

Rhetoric in Scandinavia Retoryka w Skandynawii

10 (4) 2023 ISSUE EDITORS: TOMMY BRUHN, LISA S. VILLADSEN, EWA MODRZEJEWSKA

REAKCJE / REACTIONS

LISA S. VILLADSEN

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2467-0570>

lisas@hum.ku.dk

TOMMY BRUHN

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3131-0856>

tommy.bruhn@hum.ku.dk

Scandinavian emerging scholars and their Ph.D. projects – an overview

[Przegląd tematyki prac doktorskich młodych skandynawskich badaczy](#)

License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 international (CC BY 4.0).

The content of the license is available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

LISA S. VILLADSEN

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2467-0570>

lisas@hum.ku.dk

TOMMY BRUHN

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3131-0856>

tommy.bruhn@hum.ku.dk

Scandinavian emerging scholars and their Ph.D. projects – an overview

This overview presents 10 Ph.D. projects that illustrate the breadth of Scandinavian rhetorical research. Among them are projects on specific conceptualizations in the field of rhetoric such as accusations, anger, the body, and voice in writing; projects on the rhetoric of groups, organizations and social movements such as the EU, LGBTQ+ minorities, and climate activists; projects that capture public debates, for example on forestry and climate change; didactic projects, and projects entertaining new methods and methodologies for rhetorical research, such as computer assisted big data analysis and participatory rhetorical criticism. This representation of 10 diverse emerging scholars from 6 Scandinavian universities gives a taste of the contemporary rhetorical research scene in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.



Image 1: A word cloud generated using the key words from the listed Ph.D. projects.

FRIDA HVIID BROBERG¹

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8685-6683>

Fhb@hum.ku.dk

HOW DARE YOU! Anger, marginalization, and resistance in a contemporary Danish context

1. Introduction

“How dare you,” the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg hissed at the World’s leaders at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit. Her speech went viral, was praised, parodied, and quoted on t-shirts, and her iconic rhetorical question was circulated as a meme accompanied by the equally iconic photograph of Thunberg’s face with tears of anger in her eyes (*Know Your Meme* s.a.). With her emotional rhetoric, Thunberg has mobilized millions of people all over the world. Simultaneously, Thunberg’s rhetoric has been met with a heavy backlash, and the critique of Thunberg echoes her rhetorical question: How dare *she*?

Thunberg is in many ways a unique figure, but even though her angry rhetoric may have contributed to making her famous, for better or worse, her angry rhetoric is not what makes her unique. Contemporary political and cultural analyses argue that our political climate is increasingly fueled by anger (Nielsen 2021; Nussbaum 2018). My Ph.D. project is an examination of how this increasing political anger manifests itself in a contemporary Danish context with a focus on the angry rhetoric of social movements and the (often equally angry) critique of these movements. Analyzing three of the largest social movements of our time (Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and the youth climate movement), I examine how anger sticks differently to different bodies, and how anger, as an effect of rhetorical circulation, orients, demarcates, mobilizes and marginalizes (collective) bodies (e.g., social movements, the public debate) (Ahmed 2014; Chaput 2010).

In this paper, I use the Thunberg case as a prism to cast light on some of the ways anger manifests rhetorically in the political struggles of our time: as a vehicle for political mobilization, a cause for rhetorical marginalization, and as a queer rhetorical form.

1. Frida Hviid Broberg is a PhD fellow at the University of Copenhagen’s Department of Communication. Her research on how anger manifests itself rhetorically in the rhetoric and critique of social movements and activism finds its theoretical foundation in the intersection of affect theory and feminist rhetorical theory, and her work is a critical extension of research into rhetorical citizenship, deliberation, and dissent. Ph.D. stipend period: 2021-2024.

2. The counterproductivity critique and the rhetorical marginalization of 'the angry activist'

As the example of Thunberg's rhetoric makes clear, anger is a core emotion for social movements and a central factor in the mobilization of political resistance, but, as the example also highlights, activists and social movements risk a backlash if they are perceived as angry (Condit 2018; Jasper 2014; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). Thunberg's angry rhetoric is accused of harming the cause (Wissendorff 2019), and critics refer to her age, gender, and autism spectrum diagnosis (see e.g., Dagø 2019; Selsin 2019).

Social movements and activists are often advised to refrain from angry rhetoric, as anger is claimed to be counterproductive (Srinivasan 2018). The *counterproductivity critique of anger* echoes a historically dominant theoretical and cultural tendency to view anger as (self)destructive (see e.g., Nussbaum 2019; Pettigrove 2012; Seneca 1976). While feminist philosophers have criticized the counterproductivity critique of anger for being morally problematic because it imposes another layer of oppression on already marginalized groups and individuals in the form of affective or epistemic injustice (Bailey 2018; Srinivasan 2018), this project's aim is rhetorical: I examine what the critique *does*. Analyzing the media coverage of social movements and activist rhetoric, I show how the counterproductivity critique takes form in Danish media and argue that the critique of anger participates in marginalizing social movements and activists. I point to at least four patterns of rhetorical marginalization that I label: a) deflection, b) pathologization, c) infantilization, and d) affective depoliticization.

The criticism of Thunberg also suggests, as feminist critics have argued, that anger *sticks* to some (in this case: young, female, neurodiverse) bodies more than others (Ahmed 2009). The critique of anger takes shape on the basis of at least gender, class, race, sexuality, age, and ability, and that activists are disproportionately marginalized at the intersections of identity categories.

3. Lordean anger and Aristotelian anger

The critique rests on an understanding of anger as vengeful and destructive (see e.g., Nussbaum 2019; Zagacki and Boleyn-Fitzgerald 2006). However, analyzing instances of activist rhetoric such as Thunberg's 2019 speech it becomes clear that this is often a misrepresentation.

Through analysis of angry protest rhetoric, I show how the critique distorts the angry rhetoric it targets when it relies on an Aristotelian understanding of anger that depicts anger as inherently vengeful and narrowly focused on the past. Drawing on the work of Audre Lorde (2017), I argue that the angry rhetoric of progressive

social movements, as exemplified in the three case studies, is better understood as rhetorical manifestations of what I call *Lordean anger*: A type of angry rhetoric that addresses structures of power and oppression and has radical change as its object. Paradoxically, the often equally angry critique of ‘angry activists’ such as Thunberg, can be read as manifestations of *Aristotelian anger*: A vengeful and reactionary type of angry rhetoric that is focused on relative status.

I use Aristotle’s and Lorde’s contesting conceptions of anger (as emotion) to develop a typology of angry rhetoric, trying to move beyond the discussion of whether anger is good or bad, should be suppressed or cultivated for political purposes (as feminist thinkers and activists have argued).

4. Making/holding space for the queer effects of angry rhetoric

Through further analysis of activist expressions of anger, I explore the rhetorical effects of anger and argue that the counterproductivity critique relies on a simplified understanding of the rhetorical effects of anger. Instead, we can understand angry rhetoric as a queer rhetorical form (Rand 2008). As the circulation of Thunberg’s 2019 speech demonstrates, angry rhetoric is prone to be put in rhetorical circulation and taken up in unintended and unexpected ways – a capacity that makes angry rhetoric capable of catalyzing rhetorical agency. Finally, I argue that anger can be a potential effect in itself: Performing anger can be an important rhetorical performance of resistance – even if the immediate consequences might be ‘counterproductive’.

Instead of dismissing angry rhetoric or demanding that it be translated into something more ‘civil’ and ‘productive’ (as the critics suggest social movements and activists do), I argue for a listening approach to anger. Building on the work of Cheryl Glenn and Krista Ratcliffe as well as feminist theory, methodology, and pedagogy (Ahmed 2009; Glenn and Ratcliffe 2011; Guschke 2023), I propose an understanding of rhetorical listening as an embodied practice that is curious towards rather than avoidant of tension and conscious of intersecting structures of power and oppression.

5. Contributions

With this project, I hope to contribute with:

1. A typology of rhetorical anger and a theoretical and analytical framework to inform future studies of angry rhetoric, activist rhetoric, and social movements,
2. Rhetorical case studies that will provide insight into some of the ways in which anger works to shape our current political context, and

3. A critical contribution to rhetorical norms and ideals of rhetorical citizenship in a time of increasing political anger.

Additionally, I hope to contribute to Scandinavian research on rhetoric, gender, and racism with analytical insights from current cases, showing how figures like ‘the angry black woman’, which have been theorized and studied in an American and British context (see e.g., Ahmed 2009; Patricia Hill Collins 2002), emerge in Danish media.

References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2009. “Embodying diversity: Problems and paradoxes for Black feminists.” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 12(1): 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320802650931>.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The cultural politics of emotion* (second edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Chaput, Catherine. 2010. “Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 43(1): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1353/par.0.0047>.
- Condit, Celeste Michelle. 2018. *Angry Public Rhetorics: Global Relations and Emotion in the Wake of 9/11*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9909538>.
- Dagø, Erik. 2019. “Debat: Klima- og miljøtøserne marcherer.” *Fyens.dk*, 25.08.2019. Retrieved January 30, 2022, from <https://faa.dk/debat/debat-klima-og-miljoetoeserne-marcherer>.
- Glenn, Cheryl, and Krista Ratcliffe. 2011. *Silence and Listening as Rhetorical Arts*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Guschke, Bontu Lucie. 2023. “Fire inside me – Exploring the possibilities of embodied queer listening.” *Culture and Organization*, 29(6): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2023.2224486>.
- Hill Collins, Patricia. 2002. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055>.
- How Dare You? | Know Your Meme. (s.a.). Retrieved January 30, 2022, from <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/how-dare-you>.
- Jasper, James M. 2014. “Constructing Indignation: Anger Dynamics in Protest Movements.” *Emotion Review*, 6(3): 208–213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914522863>.
- Lorde, Audre. 2017. *Your silence will not protect you*. London: Silver Press.
- Nielsen, Henrik Kaare. 2021. *I affekt: Studier i senmoderne politik og kultur*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 2018. *The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 2019. *Anger and forgiveness: Resentment, generosity, justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pettigrove, Glen. 2012. “Meekness and ‘Moral’ Anger.” *Ethics* 122(2): 341–370. <https://doi.org/10.1086/663230>.
- Rand, Erin J. 2008. “An Inflammatory Fag and a Queer Form: Larry Kramer, Polemics, and Rhetorical Agency.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94(3): 297–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630802210377>.
- Selsing, Rune T. 2019. “Den virkelige pris for Greta-kultens religion er døde børn.” *Jyllands-Posten*, 24.09.2019. Retrieved January 30, 2022, from <https://jyllands-posten.dk/debat/kommentar/ECE11637025/den-virkelige-pris-for-gretakultens-religion-er-doede-boern>.
- Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. 1976. *Om vrede—Om mildhed—Om sindsro*, trans. Villy Sørensen, [2. oplag]. København: Gyldendal.
- Srinivasan, Amia. 2018. “The Aptness of Anger.” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 26(2): 123–144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12130>.
- van Stekelenburg, Jacqueline, and Bert Klandermans. 2013. “The social psychology of protest.” *Current Sociology* 61(5–6): 886–905. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113479314>.
- Wissendorff, Anya. 2019. “Er vrede det bedste brændstof i klimakampen?,” *Horsens Folkeblad*, 26.09.2019. Retrieved January 30, 2022, from <https://hsfo.dk/debat/leder-er-vrede-det-bedste-braendstof-i-klimakampen>.
- Zagacki, Kenneth S., and Patrick A. Boleyn-Fitzgerald. 2006. “Rhetoric and Anger.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39(4): 290–309. <https://doi.org/10.1353/par.2007.0006>.

