

Från: Rhetoric Society of Europe magnus.iversen@uib.no
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Till: louise.therkildsen@littvet.uu.se



RSE | rhetoric society of europe

Newsletter (#6 - 2016)

Dear members of the Rhetoric Society of Europe,

We present to you the sixth newsletter of the year. This months featured publication is an article on the rhetoric of conflict resolution, and is written by RSE-member Trygve Svensson from the University of Bergen.

In addition to other calls, conferences and publications, we've talked to RSE board member Hilde van Belle.

If you have any news that you'd like to share with the members, please [just let us know!](#)

Best wishes,

Anne Ulrich and Magnus Hoem Iversen

Newsletter Team of the Rhetoric Society of Europe

Submit something for next newsletter

Featured publication

New publication from Trygve Svensson (The University of Bergen) in Conflict & Communication Online on the rhetoric of conflict resolution:



conflict & communication online, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2016
www.cco.regener-online.de
ISSN 1618-0747

Trygve Svensson

Three dimensions in rhetorical conflict analysis: A topological model

Kurzfassung: Konflikte sind in menschlichen Beziehungen allgegenwärtig, ebenso Rhetorik in Konfliktsituationen. Die rhetorische Analyse läuft daher Gefahr, Konflikte und ihre verschiedenen Lösungsansätze als selbstverständlich zu betrachten. „Rhetorik“ wird in den Sozialwissenschaften oft als vorwissenschaftlicher Begriff verwendet. Dasselbe gilt für „Konflikt“ in rhetorischen Untersuchungen. Es besteht daher ein Bedürfnis nach konkreten Analyseinstrumenten. Der vorliegende Aufsatz schlägt ein topologisches Modell zur Analyse von drei Dimensionen der Rhetorik in Konflikt*lösung*, Konflikt*management* und Konflikt*austragung* vor und erläutert es am Beispiel der berühmten letzten Rede von Martin Luther King Jr. „I’ve Been to the Mountaintop“.

Abstract: Conflict is omnipresent in human relations. So is rhetoric in conflict situations. Hence, there is a danger of taking conflict and its different forms of resolution for granted when we do rhetorical analysis. “Rhetoric” is often used as a general and non-scientific term in the social sciences; the same is the case for “conflict” in rhetorical scholarship. Hence, there is a need for concrete analytical tools. This article suggests a topological model to analyze three dimensions of rhetoric in conflict *resolution*, *management* or *handling*. Using “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”, the famous last speech of Martin Luther King Jr., as an example, I use the model to give an analytic overview.

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- [More information here](#)

RSE Board member: Hilde van Belle



Associate Professor in Dutch Studies & Rhetoric, Faculty of Arts, KU Leuven Campus Antwerpen, Belgium.

Why are you interested in the study of rhetoric?

I study rhetoric because the discipline provides me with a great amount of tools and perspectives to study various human

artefacts. I always liked speech analysis, especially because of the broad scope: both content and form are implied in the interpretation. Some time ago we designed a new curriculum for our students in the department of applied languages, and I took the opportunity to develop a course in rhetoric. In Belgium, we don't really have rhetoric departments, but I was happy to discover that in many countries the study of rhetoric is alive and kicking! I think it is essential for language students to know more about language than grammar and vocabulary; they should be able to discover argumentative text structures and rhetorical strategies in order to improve their skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Those qualities will support them in their professional, political and personal life.

What are your main research interests?

At first I read a lot about argumentation theory since that was new to me, and I wanted to assimilate that aspect in my course as well. Later, I focused more and more on the study of (verbal and visual) antithesis, opposition and polarization and the rhetoric of dissensus. It is important to stress the unifying power of rhetoric and to resist accusations of manipulation, but it is equally important and fascinating to study the ways in which oppositions develop and shift throughout all kinds of texts.

What is typical for the way rhetoric is studied at your university?

Belgium is the country where Chaïm Perelman worked, and his university (Université Libre de Bruxelles) honors him with the *Perelman Centre* in the Faculty of Law. Also at ULB, there is the GRAL-research group (*Groupe de recherche en Rhétorique et en Argumentation Linguistique*). Next to those groups, there are several rhetoric scholars working in very different contexts: philosophy, pedagogy, cultural studies, languages, etc. Finally I should mention the good contacts with our Dutch colleagues in Amsterdam (ISSA) and Leiden.

Why did you join the RSE and what do you think is most important for the society?

I was very happy with the theme of 'Rhetoric in Society' in Aalborg (2006). During that conference Jaap De Jong and I already dreamed of a continuation, which we actually realized in 2009 (Leiden) and 2011 (Antwerpen). The notion of a European Society for Rhetoric grew, and the organization was formally established in Copenhagen during the fourth RIS-conference (2013), thanks to the many enthusiastic people that supported the idea. To me, the promotion of rhetorical studies in Europe and the contact between rhetoricians is essential. The conferences have been a success from the start, we have a strong organizational structure, a good website, and a Newsletter. The next step should be a journal, of course, and I'm confident that we will realize this challenge as well. A lot of people put a lot of work in the RSE, and the future looks bright!

What is your favorite rhetorical resource?

Of course, for a rhetorician it is hard not to see rhetorical resources in everything. (I really should liberate myself from this aberration!) In my classes I analyze speeches, but I also present various thematic corpora of newspaper articles: they are actual and easily accessible, and they confront students with the thin line between information, argumentation, and rhetorical strategies.

Members announcements & other news

Lecture by Marianne Doury on "A descriptive approach to argumentative norms" at the University of Groningen. 25 May 2016.

[Click here for details.](#)

Conference: Trento Days on Rhetoric. The 7th conference of the Italian Society for Law and Literature. Trento, Italy. 16-17 June 2016. [Click here for details.](#)

Call for Papers: Renaissance Society of America, Discipline of Rhetoric. Chicago, US, 30 March - 1 April 2017. Deadline: 25 May 2016. [Click here for details.](#)

Call for chapter proposals: Rhetoric of Health and Medicine as/is. Deadline: 30 May, 2016. [Click here for details.](#)

Call for papers: Metaphors and Political Discourse, Liège, Belgium, 1-2 December 2016. [Click here for details.](#) Deadline: 1 July 2016.



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Rhetoric Society of Europe
School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University
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