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Modern Rhetoric. An Introduction

In most European countries, the study of rhetoric as a formal subject disappeared from university curricula in the 18th and 19th centuries, replaced by the various branches of philology and other disciplines in the humanities. After this period, the analysis of language and literature became the focus of academic interest. The study of strategic communication from a ‘production-theoretical’ viewpoint, however, was largely displaced; it was not until the 20th century that such study was revived in the academic world. Today, rhetoric as a university subject must be rediscovered by many academics, despite the fact that its practical use has always been present in social discourse in one form or another. Modern democratic societies need rhetoric as a civilized method to affect socio-political decisions. Such decisions deal with questions of power that can only be negotiated openly and peacefully through constant communication. Accordingly, one of my definitions of rhetoric is that it is the communicative method by which a change (metabole) of opinion in a society or group can be peacefully achieved. To this definition I would add the following paradox: rhetoric is also the method of re-establishing order and connections (systasis) once such change has taken place.\(^1\)

The topic of rhetoric in politics has been and continues to be the subject of countless publications by academics from a wide array of disciplines around the world.\(^2\) In general, these works are based on a practical understanding of rhetoric that is oriented towards either common prejudices, on the myriad books that deal with practical everyday rhetoric, or on textbooks that deal with ancient rhetorical theory.\(^3\) There is also a wide array of literary studies that sail under the flag of rhetoric. By contrast, there have been a dearth of studies that attempt to develop a modern and genuine theory of rhetoric and that take the idea of rhetoric as an independent scientific paradigm seriously, while fulfilling contemporary theoretical demands. The fact is that in the 20th century, only a very few thinkers devoted themselves to the question of a modern theory of rhetoric; Kenneth D. Burke (Berkley, USA) and Chaïm Perelman (Brussels, Belgium) represent two original and independent exceptions to this trend. The attempts of some German philosophers (Martin Heidegger,\(^4\) Hans Georg Gadamer, Hans Blumenberg) have been unable to newly contour the theoretical understanding of the specifics of an independent discipline of rhetoric.

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1 Knape 2000a, p. 34.
2 For a selection of titles on this subject see: Jasinski 2008 and Bergsdorf 2009.
3 The references to specific textbooks can be found in Chapter 2 of this book.
4 Knape/Schirren 2005b.
Other philosophers, such as Jürgen Habermas, have gone so far as to reject rhetoric altogether. At the same time, American postmodern philosophers such as Richard Rorty, have had an ambiguous relationship with rhetoric (if they have really spoken of rhetoric at all and not some other conception of communication). On the one hand, such philosophers have strengthened the pragmatic approach of modern rhetorical theory. On the other, they have practiced a deconstructive and fundamental criticism of the strategic basis of rhetoric as a whole.

The following book seeks to solve some of these discrepancies. It will discuss questions related to the fundamental anthropological, communicative and cultural foundations of a terminologically consistent understanding of rhetoric. At the same time, a series of case studies will be used to illustrate the presence of rhetoric in culture, and to show its meaning and function in each individual case.

A theory of rhetoric is first and foremost a theory of communication. But because communication touches on every aspect of culture, rhetoric is also part of a social and cultural theory. Still, we must be careful: rhetorical theory does not claim to be a general or overarching theory of communication. It is instead very specialized. A scientific theory of rhetoric concentrates on specific questions and problems of communication involved in the persuasive action of humans, and focuses exclusively on these issues. Thus, another of my definitions of rhetoric can be formulated as follows:

In practice, rhetoric is the mastery of success-oriented, strategic processes of communication. Rhetoric is the communicative possibility for man to assert the social validity of an issue that is important to him (his oratorical telos) and, in doing so, to free himself, at least in the moment of communicative success, from social determination. Rhetoric has, from the beginning, always been about the emergence of man from social voicelessness, and the rhetorical imperative is: perorare aude! Have the courage to use your expressive capabilities!

The disciplinary perspective of rhetorical study is thus quite specific, and it is discrete from other (social) areas of study. For this reason, Chapter 1 of this book deals with the seven main fallacies found in intercultural rhetorical research. Intercultural contrastive rhetoric is itself a new academic branch that seeks to apply the systematic rhetorical approach originally developed in Europe to other

5 Habermas 1981.
6 For more on Rorty’s theoretical role in rhetoric see: Knape 2000a, pp. 43 ff.; and Knape 2007c, pp. 44–47.
7 Greene 2008.
8 Knape 2000a, p. 33.
non-European and non-American contexts.\textsuperscript{9} The area of fundamental rhetoric provides the necessary analytical approach for such research, because it defines when a rhetorical case (that is, an instance of persuasion) occurs. Only then can such instances be interculturally analyzed with a rhetorical focus.

Another systematic area of rhetoric is the organon doctrine, which deals with the means (instruments) that an orator (a rhetorically acting person or institution) can utilize in cases of rhetorical communication. With respect to these rhetorical means and ways, studies in intercultural contrastive rhetoric have demonstrated that clear differentiations exist: \textit{true rhetoric} only occurs when socially acceptable means and methods are used, and varying cultures around the world have different standards about what constitutes acceptable and appropriate means of persuasion.

Discussions within contrastive rhetoric begin with the question of whether the conception of rhetoric that originated in Greco-Roman antiquity (and continues to form the foundation of Western rhetoric) is appropriate and meaningful for analyses of other cultures such as those in Asia and Africa. The answer is yes: if rhetoric is systematically conceived and theoretically rigorous (as all other modern synchronic sciences), then its application is appropriate in such situations regardless of its historical origins.

