

# Peitho

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a publication of the coalition of women scholars in the history of rhetoric and composition

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## Editor's Letter

I am pleased to announce the re-launch of *Peitho*, a publication of the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition. Under the leadership of Susan Jarratt and Susan Romano, *Peitho* became an important publication venue for research in feminist pedagogy, practice, history, and theory. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for their hard work.

The re-launch issue of *Peitho* features the work of the 2009 CCCCs Feminist Workshop Collective. A long-running Wednesday workshop, the Workshop offers those interested in feminism and teaching a chance to meet, engage, and discuss issues of importance. This year, we decided to extend that discussion to others via *Peitho*. The three roundtables each featured 2-3 speakers. These speakers collaboratively wrote overviews for this issue of *Peitho* and their individual essays (developed from their presentations and the conversations at the table) are available online in pdfs as extensions of *Peitho*. Go to [www.cwshrc.org/peitho/](http://www.cwshrc.org/peitho/) and click on the Roundtable 1, 2, or 3. You can also click on the active links in the electronic copy of *Peitho*.

In the future, look for *Peitho* in your email, as an electronic pdf. As the

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## Introduction:

Crosscurrents in Feminism: Building Coalitions, Sharing Knowledges and Pedagogies, Shaping Networks

*Lisa A. Costello, Layne Craig, Jennifer Fallas, Allison Gross, Emily Hoeflinger, Erin Hurt, and Jessica Ketcham Weber*

The papers that comprise this issue of *Peitho* trace the many feminist thoughts, theories, and activities that arose during the 2009 Conference on College Composition and Communication Feminist Workshop. This year's workshop sought to highlight the disjunctures that exist between forms of feminism within the academy as well as those between academics and activism. The workshop, which assumed these differences to be productive, asked

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Peitho fleeing the seduction of Leda appearing on an Apulian red figure vase, ca. 350-340 B.C.E.

J. Paul Getty Museum  
Used with permission

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## Introduction

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participants to examine and discuss how feminists within academic communities negotiate coalitions, pedagogies, and mentorships. We divided the workshop into three interconnected parts: academic-activism, classroom rationales and practices, and coalitions and mentorships.

In this issue, we wanted to focus on classroom rationales and practices in order to make the pedagogical tools presented at the workshop available to *Peitho's* wider audience of feminist scholars in rhetoric and composition. The papers that follow demonstrate the dynamic of this year's workshop as well as the ideas that resulted from the collaboration of its participants. The eight papers have been grouped into three roundtables. By using this structure, we hoped to preserve and recreate for *Peitho* readers the conversations that took place among conference participants. Each roundtable introduction summarizes the larger connections and queries shared by its individual essays, while the linked essays by each roundtable participant offer detailed descriptions of feminist approaches, activities, and assignments that one can use in the classroom.

The three roundtables that form the basis of this issue address the multiple connections between feminist activism and feminist pedagogy, including considerations of classroom audiences, personal and de-personalized relationships between students and instructors, and broad historical and technological ar-

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Coalition continues to search for a permanent home for *Peitho*—and eventually transition into a journal—, we will publish the newsletter electronically, which allows us to explore different mediums as well as save on cost. The newsletter's electronic permanent home will be on the Coalition website, [www.cwshr.org](http://www.cwshr.org).

I am also pleased to announce the creation of the Winifred Bryan Horner Outstanding Book Award and the Kathleen Ethel Welch Outstanding Article Award, as well as the Nan Johnson Outstanding Graduate Student Travel Award. Criteria, announcements, calls for submission, and addi-

tives where instructors can find and create texts for classroom use.

**Roundtable 1:** “Contemporary Articulations of Feminist Pedagogy” addresses the paradigms within which feminist teachers operate, from online communities to postmodern philosophy to media activism.

**Roundtable 2:** “Going Deep into the Self and Expanding Out Into the World’: Two Takes on Embodied Rhetorics” discusses multiple possibilities for spiritual and physical embodiments of feminism, reminding us of the numerous identities that disrupt straightforward understandings of “student,” “teacher,” and “scholar.”

