

From Birthing to Blogging: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of the Blog “Birth Without Fear”

by Lori Beth De Hertogh

Introduction

As access to the internet has grown, women have begun to use the web—and more specifically, blogs—to create online spaces to promote women’s issues and foster community. A 2002 study by Lisa Guernsey, a writer for *The New York Times*, revealed that between 40-50% of blogs were written by women, but since that time, the number of women participating in the blogosphere has grown. In fact, a 2012 study by Gina Chen published in *Computers in Human Behavior* reports that women are significantly more likely to write blogs than men (172). It is clear that the number of blogs created by women continues to grow and that women now command a significant web presence as bloggers. The increased number of women writing for the web is significant because as the number of women bloggers grows so too does their ability to shape the rhetorical conversations taking place on the web.

One way in which women have begun to influence the rhetoric of the web is through “birthing blogs.” These blogs have responded to a growing trend in which women insist that the modern medical establishment accept natural, non-medicated, and midwife-assisted birthing practices as legitimate. Birthing blogs promote the idea that women’s pregnancies and birthing stories are important sources of information that should be shared in an effort to empower other

women and to foster community. Although there are hundreds of birthing blogs in existence, the blog “Birth Without Fear” (birthwithoutfearblog.com/) is among the best examples of a blog which aims to support women in their birthing practices and to create a space in which women can celebrate their birthing stories and experiences.

In 2009, a woman using the name January created the “Birth Without Fear” blog in an effort to “reach more women and educate them about what birth really should be” (“About Birth Without Fear”). January’s belief, shared by the majority of the blog’s subscribers, is that the medical establishment has largely failed to educate women on the diverse birthing options available to them such as home, water, and intervention-free births. Thus the blog responds to this perceived lack of information by presenting readers with an array of alternative birthing practices intended to empower women and eradicate the fear-based rhetoric surrounding birth. Just as importantly, the blog acts as a public space where women can openly share their birthing experiences through narratives, photos, and videos. These features make the blog an important site of feminist rhetoric because women’s voices are able to promote a woman-centered rhetoric and to create digital networks in which women’s voices are valued.

Considering the vital role that “Birth Without Fear” plays as a source of feminist rhetoric, I offer here a rhetorical analysis by addressing three significant questions: 1.) In what way does the rhetoric of digital storytelling play a role in

building online feminist communities? 2.) How do the visual and multimodal aspects of the blog help women legitimize their stories and create moments of rhetorical witnessing? 3.) By what means does a blog like “Birth Without Fear” act as a site of rhetorical feminist activism in response to censorship? In exploring these questions, I will illustrate the diverse ways in which “Birth Without Fear” promotes a woman- and feminist-centered rhetoric. While there has been a recent surge in research regarding women and blogging (particularly in the fields of communication and the social sciences), there is little focus on the *rhetorical* importance of women’s blogs, especially those devoted to birthing. Rhetorically analyzing these digital spaces is essential; however, as it provides an opportunity to understand how birthing blogs help women share their experiences and in so doing, create important sites of feminist rhetoric.

The Rhetoric of Digital Storytelling

The defining strength of the “Birth Without Fear” blog (known as BWF among the community) is that it creates a digital space where women can share birthing stories and experiences. Studies on blogging by Huang, Shen, Lin, and Chang (2007) as well as by Nardi, Schiano, and Gumbrecht (2004) indicate that women engage in digital storytelling for a number of reasons, but most frequently to build a sense of community by seeking others’ approval and by expressing emotions through narrative. Gina Chen, a researcher in Public Communications at Syracuse University, expands this rationale by noting that “[w]omen blog to

express deeply held emotions, articulate ideas, form and maintain community forums, provide commentary, and document their lives” (172). The women who belong to the BWF blogging community most often use their birthing stories to achieve these societal and personal goals. The process of sharing their narratives helps the women establish an ethos within the community, while also promoting the value of storytelling. This recursive process makes the blog a site of feminist rhetoric because women use digital storytelling to create virtual communication networks to build a sense of community online.