This discussion leads us to a completely different question: to what extent are purely historical studies on the development of rhetoric (especially those that deal with antiquity) still useful today? Chapter 2 deals with exactly this issue. In it, I draw the conclusion that diachronic or historical research on rhetoric continues to be useful because ancient theories of rhetoric long ago gained insights into human communication that remain valid today. At the same time, the practical history of rhetoric provides us with a valuable collection of empirical cases that can be systematically and structurally evaluated in order to learn more about the communicative behavior of humans in certain social formations (for instance when in small groups, in the political sphere, or in the courtroom). Regardless of the number and type of laboratory studies it may run, synchronic rhetorical science could never hope to replicate the amount of knowledge contained in human history. In this way, historical research on rhetoric is just as valuable as intercultural contrastive rhetoric: both fields of research provide us with systematically useable knowledge about the social and psychological history of persuasion. And persuasion is the core of rhetorical theory.\textsuperscript{10}

This disciplinary focus on persuasion was established in Greek and Roman antiquity, and our modern thinking follows their lead. Knowledge of human

\textsuperscript{9} Meyer 2009 and Hinkel 2009.
\textsuperscript{10} Knape 2003a; Price Dillard/Miraldi 2008; Seiter/Gass 2008; Hosman 2008.
communication and interaction was already highly developed in these societies, in some respects even more so than today. Thus, it makes sense to incorporate ancient rhetorical knowledge into our modern conception of rhetoric; it already proved itself useful and practical in antiquity and is thus in no way speculative. As a discipline, rhetoric has had the good fortune to have been studied by some of the greatest and most perceptive ancient philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, etc.), all of whom dealt with rhetorical communication. Later, and especially since the Renaissance, other great minds have interested themselves in questions of rhetoric. Such historical knowledge provides important interfaces for a modern theory of rhetoric. Still, it is important to rethink and restate ancient insight so that it can be integrated into modern approaches (such as in the field of media theory, as we will see in Chapter 13).

A summary of this ancient knowledge about rhetoric, the *Institutio oratoria*, was written by Quintilian around 100 years after the birth of Christ. Quintilian concentrated the theoretical focus of rhetoric on three aspects of communication, which were defined in his second book as: 1. *ars*: the theory, 2. *artifex*: the orator as producer of orations, as an actor and specialized practical communicator, 3. *opus*: the rhetorical instrument of communication in the form of a manufactured text. In the following I will discuss these three fundamental categories, and begin with the rhetorical actor, the Archimedean point of rhetoric.

**Orator**

Because the theoretical system of rhetoric is based on the connection between actor, text, and communicative setting, the theory of rhetoric explicitly retains the abstract category of the *historical author*, even though some representatives of modern literary theory believe it no longer necessary to address the concept of the author at all. According to Quintilian, the *artifex* is a “specialist”, the expert of rhetorical communication who has knowledge of the tenets of the *ars* (rhetorical theory) and whose communicative actions are guided by this theory. The other important Roman rhetorical theoretician, Cicero, focused his theories almost exclusively on this aspect of communication; the modern titles of his works reveal the central importance of the role of the actor: ‘*De oratore*’, ‘*Orator*’, ‘*Brutus*’, etc. Still, like all other important systematic components of rhetorical theory, the concept of the orator opens an anthropological perspec-

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Orator

tive, and is based on high level abstractions. Within the framework of rhetorical theory, then, we can say that the orator, “is to be understood as an abstract entity, as a theoretical construct that is analytically derived from the study of myriad discourses and can be observed from different perspectives: as a cognitive calculation, as a social role of action, or as a factor of communication and text constructing entity.”

For general analyses of communication, all parts of the communicative event are important. The field of rhetoric, however, focuses solely on problems involved with the rhetorically active part. In this sense the central perspective of rhetoric is the strategically communicating orator, often referred to as the “Sender” on the left side of the classic linear model of communication. The channel (including medium and text) in the middle and the addressees on the right side constitute its other two components. These three theoretical units trace their roots to, among others, Karl Bühler’s 1934 book ‘Sprachtheorie’, and were brought together in Shannon and Weaver’s 1949 book ‘The Mathematical Theory of Communication’ to form today’s well known model.

The main question of rhetoric is not how communication functions in general, nor how the three units or entities of the above model interact with each other. These are questions for communications studies and linguistics, whose findings are only relevant to us through the lens of rhetoric’s unique perspective. Rhetoric as a specialized theory of communication has only one main concern from which everything else is derived: How can the ‘sender’, which we name the ‘orator’, strategically and effectively communicate to meet life-world goals? This fixed perspective gives all other theoretical considerations about communication a focused direction. We see communication sub specie oratoris, that is to say: completely from the perspective of the orator. Thus, in the model of communication mentioned above, we focus above all on the left side of the equation: on the sender and his communicative tools, the “medium” and the “text”.

The entire field of investigation described above is called extrinsic rhetoric. It is a rhetoric that looks outward, whose focus moves from the orator to the external world. From the perspective of extrinsic rhetoric, the classical definition of rhetoric as an ars persuadendi, an “art of persuasion” is appropriate. The orator wants to persuade others, and does so in an interactive social envi-
ronment. The actors, their actions, the sphere of activity, and the prerequisites for such actions are of primary interest here. We call this the external 'communicative universe', the universe of discourse within which the orator operates. The addressees, his audience, are also a part of the external factors of the communicative context.

Concerning the orator in general, there are two questions of importance: 1. the teleological question and 2. the question of roles.

The teleological question: A person is considered an orator when he/she has a goal (a telos), which he believes to be justified and which he seeks to achieve through communication. At the theoretical level, the most important problems here are social and are connected to human intentions and human manipulation. Behind these concerns is always a question of power relations. Above all, questions surrounding the limits of communicative goals are important: what is an ethically acceptable goal? Which goals are politically or legally tolerated? Are there definable limits to rhetorical goals? To this we can add questions regarding the overall method of communication. The starting point for all discussions of this topic (the social acceptance of rhetorical action) must be Immanuel Kant’s political categorical imperative, described in his, ‘To Perpetual Peace’. I quote: “All actions relating to the right of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is incompatible with publicity.”¹⁸ This publicity postulate is important in order for rhetoric to be seen as fundamentally different from manipulation. Those who “manipulate”, we can say, have secret goals, do not act openly, and communicate using tricks. Such communicative action must be excluded from real rhetoric, which is by definition always tied to socially acceptable means.

The question of roles: The role of the orator is also an important topic of study for rhetoric. How are we to evaluate the social role of a strategic communicator? In this sense, rhetorical theory seeks to further develop a general theory of communicative action.

