

Introduction: Rhetorical Perspectives

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Rhetoric in society

Since Aristotle, the study of rhetoric has focused on the persuasive aspect of discourse in the political, forensic and ceremonial domains. Rhetoric deals with *doxa*, the shared opinions and reasons people consider plausible and acceptable in a specific situation, in the realm of appearance, ambiguity, change and opinion. Rhetorical action involves decisions taken by participants in public discourse on the basis of common deliberation and free choice in domains such as social and political life, in which there is no absolute knowledge, truth, certainty or fixity.

No doubt the title of the *Rhetoric in Society* conferences in Aalborg (2006), Leiden (2009) and Antwerp (2011) sounded attractive to many scholars. It clearly attributed to rhetoric the position it inherently occupies: in society. The tautological element in this title reveals, however, that this idea is not self-evident. The field of rhetoric is fragmented, and dispersed over several disciplines, such as literary criticism, stylistics, or debating. In domains such as philosophy or politics, and not only there, rhetoric is easily associated with lies, emotion and manipulation, in contrast to a more respectable concept such as truth, be it factual, scientific, or ideological. Generally speaking, since Plato, through the seventeenth and eighteenth-century enlightenment of reason and well into the scientific modernism of our times, Western thought has favoured theories of knowledge in which the values of universality and objectivity prevail over those of particularity and subjectivity or intersubjectivity (Lucaites & Condit 1999a, p. 6).

Although the rejection or depreciation of rhetoric often comes down to the condemnation of the rhetoric of *others*, thus mystifying one's own rhetorical skills, or explaining away the lack of them, it does not discharge us from this basic question in rhetorical studies: what is rhetoric? In its oldest form, rhetoric is an important power in the communication of societies. Verbal communication is a pre-eminently human skill, and rhetoric is the earliest discipline that studies how people build communities when talking

to one another, negotiating with one another, or convincing one another in deliberations about political action, in cases of guilt or innocence, in matters of fame or dishonour. In its most classical version, rhetoric refers to the Greek ideal of the *rhetor* as the highest form of citizenship, or Quintilian's idea of the *vir bonus*: the good man speaking well.

Yet the definition of rhetoric is highly contested and we cannot speak of a coherent or definite version of ancient rhetoric. Rather, we can determine and follow through history an extensive set of similar perspectives, a vast body of theoretical reflection and practical devices (for an overview see e.g. Conley 1990; Kennedy 1994; Fumaroli 1999; Meyer 1999; Herrick 2005, etc.). All the early scholars, such as Gorgias and Protagoras, Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian are associated with the Western, liberal-democratic tradition of ancient Greece and Rome, and with the creation of democratic forms of government. Hence, in the classical tradition, the focus on rhetoric typically emphasized 'the *public*, *persuasive*, and *contextual* characteristics of human discourse in situations governed by the problems of *contingency*' (Lucaites & Condit 1999a, p. 2; see also Herrick 2005, p. 7). Classical rhetoric concerns the public sphere, where audiences are part of social life, where language is assumed to play its role in the persuasion processes, where specific contexts modify the production of meaning, and where decisions are inherently based on probabilities, rather than on fixed certainties.

Rhetoricians examine how people use arguments and language in order to convince or persuade an audience. More than a set of devices, rhetoric is the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion, as Aristotle stated. Scholars such as Reboul explicitly refer to rhetoric as an art:

La rhétorique est l'art de persuader par le discours [...] Mais 's agit-il d'une simple technique? Non, il s'agit de bien plus. Le véritable orateur est un artiste en ce sens qu'il découvre des arguments d'autant plus efficaces qu'on ne les attendait pas, des figures dont personne n'aurait eu l'idée et qui s'avèrent être justes; un artiste dont les performances ne sont pas programmables et ne s'imposent qu'après coup (Reboul 1991, pp. 4-6).

This inventiveness highlights the heuristic function of rhetoric and the important aspect of invention. It appeals to our creativity in our search for relevant questions and answers to specific matters. The art of rhetoric has many

social functions, such as the testing of ideas and the discovery of facts (Herrick 2005, p. 16), and the open and creative character of rhetorical thinking is mentioned by most scholars.

Rhetoric is an acquired competency, a manner of thinking that invents possibilities for persuasion, conviction, action and judgment; it may be developed and sophisticated and, above all, critiqued and improved. [...]. Rhetoric helps us to invent public thought (Farrell 1993, p. 16).

But as our discourse and arguments develop in interaction with other discourses, rhetoric encompasses a hermeneutic moment as well. One does not argue in isolation. Rhetorical interaction also calls for analysis, interpretation and for theoretical reflection. In this sense, the history of rhetoric might as well be called the history of philosophy of communication. It should come as no surprise that this art of speaking and writing well is an established intellectual tradition that has been considered a cornerstone of our cultures and our educational systems for many centuries. The restriction of rhetoric to the study of formal aspects, *elocutio* and rhetorical figures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cut the discipline loose from argument, function and meaning and caused it to lose relevance and eventually to disappear as such from the curricula. But even in our times, scholars such as Wayne Booth consider rhetoric as a kind of master art, structuring all other fields of knowledge. He wrote that rhetoric ‘held entire dominion over all verbal pursuits. Logic, dialectic, grammar, philosophy, history, poetry, *all* are rhetoric’ (Booth, quoted by Herrick 2005, p. 2).

A danger that comes with such all-encompassing views on rhetoric, however, is that the discipline comes to stand for any human symbolic interaction and thereby loses its focus. In this light, it is not surprising that much work has been done exactly on the relation between rhetoric and all kinds of adjacent fields: the tension between rhetoric and dialectic, logic, epistemology, hermeneutics, philosophy, stylistics (Groupe Mu), or between doxa and episteme, persuasion and narrative, argumentation and information.

An interesting proposal to situate rhetoric in our times is offered by John Lucaites and Celeste Condit. According to them, a rhetorical perspective on the world opens the possibilities for constituting a distinctive alternative to the projects of modernism and postmodernism.

Instead of living inside the absolute totality of modernism, or living outside modernism in perpetual critique, the rhetorical perspective describes a *relatively* stable and *relatively* fluid community that eschews any clear distinction(s) between inside and outside (Lucaites & Condit 1999b, p. 610).

