKING ARGUMENTS

Global connections are everywhere.
So how does one study the global?

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NETWORKING ARGUMENTS: HOW RHETORICIANS SHOULD STUDY GLOBALIZATION

IN 1995, delegates from 189 countries and territories and representatives from over 2,100 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) travelled to Beijing for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Focusing specifically on mainstreaming women's needs into policy and development plans, this historic conference concentrated on the ways in which women's equality related to human rights as well as on women's ability to resist impoverishment, participate in public and private decision making, and influence media representations of women and girls. Participants took part in conversations and presented statements about women's struggles for gender equality and poverty alleviation. These statements provided a way for women's rights advocates to make connections among the struggles that women face across the globe.

One possible way to bring rhetorical theory to bear on globalization is to study rhetorical occasions such as the Beijing conference. Certainly, the Beijing conference was a momentous and unique event that brought women together from a variety of backgrounds, nations, and political agendas to conceive of a Platform for Action that would offer a plan to national and supranational policy makers for bringing women's issues and diverse needs to the center of policy making (*Beijing Declaration*).¹ Because delegates from each of the 189 nations and many representatives from several NGOs presented formal speeches that addressed the unique circumstances of women from that nation or organization, rhetoricians might

consider, for example, who each country sent as a representative and what that representative spoke about. Or perhaps, rhetoricians might note the common themes or arguments that emerged across speeches or even how the speakers addressed international power relationships. Because the speeches at the Beijing conference were performative and celebratory, and they specifically called for gender mainstreaming alongside women's empowerment initiatives, this sort of occasion-bound rhetorical analysis might lead rhetoricians to conclude that the results of the Beijing conference were overwhelmingly positive. Certainly, as then First Lady Hillary Clinton aptly noted during her speech: "It is conferences like this that compel governments and peoples everywhere to listen, look, and face the world's most pressing problems." The Fourth World Conference on Women and the resulting Beijing Platform for Action did indeed influence how governments and global policy makers addressed women's poverty and disenfranchisement; post Beijing, several national governments and supranational organizations began to write gender mainstreaming imperatives into their own policies and development plans. Yet, as the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming traveled from policy to policy, development initiative to development initiative, policy and development experts reframed the meaning of gender mainstreaming to fit with their own agenda.

To really understand the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming, then, rhetoricians must look not only at static rhetorical occasions such as the Beijing conference but they must examine how rhetorics travel—how rhetorics might be picked up, how rhetorics might become networked with new and different arguments, and then how rhetorical meaning might shift and change as a result of these movements. In other words, analyzing the Beijing conference and the resulting Platform for Action as discrete texts only reveals a glimpse of the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming.

For example, while the Beijing Platform for Action offers a holistic and refined way of approaching gender inequalities, this sophisticated interpretation of what gender mainstreaming initiatives ought to do did not necessarily travel post Beijing as other organizations integrated the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming into their policy agendas. The definition of gender mainstreaming within the Beijing Platform reveals a nuanced definition that does not simply mean establishing policies that address gender disparities or examining how the policies will impact women and men

differently. Rather, the Beijing Platform reflects transnational feminist goals and approaches by networking and linking the definition of gender mainstreaming to local and global structures that exacerbate inequalities, such as international trade agreements, (neo)colonial power relationships, changing local cultural practices, political unrest, and environmental degradation. The platform notes, for example, how globalization has affected women's well-being. It states, "since . . . 1985, . . . the world has experienced profound political, economic, social, and cultural changes, which have had both positive and negative effects on women" (*Beijing Declaration* 8). Among the negative effects that the platform mentions are "wars of aggression, armed occupation, civil wars, and terrorism" that often lead to "murder, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy and forced abortion," as well as "reduced . . . resources available for social development" (9). The Platform for Action also notes that gender discrimination is not due to the fact that women are ontologically *different* from men but that political practices and supranational development policies can *create* gender inequalities. Gender mainstreaming, according to the Beijing Platform, crucially means developing policies, programs, and practices that do not simply respond to gender inequality but that actually encourage social, cultural, and political practices that positively impact women and their diverse needs.

For this reason, the Beijing Platform explains how poorly designed structural adjustment policies, unequal education programs, excessive military expenditures (over social programs), and disproportionate economic growth has led to the feminization of poverty and has especially impacted women in low-income nations not only economically but also socially and culturally. Such recognitions are undoubtedly valuable, because the platform connects women's poverty to local and national political and historical power structures—not individual women's personal circumstances or their personal behavior, as subsequent initiatives do. In other words, the Beijing Platform highlights the vectors of subjugation that impact women and thereby provides a *holistic* and *contextual* account of how gender might be mainstreamed at all levels of policy, including how its final material outcomes affect women's (and men's) lived experiences.