There are a series of questions related to this domain: How does a society shape the roles of orators? Is the orator function bound to specific professions (pastor, teacher, government spokesperson)? How does one take on the role of an orator? Is everyone, everywhere, allowed to assume this role (and thereby to attempt to achieve their goals through communication)? How is competition among orators organized and regulated within society?

In a dictatorship, all speech is seen as potentially dangerous, and access to the role of the orator is strictly controlled. Throughout history, gender specific

¹⁸ Kant 1795, appendix 2, p. 37. See also: Knape 2000a, p. 80.
restrictions have kept women from gaining access to the orator role as well. In modern democracies, on the other hand, the fundamental human right of freedom of expression demands the guaranteed access to the orator role for all individuals. In practice, however, there continue to be restrictions regarding such access. An important example of this is the system of mass media (with the exception of the web): not just anyone is allowed to write for the press, appear on television, or broadcast their opinions on the radio. Especially in these later cases, the view of an orator as a singular individual must be extended to the consideration of higher, more complex rhetorical institutions. This begs the question: Who assumes the role of the strategic communicator (orator) in those communicative systems where individual roles are limited and defined? In such cases, is each individual merely an operational part of the larger system?

Chapter 3 focuses on the role and theoretical model of the orator. The starting point of this discussion is the rhetorical category of ethos from Aristotle’s ‘The Art of Rhetoric’. For Aristotle, the self-fashioning of the orator, his publicly presented self (ethos), constituted an important element of rhetorical success. The orator must demonstrate knowledge about his subject, integrity or credibility, and empathy with his listeners. Chapter 3 combines this ancient doctrine with the modern academic categories of image, prestige, and reputation. These forms of self-portrayal are implemented either in punctual settings or through long term communicative processes.

These questions and considerations of a theory of orators lead us to another important focus of modern rhetoric: the theory of rhetorical resistance. From the perspective of the orator, communication that mirrors a modified stimulus-response model of classical behaviorism would be the best and most effective solution for achieving life-world goals. According to this model, I would undertake some specific communicative act that would immediately create the desired effect in my audience. Naturally, this orator’s dream has little to do with reality. In truth, orators face many types of resistance that continually obstruct successful communication. Every element that an orator deals with in the communicative realm can become an obstacle that stands in the way of his success; a theory of rhetoric must address the issue of how an orator is to deal with such resistance.

There are two primary sources of such resistance: circumstantial resistance (that which arises from changing contextual situations) and structural resistance (that which arises from unchangeable structures of communication). The rhetorical analysis of communicative resistance must use empirical

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methods to examine the conditions under which strategic communication is successful or unsuccessful. Such analysis leads to the determination of specific points that must be overcome for an orator to be successful. In the following, I will name a few obstacles whose influence on communication should be further explored, and whose existence raises a range of open questions for rhetorical investigation.

1. **Situative** resistance: The conditions of a concrete face to face communicative situation can at times be problematic. When giving a lecture, I may find myself speaking to a hostile audience, which might distract me from my communicative purpose. Or the time of day might be inappropriate for my topic, or the room in which I am speaking might not be suitable for my audience or my needs. Each of these factors of resistance are directly tied to the situation that I find myself communicating in.

2. **Medial** resistance: In *dimissive* communication (communication that is transmitted over distances) a speaker needs a technical medium to carry his text to his audience. Each medium, however, has a certain amount of structural determination. The traditional telephone, for instance, can only send acoustic types of text (no optical signals) to listeners, while the newspaper can only send optical types of text (no auditory signals), and the television can't broadcast smells. Thus, every change in medium involves the loss of information, and a speaker must take such factors into account. More will be said about medial resistance and the overall concept of medium in Chapter 12.

3. **Textual** resistance: When constructing a text, I must formulate my text according to a general model of my chosen text genre and fulfill other expectations of conventional form in order to successfully communicate. Only by fulfilling such expectations will my audience accept my text as a legitimate form of communication. This can, however, become an obstacle when I attempt to formulate my thoughts into an appropriate text. In some respects, the analysis of textual resistance in antiquity had positive and productive side effects: it led to the development of a myriad of linguistic structures and forms that were held to be particularly effective. These were classified, named and catalogued as the so called *rhetorical figures*.

4. **Linguistic** resistance: No speaker has a complete command over the language in which he communicates in. As soon as I utter a word in a language that I have not myself created, I am subjugated to the rules and structures of that language. We (as speakers) must use languages as we find them, and must accept their rules and structures if we are to be under-

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21 See also: Knape/Becker/Böhme 2009.
stood by others. Nonetheless, there are many things that I feel and think which I would like to express in ways that the conventions of my language do not allow. How do I overcome this resistance? How can I individually express my conceptions and ideas and still successfully meet my communicative goals?

5. **Cognitive resistance:** The theory of *radical constructivism* teaches us to conceive of each person as a closed cognitive system, and that in reality, the exchange of information between us is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Over the last decade, this radical constructivism has been modified, and rhetorical theory demands that the opinions of others can, indeed, be influenced. Still, penetrating the closed cognitive system of another person is a formidable obstacle to successful communication. How can I achieve my desired effect on my audience’s mental state? To overcome this point of resistance, an orator must have a *projective calculation* in relation to his audience: he must imagine himself in the psyche of his addressees and formulate a rhetorical strategy tailored to the expectations and needs of his audience members. Such calculations are always imprecise and can be risky for the speaker. Above all, such considerations must focus on the communicative instruments that are most appropriate and effective at influencing a given audience.22

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**Theory**

According to Quintilian, the Latin term *ars*, like the Greek *téchnē*, refers to that which can be taught as a well-defined area of study (*disciplina*) to others. One could say that an *ars* is the theory of a subject in relation to its practical domain. As early as antiquity, the development of a theory involved collecting and abstracting the knowledge available about the given practical field. What does this method mean for us today? In other words, what is a theory in the humanities today? What is a theory of rhetoric? What kinds of characteristics must an acceptable theory have?23