**Roundtable 3:** “Getting Our Bearings in Unfamiliar Waters: Students’ Encounters with New Feminist Texts” further examines the complex interplay between feminist pedagogy and student audiences, offering several perspectives on introducing students to feminist thought through mainstream and alternative media, archival materials, and online texts.

Ultimately, the tools and ideas in this section are meant to inspire discussion about the myriad of connections between feminist pedagogy and activism, rather than delineate a proscribed set of connections. Our hope is that readers will take their moments of affinity with these essays, as well as their moments of friction or resistance to them, and use those moments to extrapolate new concepts and experiment with new methods in their own teaching, creating new possibilities for bringing feminism into university classrooms and into our local, national, and global communities.

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tional information will be at [www.cwshrc.org](http://www.cwshrc.org). We encourage all of you to submit or apply.

Finally, don't forget our Wednesday night session at the 2010 CCCC's. This year's session—entitled **Remixing Mentoring and Networking**—grew out of the lively discussion at last year's session. Questions that arose included how we might we mentor each other in non-traditional ways; how we can develop and sustain non-traditional forms of networking; and how might we re-imagine ourselves in our workplace and the public. This year's session will attempt to address those questions in brief presentations and discussion. We look forward to seeing you there. Barb

## **ROUNDTABLE 1: Introduction**

### Contemporary Articulations of Feminist Pedagogy

*Lauren Mitchell Nahas, Patricia Price, and Jessica Ketcham Weber*

Our roundtable brought together three very different assignments that all asked students to either analyze or create "non-traditional" texts in the hopes of achieving feminist pedagogy's central goals of student empowerment, engagement and activism. Throughout the morning we talked about how feminist pedagogies (in particular, visual, postmodern, and activist pedagogies) work to unsettle dominant discourses and to create new articulations. Three different theoretical approaches were presented, and through the discussion of specific classroom activities, we reflected on how these approaches translated into the space of the classroom. Resonating throughout the presentations was an understanding that feminist teaching—itself a form of activism—takes many forms and that such pedagogical practices are needed as much now as ever before.

In her presentation titled "Visual Rhetoric and Feminist Pedagogy" Lauren Mitchell Nahas explained how a web-tool like Pageflakes.com can be used in a computer-assisted classroom to bring student-found visual texts into the course. Focusing some portion of the course on these visual texts can empower students by giving them some control over course content, a venue for self-expression, and by illustrating the real-world relevance of the course's content.

In "Postmodern Feminist Pedagogy in First-year Composition Classes" Patricia Price gave an overview of some of the ways feminism and postmodernism may coexist, intersect, or collide. The pedagogical opportunities of both fields of inquiry, especially in their disjunctures, are exciting. She described her classroom use of a writing assignment which she designed to be consonant with much postmodern feminist thinking. Some student writings in response to

the assignment have been remarkably powerful. But results have been varied, and her research continues.

In her presentation, "A Pedagogy of Action: Kairotic Moments and Ephemeral Texts," Jessica Ketcham Weber discussed how independent media; digital, ephemeral texts; and public, kairotic pedagogies might be useful to activist teachers in an age of global capitalism and corporatized universities. Grounded in feminist theories and praxes that interrogate institutions and the power and access they grant particular publics, she shared two classroom assignments which take as their cue the notion of public, ephemeral texts.

Much of our conversation after the presentations circled around these common concerns:

1. What is a text, and how is our understanding of that designation changing?
2. What is writing, and how are expectations of texts changing our understandings of textual production?
3. How can we teach traditional academic [read: agonistic] writing and then move students beyond that limited view of texts and textual construction?
4. How can we engage students, especially first-year writing students, in academic work and encourage them to become involved in public activism?
5. How can the goals of feminist pedagogy be translated into specific writing assignments?

Taken together, these seemingly disparate approaches point to a larger movement within contemporary feminist pedagogical theories to pay attention to visual culture and to re-conceptualize meaning-making practices in the writing classroom.

