Works Cited


Reviewed by Maureen Daly Goggin, Arizona State University

*Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* by Janice Lauer is published in Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition (ed. Charles Bazerman), a monograph series developed to promote comprehensive but compact surveys of scholarship, teaching, and practice on major topics in rhetoric and composition. Organized into seven ambitious and packed chapters, Lauer’s book delivers on the promise of this new series. Indeed, as the first monograph in it, Lauer has set a high bar for all other authors to follow.

The initial two, as well as the final two, chapters provide readers with instructional scaffolding for understanding the complex theoretical and pedagogical grounds of rhetorical invention that Lauer reviews in the middle three chapters. In her first chapter, Lauer explicates the triadic framework that guides her discussion of invention in chapters 3 and 4, namely the contested scholarly and pedagogical positions concerning the nature, purpose, and epistemology of rhetorical invention. As she rightly points out, theoretical and scholarly debates over these issues form a contentious space that in turn has important implications for both what is taught in composition and how writing is taught. The second chapter provides definitions of key classical, modern and contemporary terms related to invention that appear throughout the other chapters. For example, under classical terms, Lauer explicates such crucial Greek and Latin keywords as *kairos*, *dissoi logoi*, *topoi*, *stasis*, and *status*. Relevant modern terms include *epistemic*, *hermeneutic practices*, and *heuristics*. Those identified with postmodernism, poststructuralism and cultural studies include *intertextuality*, *signifying practices*, *subject*, and *cultural codes*. As a primer for those new to the study of rhetorical invention, these beginning chapters offer a useful context for Lauer’s comprehensive and fair-handed review of competing — and often contradictory — theories, scholarship, and pedagogies of rhetorical invention from ancient through contemporary times.

Chapter 3 traces the complex history of divergent rhetorical theories, practices, and pedagogies of invention from fifth century BCE up through the
nineteenth century, and is organized into two major sections: theoretical issues and pedagogical issues. Each of the major sections is further organized according to historical periods typical of histories of rhetoric: Classical Greek, Classical Roman, Second Sophistic, Medieval, Renaissance, and eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Within each time period, Lauer treats major, canonical rhetorical figures. For example, under Classical Greek, the Sophists (primarily Gorgias), Plato, and Aristotle take center stage; under Classical Roman, Cicero and Quintilian; under the Second Sophistic, Medieval and Renaissance, Boethius, Augustine, Basevorn, Cassiodorus, Wilson, Ramus and Bacon; under eighteenth century, Blair, Campbell, Smith, and Siscar; under nineteenth century, Whately. As these examples suggest, Lauer’s focus is squarely on the Western rhetorical tradition with only three minor exceptions: references to fifth-century Chinese scholar Liu Xie, medieval Arab commentators on Aristotle, and Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zi. Moreover, Lauer’s treatment of women rhetors and rhetoricians from the classical period up through the end of the nineteenth century calls attention to their marginalized positions throughout history—subject positions that situate them as separate and unequal to their male counterparts. At the end of each historical section a separate paragraph titled “Subject Positions” lists women rhetors from that time period along with relevant scholarship on these female figures. These separate but not equal sections serve as a powerful reminder that much work is yet to be done to incorporate women more fully into the manly canon of Western rhetoric.

What makes this book so valuable to scholars and students, however, is that Lauer admirably weaves a review of landmark scholarship on the canonical rhetorical theorists to show how just as there is divergence among rhetorical theories at any given point in time, so too is there great divergence among how scholars approach and treat these various figures and theories across time. That is, just as rhetorical theorists disagree about the nature, purpose, and epistemology of invention, so too do the scholars who study these historical figures. Thus, Lauer picks up disparate historical and scholarly strands to create a readable picture of the complex theoretical terrain of rhetorical invention as it participated in the waxing and waning of rhetoric within and throughout the centuries.