A theory concentrates on a specific subject area, defines it or one of its parts, and establishes its position as a part of an overarching system of knowledge. A theory collects various propositions about this subject area and develops a field specific terminology. A theory systematizes and orders the various phenomena that fall within the area of the subject, determines regularities,

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and develops structural models of the subject area. Finally, a theory also provides explanations for these phenomena and regularities, and can predict the appearance of certain phenomena within the subject field (prognostic function). This last feature points to the need for the general components of theories in the humanities and social sciences to be consistently modified to match concrete circumstances. The overall efficacy of a prognosis varies from subject to subject. In some fields of the humanities, for instance, that which we normally call a prognosis must be limited to the analysis of repetitive structures found in specific contexts. Even when the theory of rhetoric is able to recommend specific communicative instruments for specific settings, such a recommendation cannot lead to a mechanical prediction of success or simple stimulus-response expectations. Between the rhetorical stimulus and the calculated effect lies a wide array of environmental factors, among which the most important variable is the autonomous, text-analytical, cognitive ‘system’ of the addressee. Still, rhetoric has the courage to recommend optimal communicative strategies and specifically calibrated means to be used in a given setting.

Modern rhetoric derives a theory of production from the field of real world rhetorical communication. This production-theoretical approach differentiates rhetoric from philology, which is satisfied with purely analytical textual analysis. By contrast, rhetoric is ultimately concerned with gaining understanding for use in future communicative action. This practical relevance has been a constitutive part of rhetoric since antiquity.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this book deal with modern theoretical perspectives on the discipline of general rhetoric and its interculturality and historicity. In these chapters, theoretical questions are discussed alongside questions of methodology, for instance: how should meaningful historical or intercultural contrastive studies be constructed? Chapter 4 also deals with such considerations, but the literary form of the chapter itself is unusual. It is written in the manner of a fictional Renaissance dialog, in which both living and deceased scholars discuss the question of the difference between linguistic and rhetorical research, and detail which methodological approaches are valid in each field of study. The goal of the chapter is to clarify that while linguistics and rhetoric are associated with one another, each has its own unique areas of interest, theoretical approaches, and methodological perspectives.

**Dialog**

Still, we must be clear about the fact that the entirety of ancient rhetorical theory depended on two specific practical prerequisites. On the one hand, it
depended on the basic setting of *situativity* (face to face communication). Modern rhetoric must expand this conception to incorporate the second basic setting of *dimissivity* (communication over a distance of space and time, for instance with the help of the printing press or the modern internet). On the other hand, ancient rhetoric focused exclusively on the communicative mode of the monologue; we can go so far as to say that classical rhetoric is the rhetoric of monologous speech (unidirectional, unilateral, and non-interactive).

A theory of conversation was left to the philosophers. To this day there is no developed or theoretically well founded modern theory of the rhetoric of conversations. Following the systematic demands of the rhetorical approach, such a theory would have to focus on the persuasive concern of a conversational participant as an orator.

Chapter 5 addresses this problem directly. It discusses the basic principles of a rhetoric of conversation and, in doing so, concentrates methodologically on the perspective of a strategically oriented and persuasively motivated conversational participant. This participant must deal with the complex situational conditions of conversation, including the potential loss of oratorical control and the interaction with other, competing orators. Thus, dialogic settings give rise to a special set of problems regarding the theory of the orator. The rhetorical calculation of intervention can only succeed when an orator overcomes seven different management tasks in a given conversation as discussed in Chapter 5.

**Verbal Text**

Quintilian’s previously mentioned definition of *ars* recalls the classical division between the categories of *natura* and *ars*. *Natura* refers to the natural characteristics of man, which are inherent and remain unchangeable. These characteristics are the purview of the natural sciences, not of theoretical rhetoric. Rhetorical abstraction addresses only those aspects of human communication which can be technically implemented, can be learned through study, and which can be consciously incorporated into practical situations. In this vein, rhetoric deals exclusively with planned, conscious acts of communication. Uncontrollable contextual conditions are integrated into the rhetorical theory of communicative resistance. Modern scientific rhetoric must focus on successful communication: how an orator can effectively and systematically construct the instruments of communication (e.g. texts), and how these can be used to successfully meet communicative goals. In short: a theory of rhetoric systematizes the knowledge needed to use communicative ‘instruments’ to successfully
meet practical goals. This leads us to a discussion of rhetorical organon-doctrine, which represents a systematization of the instruments of rhetorical communication.

That which we here have called a ‘communicative instrument’ is associated with Quintilian’s third main category of rhetoric, the opus. The opus is an orator’s output or product. To quote Quintilian, “the work (opus) is that which is created by the rhetorical specialist (artifex), a good piece of prose (bona oratio).”24 Thus, an orator should create a “good text”, a bona oratio. But what is good in this sense? Within the context of this quote, it is clear that a text is good when it has been constructed under the aegis of rhetorical theory. The second common definition of rhetoric in antiquity corresponded to this conception: rhetoric as ars bene dicendi, “the art of good speech”. Good speech in this context is again that which has been formulated and conceived according to the rules and insights of the elocutionary doctrine, which demands that the text be appropriately constructed (aptum) and ‘well-formed’.

The study of the rules and principles of text formulation belongs to the field of intrinsic rhetoric. Intrinsic rhetoric turns its gaze inward, exploring (in short) the communicative instruments available to an orator.25 Historically speaking, intrinsic rhetoric has been the main focus of academic interest, and the field of rhetoric has continually been reduced to questions related to the intrinsic nature of communication in modern times as well. Over time, rhetoric has come to be seen more and more as purely a theory of text formulation (elocutio) combined with a set of stylistic devices and instructions for the construction of phrases (compositio).

This trend has led to a well-known stereotype: that rhetoric is nothing but empty wordplay. Today, rhetoricians take a nuanced position to this complex of problems. On the one hand, the modern theory of rhetoric takes seriously Aristotle’s division between rhetoric and normal speech, found in the third book of the amazingly systematic philosopher’s ‘The Art of Rhetoric’. According to Aristotle, the entire systematized arsenal of figures (which was already highly developed in his time) associated the pragmatic prose of the orator too much with poetic texts, exemplified by the aesthetically heavily overcoded speeches of the Sophist Gorgias.26 Accordingly, he insisted that rhetoric distance itself from such ornate forms of expression; the metaphor is the only exception to this rule.

