

# Moment of Witness and Sharing Our Feminist Platform

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We have collectively been holding our breaths with many others this winter while watching the horrific disruptions to norms, law, and safety, alongside the displays of heroism, love, and humanity in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the surrounding metro area in Minnesota. During this time, when we have to turn our attention to academic matters, we have asked ourselves: what are our responsibilities as feminist rhetoricians during this breach of norms, and during other horrific events in other places? Since our positions in this moment are those of observation, we have decided our responsibility is to offer this platform to our feminist rhetorician colleagues from Minneapolis and St. Paul (“the Cities” as they are lovingly called in the Midwest).

Colleagues at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities quickly responded and activated a network of those who can give voice to recent events for this issue of *Peitho* in a contribution entitled: “Dispatch from Minneapolis: On Feminist Rhetorics of Resistance” by Liane Malinowski and Jaclyn Fiscus-Cannaday, with contributing authors Sara N. Beam, Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, Curtis Ladrillo Chamblee, John Logie, Maddi Melchert, Nicole Montana, Matthew Tchepikova-Treon, Molly Vasich, Allison Vincent, and Marcus Woodman. We are grateful to these colleagues for the urgency and insight with which they have written about their experiences, and we think readers will learn from and be moved by their “ideas about the feminist rhetorics of resistance happening here and how feminist rhetoricians and activists can understand resistance as more capacious.”

## In this Issue

Within this issue and preceding the “Dispatch from Minneapolis,” you will encounter the ongoing excellence we are seeing in the feminist rhetorician scholarly community by writers who use their resources, skills, and voices to evaluate and elevate feminist activists and activist movements, as well as unearth how scholarly and commercial communication practices shape people’s lives, with an interest in how we can understand and possibly countermand them to improve material conditions.

The lead article, Olivia Rowland’s “Capitalist Rhetoric, Anticapitalist Struggle: Reevaluating Wages for Housework” offers a rhetorical analysis of capitalism and Judith Butler’s concept of performative contradiction to archival materials from the Wages For Housework (WFH) campaign of the 1970s to illustrate how aspects of the campaign’s rhetoric that have been read as reductionist actually contribute to a larger strategy of turning capitalist rhetorics against themselves. Focusing on multiply-marginalized WFH groups, including Black Women for Wages for Housework and Wages Due Lesbians, Rowland demonstrates how activists reappropriate rhetorics associated with finance capital to draw attention to the limitations of such rhetoric. Through discourses of risk calculation, typification, and credit and debt, WFH campaigners surface and challenge capitalism’s contradictory organization of productive and reproductive labor.

Next, “Framing Failure and Success: Retrospective Remembering in Oral History Archives” by Jessica Edens McCrary introduces Feminist Rhetorical Microhistory (FRM) as a methodological approach for examining how activists retrospectively frame their work, particularly around narratives of success and failure. Through analysis of Linda Hallenborg Kurtz’s oral history in the Georgia Women’s Movement Project archives, the article reveals the dissonance between how individual women in Georgia remembered their experiences advocating for the Equal Rights Amendment and how it was interpreted in historical memory.

Mollie Stambler’s “Rhetorical Sandwiches: Appeals to Evidence and Expertise as Ethos-Building Strategies in Epideictic Discourses of Eating, Food, and Health” offers a critical analysis of “healthy lifestyle” articles that demonstrates the persuasive and rhetorical tactics embedded in the capitalist aims of healthy lifestyle magazines and websites. Stambler analyzes the rhetorical strategy by which authors of “healthy eating” advice combine several appeals to ethos—appeals that alone might not persuade their audience but together generate compelling recommendations for health and consumer behavior change.

There are four excellent and timely book reviews in this issue: a review of Mónica Reyes’ *Rhetoric and storytelling within the U.S. asylum process: Shelter rhetorics* by Jade Yeen Onn; a review of Laura Elliot Tetreault’s *Truth Be Told: White Nostalgia and Antiracist Queer Resistance in “Post-Truth” America!* by Rhiannon Zwiieg; a review of Charlotte Hogg’s *White Sororities and the Cultural Work of Belonging* by Jo Christian and Anna Sicari; and a review of Alice Braun’s *Motherhood and Creativity in Contemporary Self-life Writing: Writers and Mothers* by Caelan Chew.

## Invited Piece

Finally, “Dispatch from Minneapolis: On Feminist Rhetorics of Resistance” includes over a dozen creative poems, vignettes, snapshots, and impressions of the disruption, resistance, care, and fortitude occurring in the Twin Cities, framed by a vision of what feminist rhetoricians can learn and do in this moment and into the future.

## Biographies

**Cathryn Molloy** is a professor of writing studies in the University of Delaware’s English Department. She is the author of *Rhetorical Ethos in Health and Medicine: Patient Credibility, Stigma, and Misdiagnosis*. Before joining the co-editing team at *Peitho*, she was on the editing team at *Rhetoric of Health and Medicine* for eight years. Currently, she is co-editing the *Routledge Handbook on the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine* with Lisa Melonçon and J. Blake Scott.

**Bryna Siegel Finer** is a professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she serves as Director of Undergraduate Writing Programs. Her published work has appeared in *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Teaching Writing in the Two-Year College*, *Praxis*, and the *Journal of Teaching Writing*, among others. She has served as the associate editor of *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine* and book reviews editor for *Composition Studies*. She is also the co-editor of *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* (2017).

**Jamie White-Farnham** is a professor in the Writing Program at University of Wisconsin-Superior, where she serves as Director of Teaching, Learning and Technology and the Jim Dan Hill Library. Her work appears in *Peitho*, *College English*, *Community Literacy Journal*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Computers & Composition*, among others. She was previously the associate editor at *Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments*. She is also the co-editor of *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* (2017).

Together, Cathryn, Bryna, and Jamie have co-edited *Women's Health Advocacy: Rhetorical Ingenuity for the 21st Century* (2019) and *Confronting Toxic Rhetoric: Writing Teachers' Experiences of Rupture, Resistance, and Resilience* (2024) and co-authored *Patients Making Meaning: Theorizing Sources of Information and Forms of Support in Women's Health* (2023). Their current book, *Living Menopause: Rhetorics, Tensions, and Futures*, co-authored with four leading scholars in feminist rhetorics, will be published by Bloomsbury in 2026.