

# Editors' Introduction

## Rebecca Dingo & Clancy Ratliff

**Rebecca Dingo** is Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Rebecca's research has addressed transnational rhetorical and composition studies and in doing so she forwards a transnational feminist lens attuned to global political economy. She is the author of *Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing*, which received the W. Ross Winterowd Award in 2012. She has published widely in both the field of Women's Studies and Rhetorical Studies. Rebecca has also offered workshops and trainings across the globe on her research, writing pedagogies, and writing development. Her pedagogy seeks to connect theory with practice and all of her classes tend to offer on-the-ground case studies paired with theoretical lenses. Rebecca earned her Ph.D. in English with an emphasis on Rhetoric and Composition from The Ohio State University.

**Clancy Ratliff** is Friends of the Humanities/Regents Professor in the English department and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her research and teaching interests are in feminist rhetorics, environmental rhetorics, writing program administration, and copyright and authorship. She has published research in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Kairos*, *Pedagogy*, and other journals and edited collections. She is involved with several community advocacy organizations, including Sierra Club Delta Chapter, Move the Mindset, Citizens Climate Lobby, Acadiana Regional Coalition on Homelessness and Housing, and Louisiana Association of Sports, Outdoor Adventure, and Recreation (LASOAR).

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This issue of *Peitho* was crafted just after the biannual Feminisms and Rhetorics De-Conference taking place at Spelman College in Fall 2023. There, the editorial team were all inspired by the rich and diverse panels that demonstrated how the political and scholarly work of feminism is pushing to make and reimagine a just future. After the editorial team presented "Making Publishing in *Peitho* Transparent" to a well-attended panel, they eagerly awaited the submissions from participants that would showcase the scholarly possibilities that come out of a de-conference. At the same time, they all heard and indeed felt the power of Tamika Carey's keynote address, "The Uses of Fatigue: Invitations, Impatience, and Investments," which acknowledged that the work of feminism is uneven and exhausting and that at the center is rage. During continued fraught times not only in the US but also across the globe, as feminists we rage but we are also challenged to question our own affinities and practices and to recognize our own political affordances and limitations. Because Carey's keynote focuses on rage and fatigue and their presence and legacies within the feminist community, especially feminists of color, we thought it was imperative to publish

it here in *Peitho*. In particular, her questions, “What are feminists’ *ways of making it* (Ballif, Davis, and Mountford) in *times like these*? And [...] how can we collectively imagine feminist futures when so many of us are tired?” are generative because they push us to imagine ways of doing feminist work in sustainable ways. Though our term as editors will have ended by the next Feminisms and Rhetorics conference in 2025, we hope that publishing the keynote addresses may become a tradition.

Carey’s focus on feminist futures and fatigue resonates with our two other articles in this issue. Holland Prior in her essay “Reimagining Sponsorship: Recovery Work, Institutional Sponsorship, and the Nearly Forgotten Rev. Mary A. Will” puts Deborah Brandt’s theories of literacy sponsorship in conversation with feminist rhetorical studies in order to forward a new feminist rhetorical recovery project based not on a figure’s words but on the figure’s relationship with an institution. Carving out a new feminist future through this unique method, Prior cogently demonstrates the affordances of this method for tracing the rhetorical practices of women whose words and work may have been erased, squelched, or would not otherwise be known. Prior implicitly recognizes how the politics surrounding a speaker may limit how their rhetorical actions were archived and circulated. As a result, her method importantly draws attention to the relationship between figures and institutions. Further drawing our attention to how institutions shape rhetorics, Amy Vidali, draws attention to how choice feminism has inadvertently promoted damaging rhetorics around infertility. Drawing from her personal experiences with infertility, Vidali’s essay resonates with Carey’s keynote essay in that both demonstrate the utility of rage even as may face exhaustion. Vidali uses her experiences to draw attention to the need to understand and communicate about infertility through the lenses of feminist disability and reproductive justice because they reframe the issue temporally, outside of a normative progression controlled by personal choice and responsibility. Ultimately, Vidali offers us new feminist rhetorical practices that treats infertility not as a person failure but as a human condition that changes across a lifetime.

Jennifer Sano-Franchini and Nina Ha’s Recoveries and Reconsiderations essay in this issue describe the important recovery work involved in building an archive. Their project recovers the history of Asian and Asian American students at their institution, Virginia Tech, and in the surrounding Appalachian community. Sano-Franchini and Ha engage in collaboration among undergraduate students, faculty, and staff to construct this archive in community about the range of Asian and Asian American experience at Virginia Tech. The Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CFSHRC) has a collection of resources, “[Fighting Anti-Asian Racism and Rhetoric](#),” and we will be recommending that this archive be added to the collection for its powerful demonstration of antiracism and belonging that universities can and should support and learn from.

Included in this issue is also an In Memoriam tribute to activist, teacher, poet, and scholar Minnie Bruce Pratt who, in solidarity with others of her generation, paved the way for many to not only embrace sexuality but also to connect oppressions within a heteronormative and heterosexist system. Rebecca encountered Pratt's work as an undergraduate student with a minor in Women's Studies. For Rebecca, Pratt's book *S/He* showed the workings of heteronormativity and sexism relied on each other.