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24 Quintilian: Institutio oratoria, 2.14.5.
25 Thus we use the Greek term organon to describe this part of rhetorical theory; Kennedy 1999 (pp. 3 f.) calls intrinsic rhetoric “secondary rhetoric”.
26 For overcoding, see: Eco 1976, pp. 133 ff.; and Nöth 1990, p. 212.
On the other hand (and also following Aristotle’s lead), rhetoric has traditionally intensively cultivated the figural doctrines. Over the course of history, rhetoric has collected a well-stocked arsenal of linguistic-aesthetic variations of overcoding under the aegis of *elocutio* (the doctrine of formulation and figures). Still, and this must be clearly stated, these figural structures are only interesting for a modern, more strictly defined theory of rhetoric when they are activated (functionalized) in actual rhetorical cases; that is, when they are integrated into acts of persuasive communication. For centuries, figural rhetoric (which is in reality only a theoretical subcategory) dominated the schools and heavily influenced the understanding of rhetoric. At least since the 18th century, this limited conception has led the discipline of rhetoric into an epistemological abyss. Gérard Genette and Chaïm Perelman have called this pure eloquence rhetoric a, “restrained rhetoric” that leads away from the actual theoretical core of the subject.\(^27\) In other words: for particular historical reasons, rhetoric has developed a linguistic-aesthetic system, which we today (under the conditions of modern academic systematics) understand as an intersection of poetics, aesthetics of language, and modern stylistics. For practical reasons, modern rhetorical research dedicates itself to studying these phenomena under historical, structural, and functional aspects, because these forms of expression can be persuasively activated and functionalized at any given moment. In the interest of theoretically sound positioning, however, modern rhetoric must be able to distinguish the linguistic-aesthetic case (someone has formulated their text well) from the rhetorical case (someone has used this well-formedness to influence others).

The theoretical core of intrinsic rhetoric is based on a model of text production that has existed since antiquity. This model divides the production of texts by an orator into five or six tasks of production (*officia oratoris*). These individual tasks are depicted in the middle column of Figure 1. The first task (generally referred to as the “zero” stage), *intellectio*, refers to the general preliminary considerations of strategy and the selection of communicative means. Then comes the concrete work on the text.\(^28\) The result of the two stages after *intellectio* is a complete text. The cognitive stage of production focuses on planning and general preliminary considerations of topic selection and the development and the overall structure of the text.

This phase also deals with the considerations related to the use of specific “superstructures”\(^29\) in a text, in short: when do I tell (*narrativity*), when do I

\(^{27}\) Genette 1972b, pp. 158 f.; Perelman 1977, p. 11.

\(^{28}\) Rolf 1993, p. 28.

\(^{29}\) For more on the concept of superstructures see: van Dijk 1978, p. 128.
use logical proofs (argumentivity), and when do I simply describe (descriptivity)? In the semiotic stage, the focus shifts to the characteristics of text formulation itself, for example, the incorporation of particular rhetorical figures (metaphors, etc.). Modern rhetorical theory does not assert that these stages are necessarily temporally distinct from one another: they often occur simultaneously and interact with each other during the process of text production.

The doctrine of the stages of production was a core element of the Roman rhetorical tradition, and we find examples of this doctrine in the writings of every important Roman rhetorician. Indeed, the quality, appropriateness and persuasive power of a text that can be developed with this model, as well as the quality of its later performance, are decisive conditions for rhetorical success.

But let us return to more fundamental considerations of rhetorical theory. Taken together, we can call the above mentioned stages of text production textual rhetoric. Textual rhetoric concerns itself with one main question: how do the communicative intentions of an orator become text? Relevant theories for this type of analysis include intentionality theory and speech act theory. The more complicated a text is to produce, however, the more difficult it becomes to describe the incorporation of speaker intention into its structure as direct transposition. This problem arises especially regarding artistic texts, which depend on extremely specialized communicative conditions.

This latter point raises the subject of specific frames of communication. Since antiquity, rhetoric has been classified as belonging to the standard (or normal) communicative frame. In every instance of communication, the framework of interaction and the knowledge of its meaning help establish relevant expectations and shape appropriate judgments for all participants. For the text theoretician Teun A. van Dijk, such frames are,

certain forms of organization for the conventionally established knowledge that we possess based on the ‘world’. Frames thus form a part of our semantic general memory; [...] Knowledge of the frame is required for the correct interpretation of different events, for the adequate participation in such events, and in general in order to give meaning to our behavior and that of others. For example, ‘eating in a restaurant’, ‘travelling by train’, and, ‘going shopping’ are frames that determine which actions we must take, and in which order and with what degree of necessity we must take them if we want to reach a specific social goal. This shows that these frames represent a form of mental organization – for complex, stereotypical actions and events.30

When Aristotle established the need for truth in the first book of his ‘Art of Rhetoric’, he did not mean that rhetoric had the same goal in the search for

30 van Dijk 1978, pp. 169 f.; see also: Genette 1974.
truth that philosophy has. That would go too far. What he meant is that rhetoric, by definition, is subject to the conditions of actuality, and takes place under a mutual assumption that binding cooperative acts occur with the help of pragmatically relevant prose texts. Cicero’s conception of the orator as an actor veritatis is also to be understood within this context: he describes a person that deals with true issues and real matters, who acts with and within the framework of the true and real, i.e. under standard communicative conditions.31

Our cultural knowledge instills in us specific expectations in a variety of different settings. The influence of a silent ‘contract of factuality’ establishes the rules of normal communication, which demand a high degree of reliability and commitment.32 This requires a framework of understanding in which the four conversational maxims defined by the British philosopher of communication Herbert P. Grice are active without restrictions: the maxims of Information (Be informative!), Truth (Be honest, say nothing that you believe to be false!), Relevance (Be relevant!), and Economy of Expression (Be clear!). According to Grice, these maxims can be derived from a more general principle of cooperation in communication.33 Breaking the Gricean maxim of truthfulness, for instance, can lead to the harshest of life-world consequences (e.g. legal problems).

