doing, knowing, and communicating. It is a wholly new understanding of American rhetoric.

At some points reading, I got the panicked feeling of ineptitude. But then I looked again at the pedagogical project Baca advocates—he stresses exploring new territories together with students, making a map, redefining and redrawing boundaries—he suggests that rhetoric is not a set of strategies and terms and dates of great masters to memorize but a dynamic practice: “Mestiza consciousness potentially reveals a new politics of teaching that no longer privileges speaking, writing, and thinking within a single language controlled by the conventions of scholarly prose” (29). It’s a project we cannot afford to ignore.

College Station, TX


Reviewed by Trisha Red Campbell, University of Pittsburgh

The Future of Invention, though published in 2008, may serve as particularly poignant now, at a time when plagiarism appears to be at its peak, digital composing wonders how to invent, and recycled pastiche stands in for new and innovative. The question of invention sits upon compositionists’ lips, yet the performance found in Muckelbauer’s work does not take these issues up explicitly; rather, he artfully asks us to look at our image of invention and complicate the tendency of its negative movement—its very insistence upon negating in order to create anew. Still, Muckelbauer does not so easily lay his argument out for us, for it is precisely in his style of engagement with the reader that he performs what he is simultaneously explaining: an orientation toward affirmative invention. Muckelbauer, rather than arguing with his sources or with invention prior, engages the scholarship in an affirmative sense.

Therefore, this work proves to be particularly difficult to review (as it doesn’t seem to be reviewed in any other journals) because Muckelbauer is asking us to orient ourselves differently within composing practices. He stoutly tells us that the argument, including his own, need no longer be the most important aspect to scholarship, rather it is our style of engagement, our ways of responding to problems in the first place, that may need the most attention (Introduction). Nevertheless, I will attempt to package his argument for you here, but to do so is to betray his performance and the performativity necessary in his “affirmative” sense of change.
Muckelbauer has divided his book into two parts and eight chapters therein. Part I called “Orientations” lays out the “problem of change” in chapter 1 as a theoretical, philosophical, and rhetorical question, connecting it to Schiappa’s “postmodern challenge.” Chapter 2, “Why Rhetoric, Which Rhetoric?” affixes the history of rhetorical invention to a series of alleged postmodern questions, further developing an affirmative sense of change. In chapter 3, “How to Extract Singular Rhythms—Affirmative Reading and Writing,” Muckelbauer offers us a type of affirmative methodology, re-visiting Derrida, Nietzsche, and Deleuze for the how of their work, not the what. Here, he is less interested in what they are arguing and more interested in how they argue. The end of chapter 3 also finally gives us a hint toward the section name of “Orientations.” Muckelbauer reveals that he is “avoiding orienting toward intentions”; this includes not “getting Plato right” but orienting towards what his writing does and “what it can do” (38). Part I reads as explanatory and Part II, titled “Intensities” (a Deleuzian term most easily defined as difference referring to other differences, a difference in intensity), takes that explanation and performs it demonstratively with chapter 4, “Imitation and Invention,” taking up the movement directly between model and copy. Chapter 5, “Intineration—What is a Sophist?” performs another form of affirmative invention, where Muckelbauer follows the how of Plato’s dialogue, *The Sophist*, re-orienting Plato as a “becoming-sophist” (xiv). In tracing the movement between Plato and Sophistry, he unravels the differences between the two. Chapter 6, “Situatedness and Singularity,” complicates the opposition from specific to general in terms of situated audience in composition pedagogy. Instead, Muckelbauer advances a theory of kairotic composition accounting for the “singularity of actual situatedness” (115). Chapter 7, “Topoi—Replacing Aristotle,” performs a reading of Aristotle’s *Physics* in order to demonstrate that the confusion surrounding the notion of topoi is not confusion at all, but “gaps” that should be given attention as inventive movements. The final chapter, “The Future of Invention—Doxa and ‘the Common,” analyzes the relationship between tradition and innovation in relation to invention so that we may reconfigure futurity itself. This chapter is where the book is going all along, questioning our very relationship to the future.

