enculturation

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Rhetoric/Composition: Intersections/Impasses/Differends

The second edition of this double issue of *Enculturation*, "Rhetoric/Composition: Intersections/Impasses/Differends," speaks to the first through articles and responses that engage with the writers and texts of *Enculturation* 5.1. At the same time, the articles and response/essays in *Enculturation* 5.2 bring their own messages to bear on current issues in rhetoric and composition studies, geographies of writing, academic privacy, activity and genre theory, pathos-ethics, and disciplinarity, among many others. Just as the first edition demonstrated that rhetoric resists being framed, resists staying where we put it, this second edition makes much of this discovery by focusing on the place of rhetoric.

The texts published here begin by exploring the place of rhetoric in the material spaces where we live and work but ultimately address rhetoric in less mappable spaces, cyberspace with its challenge of electracy and the human space of emotions, feelings, pain and even joy.

Lorien Goodman's article, "Skid Row Notes, the Place of Rhetoric," describes her experience with Service Learning on Skid Row in Los Angeles, where she has come "to take seriously the rhetorical nature of our built environment and the need to actively engage our situatedness in material, physical space" (Goodman). Goodman tells us that "place matters," and she claims that rhetoric calls us out of our classrooms into public spaces. Responding to Susan Jarratt's effort to find rhetoric, to locate it outside the classroom in her essay, "Rhetoric in Crisis?: The View from Here," Goodman concludes that rhetoric is "always on the move, always out and about."

K.J. Peters returns us to the composition classroom in "A New Rhetorical Topography: How the Composition Classroom Became the University Homeroom and Where to Draw the Line." Peters describes the classroom as a compromised space taken over by the university to serve as its "homeroom," a space subject to the encroachment of a kind of "administrative right of way" that underscores the question of who owns composition (Peters). He responds to Crowley's article, "Composition is not Rhetoric," and its claim that the Arnoldian humanists pushed rhetoric out of their classrooms in an effort to cultivate well-read intellectuals. For Peters, this historical encroachment on the composition classroom, ensuring its status as homeroom, should be addressed and defended against by way of the American Association of University Professors and that body's statements on professorial privacy and academic freedom.

Elizabeth Wardle's essay, "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces," takes us out of the composition classroom and academic writing and into the workplace and the writing demands that are made there. Working out of activity and genre theory, Wardle addresses

the problem noted by Bill Bolin in his essay, "The Role of the Media in Distinguishing Composition from Rhetoric", that the media influences the public perception of rhetoric and composition. For Wardle, these media complaints should inspire us to re-understand writing as an activity that is "bound up with issues of identity and authority" that can be particularly problematic for new workers writing in the workplace (Wardle).

David Metzger's, "The Call for Rhetoric," addresses the rhetoric in the editors' original call for papers and the feelings attendant on that call. Working to distinguish unnamed feelings from named emotions, Metzger responds to Susan Jarratt's essay and Victor Vitanza's article, "Abandoned to Writing: Notes Toward Several Provocations," and claims that "emotions tell us and others what to do; feelings do not" (Metzger). He then takes an ethical turn toward a pathos-ethics by claiming that we may prefer emotions to feelings because they help to initiate action and thus, in some measure, limit our responsibility to the other. He elaborates on and problematizes this responsibility through his readings of Christine Farris's essay, "Where Rhetoric Meets the Road: First-Year Composition" and Kathleen Welch's essay, "Compositionality, Rhetoricity, and Electricity: A Partial History of Some Composition and Rhetoric Studies."

Janet M. Atwill's response/essay, "Art and Disciplinarity," suggests that Enculturation 5.1 "recapitulates ancient disputes over rhetoric's province" (Atwill), which leads her to assert that composition studies has a historical relationship with rhetoric that is not simply tied to composition's desire for what Farris calls "disciplinary pedigree" (Atwill). Maintaining that rhetoric gave compositionists a way to explain and answer questions about their practice, Atwill offers a nuanced discussion of the role that the classical conception of art plays in breaking down institutional binaries like subject matter and skill, binaries typically attributed to rhetoric and composition, respectively.

Daniel Smith's, "Of Headaches and other Illnesses," invokes Nietzsche's words to support his claim that "sickness is instructive" and claims that Vitanza's article is headache inducing with a purpose, to challenge those of us in rhetoric and composition to realize that programmatic change from within is impossible. Conversely, Smith advocates affirmative "practices of experimentation" and maintains, contra Vitanza, that "the only way 'out' is through" (Smith).

