

THE RHETORICAL TURN IN ANTHROPOLOGY

MICHAŁ MOKRZAN

Abstract: The article discusses the theoretical and methodological considerations as well as the practical application of two incarnations of the rhetorical turn in socio-cultural anthropology. Rhetorical turn is understood as a linguistic and constructivist turn, which marks a substantial part of contemporary thinking in the social sciences and humanities. Reflection about the relation between anthropology and rhetoric shows that the rhetorical turn is oriented on analyzing the rhetoric of anthropological texts, in their persuasive and figurative dimension. On the other hand, rhetorical turn refers to the research perspective in anthropology which is focused on the interpretation of society and culture in which an important role is played by the tools and concepts of rhetoric.

Key words: cultural anthropology, rhetoric, metaphor, metonymy, rhetorical turn.

Rhetoric and Social Sciences

The term “rhetorical turn” refers to the intellectual movement, which influences a substantial part of modern thinking in the social sciences and humanities (Mokrzan 2012a: 101–103). Herbert W. Simons points out that in 1984, at the symposium entitled *Rhetoric of Human Sciences*, held in Iowa City in the USA, Richard Rorty diagnosed that the modern history of the humanities is marked by a number of “turns” (Simons 1990: vii). The first one – mentioned by the philosopher – is the linguistic turn. The main ideas regarding this type of reflection were expressed in a book *The Linguistic Turn. Essays in Philosophical Method* (Rorty 1967), which is the collective work of many contemporary thinkers. It contains articles which situate language at the core of philosophical reflection. In addition to Rudolf Carnap’s text, the co-founder of the Vienna Circle, this collection contains texts of philosophers who present contradictory approaches to language. We find here the articles of the following authors: Willard Van Orman Quine – presenting criticism toward logical

positivism, Max Black – who influenced analytical philosophy and Jerrold Katz – a representative of generative grammar. The second turn mentioned by Rorty is the interpretative turn. According to Jürgen Habermas (1983) its main concepts were most fully laid out in *Interpretive Social Science* (Rabinow – Sullivan 1979). This book contains texts of such thinkers as Paul Ricoeur, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Stanley Fish, Charles Taylor and Clifford Geertz. Rorty claims that after these two turns, it's time for another one, the rhetorical turn, which is sometimes labeled as rhetorical constructivism. According to this theoretical and methodological approach, common-sense as well as scientific and philosophical representations and interpretations of the bio-socio-cultural reality are constructs developed by rhetorical devices such as tropes, figures, and acts of persuasion. Furthermore, it is argued that not only representations and interpretations but also “selves and societies are constructed and deconstructed through rhetorical practices” (Brown 1990: 191). This is due to the presumption that we experience the world through rhetorically mediated forms of knowledge. In the social sciences and philosophy the rhetorical turn is characterized by a critical reflection on epistemology. It is considered that the process of understanding is based on the mechanisms of rhetoric. In the entry entitled *The Rhetorical Turn in Social Theory* in the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* Richard Harvey Brown claims that “the rhetorical transvaluation of epistemology wrenches us away from our most treasured beliefs about the constitution of science, knowledge, and even reason itself (...) rhetorical approach subverts the authority of modernist philosophy of science by radically conflating the traditionally bifurcated hierarchies of truth and expression, *doxa* and *episteme*, rationality and language, appearance and reality, and meaning and metaphor. It does so by focusing on the how rather than the what of knowledge, its poetic and political enablements rather than its logical and empirical entailments. Through such shifts of focus, the rhetorical turn relocates knowledge in the act of symbolic construction, and knowledge is no longer regarded as that which symbols subserviently convey. Humans *enact* truth not by legislating it scientifically, but by performing it discursively, in science, in politics, and in everyday life” (Brown 2005: 645–646). Therefore, distinctive feature of the rhetorical turn is the focus on the rhetorical dimension of scientific and philosophical discourses. The attention shifts to the reflection on the role of tropes, rhetorical figures and argumentative techniques in narratives written by scholars.