As a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women, supranational organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, national

governments, and even aid organizations made serious attempts to reconceptualize their development agendas with the intention that they would follow the Beijing Platform. Many institutions publicly sought to promote an “active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes” so that they analyze “the effects on women and men, respectively” (*Beijing Declaration* 27). However, these gender mainstreaming initiatives looked very different from the sorts of projects that the Beijing Platform may have intended. The subsequent gender mainstreaming policies and programs in no way reflected the Beijing Platform, despite the platform’s very clear and dynamic definition of gender mainstreaming, its nuanced understanding of the need to address issues of gender inequality in regards to social programs, development practices, and neocolonial power relations, *and* despite global policy makers vocal and public support for gender mainstreaming initiatives. The variety of ways in which gender mainstreaming rhetorics function in documents post Beijing demonstrates the need to look at how rhetorics travel and how, as they do, they shift, change, and are redefined.²

The United States, for example, actively supported gender mainstreaming initiatives at the Beijing conference, but shortly thereafter, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which focused on mainstreaming poor women by regulating their behaviors and their role in the U.S. economy. The very title of the act, and the policy’s overwhelming focus on women, demonstrates how gender mainstreaming ideologies conjoin with a rhetoric of personal responsibility, thereby shifting the definition of mainstreaming away from a vectored and holistic definition and instead toward a focus on individual behavior (part of the focus of chapter 2). Indeed, the policy’s emphasis on work and personal responsibility already clearly decontextualizes women’s poverty by *not* drawing attention to, for example, the long-standing ties between poverty and racism or how ten years of deindustrialization in the United States had caused a drop in middle-class incomes and a corresponding rise in service sector jobs that do not provide benefits for women. So although the United States supported the notion of gender mainstreaming, the first lines of the Personal Responsibility Act reflect the ways in which the United States translated gender mainstreaming imperatives into a rhetoric of personal responsibility: “The

Congress makes the following findings: (1) Marriage is the foundation to a successful society” (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 101[1]) and through the support of marriage women ought to “transition from economic dependency [on the State] to self-sufficiency through work” (817[c]). In short, the Personal Responsibility Act argues that to prepare women for a postindustrial, neoliberal economy, the policy must attempt to make women responsible caregivers *inside* the home through the institution of marriage and more productive workers *outside* the home through paid labor. Employing the rhetoric of rational choice economics and focusing on teaching women to make what the policy portrays as “better” choices, this neoliberal policy also drastically cut traditional safety-net benefits, housing and childcare allowances, education programs, unemployment assistance, and even disability subsidies in the name of “personal responsibility” (Jaggar 299).

This kind of rhetoric of personal responsibility within the context of gender mainstreaming can also be traced further beyond the U.S. borders where the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming shifts again and connects with notions of economic fitness (the focus of chapter 3). In 1997, just two years after the Beijing conference and very much in response to the Beijing Platform’s gender mainstreaming initiative, the World Bank, the largest and most powerful global development agency, publicly announced that women are the keys to a nation’s economic success. In a speech called “The Challenge of Inclusion,” which I explore further in chapter 2, given by then World Bank president James Wolfensohn, he stated that it was time for the World Bank to make a formal commitment to include women in the “mainstream” of global development. Wolfensohn used this speech to argue that it was time for the Bank and development experts to mainstream gender and women’s place in the development process; it was time, he concluded, to “include” women and bring “into society [those people] who have never been part of it before” (1–2). Significantly, Wolfensohn went on to define the “challenge of inclusion” as “bringing more and more people into the economic mainstream” (3) in order to “make the unfit fit” (5). In this example, Wolfensohn successfully connects the notion of gender mainstreaming to the notion of fitness—not only economic fitness but, given that he speaks about women from so-called developing nations, fitness defined by global capitalism. In other words, Wolfensohn attaches the

rhetoric of gender mainstreaming to eugenicist and colonial aims thereby divorcing the notion of gender mainstreaming from the dynamic meaning put forth by the Beijing Platform (a topic I explore further in chapter 3).