One of the most poignant examples of one women’s birthing story which creates community is revealed in a February 9th, 2012 post in which Jennifer, one of the community participants, explains to readers her birthing experience as well as her desire to have a non-medicated, midwife-assisted birth. Before beginning the birth narrative, however, Jennifer pauses to explain the deep emotions underwriting her desire to tell her story as well as the value she places on storytelling:

We had planned to take pictures to document the whole day. After waiting for so long, I wanted to remember every detail. The pictures didn’t quite happen. So as soon as she came, I had an overwhelming desire to write out the story of Stella’s birth. It took me two and a half weeks, as I was overcome with deep emotion just recalling the details of, what has been thus far, the most momentous day in my life. But I finally got it all written down. The words don’t seem like enough, but they’re what I have. And I

want to share them; that day was too beautiful, too miraculous for its story not to be told. (“Natural, Unmedicated, Midwife Assisted Hospital Birth”)

Jennifer’s disclosure that her birthing experience was “too beautiful, too miraculous for its story not to be told” underscores the role that storytelling plays as a means of personal expression and community-building. Because the rhetorical space of the blog values individual testimony, Jennifer’s narrative initiates her into the community and reinforces the value the community places on natural childbirth.

Jennifer’s narrative also allows her to celebrate her child’s birth in a public space where other women can provide support and positive feedback. This recursive process allows the BWF community to reinforce their belief that natural, non-medicated child-birthing is ideal. In fact, one user, Alena, comments that:

Wow... This story brought tears to my eyes, and when she was crowning I stopped breathing. What an amazing, beautiful, precious story!! It was just what I needed to read today – I’ll be having my own natural, unmedicated hospital birth with a midwife (and hopefully my doula – she just had her own baby in December, so we’ll see how things go in April when I have mine), and lately I’ve been feeling unsure and unsettled about everything. I needed to read this – thank you thank you thank you for sharing!! Stella is beautiful (“Natural, Unmedicated, Midwife Assisted Hospital Birth”)

Because blogs, unlike print media, are ever-evolving, community-oriented spaces, Jennifer’s readers are able to respond to her story and strengthen the

idea that natural childbirth is ideal. Alena, for instance, uses Jennifer's story as an opportunity to share her own thoughts on natural birth, saying that she'll be having her "own natural, unmedicated hospital birth with a midwife" in the months to come ("Natural, Unmedicated, Midwife Assisted Hospital Birth"). Sharing stories helps these women create a discourse community in which storytelling and disclosure binds the community and strengthens their devotion to natural birthing practices.

The ability of users to comment on Jennifer's post also reveals the social nature of digital storytelling where narratives act as centerpieces around which the blog users interact and create meaning collectively. In this sense, the relationship between narrator and audience underscores the fact that digital storytelling is not a solitary act, but a social one (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht). Mark Federman, a researcher at the University of Toronto, highlights the social nature of blogs, pointing out that "[u]nlike normal conversation that is essentially private but interactive, and unlike broadcast that is inherently not interactive but public, blogging is interactive, public and, of course, networked—that is to say, interconnected" (qtd. in MacDougall 83). Because Jennifer's post is on a blog, it makes the storytelling process interactive, allowing both writer and participants to expand and complicate the narrative, while simultaneously building community.

The value the blog subscribers place on storytelling plays an important role in reinforcing the exigency of "Birth Without Fear" (BWF). Unlike some blogs in

which an “individual blogger has control of the space and the administrative permissions to delete readers’ comments for any reason” (Ratliff 128), BWF is a relatively open forum where users can share narratives and comments with minimal censorship. This open-forum approach is inherently feminist as it decentralizes January, the blog owner, as an authority figure. January even claims that “I truly believe women can learn much from one another and that sharing and support is vital for women” (“About BWF”). January’s stance that women can “learn much from one another” subverts a rhetorical hierarchy in which some voices (or even her own voice) are more important than others; by using a community-centered rhetoric to describe the exigency of the blog, she creates an ethos in which all women’s stories, ideas, and perspectives are valued. In this sense, the women belonging to the blog engage in a heterarchical, rather than hierarchical, social composing process in which each woman’s voice carries equal weight (Joyce and Tringham 330).