This seriousness of material or life-world communication does not exist in cases of specialized communication (in the de-pragmatized textures of the arts, in literature, theater, advertising, carnival, etc.). The frame of understanding that defines specialized communication is usually established by specific markers, sometimes pragmatically through the mere existence of an edition from a certain publishing house (which may indicate that a text is literature), or purely textually (through genre specifications such as ‘novel’).

This creates the need for a clear distinction between normal/standard and specialized modes of communication.34 Does this mean that rhetoric, focused primarily on standard communication as it is, has nothing to do with situationally created art? In the beginning, ancient theory did not have a unique concept of that which we today call literature. Aristotle reminded his students of this by writing a separate theoretical work for this kind of text (his ‘Poetics’) in order to clearly distinguish it from rhetoric. This second work described his

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31 See: Cicero: De Oratore, 3.214.
33 Grice 1967. See also: Knappe 2008a, p. 899.
34 Knappe 2008a, p. 900; for more on this topic see: Habermas 1985, pp. 185–210; on frames: Goffman 1974.
doctrine of poetic text construction and creation; it discusses mimetic, i.e. playful, simulative creation, “with words alone”\textsuperscript{35} (that Plato had dismissed and questioned). Modern theories of fiction (for instance, that of French literary theorist Gérard Genette) are founded on Aristotle’s ideas.\textsuperscript{36}

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 use three case studies to put this classical division to the test. They analyze texts that could hardly be more different: one deals with medieval chronicles, while the others deal with a short story by the Austrian author Thomas Bernhard and a novel by the American novelist Katherine Anne Porter. In these cases of literary rhetoric,\textsuperscript{37} the composer of the text plays with the boundary between fact and fiction, and thereby with the line between standard communicative and specialized communicative frames. This flirtation with boundaries was in all cases a conscious decision by the authors, even though the genre expectations of chronicles demand truth, and those of short stories or novels demand fiction. Despite these expectations, in the three cases something occurs that I call the \textit{rhetorical factor}. Although neither historiographical nor literary genres envision rhetorical persuasion as a core characteristic, these authors brought components of cognitive influence into their works. According to the 19\textsuperscript{th} chapter of Aristotle’s ‘Poetics’, these components represent the rhetorical factor, which also falls under the purvey of rhetoric even when found in literature.\textsuperscript{38}

Aristotle’s focus on the rhetorical factor consummated a systematic reorientation that focused the concept of rhetoric on the question of influence in a way that no other communicative discipline had before. Against this background, Chapter 9 revisits the approaches of \textit{New Rhetoric} and \textit{Deconstruction}. The modern systematic and terminological differentiation of phenomena makes it no longer possible to fundamentally define rhetoric solely around the so-called rhetorical figures. I have already briefly mentioned that the figural doctrine is – systematically seen – today more closely associated with aesthetics or structural stylistics than with rhetoric. In this respect, we can no longer say that the figural approach of postmodern literary analysis is \textit{rhetorical per se}. Still, the results of such analyses can lead to insight into strategies for dealing with the rhetorical factor.\textsuperscript{39}

We speak of the \textit{rhetorical factor} in all cases where the text genre and communicative frame suggest the use of other production calculations and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{35} Aristotle: Poetics, 1.1–2.
\textsuperscript{36} See: Genette 1991.
\textsuperscript{37} Cf. Deciu Ritivoi/Graff 2008.
\textsuperscript{38} Aristotle: Poetics, 19.
\textsuperscript{39} Cf. Knape 2008a.
\end{flushleft}
expectations (e.g. aesthetic), but where rhetorical components (those concerned with life-world relevant influence of addressees) are present. The search for this rhetorical factor in non-rhetorical settings, contexts and texts is also the focus of the chapters in this book listed under the heading Intersemiotic Rhetoric. The starting point of all of these discussions is the question of whether rhetoric can exist outside of verbal language at all (e.g. in other acoustic and optical systems of signs).

In light of this question, Chapter 10 deals with the subject of a rhetoric of music. If persuasion is the central operation of rhetoric and consists of moving humans from a mental state A to a mental state B, then the question arises of how such change is possible through music. Music is not based on a strong, discrete code (as verbal language is), but music can obviously trigger emotions. Can it also do more? It is quite possible that the rhetorical approach reaches its explanatory limit in posing such questions.

This may also be the case regarding images, and Chapter 11 addresses this question. While the issue of rhetoric in images is an intensive branch of research within the visual studies, these approaches still lack a convincing foundational theory. This dearth stems from the fact that international research on images lacks unity on even a minimal definition of the image itself, much less a fully developed theory of images as images. Accordingly, we can little hope to find a clear concept of the rhetoric of images in this myriad of studies. Chapter 11 discusses how we can integrate the image as a means of rhetorical communication into an overarching theory of rhetoric. In particular, this chapter attempts to transfer important rhetorical categories (such as the doctrine of stages of production) to the strategic communication with images. The important questions to be asked in this regard have nothing to do with questions of art or aesthetics; they are exclusively concerned with the question of rhetoricity. This perspective is reflected in my definition of the rhetoric of images: “The ‘rhetoric’ of an image is defined as the strategic calculation used in its production and its potential for interaction (in relation to action theory) that is ingrained, structurally sedimented, and focused on a communicative effect.”

A film is a film, and not an image in the terminological sense. This fact must be explicitly stated in order to emphasize the complex semiotic character, the audiovisual complexity, and the moving and linearly sequential nature of film relative to images as “stills”. The challenges of a rhetoric of film are accord-

40 Knape 2003a, col. 875.
42 Knape 2005e, p. 138; Knape 2007b, p. 17.
ingly complex as well; a unified theory of film rhetoric would have to limit itself to generalized statements about the rhetorical nature of film. Instead, well developed rhetorical theories of film must limit themselves to specific genres, among which the most important are documentary film, experimental film, and feature film. Chapter 12 focuses on the genre of feature film with a case study of the 1931 Fritz Lang classic “M”. The focus of these considerations is the difference between aesthetic and rhetorical calculations of production. Films of the genre feature film are usually produced on the basis of aesthetic calculations. Nevertheless, the example of “M” demonstrates well that the rhetorical factor (the purposeful influence of the thought and will of the audience outside of mere generation of moods) can play an important role as well.

