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Digital Library

Studies of Rhetoric

Gabriela Kisicek and Igor Z. Zagar, editors. *What do We Know about the World?*

Rhetorical and Argumentative Perspective, Digital Library, 2013

The book *What do We Know about the World? Rhetorical and Argumentative Perspective* (2013) is a part of an interesting, modern and efficient project called *Digital Library*. It is the effect of a host of latest developments in the field of research and communicative practices involving the processes of 1) collaboration of researchers from different countries in one or more scientific fields; 2) development of scientific networks of researchers that have marked tendency of steady growth; 3) using frontier methods of presenting and making popular the results of scientific studies into the traditional and some newly-developed sub-fields of rhetoric.

Gabriela Kisicek and Igor Z. Zagar are the editors of the book *What do We Know about the World? Rhetorical and Argumentative Perspective*. The completed variant of the text is the effect of the collaborative activities of the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Windsor Studies in Argumentation Centre, University of Windsor.

The book is a teamwork where the results of collaborative studies are collected in six parts: Rhetoric, Argumentation, Political Discourse, Legal Discourse, Education and Media discourse studies.

The digital text begins with a part entitled *Theoretical Perspectives*, consisting of six chapters besides the Introduction and Conclusion, written by Leo Groarke, Igor Zagar, Paul Danler, Ana Dimiškanska, Fabrizio Macagno, and Sheldon Wein.

Leo Groarke from the University of Windsor is the author of the first article *The Elements of Argument: Six Steps to a Thick Theory* where the argument is laid out in 6 schematic

steps of study: 1) *Beginning with Logic*, 2) *Argument in its Rhetorical Context*, 3) *Argument in its Dialectical Context*, 4) *Argument in its Dialogical Context*, 5) *Multi-Modal Argument*, 6) *Argument and Emotion* (pp. 25-45). The author positions the multi-modal argument beyond verbal paradigms and even beyond the traditional concept of the argument, letting the idea that photos, maps, pictures and other visual aids can be perceived as arguments in certain contexts. The conclusion of the research is that in the Digital Era it is easy to share images, sounds and even physical perceptions and it is no surprise at all that arguments tend to rely more on visual and non-verbal elements in general. In addition, the recognition of multi-modal arguments is one of the ways to broaden the scope of our understanding of the nature of the argument and make a step forward in the development of *thick rhetorical theory* (pp. 34-37).

In his paper, *Argumentation as Polyphony: One Speaker, Several Voices*, Igor Zagar focuses on defending an interesting statement concerning the understanding of what a 'speaker' is (pp. 49-62). The author accentuates on the clarification of the concept of 'polyphony' (p. 60), starting from Bachtin to develop his own thesis. In the theory of Igor Zagar polyphonic analysis can serve as a useful analytical tool. He also extrapolates on the concept of 'utterer': in his understanding 'utterers' are not merely individuals who listen to each other and agree to disagree, but they have different positions and viewpoints which are clearly outlined within the process of argumentation. He also makes the precise clarification that 'utterers' are not real people talking to each other but theoretical /abstract/ and analytical individuals that help us reconstruct the steps in argumentation.

Another interesting article from the part *Theoretical Perspectives* that attracted our attention is Paul Danler's study *The Linguistic-Discursive Creation of the Speaker's Ethos for the Sake of Persuasion: A Key Aspect of Rhetoric and Argumentation*. It gives answers to enquiries concerned with the role of *ethos* in rhetoric and argument and how the Speaker's ethos is created in linguistic discourse (pp. 69-80). One of the main points of our concern is the difference of argumentation and rhetoric expressed by the author. He states that language is in the focus of Argumentation, while Rhetoric places in the core the human individual (p. 71). The second point of interest in this article is the systematic layout of morpho-syntactic criteria which in the view of the author aid the creation of the Speaker's ethos. Paul Danler's

thesis is that each language structure can improve the Speaker's ethos if the latter has been created in effect of linguistic discursive construction.

In the 6th part, *Media*, the study of Petra Aczél *Challenges of Rhetoric in the Era of "Bytes and Likes"* introduces some novel and useful information for us. It searches to display the relations and the cross-points of rhetoric and the new media. The paper introduces the new concepts of 'visual rhetoric', 'spatial rhetoric', 'procedural rhetoric', 'aural rhetoric' (pp. 329-343). The author discusses the 'visual' and 'iconic' images, the ideas of 'space', 'place', 'position' and 'environment' as well as 'the new cultural spaces'. She mentions a couple of key concepts that open new routes for scientific thinking and reach to broader rhetorical horizons for the uses of 'space' and 'place'. The term 'procedural rhetoric' refers to a couple of levels: graphic (motion, light, rhythm of changes, etc.) and textual (choice, combination, serial sequences, procedures). The term is applicable to both procedural and general models and to such used in media and its functions (menu, toolbar). Procedural Rhetoric thus uses figures and data for procedural, textualised and graphic ways of thinking to design concepts and reach conclusions based on the processes and procedures in view. The author states that there exist textual, visual and iconic projections (p. 340). Phonetic and phonological dimensions of rhetoric are described by the term 'aural rhetoric'. The author sees Aural Rhetoric as a branch of Visual Rhetoric accentuating on the historic fact that it has been 'struggling with the disciplinary determination and domination of the verbal' in Rhetorical theory for more than 2,500 years by far (p. 341).

The authors' profiles at the end of the digital edition serve as sound proof of the created research networks or communities of scientists from different countries represented by the following universities: University of Calgary, Simon Fraser University, the University of Helsinki, University of Western Ontario University of Innsbruck, Wayne State University, University of Windsor, University of Padua, Austria, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Corvinus University of Budapest, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, University of Trento - Italy, University of Lugano - Switzerland, University of Zagreb, University of Split, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje,

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