In philosophy the rhetorical turn is associated with Jacques Derrida and with the reflection – developed by the thinker in the *White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy* (Derrida 1982) – on the metaphorical nature of philosophical concepts. The first sentence of the essay “From philosophy, rhetoric” (Derrida 1982: 209), summarizes the main objectives of the project “philosophy as a kind of writing” developed by Derrida (Rorty 1978). In the field of literary criticism, tropes, understood as rhetorical mechanisms organizing literary, philosophical and scientific

discourses are the object of interest for The Yale School. It is worth mentioning its representative Paul de Man and the essay *The Epistemology of Metaphor* (De Man 1978) which is the key text to the rhetorical turn. De Man develops the concept of rhetorical reading, which, according to Rodolphe Gasché (1999), corresponds to Derrida's project of deconstruction. In this essay De Man writes: "rhetoric, however, is not in itself a historical but an epistemological discipline" (De Man 1978: 30). In the field of history, scholars who are interested in the rhetorical dimension of cognition are Hayden White and Frank Ankersmith. The first one in the *Tropics of Discourse* argues that "The historian's characteristic instrument of encodation, communication, and exchange is ordinary educated speech. This implies that the only instruments that he has for endowing his data with meaning, of rendering the strange familiar, and of rendering the mysterious past comprehensible, are the techniques of figurative language" (White 1978: 94). In sociology Richard Harvey Brown wrote about the rhetorical construction of social reality. Employing the terminology of rhetoric, he argued that society works as a text (Brown 1987). Deirdre N. McCloskey, in *The Rhetoric of Economics* showed that economic sciences persuade through the use of rhetorical tools: "Figures of speech are not mere frills. They think for us." (McCloskey 1998: xix) James Boyd White, in turn, pointed out that in the legal sciences "this is a way of looking at the law, not as a set of rules or institutions or structures (as it is usually envisaged), nor as a part of our bureaucracy or government (to be thought of it terms of political science or sociology or economics), but as a kind of rhetorical and literary activity" (White 1985: x).

Not only has the discourse of humanities and social sciences become the subject of meticulous rhetorical analysis, but rhetoricians and rhetorically oriented sociologists of knowledge as well as philosophers of science have started extensive discussion on the rhetorical dimension of knowledge produced within the natural science: biology, physics, chemistry, etc. In classical works for the newly emerging discipline, that is the rhetoric of science, Charles Bazerman (1988), Greg Myers (1990), Alan G. Gross (1990) and John Angus Campbell (1990) focused inter alia on the techniques of argumentation and strategies of justifying scientific theorems in the following works: Galileo's *Two World Systems*, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, and Isaac Newton's *Opticks*. Analyzing the rhetoric employed by the creators of discourses they argued that the "rhetoric is constitutive of scientific knowledge" (Gross 2006: 5). The position taken by the first generation of the rhetoricians of science clearly expresses Bazerman's opinion: "persuasion is at the heart of science, not at the unrespectable fringe. An intelligent rhetoric practiced within a serious, experienced, knowledgeable, committed research community is a serious method of truth seeking. The most serious scientific communication is not that which disowns persuasion, but which persuades in the deepest, most: compelling manner, thereby sweeping aside more superficial arguments. Science has developed tools and tricks

that make- nature the strongest ally of persuasive argument, even while casting aside some of the more familiar and ancient tools and tricks of rhetoric as being only superficially and temporarily persuasive” (Bazerman 1988: 321). In the works of the rhetoricians of science, considerations on the persuasiveness of scientific discourse are accompanied by reflections on the role of tropes, rhetorical figures and topos in the creation of scientific knowledge. The cognitive value is attributed to the elocutive elements of rhetoric. In the work entitled *Rhetorical Figures in Science* Jeanne Fahnestock states that figures “are no longer seen as decoration on the plain cloth of language but as the fabric itself. The figures epitomize lines of argument that have great applicability and durability, and though these lines can be paraphrased in roundabout ways, they gain their greatest force in the stylistic concision of a recognizable figure. In a general as well as a very particular sense, then, a style argues.” (Fahnestock 1999: xii)

This sample of authors and books shows a reflection on the rhetorical aspect of the production of scientific knowledge, which we refer to as the rhetorical turn, have taken place in almost all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. This reflection is also not alien to socio-cultural anthropology. It should however be underlined, that with regards to our discipline we can talk about two incarnations of the rhetorical turn. Analyzing the discursive space of anthropology it can be noticed that its representatives rhetorically analyze anthropological texts in persuasive and figurative dimensions. In this regard they do not differ from the representatives of other disciplines i.e. they are interested in the rhetoric of science, in this particular case, the rhetoric of anthropology. However, in anthropology, the rhetorical turn, takes yet another form. It is also understood as a theoretical and methodological perspective oriented on the interpretation of society and culture in which the rhetorical tools play an important role. Anthropologists of rhetoric are less interested in how anthropological knowledge is produced. They rather emphasize the interpretation of figurative and persuasive processes which take place in culture and society. The next part of the article will be devoted to a critical discussion on the key arguments underlying these two incarnations of the rhetorical turn in anthropology.