In his preface, Muckelbauer echoes something we tussle with in the field of Composition and intimates where this book is situated. He writes, “so many others here and elsewhere insistently remind me of the ‘practical’ dimension of my ‘theoretical’ obsession” (vii). His work straddles this complicated edge, through the reliance upon Derrida, Nietzsche, Deleuze, and Guattari, yet it is in his title that we are struck immediately by what is practical in this work: the future of invention. Is this not a most practical question? What is the future of invention in Composition Studies?
Muckelbauer initially restates this question as the “problem of change” elsewhere referred to as the “problem of writing” by Deleuze (chapter 1). Ostensibly diverse and distinct fields of foundationalism/anti-foundation-alism, humanism/postmodernism, universalism/relativism all share a common commitment to a dialectical notion of change, thereby reinforcing one of the most commonly ignored binaries, that between same and different. The problem of change then is that to make something new, different, or even original, it must negate something else. The innovative (the different) negates the traditional (the same), which is precisely how it becomes the innovative. A classical example is that between Plato and the Sophists, often taken up in rhetorical scholarship. By reversing which position is privileged, we certainly do get a new take, yet we do so only by reproducing the same system, the same dialectic of negation. This exchange is well known; the group occupying the positions may change, but the positions are the same. This is the problem of change. Muckelbauer performatively asks us to look away from these points of opposition, and to instead look at the particular movement of negation between the points (chapter 4 and 5). It is movement that Muckelbauer is most compelled by, for it is movement that keeps binaries within negation and it is yet again movement in another direction, which creates the affirmative (chapter 2). Muckelbauer chooses rhetoric because it is the art of persuasion and the process of investigating the “asignifying” aspects of language (chapter 2). Thus rhetorical invention is somewhere between signification and non-signification and is integral to this other kind of change (not to be confused with a new kind of change, because that would be a negation). Muckelbauer calls this change affirmative, which is a post-dialectical/post-negation style of change. The opportunity of responding differently in any particular occurrence is crucial—he wants to design and invent the potential of responding without negation (chapter 3).

The Future of Invention may not be a typical argument and a certain amount of patience is required to extract Muckelbauer’s own singular rhythms (chapter 3). He uses Deleuzian terms coupled with his own lucid explanation, followed by a display of the explanation. His writing mimics a philosophical style, and at times, I desperately wished for the display to cease. However, because he is asking us to engage differently with texts and with composing, I found it easier to read on, attempting to perform an affirmative reading strategy. Each chapter builds upon this other kind of invention and by the end we’re left with the most compelling moment of the whole book. What is the future of rhetorical invention? “To speak of the future of invention, then, is not to refer to what comes next for invention... because tradition is nothing other than its own self-overcoming” (165). Instead, the future of invention within the tension between tradition and innovation offers something much more supple (chapter 8). Within the movement between tradition and innovation the future is both unrecognizable and only
actualized through recognition (165). Muckelbauer asks us to follow the “singular rhythm” of futurity, the outgrowth of this movement to the very possibility of beginning.

The practical reader may not be fully convinced, however. I am not yet sure myself how to thoroughly enact Muckelbauer’s philosophy, although I do see a call for rhetorical invention that speaks to our current moment as necessary. Because Muckelbauer rarely breaks from his philosophical prose, our only sense of clear application comes in chapter 6, where he raises serious questions about the teaching of situated audiences. And, in an entire book written about invention, he never once mentions digital composing. I suppose that leaves us wondering how The Future of Invention changes composing practices. What I see as most relevant is Muckelbauer’s sense of “singular rhythms”; these are the lines and movements that don’t fit into points, but rather outgrow the points. Singular rhythms are the differences in each repetition, movement, and argument. They are relevant for what they offer methodologically, which suggests we could draw attention to the movement between points, between binaries, in order to attain an affirmative invention. Yet, it is to digitality and digital composing that I think Muckelbauer’s work most pertains to, as a site of constant movement, allowing composing to evolve out of the movement.

Taken as a whole, The Future of Invention fluently mingles invention, binaries, composition, writing, and change in a way that allows the reader to follow Muckelbauer’s movement across concepts and to envision a practical dimension to his theoretical obsession. It begs for further readings along with pedagogical and scholarly application.

Pittsburgh, PA


Reviewed by Kerry Dirk, Virginia Tech

In 1997, Charles Bazerman claimed that “Genres are forms of life, ways of being. . . . Genres are the familiar places we go to create intelligible communicative action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the familiar” (19). Years later, perhaps to illustrate just how genres can make communication understandable, Bazerman, along with Adair Bonini and Debora Figueiredo, have compiled a collection of 24 chapters in Genre in a Changing World. Chosen from the conference presentations at the Fourth International Symposium on Genre Studies (SIGET IV) in Brazil, the chapters