Utopian Genderscapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age by Michelle C. Smith (review)

Nancy Myers

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that he got in trouble for mocking the demagogue Cleon in a pervious play. Whether or not we take the comic poet at his word, that premise certainly informs Parrhesiades's defensive stance towards his own practice of frank speech. It is not just, as Fields observes, that Lucian calls our attention to the ease with which *parrhēsia* could be undermined in his own day but also in the context of classical Athens.

Fields's study is an important one that expands our understanding of *parrhēsia* as an ancient virtue and of the literary period under discussion. While it might have been nice to connect the authors studied here to the changing role of *parrhēsia* in Christian sources, this is not a major deficit. Fundamentally, what Fields offers her readers is a new way to think about the development of *parrhēsia* in the Greek and Roman worlds, a perspective that classicists and scholars of rhetoric alike will find of value.

[1] See, for example, Ineke Sluiter and Ralph M. Rosen, *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*, Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava, Supplementum 254 (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2004); David Konstan, "The Two Faces of *Parrhēsia*: Free Speech and Self-Expression in Ancient Greece," *Antichthon* 46 (2012), 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0066477400000125; and Irene van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Anna Peterson
Penn State University

Michelle C. Smith, *Utopian Genderscapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2021. 234 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8093-3835-1.

In her 1863 self-researched and self-published *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopaedia of Woman's Work*, Virginia Penny points out that "the false opinion that exists in regard to the occupations suitable for women must be changed ere women have free access to all those in which they may engage."[1] Penny's research may have expanded her readers' views on women's work in the nineteenth century; however, Michelle C. Smith's *Utopian Genderscapes: Rhetorics of Women's Work in the Early Industrial Age* illustrates for the contemporary reader the "social, economic, and cultural shifts" and contexts during the antebellum period that effect gendered labor issues today (11).

Comprised of five chapters, *Utopian Genderscapes* presents three rhetorical case studies of intentional communities: Brook Farm (1841–1847) in West Roxbury, Massachusetts; the Harmony Society (1804–1905) settling near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1825; and the Oneida Community (1848–1881) in Oneida, New York (3). These examinations on gendered labor are framed at the beginning of the book with Smith's theoretical lens, historical

context, and rhetorical argument about gendered labor during the antebellum period and at the end of the text with the continuing utopian fallacy of gendered and class labor in our own time as expressed through tropes such as "tidying up," "leaning in," and "having it all" (148–153). Smith's overarching argument claims that "such rhetorics of gendered labor function to increase divides among women and preclude alliances on the basis of gender" (5). She grounds her argument through her clearly articulated and detailed theoretical approach of analyzing the intentional communities as "ecologies of gender" (6–11). This material-feminist rhetorical lens examines each community's practices in its resistance to the larger context of American industrialization and in its reflection of that industrialization as well as the societal and the cultural attitudes about gendered labor.

The three case studies, as Smith explains, convey "the networks of bodies, spaces, objects, and discourses that comprised women's work within each community, intervened in larger rhetorics of women's work, and initiated patterns of gendered labor that persist today" (4). In "Domestic Rhetorics," which details the distribution of labor at the transcendentalist community Brook Farm, Smith focuses on women's work to argue that while women branched out into nondomestic labor, men did not venture into traditional housework, thus reinforcing its stigma as representing menial chores. To alleviate the burden of daily living and provide time for other endeavors, the community's middle and upper-class women employed working-class women for housework further associating those tasks with class divisions. "Professional Rhetorics" demonstrates how women, labor, and prestige are not allied. In fact, as is illustrated by Gertrude Rapp in the Harmony Society, the success of one woman's entrepreneurial and rhetorical endeavors becomes a synecdoche for all women working in the silk industry. Unfortunately, many women at that time in the silk industry were laborers working for low wages and in unsafe working conditions, so they were not aligned with Rapp's privilege and whiteness. Focused on the Oneida Community, "Reproductive Rhetorics" illustrates the complex dynamic between an intentional community's mission and its practices resulting both in reinscribing societal norms tied to motherhood, childcare, and housework and in creating new hierarchies of gendered and class labor and authority.

In the final chapter, Smith appropriately positions herself as researcher and scholar, as she did in the book's opening, with her clearly articulated argument and analytical method. She expands on her aims in writing history "to restore a sense of possibility" and to make that history relevant for today as a means to imagine what "might yet be otherwise" (27). She validates her aims by drawing connections between each intentional community and current social, cultural, and economic practices and attitudes about housework, professional women supporting the advancement of other women, and the continued tension between the gendered roles of worker and mother. Bringing future rhetorical scholarship and the United States society in conversation, Smith concludes with a call to consider the

more equitable possibilities of both by recognizing faulty assumptions and reasoning: "Our blind spot when it comes to perceiving and acknowledging alternative lifestyles also obscures the historical contributions of utopian communities" (158).

Utopian Genderscapes is a substantial addition to rhetorical scholarship and historiography. Smith's joining of material rhetorical theory with feminist historiography and her robust multilayered methodology provide readers with rich and rewarding insights to intentional communities. In addition, her synthesis of crossdisciplinary theoretical, historical, and archival research clearly substantiates her ecological analysis and demonstrations of gendered labor as it interacts with "rhetorics of teleology, exceptionalism, and choice" (143). In its rhetorical framing, *Utopian Genderscapes* reaches beyond the three case studies of women's labor and opportunities in intentional communities: it addresses the tensions faced by all antebellum women engaged in or needing employment, even when the community is willing to broaden its gaze. Penny's 1863 encyclopedia listed 500 types of employment in which women were engaged and might be engaged, thus her research could help build awareness of what work women were doing and could do. By employing a discursive-material lens almost 160 years later, Smith extends rhetorical and historical understanding on women's inequitable labor in intentional communities and extrapolates that understanding to broader and more complex representations of gender then and today.

[1] Virginia Penny, *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopaedia of Woman's Work* (Boston, MA: Walker, Wise, & Co., 1863; repr. London, GB: Forgotten Books, 2016), vii. Citations refer to the London edition. Also reprinted as *How Women Can Make Money, Married or Single, in All Branches of the Arts and Sciences, Professions, Trades, Agricultural and Mechanical Pursuits* (Springfield, MA: D. E. Fisk, 1870).

Nancy Myers
University of North Carolina Greensboro

J. E. Lendon, *That Tyrant, Persuasion: How Rhetoric Shaped the Roman World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. 302 pp. ISBN: 978-0-691-22100-7.

John Lendon has written a provocative book about the interrelationship of formal rhetoric and the different worlds—physical no less than intellectual—that ancient Romans built for themselves. The arrows of provocation travel from Lendon's quiver in two different scholarly directions: first, at historians seeking to uncover sources, causes, or influences for some staple topics of Roman history; second, at scholars of rhetoric who have in recent decades so eagerly sought to excavate the underlying