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Introduction
Organizational Rhetoric

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Organizations need to communicate. As evident as that statement is, studies continue to probe how discourse can be effective and ethical. Present research literature abounds with theoretical advances that provide advice for how organizations can participate in dialogue and engage with their stakeholders (e.g., Johnston & Taylor, 2018). Some sort of discourse, including narrative form and content, is presupposed in this regard, and rhetoric, because of its origins in classical Greece, is arguably the foundation for these concepts. As the first of the communication disciplines, rhetoric has both practical and theoretical applications that have not only stood the test of time but redirected, and corrected, nation states' relationships with citizens. Furthermore, the rhetorical tradition offers scholars, organizational managers, and communication practitioners a resource to understand organizational discourse, its effects, and its role in society. This volume examines humans, and the organizations they create, as *homo rhetoricus*, the rhetorical animal who uses words to co-create meaning, share ideas, and motivate actions, the building blocks of self-governance (Oesterreich, 2009).

Rhetoric helps explain the ways in which organizations attempt to achieve specific political or economic goals, build identity, and foster relationships with their stakeholders. Rhetorical theory sets itself apart from disciplines such as discourse studies (e.g., van Dijk, 2011) by tracing its tradition back to ancient time and by harboring a normative and practical ambition (Conley, 1994). In addition to offering down-to-earth practical advice, rhetoric also presents epistemological perspectives that temper theoretical tendencies toward naive realism and platonic notions of absolute truth (Vickers, 1999). Rhetoric helps us to understand how knowledge is generated and socially constructed through communication. People create the world in which they work and live via words. They also contend with one another over values and policies. They seek to demonstrate and critique ideas as ways of enlightening choices. Thus, the topic is both ancient, and as current as some outraged position-taking on Facebook, as is evident by the coverage of the many facets of rhetoric in, for instance, the *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by Donsbach (2008) and area specialists. Rhetoric and its companion concepts *heritage* and *current relevance* arise from the need for shared meaning to enact societies, and the layers of individual identities, identifications, and interpretations of reality that constitute the pillars of self-governance, the rationale for society.

In the time of ancient rhetoricians like Aristotle (2007), Isocrates (2000), and others, the goal was to understand rational, values-based, and wise policy-formulating discourse for individual

agency, and then society. Today organizations of all types have taken on the individual roles, but as a collective endeavor to achieve societal agency. In recognition of the centrality of discourse, there has been a (re)turn toward rhetoric in many academic disciplines. Scholars of philosophy, management, economics, law, political science, social psychology, history, anthropology, political science, sociology, and literature have all drawn on the rhetorical tradition (e.g., Harmon, Green, and Goodnight, 2015; Heath, 2011; Lucaites, Condit, and Caudill, 1999; Sillince and Suddaby, 2008). However, presently, the rhetorical scholarship that is of relevance for the analysis of *organizations* is largely confined to its respective disciplinary contexts, be it public relations, organizational communication, marketing, advertising, organizational theory, or management studies. A goal of this handbook is to go beyond the silos and bring this scholarship together to demonstrate its currency and impact on today's fractured world and complex societies. We seek to extend the scholarship that has used rhetoric to analyze the internal as well as external communication of organizations, and discuss how dialogue, discourse, narrative, and engagement (as key rhetorical forms) have become parallel lines of exploration to investigate the enacted role of discourse in human affairs.

The book presents a research collection on rhetoric and organizations while discussing state-of-the-art insights from disciplines that have and will continue to use rhetoric. With its organizational focus, it examines the advantages and perils of organizations seeking to project their voices to shape society to their benefits. As such, the book contains chapters working in the tradition of neo-Aristotelian rhetorical criticism that asks whether the rhetorical strategies have fulfilled their function, but also chapters that incorporate perspectives with a view of whose interests that are served by particular rhetorical means (Conrad, 2011; Ihlen, 2015). The book discusses the importance of nuanced strategies such as discourse interaction that balances dissensus as formative and consensus as daunting. It explores the potential, risks, and requirements of engagement which presumes that discourse improves ideas, reputations, policies, and relationships as ongoing efforts to draw on the best all parties can offer.

This introductory chapter proceeds to offer a brief overview of the art of rhetoric, anchoring it in the Western tradition from Greece (Aristotle, 2007), but also with a view on new rhetoric á la Kenneth Burke (1969a, 1969b). While the volume includes several chapters that explore the link between and history of rhetoric and organizations, a short preface is given in this introduction chapter as well. Finally, the chapter also includes a presentation of the structure of the volume.