Key words

activism, affect, anger, queer rhetoric, social movements

THORE KEITUM FISKER²

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7869-1524>

tkf@hum.ku.dk

The Doxastic Body: Corporeal formation and expression of ideological identity

1. Introduction: Embodied doxa

Concluding Jack Selzer's and her groundbreaking book *Rhetorical Bodies*, Sharon Crowley contends that "no body is disinterested," and "that is why this work [on the body] is central to rhetorical studies, which has always taken the study of partisanship as its province" (1999, 363; see also Chávez 2018). If we are to understand the body beyond a medium, rhetorical scholars must investigate the processes in which bodies become interested, to put it in Crowley's words. As one way to do that, I investigate the role of the body in *doxa*. In Freya Thimsen's conception, *doxa* can be productively thought of as the product of cultural sedimentation, existing "at deeply embedded levels of embodied subjective practices rather than representations and consciously held opinion" (2015, 492). Such a perspective of *doxa* leaves room for what Greg Dickinson and Brian Ott call the "[c]arnal knowledge," or, "that which is known at a visceral level," (2019, 80) in *Rhetorical New Materialisms*.

However, rhetorical scholarship on the body almost exclusively understands the body as or through text, as when Karma Chávez sees the "(foreign) body-as-text," (2009, 24) and when Kevin Michael DeLuca lays out his methodology as that of "close readings of [...] bodies" (1999; see also Fisker 2022, 63 for a similar approach). Drawing on rhetorical work on the *chōra* as a matrix of invention (Rickert 2013, 41–73), the embodied mind model in contemporary neuroscience (Fuchs 2022), and Sara Ahmed's understanding of power as "a way of orientating bodies in particular ways" (Ahmed 2017, 43; see also 2006) I synthesize a framework for investigating the body-in-space and its relation to *doxa*. This synthesis enables me to study how bodies partake in the construction of a communal ideological identity.

2. Thore Keitum Fisker (born 1990) holds a BA and an MA in rhetoric from the University of Copenhagen and is currently a Ph.D. fellow at the same university in the Department of Communication. Before entering the Ph.D. program, he worked as a voice coach and rhetorical consultant and continues to do so. Advised by Associate Professor Kristine Marie Berg, Thore's research deals with the body and voice in political communication. In 2022, Thore published an article in the journal *Rhetorica Scandinavica*. Ph.D. stipend period: 2022-2025.

2. Methodology: How to study the body-in-space?

In an article with the working title *The Doxastic Body: Embodying ideological orientations*, I argue that the situated, concrete body is paramount to ideological identity through its function as doxastic warrant in enthymematical argumentation. To study such ideological embodiment, the article contributes with a rhetorical-ethnographic methodology for investigating the points of expression for a *doxastic body* of a specific political field. Such a concept adds a morphological layer to Michael Calvin McGee's concept of the *ideograph* (1980) in political communication, but functions not on a basis of disclosure but ecological performativity. The doxastic body, I argue, is enacted on three levels of instantiation ranging from non-representative to representative modes, that is,

1. Environment, in what atmosphere and physical framework are the bodies of rhetors situated;
2. Bodies, what are the movements and orientations of these bodies; and
3. Symbols, how is the body represented in the community.

3. Into the field: Ideological youth debate schools

Using the methodological framework of the doxastic body developed in my first article, this analytical contribution will take the shape of an article on a comparative field work study. In the spring of 2023, I finished my field work at the CEPOS Academy in Copenhagen, a youth debate school organized by the right-wing libertarian think tank CEPOS,³ and in 2024 I will conduct a similar study in another youth debate school with an opposing ideological orientation. In the article on my findings resulting from these field studies, I will analyze how these political communities construct and uphold certain doxastic bodies, and how these body ideals affect their understanding of self and deliberation with others.

4. Theoretical inversions: Hopping around in certain ways

This article, which is in a very early state of development, is meant to function by turning the rhetorical body inside out, or, more accurately, reverse our processual conception of it. Conceiving of *actio* (delivery) as the fifth and temporally last of the rhetorical canons (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *actio*) leaves the body a mere vehicle of the dissemination of the mind's ideas and the trustworthiness of its character. Working with the centrality of the body for ancient and Burkean rhetoric (Hawhee 2004; 2009; Johnstone 2001), the article suggests a reversal of Kenneth Burke's famous quote, that "'ideology' [...] makes the body hop around in certain ways" (1989, 59). I hope to argue that we might conceive of also *actio*

3. An acronym for *Center for Politiske Studier* (in English: Center for Political Studies).

inversely, as hopping around in certain ways also makes ideology. In other words, the body may also work as the very first step in rhetorical processes functioning as a sort of pre-inventio, shaping the embodied *doxa* of the rhetor, determining their conception and valorization of the world and therefore their possible rhetorics.

5. Contributions

This project seeks to further a rhetorical, non-symbolic understanding of the body as a concrete form, whose orientations and movements mold and are molded by communal identities. Developed in the project is: 1) A methodological framework for investigating the body-in-space as it pertains to the formation and expression of ideological communal identity. Utilizing this framework, the project contains 2) A comparative field study of two opposing ideological communities. Finally, the project argues for 3) A theoretical centering of the body through a reversal of the rhetorical canons. These contributions, hopefully, will inform future rhetorical studies on bodies.

References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2017. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373377>.
- Burke, Kenneth. 1989. *On Symbols and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chávez, Karma R. 2009. "Embodied Translation: Dominant Discourse and Communication with Migrant Bodies-as-Text." *The Howard Journal of Communications* 20 (1): 18–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170802664912>.
- Chávez, Karma R. 2018. "The Body: An Abstract and Actual Rhetorical Concept." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 48 (3): 242–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2018.1454182>.
- Crowley, Sharon. 1999. "Afterword. The Material of Rhetoric." In *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley, 357–64. Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press.
- DeLuca, Kevin Michael. 1999. "Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, Act Up, and Queer Nation." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (1): 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00028533.1999.11951634>.
- Fisker, Thore Keitum. 2022. "Konstitutiv Actio: Stemmeføring Og Kropssprog i Retoriske Identifikations-processer." *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 84 (November): 60–75. <https://doi.org/10.52610/KGTK9487>.
- Fuchs, Thomas. 2022. *Ecology of the Brain: The Phenomenology and Biology of the Embodied Mind*, 1st ed. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Hawhee, Debra. 2004. *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press. <https://doi.org/10.7560/705845>.
- Hawhee, Debra. 2009. *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language*. Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press.
- Johnstone, Christopher Lyle. 2001. "Communicating in Classical Contexts: The Centrality of Delivery." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87 (2): 121–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630109384325>.
- McGee, Michael Calvin. 1980. "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638009383499>.
- Ott, Brian L., and Greg Dickinson. 2019. "Redefining Rhetoric: Why Matter Matters." *Berlin Journal of Critical Theory*, January. https://www.academia.edu/38244148/Redefining_Rhetoric_Why_Matter_Matters.
- Rickert, Thomas. 2013. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5hjqlwx>.
- Thimsen, A. Freya. 2015. "The People Against Corporate Personhood: Doxa and Dissensual Democracy." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (3): 485–508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2015.1055785>.

Key words

delivery; doxastic body; embodiment; ideology; rhetorical fieldwork

ANNE DEHLIE GLÆDESDAHL⁴
 UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9959-9150>
 annedgl@uio.no

Voice and writing as rhetorical practice in Danish and Norwegian L1 teaching

1. Introduction

In the history of compositional rhetoric, voice has become the metaphor used for authorly presence in a text (Bowden 1995). Identified variously as a subject-oriented feature, a dimension of *text*, or something in between, *voice* has become a favoured term for whatever makes the text seem imbued with the presence of a writing subject. Despite the prevailing critique of the “fuzziness” of the metaphor, voice has proved a pervasive term even when challenged alongside neighbouring concepts such as *tone*, *style*, or *stance*. As said by Mussack, voice is: “Ubiquitous without being terribly well defined” (2022, 270).

Until recently, voice was non-existent as an explicit didactic term in the Scandinavian countries’ curriculum and school policy documents. However, following a governmental reform in 2018, “The personal voice” suddenly appeared as a concept and exam prerequisite in the L1 curriculum in Danish upper secondary schools (ages 15–17). Although the concept has long hovered in didactic literature as a pedagogical principle related to *Bildung* and identity formation (Krogh 2012), there is no tradition for teaching voice as an explicit didactic metaphor in Scandinavia.

This study explores how upper secondary school teachers of L1 in Danish and Norwegian perceive, understand, and operationalise voice as a metaphor in writing classes. The project thus has an explorative and theoretical aim; I investigate how the “new” voice metaphor transfers to a Danish and Norwegian teaching practice through the analysis of teacher talk and the teachers’ own didactic materials. I then conceptualise and relate these current perceptions towards a rhetorical didactic tradition. Central research questions are:

1. What can we infer from a reading of the rhetorical tradition to imagine or reinvent a rhetorical practice of voice?
2. How can such a rhetorical framework help to inform and qualify the current teaching of voice and writing?

