



GTR22 - XXI TRENTO DAYS ON RHETORIC

XXI Edition - 23-24 May 2022

Rhetoric, Communication and Social Responsibility

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION

on May 23rd, 2022

Tindale, Christopher W. (University of Windsor)

Believing Impossible Things, and Its Remedies

Our cognitive environments, it seems, are as polluted as our physical environments, and just as we find ways to improve the quality of those physical environments, so we must turn similar attention to the cognitive. Through rhetorical arguments we modify cognitive environments in order to convince, but the acts of persuasion depend on how people access those environments and process the rhetoric there, dealing with experts and so forth. On these terms, audiences need direction to negotiate polluted spaces and separate the fake from the real. In this talk, I explore some recent attempts to address this problem, like outsourcing beliefs (Levy 2022), cultural cognition and collective thinking (Kahan & Braman 2006) and the roles of pre-existing epistemic states and epistemic vigilance (Mercier 2020). The degree to which such suggestions are plausible remedies to the problem of epistemic pollution will be discussed and some conclusions drawn.

Groarke, Leo (University of Trent)

Let Them Argue: Heraclitus and Encounter Rhetorics

Christopher Tindale and Michael Gilbert have inserted rhetoric into informal logic in ways which have dramatically expanded our ability to understand and assess real world arguing. In his recent book, *The Anthology of Argument*, Tindale responds to some of



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the deepest questions which arise when we study argument an account of encounter rhetorics that reflect what happens – and what should happen – when the Western and non-Western cultures with different understandings of argument and evidence and reason encounter one another. Inspired by Heraclitus, I will briefly consider five issues I want to consider in light of his remarks: the politics prerequisites for good encounters; insider and outsider (“emic” and “etic”) views of arguing; colonialism; identity politics; and criteria that might be incorporated into encounter rhetorics and logics.

Ferraro, Francesco (University of Milan)

From Strategic Legislative Communication to Symbolic Legislation

Legislative communication is often strategic, rather than cooperative, which makes Gricean maxims of conversation inapplicable and implicatures uncertain. Strategic communication between members within the legislatures gives rise to compromises on vague statutes, that leave actual decisions on crucial issues to the courts. Strategic communication between the legislature and the courts and agencies results in what Andrei Marmor has called “legislative double-talk”, where the message conveyed to the public at large differs from the one directed to the courts and agencies. Both cases appear as instances of “symbolic legislation”, which some have understood as laws made not to be complied with, or not to attain their declared purposes. This presentation will address the following questions: 1) What are the semiotic “clues” that could give away legislative strategic behaviour? 2) What does legislative strategic behaviour suggest about an adequate understanding of so-called “symbolic” legislation?

Wagemans, Jean (University of Amsterdam)

The role of rhetoric in interpreting persuasive discourse

This presentation develops a general method for interpreting persuasive discourse consisting of four hermeneutical stages. Different from existing theories of interpreting persuasive discourse, which are normatively informed in that they start from an ideal of reasonableness that deviates from how people evaluate persuasive messages in concrete cognitive environments, the proposed method builds on insights about the production of persuasive discourse, i.e., on the art of rhetoric. By specifying which of these rhetorical



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insights can be helpful in which hermeneutical stage, it is shown how the practical art of rhetoric can be transformed into a theoretical art, more specifically, for the purpose of providing a *cognitio* (analysis) and *aestimatio* (evaluation) of the *opus* (work) that has partly been produced based on sets of rhetorical instructions or ‘rules of the art.

Pölcz, Ádám (University of Budapest)

Dissociation in argumentation: Is it a manipulative strategy?

Since the renewal of the practice of rhetorical argumentation by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, dissociation has also been regarded as a collective concept of arguments that can be paired with each other. Thinking based on the separation of appearance and reality is a close part of our everyday life, but it can also be seen in political-public communication, in the linguistic formality of pseudo-news and pseudo-scientific content. That is why it is crucial to look at the reality-exploring and manipulative role of dissociation in the information-rich world of the 21st century. The aim of paper is to explore the operation from the dissociation mindset along the following concepts that define our everyday life through a wealth of examples (based on Perelman’s work): appearance-reality, hidden-obvious, misleading information, “fake”, manipulation. The chapter contains examples from articles published in the Hungarian and foreign press, analyze them in search of the statements that reflect dissociation in each other. An integral part of the material is the dissociation analysis of the coronavirus epidemic that erupted in 2020: a study of pseudo-news, anti-vaccination argument systems, which provides close-to-life evidence for teaching dissociation to all colleagues who teach rhetoric. Last but not least, because one of the most important critical attitudes is, for example, the reference to sham democracy, sham measures, or the opposition of contemplation and practice.