By tracing how gender mainstreaming rhetorics circulate within various policies and how they are networked with new and sometimes conflicting ideologies, we can see how rhetorical meaning is not always stable. Rhetorics can shift and, thus, have drastically different material effects. As John Trimbur has made clear, the circulation of rhetorics and writing cannot be isolated from the material conditions that make that circulation possible (190). For example, further working directly against the recommendations of the Beijing Platform, which stressed the need to consider how women's poverty relates to broader social, political, and economic conditions, post-Beijing World Bank loan parameters and International Monetary Fund currency devaluation initiatives reduced the very social programs designed to help women succeed in the paid labor market (Rittich 249)—programs that the platform notes are key to helping women achieve empowerment.

By briefly demonstrating how arguments for gender mainstreaming are networked across several documents, we can see how, just after the Fourth World International Conference on Women and the subsequent rise of strong global support for public policies that included gender mainstreaming imperatives, policy makers certainly did focus on *women*, but they specifically focused on their behavior and individual abilities to be core economic actors for their families and communities. In addition, by networking these policy arguments we can note that while the public rhetoric of gender mainstreaming is supposedly constant, *meaning* and rhetorical purpose change as it moves from policy to policy, from supranation to nation.

In other words, the above transnational feminist rhetorical analysis illustrates that the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming ultimately becomes attached to acontextual rhetorics of self-determination, responsibility, family values, and tradition. What appears to be a common rhetoric of "gender mainstreaming" is not actually common at all. While gender mainstreaming within the context of the Beijing Platform is intended to create policy and development initiatives that address the wide context of women's inequality, in practice gender mainstreaming projects set into mo-

tion several successive development programs and policies that employed rhetorics of personal responsibility, economic fitness, and empowerment as a way to mainstream women into the global economy; yet these policies remarkably end up reinforcing gender and global inequalities. These rhetorical variations make it necessary for rhetoricians to look carefully at policymaking practices through the lens of transnational networks so that we can identify the multiple strands of influence that give a policy argument clout and demonstrate how repetitive lore often circulates on a transglobal scale, blending the local and global across national or political boundaries (Dingo and Scott).

To answer Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's question, which is the epigraph to this chapter, about how we might study global connections, I offer a transnational feminist rhetorical methodology that seeks to identify how arguments are networked, how and why rhetorics travel and circulate, and then how (due to rhetorical occasions such as the rise of neoliberal economics)³ they shift and change as they move across geopolitical boundaries to reflect different ideas about production, labor, and global citizenship. The way in which policy makers address women's role in an increasing neoliberal and global economy should be of crucial concern for feminist rhetoricians because, as I argue, although topoi like gender mainstreaming appear to have a universal definition, meaning shifts as topoi transverse geopolitical contexts and exist within different policies. The circulation of the term *gender mainstreaming* that I have analyzed above shows how and why the practice of feminist rhetorical analysis must be brought to bear on public policy, globalization, and the transnational movement of texts and ideas. Feminist rhetoricians must consider how policy rhetorics are linked—how they are disseminated, received, rewritten, and put into action—in unexpected ways. The goal of *Networking Arguments*, then, is first to demonstrate a new method of feminist rhetorical analysis that pays attention to how rhetorics are networked and travel, thereby moving the public toward a better understanding of the uneven impact of globalization on women, and, second, to enact this method by tracing three central terms that circulate within late twentieth-century global gender policies and initiatives—mainstreaming, fitness, and empowerment—in order to show how, as they travel, their meanings shift and change depending upon the contexts in which policy makers and development experts

use them. Ultimately, by turning to transnational feminist theory, feminist rhetoricians can learn how to network arguments so that they might gauge the various and shifting representational and material effects of globalization on women.

WHY TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST STUDIES?

Contemporary globalization (through the proliferation of international trade agreements and policies, transnational corporations, and migration alongside new and efficient communication networks) has enabled economic, social, political, and cultural connectivities between and among nations and thus has also affected the ways in which texts are produced, circulated, and used. These connectivities have inspired scholars across disciplines to think in new ways, not only about international politics but also about how contemporary globalization has made it necessary to examine the flow of ideas, goods, people, and texts across borders (see Levitt and Khagram). Globalization, specifically subsequent changes to national economies, has had an uneven impact on women across the globe; for example, at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century there has been a rise in women's poverty worldwide in addition to women increasingly migrating (often without their family members) to other countries for work (2004 *World Survey* 9). Thus, to further answer Tsing's opening epigraph question—how should we study global connections—requires new feminist rhetorical methods and theories that pay attention to the transnational networked relationships and connections among texts within the frameworks of globalization and the rise of neoliberal and neocolonial practices.