Rhetoric of Anthropology: Figurativeness, Persuasiveness and Power

Stephen A. Tyler in the book entitled *The Unspeakable: Discourse, Dialogue and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World* (1987), argues that an analysis of the history of rhetoric show how the rhetoric was ousted from philosophy and scientific discourse. Rhetoric in ancient times and later again in modern times was the reference point for philosophy and science. Philosophers such as Plato, John Locke, Francis Bacon and Immanuel Kant created the grounds of philosophical discourse in opposition to rhetoric. These thinkers attempted to expel rhetoric from their discourse, because – they believed – it obscures reality and

instead of providing true knowledge (*épistemē*) is limited to common opinions (*dóxa*). Antirhetorical tendency which can be traced in philosophy and modern science is also exposed by S. Tyler in *A Post-modern In-stance*: “No poets, thank you. No *doxa*. No metaphors. No suggestion. Only statements need apply for real work.” (Tyler 1991: 90) Describing the project of modernity, the American anthropologist emphasizes that modernism is seen as the triumph of things over signs, *plain style* over rhetoric and reason over passion. He notes that nothing so clearly highlights the motivation of modernism as the dream of a transparent language. The idea of a transparent language – which implies the correspondence theory of truth – assumes that the words perfectly reflect reality. The ultimate goal of modern science and philosophy “was to create an order of discourse that mirrored the mind that mirrored the world that mirrored the discourse that...” (Tyler 1987: 7) To build a transparent language, modernism has developed a so called *plain style*. The intention of its founders was to fulfill the ideal of scientism; that is, a limpid style of description freed from rhetoric, which in the long philosophical tradition derived from Plato was treated as a discourse of deception. “For plain style, rhetorical tricks are bad because they cloud the mirror.” (Tyler 1987: 7) Since the metaphor compares two unlike elements, rhetoric can be treated by the discourse of modernism as a fraud, which tangles the relationship of words and things. Such a position in the philosophy and science was identified by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as “fear of metaphor and rhetoric” (Lakoff – Johnson 2003: 191). Anthropologists forming the rhetorical turn, argue that the attempts to eliminate rhetoric (understood as figurativeness) from the anthropological discourse are ineffective and unjustified. This is due to the fact that language is a space which can exist through the elements that modernism hoped to banish from its own discourse. Language cannot be treated in reference and literal categories, because, as Friedrich Nietzsche emphasizes: “there is obviously no unrhetorical «naturalness» of language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts” (Nietzsche 1989: 106). “The tropes are not just occasionally added to words but constitute their most proper nature.” (Nietzsche 1989: 25)

Reflection on figurative language sheds new light on the nature of human cognition. It turned out that our cognitive acts are based on “a series of tropological transpositions” (Rusinek 2003: 9). This thought becomes particularly relevant to anthropologists who develop the reflection on the rhetorical dimension of anthropological cognition. In their view, the elementary modes of understanding social and cultural phenomena are determined by rhetorical conventions. The following considerations are therefore the grounds of reflection on the rhetorical dimension of anthropological knowledge. The reality is available through rhetoric. We cast a narrative net on reality i.e. we interpret it through the process of translation using rhetorical tropes. This in fact means that the transformation from strange to familiar happens via rhetorical operations. Noticing this trait of the process of anthropological

knowledge construction has important epistemological consequences. If we assume that every story has a plot, which provides meaning to events that compose the line of the story, than every fabularization equals figurization i.e. the recognition of reality by means of rhetorical tropes (see Domańska 2000: 23, Mokrzan 2010: 15). “A mode of representation is ultimately not logical, but tropological. Metonymy, metaphor, and synecdoche are the means by which signs substitute for both words and the world.” (Tyler 1987: 64)