The Ancient Art of Rhetoric

Several excellent introductions to rhetoric point out that the Greek–Roman tradition of rhetoric can be traced back to around 500 BCE (e.g., Golden, Berquist, Coleman, and Sproule, 2011; Herrick, 2011; Kennedy, 1999). At this time, a system for making speeches was developed for ordinary citizens who had to present their own cases in court. The emergent study of rhetoric advised that speeches should include an introduction, presentation of proofs, and a conclusion. Later, more elaborate systems were introduced on the Greek mainland and teachers and sophists offered their services in this regard.

From this period stems the so-called rhetorical canon. Rhetoricians had ideas for the five stages of the preparation of a speech: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. The later Roman rhetorician, Cicero, described the phases as follows:

> Invention is the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one's cause plausible. Arrangement is the distribution of arguments thus discovered in the proper order. Expression is the fitting of the proper language to the invented matter. Memory is the firm mental grasp of matter and words. Delivery is the control of voice and body in a manner suitable to the dignity of the subject matter and the style. (Cicero, 1949, I.9)

A well-known dispute developed between philosophers, Plato (1960) in particular, and rhetoricians. Plato positioned philosophy, or more specifically dialectic, as a form of truth-finding superior to rhetoric which could only create the appearance of truth. Rhetoric deals in deception and manipulation, and allows non-experts to outmaneuver the real experts. Thus, rhetoric is actually dangerous, according to Plato. In the dialogue *Gorgias* he pits Socrates against the discipline and the sophist Gorgias with the following statement: "an ignorant person is more convincing than the expert before an equally ignorant audience" (Plato, 1960, p. 459). Sophists like Gorgias adhered to the idea of competing truths (*dissoi logoi)* and saw pros and cons for all arguments, and that truth, being a social construction, could change accordingly. Plato, however, only saw rhetoric as legitimate if it supported the truths that philosophy had established. Truth exists outside of language, it is singular and stable, and can be grasped by dialectic approaches.

Plato's arguments have been recycled throughout history in different versions. Critics have for instance pointed out that rhetoric will utilize all there is, including appeals to emotions, to achieve its goals. For philosophers like Rene Descartes (1956), this was something of an affront since clear logical arguments are what should take precedence.

Aristotle (2007) is recognized as attempting to straddle the two disciplines of rhetoric and dialectics in his treatise on the former. Rather than seeing multiple, equal truths or absolute truths, he preferred to talk about *probable truth*. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle, 2007, 1.2.1; see also chapter 32 on three different Aristotelian conceptions of rhetoric). In addition to Aristotle, however, the ancient tradition also contains the writings of others such as Isocrates that emphasized the epistemic quality of rhetoric, as he stated that "we use the same arguments by which we persuade others in our own deliberations" (Isocrates, 2000, p. 15.256). In other words, it is crucial to use rhetoric for our own thinking and understanding. This point has also been supported by later writers. A prevailing notion is that all language use is rhetorical and that our knowledge of reality is formed by rhetoric. This type of epistemology has been called the *rhetorical turn* in social science and humanities. It calls for studies of the constituting effect of rhetoric (Charland, 1987). Despite the fact that material structures exist, we do need rhetoric to mediate this knowledge. While rhetoric is epistemic in this sense, the relationship with the ontological might be comprehended more fruitfully when it is perceived as a dialectic relationship (Ihlen, 2010). Rhetoric deals in opinions (*doxa*), rather than certain knowledge. While Plato held *doxa* in disregard, as "mere opinion," Aristotle recognized its usefulness, building on the contrast between what is certain and what is probable (Herrick, 2011). Since we cannot have certain knowledge, rhetoric deals with the contingent, the probable, or in other words, *doxa*. In essence, the knowledge of today might look different tomorrow. Still, if something is established as a fact, this must necessarily happen through rhetoric.

New Rhetoric

In the twentieth century, scholars like Kenneth Burke (1969b) and Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) were the driving force behind a renewed interest in rhetoric. The philosophical orientations of the ancient discipline were brought back to the fore: rediscovered, restored, and also developed further. Rhetoric was seen in all forms of purposive symbolic action by human agents, including mass media use, and not tied to the delivery of a speech to a live audience. Furthermore, material conditions and their consequences can also be analyzed using rhetorical theory. This expansion has led editors and commentators to expand the rhetorical umbrella to include scholars who do not explicitly draw on the work of, say, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, or Quintilian. *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* (Foss, Trapp, and Foss, 2002), for instance, included entries on scholars like Jürgen Habermas, Jean Baudrillard, and Michel

Foucault. The list is even longer in *Twentieth-Century Rhetorics and Rhetoricians* (Moran and Ballif, 2000), adding names like Jean-Francois Lyotard. Purposive communication is central in the writings of all these figures.

Besides Aristotle, the one rhetorician quoted most by the authors in the present book is Kenneth Burke. For him, rhetoric was not so much about persuasion as *identification* (see chapter 8). In his "Introduction" to *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969b) he emphasized the types of symbolic action by which humans influence one another: poetry, rhetoric, and dialectic. Symbolic action, the dominating theme in his work, is inseparable from motive, "the process of change" (Burke, 1969b, p. xiii). In his view, rhetoric accomplishes identification. Dialectic is the joining in a progressive form of element of thought to achieve a coherent conclusion. Poetry is the use of language for sheer pleasure (but can influence judgment and behavior).

Eloquence plays to the psychology of the audience; the poet or rhetor creates an "appetite" and tries to satisfy it by using tropes and figures (Burke, 1968, 1969b). Form uses audiences' appetites and by progressive, emergent resolution prepares the audience for the next part (or step) of each text's theme. The rhetor hopes to get the audience to agree to each step achieved in form and thereby become engaged in completing (resolving) the progression. Resolution is complete when the audience agrees (identifies) with the perspective advocated by the rhetor. By featuring resolution, Burke's rhetoric addressed how humans engage in competitive and cooperative (and even courtship) actions. Dialectic, an inherent dimension of language, consists of transformations, tensions, conflicts, paradoxes, guilt, ironies, polarities, interactions based on pitting words and meanings against one another to create and track down conflicts, tensions, transformations, and other resources of cooperation.

Burke's discussion of thought through symbolic action centered on the nature of vocabulary—the power of words and other symbols to order the world. In the 1930s, he announced: "Man is vocabulary. To manipulate his [sic] vocabulary is to manipulate him. And art, any art, is a major means of manipulating his vocabulary" (Burke, 1968, p. 101). Human choice and action is inherently problematic. Burke (1934) cautioned, "if language is the fundamental instrument of human cooperation, and if there is an 'organic flaw' in the nature of language, we may well expect to find this organic flaw revealing itself through the texture of society" (p. 330). By the mid-1930s he had sown the seeds that would grow into a comprehensive theory of the rhetoric of identification (George and Selzer, 2007; Heath, 1986).

This inherent associational flaw that affected the thinking and actions of these "wordy people" motivated Burke (1966) to define humans as "*the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-mis-using) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative) separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order) and rotten with perfection*" (p. 16, italics in original). Talk about their physical realm inherently separates people from reality, but in doing so, words allow humans "to invent ingenious ways of threatening to destroy ourselves" (p. 5). It allows us to create ideologies which are "like a god coming down to earth, where it will inhabit a place pervaded by its presence. An 'ideology' is like a spirit taking up its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways; and that same body would have hopped around in different ways had a different ideology happened to inhabit it" (p. 6). Wars, disputes—all of the implications of division—arise from separation. Consequently, competing vocabularies produce different ideologies (as complexes of god-terms and devil-terms) which predict whether German boys and girls become traditional citizens, or "Hitlerite fiends" (p. 6). In these ways, words shape perspectives and perceptions, Consequently, they impose preferences on issues and therefore guide choices which can variously lead to productive or unproductive, as well as moral or immoral, outcomes.

This interplay of language and ideology allows for many mental tricks such as condensation, displacement, transubstantiation, substitution, and abbreviation. For instance, the power of the negative allows "shall not"s of morality to displace positive incentives of "must"s and "should"s.

Perfection and imperfection intermingle and compete for idiomatic advantage; as one rhetor pushes against another, one group is pitted against another.

With maturer insight, courtship increasingly became Burke's paradigm of association, as estrangement became motive. Either estrangement's discomfort presses people to engage in courtship, or courtship is a tool for combating division. As courtship, rhetoric addresses estrangement, division, merger, and other tensions. "All told, persuasion ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as in sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education, and the sermon, to a 'pure' form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose" (Burke, 1969b, p. xiv). Rhetoric presumes opposition, difference, and dialectical (op)positions. It is the "use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Burke, 1969b, p. 43). It occurs in "the region of the Scramble, of insult and injury, bickering, squabbling, malice and the lie, cloaked malice, and the subsidized lie" (Burke, 1969b, p. 19). Rhetoric "*is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols*" (Burke, 1969b, p. 43, italics in original).

Ever the explorer of paradoxes, Burke balanced classical rhetoric as the use of "explicit design in rhetorical enterprise" with an incentive to "systematically extend the range of rhetoric." This can be done "if one studies the persuasiveness of false or inadequate terms which may not be directly imposed upon us from without by some skilled speaker, but which we impose upon ourselves, in varying degrees of deliberateness and unawareness, through motives indeterminably self-protective and/or suicidal" (Burke, 1969b, p. 35).

Thus, the rhetoric of Burke is far removed from a mechanistic neo-Aristotelian approach to discourse. It is also a crucial illustration of what a rhetorical perspective can entail. Obviously, the many other authors mentioned above offer other takes on rhetoric which can be fruitful. Some of these are also used in other chapters of the book.

Organizational Rhetoric: Domain and Practice

Sometimes in the history of rhetorical practice it has been seen as the making of elegant/artful statements for the sake of making such statements. Far more often, however, rhetoric has been understood to be a powerful work horse that is expected to do heavy work. To the Ancient Greeks it was the means of self-government, personal influence on important matters in public forums, and democracy. Over the ensuing centuries, it was used in the advancement of republican forms of government and religions—the propagation of faith and the working of conversion. It became fundamental to university educational training and curriculum—and reputation building. It was practiced and refined as it navigated unity and division. It empowered a prime minister to galvanize a people against tyranny. It both seamed torn societies together and ripped them to pieces. It was the practice of public influence, putting ideas into action. Generically, the question has been whether many minds and voices together produce better conclusions, or whether wise people understand the true and propagate it to those who do not.

However much the Greeks achieved a democratic voice of community leadership, over time other pockets of democratic discourse emerged in Europe and the Americas, but the trend toward organizational rhetoric, as in government-speak, gained impetus. Ancient Persian leaders used government communication to foster coordination and service on the part of the ordinary people; leaders even announced laws aimed at shaping public order and allegiance. The same was true of Assyria, where government sought to create an orderly society by communicating public policy norms to the common people (Heath and Xifra, 2015).

Organizational rhetoric often took nonverbal forms through statuary, architecture, apparel, totems, armies, monuments, and events (what Burke, 1969b, for instance, would call forms of

the rhetoric of identification). Add to this list the proselytizing rhetoric of the church, and events of a commercial nature such as fairs. Add executions, coronations, and the list goes on. Political philosophers as long ago as Plato and Aristotle recognized the role of discourse in creating social order. That tradition was continued by the likes of Machiavelli, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and so on. This steady stream of political philosophers pondered the means by which uncertainty is overcome, power is forged, and risks and rewards are distributed. The arenas of political discourse were as often as not the backstage conferences and whisperings of councilors as it was aimed at allegiance to a cause and central figure.

Although organizations had used or engaged in rhetoric for commercial advantages prior to the nineteenth century, that variation of organizational rhetoric flourished with the industrial revolution (the coming of a mass production/mass consumption society). It is no wonder that this new era of organizational rhetoric was shaped by the steady increase in organizational size and power; reflexively, large corporations need to gain acceptance for their size and power and success spawns more success. This new order required sophisticated communication, and thus the modern era of public relations and organizational communication in its many permutations was launched (see e.g., Cutlip, 1994, 1995; Marchand, 1998).

Despite the crucial role of rhetorical practice, searching Google Scholar for academic publications where "organizational rhetoric" is used in the title only yields 72 hits (July 2017). Even fewer books are primarily devoted to the topic: a textbook called *Organizational rhetoric: Situations and strategies* (Hoffman and Ford, 2010) and also a monograph published in the introduction series *Key Themes in Organizational Communication: Organizational Rhetoric: Strategies of Resistance and Domination* (Conrad, 2011). Searching the journals in the field of rhetoric (e.g. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*), does not yield many hits on the strategic communication of organizations either.

As will be evident in the present volume, however, rhetoric has been used in many disciplines related to the communication of organizations. It is of course possible to build on the notion that rhetoric concerns the use of symbols in the widest sense, and, as Burke (1969b) reasons, is something that occurs normally and necessarily and not merely occasionally. This would mean that all analyses of the communication of organizations would qualify as organizational rhetoric in one sense or the other. However, in this book, the authors specifically draw on rhetorical concepts and tools to study the communication of organizations. In other words, the chapters contain references to either ancient theorists or modern scholars working within the rhetorical tradition. Nonetheless, the *extent* to which this is done varies.

What also varies is the degree to which the authors relate themselves to what we call the tradition of organizational rhetoric. Some authors place their work squarely within, say, organizational theory, others within marketing, organizational communication, or public relations. Where relevant we have urged our contributors to look beyond their particular disciplines. Still, it is likely that it is the combined effort of the book as such that is the best testament to the richness of organizational rhetoric.

Structure of the Volume

This Introduction forms Part I. The rest of the book is structured in five parts:

II Field overviews: foundations and macro-contexts

The first section following this introduction is devoted to discussion of how the rhetorical tradition has been treated in relevant key academic disciplines such as organizational communication, public relations, marketing, management, and organization theory. The contributors have been

challenged to provide answers for questions such as "How is rhetoric defined in this discipline?"; "How large is the literature on rhetoric in this discipline?"; "What different strands of research exist?"; "What are the tensions that are spelled out?"; "What are the contributions from this discipline?"; "Have these contributions had any impact beyond this discipline?"; and "What research agenda could be suggested?"

Arguably, the development of organizational rhetoric is intertwined with the field of organizational communication. Thus, this section starts with double barrel action (chapters 2 and 3) provided by the duo Charles Conrad (Texas A&M University) and George Cheney (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs): The first of their chapters focuses on how certain intellectual traditions merged in organizational communication to give birth to the discipline of organizational rhetoric. The second lays out the development of organizational rhetoric as a distinctive field of study.

In chapter 4, Robert L. Heath (University of Houston) and Øyvind Ihlen (University of Oslo) chart the terrain of rhetorical studies within *public relations*. A crucial point in their discussion is that however skilled an organizational rhetor is, that success is inseparable from ethical considerations of self-governance and the constant test of the contribution of organizations of all types (like citizens in Ancient Greece) to the quality of community and the strength of society.

In chapter 5, Simon Møberg Torp (University of Southern Denmark) and Lars Pynt Andersen (University of Aalborg) detail the relationship between rhetoric and *marketing*, and the providing of fact/evidence and reasoning, ethics/moral judgment, and emotional appeals that seek favorable responses from customers.

Continuing the focus on context, chapter 6 addresses the field of *management*. Larry D. Browning (University of Texas at Austin/Nord University) and E. Johanna Hartelius (University of Pittsburgh) articulate six themes that are dominant in the management and organization literature which draws on rhetoric as a central research concept.

In chapter 7, John A.A. Sillince (Newcastle University) and Benjamin D. Golant (University of Edinburgh) go deeper into the *organization theory* field to explore organizations as one of the grand contexts in which rhetoric is located.

III Concepts: foundations without which rhetoric could not occur

This section turns to the discussion of key concepts in rhetorical theory. The rationale for this section is the insights gained by generations of scholars who have carefully examined the strategic nature of rhetoric as a means for understanding that it both contributes to but is also held close to (even myopically so) individual perspectives, societal rationales, and cultures, and even confounded by them. The contributors have been asked to address questions such as "What is the concept about?"; "What is the history of the concept?"; "How can the concept be related to organizational rhetoric?"; "How have the concepts been used in the analysis of organizational rhetoric?"; "What are the implications for academia and for practice?"; and "What research agenda could be suggested?"

The concept of *identification* is discussed by the trio of Robert L. Heath (University of Houston), George Cheney (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs), and Øyvind Ihlen (University of Oslo). They argue here that creating identification is perhaps the fundamental challenge of human association and organization as laid out by Kenneth Burke.

Chapter 9 returns to classical rhetoric and the starting points for rhetors: Greg Leichty (University of Louisville) discusses *topics* (classically *topoi*) that prompt rhetors' ability to discover and invent arguments. In modern rhetoric, the notion of *ideograph* has been used to point to broadly accepted cultural values and commitments that can both truncate arguments and point to which ones are situationally most relevant to an issue. An ideograph can be encapsulated in a single word or phrase (such as "free market"). Josh Boyd (Purdue University) traces the origins

and development of this concept in chapter 9. His discussion of ideograph corresponds to *myths*, a notion discussed by Graham Sewell (University of Melbourne) in chapter 11. Sewell argues that myth is indispensable when it comes to creating knowledge about the social world, but reminds us that myth is not "fiction," but a short-hand approach to important ideologies and decisions.

Again, returning to ancient theory, Charles Marsh (University of Kansas) next investigates *stasis theory* as a way of identifying the key points of contention within each debate, and the discovery of which leads communicators to relevant strategies needed to advance their point of view. A key point of contention within a debate can concern organizational wrongdoing. Keith M. Hearit (Western Michigan University) explores the notion of *apologia* in more depth in chapter 13. The language of self-defense can be analyzed with this notion as a form of secular rituals seeking remediation of wrongdoing.

Aristotle held that *ethos* was the first and "controlling factor in persuasion" (Aristotle, 2007, 2.4). The richness of this concept is discussed by James S. Baumlin (Missouri State University) and Peter L. Scisco (Center for Creative Leadership) who add to the treatment of the concept as presented by Cicero and Kenneth Burke. Chapter 14 emphasizes how character is important in persuasion.

Closely aligned with *ethos* is the Roman concept of *persona*. The four-person team of Jill J. McMillan, Katy J. Harriger, Christy M. Buchanan, and Stephanie Gusler (all from Wake Forest University), revisit the classical concept and follow its historical transition to a modern-day descriptor of identity formation in groups and collectivities. They use the tradition of persona by demonstrating how students (who represent organizations) benefit from early instruction as to the importance of persona as articulate citizenship.

Next, chapter 16 recalls the ancients' interest in *elocutio* or the stylistic phase in ancient rhetoric. Here, *rhetorical figures* are discussed by Bruce A. Huhmann (Virginia Commonwealth University) who uses advertising as an illustrative case. The chapter presents a taxonomy to categorize verbal and visual figures and reviews research into their efficacy in producing advertisers' desired communication effects.

Next, Damion Waymer (North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University) unearths the role of *metaphors* in organizational rhetoric, not as artifice but as argument. Metaphor, argues Waymer, is a means by which materiality is connected to language. It has been featured as artifice, but gains importance when viewed as means for disclosing how a rhetor thinks, and how that rhetor wants an audience to think and act.

Chapter 18 also focuses on the *elocutio* phase and one of the four so-called master tropes, *synecdoche* (metaphor, simile, and irony being the others). The latter term is broadly understood as a trope of representation where the part of something is represented by the whole or vice versa. Peter M. Hamilton (Durham University) points out that the use of synecdoche can indicate what is supported or opposed and the directions in which particularly powerful actors wish to drive organisational strategies and policies.

IV Process of rhetoric: challenges and strategies

This section of the book investigates the processes of rhetoric and the challenges and strategies involved. Crucial questions are addressed: "What is the process about?"; "What have rhetorical scholars written about this?"; "How can it be related to organizational rhetoric?"; "What are the contributions and implications for academia and for practice?"; and "What research agenda could be suggested?"

The penultimate process of organizational rhetoric is *legitimacy*. Organizations need to be viewed as legitimate as the license to operate for reward. This enduring rhetorical problem is discussed by Ashli Stokes (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) in chapter 19.

To strengthen their legitimacy in order to achieve other goals, organizations make use of *rhetorical agency*. Elisabeth Hoff-Clausen (University of Copenhagen) explores the constraints and conditions of this ability to achieve agency with words and other symbols.

As discussed in many of the chapters (because of its historical role in the human condition), rhetoric concerns exchanges among competing voices as differences of opinion. If no such division existed, there would be no need for rhetoric, as pointed out by Burke (1966). Relying on *agonism*, Scott Davidson (University of Leicester) puts emphasis on vibrant rhetorical exchanges and dissensus as essential for ensuring that democracies do not slide into the control of narrow elites.

On a parallel topic, *dialogue*, Michael Kent (University of New South Wales) and Maureen Taylor (University of Tennessee) devote chapter 22 to pointing out that dialogue is about seeking to understand others and co-create meaning. Integrating both dialogue and rhetoric into individual and organizational communication creates opportunities for more ethical relationships at multiple levels of society among many voices.

Discussion of the ethics of rhetoric necessarily evolves around processes of *persuasion*. The Swiss-based trio Ford Shanahan (Franklin University), Alison Vogelaarm (Franklin University), and Peter Seele (Università della Svizzera italiana in Lugano), addresses this topic by giving special attention to it as a deliberative or facilitative form.

Turning to practicalities, in chapter 24, Peter Smudde and Jeff Courtright (both from Illinois State University) address what they call the "bread and butter" of the livelihood of practitioners within public relations and strategic communication, namely *message design*. A argument in their chapter is that message design is a strategic (rather than random or haphazard) process that should be defined as a prospective, *propter hoc* rhetorical practice built on sound theory and strategy.

Even though organizations run on words, to paraphrase Jens E. Kjeldsen (University of Bergen), the world is also visual. In chapter 25 on *visual and multimodal communication*, he addresses the interdependence of such forms of organizational communication as being both event and language.

The section on processes is rounded off with a focus on the role of the *audience* in the communication process. In chapter 26, Heidi Hatfield Edwards (Florida Institute of Technology) traces the treatment of audience in rhetorical studies since Aristotle and adds a discussion of the role played by the audience in the social media era.

V Areas: contextual applications and challenges

The fifth section is then devoted to discussing *rhetorical areas* or *genres*, in other words, contextual application of rhetoric and the challenges that arise from it. Key questions have been "What have scholars in general written about this particular area of rhetorical practice?"; "What can rhetoric contribute to an understanding of the area?"; "How can it be related to organizational rhetoric?"; "What are the contributions and implications for academia and for practice?"; and, yet again, "What research agenda could be suggested?"

This section starts off with two chapters relating to public interest, organizations and rhetoric. The first of these (chapter 27) discuss the dependence of *strategic issues management* on rhetoric as argumentation. Robert L. Heath (University of Houston) contends that the discipline arose as a means of helping large organizations to avoid and address legitimacy gaps between management practices and stakeholders' expectations. Thus, issue communication can foster understanding, minimize conflict, collaboratively engage, and otherwise enlighten choices to serve private and public interests. A companion chapter (28), written by Amy O'Connor (University of Minnesota) and Øyvind Ihlen (University of Oslo), traces the notion of *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) and the use of rhetoric. Combined, these chapters explore the challenges posed by the interdependence of legitimacy and corporate social responsibility.

Two similarly intertwined research areas relate to risk and crisis: Mike Palenchar (University of Tennessee) and Laura Lemon (University of Alabama) seek to bring together organizational rhetoric and communication to better understand risk communication, in an effort to more

fully explicate and expand the components that construct the infrastructural approach to risk communication. Concerning, crisis, W. Timothy Coombs (Texas A&M), points out that rhetoric has had a profound effect upon the creation and development of crisis communication. It was the progenitor of crisis communication and remains a vital guiding light for this expanding research area.

While much of research on organizational rhetoric and communication tends to be corporate centric (and focused on profit), this section's discussion of contexts is rounded off by looking at the area of activism as a form of organizational rhetoric. Michael F. Smith (La Salle University) and Denise P. Ferguson (Azusa Pacific University) specifically address the concepts of issues, identity, and legitimacy through a rhetorical lens in chapter 31.

VI Conclusions: from origins, to now, and beyond

The final part of the book consists of three chapters that seek to answer questions such as "What contribution do the chapters in the handbook provide to the understanding of organizational rhetoric?"; "What perspectives are lacking?"; and finally, "What future can be envisioned for the study of organizational rhetoric?"

The first chapter revisits the works of the two most cited rhetoricians throughout this book, Aristotle and Burke. In chapter 32, with the title "Aristotle, Burke and beyond," George Cheney (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs) and Charles Conrad (Texas A&M University) suggest that the two rhetoricians can be used to examine socio-economic-political issues that transcend specific organizations, industries, and institutions and at the same time have important implications for the understanding of organizational rhetoric. The chapter as a whole is a passionate call for the revival of organizational rhetoric as a field of study, and a call to look beyond discrete rhetorical situations and include a broader focus on organizational rhetoric in society building on the two mentioned luminaries.

In chapter 33, Rebecca Meisenbach (University of Missouri) joins the previous chapter's call to broaden the scope for organizational rhetoric, including the intersection of different levels of discourse. Meisenbach argues there is a need to augment traditional studies of organizational communication with a wider range of conceptions and applications of rhetoric, especially those that focus attention on the intersections between micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of suasory discourse. More studies need to be conducted and published that examine discourse and rhetorical agency as means for achieving organizational communication.

Finally, Robert L. Heath (University of Houston) and Øyvind Ihlen (University of Oslo) tie together the collective wisdom of the contributions in this book in the form of some conclusions and take away points.

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