The term *transnational*, while defined in a number of ways, generally refers to how globalization has influenced the movement of people and the production of texts, culture, and knowledge across borders so that the strict distinctions among nations and national practices can become blurred.⁴ In the last ten years, disciplines throughout the humanities and social sciences have recognized that increasing globalization and enduring neoliberal economics have changed our understandings of citizenship, place, and texts. Drawing heavily from the fields of political science, sociology,

geography, and women's studies, the emergent interdisciplinary field of transnational studies has sought to "uncover, analyze, and conceptualize similarities, differences, and interactions among trans-societal and trans-organizational realities, including the ways in which they shape bordered and bounded phenomena and dynamics across time and space" (Levitt and Khagram 10–11).⁵ Transnational feminists add a political edge to this study of globalization by tracing how increasing global capitalism can create conditions of economic exploitation for some women and possibilities for others. Transnational feminists also draw important attention to the relationship between neoliberal economics and neoliberal governmentality (see Brown) citing how, at the end of the twentieth century, neoliberalism inundated not only the global economy but cultural practices as well. Generally neoliberal policies have been critiqued by feminists for being indifferent to poverty, social development, and environmental destruction (Brown 18). In this way, then neoliberalism functions on several scales: policy, economy, and culture. The political economist Susan George characterizes the neoliberal economy in the following way: "the State . . . reduce[s] its role in the economy, . . . and citizens [are] given much less rather than much more social protection" (27). Anthony Giddens, likewise, notes that neoliberal policies are "link[ed to supporting] unfettered market forces [and] to a defense of traditional institutions, particularly the family and nation" (12).

Thus, the rise of neoliberalism is an important historical and ideological touch point for this book. Roughly defined, the term *neoliberalism* has come to describe the economic philosophy that markets will always regulate themselves and thus that governments and policy makers ought to promote free market capitalism and strategies such as global trade and the development of global markets so that goods may flow freely between nations with few to no regulations, including taxes and tariffs (see Steger and Roy).⁶

Historically, the term first appeared post–World War II via economic and legal scholars associated with the Freiburg School in Germany. They used the term to refer to revivifying classical liberalism. Throughout the 1970s and '80s Latin American economists adopted this revived term to support their pro-market model of development. Later in the 1990s, activists and scholars embraced neoliberalism as a pejorative term that describes

the pro-market, American-style capitalism that is associated with the Washington Consensus—a set of economic development policies for the Global South supported by the U.S. government, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (ix–x).

Today neoliberalism is a common term that refers not only to market-centric policies, free trade, and the spread of global capitalism but also to how individuals ought to act. In other words, the *ideology* of neoliberalism trickles into our everyday lived experiences (see Riedner and Mahoney) and manifests within particular values: entrepreneurship, competition, individual choice, self-interest, and self-empowerment. As Manfred B. Steger and Ravi Roy aptly state: neoliberalism “puts the production and exchange of material goods at the heart of the human experience” (12). Neoliberal policies then extend capitalist market logic—that is, competition, free trade, and business—to all institutions, including social welfare. Wendy Brown illustrates that neoliberalism has turned into a form of “political rationality” that extends beyond market economics to the management (and then self-management) of people. As I explore further in chapter 2, neoliberal governmentality, which embraces rational choice economics, works at the level of the individual and thus produces neoliberal actors. Neoliberalism is often articulated through a rhetoric of choice (consumer, personal, behavior, and so on). Moreover, neoliberal policies also went into effect alongside the rise of multiculturalism in the United States and elsewhere, creating rhetorics that stripped notions of equality, difference, and equity away from their structural causes (see Duggan). In this way, as Inderpal Grewal notes, neoliberal policies have also managed to at once rearticulate colonial histories and feminist goals together (15). As Grewal maintains, “neoliberalism produces its own geopolitics in terms of how market logics could be linked to social concerns for differently located, gendered, and racialized populations” (19).

Thus transnational feminists tend to trace the economic, social, and political conditions of contemporary neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and neoimperialism across nations, asking how these sorts of practices link diverse nations and people and shape them in similar and different ways. In addition, transnational feminists examine the roles that state and supranational power, history, class relations, and sexual, gendered, raced, and ethnic expectations play in the making and unmaking of nations and

nation-states and the movement of goods, ideas, and people across and within borders.

