Teaching the Literatures of the American Civil War

Edited by Colleen Glenney Boggs

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—Randall Fuller
University of Tulsa

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From the Editor

Colleagues:
I am pleased to present to you the December 2016 issue of College Composition and Communication. As usual for the December issue, this one features the CCCC 2016 Chair’s Address and Report, as well as the Secretary’s Report, in addition to a spate of impressive research articles from the field.

We begin with Chris Gallagher’s “What Writers Do: Behaviors, Behaviorism, and Writing Studies,” which offers an important accounting of our field’s historical engagement, consciously and not, with behaviorism. Gallagher deftly articulates how we might generatively understand writing as a complex “behavior” without reducing it to a set of “verifiable” traits. The complexity of writing as a behavior finds interesting resonance with Jeffrey A. Bacha’s “The Physical Mundane as Topos: Walking/Dwelling/Using as Rhetorical Invention,” in which Bacha turns our attention to the campuses and actual structures that often surround acts of writing. His ecologically rich approach extends our sense of writing as a rhetorical and situated behavior. In a further twist, Jennifer Lin LeMesurier, in “Mobile Bodies: Triggering Bodily Uptake through Movement,” invites us to understand how learning to compose in new genres is not just adopting a new behavior but embracing affective and embodied shifts in how and what we know.

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As she succinctly puts it, “Teaching new genres is not merely a matter of cognitively processing differences in layout or appropriate sentence length. Rather, successfully entering into generic uptake requires aligning one’s affective ties with one’s experience of performing the genre.”

Writing—a rhetorically situated and embodied behavior—often moves and takes shape across multiple spaces, and our two final articles emphasize this movement. Jerry Won Lee and Christopher Jenks, in “Doing Translingual Dispositions,” analyze a fascinating international pedagogical experience spanning two continents in which students and instructors alike learned much about the politics of language. And D. Alexis Hart and Roger Thompson, in “Veterans in the Writing Classroom: Three Programmatic Approaches to Facilitate the Transition from the Military to Higher Education,” consider how we might help ease our student veterans back into the classroom after their own encounters with the vagaries of global politics and military service. Mobilizing the affordances of varied experiences lies at the heart of both of these articles.

So writing—situated, embodied, moving. Collectively, these articles and our reports from the conference offer further insight into the complexity of the subject we research and teach. I wish you all the best for the winter holiday season.

Jonathan Alexander
University of California, Irvine