Ryan Claycomb and Rachel Riedner's essay, "Cultural Studies, Rhetoric Studies, and Composition: Toward an Anti-Disciplinary Nexus," claims that the specter of cultural studies haunts this issue of *Enculturation*, pointing to Sharon Crowley's doubt as to cultural studies' potential as a serious "political intervention," and Ratcliffe's contrary assertion that "cultural studies scholarship . . . must be made overt" (Ratcliffe "The Current State of Composition Scholar/Teachers: Is Rhetoric Gone or Just Hiding Out?"). Disagreeing with Crowley, but preferring an alliance to a turf battle, Claycomb and Riedner call for a nexus of the "modes of inquiry" particular to rhetoric, composition, and cultural studies "in service of an anti-disciplinary politics in the classroom and in our

scholarship" (Claycomb and Riedner).

In "Translating (Within) the Spaces Between Rhetoric and Composition," Eve Wiederhold, like David Metzger, picks up on the feelings emanating from the *Enculturation* 5.1 call and essays, noting in particular an "anxiety about 'belonging.'" Responding to Pete Vandenberg's essay, "Conjunction Function Reduction: A Too-Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition," Wiederhold notes that institutional ties to the German university model with its insistence on "empirically demonstrable truth claims" have marginalized rhetoric/composition scholars in English studies (Wiederhold). To address this marginalized state, Wiederhold suggests "that the rhetoric/composition encounter act as a testimonial to the work of translation, work that is ongoing and itself not fully translatable" (Wiederhold).

In "Returns of the Question," John Muckelbauer addresses the question, "What is Rhetoric?" and thereby implicitly addresses the editors and each contributor in *Enculturation* 5.1. Noting that this question is not new, he metaphorically stands before it and acknowledges that we can honestly answer that question "A" AND "not A," verifying Wiederhold's claim concerning rhetoric and truth claims. But Muckelbauer's point, much like Wiederhold's notion of ongoing acts of translation, is that we are never done answering the question, and that the repeated practice of answering, may, in itself, be an affirmative act.

George Pullman's "From Greek to Geek" notes with Krista Ratcliffe that history of rhetoric panels at the CCCC's seem to be diminishing, and attributes that diminishment, as his paper title suggests, to the growing interest in new academic issues and venues: the politics of untenured composition instructors, the movement to do away with first-year writing or remove it from English departments, popular culture studies, and his own new interest, electronic forums for writing. Choosing between learning classical Greek or html, George chooses the latter and argues that by sharing our own research choices we can better recognize what is happening in our field.

Following Ratcliffe, Phillip D. Casteel is on a search for rhetoric in his response, "Locating Rhetoric: Rhetoric, Alive and Well," and he finds it inside and outside the confines of the university in what he terms "private spheres" or language networks. Borrowing Ratcliffe's postmodern definition of rhetoric, "the study of how we use language and how language uses us," Casteel rather gleefully leaps over disciplinary boundaries and locates rhetoric in places that range from the words of critical theorists to conversations among friends, from the "rhythmic epideictic writing" of the "electric" Cornel West to the "private colleges that continue to teach eloquence and reason in the pulpit," and from literature classrooms to classrooms in rhetoric and composition (Casteel). Declaring, along with Ratcliffe, that rhetoric is "alive and well," Casteel's essay reflects not just hope but a kind of joy in the abundance of rhetoric, if one knows how to look for it.

In another hopeful and anticipatory turn, Michele Shauf's piece, "Where

are We Going and What Shall We Take with Us?" reminds us that this journal is an electronic one occupying a virtual space we are only just beginning to know. In agreement with Kathleen Welch's positive predictions for composition-rhetoric, Shauf feels confident that rhetoric has a bright future because, for her, it is our field that has the best tools "for making meaning with the new technologies and media, whatever they will be" (Shauf).

The reviews appearing in *Enculturation* 5.2 are not to be missed, each one adding exponentially to the discussions taking place in the articles and response essays.

David M. Rieder offers us a "Review of Nedra M. Reynolds' *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference* that greatly augments the discussion of the place of rhetoric in most of the essays in *Enculturation* 5.2.

The reviews by Peter Goggin and Spencer Schaffner provide glosses on genre and activity theory: Goggin in his essay, "Getting the 'Big Picture' on Activity and Genre Theory," a review of Charles Bazerman and David Russell's *Writing Selves/Writing Societies: Research from Activity Perspectives*; and Schaffner in his review of Amy J. Devitt's book, *Writing Genres*.

Finally, Michael Pennell offers "The Labor of Composition," his review of two books, *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers*, Marc Bousquet, Tony Scott, and Leo Parascondola, editors, and Margaret J. *Marshall's Response to Reform: Composition and the Professionalization of Teaching*.

In his book, *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*, Gregory L. Ulmer asks "How to improve the world?" and maintains that one way to do so involves dealing with substantive social and civic issues on the internet (1). By continuing to ask the question of rhetoric's place in relation to the teaching of writing, I hope this special double issue of "Rhetoric/Composition: Intersections/ Impasses/Differends" has made some small contribution to that worthy goal.

Works Cited

Ulmer, Gregory L. *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*. New York: Longman, 2003.

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