Therefore tropes – right from the beginning – are the essence of language, and literature, anthropology and philosophy speak the same figurative language. From this fact stems the conclusion or rather a postulate to analyze anthropology and other disciplines rhetorically. For example Clifford Geertz is one of the authors who – as Lisa Ede points out (1992) – helped to initiate the rhetorical turn in the social sciences and humanities (Mokrzan 2012a). In *Works and Lives: The anthropologists as Author*, a book that was dedicated to the founder of the new rhetoric – Kenneth Burke, Geertz tries to answer the question: how anthropology copes with persuasion? This problem inclines one to think about anthropology, taking into account its persuasive potential. Anthropology is viewed here as particular rhetorical practice. According to Geertz’s statement that ethnographic texts are convincing due to their reliability and through the power of theoretical proof is naïve. Apart from research techniques, i.e. fieldwork methods and the methodology of cultural sciences, anthropologists use other tools to convince the readers of ethnographic texts of their opinions about reality. Geertz claims that “the ability of anthropologists to get us to take what they say seriously has less to do with either a factual look or an air of conceptual elegance than it has with their capacity to convince us that what they say is a result of their having actually penetrated (or, if you prefer, been penetrated by) another form of life, of having, one way or another, truly ‘been there’. And that, persuading us that this offstage miracle has occurred, is where the writing comes in” (Geertz 1988: 4–5). In this statement two issues are highlighted: persuasion, and the act of writing. They are both important to the understanding of what constitutes the power of the anthropological story. It is justified to conceive Geertz’s view on anthropology in such way which allows one to consider anthropology as an art of persuasion through writing. The rhetoric understood as an act of persuasion is an immanent property of anthropology. It turns out that the authority of anthropology is established through the persuasiveness of ethnographic text. Persuasion is a key concept in ancient rhetoric treated as the art of pronunciation. In English the word persuasion derives from Latin *persuade*, which is the translation of Greek *peitho* meaning “‘to urge’, ‘to prompt’, ‘to persuade’, and ‘to request’, ‘to propitiate’ and even ‘to lure’” (Ziomek 1990: 8). Geertz argues that by knowing the techniques and strategies of rhetorical argumentation, some anthropologists have gained the ability to make readers believe that events presented in texts are real and to incite them to

accept as true what authors have written. In *Works and Lives* arguments previously expressed by philosophers, literary scholars, specialists in rhetoric and poetics in relation to literary and philosophical texts, have been applied to anthropological discourse in order to capture its persuasive and illustrative power. It is in this book that Geertz demonstrates in detail, by using rhetorical terminology, how the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Ruth Benedict are constructed and what persuasive strategies have been applied (see Mokrzan 2012a).

The rhetorical analysis included in *Works and Lives* emphasize the persuasive and figurative nature of anthropological texts. Similar analysis, we find inter alia in the works of such authors as George E. Marcus and Dick Cushman (1982), James Clifford (1988), John Van Maanen (1988), Paul Steven Sangren (1988), Waldemar Kuligowski (2001) and Michał Mokrzan (2010). It should be also recognized that the book *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford – Marcus 1986) is a significant completion to the perspective adopted by Geertz and other researchers circled round the rhetorical turn. In this work, reflection on the rhetoric of anthropological writings has been combined with a reflection on the power relations underlying scientific practice. Monika Baer notes that detailed analyses of anthropological rhetoric cast doubt on the assumption of the transparent and objective status of anthropological texts. *Writing Culture* contributors “challenged the politics underlying the poetics, which existence depends on the words of ‘other’s’ (who usually occupy a less privileged position), and to whom co-authorship of the texts (ethnographies written by male and female anthropologists, to which the title of the book: *Writing Culture* refer to) does not bring any benefits” (Baer 2010: 14). James Clifford stated that the new anthropology announced in the volume provides only partial truths, and is “a way to decolonize power relations that characterize the traditional anthropological representations of the ‘other’” (Baer 2010: 15).