4. Anne Dehlie Glædesdahl (b. 1993) holds a master’s degree in Rhetoric from the University of Copenhagen. She is one year into her Ph.D. in rhetorical didactics at the University of Oslo. Stipend period: 2022-2025.

2. Theoretical field and previous research

Voice in a metaphorical sense was not a concept used by the ancient teachers of rhetoric. However, the term has telling similarities with other metaphors employed in the ancient world that have a rhetorical origin, as well as with contemplations of *ethos* and *persona*. According to Bowden (1995), “voice” entered into its common usage as a metaphor as late as the 1970s. Voice is affiliated with the formation of rhetoric and composition as a discipline and has been influenced by intersections with neighbouring fields of study, e.g., literary studies and linguistics. These theoretical conjoiners have contributed to operationalising the voice metaphor into forms used and applied in modern writing instruction (Ivanic 1998). However, the initial usage of the term in rhetoric and composition is more abstract and much disputed, causing some writing researchers to advise not to use the metaphor in school settings (Hashimoto 1987).

For rhetoricians, voice is probably primarily associated with the writing pedagogy of Peter Elbow, Donald Murray and others, emanating from the American expressionist rhetoric of the 70s and 80s (Berlin 1987). Following this tradition, voice is an ideological end of writing closely intersecting with a process of self-discovery. This line of thought was challenged by the poststructuralist turn following the translation and discovery of the writings of Bakhtin, which caused several writing professionals to problematise the pursuit of a single voice within the doctrines of dialogism (Bakhtin et al. 1986; Farmer 1995).

While rhetoricians are undecided on whether to include the concept in our disciplinary toolbox, the rhetorical tradition remains rich in didactic literature and textual tools that can aid the teaching of voice and contextualise the ideological motivation for such a practice. Reuniting voice with its rhetorical roots can help us restore a teaching practice that combines oral and literary dimensions of text production – and emphasise voice on a dialogic grounding, not as a solipsistic search for individual power and stylistics but as the rhetorical skill of listening and tuning in with the role of a democratic citizen.

3. Empirical components and research methods

Through an action research-oriented, interview-based study, I investigate how teachers interpret voice and the term’s utility in teaching writing. The project consists of a series of eight focus groups that explore teachers’ practice as a triad of “sayings”, “doings”, and “relatings” (Kemmis 2009). I collaborate with teachers on a binational level to compare an educational environment where voice is explicitly incorporated in the curriculum and study plans (Denmark) with an educational environment where it is only implicitly considered as a principle in didactic literature (Norway).

The empirical design of the project is guided by an action research-oriented approach with iterative circles of planning, testing, and redesigning my interactions in collaboration with the participating teachers. I aim for a practitioners-as-researchers approach, encouraging teachers to identify central research questions, challenges, and possibilities in their own teaching practice (Kemmis 2009). Consequently, the empirical components of the project follow a threefold structure with the focus group as the initial intervention, the sharing of educational designs as a second, and, lastly, a third interaction consisting of a digital information session with participants where I outline and discuss my findings, and participants get to comment and interact. I hope this approach will ensure benevolence and engagement with the project's participants and generate results that prove relevant to a majority of L1 teachers.

4. Disciplinary contribution and prospects

With the thesis, I provide the first empirical study of the propagation and translation of the voice metaphor in the Scandinavian school. Insights from this study can help to qualify and nuance the educational practice of working with writing and identity on a national level and serve as a perspective and example internationally. Moreover, the project is a contribution to the subject of rhetorical didactics, which is slightly underrepresented as a field of study in the Scandinavian countries despite considerable awareness of the topic internationally (Hauser 2004), and growing interest in the rhetorical tradition and its educational roots from researchers in didactics and pedagogy (Biesta 2012). Methodologically, the project adds to the exploration of the use and evaluation of qualitative fieldwork in rhetoric and thus helps to broaden the scope of what a rhetorical study can be. By directing our attention as researchers to the encounters and practices of the physical world and its subjects, we can prove rhetoric to be a relevant and ever-present topic in the field of humanities, and what could be a better place to start than with the education of future citizens?

References

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. M.** 1986. *Speech genres and other late essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, Caryl Emerson, trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Berlin, James A.** 1987. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900–1985*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Biesta, Gert.** 2012. “Becoming world-wise: An educational perspective on the rhetorical curriculum.” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44 (6): 815–826. doi: 10.1080/00220272.2012.730285.
- Bowden, Darsie.** 1995. “The rise of a metaphor: ‘Voice’; in composition pedagogy.” *Rhetoric Review* 14 (1): 173–188. doi: 10.1080/07350199509389058.
- Farmer, Frank.** 1995. “Voice reprised: Three Etudes for a dialogic understanding.” *Rhetoric Review* 13 (2): 304–320. doi: 10.1080/07350199509359189.
- Hashimoto, Irvin.** 1987. “Voice as Juice: Some Reservations about Evangelic Composition.” *College Composition and Communication* 38 (1): 70–80. doi: 10.2307/357588.

- Hauser, Gerard A.** 2004. "Teaching rhetoric: Or why rhetoric isn't just another kind of philosophy or literary criticism." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 34 (3): 39–53. doi: 10.1080/02773940409391289.
- Ivanic, Roz.** 1998. *Writing and identity. The discursal construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company.
- Kemmis, Stephen.** 2009. "Action research as a practice-based practice." *Educational Action Research* 17 (3): 463–474. doi: 10.1080/09650790903093284.
- Krogh, Ellen.** 2012. "Literacy og stemme – et spændingsfelt i modersmålsfaglig skrivning." In *Nordisk morsmålsdidaktikk. Forskning, felt og fag*, ed. Sigmund Ongstad, 260–289. Oslo: Novus.
- Mussack, Brigitte.** 2022. "Epideictic Metaphor: Uncovering Values and Celebrating Dissonance Through a Reframing of Voice." *Rhetoric Review* 41 (4): 266–280. doi: 10.1080/07350198.2022.2109399.

Key words

action research, education, rhetorical didactics, writing, voice

CHARLOTTE HIDLE⁵

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0991-6038>

charlotte.hidle@media.uio.no

Topical Circulation: Tracing argumentation through political process

1. Introduction

Conflicting interests and values lie at the core of today's most challenging climate and environmental issues. The way we discuss a specific political issue establishes the framework for which arguments can be included and which political solutions are viable (Pontoppidan, Gabrielsen, and Jønch-Clausen 2022; Togeby 2009). Through tracing *topoi* across texts in politics, bureaucracy, and public debate, this project aims to visualize how arguments are reproduced and circulated throughout different spheres and democratic practices. By analyzing the argumentative patterns, we can uncover who holds the power to define the political process, and further provide insight into the premises upon which the dominant arguments are built, namely:

1. Is it economic growth, redistribution of wealth, or environmental concerns?
2. What actors are benefiting from the dominant perspective?
3. How democratic is the deliberative process?

5. Charlotte Hidle holds an MA in Rhetoric and Communication from the University of Oslo. Her Ph.D. project is a part of the Voicing Democracy Research Group, and the POLKOM – Center for the Study of Political Communication at the University of Oslo.

2. Background

The impact of both climate change and the global democratic deficit represent two complex problems that intersect and amplify each other. Through empirical analysis of two Norwegian cases, this project aims to expand our knowledge of how these issues are debated and transformed throughout the political process. While there is no lack of studies on political processes, several studies have shown that a rhetorical approach can provide new insight into how political issues are shaped and transformed through a variety of texts, genres, and situations (Rasmussen and Just 2020; Schou Therkildsen 2022). The main objectives of this study are to map how topoi circulate; employ a circulatory approach (Chaput 2010) to the rhetorical study of long-standing political processes; and discuss the democratic implications of topical and rhetorical circulation.

The empirical analysis will include texts from the political, bureaucratic, and public spheres, such as hearing statements, Official Norwegian Reports, White Papers, national budgets, media sources, and political party programs. Through a combination of rhetorical close readings, digital corpus analysis, and qualitative interviews, this project asks: a) How do democratic processes handle climate and environmental issues where interests and values clash, and b) who wields the power of definition when the issues are negotiated through the political process?

The two Norwegian cases – the implementation of resource rent taxation on salmon farming and the initiative to reduce meat consumption for climate change mitigation – have both sparked longstanding and polarized debates involving politicians, scientists, and powerful interest groups. While there are important differences between the cases, they overlap on certain core issues: Both aquacultural and agricultural farming draw private profit from the utilization of natural resources, and thus have a massive impact on how a substantial part of the national resources is managed and sustained. Both sectors are key actors in creating jobs in rural areas and in sustaining national self-sufficiency. Lastly, they are both built upon the traditions of primary industry (i.e., coastal fishing and traditional farming), but have been industrialized, transformed, and modernized extensively, which has led to the emergence of influential interest groups that wield significant influence in politics and public debates.

3. A digital and circulatory approach

Political processes contain a large number of reports, notes, media coverage, and political documents. Both cases hold numerous voices, contexts, and perspectives changing over time. This longstanding and intricate process of political deliberation requires both a theoretical and a methodological approach capable of grasping the material and spatiotemporal complexity. While Bitzerian theories of rhetorical

situations (1968) have proven useful in the study of situated communication, they fall short in grasping the complexity of long-standing political deliberation. Within the ecological turn, rhetoricians have argued for a theory grasping the flux and historical specificity of situated communication (Edbauer 2005; Ehrenfeld 2020). In response, Catherine Chaput argues for a shift from “the rhetorical situation as a temporally and spatially fixed site of exigency, constraints, and discourse to rhetorical circulation as a fluidity of everyday practices, affects, and uncertainties” (2010, 6). A central hypothesis of this project is that the momentum and circulation of *topoi* serves as a rhetorical force which can be unveiled by employing perspectives from rhetorical ecology and circulation.

The fluid and voluminous nature of political processes necessitates digital methods to grasp the process as a whole. Digital methods of rhetoric are unexplored but have shown great potential in tracing rhetorical effects in large corpus and over time (Helland 2019; Majdik 2019). The empirical study will employ digital text mining methods developed within literary studies such as *sub-corpus topic modeling* (Karlsen 2019). Here, close readings of central texts will form a model for the digital distant readings of corpora using tools such as collocations, concordance, and n-gram to map the recurrence of specific *topoi*. It is not used as a standalone method, but rather as a supplement to strengthen findings from close readings and qualitative interviews. The corpus analysis will be developed in collaboration with The Digital Humanities Lab at the Norwegian National Library.