The rhetorical perspective focuses on the way communities negotiate and debate their decisions, thus acknowledging that their truths are provisional: ‘good enough for daily use, but also open to challenge when necessary’ (Ibid., p. 610). The rhetorical tradition does not search for timeless truth; instead, it is situated in societies, where communal experiences and knowledge guarantee certain ‘substantial anchors against totalitarianism (whether fueled by monarchial will, the tyranny of the majority, or solipsistic individualism)’, and where a focus on the pragmatic, emancipatory possibilities in any given situation can feed ‘strategic liberation’ in this contingent world (Ibid., p. 611).

Rethinking rhetoric

The rich and respectable tradition of the rhetorical discipline does not stipulate, however, that rhetoric scholars should restrict their work to the traditional areas and questions of rhetoric. On the contrary. As we have come to realize the importance of rhetoric and rhetorical interaction in all forms of discourse, the scope of rhetorical scholarship is enlarged. Rhetorical studies should not be limited to the three basic areas of law, politics and the ceremonial oratory, but should include all forms of public discourse, written or multimedia. The paradigm of the monologic and oratorial speech delivery has expanded to all verbal communication and comprises both public and private interaction, official and vernacular speech, planned and spontaneous discourse. Its scope has widened from exclusively verbal language to the study and interpretation of other symbolical languages, such as art and visual artefacts. This evolution shows how rhetoric is an interdisciplinary activity that does not conform to a fixed method or a rigid theory.

The ongoing discussion about the status, scope and value of rhetoric as a discipline is part of the rhetorical project. The changing cultural, political and scientific conditions of our time urge us to adapt rhetoric to this new era. In the Sixties of the last century, for instance, new media such as television and new social movements such as feminism or the social rights movement urged rhetoricians to widen their focus and reformulate their

questions about language, power, and the public sphere. As a consequence, many scholars turned away from the neo-Aristotelian project that strives for objective knowledge about the rhetorical effect of a given artefact, and work on new concepts of rhetorical praxis such as the production of discourse by social forces and the engagement of the rhetorical scholar in the performance of her interpretation.

The neo-Aristotelian perspective basically featured the traditional analytical tools of rhetoric, such as the canons (invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery), the three modes of proof (logos, ethos, pathos), the three levels of style (plain, middle or grand style) and the virtues of style (purity, clarity, decorum and ornamentation). Other methods of analysis originated, drawing from the close reading movement, or from philosophical (e.g. Kenneth Burke, Michel Foucault), social, or literary theories. This evolution evokes central topics in recent scholarship such as the relationship between theory, criticism and practice, and the nature of rhetorical criticism.

The assumption that discourse reflects and consolidates socio-political power structures marks the complex and paradoxical position of rhetorical scholars. As critics choose and define their objects, varying from concrete texts to wider phenomena such as the discourse of social groups or movements, they also define their function as either promoter of 'good' rhetorical practices or as revealer of processes of power. On the one hand, the traditional critical norm of disinterestedness obliges a critic to be neutral and objective (Jasinski 2001, p. 135); on the other hand, it is assumed that the analysis and evaluation of effective practices reinforce the dominant discourse. How can the critic be a scientific observer, when, in fact, she is always a participant in human discourse and society as well?

McKerrow (1999) presents two levels of criticism: scholars can work towards emancipation and formulate a 'critique of domination' by revealing the discourse of power that structures social hierarchies. Although it is important to study 'the discourse which flows from or expresses power functions to keep people "in their place"', this should not keep us from challenging the power-repression formula and examine the critique of power relations across a broader social spectrum' (McKerrow 1999, p. 446). Drawing from Foucault, he shows how the second level, 'critique of freedom', is a continuous self-reflexive investigation that tries to lay bare underlying structures in discourse that either prevent or enable social change. Criticism is not a methodology, McKerrow ascertains, but a perspective that results from

a certain orientation towards the object of study. This theoretical rationale supports the eight well-known ‘principles of praxis’, which show how ‘a critical rhetoric celebrates its reliance on contingency, on *doxa* as the basis for knowledge, on nominalism as the ground of language meaning as doxastic, and critique viewed as performance’ (Ibid., p. 459).

Criticism is a central activity in the discipline of contemporary rhetorical studies. One of the main challenges in the critical interpretation of texts or phenomena is the apparent self-evidence or transparency of public discourse. Institutions and conventions mould its appearance and forms, and it is by critical analysis, in the project of a close reading, that the underlying tensions or dynamism can be revealed (Jasinski 2001, p. 129).

The specific methods or procedures that guide the critical work of rhetoricians are very diverse. In order to demonstrate this ‘methodological pluralism’, Jasinski quotes the

Matlon (1995) *Index to Journals in Communication Studies*, that identified more than sixty critical methods under the heading for methodology in rhetorical criticism. Among the methods listed were archetype, axiological, Burkeian, dialectical, dramatic, ethical, existential, factor analysis, fantasy theme, genre studies, historical, inferential, intersubjective, language-action, Marxist, myth or mythological, organismic, phenomenological, philosophical, sociolinguistic, structuralist and symbolical analysis (Jasinski 2001, p. 137).

All these methods have their representatives and their merits, and the sheer diversity of this survey particularly reveals the richness and power of rhetorical criticism. The crucial point to be made here is the risk of closure. Rhetorical work should resist the all too easy reduction to preset classifications and show creativity and nuance in the overall search for critical interpretations.

Apart from rhetorical criticism, there is another particular field of rhetoric that has received intense attention during the last decades, namely the field of argumentation. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to discuss the historical factors that caused argumentation to be expelled from rhetorical studies, but by focusing on argumentation, scholars such as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca unmistakably brought a neglected area in the study of rhetoric firmly back to the centre, where it belongs. Although their work originates from their disappointment in the rigidity and limited focus of formal logic, it is their rejection of traditional rhetoric as a superficial

formal style device collection that determines the originality of their work. Form and content should not be studied separately, they claimed, because style and argument are similarly functional in the process of discussion and persuasion. Truth is never manifest, and the purpose of argumentation is nothing more and nothing less than to elicit or increase the adherence of members of an audience to theses that are presented for their consent. The quality of argument is also determined by the audience, be it particular or universal, and the task of the speaker or writer is to find and formulate arguments that work. The *New Rhetoric* not only generated a revival of rhetorical studies, but it also claimed the position of rhetoric in the expanding field of argumentation studies right from the start.

