

Editors' Welcome

We welcome you to the Fall/Winter edition of *Peitho: A Journal of the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition*.

It has been a pleasure to work with the founding editors of this peer-reviewed journal, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo. Their vision has transformed the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition Newsletter into the peer-reviewed journal that we now take forward. More importantly, both Barb and Lisa embody the feminist mentorship so richly needed by other scholars; they don't relax standards but encourage us all to strive for the best versions of ourselves.

As we see it, the field faces challenges, holds hopes, and continues to craft responses that meet the challenges and fulfill the hopes.

Challenges

Challenges surround us perennially, and in recent years varied and particular ones have been laid down for scholars who study women's contributions to histories and theories of rhetoric, composition, communication, and writing. Historical work has raised challenges to focus, stakes, figures, and methodologies, to name a few. In 2003 Jacqueline Jones Royster's "Disciplinary Landscaping, or Contemporary Challenges in the History of Rhetoric" highlighted landscaping as an interpretive process and urged us "to resist exclusionary practices and to reform disciplinary habits" by joining reform-minded scholars "in the close and careful work of recovering, re-ordering, re-situating, re-visioning, and re-creating. . . non-normative subjects in order to make visible new and different features of the territory that might enable paradigmatic shifts" (160-161). Her challenge directed attention both to disciplinary formation and to disciplinary knowledge making. Others, such as Tarez Graban, Shirley Rose, Alexis Ramsey, David Gold, have since focused on rethinking archival methods in ways that support work that assists in the recovery of women's contributions to the histories of rhetoric and writing.

In addition to the work needed to meet Royster's challenge, other challenges have been issued that invite our response, with the shifting definition of writing holding a prominent position. NCTE under the leadership of Kathy Yancey, to offer one example, has massaged the

definition of 21st century literacies to make writing encompass "create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts." Yancey details this challenge in "Made not only in Words," as she expands the definition of writing/texts into other composing media and offers a new kind of challenge for those of us who privilege a certain "written" communication format over others. The implications such media shifts for literacy and composing can be profound.

Hopes

These challenges should, we think, be used to spur our work, not to discourage us. Our efforts can and do matter. Elizabeth Grosz, as she describes feminist theory practice both in terms of philosophy and political movements, confirms our hopefulness when she writes, "feminist theory is directed toward bringing about a future better than and different from the present." Though she acknowledges immense differences among feminists, Grosz goes on to say there is a shared subject— "woman, women, the feminine, and their social, political, economic, cultural, and conceptual relations" —and a need "to understand how change is possible" (101-102). We agree, and we find her words hopeful and ones that help push us forward to forge new alignments of force. The atmosphere Grosz creates is one of hope that feminist theory can, as she says, reveal forces "that enable the actual, the present, to become otherwise."

One of the hope-filled methods that resonates with Grosz's words comes from Susan Leigh Star's deployment of the concept of boundary objects. In 2010, Star mused about the impact of boundary objects on the studies in science and technology over the 30 years since she and Jim Griesemer had proposed them as methodological interpreters. She focused her remarks on how boundary objects work as a tactical method (one we think is feminist, though she does not name it so) that links "generation of residual categories [with] communities of practice of 'others' or 'outsiders'" (615). Then, after alliances and cooperative work have emerged and been facilitated by boundary objects, standardization collapses or administers or regulates those objects in ways that makes the boundary objects less powerful.

We recognize and take up the challenges Royster and others have posed, at the same time as we share the hopes Grosz, Star, and others

hold, hopes we know other scholars in the Coalition hold as well. We are particularly pleased to be helping with the journey that we have experienced to be invisible to some in the broader field but needed for the health of all research in Composition and in Rhetoric.

Responses

In this issue of *Peitho* we present essays by Kelly Cameron and Elizabeth Rohan that offer new responses and practices that take up some of these challenges.

Kelly Cameron investigates France Power Cobbe's journalistic writing, focusing on "Life in Donegal" (which appeared in 1866). Cameron details Cobbe's travels and colorful life as a way to chart the sorts of productive resistance to stereotyped portraits of the Victorian woman that Cobbe forged into the persona of the "stranger-guest." Cameron contends that such a persona allowed her writing to operate at the intersection of travel writing and rhetoric, in part because it "represents women on the move, physically, socially, and ideologically."

Liz Rohan probes how a feminist method of "strategic contemplation" assists in the study of male subjects in the Price family archives, with a focus on John M. Price's post-World War I diaries during the years he was in college at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. While she was editing his diaries, Rohan shows how the vulnerabilities of her own life connected with those of her male subject. She explains that "extending feminist research methods so that they might be used to measure scholarship for which men or non-feminist topics are subjects, does seem a logical extension of any productive feminist enterprise with the aims of nurture and inclusion and when considering that collective experience and memory includes actors of each gender."

The issue then moves to a "Celebration of the Life" for Linda S. Bergmann who died unexpectedly in early January. As you will see from that piece, Linda, a lifelong feminist mentor, began her scholarship with a study of American humor, moved to archival study of Elizabeth Agassiz' writings, and eventually worked across disciplines with the goal of demonstrating how communication knowledges morph and transfer. We dedicate this first issue to her memory.

We end the issue with book reviews of recent feminist scholarship: Kelly Ritter's *To Know Her Own History: Writing at the Woman's College,*

1943-1963, by Andrea Lunsford; Donna Strickland's *The Managerial Unconscious in the History of Composition Studies*, by Seth Kahn; Amy Goodburn, Donna LeCourt, and Carrie Leverenz's *Rewriting Success in Rhetoric and Composition Careers*, by Megan Schoen; and Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*, by Alexis Ramsey-Tobienne.

Before ending our remarks, we acknowledge two people who work behind the scenes: Christine Jach and Carrie Grant. Because production of this issue includes a reworking of behind the scenes manuscript handling (transferring the process to a manuscript management software), our editorial interns have shouldered more work than usually they would. We are indebted to Carrie and Christine for their excellent work and flexible, go-for-it attitudes. They are as hard-working as they are smart. Thanks, ladies.

Look for an announcement on the website of two special issues, a twenty-fifth anniversary issue and another special issue forthcoming in Fall 2014, and keep your manuscript submissions coming. We promise to uphold the journal's standards and rigor modulated by a feminist ethics of care as established by Barb and Lisa.

Forward.

Jenny and Pat

References

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