## Essays in [Roundtable 1](#) available at [cwshrc.org/peitho](http://cwshrc.org/peitho)

- Lauren Mitchell Nahas "Visual Rhetoric and Feminist Pedagogy"
- Patricia Price "Postmodern Feminist Pedagogy in First-year Composition Classes"
- Jessica Ketcham Weber "A Pedagogy of Action: Kairotic Moments and Ephemeral Texts"

## **ROUNDTABLE 2: Introduction**

### “Going Deep into the Self and Expanding Out Into the World”: Two Takes on Embodied Rhetorics

*T J Geiger and Faith Kurtyka*

Much of the writing in rhetoric and composition is disembodied: we encounter scholars through their books and journal articles; we send our own writing to anonymous, blind reviewers. Though we occasionally have the good fortune of a colleague or friend reading our work, often, the discourse community that we are trying to enter must be creatively imagined. Conference presentations, however, provide one means of embodying the work we do: both for the presenter, who adds a face to his or her name, and for the audience, who provides voice and substance to the imagined audience. The CCCC Feminist Workshop, in particular, is an ideal location to talk about embodiment because we sit in the same room all day, drink coffee and eat lunch together, and experience the same presentations and discussions. At the 2009 Feminist Workshop, we presented two very different papers: T J Geiger presented on spiritual activism in academic writing and Faith Kurtyka presented on gender roles and power dynamics in the classroom. Despite these disparate topics, the small group assembled at our roundtable eagerly took up the challenge of looking for common themes in our work.

One theme that emerged time and again in our lively and fruitful discussion was the idea of embodiment and its power to disrupt. Disruptive potential in feminist work emerges, in part, from its ability to challenge the ordinary and question the commonsensical and its call to us, as teachers and scholars of writing, to locate our actions in the context of complex power relations and negotiations of agency. Efforts that undertake such disruptive feminist projects involve situated, embodied encounters in classrooms, at conferences, and through the pages (or screens) of

journals. In such encounters, we might experience discomfort, shame, relief, and other affects that make individual and community transformations possible. For example, raising awareness of gender dynamics in the classroom may provoke discomfort in both teacher and student but can ultimately lead to individual and institutional change; likewise, claiming spiritual components in one’s scholarship may provoke disbelief or derision, but those claims may reveal the personal healing that fuels political action. How, then, does one embody such awareness and work in scholarship or teaching? How do bodies connect to social forces? How do bodies demand attention, and how they are ignored? How is this work feminist?

Our work arises from a persistent desire to embody, even in an online publication, where we find our words separated from the materiality of the printed page. We attempt to write bodies back into where they’ve been erased to regender professional rhetorics, providing spaces for the feminist embodiment of theory and praxis. Jane E. Hindman argues that erasing bodies and other material conditions promotes a masculinist “master narrative” that privileges “certainty” over “positionality” (101). As William P. Banks writes, embodied rhetorics, more so than personal writing, “requires writers to foreground their sense of self at the same time that they consider the social implications of this gesture away from ‘impersonal,’ disengaged, disembodied rhetorics that permeate certain masculinist logics” (35).

One site where the interaction of individual bodies and social discourses becomes a possible resource for politically conscious and embodied rhetoric

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## Essays in **Roundtable 2** available at [cwshrc.org/peitho](http://cwshrc.org/peitho)

- T J Geiger “Our Work is Our Prayer: Scholarship, Invention, and Spiritual Activism”
- Faith Kurtyka “‘Hello Beautiful’: Institutional Discourses of Sexual Harassment and the Embodied Instructor”

## Roundtable 2

(Continued from page 4)

comes from Mary Louise Pratt. Her “contact zones” constitute spaces “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). Such grappling involves individuals working through not only new knowledge, but also experiences provoked in contact zones—for example, the anger, anxiety, excitement, and hope feminists face when challenging the patriarchy and its privileges. Along similar lines, Susan Jarratt advocates classical Greek sophistic rhetoric as a site for modeling argumentative efforts that are richly situated and that form out of multiple and often contradictory positions and interests. For classroom interactions, Jarratt claims that seeing the “inevitability of conflict—in sophistic terms, a recognition of *dissoi logoi*—is not grounds for despair.” Rather, classroom conflicts may serve to open up opportunities to address and alter the very power imbalance giving rise to discord.