**Medium**

According to classical doctrine, there are two *performative stages* at the end of the process of text production (as illustrated in Figure 1) known in antiquity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Production</th>
<th>Tasks of Production (officia oratoris)</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>0. Intellectio (Planning)</td>
<td><strong>Text and Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>1. Inventio (Invention)</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dispositio, Arrangement (Structure)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiotic</td>
<td>3. Elocutio, Style (Text Formulation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performative</td>
<td>4. Memoria, Memory (Saving)</td>
<td><strong>Medialization and Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Actio, Delivery (Performing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Stages of Text Production.*
as *memoria* and *actio*. In these phases, the prepared text is saved and performed. Are there related modern theories which rhetoric can use to describe these stages? The answer is yes, and they are found in modern media theory.\(^{43}\) Still, the theory of rhetoric must find its own way, because media theory is in the process of sinking into terminological and systematic chaos at universities around the world.

Chapter 13 thus begins with an overview of the dominant confusion regarding a terminological definition of *medium*. The word *medium* has yet to be well defined as a *terminus technicus*. Instead, it is usually used as a colloquial or arbitrary plastic word. For it to be acceptable as a modern theoretical category, the expression *medium* must assume the character of a well formulated technical term that is categorically distinct from the concept of *text*. For this reason, we must also develop a specific modern *media rhetoric*.

A rhetorical theory of media explores issues related to what media achieve as media, which profiles of leistung (power or performance) of different media are appropriate for various communicative goals, and the relationship between an active orator and a medium as communicative instrument in combination with its text. An important part of the abstract rhetorical definition is that *media* both save and perform texts. With this approach, a rhetorician can develop theories that are capable of predicting the potential for communicative resistance and calculating the efficiency of various media for the fulfillment of specific communicative goals.

The most famous media theorist of the 20th century, Marshall McLuhan, once spoke metaphorically of the media as “massage”.\(^{44}\) A massage is normally defined as a “treatment through the mechanical manipulation of bodily tissue”. This definition is useful for rhetoric in a figurative sense. In order to see how this metaphor applies to media, let us imagine an orator who wants to convey a given text. To get an even more concrete picture, let us imagine an advertising executive who wants to promote a product. To be successful, he must carefully consider which *medium* to utilize in order to most effectively transmit his advertising *text*. In order to select the appropriate medium for his purposes, the following sub-questions must be definitively answered: Which medium has the best chance of reaching his target audience? Which medium has the correct social value or highest appeal to suit his purposes (should he use a book or a plastic bag as his medium, or radio)? What does this selected medium do to the original advertising text? Which medium can strengthen the advertisement, and which might weaken it? Should he utilize the medium of a newspaper, or a flyer, or rather radio, television or cinema advertising?

\(^{43}\) Knape 2005c.

\(^{44}\) McLuhan/Fiore 1967; Knape 2005c, pp. 35–39.
If he chooses television, what time of the day should his ad run (in prime-time)? What kind of format should it run with (that is, what kind of show should it be shown during? A crime drama?)? How often should it run and how long should the video-clip itself be? How should his video-clip be designed so that the peculiarities of the television medium do not negatively influence the advertising pitch, e.g. so that viewers do not simply change the channel? How can he assess and evaluate the issues of cost associated with this medium?

These examples from media rhetoric reveal some of the difficulties and tasks that modern theory formation in the humanities often has to overcome. A modern theoretical conception of rhetoric is no exception. It is often the case that scientific concepts and terms must first be liberated from their historical bonds and the bonds of everyday use; they must be more strictly systematized so that discrete analytical levels and concepts can be defined. The scientific principle of Ockham's razor\textsuperscript{45} is also helpful in defining the scope of new and more distinct theoretical standpoints. In this way, even the common concept rhetoric can be freed of much historical ballast and transformed into a sleek and well systematized theory.

General Rhetoric
1 Rhetorical Fallacies and the Foundations of Intercultural Contrastive Research in Rhetoric

In 2000 and 2001 an interesting controversy arose between two USA Anglicists, H. G. Ying from the University of Colorado at Denver and Paul Kei Matsuda from Durham. The debate centered on the question of the origin of contrastive rhetoric in America. This controversy is interesting because it directly illustrates the misunderstanding (or even incomprehension) of modern scientific rhetoric that has led to the naïve handling of the topic in many academic disciplines. For this reason, I will devote the first part of this essay to discussing the widely used pre-academic conception of rhetoric, and to outlining the seven most common fallacies held about the discipline of rhetoric. This will allow me to then, in the second part of this essay, suggest a modern scientific conception of contrastive rhetoric that can be used across multiple disciplines.

1 Rhetorical Fallacies

The starting point of our discussion is the simple question: What is rhetoric? What is the research subject of general rhetoric as an academic discipline? The modern theory of rhetoric calls this the fundamental perspective of rhetoric. The field of fundamental rhetoric concentrates on the question of when a rhetorical case arises in the world that researchers can then investigate.

I will now take a look at seven different fallacies regarding the discipline of modern rhetoric that are widespread in the academic world.