4. Democratic implications of topical circulation

Deliberative democracy is an ideal of open debate and collective decision-making. Gutman and Thompson assert that a “general aim of deliberative democracy is to provide the most justifiable conception for dealing with moral disagreement in politics” (2004, 10). The two cases examined have both sparked polarized debates and have great economic and environmental consequences. Mapping the topical circulation will visualize how rhetorical agency and political influence are distributed throughout the deliberative process. This opens up discussions on the democratic implications of these practices. In a Norwegian context, there is little insight into which voices are being heard in deliberative arenas such as public and parliamentary debate and public hearings. How democratic are these democratic practices? And what grounds and values are the winning arguments built upon?

References

- Bitzer, Lloyd F. 1968. “The Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1 (1):1–14.
- Chaput, Catherine. 2010. “Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 43(1): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1353/par.0.0047>.
- Edbauer, Jenny. 2005. “Unframing models of public distribution: From rhetorical situation to rhetorical ecologies.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35 (4): 5–24. doi: 10.1080/02773940509391320.

- Ehrenfeld, Dan.** 2020. “‘Sharing a World with Others’: Rhetoric’s Ecological Turn and the Transformation of the Networked Public Sphere.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 50 (5): 305–320.
- Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis F. Thompson.** 2004. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Helland, Frode.** 2019. *Rasismens retorikk: studier i norsk offentlighet*. Oslo: Pax forlag A/S.
- Karlsen, Heidi.** 2019. “Sub-corpus topic modeling og diskursanalyse: gruvearbeid, tråling eller kokekunst?” *Samlaren* 140:281–304.
- Majdik, Zoltan P.** 2019. “A Computational Approach to Assessing Rhetorical Effectiveness: Agentic Framing of Climate Change in the Congressional Record, 1994–2016.” *Technical Communication Quarterly* 28 (3): 207–222. doi: 10.1080/10572252.2019.1601774.
- Pontoppidan, Christina, Jonas Gabrielsen, and Heidi Jønch-Clausen.** 2022. *Retorikkens hemmelige steder*. 1. udgave ed. København: Hans Reitzel Forlag.
- Rasmussen, Rasmus Kjærgaard, and Sine Nørholm Just.** 2020. “Retorisk policyanalyse – Studiet af politiske dokumenter som proces og produkt.” In *Retorik og metode*, ed. Mette Bengtsson, Kristine Marie Berg, and Stefan Iversen, 71–91. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Schou Therkildsen, Louise.** 2022. “A European State of Mind: Rhetorical Formations of European Identity within the EU 1973–2014.” Retrieved December 19, 2023 from Centre for European Research (CERGU). <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-508003>.
- Togeby, Ole.** 2009. *Steder i bevidsthedens landskab – grene på ideernes træ: om at finde stof til belysning af en sag*. 2. udgave, 1. oplag ed. Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Key words

deliberative democracy, digital rhetoric, political rhetoric, topos

KLARA HÄRGESTAM⁶

ÖREBRO UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8422-4090>

klara.hargestam@oru.se

Understanding the Swedish forest debate

1. Introduction

In Sweden, forests play a crucial role in supporting or destroying ecosystems, and in the transition towards a sustainable future. However, the public debate about management and protection is often conducted in a conflicted manner that does not help in understanding each other or finding constructive forest-based solutions for the climate crisis. But why do people express such strong emotions regarding forest issues? I claim that the positions in the Swedish forest debate arise not from rational, distanced reasoning but instead from people’s embodied relationship with the forest. So my main question is: How does people’s relationship with

6. Klara Härgestam is a Ph.D. fellow at Örebro University, Sweden. Her research interest lies in studying polarization and how to find ways to move the dialogue to a more nuanced tone where the people involved feel validated, heard and understood. Environmental Rhetorics, place based studies, Invitational Rhetoric and Rhetorical Listening are all important areas of focus for her research. Ph.D. stipend period: 2022–2027.

the forest in terms of identity, temporality and place impact their positions in the forest debate?

Encircling this project are the three theoretical concepts of temporality, place and identity. By using temporality as an analytical tool, I wish to expand existing knowledge on how temporality can be operationalized in rhetorical analysis. Senda-Cook et al. (2023), with their way of explaining different responses to climate crises as urgency or impatience, and Buhre (2019), who showed how powerful rhetorical strategies built on temporality can be, are both examples which I build from.

2. Temporality and place in the Swedish forest debate

The forest debate in Sweden has a long history, and it concerns a resource with long life spans to take into consideration in decisions about forestry. And now, climate change is a new concern. It is an urgent crisis. This tension makes temporality a productive tool for mapping out the relationship between people and the forest.

To better understand the debate, we need to see that people's positions are rooted not only in how they view a resource but in their relationship to a living place. My project answers to Goggin's call for environmental rhetorics to take place based perspectives into account (Goggin 2013, 5). The dominant perspective in the public debate is often related to the forest as a tool for green energy, carbon storage, fossil free products and so on. Through fieldwork I will be able to make visible the importance of the forest as a place, which gives me an important ecological perspective in the rhetorical analysis. This will shed light upon the Swedish forest debate in ways that have not yet been considered.

Bringing identity to the table will give us a more holistic understanding of the debate because the relationship to the forest runs deeper than opinions. To question, not what somebody holds to be true, but whom somebody claims to be, is a point in conversation more vulnerable to conflict. To understand this we need to see how communication is made possible across social structures where peoples' identities are an inevitable part of the conversation (Ratcliffe 2005, 34–35). Whereas classic rhetorical theory, and modern dialogue centered theory, emphasize the topic, the conceptualization of rhetoric by Sonja Foss, labeled Invitational Rhetoric (Foss and Griffin 1995), and the closely connected concept of Rhetorical Listening (Ratcliffe 2005), emphasize the people taking part in the conversation. These concepts help me to position myself as a researcher in relation to the participants, since they demand that the researcher to recognize the value that participants bring not just with what they say, but with their whole being. This is also a way to get

close to the rhetorical *inventio*, the place where rhetorical messages come into existence, which is an important part of Participatory Critical Rhetoric (Middleton et al. 2015).

3. The methods of exploration

Rhetoricians have recently turned to methods that let us explore audience response, as well as the actual effects of rhetorical action (Kjeldsen, ed. 2017). In my case the participants are, in a way, audiences for the places we visit since I explore the impact the forest has on my participants – the way the place makes them move, talk, see and listen. Conducting fieldwork also means recognizing the place as an agent, a co-producer of the relationship. This method places me as a researcher in close contact with my empirical data both in time and place. The embodied experience I share in time and place with my participants decreases the distance between the data, the researcher and the available interpretations, leading to a more in depth understanding than traditional, text-based methods for rhetorical criticism. It also allows participants to express more of their identity connected to the forest since I am there, following them, letting them take the lead and do what they usually do.

From early Athenian democracy, rhetoricians have always turned their eyes and ears towards places where persuasion happens. Through this we have built a rich understanding for how persuasion in those public, and powerful places work. In one sense my project is a continuation of this practice, turning my eyes and ears to where persuasion happens; but two major things differ. First, I argue that persuasion happens, not only in the rooms traditionally associated with power, and that's why rhetoricians need to turn their eyes and ears to those places – in my case, the rhetorical situation of a person being in the forest. Secondly, the voices in our society today are more diverse than was the case in the democracy of Athens. This demands different rhetorical theories and methods in order to continuously add to our knowledge about persuasion and human relations. Rhetorical Listening offers tools for analysing situations where people with diverse identities raise their voices about a common issue, but it also requires from us as researchers to be present at the birthplace of those identities, which is again in my case, people in the forest.

I conduct fieldwork among people connected to the forest in different ways: landowners, people working for the forest industry, and people engaged in protecting certain forests. My data consists of field notes and recorded conversation from the fieldwork. Analysing this I will define *topoi* derived from my theoretical framework of temporality, identity and place. But I choose an inductive approach in my analysis which means the data may reveal other *topoi* of analytical interest

as well. Still, I see the inductive approach as being guided by the perspective of Rhetorical Listening. This means that I try to listen to my data with a broad lens, with an intention of understanding each participant's stories in their wholeness, not as pieces of arguments or isolated stories.

4. Disciplinary contribution and prospects

In conclusion I attempt to bridge the gap between analyzing a debate and understanding a deeper relationship. I believe rhetorical understanding connects the dots between how relationships are constructed by time and place through language and how that relationship is the basis from which people position themselves in a debate. In tying these perspectives closer together we can reach a more holistic view of what the debate about the forest actually contains: people with multifaceted relations to what is being debated, i.e., living places, economic resources and potential climate heroes.

References

- Buhre, Frida.** 2019. "Speaking Other Times – Hannah Arendt and the Temporality of Politics." Doctoral Thesis, Uppsala University. Retrieved December 19, 2023 from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1342432&dswid=-2941>.
- Foss, Sonja K. and Cindy L. Griffin.** 1995. "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric." *Communication Monographs* 62:3–17.
- Goggin, Peter N.** 2013. *Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place*. New York: Routledge.
- Hallberg-Sramek, Isabella.** 2023. "Tailoring Forest Management to Local Socio-Ecological Contexts : Addressing Climate Change and Local Stakeholders' Expectations of Forests." Doctoral Thesis. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae Sueciae* 2023:19. <https://doi.org/10.54612/a.60s9e6ei21>.
- Kjeldsen, Jens E. (ed.)** 2017. *Rhetorical Audience Studies and Reception of Rhetoric*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
- Middleton, Michael, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook.** 2015. *Participatory Critical Rhetoric – Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in Situ*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Ratcliff, Krista.** 2005. *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.
- Senda-Cook, Samantha, Danielle Endres, Stacey K. Sowards, and Bridie McGreavy.** "Engaging Complex Temporalities in Environmental Rhetoric." *Frontiers in Communication* 8 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1176887>.