Instances of *dissoi logoi*, such as invocations of spirit in academic discourse, may push at accepted epistemological boundaries, even among feminists. Geiger’s essay, “Our Work is Our Prayer: Scholarship, Invention, and Spiritual Activism,” suggests that a richer consideration of spirituality as a dimension of the “personal”—experienced through and located in bodies and emotions—opens up possibilities for alternative forms of rhetorical invention that emerge from embodied desire. Specifically, Geiger investigates how the implicit metaphor of scholarship as prayer operates as an inventive strategy in the work of Latina feminist scholar Irene Lara. This essay further invites an understanding of such inventive work as a form of what Gloria Anzaldúa calls “spiritual activism,” a mode of acting for social justice that emerges from felt knowledge about the interrelatedness of all existence. Similarly, looking to change definitions by re-writing bodies into spaces where they may have been erased, Kurtyka’s essay, “‘Hello Beautiful’: Institutional Discourses of Sexual Harassment and the Embodied Instructor,” points to the embodiments of various gender roles that come into play in situations of sexual harassment. Reading her personal experience of sexual harassment against the institutional language of sexual harassment,

Kurtyka invites consideration of how universities pay attention to and ignore these bodies and contrasts this with the resultant gender power dynamics in the classroom to connect institutions, discursive practice, and the body.

In reflecting on these bodies, we find new ways of thinking about the claims bodies make on each other. We hope that these pieces represent what Gloria Anzaldúa calls the “path of a two-way movement—a going deep into the self and an expanding out into the world” (232). We contend, too, that affective experiences embodied in those moments of conflict—discomfort and tension, feelings breaking through everyday academic civility and attending to their circulation—form a critical part of what makes conflict potentially transformative. Extending Jarratt’s feminist reclamation of *dissoi logoi*, Beth Daniell argues for its power as a way of reading, writing, and talking that enables (and provides us with a way to theorize) the production of women’s literacy and spiritual power, which is always enmeshed with material and social conditions (86-89).

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## **ROUNDTABLE 3: Introduction**

### Getting Our Bearings in Unfamiliar Waters: Students' Encounters with New Feminist Texts

*Layne Craig, Jane Greer, and Sara Sliter-Hays*

The 2009 CCCC Feminist Workshop Call for Papers articulated the goal, in part, of “address[ing] the...practical roles of feminists in the academic community” as agents of change and negotiators of difference. The “Pedagogies” roundtables grew out of a sense that while the power-sharing principles of feminist pedagogy and the “big picture” ideological goals for feminist classrooms frequently are discussed at workshops and conferences, discussion of the practical angle of feminist pedagogy is much more rare. Our roundtable on practical pedagogy, therefore, focused on classroom exercises that employ feminist pedagogy in order to introduce feminism and related ideas to a broader community of scholars, specifically scholars in lower-division composition and literature classes. The purpose of this roundtable was to help participants plan classes on gender and feminism that take into account the goals and perspectives of both feminist instructors and (sometimes skeptical) students. Presenters shared practical teaching tips on how to put the suggested lessons into practice and avoid common pitfalls associated with speaking to audiences with different understandings of feminist politics.

Layne Parish Craig’s presentation “Feminist Pedagogy in the Blogosphere: Sources and Strategies” focused on approaches to incorporating feminist blogs as texts in lower-division rhetoric and composition classes. Though feminist blogs are usually discussed in terms of their uses in gender studies classrooms, the blogs’ familiar and accessible political and social content makes them ideal for an audience of lower-division rhetoric students. In addition, feminist bloggers’ development of their ethos among feminist

and non-feminist readers and the bloggers’ differing definitions of concepts like “feminism,” “gender,” and “sexism” offer interesting connections with the goals of rhetoric courses. This presentation offered suggestions for using feminist blogs for teaching rhetorical analysis, definition arguments, evaluative arguments of visual or written media, and “mapping the argument” exercises, in addition to ideas for using feminist blogs as models for web writing. It also covered caveats to using feminist blogs in the classroom, including warnings about protecting bloggers’ privacy and the limitations of defining “feminism” using only online texts. We ended this presentation with a discussion of an annotated bibliography of selected feminist blogs from a variety of political and identity perspectives.