Perelman's constructive understanding of rhetoric as the study of the methods of argument encourages us to view it as a fundamentally communicative practice. Scholars such as Tindale have elaborated this understanding in showing that argumentation as a human practice is essentially rhetorical in ways that far exceed methodology alone (Tindale 2004, p. 19). Referring to Bitzer, who defined the *rhetorical situation* in terms of exigence, audience and constraints, Tindale proposes a constructive understanding of rhetoric as 'a mode of altering reality [...] by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action' (Bitzer 1968, p. 4). Argumentation is to be appreciated as an activity that changes how we perceive the world by changing the way we think about things.

By linking the logic perspective to the product of argumentation, the dialectic perspective to the procedure, and the rhetorical to the process, Tindale manages to develop a theory that accommodates the relationship among the three. Yet, 'it is the *rhetorical* that must provide the foundations for that theory, and it will influence how we understand and deal with the logical and the dialectical in any particular case' (Tindale 2004, p. 7).

'In a very general sense', Tindale claims, 'an argument is the discourse of interest that centers, and develops in, the argumentative situation' (Ibid., p. 23). This situation does not only involve logos, or argument itself, but also the two other Aristotelian means of persuasion. The concept of ethos is linked to the arguer, who is always involved in, or even constructed by the text, and the concept of pathos refers to the audience, that does not in the least play the role of a passive receiver, but on the contrary is characterized mainly by its dynamism and engagement. The argumentative situation is the 'dynamic space in which arguer and audience interact, but interact in a way

that makes them coauthors' (Ibid., p. 23), since this space of the argumentative situation is crucial to our self-understanding and our understanding of others. After all, as social beings, we all are 'in audience' most of the time. Referring to Bakhtin and Todorov, Tindale highlights the aim for agreement and 'co-voicing' in what he calls dialogical argumentation: 'Argument, like dialogue, is ongoing' (Ibid., pp. 104-105).

Although many scholars propose new and open frames for the study of argumentation (Gilbert 1997; Amossy 2010), most argumentation theories, such as the Toulmin model, the Informal Logic tradition, or the Amsterdam pragma-dialectic school, offer more normative views on argument (for an overview or discussions see O'Keefe 1977; Gilbert 1997; Jasinski 2001; Van Eemeren 2003, etc.). Those approaches are more normative in their focus on the logos of argument schemes or the dialectics of procedures for the reconstruction and critical evaluation of an argument, and in their interest in fallacy theory. It is not within the scope of this introduction to elaborate on argumentation theory; nevertheless, the work of both the Informal Logicians and the Amsterdam School of pragma-dialectics has functioned as a constant touchstone and as an invitation to reformulate the specific rhetorical aspects of argumentation. Especially the expansion of the pragma-dialectic programme to the concept of strategic manoeuvring that started in 1999 has triggered a considerable production of work on the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic (e.g. Garver 2000; Van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002; Leff 2002; Krabbe 2002; Blair 2003).

Contemporary rhetorical studies are involved in a broad spectrum of academic fields, which offer many chances for interdisciplinary research. Conversely actual language and communication theories and disciplines extensively draw on ancient rhetoric (e.g. Barthes 1994). Primary rhetorical disciplines such as speech analysis or rhetorical criticism are closely related to fields like rhetorical citizenship, argumentation studies, pragmatics, critical discourse studies, text linguistics, art, literary criticism and cultural studies, but they also have their part in the fields of communication studies, journalism studies, political, social and educational studies, history, psychology and philosophy. Many of those disciplines show an increasing interest in the rhetorical aspects of their own paradigms and methods.

Because of their specific interest in speech and language processes, linguistic approaches such as (critical) discourse studies (DS) show particular similarities with rhetorical studies. Like rhetoric, discourse studies aim at a

qualitative interpretative approach; but DS are more data-driven rather than theory-driven. Analyses start from close attention to linguistic details of records of discourse. As Eisenhart and Johnstone put it:

Working upward from particular, situated instances of text and talk rather than downwards from abstract models of discourse, they take systematic approaches to exploring why particular utterances take the particular shapes they do. [...] They are *empirical*, in the sense that they are based in observation rather than introspection alone; they are *ethnographic*, in that they seek to understand the rhetorical workings of discourse and context through the eyes and minds of those engaged in them, and they are *grounded*, returning again and again to their data as they build theory to account for it (Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008, p. 3).

The interest in particular language processes and for an interpretation of the ways in which people persuade one another links discourse studies to new rhetoric projects that are not limited to speech analysis but aim at interpretation of other kinds of discourse and interaction. For example, scholarship on political discourse is growing (e.g. Charaudeau 2005), and also fields such as cultural studies are examining possibilities for discourse analysis (Carpentier & Spinoy 2008).

In a way, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a recent school of discourse analysis, is particularly closely connected to the rhetorical project, in that it concerns itself with relations of power and inequality in language, and with the position of the reader/interpreter/scholar. CDA scholars like Fairclough, Blommaert & Bulcaen, Wodak & Meyer, and Van Dijk state that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned, and that it should be studied in terms of (sometimes opaque) processes in hegemony. They explicitly incorporate social-theoretical insights into discourse analysis as they strive for social commitment and interventionism in research. Nevertheless, CDA is but one of the many ways in which rhetorical studies have come to focus on language as the basic phenomenon from where to start an analysis. Discursive psychology, for one, is another field in which rhetoric as a discursive practice takes a central position (see e.g. Potter 1996). The themes and questions of traditional rhetorical theory and practice have thus been extensively picked up by linguists working in the field of pragmatics.

Another new research area that is connected to rhetoric comes from a psychological or sociological perspective. Scholars such as Daniel O'Keefe or

Hans Hoeken study the effects of persuasion processes, and try to determine the factors that trigger changes in attitude or behaviour. So far, no theory has been able to develop a model that explains all observed phenomena, and notably people such as O’Keefe keep warning us of the pitfalls of this kind of scholarship (O’Keefe 2011, pp. 127-129). Persuasion processes are indeed very complex, and difficult to separate from social factors as well (Kienpointner 1995, p. 268). Yet these challenges do not prevent even further remote research areas such as neurosciences from taking up questions based on rhetorical processes of persuasion in their programmes.