The concept of social composing, however, is unique to digital environments. Although multiple individuals may author a print text, it is only in an online space like a blog where such a large and diverse number of individuals can work collaboratively to create a woman-and community-centered rhetoric. Because the blog is socially composed, subscribers create their own sense of rhetorical feminist agency in which language plays a powerful role in promoting women’s issues, particularly regarding birthing.

Feminist Rhetorical Witnessing

Yet another significant way in which women unfold their stories on the “Birth Without Fear” blog is through photographs. Although text plays an essential role in the storytelling process, the combination of textual and visual rhetoric helps writers legitimize their narratives, while also giving viewers the opportunity to *witness* childbirth. The relationship between rhetor and witness is significant as it creates a dynamic scenario in which both the storyteller and witness collaborate to exchange ideas and experiences. This recursive process of feminist witnessing creates a powerful bond of shared experience among women in the community, particularly in a digital space where individuals may have no personal knowledge of one another.

In recent years, the rhetorical significance of witnessing has gained the attention of feminist scholars. Wendy Hesford, for example, argues that in composition classrooms both teachers and students should recognize the powerful rhetorical role that images and witnessing play on cultural perceptions of groups and individuals. In “Feminist Witnessing and Social Difference: The Trauma of Heterosexual Otherness in Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*” Ilya Parkins uses feminist theory to analyze issues of witnessing and remembrance. Although these texts present examples in which women are negatively impacted by witnessing, they still provide a framework in which to begin to think about the

positive ways in which witnessing can affect groups or individuals, particularly in digital environments.

The rhetorical situation present when an individual witnesses a story, however, is complex. As Judy Iseke, a scholar at Lakehead University, indicates there are three levels of witnessing that must be considered:

A first level is when a person is a witness to oneself in his or her own recollections of an experience or event. A second level of witnessing is being a witness within the process of sharing testimony about an experience or event. The final level is being a witness in the process of witnessing the testimonies of others. (311)

Each of the three levels outlined above take place on the “Birth Without Fear” blog as both narrators and witnesses engage in the storytelling process. In a February 2nd, 2012 post a young mother named Kacey shares a childbirth story where images support her narrative and create powerful moments of witnessing. Her post includes a range of images from the induction of labor to the birth itself to pictures of the placenta and birth cord. In Kacey’s story, each level of rhetorical witnessing is present: the first level is experienced as Kacey reflects on her birthing experience; the second level becomes visible as readers view and comment on Kacey’s photographs; finally, the third level is realized as I—a researcher, writer, and viewer of the blog—witness others experience Kacey’s photographic testimony.

The rhetorical significance of this process is profound as it reveals the interdependent and recursive nature of visual rhetoric in digital environments. More specifically, the fact that Kacey's photographs are posted on a blog (rather than on a webpage) allows viewers to act not only as witnesses, but also as participants who help expand the rhetoric of blog as they post comments and ask questions. In fact, several individuals who view Kacey's post comment directly on the photographs in her story. One user writes:

Thank you so much for sharing your beautiful story. So wonderfully written... I felt like I was right there with you! And the pictures.... wow, I am hoping that with baby #3 we get as good of pictures as you have. Something to be cherished forever! ("Birthed Without Fear with Induction due to Kidney Problems, Gas and Air, an Epidural and a Great Birth Team").

The blog reader's perception that she is "right there with" the narrator emphasizes that this is not a passive act of witnessing, but a dynamic one. This recursive process allows the viewer to experience a sense of empathy with the writer, something which is achieved primarily through images, rather than text. From a feminist rhetorical standpoint, this moment is significant because it emphasizes the central role that images play in reinforcing a sense of lived experience and in building community, traits specific to storytelling in digital environments.

While images play an important role in helping women create powerful moments of rhetorical witnessing, they also help women create visual texts which articulate feminist rhetorical agency. Because the blog community defies what it perceives as a societal and medical rhetoric of fear regarding childbirth, some women choose to document their birthing stories through photographs and videos in an attempt to subvert this rhetoric.

