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Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric

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During the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, historians of rhetoric, composition, and communication vociferously theorized historiographical motivations and methodologies for writing histories in their fields. After this fertile period of rich, contested, and impassioned theorization, scholars busily undertook the composition of numerous historical works, complicating master narratives and recovering silenced voices and rhetorical practices. Yet, though historians in these fields have gone about the business of writing histories, the discussion of theorization has been quiet. In this welcome volume, fifteen scholars consider, once again, the theory of historiography, asking difficult questions about the purposes and methodologies of writing histories of rhetoric, broadly defined, and questioning what it means, what it should mean, what it could mean to write histories of rhetoric, composition, and communication.Normal.dotm0012641508SIU Press123185112.00false18 pt18 pt00falsefalsefalse

The topics addressed include the privileging of the literary and the textual over material artifacts as prime sources of evidence in the study of classical rhetoric, the use of rhetorical hermeneutics as a methodology for interpreting past practices, the investigation of feminist methodologies that do not fit into the dominant modes of feminist historiographical work and the examination of archives with a queer eye to better construct nondiscriminatory narratives. Contributors also explore the value of approaching historiography through the lenses of jazz improvisation and complexity theory, and the historiographical method of writing the future in ways that refigure our relationships to time and to ourselves.

Consistently thoughtful and carefully argued, these essays successfully revive the discussion of historiography in rhetoric, inspiring fresh avenues of exploration in the field.

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