Rhetoric and media

The Western tradition of thought about language has tended to privilege referential discourse and to imagine that discourse (at least ideally) reflects the pre-existing world. But as twentieth-century philosophers (Foucault 1980), rhetoricians (Burke 1945), and linguists (Sapir 1949, Wolf 1941) showed again and again, the converse is also true, or perhaps truer: human worlds are shaped by discourse (Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008, p. 12).

At first sight, rhetoric and media have quite different aims and features. Traditional rhetoric is about persuading an audience while media claim to inform the public in the first place. And even though most media also provide large portions of explicit ‘opinion’, journalists and readers alike consider the rendering of correct and factual information to be the core business of news media. Although nobody will deny the epideictic function of media in society, in that they should praise or blame persons or institutions (Herrick 2005, p. 81), there seems to be a general understanding that media ‘represent reality’, and that consequently, journalists can/should report facts that ‘speak for themselves’. When the media are criticized for lies or bias, the critique is based on this very factuality, or rather the lack of it.

Meanwhile, a lot of research in a variety of academic disciplines is oriented towards distinct rhetorical questions such as the implicit rhetoric that emphasizes the importance and truth of media messages, the rhetorical processes that determine news selection, the way in which journalists manage competing opinions or, more generally, the way in which journalists and other public figures alike participate in public discourse. Important questions are taken up by scholars such as Teun van Dijk (1988), who examines

the ways in which the importance and truth of the message is enhanced in media discourse.

One of the basic conventional conditions of truth is direct observation: 'I have seen it with my own eyes' is the ultimate warrant of truthfulness [...]. Within the limits of their financial budget, newspapers therefore try to get first-handed evidence from their correspondents or reporters and may even send a special envoy to places where dozens of other reporters already are present. The immediacy of the description and the closeness of the reporter to the events is a rhetorical guarantee for the truthfulness of the description and, hence, the plausibility of the news (Van Dijk 1988, p. 86).

An important challenge for all media studies, then, is to examine how the ideal of fact-finding and objective scientific rendering of verbal and visual information influences the selection and formulation of news. In other words, a critical attitude towards the media should comprise more than the indispensable search for facts that are inadequately or incorrectly reported, and the ideological, commercial, or other factors that influence this process (e.g. Parenti 1993). It should also question the very paradigm of objective observation and transparent language. One example of such a fundamental media critique is to be found in the field of peace journalism. Scholars such as John Galtung established a worldwide interest in conflict and peace studies, and stimulated rhetoricians such as Samuel Peleg (2006) or Annabel McGoldrick (2006) to examine meticulously the rhetorical elements in contemporary 'objective' media reporting habits that stimulate the very conflicts they lament, thus confirming the commercially and ideologically based media bias in favour of conflict and war. An important challenge for this kind of journalism is the delicate position of the journalist, who no longer functions as a 'neutral observer', but has to construct a new ethos as a participant in the resolution of a conflict, with all the (other) risks that this position involves.

Another challenge for media studies in this struggle with the objectivity ideal is the coming to terms with both narration and ideology. Information, or 'content', is always structured within narrative and ideological frames. News stories come in highly ritualized narrative structures, marked by fixed features such as the absent I-narrator or the inverted pyramid structure. In their urge for 'neutrality', media stage well-defined and unilateral characters, often in polarized positions. Moreover, the dependence on 'ob-

jective' visual information urges them to concentrate on stories that can be presented in (or proven by) visual narration that puts concrete people and places in the picture, rather than abstract elements such as political programmes or historical context. From this inclination towards concrete and visual stories, it follows that more complicated ideological or argumentative elements are often suggested rather than explicitly formulated. This is even more the case in sports and other entertainment media, where the inoffensive and superficial stories can barely conceal the deeper interests involved. These are but a couple of the narrative choices media make day by day, and while many choice mechanisms can be detected or studied by means of quantitative research, it is a particular mission for rhetorical studies to reveal as meticulously as possible the utter complexity and interconnectedness of the different factors that influence those choices.

The media do tell stories, and an interesting point here is made by John C. Hartsock, who, in his study of the intricate historical relationship between literature, narrative journalism, and journalism, explains how the dominant attitude of the journalist as a scientist originated in the divide between literature and journalism that emerged during the nineteenth century. He shows how the establishment of a social scientific approach as a dominant paradigm for journalistic study based on positive assumptions promoted by scholars such as W. Bleyer and W. Schramm (Hartsock 2000, p. 233) can be interpreted as a way to save journalism from the derogatory attitude of the defenders of 'high' literature that appealed to a transcendent universality that journalism never aspired to (Ibid., p. 218, p. 244). Hartsock describes how 'the study of journalism moved from being a humanistic and rhetorical enterprise to being a social science, with a quantitative, empirical, and behavioral focus' (Ibid., pp. 236-237). Thus, many a definition of communication sciences 'excludes the possibility of interpretation based on critical, not empirical, induction and deduction. In turn, they miss the point that all texts, even scholarly empirical texts, are fundamentally interpretive' (Ibid., p. 238). As such, in his work on literary journalism, Hartsock describes how both the profession and the study of journalism are part of historical and rhetorical processes that include elements of context, status, and authority.

Media not only present story, they present opinion as well. Needless to say, media take part in the rhetorical processes that constitute our societies: they formulate or neglect questions, statements, and arguments, they stimulate or suppress discussion and debate, and they criticize or praise

persons, events, and actions. Ever since the concept of public opinion arose in the eighteenth-century context of enlightenment, media have been connected to what Jürgen Habermas later coined as ‘the public sphere’. It is up to rhetoricians to propose interpretations of all kinds of media discourses, and to show how rhetorical elements like style and argument determine those particular public discourses. They can describe and analyse texts in their complexity and totality, paying attention to aspects such as the balance between logos, ethos and pathos, the underlying dynamics of certain recurring words, frames or metaphors, the strategic structuring of themes or arguments, or the subtle play with different styles. Rhetoricians try to do more than lay bare the static underlying ideas that are being imposed on media consumers, but rather they consider the artefact in its context and in the dynamic exchange of views and arguments between different individuals and groups in public space.

