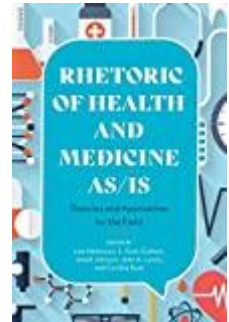


Lisa Melonçon, S. Scott Graham, Jenell Johnson, John A. Lynch, Cynthia Ryan, eds.
Rhetoric of Health and Medicine As/Is: Theories and Approaches for the Field.
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How should scholars define rhetoric of health and medicine (RHM), and how can scholars studying RHM think critically about rhetorical theories, methodologies, concepts, locations, spaces, and artifacts that ground RHM as a theoretical construct, as a practice, and as a field of inquiry? These two-fold questions reflect the multifaceted foci of *Rhetoric of Health and Medicine As/Is: Theories and Approaches for the Field*, a volume that “seeks to offer a robust conversation, a dialogue, a multiplicity of perspectives on the question of where this emergent movement—at this critical moment in its development—has been and where it is going” (p. 4). Editors Lisa Melonçon, S. Scott Graham, Jenell Johnson, John A. Lynch, and Cynthia Ryan position RHM within an “as/is” framework to capture the complexity and the diversity of RHM, in which “RHM can be seen as a theoretical construct that guides research and thinking in the field. Additionally, the concepts can be explored in the is stance as a way to define the boundaries of the field” (p. 3). Each chapter in this volume challenges and advances RHM scholarship by reflect-

ing the breadth of possible research trajectories in RHM and by contextualizing the boundaries of medical and health landscapes.

In the foreword, Judy Z. Segal introduces the term “*polydisciplinary*” to represent RHM’s “openness to opportunities for alliance” across disciplinary boundaries (p. ix). Segal discusses RHM within an as/is framework that is foregrounded in rhetoric, and she suggests that the collection of essays in this volume reinforces RHM’s identity as a field. In the introduction, Melonçon, Graham, Johnson, and Lynch examine the challenges and opportunities for defining RHM, capturing the tensions of framing the rhetoric of health and medicine as a field of inquiry apart from other related fields. While this volume demarcates ways to define RHM as a field of inquiry, it also illustrates how RHM scholarship can apply rhetorical criticism from diverse polydisciplinary perspectives and approaches to evaluate discourses in health and medicine. Additionally, the as/is framework juxtaposes RHM’s diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to ensure flexibility and growth of the field, while

simultaneously defining and placing constraints on the boundaries of RHM in practice as a field.

The volume is divided into three sections: “Interdisciplinary Perspectives,” “Representations and Online Health,” and “Health Citizenship and Advocacy.” Each section builds on and contributes to what RHM can do as a theory and as a practice, highlighting the varieties and possibilities of scholarship in this emerging field. A unique feature of this volume is the dialogic representation throughout the chapters, which the editors reinforce with the inclusion of a response essay written by an expert in RHM at the conclusion of each section. The response essay contextualizes some of the common themes, concepts, questions, and boundaries discussed within the three preceding chapters for each section. Each respondent offers insight into RHM as a field of inquiry, calling attention to how we should conceptualize health, to what defines the field of medicine, and to how rhetoric can function as an entry point for evaluating discourses in health and medicine. The conversational structure in this volume broadens the scope of potential audiences within and beyond a particular field or discipline, suggesting pathways forward in which RHM scholars, researchers, and practitioners, as well as students can engage, (re)define, and (re)examine their understanding of medical and health policies, practices, and technologies.

The first section focuses on interdisciplinary perspectives. The chapters in this section include “Health Humanities as an Interdisciplinary Intervention: Constitutive Rhetoric, Genre, and Health Citizenship,” by Colleen Derkatch and Philippa Spoel; “Mediating Minds: Disability Studies and the Rhetoric of Mental Health,” by Drew Holladay and Margaret Price; “From HeLa Cells to Henrietta Lacks: Rehumanization and Pathos as Interventions for the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine,” by Emily Winderman and Jamie Landau; and a response chapter, “Mapping the Healthscape: *Onto*, *Eco*, and *Otherwise*,” by John Lyne. Derkatch and

Spoel explore how health and food are rhetorically constructed in public health and community-based discourses. They conclude that RHM can produce significant knowledge about health and health citizenship that “has value in its own right, rather than principally or exclusively in relation to health-care professions and practices” (p. 29). Holladay and Price’s chapter examines the intersection of disability studies (DS) and rhetoric to understand the cultural constructions of mental health and disorder, which serves as an entry point for scholarship, advocacy, and intervention. In the final chapter of this section, Winderman and Landau evaluate Rebecca Skloot’s award-winning bestselling book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010), to illustrate the role of pathos in health discourse and to show how rehumanization is put into practice to “work in service of gender and racial injustice” (p. 70).