Stacey, a contributor to the blog, for instance, writes that “I haven’t had a chance to write out my story but I have a beautiful video to capture the beauty of my birth” (“Midwife Assisted Home Water Birth Video, Surrounded by Family and Friends”). By sharing her birthing experience through video, rather than text, she literally *shows* that childbirth can be a beautiful, rather than fearful process. This is especially central to Stacey’s story as she chose to have a non-traditional, home water birth, a practice generally discouraged by the medical establishment.

The important relationship between rhetor and witness is also demonstrated as several blogreaders comment on how important it is for mothers to show, rather than tell, their birthing stories. One user, Bonnie, writes:

This is such a beautiful video. It is inspiring and loving and should be shown to all the people who do not understand about home birth. A hospital birth is never this uninterrupted and calm. What I want for ALL women is that they educate themselves about birth by reading “good” birth books (not the fear based kind with the “catchy” title) and watch videos

exactly like this one. Also they should attend meetings where others who have gone on this journey can share their experiences and their joy. (“Midwife Assisted Home Water Birth Video, Surrounded by Family and Friends”)

Bonnie’s comment that “ALL women” should “watch videos exactly like this one” underscores the power of feminist rhetorical witnessing. Because images and videos, unlike text, seem more verifiable to viewers, they help legitimize Stacey’s story and reinforce the blog’s rhetoric that natural birthing experiences are not only possible, but ideal.

It is essential to note that Stacey’s use of a video to subvert a rhetoric of fear associated with non-traditional childbirth is possible only because her story is delivered multimodally. Unlike a print medium in which Stacey’s narrative would be delivered via text, she is instead able to visually relay her experiences, thus creating moments of feminist witnessing. This increased access to rhetorical agency reflects what Laura Gurak and Smiljana Antonijevic in their piece “Digital Rhetoric and Public Discourse” argue are some of the benefits of digital rhetoric, including speed, reach, interactivity, and collaboration and community (499-501). Because Stacey’s story unfolds in an online forum, she is able to utilize each of these unique rhetorical forms and in so doing, create feminist rhetorical agency.

While the thrust of this essay supports the notion that blogging sites like “Birth Without Fear” increase women’s access to rhetorical agency, it is also important

to note that these spaces can sometimes unintentionally make women who are unable to have natural childbirths feel disempowered. Many of the bloggers who share their stories through visual narratives portray childbirth in a romanticized way, often showing neatly edited images of supportive family members, the birthing mother in carefully selected clothes, and setting their narratives to uplifting music. Rarely do these videos reveal moments of sadness, regret, or unmanageable physical pain. They instead celebrate the fact that the mother, whose dream is to have a natural childbirth, has finally experienced this moment at long last.

While a mother's desire to share her birthing story in such a way is certainly understandable, these types of narratives can sometimes inadvertently cause individuals who are unable to have idealized births feel a sense of loss or disappointment. During the early stages of my research for this article, for instance, I spoke with a female colleague about the blog. She quickly commented that idealized stories like those presented on birthing blogs made her feel as though her own childbirth (which was not intervention-free) was perceived as less valuable by natural birthing communities. From this perspective, the rhetorical act of witnessing can have the unintended consequence of "othering" some viewers. While individuals who are able to achieve their desired birthing experiences are certainly not culpable for such "othering," it is important to note that these scenarios have the potential to negatively impact certain individuals.

Censorship, Blogging, and Feminist Rhetorical Activism

While the “Birth Without Fear” blog functions as a digital space for women to share and witness each other’s stories and experiences, it is also a site of rhetorical feminist activism. Traditionally scholars associate activism with organized protests and collective action, but Stacy Sowards and Valerie Renegar in their work “Reconceptualizing Rhetorical Activism in Contemporary Feminist Contexts” argue that feminist activism also includes “feminist identity, sharing stories, and resisting stereotypes and labels” (58). The BWF blog utilizes each of these forms of feminist activism in an effort to subvert internet censorship of photographs associated with childbirth.