Corradi, Silvia (University of Trento)

Beyond episteme and techne: an historical and techno-scientific account of rhetoric

After a brief explanation of the word “techne”, the paper will investigate the following issues: (i) is rhetoric an art? (ii) what does being an art mean? (iii) what is the



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relationship, in rhetoric meant as art, between techne and episteme? In order to answer to these questions, it will be first discussed the difference between poietic art, theoretical art, and practical art, to which rhetoric pertains. Secondly, it will be point out the tension between the so called “knowing that” and “knowing how” as two different components of the notion of art, emphasizing the “production” of rhetoric. In conclusion, there will be a shift of perspective into the philosophy of techno-science. Three main changes developed by techno-science – and linked to the concept of “production”, which could be found in rhetoric as well – will be discussed.

On May24th, 2022

D’Agostini, Franca (University of Milan)

The place of truth in rhetoric: re-reading Gorgia's Encomium of Helen

In rhetorics and argumentation theory (since Perelman-Olbrechts-Tyteca's as well as Toulmin's seminal works) the role of truth is unspecified or underrated, and in general pragmatic values dominates over cognitive values. This meta-theoretical attitude corresponds to an a-dialectical conception of truth, whereby first, the concept of truth is exclusively of epistemic relevance, and second, it exclusively conveys positive values. In my contribution I discuss both theses, re-reading Gorgia's *Encomium of Helen*, the germinal text of rhetoric as well as critical philosophy.

Santulli, Francesca (University of Venice)

Rhetoric in discourse: exploring argumentation and linguistic choices in a genre of political communication

This presentation explores the synergy between rhetoric and discourse analysis, with special emphasis on pragmatics. In a discourse analytical perspective, the methodological toolkit encompasses concepts and methods stemming from both rhetoric and pragmatics, which crucially contribute to a better understanding of texts and



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communicative interactions. From the opposite viewpoint, the discourse analytical approach often leads to developing new frames for old notions, expanding their original scope and occasionally promoting a re-definition of their meaning. Against this background, the presentation illustrates these points investigating a selection of texts belonging to an institutionalized genre of US political communication, the Presidential Announcement. In the perspective of argumentation in discourse, the analysis will first single out recurring argument schemes and then focus on some of the most important linguistic features exploited by arguers (enunciation choices, presupposition and implicit meaning, lexical selection, figurative language) to enhance the persuasive impact of their words.

Piazza, Francesca (University of Palermo)

To say goodbye to the truth? An Aristotelian perspective on rhetoric and truth

My aim is to challenge the traditional view according to which rhetoric has nothing to do with truth. Overcoming this idea is in fact a way of rethinking the role of rhetoric in the public sphere. The traditional view has its origin in Plato and in particular in a famous passage from Phaedrus (272d-273a) where Socrates says that rhetoricians (identified with the Sophists) “say goodbye to the truth” and deal only with *eikos* (traditionally translated as “probability” or “likelihood”). Therefore, from the Platonic point of view, rhetoric has no choice but to step aside or subordinate itself to philosophy (or science). Instead, I intend to argue that another way is possible and this is the Aristotelian one. The key notion I will focus on is that of *eikos*. Indeed, I believe that it plays a crucial role in understanding the difference between Plato and Aristotle with respect to the relationship between truth and rhetoric. According to Plato, *eikos* is what is similar to the truth (both in the sense of ‘imitation’ and ‘manipulation’) and therefore only who knows the truth (i.e. the philosopher or the dialectician) can also know what is *eikos* (see Phedr. 272d-273a). In this perspective, *eikos* has no autonomy and consequently neither does rhetoric. Instead, Aristotle (which, in this respect, is closer to the traditional meaning of the Greek word *eikos*) has a different, and more benevolent, attitude toward this concept. According to Aristotle, *eikos* is not an imitation (least of all a manipulation) of the truth but the kind of truth appropriate to issues that can be otherwise and have a for the most part regularity. The specific characteristic of this kind of truth is that it is by nature questionable and rhetorical issues are always of this kind. As we know, rhetoric has a practical aim (persuasion and deliberation). Since we can



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deliberate and try to persuade only about what can be otherwise, the rhetorical point of view on truth is different from that of a logician or a scientist. The kind of truth rhetoric deals with is never a universal and necessary truth but it is always exposed to failure (and therefore to conflict) but this does not imply indifference or disregard for truth. Against this background, what I intend to argue is that rhetoric, far from being indifferent to true and false, brings into focus the difficulty of truth in human affairs. Therefore, reconsidering the role of rhetoric in the public sphere can be a way to take charge of this difficulty without having to say goodbye to truth.