Key words

environmental rhetoric, fieldwork, forest management, participatory critical rhetoric, place based studies, temporality

JON MARTIN LARSEN⁷

KRISTIANIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE IN OSLO, NORWAY

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7113-553X>

jonmartin.larsen@kristiania.no

Mirroring minorities: Exploring rhetorical communication between municipalities and their minorities seeking to improve quality of life

1. Introduction

The initial idea for the project was sparked in June 2018 after I chaired a local pride debate in the town hall of Nesodden, a municipality bordering the Norwegian capital Oslo, with 20.000 residents. During this debate, it was revealed that no one at the local high school was open about their gender- and sexual diversity (LGBTQ+). No one, in a high school with 650 pupils and 120 staff members. As I entered academia in a full-time position in 2019, I initiated discussions with the mayor leading up to a political commitment from five neighbouring municipalities in the region of Follo, to cooperate in a pilot research project in 2020 aiming to scope best-practices in municipalities world-wide. This pilot project led to an article on excluding language in current municipality action plans meant to create inclusion for LGBTQ+. After a close-reading of six of these plans in Norway, I warned that these municipalities maintain a dichotomy of normal and abnormal in their language. For example, by upholding (hetero)norms and stereotypes, and maintaining a 'us' and 'them' with phrases like 'those who are' versus 'those of us who are'. The latter only used sporadically in one of the plans.

In 2021, a public sector PhD-scholarship on research and innovation in public sector was granted by the Norwegian Research Council and the project is fully financed with the support of the Norwegian Savings Bank Foundation and Kristiania University College in Norway.

2. Background

Recent research has given us insight on the *silence* surrounding the lives and living conditions of LGBTIQ+ in municipalities, unpacking a communication challenge and lack of conversation between municipalities and their LGBTIQ+ residents. These studies shows that LGBTIQ+ residents in municipalities remain closeted in their local communities, especially in schools, their workplace, the

7. Jon Martin Larsen (b. 1975) is a Ph.D. candidate in communication and leadership at Kristiania University College in Oslo, Norway, particularly in the field of strategic communication, risk communication and rhetorical silence and listening. He has a master's degree in international journalism from Cardiff University (2007) on how terror, migration and minorities influence the Turkish identity. Larsen is also an assistant professor in journalism at Kristiania and regular commentator for Norway's largest media website, M24. His work experiences include being a journalist and humanitarian communicator worldwide, including communication management for the Red Cross in Norway and the Middle East. Ph.D. stipend period: 2021-2026.

health care services and their spare time activities (Eggebo et al. 2015), meaning that they stay hidden and silent towards the municipality staffers that could be seen as first liners in services and help to this minority group, as the municipalities are responsible for health care, education, spare time activities and so on. All directly involved in all residents' lives.

The LGBTQ+ residents' lack of openness extends to a situation where they do not use municipality health care services at all (Stubberud et al. 2018). As a result, they remain at high risk for a much lower degree of life quality than heterosexual citizens, with a higher degree of loneliness, lack of psychological well-being, thoughts and attempts of suicide (Statistics Norway 2020).⁸ Stubberud et al. (2018) point out *heteronormative services* in the municipalities as a main reason for the lack of conversation between the municipalities and their gender and sexuality minority residents, meaning that the municipal staff members either do not want to care and service for LGBTIQ+, or do not see the LGBTIQ+, or are not able to care and service them namely due to lack of knowledge, all in all leading to discrimination of LGBTIQ+ residents.

Heteronormativity defines the boundaries of socially acceptable relationships and identities. As such, it enforces compliance with culturally determined heterosexual roles (Nielsen, Walden, and Kunkel 2000) and fosters assumptions about heterosexuality as 'natural' or 'normal' (Kitzinger 2005; Yep 2003). Mobilized as an analytical category, heteronormativity foregrounds how heterosexuality acquires a normative status in organizations, such as municipalities, where LGBTQ+ sexuality and non-conforming gender identities are often cast as abnormal and unnatural (Colgan and Rumens 2014).

3. Overarching research question and theoretical framework

With my Ph.D. project, I wish to shed light on the rhetorical and conversational aspect of strategic communication with the overarching research question: How could local authorities communicate with minorities in order to help improve the quality of life?

Zerfass et al. (2018, 493) outline that "conversations of strategic significance might happen in a variety of arenas" and that the purpose can be "contested" by different actors. The *arena* in my project is the municipalities, as an organization that is supposed to care and service its residents, and the actors who should converse, and who could also *contest* the strategic purpose, could be municipality staff.

Consequently, I will survey the (heteronormative) attitudes, motives and knowledge of gender and sexuality minorities within municipalities, including municipal institutions such as schools and nursing homes. In my project title, I'm using the phrase "rhetorical communication" overall to cover *how* municipalities communicate and create a dialogue with their LGBTQ+ residents, their efforts in

8. Link to the dataset at Statistics Norway: Statistics Norway. 2020. https://www.ssb.no/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/432986?_ts=174f79f8608.

developing relevant rhetoric, oral and written, to initiate and develop a conversation with their LGBTQ+ residents. A conversation needed to develop services, programs, and policies for this minoritarian community.

Rhetorical communication will also refer to how the LGBTQ+ population in municipalities represent themselves, attempt to make themselves heard and be informed of services, programs and policies that concern them following the concept of risk communication and strategic communication. The rhetorical communication will also include situations when the LGBTQ+ residents chose silence as a rhetorical strategy. Glenn (2004) articulates the ways in which silence can be as expressive and strategic an instrument of human communication itself, I'm aiming to recommend strategies for a municipal rhetorical listening (Glenn and Ratcliffe 2011), that is missing, between municipalities and their local gender and sexual minority residents – a conversation that could lead to improved quality of lives for these minorities.

4. Preliminary findings

My findings from ongoing research, mainly semi-structured qualitative interviews and focus-groups with both school pupils and non-heterosexual elders, suggest that the lives of LGBTQ+ in municipalities is still surrounded with silence and a rhetorical silence.

In my interviews with youth, aged 14-16, a high level of regular harassment and violence towards any teenagers who appear as any kind of different is acting as a conversation-barrier. In several interviews and group-conversations, teenagers who identify as gender- and sexual minorities describe a normalization of daily harassment and violence in school and outside school, where the use of non-verbal body language and sounds such as barking is creating a permanent hostile or threatening environment.

Most of the elders are pointing out few or many situations of heteronormative attitudes and homophobic slur and comments throughout their lives as reasons for their silence today. Particularly, negative experiences with the health and care services, and meetings with authorities and service providers, throughout the life course affect trust in the services in general. A few elders point at their family doctor or general practitioner as one they eventually could open up to, often after many years of relationship where the doctor had gained trust and proven to be open for conversations about gender and sexual diversity, and sometimes listened carefully and picked up on signals of rhetorical silence such as an unwillingness to discuss situations in their private lives, labeling themselves or discuss matters of sexual health.

In 2024, a digital survey on 12.000 municipal staff members' attitudes towards gender- and sexual diversity will be conducted.

References

- Colgan, Fiona, and Nick Rumens (eds.) 2014. *Sexual orientation at work: Contemporary issues and perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Eggebo, Helga, Maria Almli, and Marte T. Bye. *Skeiv på bygda*. KUN-rapport 2015:2. Retrieved December 19, 2023 from https://www.kun.no/uploads/7/2/2/3/72237499/2_2015_lhbt.pdf.
- Glenn, Cheryl. 2004. *Unspoken: A rhetoric of silence*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Kitzinger, Celia. 2005. "Heteronormativity in action: Reproducing the heterosexual nuclear family in after-hours medical calls." *Social Problems* 52:477–498. doi:10.1525/sp.2005.52.4.477.
- Nielsen, Joyce McCarl, Glenda Walden, and Charlotte. A Kunkel. 2000. "Gendered heteronormativity: Empirical illustrations in everyday life." *Sociological Quarterly* 41: 283–296. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2000.tb00096.x.
- Ratcliffe, Krista, and Cheryl Glenn (eds.) 2011. *Silence and listening as rhetorical arts*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Stubberud, Elisabeth, Lin Prøitz, and Hasti Hamidiasl. 2018. *Den eneste skeive i bygda? Unge lhbt-personers bruk av kommunale helsetjenester*, KUN-rapport 2018. Retrieved December 19, 2023 from https://www.kun.no/uploads/7/2/2/3/72237499/stubberud_pr%C3%B8itz_og_hamidiasl_2018_-_den_eneste_skeive_i_bygda_-_web.pdf.
- Yep, Gust A. 2003. "The violence of heteronormativity in communication studies: Notes on injury, healing, and queer world-making". *Journal of Homosexuality* 45: 11–59. doi:10.1300/J082v45n02_02.
- Zerfass, Ansgar, Dejan Verčič, Howard Nothhaft, and Kelly PageWerder. 2019. "Strategic communication: Defining the field and its contribution to research and practice." *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12(4): 487–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485>.

Key words

LGBTQ+, minorities, rhetorical listening, rhetorical silence, risk communication, strategic communication

KIRA SKOVBO MOSER⁹

AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3206-5391>

kiramoser@cc.au.dk

Manifestos in contemporary Danish gender debates: Analyses and interventions

1. Introduction: Point of departure

Manifestos, hybrid and broad in form and genre, but traditionally understood as provocations that speak out against established norms (Lyon 1999; Yanoshevsky 2009), have played such crucial roles in upheavals in the spheres of art, politics and everyday life that existing research sees manifestos and modern publics as mutually dependent (Lyon 1999). Not least, manifestos have been important in understandings of gender roles, where texts like the *Red Stocking Manifesto*

9. Kira Skovbo Moser is a Ph.D.-student in rhetoric at Aarhus University. Board member of Kvinde Kend Din Krop and editor of the 50th anniversary edition (est. 2025). Her MA-thesis *Gender Utopia! on teaching feminist gender manifestos in the Danish folk high school movement* won K-Forum's prize for best MA-thesis 2022.

(Morgan, ed. 1971) have ignited heated debates and disrupted established understandings of gender, both internationally and in Denmark.

Numerous studies of manifestos exist (Yanoshevsky 2009), including several studies of the relationship between manifestos, gender debates and feminism (Colman 2010; Fahs 2018). Understudied, however, are more recent Danish manifestos and their role in current Danish gender debates, despite the fact that new manifesto forms and functions are currently shaping contemporary discussions of gender norms.