The BWF blog has consistently dealt with issues of internet censorship on its sister site, the BWF Facebook page. In a February 8th, 2012 post January informed the BWF audience that Facebook censored an image of a placenta. To her chagrin, Facebook argued that the image was a “violation of their ethics” (“Again...BWF Banned From Facebook: The Offensive Placenta”). Facebook administrators promptly removed the photo and banned January from posting for twenty-four hours, with the added threat that if she posted another photo like it, her entire page might be erased.

January’s response to Facebook’s censorship was to repost the picture of the placenta on the BWF blog and to create a private BWF forum where members can “share openly and safely” their stories and images (“Again...BWF Banned

From Facebook: The Offensive Placenta”). Furthermore, January argued that internet censorship would not be tolerated by the BWF community and that she would continue to provide a censor-free forum for women to share and discuss birth:

This has actually been on my mind lately, as I watch other natural and birth pages put in time out or detention and even scolded or deleted. I'm not surprised it is my turn. The thing is, this is MY blog and it is not going anywhere. BWF is now a strong community of women that inform and support each other in TTC, pregnancy, labor, birth, post partum, breastfeeding, parenting, womanhood and more! (“Again...BWF Banned From Facebook: The Offensive Placenta”)

Rather than allow Facebook's censorship to stymie the group's ability to share images, January uses it as an opportunity to create a rhetoric of feminist activism, arguing that “this is MY blog and it is not going anywhere” (“Again...BWF Banned From Facebook: The Offensive Placenta”). In doing so, she reinforces Sowards and Renegar's idea that contemporary feminist rhetorical agency is often guided by the need to create feminist identities and to share stories. In this case, the BWF community's sense of identity stems from their ability to share birthing images and narratives without censorship.

Over the years, January and the blog's subscribers have continued to raise awareness regarding internet censorship and childbirth. In an April 9th, 2012 post, for instance, January bemoans the fact that Facebook banned yet another

series of birth-related photographs, contending that “Birth is a normal part of life. Trying to cover it up, hide it, ban it and censor is ludicrous and I won’t allow it. So, if vaginas and nipples offend you when in the context of birth and breastfeeding, hit the ‘red X’ now and walk away! You’ve been warned” (“More Birth, Breastfeeding and Placenta Pictures Removed From Facebook”). Her challenge is that the photographs were posted in a private, closed Facebook forum (which requires that participants request access to the group) and therefore should be permitted. January’s response to Facebook’s censorship was to once again repost the photographs on the BWF blog.

January’s ability to subvert Facebook’s censorship by relocating the images from one digital space to another begs an important question: in what ways does the internet create moments of rhetorical feminist activism that are unique to the web? Digital spaces, unlike print media, are initially easier to censor as site administrators can simply remove materials at their discretion; they are ultimately more difficult to control, however, because users have a multitude of ways in which to redistribute text and images. In January’s case, because she is the administrator of her own blog, she was able to redistribute the so-called “offensive” images from Facebook to the BWF blog. For the BWF community, this move is significant because it allows them to control the rhetoric and images used to represent childbirth. It also creates a sense of solidarity among the community, something important in an online forum where rhetors and audiences may have little to no physical contact with one another.

Accompanying January's reposting of the photographs was a barrage of responses from the blog community against the censorship of the images. One subscriber, Jennifer, exclaims: "these pictures are amazing and wonderful. how people can report them on Facebook is just ridiculous. They are such beautiful pictures and amazing xx" ("More Birth, Breastfeeding and Placenta Pictures Removed From Facebook"). Another writer, Lynette, adds:

Thank you for sharing these in spite of the ridiculous people on FB. If they don't want to see childbirth pictures, then why on earth are they a part of your "closed group"????? I don't get it either. They either do not have children yet, or they are jealous that they didn't have a beautiful birth experience. Either way, it is very immature of them and of FB for caving to their childish demands to remove the pics. They're beautiful! ("More Birth, Breastfeeding and Placenta Pictures Removed From Facebook")

Comments like those outlined above play an essential role in reinforcing the exigency of the community by supporting the idea that women's bodies during the childbirth process are not vulgar or offensive, but natural. These women's contributions (in the form of photos, comments, and stories) allow them to create a feminist rhetorical space in which they "rewrite" the negative the rhetoric surrounding women's birthing bodies. Because individual women's voices are valued within the space of the blog, these women both create and enforce moments of rhetorical feminist activism and agency.