A radical position on this issue was stated by Stephen Tyler in the manifesto of postmodernism in anthropology, in the essay entitled *Post-Modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document*, which is included in the aforementioned publication. In Tyler’s opinion the responsibility for the existence of power relations in anthropology – which translate to the rhetoric of ethnographic texts – rests on the fact of perceiving language as a representation; a view shared by many researchers (Mokrzan 2012b: 118–121). Scientific discourse, criticized by Tyler, has the desire to gain “power through knowledge, for that, too is a consequence of representation. To represent means to have a kind of magical power over appearances, to be able to bring into presence what is absent. [...] The whole ideology of representational signification is an ideology of power,” (Tyler 1986: 131) which is based on the subject-object relation; i.e. the relation of those who represent and are represented. This approach shows that every rhetorical use of language, in order to represent

culturally different societies, is a manifestation of power relations. The adoption of the model of language as representation in the research practice has an impact on the rhetoric of anthropological writing. Scientific rhetoric supported by the concept of *mimesis* is, according to Tyler, replete with figures such as: “‘objects’, ‘facts’, ‘descriptions’, ‘inductions’, ‘generalizations’, ‘verification’, ‘experiment’, ‘truth’” (Tyler 1986: 130). Anthropology built on the model of language as representation takes a monologic form and uses rhetorical strategies characteristic to anthropological realism. Marcin Lubaś states that the realistic belief, common in anthropology, “about the ability of gaining comprehensive knowledge on another culture becomes” in the perspective adopted by *Writing Culture* contributors a “dangerous illusion, the component of the ideology of power, giving the impression of controlling words and things which are the subjects of representation” (Lubaś 2003: 159). The illusion of a holistic approach became possible through the use of synecdoche, the trope which enables one to create a sweeping view of culture. James Clifford notes that due to the fact that capturing culture as a whole is not possible in a short period of fieldwork, anthropologists analyzed selected institutions. They were focused not on the full cataloguing or depiction of the local customs but on portraying “the whole through one or more of its parts” (Clifford 1988: 31). “In the predominantly synecdochic rhetorical stance of the new ethnography, parts were assumed to be microcosmos or analogies of wholes. This setting of institutional foregrounds against cultural backgrounds in the portrayal of a coherent world lent itself to realist literary conventions.” (Clifford 1988: 31) Synecdoche creates a generalizing model of culture which marginalizes all particular phenomena and specific individuals (Mokrzan 2010: 34–40). Mark Risjord recalls that a comprehensive critique of the generalized models of culture provided by anthropologists was developed by Edward Sapir and Paul Radin, who anticipated the postmodern critique of 70s and 80s. The anthropologists have argued that: “by abstracting generalized persons or general characterizations of the culture, ethnographers not only lost the evidential grounding for their work, they lost its proper object as well. Radin drew the methodological consequence that ethnographers need to study individual persons and events in all of their rich detail” (Risjord 2007: 409). However, Sapir and Radin did not notice what was later emphasised in the rhetorical analyzes of postmodernists: “In many, if not all cultural contexts, participants have systematically different points of view on the culture. For example, men and women may have opposed, but related, notions of what the appropriate behavior should be in a particular context. Homosexual and heterosexual members of a culture may have different views about how one should be related to extended family members. Moreover, the dominant norms of a culture may be in dispute. Different groups with different political interests might be arguing about just what the norms are or how they are to be implemented. (...) Such differences and disputes within a group are shot through with power relations

and political ramifications. By describing one perspective on social norms as the correct one, an ethnographer is taking sides on a political issue within the culture. In the context of colonialism or post-colonial nationalism, choosing one description as 'the culture' cannot be a politically neutral act." (Risjord 2007: 419)

In response to the project of anthropology founded on the metaphor of language as representation, Tyler proposes anthropology, for which the basic idea is evocation. Evocation does not represent any objects, "there being nothing observed and no one who is observer" (Tyler 1986: 126) and therefore, according to Tyler, it aims at decolonizing power relations. The American anthropologist, questioning all monologic rhetorical strategies, moves the cooperative nature of the anthropological experience to the forefront of scientific rhetoric. Anthropological texts which realize the idea of evocation ought to be composed of fragments of discourses and utterances of social actors cited by an author. In other words, the rhetorical structure of anthropological text takes polyphonic form. Polyphony, connoting the voice and the discursive context of fieldwork, becomes the best rhetorical tool of anthropology which aims at refuting its own hegemony (Tyler 1986: 137). Rhetorical attempts to eliminate these power relations from research practice were also taken by the researchers whose narratives were defined by George E. Marcus and Dick Cushman (1982: 25) as experimental. Experimental texts in anthropology, which should be treated largely as a remedy for anthropological realism genre conventions, emphasize that the process of production of scientific knowledge is dialogical. Marcin Lubaś writes that "dialogic criticism of ethnography situates the discourse of ethnographer on the same level as the indigenous discourse. Ethnographic text takes the form of conversation" (Lubaś 2003: 170). The purpose of dialogic rhetorical strategy is to disavow power relations and to replace them with egalitarian relations. In this perspective, rhetoric is not only a way to create a text and understand reality, but it is also a tool which advocates emancipation. Rhetoric – conceived this way – has an epistemological as well as performative character.