In her presentation, “Undergraduates in the Archives: Researching Girls’ Literacies as Feminist Activism,” Jane Greer described a course that invites students to research the rhetorical practices and literacy practices of girls. Students are encouraged to search county historical societies, public libraries, college archives, and even the attics and closets of family members for diaries, travel journals, letters, school yearbooks, memory albums, and other texts composed by girls, which then serve as texts for this class. Researching such primary documents can help students develop a greater sense of academic authority as they bring these texts to the attention of wider audiences. Moreover, investigating the lives and literacies of girls at different historical moments affords students opportunities to engage with public histories of women’s places within the social fabric of the

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### Linked Essays for [Roundtable 3](http://www.cwshrc.org/peitho) at [cwshrc.org/peitho](http://www.cwshrc.org/peitho)

- Layne Craig “Feminist Pedagogy in the Blogosphere: Sources and Strategies”
- Jane Greer “Undergraduates in the Archives: Researching Girls’ Literacies as Feminist Activism”
- Sara Sliter-Hays “Love Your Body: Deconstructing Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty”

### Roundtable 3

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United States and to interrogate their personal histories and the impacts of gender on their own growth and development. This presentation offered concrete suggestions for introducing students to archival research and feminist historiography, including a sample syllabus and assignments. Roundtable participants had the opportunity to examine several student research projects that were published in *Young Scholars in Writing* as examples of academic feminist activism.

“Love Your Body: Deconstructing Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty,” Sara Sliter-Hays’s narrative of a lesson she incorporated into different composition classes with varying degrees of success, suggested the difficulty of introducing into the classroom feminist critiques that run counter to popular, media-based feminist ideology. While her basic composition students untangled the commercial appeals in Dove’s popular marketing campaign and uncovered the regressive and misogynistic values that undergird it, students in her rhetoric/women’s studies classes, paradoxically, took the campaign’s pro-woman claims at face value. This presentation speculated on what about Dove’s campaign short-circuited the analytic and critical capacities of the women’s studies students and suggested that the concerns of popular feminism leave women vulnerable to consumerism disguised as feminism.

Audience and archives emerged as significant themes in each of the three presentations, and these themes animated the ensuing discussion. What preconceptions do our student audiences have about feminism? How does resistance to feminism manifest itself and fracture the collectivity of a classroom into multiple student audiences that we must engage?

How can feminist teachers push against the diverse forms of resistance we encounter? What archives of feminist thought are available to educator-activists who seek to engage diverse student populations in discussions of gender equality? How might feminist teachers capitalize on the rhetorical affordances of historical documents, the mass media, and digital technologies as we introduce students to and sustain their engagement with the study of women’s lives? At times, as we discussed the best ways to appeal to our students, our discussion felt as if it were a marketing campaign designed to persuade students to engage with feminist inquiry, highlighting the ethical demands feminist instructors face in occupying the roles of rhetor and educator simultaneously. As feminists, we are trained to read against the grain; as rhetors, we try to persuade others to read with us against the grain; but as educators, we teach students to think critically and independently, reading against the counter-readings we ourselves have introduced into the classroom. The presenters on this panel believe that the best way to engage students in this type of free and critical inquiry is by giving them the tools and the opportunities to discover and explore primary texts, an exploration which allows students to take ownership and responsibility for their successes and failures, their discoveries, assessments, and scholarship.