2. Hypothesis, purpose, and research questions

The hypothesis of this project is that the manifesto is a privileged form of social action in the public gender debate in Denmark today. This hypothesis is pursued through two connected studies: The first study analyses and compares Danish gender manifestos since 2016 through rhetorical critique and close reading (Iversen and Villadsen 2020) with the aim of understanding current Danish gender manifestos as social actions (Miller 1984). In collaboration with two Danish NGOs working to promote gender equality from two different positions in the gender debate, the second study uses affective writing experiments (Uldbjerg and Hendry 2022) and participatory action research (Bradbury 2015) to test how the manifesto can be used in practice, with the aim of giving the two NGOs a stronger voice in the public debate.

The project's two studies are guided by each their research question:

1. What rhetorical strategies do current Danish gender manifestos utilise, and how have they sought to influence Danish public gender debates since 2016?
2. How might manifesto writing contribute to two Danish NGO's work to promote gender equality in Denmark?

The hope is to uncover useful or interesting rhetorical strategies that can then be tested in practice.

3. The Danish gender debates and manifestos

Since Fibiger's *Clara Raphael Tolv Breve* (1851), the first Danish feminist manifesto (Lund 2023), Danes have debated gender norms, roles, and rights, both publicly and privately. Over time, this debate has expanded: In the 1970s, the *Rødstrømpe-Manifest*, translated by Karen Syberg (Morgan, ed. 1971) showed how the private became political and women's struggle was linked to class struggle, and in the 2000s, *Queer Jihad* (2013) manifested Butler's ideas of gender as a social construction (1990) through zines and manifestos.

Several of these themes are still present in the gender debate today, albeit in updated form, alongside new topics such as intersectionality, transgenderism, and body activism. Unlike in the past, the debate today is hyper-aestheticised and multimodal (Kress 2010). It moves across digital and physical platforms and can be avatar-based or have a high degree of performative (often subversive) and individual-centred character, as seen, for example, in #GirlSquad's *Ludermanifest* (Klæstrup, Kjølsten, and Andersen 2017). It is in particular these new modalities in the gender debates that this project investigates.

The project builds on four main insights from existing research: Ariel's emphasis on how the manifesto genre continuously redefines itself (2021); Lyon's argument of the manifesto as "constitutive of the public sphere" (1999, 8); the understanding of the manifesto as a "discourse of power" that seeks to "change reality with words" (Yanoshevsky 2009, 264); and Fahs' (2019) and Somigli's (2003) ideas that working with manifestos is a transformative and norm-critical process, especially for marginalised voices in society.

4. Methodology and ethical considerations

The first study combines rhetorical close reading (Iversen and Villadsen 2020) and textual-intertextual analysis (Rønlev 2020) of manifestos such as *Jeg anerkender ikke længere jeres autoritet. Manifest* (Bech 2022) and *Ludermanifestet* (Klæstrup, Kjølsten, and Andersen 2017) to examine audience constitution, argumentation strategies and ethos construction. The findings of the first study inform the second with inputs for writing exercises and reflections on what rhetorical strategies that could be interesting for the NGOs to work with.

The second study has participatory action research as its approach, defined by Bilfeldt et al. as "an umbrella term for participatory research based on democratic and inclusive values, where knowledge should contribute to collective actions that change the state of things" (2018, 7; my translation). The project is based on Bradbury's criteria for good action research (2015), which are applied in the design, execution, and evaluation phases of the project (Matthiesen 2020).

The project intends to reflect openly, curiously, and critically on its normative aspects and aims to contribute to the discussions on the relationship between research and activism with insights into which exchanges between the two areas can be problematic and which can be productive.

References

- Ariel, Nana. 2021. 'Language Games with "Manifesto"'. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, November, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2021.1984970>.
- Bech, Glenn. 2022. *Jeg Anerkender Ikke Længere Jeres Autoritet. Manifest*. Rønne: Gyldendal.

- Bilfeldt, Annette, Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, John Andersen, and Kevin Anthony Perry** (eds.). 2018. *Den Ufærdige Fremtid : Aktionsforskningens Potentialer Og Udfordringer*. Retrieved December 19, 2023 from https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/286621905/Den_uf_rdige_fremtid_online_2.pdf.
- Bradbury, Hilary**. 2015. *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*. Third edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Butler, Judith**. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Colman, Felicity**. 2010. "Notes on the Feminist Manifesto: The Strategic Use of Hope." *Journal for Cultural Research* 14 (4): 375–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14797581003765333>.
- Fahs, Breanne**. 2018. "Words on Fire. Radical Pedagogies of the Feminist Manifesto." In *Transforming Contagion: Risky Contacts among Bodies, Disciplines, and Nations*, ed. Breanne Fahs, Annika Mann, Eric Swank, and Sarah Stage, 218–32. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. <https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813589626-015>.
- Fahs, Breanne**. 2019. "Writing with Blood: The Transformative Pedagogy of Teaching Students to Write Manifestos." *Radical Teacher* 15: 33–38.
- Fibiger, Mathilde**. 1851. *Clara Raphael: Tolv Breve*, ed. Johan Ludvig. Heiberg. København: Reitzel.
- Iversen, Stefan, and Lisa S. Villadsen**. 2020. "Nærlæsning." In *Retorik Og Metode*, ed. Stefan Iversen, Mette Bengtsson, and Kristine Marie Berg, 29–48. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Klæstrup, Nikita, Louise Kjølse, and Ekaterina Krarup Andersen**. 2017. *Ludermanifestet*. 1. udgave. København: DR.
- Kress, Gunther R**. 2010. *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203970034>.
- Lund, Marie**. 2023. "Claras Taleraseri: Det Første Feministiske Manifest På Dansk." *Temp - Tidsskrift for Historie* 13 (25): 75–92. <https://tidsskrift.dk/temp/article/view/135453>.
- Lyon, Janet**. 1999. *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501728358>.
- Matthiesen, Christina**. 2020. "Aktionsforskning." In *Retorik Og Metode*, ed. Stefan Iversen, Mette Bengtsson, and Kristine Marie Berg, 237–58. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Miller, Carolyn R**. 1984. "Genre as Social Action." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (2): 151–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638409383686>.
- Morgan, Robin** (ed.). 1971. *Søsterskab!: Artikler Fra Den Amerikanske Kvindebefrielse*, trans. Karen Syberg. Rhodos.
- Queer Jihad**. 2013. *Se! Den Heteroseksuelle Verdensorden Går i Stykker!*. 1. udgave. København: Solidaritet.
- Rønlev, Rasmus**. 2020. "Tekstlig-Intertekstlig Analyse." In *Retorik Og Metode*, ed. Stefan Iversen, Mette Bengtsson, and Kristine Marie Berg, 49–70. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Somigli, Luca**. 2003. *Legitimizing the Artist. Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885–1915*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442621060>.
- Uldbjerg, Signe, and Natalie Ann Hendry**. 2022. "Affective Writing Experiments." In *Methodologies of Affective Experimentation*, ed. Britta Timm Knudsen, Mads Krogh, and Carsten Stage. London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-96272-2>.
- Vatnø, Eirik, and Dawn Wheatley**. 2020. "Eksplorativ Retorisk Analyse Af Sociale Medier." In *Retorik Og Metode*, ed. by Stefan Iversen, Mette Bengtsson, and Kristine Marie Berg, trans. Morten Visby, 213–36. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Yanoshevsky, Galia**. 2009. "Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre." *Poetics Today* 30 (2): 257–86.

Key words

activist research, gender debates, manifestos, participatory action research, rhetorical critique

FREDERIK APPEL OLSEN¹⁰

DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3571-2812>

frederik@appel.dk

Anthropocene Conjunctions: Scientist activism and ethos in the climate and ecological emergency

1. Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of scientists are choosing more radical modes of societal engagement seeing that the climate and ecological crisis, thoroughly documented by science, is deepening and proper political action is yet to be seen. Organizing in protest movements, publishing calls for radical engagement in scientific journals, and engaging in non-violent civil disobedience are just some of the ways that scientists are breaking with the cultural conventions of their profession in the face of a rapidly deteriorating biosphere.

This PhD dissertation – submitted on August 1st and defended on December 1st 2023 – consists of four independent research articles and an introductory chapter responding to the following research questions:

1. How do contemporary expressions of scientist activist rhetoric unfold and function within the broader spectrum of knowledge work and climate politics?
2. How is scientific ethos (re)negotiated in scientist activist rhetorical practices in the climate and ecological emergency?
3. What would productive trajectories for scientist activism in times of crisis look like, and how can we get there?

The dissertation uses a rhetorical-critical framework engaging with multiple fields to examine discussions among scientists about the responsibilities and purposes of social action in the climate and ecological emergency. Scientist activist protest events attempting to persuade the wider public, especially those in power, that substantial climate policy is needed, while doing so in the name of science is also examined. The methodology of critical rhetoric is discussed in relation to these topics as well as to the dissertation's author's specific research trajectory during the past three years.

In the following, the dissertation's four articles are recapped.

10. Dr. Frederik Appel Olsen is a recently graduated PhD from the Department of Communication at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His research expertise lies in the intersection of climate and environmental rhetoric, the rhetoric of science, and social movement and activist rhetoric. He has also published on polemical rhetoric as well as engaged in a wide variety of dissemination activities in Danish media. Ph.D. stipend period: 2020–2023.

2. Publish and/or perish: Scientific journal commentary for social action in the climate and ecological emergency

This article is a rhetorical-critical reading of two scientific articles discussing the role of science in the climate and ecological emergency: one calling for a moratorium for climate science (Glavovic et al. 2021) and another calling for a turn from traditional conservation efforts to “survival ecology” (Gardner and Bullock 2021).

First, I argue that developments in the climate debate broadly have shifted the relationship between scientists and the ‘a-words’ (advocacy, alarmism, and activism) to become less defensive on the part of climate science.

Second, I show how the two articles use the scientific article genre for social action (Devitt 2021) in the climate and ecological emergency.

Lastly, I argue that the article calling for survival ecology uses the rhetorical figure *antithesis* to position itself more productively within the co-production of science and society than the moratorium call’s use of the figure *ploche*. In the overall framework of the dissertation, this article points to how some overall shifts in the climate debate and how these shifts offer new opportunities for scientists to engage with wider society.

