Minnix, Christopher, *Rhetoric and the Global Turn in Higher Education*. San Jose: Palgrave Macimillan, 2018.

An extensive study of the role of rhetorical education within global higher education in the USA (225 pages), in dialogue with a wide range of complementary theory and research (over 230 bibliographical units), *Rhetoric and the Global Turn in Higher Education* is a comprehensive monograph built upon an appreciation of a strong bond between rhetorical education and power relations. Between the five-page preface and seven-page index there are six chapters, with titles that disclose much about the book's scope and general orientation:

1. Rhetorical Education and Global Higher Education in an Age of Precarity
2. Global Higher Education and the Production of Global Citizenship
3. Making Room for Rhetorical Education in the Global Curriculum
4. Seeing Precarity: Rhetorical Citizenship, Global Images, and Rhetorical Ethics in the Global Classroom
5. Dwelling in the Global: Rhetorical Education, Transnational Rhetorical Ecologies, and the Locations of the Global
6. Conclusion: Rhetorical Education and the Local Production of Global Higher Education

The monograph's thesis revolves around the fact that – despite official claims to the contrary – rhetorical education in the (undergraduate) curriculum remains marginalised.[1] Minnix presents the reasons why rhetorical educators should feel challenged to address the issue. In the context of global education he argues against "the vagueness of global citizenship" and in favour of "the role of rhetorical education in fostering (...) *transnational rhetorical citizenship*" (Minnix, 2018, p. 5), and against viewing global higher education as a neutral movement, but rather as a site of conflict between competing ideologies and political interests. He sheds light on the specifics of this ideological conflict within the right-left political continuum in the USA.

In the second chapter, the author is concerned primarily with the development of global higher education in the USA after the signing of the 1958 National Defence Act (NDEA). Interested in the ideological underpinnings of programmes that aim to internationalise university curricula, he illustrates different ways in which these programmes influence/change

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1   It is safe to say that this is so everywhere, not only in the USA (cf. Abrami et al. 2008; Akerman and Neal 2011, Orlowsky 2011; Želježič, 2016; Žagar et al. 2018) – which makes the text resonate with readers worldwide.

the discourse of contemporary global education in America, and define the ambiguous roles American college students are expected to adopt as global citizens.

Minnix contends that the prevalent attitude towards global education/citizenship tends to naturalise a discourse that creates untenable affinities between stakeholders as disparate as "academia, the corporate world, the intelligence industry, and the military" (ibid., p. 38), inevitably defining students (as global citizens) in contradictory and conflicting ways: as individuals who promote the spirit of general respect and cosmopolitan tolerance, but also as individuals acting as economic ambassadors of the USA and safeguarding conspicuously American political interests. He warns against this authority of ethics over politics in global education because it

> runs the risk of both being easily co-opted by other discourses and obscuring concrete strategies of political education, including rhetorical education[2] (ibid., p. 44).

In the Cold War period, students and scholars were supposed to "export democracy" (ibid., p. 47), while the post 9/11 climate has given impetus to more nationalist conceptions of global education.

One of Minnix' most notable contentions is indebted to Judith Butler's insights into the blind spots of multiculturalism (and, by extension, global citizenship), in particular to her understanding of interdependency and precarity. Echoing her reasoning, he argues that "global higher education can be and has been framed by frames of war and frames of capital that create rather than ameliorate conditions of global precarity or 'precarious life'." (ibid., p. 39) And here lies the challenge and opportunity of rhetorical education: it can teach people how to critique these exclusionary frames. The author suggests that such a shift in global education programmes would, appropriately, direct attention to the conditions of power that determine visions (and forms) of citizenship, questioning the political motives behind them.

Conscious of the fact that access to participation in public discourse alone does not build rhetorical competence and agency, Minnix argues for a robust rhetorical education. Relying on a vast body of relevant research and legacy of eminent intellectuals (such as, for instance, Atwill, Arendt, Butler, Foucault, Giroux, Negri, Spivak), his discussion of transnational rhetorical education in a globalised world is anything but under-the-

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2   In the subchapter "DreamersAdrift and the Awkwardness of Citizenship" he provides most telling examples of how exclusivity of normative citizenship can be perpetuated by discourses of inclusivity and political awareness (ibid., pp. 116–123).

orised. He also gives due consideration to criticism from the political right. However, focused on a meticulous, in-depth analysis, he succumbs at times to excessive repetitiveness: leading up to already sufficiently developed conclusions, he sometimes addresses virtually the same issues, repeating virtually the same arguments.