It should be emphasized that the critics of the dialogic perspective have argued that this approach does not match up to expectations. According to Tyler, dialogue in anthropology is a rhetorical form which masks in fact, that the final voice in the production of meanings belongs to an anthropologist (Tyler 1987: 66). A similar opinion was expressed by Clifford, who broadened Tyler's observation by including the polyphonic perspective: "the authoritative stance of 'giving voice' to the other is not fully transcended" (Clifford 1988: 51).

Commenting on the topic, Risjord notes that critics of anthropology such as Steven Sangren and Paul Roth, have also shown that "rhetorical changes [characteristic to experimental ethnographies – M.M.], such as emphasizing the active voice or writing in the first-person, are insufficient to address the real problem. (...) If the political position of ethnographers *vis-à-vis* colonialism is the problem, then reflexivity is

unable to either expose or fix it. Reflexivity does not aid recognition; ethnographers were rarely self-conscious about the relationship between their research and the colonial authorities (as the essays in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* showed). Nor does reflexivity resolve the political issues; for that one needs a critical stance” (Risjord 2007: 420–421).

It is worth noting that some of the anthropological works included in the rhetorical turn, which were defined by George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer as ethnography of experience, basically aimed to create – by using rhetorical devices – more adequate forms of representation of socio-cultural reality (Marcus – Fischer 1986: 109). In the face of the critique of epistemology proposed by Rorty and Jean-François Lyotard, which rejected the idea of representation as such, the attempts to overcome the epistemological and ethical problems in experimental ethnographies appear to be paradoxical. The paradoxical nature of rhetorical turn in anthropology was highlighted by Peter Pels and Lorraine Nancel. They argued that “the movement of textual criticism was quickly labelled ‘postmodern’. But if the postmodern condition is, as Lyotard argues, a crisis of legitimation based on incredulity towards metanarratives, several of the critics of ethnographic authority are not so much ‘post’-modernists as modernists of the literary turn. Their ‘crisis of representation’ is merely an experimental moment in which we can look for other, and possibly more adequate, means of representation. Their experiments do not produce the bewilderment created by a truly ‘postmodern’ crisis of legitimation in which the possibility of representation *per se* is questioned” (Pels – Nancel 1991: 14).

Anthropology of Rhetoric, Social Poetics and Rhetoric Culture Theory

The second incarnation of the rhetorical turn in anthropology is characterized by an interest in the processes of figuration and acts of persuasion in culture and society. Works of Franz Boas, James Frazer, Bronislaw Malinowski – the founding fathers of the scientific discourse of anthropology – show that first anthropological studies on the rhetoric were incidentally focused on metaphors, allegories and symbols in thought and language of tribal societies. Ivo Strecker and Stephen Tyler (2009: 4) point out that only with the so-called “metaphorical turn”, which took place in the mid-twentieth century and was initiated by structural anthropology, the large-scale anthropological studies on the rhetorical dimension of cognitive and symbolic mechanisms has flourished. In *The Savage Mind* Claude Lévi-Strauss showed that indigenous logic of totemic classifications and European ways of conceptualizing reality are based on metaphorical and metonymic transformations. Totemic taxonomies of Australian Aborigines as well as French practices of naming plants demonstrate that the “systems of logic work on several axes at the same time. The relations which they set up between the terms are most commonly based on contiguity [...] or on resemblance [...]. In this they are not

formally distinct from other taxonomies, even modern ones, in which contiguity and resemblance also play a fundamental part: contiguity for discovering things which ‘belong both structurally and functionally ... to a single system’ and resemblance, which does not require membership of the same system and is based simply on the possession by objects of one or more common characteristics” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 63). The ability to combine two different concepts or terms through metaphor and metonymy is an innate human ability. Author of *The Savage Mind* draws attention to the figurative aspect of human cognition. Metaphor and metonymy as rhetorical tropes are therefore treated in epistemological rather than aesthetic categories. Studies on the rhetorical dimension of human knowledge initiated by Lévi-Strauss were continued in the works of those anthropologists who adopted the structural model of analyzing socio-cultural phenomena (Leach 1976; Douglas 1966; Stomma 2002).