This article is accepted as a chapter for the anthology *Speaking Truth to Power and the Power of Truth: How Science Engages Politics, Public Knowledge, and Activism* (ed. Pamela Pietrucci and Leah Ceccarelli) in Springer’s *Rhetoric, Politics and Society* series.

3. Scientists Rebelling at the Climate Ministry: Unrestful scientific ethos at scientist rebellion’s teach-in demonstration

Next, this article turns to a specific event to look at how the above-mentioned new rhetorical opportunities for scientists are taken up in activist practice: the first Nordic civil disobedience action carried out by the scientist social movement Scientist Rebellion in front of the Climate Ministry in Copenhagen in 2021.

In my rhetorical critique, I focus on the media coverage of the demonstration to examine how scientific ethos is negotiated when merging with activist practice in public space. Through a reading of the scientist activists’ operationalization of place and movement rhetoric, I argue that it would be helpful to rethink dominant perspectives on scientific ethos in the climate and ecological crisis. The intersection between science and social movements highlights the need to understand ethos as unrestful rather than as a gradual and stable process of construction. Finally, I argue that a rhetorical-humanist approach to social movements’ potentialities to change society can serve as a nuancing perspective to the more deterministic theories of change like the ones Scientist Rebellion works with. Thus, this case

both points to ways that scientific ethos is renegotiated and to a new conception of scientific ethos that could inspire a productive trajectory for scientist activist movements.

This article is an English translation of an article published in *Rhetorica Scandinavica* (Appel Olsen 2023).

4. Bodies on or off the gears of the Science Machine? scientist activist ethos and machinic logics at the Science Museum

This article engages deeper yet in the dissertation's rhetorical-critical examination of scientific ethos in a specific protest event: On May 19, 2021, the scientist climate movement Scientist Rebellion (SR) disrupted the opening of the "Our Future Planet" exhibition at the Science Museum in London, UK.

This article presents a rhetorical critique of SR's civil disobedient direct action, examining the (re)negotiation of scientific ethos unfolding in activist practice. First, the contribution that a critique of scientist body rhetoric in a climate protest setting makes to the fields of rhetoric of science and social movement rhetoric is staked out.

Second, I present four "machinic logics" at play at the "Our Future Planet" protest:

1. Climate understood as machine,
2. the denial and delay machine,
3. oppressive politics understood as machinic in activist vocabularies, and
4. the political and ethical issues and entanglements with the former three as they specifically relate to what C. Wright Mills (1958) calls the "Science Machine".

Third, an analysis of the livestream of SR's direct action shows how the scientist activists' interruption and intervention in this cacophony of machinic logics relates to scientific ethos in productive, yet contradictory ways.

Finally, I argue that SR succeed in creatively highlighting Shell's greenwashing agenda and the contradictions inherent in the Science Museum's cooperation with Big Oil, but would do well to touch upon the scientific community's own investments in the Science Machine that stifles and prohibits urgently needed political climate action.

5. Impure methodology: Biospheric crisis, critical rhetoric, and scholarly engagement in the uncanny present

Finally, in the fourth and last article, I take a meta-perspective on the dissertation to reflect on research and activism is not only the object that I study, but essentially also has a lot to do with my own position as a scholar.

I offer here, then, a reflective essay dealing with the dissertation's methodology. Methodology is often, and for good reasons, occupied with the *how* and *why* of scholarship and criticism, and participatory variants of rhetorical criticism and critical rhetoric are no exceptions. This essay seeks supplementary re- and/or disorientations for participatory critical practice in that it seeks to turn engaged rhetoricians' attention towards the *when* and *where* of criticism.

First, I discuss main currents within critical rhetoric from Raymie McKerrow's (1989) essay inaugurating the critical rhetoric framework up to Middleton et al.'s (2015) notion of participatory critical rhetoric (PCR). I argue that ideas about criticality and participation should be expanded in the Anthropocene because the ubiquitousness of this crisis and its implications for scholarship and politics easily create awkward ambivalences when working with and in different variants of activism.

Second, I propose that Rebecca Bryant's (2016) notion of "the uncanny present" can inform critical orientations of scholars working with environmental and climate rhetoric. Drawing on the work of Alexis Shotwell (2016) and Steven Epstein (1998), I then introduce the term 'impure methodology' as a way of actively working with the above conundrums without limiting the practice of critical participation to the one advocated by PCR.

Finally, I offer a list of 'pseudo-principles' for impure methodology as inspiration for scholars of rhetoric and other fields trying to navigate global crisis.

The overarching thrust of this dissertation is that scientist activists are in a new position in this stage of the climate and ecological emergency; a situation that offers them new opportunities for societal engagement that a rhetorical-humanistic approach to social movement work can help explore productively. The scientist activists in the dissertation's cases grapple with the somewhat contradictory cultural norms of science and activism. They are often good at addressing the public in ways that inspire questions about science and its relation to politics – which shows the unrestful character of scientific ethos in a civilizational crisis. However, they also struggle with countering institutional science's own part in this complex political crisis. For both scientist activists and critical rhetoricians, then, engaging openly and with curiosity in these impure relations of research, activism, and biospheric breakdown at this exact conjunction in the planet's political history offers inspiration as to how to engage with the serious challenges of the Anthropocene.

References

- Appel Olsen, Frederik. 2023. "Forskeroprør Ved Klimaministeriet: Urolig Videnskabelig Etos Ved Scientist Rebellions Teach-in-Demonstration." *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 86: 157–77.

- Bryant, Rebecca.** 2016. "On Critical Times: Return, Repetition, and the Uncanny Present." *History and Anthropology* 27 (1): 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2015.1114481>.
- Devitt, Amy J.** 2021. "Genre for Social Action: Transforming Worlds Through Genre Awareness and Action." In *Genre in Climate Debate*, ed. Sune Auken and Christel Sunesen, 17–33. De Gruyter Open Poland. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9788395720499-003>.
- Epstein, Steven.** 1998. *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.
- Gardner, Charlie J., and James M. Bullock.** 2021. "In the Climate Emergency, Conservation Must Become Survival Ecology." *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 2. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcosc.2021.659912>.
- Glavovic, Bruce C., Timothy F. Smith, and Iain White.** 2021. "The Tragedy of Climate Change Science." *Climate and Development* 14:9, 829–833. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2021.2008855>.
- McKerrow, Raymie E.** 1989. "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis." *Communication Monographs* 56 (2): 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390253>.
- Middleton, Michael K, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook.** 2015. *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric In Situ*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Mills, C. Wright.** 1958. *The Causes of World War Three*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Shotwell, Alexis.** 2016. *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt1hch845>.

Key words

Anthropocene rhetoric, climate and ecological emergency, rhetoric of science, scientific ethos, scientist activism

REBEKKA LYKKE RINGGAARD¹¹

AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4118-9199>

rln@cc.au.dk

Accusations in contemporary Scandinavian public discourse

While accusations and defenses have been integral components of rhetorical theory and practice since antiquity, a clear trend has emerged over time, with defenses getting more empirical and theoretical attention than accusations (Ryan 1982). This pattern persists in the modern rhetorical tradition. The missing theoretical interest in accusations in recent rhetorical research is particularly noticeable when compared to its counterpart, defense or apology, which has been researched for decades (see, for example, Villadsen 2008; Villadsen and Edwards, eds. 2020; Ellwanger 2012; Benoit 2015). This research project seeks to fill this gap by proposing a definition of accusation and analyzing a number of public accusations as they manifest in current public discourse within a Scandinavian context.

11. Rebekka L. Ringgaard is a M.A. in Rhetoric and Ph.D. fellow at Aarhus University. She is affiliated with the Department of Comparative Literature and Rhetoric, Aarhus University, Denmark. The project is supervised by Stefan Iversen, Aarhus University and Elisabeth Hoff-Clausen, University of Copenhagen. Ph.D. stipend period: 2018-2020 (part time) / 2020-2024.

Two research questions are guiding my work and the dissertation:

RQ1: What characterizes the accusation as a rhetorical utterance?

RQ2: What functions do accusations have in current Scandinavian public deliberation?

In this project I define accusation as a situated utterance wherein someone ascribes guilt to a group or an individual (Iversen and Nørremark 2021, 56). This definition distinguishes accusations from related phenomena (such as shaming, hate speech, character assassination, etc.) by emphasizing guilt as the concrete and personal responsibility for an action, inspired by the writing of Hannah Arendt: “Where all are guilty, nobody is. Guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out; it is strictly personal. It refers to an act, not to intentions or potentialities” (Arendt 1987, 43).

Moreover, the definition establishes a connection between accusations and statements concerning past events that have violated written or unwritten norms. Consequently, I argue that the logic of narrative influences the form and function of accusations. Narrative thinking connects events in linear sequences, providing coherence, direction, and potential meaning (Walsh 2018). Accusations, drawing upon this capability to establish connections and imbue events with significance, attribute guilt through depictions of sequences of events. A crucial implication of the association of accusations with narrative thinking is that the characteristics inherent in narrative thinking influence the nature of the accusation (Iversen and Nørremark 2021, 57).

In this project I extend my focus beyond the forensic genre by examining more than just legal accusations, under the assumption that the anatomy of the accusation is consistent across discursive forms and communities. I argue that the accusation exhibits the same set of core characteristics whether it is voiced privately, in a public sphere, or within the confines of a courtroom. Thus I propose to view the accusation not as a genre but as a particular kind of rhetorical utterance that transcends situations and genres.

Empirical data for this study are derived from various individual and collective public accusations, including those presented as part of the #MeToo movement's numerous testimonies of offensive behavior and acts of abuse, as well as from public debates about appropriate and inappropriate conduct during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. The attempts to contain and combat the world wide epidemic resulted in societal measures at various levels, notably the rapid introduction of comprehensive regulations governing residence and movement. In the Scandinavian countries some of these measures were of a legal nature, while others were more informal. Suddenly, completely ordinary everyday activities were rendered illegal, subject to criticism, and indicative of a lack of respect for

one's fellow citizens. It engendered a fundamental uncertainty about what could be considered a breach of decorum, thereby laying the groundwork for formal and informal accusations in various forms.