The second section examines representations and online health. The chapters in this section include “Enactments of Self: Studying Binaries and Boundaries in Autoimmunity,” by Molly Margaret Kessler; ““Did you have sex today?”: Discourses of Pregnancy and Big Data in Fertility-Tracking Apps,” by Amanda Friz and Stacey Overholt; “Theorizing Chronicity: Rhetoric, Representation, and Identification, on Pinterest,” by Sarah Ann Singer and Jordynn Jack; and a response chapter, “An Analytic of and Beyond Representation for the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine,” by J. Blake Scott. Kessler’s chapter examines how autoimmunity binaries and boundaries are enacted in online mediums to make meaning of bodily experience and patienthood. She shows how autoimmune patients capitalize on online spaces to represent their diverse lived experiences and “challenge assumed boundaries regarding self, nonself, technology, human, and more” (p. 98). Kessler suggests that future RHM research should focus on enactments of patients’ lived experiences to help understand meaning-making practices and to help provide ways for intervention. Friz and Overholt examine Eve—a health surveillance app designed to track

users' menstrual cycles, sexual activity, and birth control—to determine how quantification-as-representation of bodily quantities enacts and (re)defines health and self-identity. The authors suggest that RHM is uniquely positioned to trace how quantification normalizes perceptions of health, connecting practice to theory. Singer and Jack's chapter demonstrates how chronicity functions as a rhetorical process of identification through available representations of a chronic illness. The authors articulate ways RHM scholars can apply chronicity theoretically and methodologically to call "attention to the rhetorical processes of identification that enable (or constrain) identity-formation for individuals with chronic illnesses" and to focus attention on representations of chronic illness as sites of analysis or spaces for intervention (p. 140).

The final section focuses on health citizenship and advocacy. The chapters in this section include "Rhetoric as Rhetorical Health Citizenship: Rhetorical Agency, Public Deliberation, and Health Citizenship as Rhetorical Forms," by Rebecca Kuehl, Sara Drury, and Jenn Anderson; "Challenging Racial Disparities in and through Public Health Campaigns: The Advocacy of Social Justice," by Jennifer Helene Maher; "Decolonizing Medical Discourse through Promotora Practices in Community Health," by Amy C. Hickman; and a response chapter, "On Seeing Health Rhetorics as Deliberation, Power, and Resistance," by Lisa B. Keränen. Kuehl, Drury, and Anderson examine how rhetorical agency, public deliberation, and health citizenship are enacted in discourses about two health issues: breastfeeding support and substance abuse. The authors invite RHM scholars to apply rhetorical health citizenship to other public health issues, suggesting it can encourage community-based engagement, civic agency, and public action. Maher's chapter applies intersectionality to evaluate informational campaigns on the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in communities disproportionately affected by infant mortality. Maher argues that an intersec-

tional approach can attend to the complex dimensions of inequality and power structures that perpetuate social injustices in marginalized and underrepresented communities, and she suggests that RHM as social justice can be a path toward health equality. Hickman's chapter positions RHM within feminist decolonial theory, and she explores modalities of power that exists in medical discourse. Hickman concludes that RHM's interdisciplinary alliance with cultural studies "demonstrates rhetorical action central to transformative change" (p. 223).

In the afterword, Cynthia Ryan, Barbara Heiferson, and T. Kenny Fountain reiterate the multifaceted and polydisciplinary work of RHM as a field of inquiry. The authors discuss how this collection of essays represents the "push/pull, deconstruct/reconstruct movement, [and] the dialectical nature of RHM" (p. 239). The essays presented in this volume illustrate the generative space of health and medicine and rhetoric. Looking forward, the authors predict future research emerging in digital and media technologies to gain a deeper conceptual understanding of health, illness, and medicine. Additionally, RHM scholarship will continue building on and contributing to collaborative research in such fields as disabilities studies, feminism, gender and queer studies, and race and ethnicity studies. RHM's polydisciplinary approach provides scholars with the opportunity to ask compelling and complex questions about medical and health issues and to examine these questions from diverse theories, methodologies, spaces, and contexts.

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