

Call for Article Proposals

This open invitation calls for authors to submit 500-750 word abstracts for *Peitho's* Summer 2024 Special Issue: "Small and Subtle Feminisms: Reconsidering Who or What Is Feminist Enough." This CFP is available at <https://tinyurl.com/subtlefeminisms>.

The extremity of violence and dehumanization especially toward queer folk, trans folk, women, and BIPOC demands action that is radical. In other words, these ongoing injustices require feminist rhetorical action that recognizes the systemic nature of oppression and how people's experiences within patriarchal systems are also affected by race, class, and sexuality. As such, radical action has recently been prioritized as loud, visible, and big—it's in the Women's Marches, the BLM protests against police violence, and the #MeToo movement. Volume and visibility contribute to radical change, but we hesitate to dismiss feminist acts that are small, subtle, or quiet. Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards provide an early exploration of this tension in *Manifesta* (2000), explaining "We dedicated it to the people who say 'I'm not a feminist, but . . .'" and to the people who say 'I am a feminist, but . . .'" It was our observation that many people felt like they were "disqualified" from feminisms because they hadn't worked out all of their shit" (qtd. in <http://signsjournal.org/bad-feminist>). Inherent in their observations is the notion of being a "good feminist" or "feminist enough," which Roxane Gay explores in *Bad Feminist* (2014). Qualifying feminism and what it means to do feminist rhetorical work has been an ongoing conversation, one worth revisiting in the face of proliferating injustices and increasing calls for transformation. This conversation resurfaced in a keynote talk at the 2019 Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference with Lisa Melonçon's talk on "Quiet Feminism," which triggered strong responses about the importance of being loud and visible in order to make change. Melonçon's notion of quiet feminism sparked our curiosity: Where does quiet feminism fit with radical feminism, and how are we understanding different enactments of feminism? This special issue calls for contributors to engage with the question: What constitutes "feminist enough," particularly in feminist rhetorical acts that are considered small, subtle, or quiet?

More than 30 years of feminist rhetorical scholarship has grappled with recovering, remembering, enlarging, and amending women's lived experiences throughout history (see e.g., Bizzel; Enoch; Ghimire; hooks, Ratcliffe; Rawson; Moraga; Anzaldúa; Jarratt; Royster; Kirsch; Logan; Wu; Lunsford; Glenn). What is "feminist enough" persists in fourth wave feminisms, and postcolonial scholarship challenges the Western, democratic assumption that activism must be loud, fierce, and visible (Koggel). Western feminisms have not only ignored the differences between women, they have also privileged the same patriarchal tools to make equitable changes that have oppressed many women (Lorde). Scholars argue that gender relations and practices are deeply embedded in cultural, economic, and political institutions that necessitate a better understanding of the many forms of feminist action in the West and across the world that can't look the same in place and time or satisfy a monolithic notion of "feminist" (Mohanty). In recent years, scholarship has been published on feminist material practices, embodied rhetorics, and feminist practices of remembering (e.g., Boling, et al; Clary-Lemon; Gruwell). Small and subtle feminisms might be seen across a range embodied and material contexts: from women in sports who hesitate to call themselves feminists, colleagues in rhetorics of science or technical communication who have felt on the periphery of the Coalition, and LGBTQIA+ students who are both vulnerable and called to take risks to exist on campus.

Contributors will be asked to rethink the potential of small, subtle, and quiet feminisms, even when our moment seems to call for big, radical action. We are a Coalition because each of our smallness adds to greater possibilities. Even as we turn up the volume; even as we dismantle harmful stereotypes such as the so-called “angry Black woman”; even as we wave rainbow flags, stand with/as trans folk, and chant “live loud and proud”—how do we also maintain and create spaces for the small, the quiet, the subtle? What are the rhetorical choices we are making in how we talk about feminist identities, experiences, practices, and activism that call into question what is and is not enough? A former student, of intersecting marginalized identities, once explained that they created pockets of resistance in chats with janitors and whispered friendships at the back of classrooms. This special issue seeks to recognize, recover, and reconsider these pockets, these moments of small and subtle feminist rhetorical action that may not be loud but are every bit as crucial—and are “feminist enough”—for our collective survival and movement toward transformation.

Possible questions and trajectories:

- How do we hold space for small and quiet feminisms alongside big and loud activism?
- In what ways might we invite a diversity of feminisms—disrupting the system from without and from within, being loud and quiet, acting both overtly and subtly, locally, nationally, and globally, and engaging in ways that are big and small?
- How might we value small and quiet feminisms while recognizing contributions across differences in race and class, which have been historically mischaracterized and dismissed as “too loud” or “aggressive”?
- How is the notion of “feminist enough” linked to identity, performance, and politics?
- How might feminist rhetorical practices look different across different fields (i.e., technical and professional writing, rhetorics of science, medical rhetorics)?
- How might we more effectively describe the radical nature of mentoring and administrative work if we recognize small and quiet feminisms?
- How might craftivism and other material/embodied feminist rhetorical practices work alongside louder activism?
- How do we engage in small, quiet, and subtle feminist rhetorics without being silenced, rendered invisible, and/or dismissed?
- If all feminisms are inherently radical, then how do we reclaim the parts of it that are small, quiet, and subtle?

Texts will be accepted based on reviewer guidelines for *Peitho*, including evidence of feminist and rhetorical scholarly foundation, readiness for publication, and commitment to feminist practices and methods. We welcome a range of genres associated with the special issue’s theme, such as scholarly articles, essays, organizing/advocacy frameworks, creative works, or multimodal works. Please submit queries and abstracts to **Tammie M. Kennedy and Jessi Thomsen** at subtlefeminisms@gmail.com.

Timeline

- Abstracts with Working Bibliography due by November 1, 2023
- Acceptance notifications by December 1, 2023
- Full manuscripts due March 1, 2024
- Estimated date of publication September 2024

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