Also, explicit accusations arose against the authorities responsible for managing the crisis. This was evident in Sweden as well, where scholars publicly accused the Swedish government and a number of officials of being guilty for the rising mortality rates in the country. 22 scholars joined forces and disseminated the severe accusation publicly through a Swedish newspaper. The accusation retrospectively addressed misprioritizations, poor choices, and a lack of actions, but it also evolved into a call to action and invited a revision of the normative foundation upon which decisions were made. In this way the accusation became a tool to negotiate the existing norms, and an example of a central claim of the project – that accusations often serve as a catalyst for the negotiation of norms and values in public discourse.

The diverse examples of public accusations in current Scandinavian public discourse that I analyze in this project are drawn from public debates characterized by a dynamic and fragmented nature. Accusations unfold across traditional media, manifestos, books, digital social media and so on. As part of the project, I develop a method to map dynamic issues across media platforms and to delimit empirical objects that can be subjected to more traditional rhetorical criticism (Nørremark 2020).

References

- Arendt, Hannah.** 1987. "Collective Responsibility". In *Amor Mundi. Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, ed. James William Bernauer, 43–50. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Benoit, William. L.** 2015. *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: Image Repair Theory and Research* (2nd ed). Albany: SUNY Press.
- Ellwanger, Adam.** 2012. "Apology as Metanoic Performance: Punitive Rhetoric and Public Speech". *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 42(4): 307–329.
- Iversen, Stefan and Rebekka L. Nørremark.** 2021. "'Men så skedde inte i Sverige' – om anklagens anatomi". *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 82(25): 50–66.
- Nørremark, Rebekka.** 2020. "Digital Issue Mapping på tværs af medier og digitale platforme" in *Retorik og Metoder*, ed. Mette Bengtsson, Kristine Marie Berg, and Stefan Iversen, 165–188. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Ryan, Halford R.** 1982. "Kategoria and Apologia: On their rhetorical criticism as a speech set". *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68: 254–261.
- Villadsen, Lisa.** 2008. "Speaking on Behalf of Others: Rhetorical Agency and Epideictic Functions in Official Apologies". *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38(1): 25–45.
- Villadsen, Lisa.** 2014. "More than a nice ritual. Official apologies as a rhetorical act in need of theoretical re-conceptualization". In *Let's talk politics*, ed. Hilde Van Belle et al., 27–43. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Villadsen, Lisa and Jason A. Edwards** (eds.). 2020. *The Rhetoric of Official Apologies: Critical Essays*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Walsh, Richard.** 2018. "Narrative Theory for Complexity Scientists". In *Narrating Complexity*, ed. Richard Walsh and Susan Stepney, 11–25. London: Springer.

Key words

accusatory rhetoric, collective accusations, guilt, public debate, social media

LOUISE THERESE SCHOU THERKILDSEN¹²
UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6956-1709>
louise.schou.therkildsen@gu.se

A European State of Mind. Rhetorical formations of European Identity within the EU 1973–2014

1. Introduction

How has the European Union (EU) worked rhetorically with European identity formation over time? This is the central question of my project. European identity has become an increasingly central issue in the political imaginary of the EU. In recent years, European identity – and related notions of a European destiny, European culture, and a European narrative – has been deployed as a weapon against the rise of the political far-right across Europe. This political landscape has compelled EU politicians to seek effective ways of countering the mythologies of the far-right, which often centre around origin, tradition, and the nation as the fundamental unit of community.

One example of such counterstrategies is the EU initiative New Narrative for Europe, which explicitly seeks to thwart growing nationalism by creating a shared cultural narrative. “We won’t have real unity”, said then-president of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso at the project launch, “until we acknowledge a sense of belonging to a community which is bigger than the nation or the region, a sense of a shared European destiny” (Barroso 2013, para. 32). In other words, the strategy of the EU to counter nationalism and populism in many ways draws upon nationalist and populist myths about collective identity and even a shared destiny.

Efforts to craft European identity are not novel practices designed only to counter forces of the far-right, though. Since the advent of the EU, the prospect of crafting European identity has been – and continues to be – conceived as a desirable quest in various strands of the political rhetoric of the EU with an almost self-evident justification: it is viewed as a necessary, legitimising step to further integrate member states.

2. Objects of study, analytical approach, and theoretical framework

I explore five concrete attempts at collective identity formation within first the EC/EU from a diachronic perspective, although the most recent takes a primary

12. Louise Schou Therkildsen is a postdoctoral researcher. She holds a Ph.D. in Rhetoric from Uppsala University and is currently working on a project exploring post-colonial reconciliation processes in Europe at the Centre for European Research, University of Gothenburg. Ph.D. stipend period: 2016–2022.

position in the study: the Declaration on European Identity (1973), A People's Europe (1984–1985), The Maastricht Treaty (1992), The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (2004), and New Narrative for Europe (2013–2014). As these initiatives are quite diverse and dispersed in time, I conduct a combination of micro and macro level analysis (Asen 2010). On the micro level, *conceptually driven rhetorical criticism* attends to the reciprocal process of illumination and thickening between concept and object (Jasinski 2001), and, on the macro level, I take a step back from the chronological order of the initiatives through a *topological reading* that views the body of texts as a topology with both uniting features and tensions (Johansen 2005).

The study is guided by the following research questions: How is European identity described and contextualised? Whom or what do such identity formations represent and encompass? Which norms and values are invoked herein? And, finally, what are the implications of such formations for both the EU and its citizens? Within the theoretical framework of constitutive rhetoric (Charland 1987), I seek to, firstly, illuminate this specific material and its means of crafting collective European identity; and, secondly, to further develop the theory by highlighting its challenges and potential.

3. Empirical and theoretical contributions

Firstly, the empirical results indicate the need to widen the scope of constitutive rhetoric to include not only text, but also other symbolic, geographical, and physical means of interpellations as resources for constitutive rhetoric. The means of the EU's constitutive rhetoric have both altered and increased. Functional instruments (e.g., regulations concerning the free movement, university credit transfer, and the internal market) have been supplemented with symbolic and physical practices aimed at interweaving the citizenry through physical encounters, social education abroad, sports, television, cultural programmes, and a range of EU symbols (e.g., the EU flag, the EU hymn, Europe Day). The most recent initiative suggests that the performative power of narratives about a European cultural heritage will help EU citizens reconnect with each other and with the EU. Of course, constitutive rhetoric does not always have the multidimensional character showcased by the EU, but understanding how these dimensions might work will help us notice them in the first place.

Secondly, the historiography of the EU invokes plural temporal imaginaries (Buhre 2019), and I therefore suggest the need for a broader theoretical focus on converging and/or diverging temporalities to achieve a more complex understanding of how transhistorical narratives are crafted rhetorically. We see this, among others, in the EU's historiographical work with a founding and a new narrative,

respectively, both of which focus on locating a proper origin as the foundation for the EU. While the founding narrative turns to WWI and WWII, traumas that the EU has helped overcome, the new narrative searches for a more distant and richer past: Antiquity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment. The founding narrative thus directs its attention towards the event of Europe becoming the EU, whereas the new narrative reverses this direction and turns from the EU to Europe, figured as a cultural resource in present and future identity formation.

Finally, I argue that the visionary, ideological aspects of the EU's constitutive rhetoric give reason to believe that we should conceptualize ideology not as distortion and illusion, but as the functions through which visions of unity and wholeness are crafted (Laclau 1997). For example, my analysis shows that the EU is driven by visions of eternity and omnipresence. We see this more specifically in the circulation of tropes about European cosmopolitanism, a European destiny, universality as European essence, and a European state of mind. In conjunction, they provide a frame for what it signifies and entails to be an EU citizen.

On a general level, I suggest incorporating a more dynamic view on interpellation that centres reciprocity and circulation. The study shows that while the quest for European identity was formalised already in the founding days of the EU, its scope has changed over time, from focusing on the image of the EU to gradually becoming a characteristic of the EU citizens. Today, citizens are expected to take part in a "European state of mind" and a cosmopolitan way of life (Battista et al. 2014). My analysis also suggests that in the EU's efforts to craft European identity, the institutional, collective, and individual levels of identity formation have become increasingly intertwined, whereby EU citizens are expected to identify with and confirm the European integration project. We see this crystalized in the New Narrative initiative, where the language of the EU is circulated by scholars, journalists, and cultural agents.¹³ This distribution and circulation of the EU's rhetorical practices complicates the search of a coherent rhetorical agent (Berg 2011). This intertwinement can have positive implications in terms of democratic involvement and legitimacy as well as social cohesion, but the risk is that the political language becomes disconnected from political actors and their arguments (Viklund 2014).

A more dynamic approach to interpellative mechanisms and constitutive rhetoric as the one suggested in the thesis allows us to question and better understand the decentred and processual character of collective identity formation: who is hailing whom?

13. Groups of actors invited to be part of the project and the publication. See Battista, Setari, and Rossignol 2014.

References

- Barroso, José Manuel Durão.** 2013. "Speech by President Barroso: 'A New Narrative for Europe'". Retrieved December 19, 2023 from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_13_357.
- Battista, Emiliano, Nicola Setari, and Els Rossignol** (eds.). 2014. *The Mind and Body of Europe: A New Narrative*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Berg, Kristine Marie.** 2011. "'Intercultural Dialogue' as Rhetorical Form: A Pyrrhic Victory." Doctoral Thesis, Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.
- Buhre, Frida.** 2019. "Speaking Other Times: Hannah Arendt and the Temporality of Politics." Doctoral Thesis, Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Charland, Maurice.** 1987. "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (2): 133–50.
- Jasinski, James.** 2001. "The Status of Theory and Method in Rhetorical Criticism." *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (3): 249–70.
- Johansen, Maria.** 2005. *Offentlig skrift om det hemliga – Raison d'état, SOU och varulven. Logos patos 4*. Göteborg: Glänta produktion.
- Laclau, Ernesto.** 1997. "The Death and Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology." *MLN* 112 (3): 297–321. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mln.1997.0038>.
- Therkildsen, Louise S.** 2022. "A European State of Mind. Rhetorical Formations of European Identity within the EU 1973–2014." Doctoral Thesis, Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Viklund, Jon.** 2014. "Den politiska visionens retorik: Exemplet Sverige – det nya matlandet." *Rhetorica Scandinavica* 66/67: 77–95.

Key words

constitutive rhetoric, collective identity formation, European Union, European identity