Rhetoric and new media

The focus on dynamism is very much at stake in light of the media’s current digital revolution. This is a new and important challenge for rhetorical scholars. According to some, we should show unrestrained enthusiasm about the dialogic power of multimodal communication and the new media, in the name of a reinvention of older traditions of oral discourse. Thus, the old textual rhetoric is defined as static, authoritative, linear and hierarchical, and new forms of rhetoric are envisioned as dynamic and interactive networks of associations driven by a multiplicity of languages and voices. Instead of the traditional knowledge inscribed and enshrined in printed text, the promise of individual freedom to think and read and write creatively in digital space reigns. Conversation and interactivity surpass monologue, association and hypertext take over linear and hierarchical communication, multimodality beats monomodality. People will participate in networks that are horizontal and associative, rather than vertical and hierarchical, logical, and abstract (Zappen 2004, p. 145).

In his qualitative analysis of the digital media, Zappen reconsiders the role of dialogue within the rhetorical tradition. He turns to Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue, which seems to challenge traditional rhetoric by directing rhetorical activity away from persuasion and towards a wider range of ends or purposes. To Zappen, dialogical rhetoric should be conceived as a kind of rhetoric that is responsive and accountable to others.

Bakhtin describes the kind of double-voicedness that he finds in the earlier Platonic dialogues: the testing and contesting and creating of ideas that occurs not as a result of a single speaker speaking but only as a result of a change, and an exchange, of speaking subjects by which old ideas are challenged and new ideas are born (Ibid., p. 2).

Zappen proposes to link the hybrid form of the Socratic dialogue to the actual hybrid forms of electronic discourse, 'which are at once oral and written and graphic and which seem to provide new opportunities for interactivity, intersubjectivity, collaboration, and dialogue' (Ibid., p. 15). This view also offers an opportunity to rethink the very meaning and purpose of public discourse 'not as persuasion but as an ongoing exchange in which we test and contest and create ideas in cooperation and when necessary in conflict with others' (Ibid., p. 2).

Zappen realizes how new media entail dangers as to privacy or manipulation or isolation of individuals (Ibid., p. 156), but a negative attitude towards new media is above all a question of cultural authority, he argues. Controversy about the authority of the old and the new media proves that the discussion is not so much about old and new media as it is about the cultural values and beliefs presumed to be embedded within them (Ibid., p. 142). It is an important project for rhetorical scholars to study how these underlying controversies and values find their way to new media as well as to the discussions about the phenomenon.

One of the challenges here is the choice (and presentation) of the artefact under scrutiny. The quantity, multimodality and volatility of the new media, together with parallel phenomena such as social media and civil journalism, ask for a quite particular corpus selection, and specific questions and methods of analysis. As the tradition of rhetorical studies mainly focused on verbal communication throughout the ages, a particularly important aspect in the study of new media rhetoric is the topic of multimodality, and the way in which audiovisual and verbal communication interact with each other and with their audiences who can take on a much more active role than was previously possible.

Visual rhetoric

Most traditional thinking about rhetoric is restricted to verbal communication. The art of rhetoric found its origin in the oratory, and books on rhetoric specifically taught speakers how to compose appealing speeches that

convince their audiences. This means actually that rhetoric not only handled the invention and writing of speeches, but also their delivery. The attention paid to speech delivery brings into play elements of voice and body language and the audio-visual aspects of presentation. In the classical tradition of rhetorical devices, even non-verbal elements such as the showing of a scar or a bloody weapon were brought into play, as they could contribute to the success of a speech. ‘The audience’s senses were all called on in this oratorical culture, rather than being fragmented and addressed in a single focus, the pictorial eye for seeing art, the ear for hearing music, the eye and intellect for reading, the nose for food and perfume’ (Hobbs 2004, p. 58).

Throughout Western history, writing and speaking instruction often handled the translation of visual images into verbal text – and the other way around. Numerous *ecphrasis* devices deal with the composition of vivid descriptions and show how to bring places and actions before the eyes clearly and vividly (Ibid., p. 56). In line with the major link between seeing and understanding that predominates Western philosophy and that can be traced back to Plato’s allegory of the cave, many rhetoricians were aware of the power of images all too well. Quintilian, for example, saw visualization as the most powerful means of arousing emotion, possibly the best way to convince an audience (Ibid., p. 57). In short, rhetorical theory may have its roots in oral discourse, and may have focused on verbal communication too easily, yet we could observe with Bruce Gronbeck that ‘visuality always has been integral to rhetorical consciousness’ (Olson, Finnegan & Hope 2008, p. xxiv). The distinctions between linguistic and visual discourse should not prevent us from studying visual discourse on rhetorical grounds.

Kress and Van Leeuwen, who explore the interrelation between the two, assume that ‘All texts are multimodal. Language always has to be realized through, and comes in the company of, other semiotic modes’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1998, p. 186). This goes for speaking (sounds, facial expression, etc.) as well as for writing (words, lay out, etc.). According to them, the traditional insistence on the monomodal – that favours, for instance, written text on a densely printed page – only reveals that this once was the most highly valued kind of writing. Indeed, this status of the verbal is possibly one of the reasons why verbal texts are still very much considered to be standing on their own, and studied apart from other modalities, while most work on visual communication does not exclude the verbal at all.

Argumentation scholars like David Birdsell and Leo Groarke refute

the 'visual scepticism' by showing, for instance, how both words and images can be clear or vague, and how context and cultural aspects play an important role in the interpretation of verbal and visual communication alike (Birdsell & Groarke 2004). In their search for the conceptualization of visual arguments, they examine how words and images can and do function together not only in the construction of meaning, but also in the construction of argument (see also Blair 2004).

