

## **Privileged Vulnerability: Embodied Pedagogy as Critical Rhetorical Praxis**

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Contextualized within the space/place of the classroom, in this article we use autoethnographic, narrative inquiry as a method built on a foundation of critical rhetoric and feminism as intersecting orientations. This study demonstrates how critical rhetoric as an orientation provides liberatory opportunities for our pedagogy at this historical moment of cultural forces intervening in a misogynistic culture that antagonizes feminist inquiry. Through our embodied and privileged vulnerability, our stories emerge, which can lead to empathy and transformation. In the case of knowledge production of and about feminism(s), embodied pedagogy—revealed via critical rhetoric—positions educators and students as cocreators and critics of discourse and lived, bodily experiences, inside and outside the classroom.

*Keywords: critical rhetoric, embodied pedagogy, critical communication pedagogy, feminism, misogyny, empathy*

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*We sat, as we have done since fall semester began only one week ago, in a circle of 18 bodies—students and professor. With my discussion notes in hand, I could have proceeded with class as planned. However, we all woke to an e-mail announcement—a TIMELY WARNING NOTIFICATION—as the university police department reports in the subject line each time this happens.*

*"We couldn't get through a full week of classes before the first assault of the semester—at least the first reported assault," I said vehemently. "I realize this is not a pleasant topic, but you have all chosen to be in a gender studies course. That choice is a political act in itself." I looked around the room to nodding heads and attentive eyes, so I continued. "However, we are also here at a liberal arts school during a growing awareness of safe spaces and trigger warnings." More nods. "Folks, everything we discuss in this class is a trigger warning," I continued, followed by a few smiles and half laughs. "I want you all to feel secure sharing your thoughts—or not sharing your thoughts—so if you are uneasy discussing campus sexual assault or rape culture, I encourage you to meet with me to discuss alternative participation for parts of the class."*

*No one budged. Steady eyes. On me. I hadn't prepped lecture notes for rape culture, nor sexual assault. That unit was planned for MUCH LATER, after we had built rapport. Or at least that was the plan. I felt out of my element, exposed and vulnerable, and likewise contributing to a culture of exposure and vulnerability. But something about their stares, their longing (or at least my perception of said longing) to discuss yet one more casual, standard operating procedure e-mail, urged me forward.*

*"So . . . if you are comfortable discussing your reactions to this morning's announcement, or about campus sexual assault, or for that matter rape culture in general, who wants to start?" I stumbled.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Orienting Our Pedagogy**

As educators, we are responsible for responding to the needs of the moment and our students' demands through engagement in critical pedagogy to wrestle with the intersection of education and political life. Critical communication pedagogy (CCP) offers one framework for this lofty goal. Specifically, CCP recognizes (1) that our identities are constituted through language, and (2) that reflexivity, collaboration, and performativity are key in decentering pedagogical power (Fassett & Warren, 2007). CCP is particularly useful for its "reform oriented" (pp. 50–51) praxis of transforming our social institutions. However, CCP stops short of fully theorizing bodies.

Enter critical rhetoric, which is an attitude, an alignment, a lens focused on power, language, and bodies. Informed by Foucault, McKerrow (2011) argues that the goal of critical rhetoric is to reveal normalized, deeply embedded power structures and practices formerly accepted as truth: "not so much simply to create the conditions for social change, but to allow the individual to reinscribe in new social

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<sup>1</sup> The "I" in this narrative, including when it is expanded on in later sections, refers to the first author, Danielle. It is one exception to the combined "we" voice that we use throughout the article in this collaborative work.

relations" (p. 257). By extending critical rhetoric to a lens of embodied subjectivity (Grosz, 1994), we connect an orientation of critical rhetoric to an embodied praxis of CCP, particularly within the context of pedagogy about and through feminism. If corporeal rhetoric, like critical rhetoric, is an orientation, then embodied pedagogy is a material praxis that we can use as lived, material examples that are illuminated by the orientation of critical rhetoric.

Critical rhetoric as an orientation provides liberatory opportunities for our pedagogy, which we term embodied pedagogy. As McKerrow (1989) argues, critical rhetoric as orientation must allow for critique of domination and freedom (McKerrow, 1989). Feminism exists as a site of domination; we can recognize that a universalizing—Western, white, heteronormative—feminist rhetoric obfuscates instead of liberates. How can we attend to the freedom of feminism, how can we embrace a mosaic, intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) feminist praxis that intervenes in oppression rather than contributes to it? Moreover, how can we align with social justice principles of intersectional feminism that rest on understanding the history of institutionalized privilege and marginality rather than contributing to an empty signifier of intersectional identity diversity (Manning, Stern, & Johnson, 2017)? Perhaps embodied pedagogy offers hope (Stern, 2011).