While the BWF blog is an important site of rhetorical feminist activism, it is worth noting that birthing blogs also have the potential to undermine and disempower women, especially blogs which support an “all or nothing” approach regarding natural births. In fact, over the years the “Birth Without Fear” blog has often become a site of controversy regarding the rhetoric used to categorize and describe women’s birthing choices. In an April 27th, 2012 January takes up this issue, telling readers that:

You have a few natural birthing communities that freak out at women who have interventions or cesarean sections. They exclaim the mother was not patient enough, strong enough or educated. When a mother shares a loss, they are shunned. Not always because other women want to hurt a loss mom, but because their own fears of loss in childbirth cause them to do so. (“Supporting Women in All Birthing Choices...Is it Possible?”)

January, however, uses the space of the blog to promote an open, supportive approach which acknowledges all women’s choices in birth:

To those that are concerned, I want you to know where I am at. I really want to bridge a gap ... and there most definitely is one. I don't want loss moms¹ or moms who had crappy natural births to feel the only place they have to turn is a really negative, hateful source (that I in no way support). While I still have my passion and opinions on birth options and choices, including UC, VBACing, home births, breech, etc., I also want mothers

¹ The phrase “loss moms” refers to mothers who have lost children during or after childbirth.

who had bad experiences or who don't agree feel welcome and not shunned.

This is not an easy thing to do and not for the light at heart. This is something for someone with a big heart, who wants to do right and is willing to be a leader. I am very serious about trying to be an example. Trying to be a natural birth community that is open and accepting. I know that no matter what I do, I will have people not like me, what I stand for or what I'm trying to accomplish. That is something I have accepted. I hope that many of you can be understanding and patient with me. ♥ ~January (Mrs. BWF).(April 27th, 2012 Facebook post)

January's claim that she wants to maintain "a natural birth community that is open and accepting" and that does not make some women feel "shunned" reveals her devotion to feminist rhetorical activism as she openly supports all women's choices and defies a rhetoric of non-acceptance promoted by some childbirth communities. The importance of January's stance regarding this issue becomes especially noteworthy when we consider the fact that blogging communities thrive on an individual's ability to remain anonymous. Although anonymity creates opportunities for women to share their viewpoints regarding natural births anonymously, it also creates situations in which some individuals openly criticize and undermine other women's choices without consequence. The fact that January, as the leader of the "Birth Without Fear" community, has

tackled this complex issue in an open and supportive way clearly reveals her devotion to feminist practices and values.

Conclusion

The processes of digital storytelling, witnessing, and rhetorical activism each play a key role in making the “Birth Without Fear” blog a dynamic site of feminist rhetoric. While I have treated my analysis of each of these aspects of the blog separately, it is important to note that they overlap in significant ways. Digital storytelling, for instance, helps create moments of feminist witnessing, particularly in a multimodal forum like a blog. In turn, digital storytelling and feminist rhetorical witnessing are in and of themselves tenets of feminist rhetorical activism, whether overt or subtle.

While each of these facets of the “Birth Without Fear” blog make it an important nexus of feminist rhetoric, what ultimately does this analysis mean for rhetorical studies? Although my analysis responds to a dearth of research regarding feminist rhetorical voices in digital environments, it also brings to light ways in which a dynamic community like “Birth Without Fear” can create a space in which women from all walks of life can gather information, form friendships, and share stories. Just as importantly, the blog functions as a public space where women’s voices regarding birthing are a major influence in both creating and shaping rhetorical conversations about women’s bodies taking place on the web.

Works Cited

Birth Without Fear. (January 15, 2012). <http://birthwithoutfearblog.com>

“About BFW.” 15 January 2012. Retrieved from

<http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/about-bwf/>. Web.