Novak, Marko (New University of Slovenia)

Multimodal argumentation in trademark disputes

EU trademarks may be registered in the form of different combinations between words and non-verbal signs. In this regard, creativity and imagination in composing such contribute to the trademark's distinctiveness with respect to consumers. To resolve disputes between similar trademarks, EU courts resort to the so-called global approach: they do not look to their specific details but dominant elements and thereby make visual, aural, and conceptual assessment by using as a rule a quite general language, especially with regard to the visual and aural elements, which cannot fully grasp the details of their non-verbal appearances. Moreover, in recent years, they have begun to include in the reasoning of their written judgments visual elements of disputed trademarks. This shows that they are already aware that words are not able to provide a fully detailed analysis of visuals compared. Perhaps with technological progress, in this kind of disputes, judicial reasonings will increasingly include other non-verbal elements.

Kišiček, Gabrijela - Nikolić, Davor (University of Zagreb)

Prosodic features, parody and rhetoric

This paper will examine the power and rhetorical nature of parody with an emphasis on the importance of prosodic features in creating parodic speech. Unlike caricature which bases its exaggeration and humorous effect on visual representation of specific features, parody in addition to visuals uses prosodic features to create its effect. Although parody



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uses gestures and facial expressions to create effect, we believe that prosodic features are crucial in its rhetorical function and power to critique existing social practices and reshape the contours of the public sphere (Hariman, 2008). In this paper we will examine distinctiveness between the original and the parody in context of prosodic features. The goal was to discover which of the features were used to mimic and to be as similar as original and which were added by an actor with an intent to ridicule and fulfil the function of parody.

Rogowska, Kinga - Modrzejewska, Ewa (University of Warsaw)

The process of evaluation of a classroom debate in higher education

Teachers can manage the process of debate evaluation in several ways: oral feedback provided after a debate, a scoring system based on a ballot, or a descriptive evaluation based on previously prepared questions. Understanding the essential criteria for judging and leaving the personal preference behind is crucial for debate judging but may not be enough to assess a debate similarly among the judges. This study offers evidence of the differences between judging among three types of judges: peers with limited debating practice, experienced debating judges, and rhetorical scholars. We organized debates in three different formats that the three mentioned groups evaluated. They used a ballot typical for a particular format and a descriptive evaluation card. The results show a strong influence of the previous debating experience and the ingrained way of understanding the process of evaluating the structure and persuasive strength of arguments.

Zoppellari, Lorenzo (University of Trento)

A rhetorical interpretation of logic. The role of the listener from Charles Hamblin to Catarina Dutilh Novaes

Immediately after the English translation of Perelman's book, *Fallacies* (1970) by Hamblin was published. This book, without spending itself for a rehabilitation of rhetoric, suggests a change of perspective (perhaps) even more radical. The Author, who presumably did not know Perelman's work, addressing directly to formal logicians proposes criteria for the logical evaluation of the arguments that focus on the listener's



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persuasion. Fifty years later, Catarina Dutilh Novaes, with *The dialogical roots of deduction* (2022), without specifically mentioning Fallacies, seems to be taking the same direction, coming to affirm, through the analysis of the properties of deduction, the preliminary role played by persuasion with respect to validity. The objective of this paper is to propose a rereading of some fundamental passages of these two texts, highlighting their common traits and suggesting that both, through the back door, spend themselves on a rhetorical interpretation of argumentative rationality, even in demonstrative contexts.

Ciccioli, Paolo (University of Trento)

Name me that I may respond thee. On rhetoric and corporate social responsibility

The aim of the paper is to develop a rhetorical methodology for Corporate Social Responsibility dealing with the legal relations in the multistakeholder governance. My thesis is that the transition from the state sovereignty era to the era of governance provides for the succession of a conception based on the I-It logic to a supposedly dialogic I-Thou. Both types of relationships, however, preserve a monologic paradigm and imply a weak compatibilist conception of rhetoric. On the contrary a strong compatibilist conception of rhetoric, according to the sequence Thou-I, can bear the fruits of the researches of Charles S. Peirce and Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy. The inquiries of both are notoriously founded on the appeal to a second person (Thou) via a Name, in place of a simple word pronounced by the first person (I), supposing this way a response and therefore, from the etymological point of view, a call to stakeholders' responsibility.