Offered as flexible frameworks for others to adapt and revise, the syllabi, assignments, and classroom activities discussed at our roundtable are presented here with the goal of extending our questioning conversation still further. We invite readers to share their responses to our work and their own teaching ideas through [femrhetcomp@cwshrc.org](mailto:femrhetcomp@cwshrc.org), a listserv for feminist scholars and teachers in rhetoric and composition.

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## Conclusion:

### Crosscurrents in Feminism: Building Coalitions, Sharing Knowledges and Pedagogies, Shaping Networks

Lisa A. Costello, Layne Craig, Jennifer Fallas, Allison Gross, Emily Hoeflinger, Erin Hurt, and Jessica Ketcham Weber

bell hooks claims that “liberatory feminist movement aims to transform society,” and for her, this transformation can only occur through revolutionary feminist pedagogy (50-1), those practices which actively transgress entrenched boundaries of binary, racist, and anti-democratic thinking. Change and progress, however, can also result from smaller ripples in the stasis of the everyday present. Ellen Cushman sees social change as occurring in “daily life . . . .] Social change can take place in daily interactions when the regular flow of events is objectified, reflected upon, and altered” (377). Both positions make claims about the potential that feminist teaching has to challenge the status quo: one by the disruption of stagnant cultural structures and the other by attending to the constitutive nature of everyday discursive practices. The 2009 CCCC's Feminist Workshop, *Crosscurrents in Feminism: Building Coalitions, Sharing Knowledges and Pedagogies, Shaping Networks*, sought to investigate the potential for teaching, collaboration, and community to collectively effect social change.

This issue of *Peitho* has focused on the pedagogical approaches presented during roundtable discussions at the Feminist Workshop 2009. The differences that mark these feminist methods clearly differentiate them from one another and thereby resist a uniform perspective. And yet, because we felt incited to conversations by these essays, we think it clear that such differences are precisely what can be productive and generative. While there may be no entirely cohesive theme among the contributions here, we don't believe there should be. Feminism has never offered an easy definition of itself, for to do so would be to belie the dynamic nature that is at its core: feminism recognizes that to seek easy answers or explanations is to risk reaffirming that which it seeks to change. Instead of an inductive conclusion about feminism and feminist pedagogy, we see a web of intersecting concerns and possibilities. These include:

- An attention to *choices* and the risks different choices entail (Kurtyka, Geiger, Price);
- The need to be critical and self-reflexive (Kurtyka, Geiger, Greer, Craig, Sliter-Hays, Price, Mitchell Nahas, Ketcham-Weber);
- The possibilities that new and digital media offers feminist teachers (Craig, Ketcham-Weber, Sliter-Hays);
- A desire to challenge the divide between classroom and students' lives outside the classroom (Greer, Mitchell Nahas, Ketcham-Weber, Craig);
- An interrogation of how feminism intersects with cultural, political, and social issues beyond the syllabus (Ketcham-Weber, Greer, Sliter-Hays, Craig).

Perhaps what does tie these myriad concerns together is the authors' attention to the kinds of worlds that are constructed through and by our feminist approaches to scholarship and teaching. Gloria Anzaldúa writes: “In the process of creating the composition, the work of art, the painting, the film, you're creating the culture. You're rewriting the culture, which is very much an activist kind of thing” (Lunsford 25). The compositions created by the authors in these essays reveal the ways in which we can rewrite cultures—challenge oppressive structures—through radical action and everyday interactions. Change may depend on our commitment to both.

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## Noteworthy

**Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene.** *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008. by Lynee Gaillet

Kate Adams and Michael Keene offer an extraordinary profile of Paul's (aggressive and shocking) activism that led to passing of a federal amendment granting women the right to vote. Her story made front-page news during the years Paul lobbied for legislation (1912-1920); yet, the public narrative of her commitment and contributions to the cause subsequently were silenced, and unlike earlier suffragettes, she did not demand to have her own story told. Until recently the official story of suffrage victory rested with Anthony, Mott, Stanton, Catt, Shaw and the efforts of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. We now know thanks to recent scholarship, along with the powerful HBO film *Iron-Jawed Angels*, that Alice Paul and other members of the National Woman's Party (NWP) are responsible for bringing the early (and famous) suffragette's work to fruition.