It appears however, that the studies on the rhetoric dimension of cultural phenomena were launched not only in the field of structural anthropology. Determining theoretical grounds of interpretative anthropology, Geertz emphasized that if anthropologists want to write about culture they have to “know something about what theater and mimesis and rhetoric are” (Geertz 1983: 30). Geertz presented his relationship to rhetoric for the first time in *Ideology as a Cultural System*, which became part of the volume entitled *Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz 1973: 193–233). In this essay he criticizes approaches to ideology existing in social sciences and proposes a new approach that takes into account the knowledge of figurative aspects of cultural phenomena (Mokrzyński 2012a: 114–117). Geertz argues that social sciences have no analytical framework in which to interpret the symbolic action and metaphorical speech. “With no notion of how metaphor, analogy, irony, ambiguity, pun, paradox, hyperbole, rhythm, and all the other elements of what we lamely call ‘style’ operate—even, in a majority of cases, with no recognition that these devices are of any importance in casting personal attitudes into public form, sociologists lack the symbolic resources out of which to construct a more incisive formulation” (Geertz 1973: 209). Writing about rhetorical tropes Geertz notes that: “As metaphor extends language by broadening its semantic range, enabling it to express meanings it cannot or at least cannot yet express literally, so the head-on clash of literal meanings in ideology – the irony, the hyperbole, the overdrawn antithesis – provides novel symbolic frames against which to match the myriad ‘unfamiliar somethings’ that, like a journey to a strange country, are produced by a transformation in political life.” (Geertz 1973: 220)

The works of structuralists and interpretive anthropologists confirm that interest in the tropologic mechanisms in culture and society is an important completion to the anthropological study of the symbolic dimension of the human experience. However, the first publication in anthropology, which took the problem of rhetoric in social life, was the book entitled *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays in the Anthropology of Rhetoric* (Sapir – Crocker 1977). Michael Herzfeld points out that anthropologists

writing in this volume (Christopher J. Crocker, James W. Fernandez, James Howe, David J. Sapiro, Peter Seitel) “have focused on the performative aspects of language in social life by treating the play of tropes as constitutive of cultural life” (Herzfeld 2005: 238). This book was dedicated to Kenneth Burke not without reason. His conception of rhetoric as using symbols in order to shape attitudes and induce behavior turned out to be very close to the anthropological position which treats language as a guide to social reality. Following Burke’s remark that the “literature is equipment for living” (Burke 1973: 293–304) authors of the articles published in the mentioned volume showed “both theoretically and empirically, how metaphors are not only ‘good to think with’, ‘good to speak with’, or ‘good to write with’, but are especially ‘good to live by’” (Strecker – Tyler 2009: 4). For example, in the article *Saying Haya Sayings* Peter Seitel, referring to Burke’s observation that “proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*” (Burke 1973: 296) and Dell Hyme’s concept of “ethnography of communication” examines the rhetorical dimension of the use of proverbs in the social life of the Haya people. In turn, James W. Fernandez in the article *The Performance of Ritual Metaphors* develops Burke’s model of analyzing ritual dramas, and states that “the study of ritual is the study of the structure of associations brought into play by metaphoric predications upon pronouns” (Fernandez 1977: 102). From a contemporary point of view, an essential value of the book *The Social Use of Metaphor* is that it expands the repertoire of rhetorical concepts and terms used to date by structural anthropologists. In the article, *The Anatomy of Metaphor*, J. David Sapiro notes that Jakobson’s and Lévi-Strauss’s approach to rhetorical tropes is too reductionist. “Jakobson not only reduces the two [synecdoche and metonymy – M.M.] to one (calling them both metonymy) but also argues that the contrast between metaphor and metonymy represents at the level of figurative language a basic contrast between paradigmatic replacement (for metaphor) and syntagmatic continuity or combination (for metonymy) that operates at every linguistic level – from phonology through syntax to semantics. Anthropologists have become familiar with this twofold distinction in Lévi-Strauss’s writing on totemism and myth, although there he ignores entirely the kinds of metaphor we have so far been talking about, restricting his interest to the analogic or external metaphors that we will come to shortly.” (Sapiro 1977: 13) One of the statements in *The Savage Mind* confirms Sapiro’s words: “we need not in this work regard ourselves as bound by grammarians’ refinements, and I shall not treat synecdoche – a species of metonymy according to Littré – as a distinct figure of speech” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 205). While reading *The Social Use of Metaphor* one can notice that authors clearly respect the classificatory fineness of rhetoric, distinguishing synecdoche from metonymy as well as paying attention to other tropes and figures of speech. It should be noted, however, that the most valuable element of those texts is that they successfully supplement the structuralist perspective, focusing only on the generative symbolic system. The proper aim of the research proposed by anthropologists of rhetoric is the analysis of how the tropes used