In the second half of chapter 3, Lauer circles back through the theorists treated in the first half to review pedagogical issues related to their theories of invention along with the scholarship on these issues. For this part of the chapter, she focuses on the treatment of (or lack of attention to) four pedagogical factors: art, imitation, practice, and natural ability. By art, Lauer means something akin to Aristotle’s definition of an artist as one who knows her knowing, and thus, something that can be taught. Pedagogies that are informed by this perspective promote the teaching of strategies for invention. By imitation, Lauer means pedagogies that promote imitating models as a way to teach writing. As she notes, “the popularity of contemporary readers testifies to the longevity of this pedagogy” (45). By practice, Lauer means pedagogies that promote frequent writing as a method for learning to write. And by natural ability, Lauer means pedagogies that “provide
encouraging contexts, assignments that motivate students, feedback on completed texts or drafts, but avoid offering strategies or direct instruction on invention” (45). Lauer points out, and then demonstrates, that pedagogies throughout, and within, time have focused on one or more of these to the exclusion of the others, with the rare pedagogy entertaining all four.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus respectively on theoretical and pedagogical issues on rhetorical invention in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, especially as these relate to the field of rhetoric and composition as practiced in departments of English. Given the lowly state of rhetoric in general in departments of English until the middle of the twentieth century, these chapters deal primarily with the revival and rise of rhetorical invention from the 1960s on. Chapter 4 divides the last century into three major periods: the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, and the mid-1980s to the new millennium. The first section is given over to exploring the differences in the natures, purposes, and epistemologies of the groundbreaking work of Rohman and Wlecke; Corbett; and Young, Becker, and Pike. The second section reviews the landmark—albeit contested—scholarship on rhetorical invention in cognitive rhetoric, philosophical rhetoric, classical rhetoric, tagmemic rhetoric, and epistemic rhetoric. The last section examines such divergent scholarship on invention as conducted in writing in the disciplines, social construction, socio-cognitive rhetoric, critical rhetoric, cultural critique, feminist studies, hermeneutics, and deconstruction, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. This chapter thus reveals the current fertile ground of rhetorical invention as a hotbed of debate over its scope, purposes, and role in creating/circulating meaning.

In chapter 5, Lauer explores five issues in the teaching of rhetorical invention. First, she examines the pedagogy of invention in relation to the four factors of art, imitation, practice and natural ability, showing how one or more of these serve as the starting points for different pedagogies. Second, she explicates over a dozen strategies of invention typically taught in writing classrooms, placing them along a continuum that stretches from algorithmic (rule-bound) to heuristic (strategies to encourage but not guarantee results) to aleatory (chance-based) practices. Familiar to many readers, these strategies include, for example, journaling, freewriting, the Burkean pentad, tagmemics, the double-entry notebook, and collaborative planning. Third, she reviews the debate over whether invention is an individual or a social act. Fourth, she examines the dispute over whether invention is a productive or hermeneutical act or a combination of the two. She closes with a consideration of the debates over whether or not invention is an epistemic endeavor, and if so, what kind.

Lauer’s book ends with two pedagogical devices for students of rhetorical invention: a glossary of sixty-three relevant key terms, and a chronologically arranged annotated bibliography of thirty-six entries of the landmark scholarship on rhetorical invention reviewed in the book. Both are written by Kelly Pender. Like the first two chapters, these two serve as instructional scaffolding for those new to the study of invention. Hence, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* would
serve a variety of courses in rhetoric well and would make an excellent companion to one of the anthologies on rhetorical invention such as Richard E. Young and Yameng Liu’s *Landmark Essays on Rhetorical Invention in Writing* (Hermagoras P, 2004) and Janet Atwill and Janice Lauer’s *New Perspectives on Rhetorical Invention* (U of Tennessee P, 2002). This monograph will also be of great interest to writing teachers in its close attention to pedagogical practices. As a well stocked compendium of primary and secondary scholarship, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* is a book that all serious students of rhetorical invention will want for their personal library.

Tempe, AZ


Reviewed by Teresa Grettano, Illinois State University

In November 2004, Susan Miller delivered the inaugural English Studies Lecture Series address at Illinois State University. In “What’s Love Got to Do With It: An Emotional History of Rhetoric, A Rhetorical History of Emotion,” Miller discussed the “false and boring” rhetorical tradition many in the field present as our foundation and argued that rhetoric, despite how it has been represented in textbooks, did not start with Corax and Tisias arguing land disputes in Sicily; that in fact, communication and the study of how it can be done effectively had been taking place long before that. Much like the recent revisionist efforts of Cheryl Glenn, Andrea Lunsford, John Poulakos, Edward Schiappa, and others, Miller discussed the need to extend our understanding of classical rhetoric by studying and applying voices of those outside the ancient Athenian Greek canon—including those of women, people in socio-economic classes other than the elite, and other cultures. *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* is such an attempt to open the canon in what the editors’ characterize as an effort to better understand “other ways of being, seeing, and making knowledge” (4).

The collection analyzes rhetorical practices from three of the six regions that are recognized as established civilizations during the period 5000-1200 BCE (the Middle East, Egypt, and China) and is divided into sections according to areas: Mesopotamian Rhetoric, Egyptian Rhetoric, Chinese Rhetoric, Biblical Rhetoric, Alternative Greek Rhetoric, and Cross-Cultural Rhetorical Studies. The editors recognize access to historical texts from this period is problematic due to the limited number of texts recovered and translated. They acknowledge that translation itself is problematic, lending to the skewing of ideas and contents, and are quick to point out that while their collection works within this problematic framework,