1.1 Linguistic Fallacy

At first, the Ying-Matsuda controversy mentioned above focused on the role of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in the development of contrastive rhetoric. The discussion hinged on the claim that, “the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity is basic to contrastive rhetoric because it suggests that different languages affect perception and thought in different ways.” Ying contrasted this with Robert B. Kaplan’s conception,

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1 See: Ying 2000; Matsuda 2001; Ying 2001.
2 Ying 2000, pp. 259–263.
3 Connor 1996, p. 10.
unlike Sapir-Whorf, who argue for a causal determination from linguistic patterning to cognition, Kaplan did not claim that language or rhetoric determines thinking. Rather, he argued that language and rhetoric are ‘evolved out of a culture’. There is little doubt that Kaplan views culture as the matrix (a causal determination), and language and writing as the result.4

This debate hinges on linguistic problems that (according to modern scientific disciplinary differentiation) belong under the purview of linguistic theory and have nothing to do with the field of rhetoric. Based on this quote, it is clear that the English word rhetoric as used here is in no way a rigorous scientific terminus; it is an informal plastic word that can be used to designate just about anything that has to do with language or communication. For Kaplan, rhetoric was clearly a synonym for “language and writing”. Should we rhetoricians in fact be considered linguists? The clear answer to this question is no.

1.2 Fallacy of Textuality or Composition

Let us continue our search for a well-defined technical definition of the term rhetoric by turning our attention to the common fallacy of textuality or composition. This type of fallacy brings us back to Kaplan’s thought. In 1996 he wrote that, “contrastive rhetoric has its origins in notions of language structure, learning and use which are not strongly autonomous, and its goal is to describe ways in which written texts operate in larger cultural contexts.”5 In his contribution to the debate, Matsuda sought to differentiate Kaplan’s concept from Whorf’s, and represented this difference visually with the diagram of Figure 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whorf:</th>
<th>language → thought</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan:</td>
<td>cultural patterns → language → thought (logic) → ‘rhetoric’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

Kaplan himself used data from more than six hundred texts from English as a Second Language courses to support his theory. His contamination of a concept of textuality with a concept of rhetoric is nothing out of the ordinary for American researchers. But as a rhetorician, I would suggest continuing to use the

4 Ying 2000, p. 262.
5 Grabe/Kaplan 1996, p. 179.
term textuality or textualization or *composition* to refer to the concept discussed here. This is an independent and separate area of study in which the rhetorical case that we are looking for need not necessarily occur. One example of this would be composition according to purely informational or aesthetic strategies, which have nothing to do with the rhetorical approach.

### 1.3 Aesthetic Fallacy

This brings us to the third fallacy, which relates to aesthetics. In 2009 Hui Wu posed the question, “why do the Chinese relate rhetoric only to stylistic devices in writing?” His answer, “western oratory was lost in translation in Japan, where Chinese students first made contact with western rhetoric,” and, “western concepts (particularly the concept of rhetoric) were translated/transformed into a theory about prose studies in China.” Similarly, Asa-Bettina Wuthenow’s article, ‘Rhetoric in Japan’ in the 2009 volume ‘Rhetoric and Stylistics’ focuses above all on Japanese poetics and stylistics. In this context, it is little wonder that the American sinologist XiaoMing Li criticized her colleague Xing Lu’s 1998 book ‘Rhetoric in Ancient China’ by saying that it focused too much on China’s, “ancient political and philosophical treatise,” and too little on its rich literary tradition. Further,

I have found that the impact of China’s literary tradition is far more palpable on their writing than the entire enterprise of philosophical treatise. For example, *sanwen*, one of the more popular genres in Chinese schools, a prose that resembles to some extent English free verse, is a direct offshoot of a tradition that regarded poetry as the supreme genre.

This confusion of rhetoric with poetics or aesthetics also occurs widely in Europe, and not just in research on contrastive rhetoric (cf. pp. 186 ff. in this volume). But even the great thinkers of antiquity, above all Aristotle, had a significantly clearer idea of the differentiation between these fields. For this reason, Aristotle even went so far as to deal with rhetoric and poetics (and the aesthetically motivated text structures) in separate theoretical works. The so-called ‘rhetorical figures’ (structural patterns that can be used in all kinds of texts) are, in fact, found in both poetry and in rhetorical prose. Poetics and

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7 Wu 2009, p. 148.  
8 Wu 2009, p. 149.  
9 Wuthenow 2009.  
10 Interview with XiaoMing Li in: Wang 2004, pp. 175 f.
rhetoric thus do intersect at the level of the rhetorical figures. Over the course of history, these aesthetically useful structural patterns were firmly assigned to the field of rhetoric. According to modern systematic premises, however, we must evaluate the situation differently and insist on discrete scientific differentiation. The fact is that an aesthetic case of communication is not necessarily identical to a rhetorical case of communication. Therefore, rhetoric cannot be reduced to aesthetically calculated structural phenomena. Unfortunately, many contrastive works have sought to establish figural universals as genuine “rhetorical” phenomena in their intercultural comparisons.11

There is an additional theoretical specification that must be made regarding rhetoric and communication. Rhetoric deals only with standard or normal communicative frames, in which the Gricean maxims hold without restrictions.12 These maxims define the expectations among communicative partners that what is being communicated is both binding and honest. In contrast, artistic communication (especially literature and poetry) works with special communicative frames. Fictional poetry works with the as if of the pure game; nobody expects to see real speech acts in theater.13 Thus, the communicative strategies underlying rhetoric and fiction are completely different. This is clear to all observers of such phenomena, even though (or perhaps due to the fact that) some writers of fiction work by consciously crossing the boundary between the two frames.14 Observers do not actually expect someone to be beheaded when a judge in a theatrical play reads the grim verdict. In a real courtroom, the reaction would be much different. It is in this real world of communication that rhetoric is active. Aesthetic speech is subject to a separate, aesthetic theory of communication; it is therefore theoretically questionable to demand and utilize literature as a source for rhetorical research as XiaoMing Li has done.

1.4 General Communication Fallacy

In his well-known work on the establishment of communicative paradigms in ethnology, Dell H. Hymes utilized the term rhetoric in a variety of ways. One way he used the term identified rhetoric as an overarching general theory of

11 For one example see: Karickam 1999; see also an overview by Meyer 2009, pp. 1876–1880.
12 Cf. p. 15 in this volume and Grice 1967.
13 Both Austin and Searle commented on this in their works. See: Knape 2008a.
14 See chapter 7 on literary rhetoric and Thomas Bernhard in this volume for more on the distinction between fiction and reality.