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Review of the book „Rhetoric and Politics: Central/Eastern European Perspectives” (edited by Maria Zaleska)

Reviewer – Iglia Kassabova

Maria Zaleska is a highly respected professor in rhetoric and a distinctive linguist at University of Warsaw, Poland. She is the president of the Polish Rhetorical Society and serves at the Editorial Board of the Forum Artis Rhetoricae. Taking in account her academic pro-activity and research interests focused on rhetoric and argumentation theory, we are not surprised to see published her impressive volume „Rhetoric and Politics: Central/ Eastern European Perspectives”. The book is entirely edited by Prof. Zaleska, who managed to gather some of the most appreciated scholar in the areas of political science, sociology, history, linguistic and rhetoric.

Rhetoric and politics or rhetoric in/of politics constitute a heterogeneous art of research. For sure, the long history of both rhetoric and politics gives anything but a straightforward answer concerning their interrelations. The challenge to introduce the relation between the rhetoric and politics is taken by the editor herself in the first two chapters: Rhetoric and Politics: Mapping the Interrelations and Rhetorical Patterns of Constructing the Politician’s Ethos.

Reflecting a growing scholarly interest in political discourses, this volume offers systematical, theoretically grounded insights into the tools of persuasion that are used, and even abused by politics nowadays. The fine selected articles by the authors combine the interest in rhetoric within politics with different disciplinary orientations – discourse analysis, argumentation research, political theory and linguistics. The focus of modern rhetoricians and discourse analysts is based on speakers linguistic and metalinguistic activities, admits the editor. Therefore, these scientists rarely, if ever, address the question of what is politics according to some principled criteria, or which part of communicative activities corresponds to such definition. Instead, most scholars are interested in what counts as politics in current communicative practices. The ambition of this volume is to reflect some of the key approaches applied within the field.

The volume is divided into four parts, the first three dedicate to the three rhetorical categories: ethos, pathos and logos. The fourth one has the challenging task to illustrate their interaction with the main form of engagement in politics – the conflicts of interests.

What concerns the concept of ethos and its modern conceptualizations, all the chapters in Part I manage to explore different aspects of self-presentation within political discourse. Maria Zeleska proposes a theoretical framework that distinguishes three sets of criteria involved in creating the politician’s ethos: mimetic, poetic and argumentative. Among the means of persuasion useful for the

constructing of the politician's ethos, there is the strategic management of the impersonal relations with the recipient. Another aspect of political categorization is addressed in the chapter, entitled „Rhetorical value of temporal categories in the construction of political identities.”

Part II is dedicated to the emotive means complementary to ethos, namely pathos. The three chapters explore the subtle mechanisms mobilized by the politicians to raise emotions through verbal and visual aesthetics. The next Part III is exploring the ways in which the argumentation interacts with emotive means. The chapters in the section explore rhetorical mechanisms underlying the construction of reasoning in political contexts, as well as the metapolitical argumentation.

The final Part IV explores the interaction of emotive and rational means within the conflictive interactions. The last four chapters of the volume involve all the components discussed in the book and one of the conclusions is that politicians often transgress the conventions of argumentation through manipulation.

Dealing with an extensive variety of topics, the case studies presented in the volume provide an empirically rich amount of information regarding to politics as persuasive achievement. The volume, edited by Prof. Zaleska provides valuable research methodologies within the discipline of rhetoric as well as in-depth analyses of political discourses sensible to cultural dependences.

To sum up, the publication of *Rhetoric and Politics: Central/ Eastern Europe Perspectives* is a book that makes a significant contribution to both rhetorical and political fields of studies.

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