The expression 'visual rhetoric' is used by Olson as 'a shorthand to emphasize culturally-shaped practices of seeing in their relationship to historically-situated processes of rhetorical action' (Olson 2007, p. 3). The growing interest in visual rhetoric results in the reshuffling of historical and intellectual status cards. Experts in visual communication often react against the supremacy of written words in the Western intellectual tradition; they claim that images do not deserve to be banished to categories of illiteracy, delusion, subjectivity, irrationality and emotion, as they are at least as basic to human communication and intelligence as verbal language (Hobbs 2004; Foss 2004; Hill & Helmers 2004). It is important to realize that, like most forms of communication, visual communication rarely stands on its own and, notably, the increasing multimodality in our times comes down to the merging of the different modes into hybrid texts and/or narrations. Newspapers explain and frame their pictures in different verbal ways, documentaries construct an internal narrative and discursive logic, online news presents a collage of texts, photos, and videos, along with invitations to interact and the presentation of hyperlinks. This means that the study of visual rhetoric does not focus on visual elements in isolation, but rather on their complex relation to the context that frames their meaning and supports their interpretation.

Nowadays, most scholars agree that the resources of rhetoric are useful for analysing, interpreting and assessing visual media. Yet, visual rhetorical studies can also benefit greatly from interdisciplinary work, particularly with fields such as art history and the humanities in general.

Other scholars rely on a more applied and cognitive basis: they examine how graphic and verbal lines of argument can work together, interfere, or contradict; how different messages can be conveyed simultaneously; how words can generate images and vice versa. Although there is no consensus on the name and the study is scattered over many disciplines and academic departments, the field of visual rhetoric is expanding rapidly as it is part of the

‘pictorial turn’ (Mitchell 1994) in the humanities and in our culture. Many studies on visual rhetoric are set up with regard to the type of medium: television, film, radio, or the hybrid forms in new media. Other work focuses on the visual symbols that play a central role in certain class, race, or gender movements, both historical and actual. The case studies draw from intellectual resources such as Kenneth Burke, Roland Barthes, or Susan Sontag. Lately, the focus has shifted from artefact or media to interpretive practices of observing and seeing, and to the institutions that control the selection and circulation of images (Olson 2007).

Verbal and visual rhetoric in a media world

This collection brings together articles that examine how rhetoric functions in society and how the field can reconcile tradition with renewal. The themes cover a wide range of topics, such as the rhetoric of popular philosophy, the use of metaphors in financial reports on the financial crisis, or the proposal of new functions for neglected fields like *actio* and *memoria*. It offers analyses of media discourse on various themes, like the wearing of religious symbols or the ethos of victims and criminals. Many of them explore the new and most important topics of new media and visual rhetoric. At an increasing pace, a greater part of news and comments is rendered in the form of images such as pictures, graphics, cartoons, documentaries and videos. The possibility and the features of visual rhetoric as such are examined, but also and particularly the question as to how the visual and the verbal interact. Visual rhetoric is not limited to the study of media discourse, but applies to the field of advertising, or to domains like education or law as well. It is important to examine how the verbal and the visual work, how they relate, what specific strengths and dangers are involved in new and increasingly complex combinations of those two forms of information and argumentation.

The natural field of rhetoric is the field of the concrete and the contextual. But rhetorical and argumentation analyses start from certain assumptions that should be cleared out and discussed continuously. Rhetorical theory, an inherently interdisciplinary project, should keep up with the changes in discourse as well as with the evolution in academia. In the first chapter of this book, fundamental questions are formulated in areas that, at first sight, are situated as far away from rhetoric as from one another, like epistemology, Qur’an translation, and neuroscience (Part 1). Next to these theoretical reflections, the collection offers a series of rhetorical analyses

that evolve from more familiar themes and topics such as style, metaphor or humour (Part 2), narrowing down towards the more specific and closely related topics of the media (Part 3), the new media (Part 4), and finally visual rhetoric (Part 5).

Theory and explorations

Rhetoric can serve as a way of knowing, it is assumed. In exploring the importance of the social and interactive ways in which knowledge is generated, the two epistemological contributions to this book continue the work that was initiated by Robert L. Scott, who put it that ‘rhetoric is epistemic’. Christopher Tindale examines the role played by rhetoric ‘in an important source of knowledge – that derived from the words of other people’. With testimony being the most ‘social’ source of knowledge, it brings to the fore questions about ethos, authority and audience and the development of a model that accounts for the way in which ‘the epistemic work is shared between speaker and audience’.

Drawing on a recent experimental social-psychological study of group deliberation, Frank Zenker suggests that affect may not only influence, but replace cognition. Vis-à-vis this result, he presents a weak version of the *rhetoric-as-epistemic* thesis. Rhetoric is understood to provide a probable form of knowledge of the available means of persuasion that may contribute to achieving the epistemic ends of groups. In particular, the use of argumentative and suasive devices in a broad sense may facilitate that information possessed by individuals is reflected in the group’s decision. Thus, with respect to deliberative discourse, rhetoric need not *create* knowledge, but may help to socialize it. The chapter stresses the importance of studying the conditions under which a person’s knowledge provides the reasons for which a collective decides.

Rhetoric can also play an important role in domains that focus on language, such as translation studies. Hanadi Behairi considers rhetoric in the Qur’an to be a basic element of interpretation that should enable translators to move beyond the idea of translating the *meaning* of the original text. In focusing on the translation of the literary and rhetorical aspects of the Qur’an, she shows that the study of rhetoric can be an important tool in the promotion of cross-cultural understanding.

With Jens Koed Madson’s article, we leave the domain of humanities altogether and turn to one of the new discussions in the rhetorical milieu:

is it possible for rhetorical theory and analysis to learn from neuroscientific evidence or not? According to Madson, this is possible in four main areas: assumption testability, theoretical predictions, analyses and as inspiration for future research. The example shows how the interaction between emotional appeals and mirror-neuron systems opens up a series of possibilities for further research.

Rhetorical analysis

In his study of the bank crisis financial credit metaphors in *The Economist*, Eric Caers highlights the location of specific metaphors on the macroeconomic terrain and investigates how *The Economist* metaphorically frames certain specific target domains (deficit spending, austerity packages, bank bailouts), as typified by its multiple responses to the financial crisis of 2008-2010. This study, therefore, pursues a qualitative analysis of metaphor use in *The Economist* during the aforementioned period, with a view to measuring to what extent the choice of metaphors used by the editors reflects their arguments/ideology against the backdrop of a worldwide liquidity shortfall followed by a dramatic recovery plan. To meet this end, this study methodologically adopts a slightly modified form of Lakoff and Johnson's Critical Metaphor Theory, which is complemented with Musolff's theory of entailment: while it is perfectly possible for a journalist to accept (and produce) a metaphorical mapping, one may not subscribe to all its entailments if the goal is an undesirable one.