Contextualized within the space/place of the classroom, in this article, we use autoethnographic, narrative inquiry as a method built on a foundation of critical rhetoric and feminism as intersecting orientations. Adams and Manning (2015) define autoethnography as a "research method that uses, and even foregrounds, a researcher's personal experience ('auto') in an attempt to represent ('graphy') cultural experiences ('ethno')" (p. 351). The present autoethnography aligns our experiences as feminist educators alongside discursive understandings of power and privilege. Because it is guided by evocative storytelling (Boylorn, 2008)—that which elicits emotion and empathy—autoethnographic inquiry provides a methodological connection to a theoretical orientation—a critical sensibility—of embodied rhetoric.

Embodied pedagogy builds from corporeal rhetorical notions that critics must find meaning in the body, but not at the exclusion of the mind (Grosz, 1994; McKerrow, 1998). The "mind" realm of language and the "body" realm of emotion/empathy are integral to storytelling. Researchers have called for the return of the body to rhetoric, via critical rhetorics and embodied storytelling. Lunceford (2015) argued that "when we act as critics, we often present ourselves as disembodied voices. Our voices are always embodied once they begin telling a story" (p. 6). Moreover, Lunceford explained, via McGee (1990), that it is no longer the task of the critic to interpret a text, but instead to create a text—a story—worthy of interpretation. As Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett (2008) have argued, personal narrative is a primary methodology for feminist, interpretive research because it introduces "marginalized voices into the record" (p. 6). Our story is guided by the following question: How can critical rhetoric as a sensibility be taught, embodied, and lived in our classrooms? In what follows, we offer our narrative as an example of how critical rhetoric as orientation provided the pathway to embodied pedagogy as intervention in a postfeminist, misogynistic culture.

### **Embodying Feminist Disclosures**

We first continue with the opening narrative as experienced by one of us. "Thank you for sharing," I kept contributing, or, "I'm sorry you experienced that, but I'm glad you felt comfortable discussing it here." By then I had already made clear that as a faculty member, I was a mandated reporter. However, I also

could not help but be grateful that those who spoke up discussed assaults that they had already reported to the authorities or that happened before their campus enrollment. I sat disgusted with myself that the thought even entered my brain, but such is the culture of mandated reporting. I suspended my ethical dilemma in the interest of the students' mindful disclosure—they seemed well aware of the Title IX campus reporting measures.

*How do I stop this train?* I thought. *If I interrupt now, they will never trust me again.* I chose to let the disclosure flow, knowing I was taking a risk with administration and federal regulations if students shared too much. Somehow, those students who shared their stories maintained an authority over their voices, knowing the parameters of reporting, while also letting the emotions flow at times. Narratives of victim blaming, lack of support, and shame intertwined with tears and sorrow.

A few times throughout the hour I interjected with moments of connection to our previous readings—such as the historical rule of coverture and the perception of women's and Black bodies as property as a link to modern rape culture (Projansky, 2001; Sills et al., 2016). I mostly nodded, thanked students for speaking up, and performed my best Sally Jesse Raphael. I'm not proud of it, but I am proud of those 17 students—those speaking as well as listening.

"Listening is just as powerful as sharing when it comes to sexual assault," I offered in closing. But we were not done.

"I know I spoke earlier of not having a community where we can feel comfortable sharing our stories, but I feel like that's what we've done here," one student said. "If you'd like, let's share our contact info and begin our own informal group to share."

My jaw dropped. I wanted to cry, but I had to hold it together. What is profound is their courage in divulging their stories and engaging in collective action.

We are still in awe of what transpired during those 50 minutes. After years of college teaching, with an untold number of traumatic events and disasters, a mundane, business-as-usual e-mail reporting a seemingly single act of violence, woke me. I awoke to the need to throw my course plan out the window. I awoke to the need to just sit with the energy and let today happen. I awoke.

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"How is this any different than what we know about CPP?" Kathy asked, putting down the drafted narratives as we sat later unpacking this situation.