———. (February 7, 2012) “More Birth, Breastfeeding and Placenta Pictures

Removed From Facebook.” Retrieved from

[http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/04/09/birth-pictures-removed-from-](http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/04/09/birth-pictures-removed-from-Facebook)

Facebook. Web.

———. (February 8, 2012) “Again...BWF Banned From Facebook: The

Offensive Placenta” Retrieved from

[http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/02/08/bwf-banned-from-Facebook-](http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/02/08/bwf-banned-from-Facebook-an-offensive-placenta/)

[an-offensive-placenta/](http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/02/08/bwf-banned-from-Facebook-an-offensive-placenta/). Web.

———. (March 14, 2012) “Supporting Women in All Birthing Choices...Is It

Possible?” Retrieved from

[http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/03/14/supporting-women-in-all-](http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/03/14/supporting-women-in-all-birthing-choices-is-it-possible)

[birthing-choices-is-it-possible](http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/03/14/supporting-women-in-all-birthing-choices-is-it-possible). Web.

———. (April 27, 2012). *Facebook.com*. Retrieved from

<http://www.Facebook.com/birthwithoutfear/posts/385668451477715>. Web.

Chen, Gina M. "Why Do Women Write Personal Blogs? Satisfying Needs for Self-Disclosure and Affiliation Tell part of the Story." *Computers in Human Behavior* 28 (2012): 171–80. Print.

Guernsey, Lisa. "Telling All Online: It's a Man's World (Isn't It?)." *The New York Times*. Web. 5 April 2012.

Gurak, Laura A. and Smiljana Antonijevic. "Digital Rhetoric and Public Discourse." *The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Kirt H. Wilson, and Rosa A. Eberly. London: Sage, 2008. 497-08. Print.

Hesford, Wendy S. "Documenting Violations: Rhetorical Witnessing and the Spectacle of Distant Suffering as Pedagogy." *Teaching Rhetorica: Theory, Pedagogy, Practice*. Eds. Kate Ronald and Joy Ritchie. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006. 93-13. Print.

Huang, C. Y., Shen, Y. Z., Lin, H. X., & Chang, S. H. "Bloggers' Motivations and Behaviors: A Model." *Journal of Advertising Research* 47 (2007): 472–484. Print.

Iseke, Judy M. "Indigenous Digital Storytelling in Video: Witnessing with Alma Desjarlais." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 44.3 (2011): 311-29. Web.

Jennifer. (February 9, 2012). "Natural, Unmedicated, Midwife Assisted Hospital Birth Story." Retrieved from <http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/02/09/natural-unmedicated-midwife-assissted-hospital-birth-story>. Web.

Joyce, Rosemary and Ruth Tringham. "Feminist Adventures in Hypertext." *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14.3 (2007): 328-58. Print.

Kacey. (February 22, 2012). "Birthed Without Fear with Induction due to Kidney Problems, Gas and Air, an Epidural and a Great Birth Team." Retrieved from <http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/02/22/birthed-without-fear-with-induction-due-to-kidney-problems-gas-and-air-an-epidural-and-a-great-birth-team/>. Web.

MacDougall, Robert C. *Dignation: Identity, Organization, and Public Life in the Age of Small Digital Devices and Big Digital Domains*. Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2012. Print.

Nardi, Bonnie, Diane Schiano, and Michelle Gumbrecht. "Blogging as Social Activity, or, Would You Let 900 Million People Read Your Diary?" Paper presented at Proceedings of Computer Supported Cooperative Work in Chicago, IL. (2004): n. page. Print.

Parkins, Ilya. "Feminist Witnessing and Social Difference: The Trauma of Heterosexual Otherness in Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*." *Women's Studies: An Inter-disciplinary Journal* 36.2 (2007): 95-16. Print.

Sowards, Stacy and Valerie Renegar. "Reconceptualizing Rhetorical Activism in Contemporary Feminist Contexts." *The Howard Journal of Communications* 17 (2006):57-74. Print.

Stacey. "Midwife Assisted Home Water Birth Video, Surrounded by Family and Friends." Retrieved from <http://birthwithoutfearblog.com/2012/01/13/midwife-assisted-home-water-birth-video-surrounded-by-family-and-friends>. Web.