

22.1.2007: Lecture by Tess Pierce, USA - Online Gender and Power: A Rhetorical Comparative Analysis of the Visual and Discursive Metaphors on the Green Party USA and EuroGreen Websites

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Dr. Pierce is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Luther College in Decorah Iowa where she teaches Communication and Women's Studies. Tess received her undergraduate degree in Speech Communication from Colorado State University and her Master's degree in Human Communication from the University of Denver. Her PhD is in Women's Studies from Clark University.

Her research focuses on the way we use the Internet to advocate for social change. As a scholar studying global rhetorical strategies, her specific research encompasses feminist discourse, the Internet, and transnational cultural processes. As a communication and cultural scholar, Pierce focuses on the ways we integrate communication in our everyday lives and, how these in turn, globalize our communication strategies. She also has interests in communication and the environment. The primary focus of her dissertation research was on the gendered discourse and personal narratives of cyberactivist women, or cyberconduits. She examined women's weblogs from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan to understand the role the Internet played in these women's everyday lives. Weblogs mirror the Internet's culture of self-disclosure and community, are designed for audiences, and provide a space for established voices to be heard while creating spaces for new voices. These new voices, or cyberconduits, are cyberfeminists who advocate for social justice on a local level, and act as knowledge conduits by using digital media and technology such as blogging to connect with activists on a global scale.

Abstract

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The issues that confront us online mirror those that confront us offline. Issues such as public vs. private space, identity, power and domination all influence the ways in which we accept or reject

political messages. My research project questioned whether or not progressive political movements, such as the Green Party of Europe and the United States, reinforced or resisted the dominant gender paradigms. My initial findings indicate that institutionalized gender stereotypes are just being repackaged in the slick graphics of hypertext and this may both alienate and attract potential supporters.