"I-I think," Danielle responded, unsure about where to go with this, "I mean, I know that CPP recognizes the embodied nature of education, but the foundational premises of CCP scholarship do not specifically call on bodies as constitutional. Language? Yes. Performativity? Yes. Disciplinary norms? Yes. But embodiment? I'm not so sure. All of the 'commitments' of CCP as Fassett and Warren (2007) call them, are implied to happen with and through bodies, but I think we can push the theory and praxis further."

"And the clear focus on power in the writing and classroom is similar to what we are advocating," Kathy again interjected.

The conversation continued as we troubled the unique impact of critical rhetoric in the classroom. The similarities that come from CPP (Fassett & Warren, 2007) and our embodied pedagogy are profound. As Stern (2018a) argues, we need to "cocreate space with our students to reframe dominant narratives" (p. 108). This cocreation looks much like the focus of dialogic education in CCP articulated by Fassett and Warren (2007). But is Fassett and Warren's move to focus on dialogue enough? What if instructors need to go further in shifting power? What if the interruptions of the instructor in an interaction remove the possibility of continued exploration on the part of the students?

"We are not trained critical rhetoricians. But perhaps this outsider status provides the opportunity to grapple with the unexpected, material ways that critical rhetoric can orient us in our everyday lives—including the mundane space of the classroom."

"The classroom is not mundane. Our universities are hierarchical, power-laden, exclusive places of learning that induces anxiety."

"Yes, but CCP talks about making the mundane matter (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Not mundane as in neutral or boring, but in the 'everyday' or 'routine' sense. And now it is routine to receive e-mail notifications about rape on campus. The embodied pedagogy that we are calling for pays respect to CCP scholars' discussion of analyzing power in the mundane. Embodied pedagogy also owes a debt to critical rhetoric's focus on bodily discourse."

"Power assumptions are rooted in our bodies—in the bodies of students and in the feminist response of faculty bodies."

"However, eight students—nearly half of the enrollment—shared their stories of sexual violence and trauma. Half. One fucking half."

When we return to the work of McKerrow (1989), it is in the focus on embodiment that we truly see the possibility and call for embodied pedagogy. In making space for bodies as sites of intervention, embodied pedagogy offers us a pedagogical praxis to be reflexive in our teacher bodies, our student bodies, our trauma bodies, our survivor bodies, and so on. Our bodies provide the entry point to the discourse. Our bodies become the discourse and the dialogue. Turning from dialogue to a flipped classroom, embodied pedagogy affords a decentralized approach. Moving professor bodies to the side, centering on other bodies, and typically marginalized bodies, this experience brings vulnerable bodies into the classroom spotlight without feeling the need to return the focus to the professor. Critical rhetoric lands on the importance of bringing bodies back into focus, and through this focus embodied pedagogy emerges, where we can extend the work that CCP does.

### Privileging Vulnerability

Critical, embodied rhetoric has helped reveal a tenuous relationship between discourses of privilege and vulnerability that results in a productive pedagogy of our bodies. Stern (2018b) explained privileged vulnerability as a theoretical contribution to CCP that “questions and then demands that instructors interrogate power and dominance in our communication artifacts, interactions, and institutions” (p. 47). Our role as educators is to recognize, use—and embody—this privileged political space of the classroom. We must model embodiment if we expect our students to practice it. Based on Foucault (1977), Grosz (1994), and McKerrow (1998), the body has become the material site of meaning and cultural production. Although “the” body has served critical scholars well, as critical rhetors, it may be more useful to orient toward Rich’s (1986) use of “my’ body,” which moves the realm of bodies away from the abstract into lived practice. In the context of a coauthored narrative, her words of “my” body become “our” bodies. A critical orientation of “my” body, “your” body, “their” bodies, “our” bodies reveals the agency and possibility of resistance, especially when bodies unite through collective trauma. In the case of knowledge production of and about feminism(s), embodied pedagogy positions educators and students as cocreators and critics of discourse and lived, bodily experiences.