Often labeled a "militant," Paul's commitment to nonviolent tactics and her use of visual rhetoric are the focus of Adams and Keene's volume. A Quaker, Paul adhered to the principles of nonviolent confrontation; her medium? dramatic visual messages designed to sway the emotions and minds of the American public. In the pages of their work, Adams and Keene brilliantly analyze Paul and the NWP's use of photographs, cartoons, parades, boycotts, pickets, and hunger strikes to educate and persuade fellow citizens. Beautifully written (and illustrated), this impressive volume is an important addition to rhetorical history, feminist study, and visual analysis.

**Stancliff, Michael.** *Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: African American Reform Rhetoric and the Rise of a Modern Nation State.* NY: Routledge, 2010. by Jami Carlacio

Michael Stancliff examines Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's radically egalitarian practice through her involvement in the abolitionist movement, emancipation, Reconstruction, and into the Jim Crow era, placing her work firmly in black-nationalist lineages from which she has been largely excluded. Chapters include a brief history, then Watkins and "Antebellum sources of Moral Suasion," followed by "The Drunken Economy: Consumption, Character and Temperance," "Black Ireland and the Political Economics of African American Rhetorical Skill after Reconstruction," and finally "Not as a Mere Dependent: The Historic Mission of African American Women's Character in the 1890s."

**Strand, Amy Dunham.** *Language, Gender, and Citizenship in American Literature, 1789-1919.* NY: Routledge, 2008. by Jami Carlacio

Examining language debates and literary texts from Noah Webster to H.L. Mencken and from Washington Irving to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, this book demonstrates how gender arose in passionate discussions about language to address concerns about national identity and national citizenship elicited by 19th-century socio-political transformations. Together with popular commentary about language in Congressional records, periodicals, grammar books, etiquette manuals, and educational materials, literary products tell stories about how gendered discussions of language worked to deflect nationally divisive debates over Indian Removal and slavery, to stabilize mid-19th-century sociopolitical mobility, to illuminate the logic of Jim Crow, and to temper the rise of "New Women" and "New Immigrants" at the end and turn of the 19th century. Strand enhances our understandings of how ideologies of language, gender, and nation have been interarticulated in American history and culture and how American literature has been entwined in their construction, reflection, and dissemination.

## Special Thanks!

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# Feminisms & RHETORICS

*Feminist Challenges or Feminist Rhetorics?: Locations, Scholarship and Discourse*

Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN  
October 12-15, 2011

The 2011 Feminisms and Rhetorics conference, sponsored by the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition, will be hosted by Minnesota State University, Mankato.

The conference committee is strongly interdisciplinary and therefore our theme seeks to recognize the spaces between disciplines and communities. The conference theme is meant to acknowledge the academic and socio-discursive spaces that feminisms, and rhetorics on or about feminisms, inhabit. Major political, religious and social leaders have recently discussed feminism, including the Dalai Lama, but the discussion seems to revolve around cultural or essentialized discourses of feminism.

We seek proposals that speak to the challenges and diversities of feminist rhetoric and discourse, in public and private life, in the academy, and in the media. We welcome proposals on topics that significantly engage disciplines other than Rhetoric and Composition, and that have consequences for communities located outside of the academy.

*"She didn't write it.*

(But if it's clear she did the deed. . .)

*She wrote it, but she shouldn't have.*

(It's political, sexual, masculine, feminist.)

*She wrote it, but look what she wrote about.*

(The bedroom, the kitchen, her family. Other women!)

*She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it.*

("Jane Eyre. Poor dear, that's all she ever. . .")

*She wrote it, but she isn't really an artist, and it isn't really art.*

(It's a thriller, a romance, a children's book. It's sci fi!)

*She wrote it, but she had help.*

(Robert Browning. Branwell Bronte.

Her own "masculine side.")

*She wrote it, but she's an anomaly.*

(Woolf. With Leonard's help....)

*She wrote it BUT. . ."*

Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing*