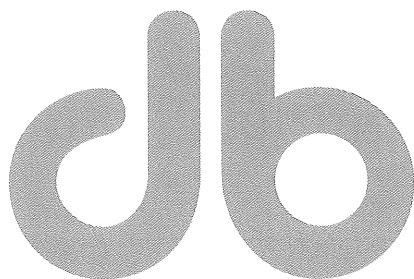


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Rhetoric

Manfred Kienpointner

1. Introduction

Rhetoric is a discipline with a long tradition: about 2500 years have gone by since it was first established in ancient Greece. Within this time span, rhetoric has been the subject of approval and condemnation.

In antiquity, some considered rhetoric as a kind of super-discipline, the 'mighty queen of all subjects' (cf. Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii* 5.427.), while others called it an evil way to flatter the human soul (Plato, *Gorgias* 463a ff.). Many scholars see rhetoric as a rather narrow subject (dealing with the techniques of persuasion and/or stylistic devices), while others conceive of rhetoric as a general theory of argumentation and communication; still others deny that it is a discipline at all. These discussions about the status, scope and value of rhetoric as a discipline are still going on (cf. Schanze & Kopperschmidt 1989; Kopperschmidt 1990, 1991). Whatever the outcome of these discussions, rhetorical concepts and techniques are increasingly attracting the interest of representatives of various disciplines such as law, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, literary criticism, etc.

In the following sections, I will first present the main concepts of ancient rhetoric; then I will deal with modern developments in the field, some of which carry the label of a 'New Rhetoric'. In the next section, I will give a survey of the main areas and subjects of rhetoric, i.e. the techniques of argumentation, formulation and delivery. Section 5 will place rhetoric into its social macro-context: the (mis)use of rhetorical techniques in the media, in propaganda and advertising. Finally, I will present an overview of the reception and further development of rhetorical concepts in other disciplines.

2. The legacy of ancient rhetoric

2.1 Rhetoric in antiquity

There is no coherent, representative version of ancient rhetoric. The main theoretical concepts and terminological distinctions were, however, established by Aristotle in his famous treatise on rhetoric (*Téchne rhetoriké*; 4th century BC; cf. Eggs 1984; Rapp 2002). Although they were refined and extended in some respects in later Greek and Roman rhetoric, they remained the core of all later attempts to write on this subject.

Even today some of the Aristotelian concepts remain valid and important contributions to the field.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic, that is, as the monological equivalent of the art of rational disputation (*Rhet.* 1354a). Moreover, he defined rhetoric as the ability to recognize acceptable means of convincing the audience of any subject (*Rhet.* 1355b). He distinguished three types of proofs ('písteis') in relation to the main factors involved in the speech situation: the speaker, the audience and the speech itself. Thus proofs are either connected with the character of the speaker ('éthos'), with the emotions of the audience ('páthos'), or with the arguments expressed in the speech ('lógos'). None of these 'proofs' is comparable to logical proofs in the narrow sense (as described in Aristotle's *Analytics*) which start from true and explicitly stated premises and use formally valid inference schemes to reach their conclusions ('apódeixis'). Instead, rhetorical arguments start from merely plausible assumptions which are accepted by (almost) everybody in the audience, which need not be completely explicit and which sometimes are not logically valid. Aristotle calls this type of rhetorical argument 'enthymema' ('enthymeme'). As a type of argument, it is accompanied by the rhetorical example ('parádeigma').

It is important to stress that Aristotle, the great logician, did not see these rhetorical arguments as an intrinsically fallacious way of argumentation because he did not believe that questions of moral, justice and political action could be decided *more geometrico*, that is, with logical proofs in the strict sense. And though he criticized contemporary rhetoric because it concentrated too much on proofs based on emotions, he included 'éthos' and 'páthos' in his own treatment. Aristotle also stressed that it is always possible to argue for and against the same controversial issue (*Rhet.* 1355a, 1402a), but he said that this possibility should not be abused and that it is not acceptable to argue for the worse case.

Aristotle developed a basic typology of speech genres according to the goals and subjects of speeches. He distinguished three genres: forensic, political and epideictic speech. The first type deals with the question whether actions performed in the past are just or unjust, the second one with the question whether future political actions are useful or disadvantageous for the state, and the third with the question whether the present behavior of a person should be praised or reproved.

As to the tasks of the speaker and the stages of speech production, Aristotle and his followers distinguish the following: finding arguments ('heúresis'/'inventio'), structuring ('táxis'/'dispositio'), formulation ('léxis'/'elocutio'), memory ('mnémē'/'memoria') and delivery ('hypókrisis'/'actio').

The main instrument of 'heúresis' is the 'tópos'/'locus' ('place'). Unfortunately, Aristotle does not define 'tópos' explicitly, not even in his *Topics*, which is a comprehensive treatment of dialectic. But following De Pater (1965: 147ff), we can reconstruct the 'tópos' as a combination of a device to find arguments ('formule de recherche')

and a guarantee which grants the plausibility of the step from arguments to conclusion ('formule probative', comparable to Toulmin's inference warrants, see Toulmin 1958). To take an example from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1397b; in the Roman tradition, this 'tópos' was called 'locus a maiore' or 'a fortiori'): the search formula tells you to look at things which have certain properties 'more or less', that is, with greater or lesser probability. One of the corresponding probative formulas says: if something which more probably has a property in normal circumstances does not have this property in a given context, then something which less probably has this property in normal circumstances will also not have this property in the same context. Aristotle illustrates this 'tópos' with the following argument: 'If even the gods do not know everything, human beings much less know everything'. In his *Topics*, Aristotle provides a detailed typology with more than 300 'places' to find arguments. In his *Rhetoric*, he only gives a short and rather unsystematic list of 28 'tópoi'.

Aristotle treats the other stages of speech production rather briefly. As to structuring, he considers only two parts as indispensable, i.e. the presentation of the facts and the proofs. But he also presents a henceforth canonical structuring into four parts: introduction ('prooímion'/'prooemium'), presentation of facts ('diégesis'/'narratio'), argumentation ('pístis'/'argumentatio') and epilogue ('epílogos'/'peroratio'). As to formulation, he briefly discusses the virtues of style such as grammatical correctness, clarity, adequacy, brevity and embellishment (figures of speech). Among the figures of speech, he mainly treats metaphor, thus laying the foundation for a theory of the metaphorical use of language. In his *Poetics* (1457b), he defines metaphor as a transfer of a noun from its proper species or genus to another one, or as an analogical transfer. Metaphor thus creates a sort of intellectual pleasure in the audience: it offers some cognitive surprise which, however, leads to a growth of knowledge in a relatively easy way. The transfer is rather easily recognized because of the common genus. It is important to see that for Aristotle metaphor is not a mere stylistic embellishment, but it also has a cognitive dimension.

Later Greek and Roman rhetoric made substantial contributions to the theory established by Aristotle. The treatment of style, e.g. was refined and extended considerably. A comprehensive typology of figures of speech was developed. Three major classes were distinguished: tropes (e.g. metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, irony), figures of diction (e.g. anaphor, parallelism, climax, ellipse) and figures of thought (e.g. rhetorical question, exclamation, persuasive definition, personification). Also, a typology of style was developed. It usually contained three types: the rich or magnificent style, the gentle or moderate style, and the poor or humble style. To these, sometimes a fourth style was added, the vehement style, which was attributed especially to Demosthenes, the greatest Greek orator. Further, a typology of controversial issues was established by Hermagoras of Temnos (2nd century BC) to enable the speaker to classify his case and to choose his main arguments. The core of Hermagoras' typology distinguished four main issues: the question whether an action has been performed

or not, the question of how to define the action, the question of how to evaluate it, and the question whether the legal procedures have been executed correctly. Hermagoras' theory is relevant for modern classifications of central issues ('stock issues') in academic debate (cf. Braet 1984). Finally, Cicero's *Topica* (1st century BC) managed to reduce the long catalogues of Aristotelian 'tópoi' to a practical typology of about 20 'loci'. In his early treatise *De inventione* Cicero also presents a complex scheme of argumentation ('épicheírema'/'ratiocinatio') which consists of five elements, a conclusion and four premises (*Inv.* 1.35.61). This scheme is very similar to the famous Toulmin scheme (Toulmin 1958). In his main treatise on rhetoric, *De oratore*, Cicero tried to go beyond the limits of school rhetoric and connected rhetoric with philosophy, law and other disciplines. Thus he developed a sort of philosophical rhetoric. Perhaps the finest and most comprehensive presentation of ancient rhetoric is to be found in Quintillian's *Institutio oratoria* (1st century AD).

2.2 Rhetoric from ancient to modern times

The legacy of ancient rhetoric was preserved throughout the Middle Ages and early modern times. There were few innovations. In late antiquity and the Middle Ages, new speech and text genres were added to the realm of rhetoric and treated in the handbooks: the art of preaching, writing letters and making poems (cf. Murphy 1974). In Renaissance and Baroque rhetoric, concepts and devices of classical rhetoric were used in related fields such as poetology, theological hermeneutics and aesthetics (cf. Kopperschmidt 1991). However, the status of rhetoric as an independent discipline was being threatened. Petrus Ramus' recommendations (16th century) to restrict the domain of rhetoric to stylistic techniques found many followers. Moreover, Descartes' verdict (17th century) against all forms of merely probable reasoning deprived rhetorical argumentation theories of their status as serious discipline. Thus, rhetoric was gradually reduced to a theory of style (cf. Genette 1972; Perelman 1980: 12ff). After the resulting decline of rhetoric as an institutionalized discipline in most parts of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, we can observe an impressive amount of research done in the field of rhetoric today, especially in the departments of speech and communication in the United States and elsewhere. There are even various attempts to establish 'new rhetorics'.

3. Contemporary rhetoric

3.1 The new rhetoric of Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca

One of the most influential modern approaches to rhetoric was developed by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (cf. Maneli 1994; Schmetz 2000, Koren & Amossy 2002; Kopperschmidt 2006). In *Traité de l'argumentation: La nouvelle rhétorique* (1983 [1958]), they re-established rhetoric as a theory of plausible argumentation in the Aris-

totelian tradition and defended it against the attacks of Descartes and his followers: outside of logic, mathematics and similar disciplines, and especially in the fields of ethical and political argumentation, there is no possibility for logical proofs in the strict sense. Moreover, they introduced a normative criterion for the evaluation of rhetorical argumentation (1983 [1958]: 40ff): only if it is directed at a universal audience (i.e. the whole of mankind, or at least all normal, adult persons) can it be rationally convincing; otherwise, it is only persuasive for a particular audience.

Furthermore, they developed a comprehensive typology of argumentative schemes (1983 [1958]: 251ff). Though many of these schemes were already described in Aristoteles' *Rhetoric* and *Topics*, Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca also added many new schemes of high empirical relevance. Later typological attempts mainly tried to improve the standards of explicitness and demarcation of argumentative schemes (cf. below, Chapter 4). Perelman also applied the concepts of new rhetoric to the description of argumentation in law (Perelman 1979).

Starting from Perelman's new rhetoric, Michel Meyer (1986, 2010) developed a new framework called 'Problematology', which stresses the central role of questions in argumentation. Meyer assumes that questions rather than (true) propositions play the essential role in problem-solving. As any answer can be challenged, argumentation can be characterized as the process of making answers problematic, that is, at raising new questions which are inherent in the answers given to an earlier question. Therefore, argumentation in natural language is different from formal reasoning, which leaves no place for questioning, because the answers are determined by the formal system. It is important to recognize that questions need not be expressed as interrogative sentences; we have to consider the context to determine the basic elements of a question-answer sequence in argumentative discourse.

3.2 New rhetoric as scientific rhetoric

From the 1950s onwards, a second type of new rhetoric was developed. From a psychological and/or sociological perspective, changes of attitudes and behavior under the influence of persuasive actions were studied in experiments or with the help of questionnaires and interviews (e.g. in the classic study of Hovland et al. 1957). Various theories were developed to explain the observed processes of persuasion, e.g. behavioristic approaches, the framework of group dynamics, or Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, according to which people try to reduce inconsistencies in their cognitive structures (Festinger 1957). A comprehensive survey of recent research is given by O'Keefe (2002), who concludes that so far no single theory has been able to explain all observed phenomena (cf. also the critical remarks by Billig 1987). This may be due to the fact that the process of persuasion is very complex and its description involves many methodological problems, such as finding the main cause of persuasion.

Moreover, it has been suggested that the new rhetoric isolates processes of persuasion too much from the social and historical background.

3.3 Normative approaches to rhetoric and argumentation

Apart from the empirical approaches mentioned in 3.2., normative theories of rhetoric and argumentation have been developed. The German rhetorician Josef Kopperschmidt used insights from ancient rhetoric, speech act theory, textlinguistics and the theory of communication and argumentation formulated by Habermas to develop a comprehensive normative approach.

In Kopperschmidt (1976), a 'general rhetoric' is developed as a theory of persuasive competence and distinguished from specific forms of rhetoric such as political rhetoric, advertising, ancient rhetoric etc. Furthermore, normative rules for the 'persuasive speech act' are established. The core of his theory of argumentation (Kopperschmidt 1989, 2000) is based on Habermas' (1981) distinction between communicative action and discourse. Within communicative action, certain claims of validity such as truth (of asserted propositions), acceptability (of norms of action) and sincerity (of the speaker) are simply presupposed. In situations of conflict, these basic claims become dubious and communication has to be continued on another (meta-)level, namely discourse. Within discourse, a sequence of speech acts takes place: first, a participant of the discourse doubts a claim of validity; second, another participant gives arguments to reconfirm the controversial claim; third, the opponent agrees that the claim has been successfully defended, if s/he has been convinced.

This procedure can only claim to be rational if certain conditions are met, which together define an 'ideal speech situation'. Speakers have to act intentionally and control their actions in a conscious way; they should say nothing which they do not believe or approve of; they should have equal opportunities to perform speech acts, that is, there should be no asymmetry of power. It is important to note that this normative theory makes no claim as to the content of rational arguments, but rather defines rationality in a procedural way. On the basis of this theory, methods of analysis are developed and applied to various kinds of argumentative texts.

A less normative stance is taken by another German rhetorician, Helmut Geißner, who developed a theory of oral communication which is based on the rhetorical tradition, linguistics and semiotics (Geißner 1988). Though he also contributed to the critical evaluation of actual rhetorical practice, he is less willing to 'idealize away' actual restrictions on argumentative abilities. The same holds for other representatives of the field of speech and communication who consider both empirical and normative aspects of the field of rhetoric and argumentation (e.g. the contributions in Trapp 1990).

The Dutch linguists and communication theorists Frans Van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst integrated concepts of Searle's speech act theory, Grice's conversational

logic and the framework of dialogue logic to develop a 'pragma-dialectic' theory of argumentation and communication (cf. Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984, 1992, 2004). As in Kopperschmidt's approach, rationality is defined procedurally: the resolution of a conflict of opinions can be called rational only when all participants act according to a code of conduct for rational discussants. Van Eemeren & Grootendorst explicitly formulated a number of rules for different stages of argumentative discussions (1992:208ff). Violations of such rules, which are traditionally called fallacies, are systematically described as obstacles to resolving a conflict of opinion in a rational way. However, the final aim of Van Eemeren & Grootendorst is to integrate empirical studies and to reconcile normative and descriptive approaches. In more recent publications, the relationship between dialectic rationality and rhetorical efficiency has been studied more systematically (Van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2000, 2006; Van Eemeren 2002, Van Eemeren 2010).

4. Fields of rhetoric

4.1 Techniques of argumentation

The description of techniques of everyday argumentation raises three main problems: (i) establishing a prototypical argumentative scheme underlying all forms of argumentation, (ii) to develop a comprehensive typology of argumentative schemes which are subtypes of the prototypical one, (iii) to distinguish sound and fallacious schemes. The most influential solution to the first problem has been given by the British philosopher Stephen Toulmin. We have noted above that his famous argumentation scheme (cf. Toulmin 1958 and the revised version in Toulmin, Rieke & Janik 1984) resembles the 'epicheireme' of ancient rhetoric in many respects. Many recent studies have taken up this scheme, not without criticism, and sometimes in a modified form (e.g. Öhlschläger 1979; Van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 1996; Kienpointner 1983, 1992; Kopperschmidt 1989). As to the second problem, the foundations of ancient rhetoric as well as the typology of Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983) proved to be very useful, but lacked internal coherence, explicitness and empirical justification. Modern typologies try to improve standards of explicitness and demarcation and sometimes also incorporate normative aspects by asking critical questions on argumentative schemes (cf. Kienpointner 1992, 1996; Warnick & Kline 1992; Walton 1996; Garssen 1997; Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008).

In everyday argumentation, argumentative schemes rarely appear in completely explicit form. In handbooks of formal logic, quite often any argument which is not formally valid (because it has some implicit premises) or which appeals to emotions is judged to be a fallacy. This would leave most of the classical rhetorical arguments,

the ‘enthymemes’, as fallacious forms of argumentation. However, in the tradition of ‘informal logic’, which emerged recently (e.g. Govier 1987; Walton 1989), it is acknowledged that everyday argumentation can be acceptable even if it is highly implicit, and that appeals to emotion can be rationally acceptable in certain circumstances (Walton 1992; Plantin 1998, 2005; Gilbert 2003). Traditional fallacies, like many arguments ‘ad’ (e.g. *ad hominem*) are thus re-evaluated as forms of presumptive reasoning which can be rationally acceptable in appropriate circumstances. This is also stressed in Van Eemeren & Grootendorst’s (1992) pragma-dialectic framework.

A comparable approach has been developed by Anscombe & Ducrot (1983). They assume that the internal structure of a language contains laws and principles which are associated with debate and argumentation (cf. Ducrot 1972:5). They show that certain particles in natural languages, e.g. French *mais* (‘but’) or *même* (‘even’), indicate implicit argumentative relations between sentences which cannot be reduced to truth-functional logical relations. Therefore, Anscombe & Ducrot formulated ‘argumentative laws’ which can be equated with Aristotelian ‘tópoi’. Moreover, Ducrot developed a theory of ‘polyphonie’ which explains various aspects of (argumentative) discourse on the basis of the presence of a plurality of ‘voices’ within a speaker’s utterance (Ducrot et al. 1980:43ff).

Much linguistic research inspired by speech act theory has been devoted to types of speech acts which occur in argumentative texts: to assert, to argue, to persuade, to convince, to prove, to explain, to infer, to reject, etc. Besides individual acts, also sequences of these speech acts and strategic choices between particular acts have been described (e.g. Öhlschläger 1979; Kienpointner 1983; Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984; Klein 1987).

4.2 Techniques of formulation

What classical rhetoric analyzed as virtues of style, is described in contemporary research in terms of techniques to formulate texts in an understandable, attractive and persuasive way. Techniques of formulation are treated as strategies to solve problems of expression in speaking and writing (e.g. Antos 1982), and the factors conditioning clarity and effectiveness of expression are studied empirically (e.g. Geißner 1978; O’Keefe 2002). The production and reception of oral and written texts is captured by cognitive models in text linguistics and psycholinguistics (cf. de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981; van Dijk & Kintsch 1983; Levelt 1989). Ortner (2000) criticizes most of the production models and tries to develop a more realistic model of the writing process.

Stylistic research refined the classical doctrine of three styles, showing that there is a multiplicity of styles according to different social and situational contexts. Moreover, there are many attempts to clarify the notion of ‘style’ by relating it to concepts such as ‘choice’, ‘deviation’ and ‘comparison’.

Much research has been done on figures of speech. The unsatisfactory traditional distinction of three classes of figures of speech (tropes, figures of diction, and figures of thought) has been replaced by highly consistent typologies. The best-known was established by the 'Groupe Mu' under the somewhat misleading title of 'general rhetoric' ('rhétorique générale': Dubois et al. 1970). A similar typology was developed by Plett (1975, 2000). These typologies start from the assumption that everyday language is a sort of zero variety and poetic and rhetorical language can be characterized as deviations from that variety. The deviations are generated by four basic operations (addition, deletion, permutation and substitution) which were already distinguished by Quintilian, but not used consistently. The figures of speech are cross-classified according to the level of language (e.g. the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic level) and the kind of basic operation that generates the figure. Dubois et al. also applied their analysis to figures of discourse in narrative texts, dramas and movies. Much of the research on specific figures of speech has dealt with metaphor and metonymy (for a survey, see Ricoeur 1975; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 2005; Haverkamp 1983; Kövecses 2002; Fahnestock 2009).

Questions of style and formulation are closely related to politeness phenomena: figures of speech often involve indirect ways of expressions (generating conversational implicatures in the sense introduced by Grice 1975) which serve as means of polite communication. Extending the Gricean conversational logic (with its cooperative principle and conversational maxims) to the interpersonal dimension, Leech (1983) developed an 'interpersonal rhetoric' with a general politeness principle and several maxims of politeness. These explain the occurrence of certain figures of speech (e.g. irony, understatement, hyperbole) as politeness phenomena. However, Brown & Levinson (1987) criticized this approach as an unnecessary proliferation of maxims and used Grice's original maxims to explain certain ways of figurative expression as off-the-record strategies to avoid face threatening acts. The ideologies underlying both everyday notions and scientific conceptions of politeness are critically discussed in Kienpointner (ed.) (1999). More recent research points out that impoliteness can be strategic, systematic and far from being anomalous behaviour (see Bousfield & Culpeper 2008).

4.3 Techniques of performance

Though Roman orators such as Cicero and Quintilian gave relatively detailed pieces of advice for delivery, this part of ancient theory was less well elaborated than others. In contemporary research, especially psychologists have contributed a lot to the description of paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects of communication (qualities of voice, management of the face, gestures, position and body movements, spatial distance between speaker and audience). With the help of modern technology (photography,

audio and video recording), detailed typologies of nonverbal ways of expressing emotions, of yielding additional information and of increasing the effect of the verbal message have been established (e.g. Poyatos 1992; Wierzbicka 1999). Nonverbal communication also fulfills strategic functions in argumentative interaction (see Kienpointner 1983: 123ff; Hirsch 1989).

5. The social macro-context of rhetoric

The rhetorical means of persuasion used in various social and political institutions are increasingly studied from a critical perspective. Topics in such research include the study of commercials, political advertisement, political speech, ideologies such as racism and anti-semitism, gender and language usage, etc. Although the theoretical point of departure may range from social psychology over linguistics and argumentation studies to sociology, most of these studies focus on rhetorical practice in concrete socio-cultural settings. Often, the cover terms 'critical linguistics' or 'critical discourse analysis' are used for this type of research (Pennycook 2001; Wodak & Reisigl 2001; Fahnestock 2009).

An important area of research concerns typical rhetorical strategies and argumentative styles associated with whole nations or cultures. Here studies on culture-specific forms of argumentation (e.g. Walker 1987; Blommaert 1988; Shi-Xu 2005) are particularly relevant. Galtung (1985) studied scientific argumentation crossculturally and tried to establish several intellectual styles of scientific argumentation (e.g. a 'teutonic' style versus a 'saxonic' style).

6. Rhetoric and other fields

Today, the departments of speech and communication in the USA, the Netherlands and elsewhere continue the tradition of classical rhetoric (Braet 1984: 3). Their members do not only continue the research on effective speaking and writing, but they also contribute to the practice of rhetoric by training students for the tournaments of 'academic debate', in which issues of general importance are discussed according to precisely established normative rules and judged by a jury (cf. Freeley 1986). Also, from antiquity onwards, lawyers have shown a considerable practical interest in rhetoric, especially in the tradition of the Aristotelian *Topics* and 'stasis'-theory (cf. Viehweg 1974).

There are very close relations between rhetoric and modern linguistics. Especially text linguists readily acknowledge the merits of ancient rhetoric as far as the study of discursive texts is concerned. The close connection between rhetorical techniques

and text structure becomes especially clear within 'rhetorical structure theory' (cf. Mann et al. 1992), a recent approach which studies semantic relations establishing the coherence of texts. The same holds for the relation between rhetoric and literary criticism. Rhetoric is used not only for theory formation, but also as an instrument for interpreting literary texts (e.g. Curtius 1948; Kibédi-Varga 1970; Plett 1975, 2000) or, from a postmodern perspective, to discuss principal difficulties of interpretation (De Man 1991).

There have also been various attempts to use the descriptive tools of classical rhetoric beyond verbal texts and to study other semiotic codes, e.g. 'rhetorical figures' in music, painting or movies (e.g. Dubois et al. 1970; Jakobson 1971; the contributions in Haverkamp 1983; Kopperschmidt 1990). Therefore, it is no wonder that semioticians have tried to integrate rhetoric into a general theory of semiotics (cf. Eco 1972: 184ff).

Within psychology, there is considerable interest in the study of persuasion and nonverbal communication, and the rhetorical doctrine of figures of speech has been related by some to aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis. Contemporary rhetoric-oriented social psychology (e.g. Billig 1987; Shotter 1993) is a very active and innovative branch, mostly oriented towards applied and critical research.

The relationship between rhetoric and philosophy is historically a problematic and ambiguous one (see Schanze & Kopperschmidt 1989). Many prominent philosophers (e.g. Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel) were very critical of rhetoric, while others considered it an important and useful discipline (e.g. Aristotle, St. Augustine, Vico, Nietzsche). In our time, many philosophers have made important contributions to the theory of rhetoric and argumentation (e.g. Johnston, Perelman, Ricœur, Toulmin and others). The old controversy may soon be replaced by fruitful interaction.

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