Through our privileged, embodied vulnerability, our stories emerge. Adopting a critical rhetorical lens reveals lived practices of continued gender domination that intersectional, feminist, embodied pedagogical activism helps liberate. For example, the students who sat in that classroom not only became friends but also relied on each other as an embodied, empathetic support system. These same students went on to complete advocacy projects about healthy relationships, sexual education, rape culture, and other feminist endeavors at the end of the semester. Though many of these students benefited from intersecting privileges, their experiences as survivors or witnesses to sexual assault led to a feeling of being disenfranchised. Their embodied pedagogy facilitated a discussion of the misogyny of everyday American culture and institutions. This feeling of marginalization then allowed for a sense of awakening—a privilege birthed from pain that, unfortunately, many survivors and sympathizers may not experience without access to affordable education and mentoring relationships from which my students benefited.<sup>2</sup>

Teaching higher education courses in the field of communication requires a privileged vulnerability that can foster growth for our students. Our classroom praxis encourages students to critically align themselves with their own privilege and marginality to critique dominant, yet fragmented, narratives of identity and institutions. Critical, embodied rhetoric affords an orientation to and of privilege that we would not have the lens for otherwise. Yes, we are in many ways protected in our ivory towers, but with growing threats to tenure and academic freedom (Flaherty, 2017; Knott, 2016), we hover over a fine line between privilege and vulnerability—just like the populations of students whom we serve. From our academic place and space, we have the privilege of being vulnerable. As Zeisler (2016) wrote, empowerment has become an empty signifier of an apolitical, marketplace feminism. What word, then, can we use to describe the productive potential of vulnerability for those of us who occupy bodies and spaces that can help our communities continue this process of intersectional feminist awakening and empathy for those more

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<sup>2</sup> As white academics, we risk cultural appropriation by this extended referencing of being “woke,” but we lack a more useful metaphor to interrogate the privilege that is the focus of this article.

vulnerable than we are? And how do we avoid the patriarchal, postcolonial, Western approach of speaking for, rather than with, in this endeavor?

Critical rhetoric's focus on power (McKerrow, 1989) provides an entry point in unpacking this domination toward what Durham (2016) identifies as embodied vulnerability, which "calls attention to the social, geopolitical, and material locations of some bodies that render them more open to harm than others" (p. 132). Scholars of CCP have also developed an understanding of vulnerability as empowering (Dannels et al., 2014; Rodriguez, 2010; Warren, 2001). Bodies who live more vulnerably because of their very existence are tasked with a precarious opportunity to voice power to that vulnerability. Yet can we ask this of them? And in making space for these discussions in our classrooms, are we asking them to risk further vulnerability? Through our privileged, embodied vulnerability, our stories emerge. Our empathy emerges. Another site for empathy emerging is both in incorporating as well as challenging a postfeminist popular culture in our classrooms. Moving forward, we elaborate how students' experiences with media and popular culture frames instructional lessons about feminism.

### **Embodying Critical and Popular Culture Pedagogy**

Introductions to feminist framings often do not start in the seminar; rather, students experience the intersection of diverse ideas in mediated contexts well before we offer engagement in the classroom. Popular culture presents a postfeminist discourse where gender has been unbound. No singular voice can propel feminist movement<sup>3</sup> (hooks, 2000); however, the cacophony of voices in television, politics, social media, academia, and other cultural institutions simultaneously praising and shaming women's empowerment and agency highlight an important problem. A postfeminist orientation, taken up by much of popular media, asserts that organized feminist movement fought for and gained institutional equality, leaving it up to "individual women to make personal choices that simply reinforce those fundamental societal changes" (Orr, 1997, p. 34). In a postfeminist media culture, then, narratives of gendered liberation, or freedom, proliferate. However, if we look more closely, we find that an orientation of critical rhetoric helps reveal the limitations of this discourse of freedom.

As feminist educators, the stakes are high to find the best words and examples to not only teach feminism but also to interrogate feminism's relevance in our students' everyday lives. As such, popular culture examples not only provide a conversational entry point (Stern, 2018a) but also disrupt the historic power dynamics between professor and student (Allen, 2010). According to McCauliff and Denker (2016), "when instructors provide popular culture texts and encourage students to bring their own, the classroom transforms" (p. 208) into a space that facilitates vocalizing and navigating controversial ideas. Before talking about sexual assault in class, my students had a backlog of popular culture memories, in addition to the current events coverage of and social media chatter from which to relate to their own trauma (or listening to their peers' disclosure of trauma). A critical rhetorical orientation provided an embodied intervention into the misogynistic rape culture my students lived in their everyday lives and experienced in popular culture. This intervention is just one example of how critical rhetoric compels educators to make explicit the accessible shared frameworks

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<sup>3</sup> We follow bell hooks' (2000) use of feminist movement as an action rather than a static category (as in "the feminist movement").

that occupy learning environments. Popular culture has the potential to facilitate knowledge, agency, and equity in the classroom, particularly if marginalized bodies are placed at the center via privileged vulnerability.