Another element of Minnix's writing that calls for a critical response has to do with the pedagogical aspects of the project: he either avoids them or addresses them rather superficially. His concept of transnational rhetorical citizenship *presupposes* rhetorical educators who are capable of both analysing normative visions of (global) citizenship and providing their students with the knowledge, tools and tactics to do the same. On the other hand, he is well aware of the problem of non-existent methodology and in touch with his own insecurities as a rhetorical educator, and he manages to turn these weaknesses into challenges by assuming an attitude of categorical openness: rather than encouraging the pursuit of ideal models, he employs different compensatory moves, adopting critical approaches to different features of transnational rhetorical education:

– He suggests that rhetorical educators should "claim space in the global curriculum" together with communication and composition studies teachers and researchers, for the three fields share sufficient overlap to make joining forces effective.
– He defines more specific goals of rhetorical education for transnational rhetorical citizenship (ibid., p. 95, 96), juxtaposing them against vaguely defined communication skills in the context of global higher education (ibid., p. 94).
– Throughout the book, he draws our attention to relevant/critical questions that should guide the process of designing rhetorical education programmes.
– The last three chapters in particular present a few courses/projects that provided students with opportunities to learn about specific, politically engaged, rhetorical practices. Admittedly, these examples do not make much difference at the level of broad curricular changes, but they are, nevertheless, the invaluable inspiration for rhetorical educators.
– He dives into the issues of rhetorical ethics and rhetorical ecologies.

Along the same lines, Chapter 4 scrutinizes digital media and global images (of human suffering), wondering about how to teach civic participation to digital natives/cosmopolitans, who appreciate international connectivity but lack an understanding of ways in which (digital) media shape our sensitivities and perceptions, and of how what Butler calls *per-*

ceptible reality gets established. (ibid., p. 142) The author claims that to go against what Fleckenstein calls *visual habits* and *rhetorical habits* (ibid., p. 147), students need to be immersed not only in processes of analysis but also in processes of performance. (ibid., p. 153) He gives a practical example of his own class assignment on the topic of global poverty, which he used as an introduction into a discussion of transnational rhetorical citizenship and spectatorship. It sounds as though Minnix made his students recognize and question the rationale behind the exclusionary politics the images/photos testified to, and the emotional response they were intended to provoke. However, the actual depth and thoroughness of their analysis, as well as what guidelines/criteria he used in assessing their work and providing feedback is not specified.

Chapter 5 is more valuable to rhetorical educators in this respect. It focuses on how to make students view the relationship between the global and the local as porous and interpenetrating, describing how he succeeded in pushing students beyond simplistic and uncritical celebrations of diversity in his own advanced composition class, articulating most revealing examples.

In many ways, the last chapter is a succinct summary of the monograph: in higher education documents and initiatives in the USA (as well as globally) sophisticated communication/rhetorical skills are generally stated as educational goals that are pursued across different disciplines. It turns out, however, that rhetorical education is not given much attention in the global curriculum, and that students remain ill-equipped to engage in agonistic democratic practices, not really capable of recognising and responding to the policies and conditions created and reproduced by the power structures. Underlying the importance of collaborative work, the author calls upon rhetorical educators to forge alliances both *in* the disciplines (with colleagues in rhetorics, composition and communication) and *against* the disciplines (with colleagues from diverse disciplines) in order to reframe the role of rhetorics in global higher education along the lines of "agonistically engaging discourses, ideologies and pedagogies of global higher education" (ibid., p. 197).

Inevitably, such rhetorical education has very little to do with the impoverished understanding of communication skills rampant in higher education environments. As a matter of fact, it perhaps sounds rather utopian. Yet I believe it is precisely Minnix's insistence on institutional analysis, on a rigorous theoretical basis, and on posing the right kind of questions rather than providing ideal pedagogical responses that make this monograph a most valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about rhetorical instruction in the context of the global turn in (higher) education.

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