In his book *Status Anxiety*, Alain de Botton faces the difficult task of demystifying the arbitrary processes through which status and authority are mediated in modern cultures without, however, giving his audience the opportunity to question his own equally arbitrary authority to speak as a philosopher. Jeroen Lauwers aims to expose the rhetorical techniques through which de Botton manages to achieve a bond of trust with his audience and yet to stay in the position of the philosophical critic of social life. The results thus reflect on the nature of the rhetorical discourse used in the field of popular philosophy.

The effect of self-deprecating humour on speaker ethos in an informative speech is examined by Sarah Gagestein, Bas Andeweg, Jaap de Jong and Martijn Wackers. Three speech versions were tested by means of a questionnaire (n=239): a control version, a mild version (seven self-deprecating remarks) and an extreme version (14 instances). The extreme version

was created to find a ceiling effect where the humorous content would be overstated and therefore harmful for speaker ethos. In this experiment, self-deprecating humour turned out to be problematic for humour, ethos, and interest. The ceiling effect was reached much faster than anticipated. Ethos was not harmed in the mild version, but was harmed in the extreme version. Humour and interest both suffered from the manipulations, both in the extreme and the mild version.

In her work on the non-verbal resources of rhetoric Marie Gelang introduces a new concept, 'Actio Capital'. It is a theoretical model that describes the development of a speaker's actio from actio resource to asset, and finally to actio capital. The model is intended to provide an overall description and understanding of a speaker's resources with regard to actio. Actio Capital is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *symbolic capital* along with the analysis of both classical and modern handbooks and recent research about actio, as well as an empirical study of university lecturers. The model will create a modern understanding of the last step in Rhetorica Partes, the delivery of a speech.

Smaragda Papadopoulou and Fotini Egglezou study the contribution of rhetoric to the teaching of argumentative writing to 25 eleven-year-old students at a Greek primary school. Their case study research has been influenced by the social constructivist theory of Lev Vygotsky. In the context of teaching for thinking, rhetoric facilitated the acquisition of students' literacy in two ways: as the art of effective use of language and as the bipolar view of every subject-matter (Protagoras's *dissoi logoi*). The development of communicative and persuasive techniques in teaching mother tongue activated social interaction among students through the confrontation of ideas and judgements. Their argumentative writing was influenced positively. Statistical analysis of data proved a significant augmentation of counter-arguments and rebuttals in the final written argumentative texts.

Media discourse

Across Europe, the wearing of religious dress and symbols has recently become a matter of controversy. Ruth Breeze examines the rhetorical approaches in the media so as to delimit the arguments that are taking shape. The chapter explores British media discourses surrounding the wearing of religious symbols by Sikhs, Muslims and Christians, by applying frame analysis to a corpus of articles from eight major British newspapers (Janu-

ary-June 2010). Five master frames are identified as organizing frameworks in a large proportion of the articles. The clarity and specificity of these frames is assessed to determine whether they are likely to become politically functional.

Women's magazines show a special type of media discourse, in which rhetoric plays an important role. In their study, Van de Voorde and Temmerman examine how two popular Flemish women's magazines try to impose their ideas on women and their relationships with their partners on their women readers. They focus on relationship advice in the problem pages of the magazines and they carry out a diachronic analysis: *Het Rijk der Vrouw* of the year 1958 is compared with the 2008 volume of *Flair*. 'Interpretative repertoire', naming analysis and a systemic-functional transitivity analysis cater for the theoretical framework for this study.

Fernando López Pan and Javier Serrano-Puche support the idea that the rhetorical strength of the journalistic column is based on *ethos*. This concept contains three dimensions: *nuclear* (topics and values of the speaker), *formal* (stylistic features) and *poetic* (the speaker himself becomes a character of his own discourse). The authors explain the relation of the journalistic column with the rhetorical *ethos*, and analyse the *poetic ethos* of a collection of columns published by three Spanish columnists and writers: Pérez Reverte, de Prada and Muñoz Molina.

Rhetoric in journalistic discourse reveals how events are appropriated through a polemical schematization that corresponds to Grize's tripartite schema. In her chapter on the heuristic function of rhetoric in journalistic discourse, Veronique Magaud aims to show how the term *hysteria* appears in media texts and how it structures each level of the polemical schematization. She adds the notion of *doxopraxie* in order to analyse the way common sense is implemented through the term. The chapter focuses on the term *hysteria* as a narrative reported speech, as a nominalization, and finally as a notion linked to quotations.

Willem Koetsenruijter analyses the roles of victims and offenders in crime news and, in particular, the way these roles can switch. The roles of victims and offenders are viewed as the result of a social construction process, achieved by rhetorical means. These rhetorical means – as components of verbal text, photographs and pictures – serve to persuade the news consumer of the guilt or innocence of the person in question and thus give us anchor points in our perception of what good and evil looks like.

In their case study, Janno Lanjouw and Peter Burger merge rhetorical and discourse analysis with narrative analysis in order to describe the way the press represented the gangsters who kidnapped multimillionaire brewer Alfred Heineken and his driver in 1983. The coverage saw the ethos of the kidnappers shift from ruthless criminals to daring criminal entrepreneurs to victims of the state. By highlighting their audacity, loyalty and cleverness, and downplaying their brutal treatment of the victims, the press moulded the kidnappers' ethos in a Robin Hood-like fashion, using the full journalist's toolbox of rhetorical, discursive and narrative means.

New media

New media discourse is characterized and operated by a rhetoric the description of which calls for more than the functional modification of the traditional canon. In the discussion on new media rhetoric, Petra Aczél introduces a new term: *netoric*. It determines an ontologically 'different' rhetoric manifest in new media communicative practices; a new rhetoric to which, paradoxically, ancient traces lead back. Starting off from where digital rhetoricians locate the functions of rhetoric, Aczél aims at offering other ways to grasp the phenomena of new media rhetoric. In her attempt to redefine rhetoric she uses intellectual sources of new media and communication theories, philosophy and anthropology.