Although we appreciate a popular culture that provides outlets for feminist critique and exposes racial prejudice, we are frustrated by the multitude of popular culture practices and discourses that do not move the conversation forward. These prominent media frames of postfeminism are also clear in our students' reactions to discussions of gender. In spaces of feedback and teaching evaluations, students would comment positively about appreciating that they were learning to critique gender bias in media. However, we still noticed negative responses to the particular use of the word "feminist" and the concept of feminism as a political identity (Olson et al., 2008). As Roxane Gay (2014) expertly wrote in her collection of essays, *Bad Feminist*, there is no singular, correct way to be a feminist. However, if our students only read about and view popular culture narratives of feminist antagonism, which continues a postfeminist ideology and detracts from inclusive feminist movement, what can we as educators do to change the conversation? In the absence of inclusive, interventional pop culture representation, feminist scholars must create this representation in the privileged space of the classroom through our vulnerable bodily experiences. We must make ourselves vulnerable and continue to have difficult conversations, orienting students' lens critically toward our shared, embodied experiences that demonstrate the continued need for feminist movement and identity. As we argue below, empathy functions as a strategy to alter the power relationship that permeates the classroom.

### **Evoking Empathy**

Embodied pedagogy facilitates not only students making space for their bodies to share experiences with us but also in modeling empathy as a communication and teaching tool. We embody empathetic agency as an invitation for our students and peers to listen to one another's stories, to get involved in advocacy that matters to them. As Rodino-Colocino (2018) argued, "an empathetic political economy can fully counter the cruelty of sexual harassment and assault, the cruelty of Trump's political agenda, and the cruelty of silenced victims" (p. 99). This is embodied rhetoric as orientation—reclaiming our bodies and our stories as inherent to an empathetic discourse—as keys to social change. As autoethnographers, we will continue to connect our stories to those of others in ways that are productive. But we cannot lie. We are frustrated that this academic technique does not appear to be making the difference where it matters. Do our essays and books make it outside our inner circle? In most cases, not likely.

A counterargument to the concern of our scholarship preaching to the academic congregation is that our storytelling via the texts we create (Lunceford, 2015) inspires others to find parts of themselves in our stories and perhaps share their own. Autoethnography functions as an entry point into academia, both for those new to higher education and those on the academic margins. In turn, this scholarly goal bleeds into our pedagogy, in the readings we assign our students and the conversations we invite into our classrooms. Students situate themselves as rhetors, practicing an embodied, critical orientation toward power and oppression. This orientation of the classroom is political. As Foucault (2000) reminds us, "space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (p. 361). Although we may never again cultivate a learning space quite like the one described earlier, whatever experiences converged in that classroom in fall 2016 united our vulnerabilities—spoken or heard—into a shared privilege of embodied storytelling (Young, 2015) that intervened in systemic gendered oppression



that sees and treats our bodies as objects instead of subjects. Dannels et al. (2014), discussing a TED Talk from Brené Brown (2012), linked vulnerability to courage in pedagogy:

Part of her argument, I think, was that vulnerability is about speaking a truth and while it may not be a comfortable space to be in it is also not a weak one. I hope we can think about our pedagogy as aimed at helping teachers and students see vulnerability as a strength—a mark of courage. (p. 375)

Observing students rally about street harassment, health care, civic disenfranchisement, and intersectional inequality brings a smile to our faces, but it also troubles us that we still have to fight this fight. And we must find ways to fight that invoke empathy instead of rage, lest we alienate those already averse to other ways of feminist knowing. As educators, we must continue to find subversive ways to introduce feminism into our pedagogy.

That day in early autumn 2016 provided an unexpected opportunity to voice our shared trauma and embody feminist praxis, our own Me Too moment one year before the #MeToo hashtag's emergence on Twitter (Johnson & Hawbacker, 2018) as a rallying cry against rape and sexual harassment. In a polymediated (Calka, 2015) rape culture saturated with images and stories of marginalized bodies as sexual objects that also silences these same voices and blames feminists for our society's troubles, students engaged in that singular experience embodied the feminist principles of agency and voice to intervene in the dominant narrative. As McKerrow (1989) explained, a founding principle of critical rhetoric is the centrality of naming as a symbolic act. Students named their trauma at a time when our civic institutions did not seem to care. Together, teacher and students embodied a collective empowerment that we hoped would carry over to our voting peers to prevent a sexual predator from obtaining the highest elected office in our nation.

These lofty goals of empathetic pedagogy butted up against apathetic inertia following the 2016 election. In short, many lost their feminist steam, perhaps similar to one author in withdrawing emotionally in her off-line relationships while simultaneously expressing outrage in her online spaces. Critical rhetoric provided the orientation toward building a theory of privileged vulnerability that intervenes in our overwhelmingly postfeminist culture of rape and misogyny that antagonizes feminist inquiry. According to Rodino-Colocino (2018), networked communities built around Me Too "challenge the very systems of power that underlie harassment, discrimination, and assault by promoting empathy from the ground up" (p. 96). The stories the students shared that day in September 2016, as well as at other times throughout our careers—not to mention stories shared by colleagues—became an empathetic Me Too network before that concept saturated popular culture. For those of us not cognizant of the ways in which our bodies and material experiences shape our teaching, we offer a space to consider our place of affirmation.

### **Conclusion**

The classroom experiences detailed in these pages is no less important or connected to other institutional issues of sexual abuse and rape culture than the larger mediated discourse. Students and instructor affirmed one another's experiences via a critical rhetorical orientation toward our embodied

experiences. Our head nods, our tears, our shares, our listening, acknowledged and affirmed. This embodiment informed a praxis of intersectional, feminist co-pedagogy that allowed us to learn with each other. McKerrow (1998) discussed critical rhetoric as a "re-visioning" (p. 317) of our historical ways of knowing and critiquing discourse. Critical rhetoric, by shifting away from a Western-centered lens that privileges gendered, raced, classed, and heteronormative power and hierarchy, challenges oppressive practices. Students' disclosures of their traumas implored me (Danielle) to flip the frame of—to reorient—how I had been thinking, theorizing, and practicing feminist pedagogy. What began as a singular, personal, univocal narrative became a collaborative project illuminating empathy (Ahmed, 2014; Boler, 1997; Rodino-Colocino, 2018) as a response to the cruelties of misogyny, racism, and rape culture. If feminism is a "response to domination, an answer to a problem of power imbalances" (Stern, 2014, p. 375), then we need more explicit connections between critical rhetoric and feminism to find those pathways to empathy and transformation of the status quo of rape culture in the classroom.

Embracing a critical rhetorical lens to cultural discourses of feminism and gender guides us to recognize the polymediated fragments (Dunn, 2016; Herbig, 2015) that constitute the complex web of feminisms, plural (Dougherty & Denker, 2015), which builds from McGee's (1990) arguments about the role of the rhetorical critic. McKerrow (1989) extended this metaphor, stating that "to approach mediated communication as rhetorical is to see it in its fragmented, unconnected, even contradictory or momentarily oppositional mode of presentation" (p. 101). Mediated communication can exist as a starting point for our students' engagement with feminist framings, but it is our embodied vulnerability that is required to move those limited frames forward. McKerrow (1998) built on Grosz's (1994) theory of "embodied subjectivity" (p. 22) that avoided a mind/body split assumed in traditional rhetoric when he argued for a bridge from critical to corporeal rhetoric via the body. By attending to these bodies as a source of knowledge and centering on these knowledge sources, embodied pedagogy moves the classroom and our conversations forward.

This article walked the expanse of that bridge to employ privileged vulnerability as a concept that is invited by an orientation of critical rhetoric and embodied subjective praxis. What remains unclear are the theoretical implications of this embodiment of privileged vulnerability. Critical, corporeal, embodied, feminist rhetoric oriented our narrative discovery. How can scholars use this privileged, yet vulnerable, orientation to expand our understandings of rhetoric? How can lived, embodied notions of privilege and vulnerability infuse our pedagogy as a matter of orientation and praxis? How can privileged vulnerability help continue the momentum of voices of social movements in the windfall public attention to horrific sexual abuse?

Communication scholars must respond to these questions in future projects. In the meantime, some of us embody more privileges than others. Those of us with the means must align our privileges with our vulnerabilities. We must evoke empathy and transformation from within our bodies out to our communities. Although the classroom provided the space for embodied rhetoric, privileged vulnerability does not and should not sit (un)comfortably alone in the academy.

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