The first time Clancy read Pratt's work was just over twenty years ago, for a feminist studies seminar when she was a student at the University of Minnesota. She was assigned Pratt's 1984 essay "Identity: Skin Blood Heart," published in *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*. Pratt reflected on her life experiences, including her childhood in Centreville, Alabama. Having spent most of her life until that point 170 miles north in Florence, Alabama, Clancy felt a shared understanding with Pratt and appreciated the deft way she described the cognitive dissonance that white evangelical Christians in the southern United States often showed, and still show, about US foreign policy, especially in the Middle East:

in evangelical theology, the establishment of the state of Israel, the growth of an "Arab-Moslem confederacy," the rise of "red" Russia and China, are seen as important only as preparation for the second coming of Christ; the Christian messiah will come again only when Arabs and Jews in the Middle East "fight a battle into which all the world's nations will be drawn"—Armageddon. All non-Christians will suffer horribly in these "end-days," which are described as specifically a time of "purification" for Jews. Christian believers will escape this holocaust, which some of them think might be a "limited" nuclear war, because they will be caught up into heaven in "the Rapture," and return to earth only after Christ's coming has prevented the destruction of the planet. *Such "Christian" believers, in their Arab-hating and their Jew-hating (disguised as Jew-loving, the right-wing Friends of Israel) have no motivation to work for peace in the Middle East, no interest in the needs of both Palestinians and Jews for safe homes, but only an interest in continuing the long history of imperialist nations in pitting the two peoples against each other.* (46-7, my emphasis)

Pratt, writing in the early 1980s, summarizes the arguments Clancy was hearing later in that decade in her Southern Baptist church's youth group (this same church brought Lt. Col. Oliver North in to give a talk, with much fanfare, shortly after the Iran-Contra hearings). "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" was published forty years ago, and it's still as timely now. Rebecca and Clancy didn't have the opportunity to work closely with Pratt as the contributors here did, but Benjamin Zender, Eileen E. Schell, and C.C. Hendricks share their memories of her as a teacher, mentor, and colleague, and we can see the reach of Pratt's legacy in their thoughtful tributes.

## Cluster Conversation: Gender and the Rhetoricity of Work

We are pleased to publish in this issue a Cluster Conversation edited by Michelle Smith and Sarah Hallenbeck. The Cluster started as a weekend workshop at the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) Summer Institute in 2023 at Penn State. From Thursday, May 25 through Saturday, May 27, participants engaged in the intensive reading, discussion, and workshopping of ideas that is emblematic of RSA workshops, and we're happy to showcase writing that comes out of that rich, deeply collaborative intellectual environment. In this Cluster, authors examine a variety of different kinds of work and norms and policies about work. Lillian Campbell shares findings from her interviews with tele-observers who work in hospitals and are overlooked members of care teams. Ashley Beardsley reveals the obscuring of labor in Rachael Ray's show *30-Minute Meals*, which demonstrate home-cooked meals that can be prepared in half an hour. Ray makes simple recipes seem more complicated and elevated than they in fact are, while also omitting some of the work that must be done to prepare the meals, including grocery shopping and clean-up. Kristina Bowers analyzes policies of US workfare programs and how they effectively prevent most people with Long COVID from being able to access benefits. Ashley Hay introduces readers to Repairman67, a content creator who posts primarily on TikTok and OnlyFans and is a sex worker, sex educator, and influencer whose work involves creating intimacy with viewers in a digital attention economy. Kelsey Taylor Alexander's piece looks closely at the the r/antiwork forum on Reddit, a space where users are doing serious critique of cultural norms about work, especially during the pandemic. Alexander historicizes this conversation, situating it in the Protestant work ethic, and she uses David Graeber's critique of capitalist logics to intervene in received notions of work-as-identity.

Our cover art for this issue is by Pilar Emitxin, an illustrator and graphic designer in Córdoba, Argentina. The image, "El Feminismo Va a Vencer" ("Feminism Is Going to Win"), is posted on *Justseeds*, a wonderful place to buy art: posters, postcards, calendars, stickers, and more. *Justseeds* also has a repository of digital graphics that are Creative Commons licensed. We are grateful for Emitxin's generosity in providing this art in the repository, and we are proud to feature it on the Winter 2024 cover.

Nicole O'Connell's review of *Unsettling Archival Research: Engaging Critical, Communal, and Digital Archives* completes the Winter 2024 issue. This issue may be the last one that will be featured on the CFSHRC's website: *Peitho* will be moving to the WAC Clearinghouse platform soon. It is still the journal of the CFSHRC, and all issues that are currently on the CFSHRC's website will continue to be archived here, but future issues will appear on the WAC Clearinghouse's website. This partnership will provide more resources for the journal, including funding and production support, and ease in assigning Digital Object Identifier (DOI) numbers for each contribution to *Peitho*. We're excited to be working with the WAC Clearinghouse, and we hope you enjoy this Winter 2024 issue.

## Works Cited

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