Feminist scholars such as Grewal, Caren Kaplan, Nancy Naples, Chandra Mohanty, and Valentine Moghadam have suggested that globalization has had uneven material consequences throughout and within different regions of the world, making it necessary to employ a transnational feminist lens to consider the vectors of power (often present within textual production through representational practices) that impact categories of identity, state sovereignty, and the markers of citizenship. According to Shari Stone-Mediatore, “transnational feminists situate language practices within far-reaching political and economic systems,” (129) including global to local relations, as well as state-to-state and supranational transactions. Transnational feminist scholars seek to examine “‘transnational social spaces,’ or linkages among political actors across borders” (Moghadam 81), and in so doing, they use the metaphor of networks and connectivity to describe uneven transnational power relationships and their impact on women. This transnational feminist network model emphasizes that the identity category of “woman” is entangled within a variety of connections (Grewal 24),⁷ and to understand women’s oppression, feminists must consider not only a woman’s local circumstance but how her circumstances *relate to* and are *informed by* supranational policies, colonial history, global economic structures, and even our practices here in the West—the very vectors of power that the Beijing Platform emphasizes.

For transnational feminists, then, networking is a useful metaphor because it draws attention to the links between women’s diverse experiences, aspirations, and identities. For instance, a transnational feminist lens notes women’s material realities by seeing the economic, political, class, and gendered connections between Mexican maquiladora workers (i.e., female factory workers along the Mexican-U.S. border) and U.S. megastore workers. Due to trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1995 (NAFTA), maquiladora workers may now be making the very same products that U.S. middle-class workers were making over a decade ago but for significantly reduced wages. U.S. workers may face unemployment and growing debts due to a lack of the job security that factory jobs may have formerly provided. While these same U.S. workers also might be able to sustain some portion of their pre-NAFTA lifestyle because

the low wages maquiladora workers make enable U.S. companies to keep the cost of products down, these same U.S. workers may now also work in low-paying blue-collar jobs that do not provide benefits, childcare, or vacation. Thus, like their maquiladora-working counterparts, U.S. workers may struggle to make ends meet. Both the maquiladora and U.S. workers' economic situation may be linked by an international trade agreement, by the products one produces and the other sells (and/or can or cannot purchase), and the fact that both are not thriving in this transnational economy. Simply comparing these two groups of people's economic statuses does not elucidate the complex ways in which they are linked by a transnational economy. A transnational feminist analysis does not simply recover lost voices nor does it ask who suffers more or how two (or more) groups are similar; instead, transnational feminism illustrate a matrix of connections between people, nations, economies, and the textual practices present in, for example, public policies and popular culture.

Just as transnational feminists have begun to query the ways in which globalization must shift how feminists think about gender identity, power, and the connections between the local and global, the field of feminist rhetorical studies has been predominantly concerned with the historical effort to recover and recognize the spaces of women's rhetorical practices by mapping oppression or hierarchical structures based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. The field has worked to widen the scope of how we define women's rhetorical practices. In May 2006, however, Wendy S. Hesford made a call to the field of feminist rhetorical studies to address globalization. Drawing on atrocities at Abu Graib, Hesford notes that rhetoric and composition scholars need to create methods and frameworks that not only move the public toward a better understanding of the uneven impact of globalization but also move them toward fostering social justice. As Hesford makes clear, composition and rhetoric scholars have had a strong interest in factoring globalization's impact into their scholarly work. Yet, while the scholarship on globalization tends to weave through some specific areas of rhetoric and composition studies (Hesford traces, for example, rhetoric and composition studies' focus on "unidirectional English monolingualism" [789], ethnography, composition pedagogy, and rhetorical history), there have been few sustained studies in the field organized around how rhetoric and composition studies scholars

must extend their methods of analysis to consider the transnational movement of texts, specifically. For this reason Hesford ultimately invites rhetorical and composition scholars to study the formation of transnational publics by considering the “intertextuality of local and global cultures,” tracing the global networks and paths on which texts circulate, and reframing how we read and attend to the local (792).⁸ This gap demonstrates the necessity for a transnational feminist rhetorical analytic that explores the relationship between language and power and considers how power works in specific historical moments and within specific texts. Because feminist rhetorical scholars are uniquely situated to study how globalization affects how we write, read, and are persuaded across and within the boundaries of the nation-state, they should have a vested interest in widening the scope of feminist rhetorical study to include transnational feminist theory. But what does that look like?

Hesford, in her call for the field of rhetorical studies to address globalization and the transnational movement of texts, suggests that rhetorical theorists often “take for granted the nation-state and citizen-subject as units of analysis” (788). Likewise, Eileen Schell notes that traditional rhetorical study assumes that “a rhetor speaks or writes from a particular location in time and space to a particular audience” (168). Yet Schell continues by explaining that globalization necessitates that rhetoricians “account for . . . how national interests and appeals are tied up in complex international and transnational flows of capital and people” (168). Both Hesford and Schell call for rhetorical scholars to incorporate into their research methods a transnational perspective that examines how economic globalization has influenced both the flow of knowledge and rhetorics across international borders while also paying attention not only to individual speech acts or occasion-bound rhetorics but the circulation of arguments about women.

This very sentiment is also noted by transnational feminist theorist J. K. Gibson-Graham,⁹ who claims that, due to the rise of contemporary globalization and the transnational movement of goods and texts, “the vision of feminist politics as grounded in persons [needs to be] extended . . . to include another ontological substrate: a vast set of disarticulated ‘places’ . . . connected through webs of signification” (xxiv). For Gibson-Graham, feminist analysis should not be just about the “category ‘woman’

or identity” (xxiv); rather, they suggest feminists must examine how women are part of and affected by a complex network of relationships. This means that feminist rhetoricians must critically examine arguments about women within the context of globalization by considering how rhetorical arguments about them become layered and connected to other information, *and* they must also trace how rhetorics shift and change as they travel.

The network model thus provides an effective way for feminist rhetoricians to think through transnational power relationships, especially in light of how rhetorics travel and are dispersed across the globe and how the circulation of rhetorics impacts representations of women and women’s material well-being and their abilities to speak and be heard (Grewal 2). For feminist rhetoricians then, engaging a transnational feminist rhetorical analysis means examining the “variety of sites” whereby “subjects [women, men, children] become constituted and connected” (Grewal 23) and texts “in *relational* terms,” paying attention to “different, often conflictual, locations and histories” (Mohanty qtd. in Bahri 75).

So, for example, returning to my introductory example of gender mainstreaming, if we only examined occasion-bound and individual-bound rhetorical acts without tracing the resulting policies and program initiatives that emerged within the context of the global support for gender mainstreaming, then we might have ignored their diverse material impact on women. However, as we place a transnational feminist rhetorical lens on the aforementioned example, we see how policy makers’ assumptions about poor and Third World women drive the creation and implementation of contemporary global economic policies. Thus, we see how crucial it is to bring a transnational lens to a feminist rhetorical analysis in order to look beyond individual texts or occasions and instead examine how rhetorics relate to each other, the time in which they are produced, and how they are employed.

I propose adopting a transnational feminist rhetorical analytic that not only examines rhetorical acts as they relate to identity categories or historical moments but also engages how complex networks of relationships affect rhetorical meaning. Globalization and the transnational movement of texts not only makes it necessary for us to consider how global forces shape lives and literate practices (Hesford) but also how such forces

make it necessary for rhetorical scholars to examine the circulations of rhetorics transnationally. This method might be derived from transnational feminist theory, which considers how representational practices are affected by social, political, cultural, and economic forces that are interconnected. This approach to rhetorical analysis also (and importantly) grounds transnational feminist theory by analyzing and making connections between specific rhetorics about women that are produced throughout disparate locations and texts. I contend that such a rhetorical methodology more effectively illustrates how transnational rhetorical acts and representations are often the results of a colonial understanding of difference, imperialist aims, and/or a neoliberal philosophy of personal achievement. Ultimately, a transnational feminist rhetorical analytic is necessary to show how these rhetorical acts relate to one another and how they shift and change as they cross national and developmental boundaries.

NETWORKING ARGUMENTS: A TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST RHETORICAL THEORY

For feminist rhetoricians to study global connections requires new methods and theories that pay attention to the transnational networked relationships among texts within the frameworks of globalization and the rise of neoliberal and neocolonial practices. Scholars of transnationalism suggest that increased telecommunications and computer networks as well as a growing global economy and immigration have made it necessary for scholars to examine the flow of ideas, goods, people, and texts across borders (see Levitt and Khagram). However, for rhetoricians, this flow calls into question the situatedness of texts and the traditional rhetorical relationship of text, speaker, and audience and demonstrates the need to look at how rhetorics circulate and how that circulation relates to (geo)political economies.

Thus, feminist rhetoricians must not only examine occasion- or nation-bound rhetorics but also how arguments are transnationally networked and how neoliberal economics and neocolonial power relationships are often exigencies for particular arguments and representations of