Margarita Esther Sánchez Cuervo examines rhetorical argumentation in celebrity gossip blogs, a phenomenon that resembles the journalistic mechanism that spreads debate globally. Comments represent the main feature of this exemplar of argumentative discourse, for which rhetoric becomes a tool of interest for practitioners. In this line, she analyses Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's arguments based on the structure of reality, by which bloggers promote fresh judgements starting from a previous solidarity. In particular, she refers to the interaction of act and person and the use of narratives, and she also considers the presence of some figures of communion like acronyms, rhetorical questions and the *enallage* of person.

The new internet culture seems to be the culture of participation. Recent changes in web technologies, leading to the creation of web 2.0 systems have put emphasis on the users' activity online. Anna Tereszkievich concentrates on the content of the iReport section of the CNN website with the aim of analyzing the language of iReporters and their approach towards the presentation of the messages. The goal was to find out whether they resort

to the use of any specific rhetorical strategies, and whether their descriptions are more factual and informative or rather more personal or opinionated.

Sue A. Kuykendall and Matthew Kim explore how to teach students to be critical prosumers of cultural artefacts. The Aristotelian canons of Invention-Arrangement-Style-Memory-Delivery may no longer be sufficient for rhetorical intervention in the global media society where communication has become consumer activity. Public discourse in the post-industrial consumer-capitalist economy of meaning calls for a revision of the canons in order to move toward unity and persuasion grounded in lived experience, taking into account the multiple modes in which messages are disseminated. They answer this call by reconstructing rhetoric pedagogy at the college/university level with a remapping of those canons, aimed at critical production and consumption of social texts for active, meaningful participation of global citizens in public discourse.

Visual rhetoric

In his discussion of *Memoria* in documentary film, Christoph Sauer examines how spectators remember sequences and actualize public memory. Documentary films proceed in analogy with orators in classical antiquity. Films use multimodal 'cues' to support the audience's remembering of what has been processed already and relating it to what is going to be processed now and later on. This instance of *active remembering* is linked with a tangible 'memory theatre' the film provides; as is archive footage that evokes a 'revitalization' of the *collective memory*. Thus, *memoria* can be related to the viewers' support of filmic information processing; they are treated as *overhearers* and *overseers*. The rhetoric of multimodal remembering, then, sheds light on the *audience design* of (documentary) films.

For argumentation theorists who are interested in forms of strategic manoeuvring with argumentation in different contexts, the way in which cartoonists use images taken from common cultural sources as a form of argumentation constitutes an interesting research topic. Eveline Feteris analyses the strategic manoeuvring with such images and shows how cartoonists adapt to the audience in their choice from the topical potential of persuasive means to convince this audience of a critical standpoint with respect to the behaviour of politicians or other public officials. In her contribution she starts from a pragma-dialectical perspective of cartoons in which the message of the cartoonist is considered as an indirect form of argumentation. She

analyses the argumentative message underlying the cartoon and describes the way in which the cartoonist manoeuvres strategically to convince the intended audience of his critical standpoint.

José Plug tackles the question as to how transformations of well-known visualizations of metaphors may be used to manoeuvre strategically when criticizing politicians or political actions. In his attempt to convince the reader of a particular standpoint with respect to a particular political situation, a cartoonist manoeuvres strategically. This implies, in the terms of Van Eemeren, that the cartoonist tries to reconcile dialectical and rhetorical goals, the dialectical goal being to resolve the difference of opinion in a reasonable way and the rhetorical goal being that he chooses from the dialectically relevant moves those that serve him best to convince the intended audience.

Newhagen's under-discussed assertion that 'the more immersive a presentation is the more persuasive it will be' is the premise underscoring the arguments in Susan Hogben's text. Using Goodman's typology of possible reader roles, which acknowledge different levels of possible participation, she proposes to understand degrees of immersion in terms of actual readerly activity. She concludes that texts that encourage readerly action on the text itself can help to realize readerly action beyond the text; thus, it can serve as a method of releasing a text's persuasive potential.

Every year, organizations such as World Press Photo, The Pulitzer Prize or Picture of the Year choose between thousands of submitted pictures in order to award the best press photographs of the year. Even though press photography in general has been studied we still do not know much about the rhetoric of these photographs. Jens Kjeldsen examines the common traits of prize-winning photographs. What do they share in content and form? What kinds of subjects, situations, compositions and aesthetic features are typical for a winning picture? One dominant content trait seems to be pictures of pain and misfortune, while a formal trait appears to be visual contrasts based on synecdochal relations.

A limited amount of empirical research deals with the question of the impact of (dominantly) pictorial texts on legal decision-making. Most studies claim that the empirical results show that the pictorial evidence is prejudicial. However, analysing the data from an argument theoretical point of view, Paul Van Den Hoven tends to refute this conclusion. He argues that from an argument theoretical point of view, the information that the pictorial texts add to the verbal 'equivalent' qualifies as probative, or at least

as non-prejudicial. A challenge for a theory about ‘visual’ legal argumentation is whether evaluative propositions such as ‘This crime is gruesome’ are established by pictorial texts.

This collection tries to determine the position of traditional rhetoric in our actual society. It starts with a series of chapters that offer theoretical possibilities for rhetoric to find a place in the twenty-first century. The following part presents rhetorical analyses where traditional concepts are practised and tested for their actual potential. Parts three and four focus on the (new) media and as such offer rhetorical analyses of one of the most characteristic phenomena of our times. And also the last part features renewal: rhetorical concepts are tried out on visual communication. There may be more questions than answers in this book and, of course, this is exactly what we aim for. To a large degree, the art of rhetoric consists in finding the right questions and formulating them as accurately as possible. If this perspective is what we created in this collection, we will be happy to hear even more questions from your side.

There is one thing, however, the editors of this collection are quite determined about, and that is our wish to express our gratitude towards the many people that helped us in realizing this project. We thank our colleagues at Lessius / Thomas More and KU Leuven for their support and enthusiasm during the RIS3 Conference (January 2011 / Antwerp). Frieda Steurs, Ken De Wachter and Raf Steenwegen were of invaluable help to us. Special thanks also goes to Christopher Tindale, Jef Verschueren, Bart Philipsen, Ronald Soetaert, Luc Van der Stockt and Michel Meyer. Finally, we thank the LUP reviewers for their remarks and suggestions, and Anniek Meinders and Chantal Nicolaes for their professional backing during the production of this book.

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