by social actors operate in specific social contexts. Joining the reflection on the tropes, as symbolic categories, arranging spheres of human experience with the problem of their applicability in everyday social interactions entails the evocation of the rhetorical fundamental concept: the persuasion. Anthropologists of rhetoric are therefore not only interested in rhetorical elocution, but – and it must be conceived as the greatest value of this book – they pay attention to the persuasive function of rhetorical tropes, adding thereby a performative dimension to the structuralist perspective.

Works in the field of anthropology of rhetoric initiated by co-authors of *The Social Use of Metaphor* are continued inter alia by James W. Fernandez, Michael Herzfeld and other researchers circled around the *The International Rhetoric Culture Project*. Thus, for example, in Herzfeld's book entitled *Cultural Intimacy. Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, the negotiations of power relations in the nation state, the issue which is characteristic to the anthropology of politics, is conceptualized in the categories proposed by rhetoric (Mokrzyński 2012b: 113–116). The author introduces the concept of social poetics, understood as a technical analysis of the rhetorical features of human symbolic expression. The anthropologist considers that “any symbolic system used as an instrument of persuasion – or, as we might now say, used for performative effect – can be examined under this heading” (Herzfeld 2005: 183). In Herzfeld's view, building social relations based on power relations as well as the process of constructing ethnic or national identity are determined by rhetorical strategies. Therefore, socio-cultural anthropology, and other social sciences, would be “a special illustration of a larger principle, the role of rhetoric in everyday social action. A social poetics treats all social interaction, not only as employing rhetoric, but also as rhetorical in its own right” (Herzfeld 2005: 185). Herzfeld rejects the epiphenomenal view, stating that rhetoric is secondary in relation to social organization. In turn, he treats “social organization as rhetoric” (Herzfeld 2005: 185). This theoretical perspective is a departure from the overly languagelike explanatory model proposed in the 60s by the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Tartu-Moscow's semiotic school. Herzfeld distinguishes models based on language (structural and semiotic) and models derived from language (close to the symbolic anthropology of Victor Turner and the interpretative anthropology of Clifford Geertz), and writes that the latter models are acceptable, “because they do not predetermine the structural characteristics that different semiotic modes employ” (Herzfeld 2005: 199). This position is consistent with Umberto Eco's concept of cultural semiotics, created on the ruins of the ontological structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan. Also, social poetics doesn't claim rights to make considerations on the structure of human cognition, but it raises the question as to how the rhetorical strategies are used in the process of negotiating power relations and constructing social identity.

For the contemporary anthropological research, on the processes of figuration and persuasion in culture and society, of particular importance is the *International Rhetoric Culture Project* which has been developed for over ten years now. This initiative brings

together researchers interested in the mutual relations between rhetoric and culture. In the introduction to the book entitled *Culture and Rhetoric*, primary initiators of the project, Stephen A. Tyler and Ivo Strecker write that the thesis, which states that every expression is rhetorically structured and should be grafted in anthropological studies of culture. Anthropologists maintain that “just as there is no ‘zero degree rhetoric’ in any utterance, there is no ‘zero degree rhetoric’ in any of patterns of culture” (Strecker – Tyler 2009: 1). Updating findings expressed in *Writing Culture*, that rhetoric is an instrument by which we describe and learn about the cultural reality, Strecker and Tyler point out that rhetoric is also responsible for the creation and functioning of socio-cultural phenomena. Referring to the book *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture* (Tedlock – Mannheim 1995), which announces the rise of dialogic a methodological perspective in anthropology, they write about the rhetorical emergence of culture. Anthropological studies of rhetoric in social relations, economy, religion and politics are based on the idea that takes the form of chiasm: “rhetoric is founded in culture” and vice versa “culture is founded in rhetoric” (Strecker – Tyler 2009: 4). This observation becomes a basis to the so-called Rhetoric Culture Theory, created by the researchers of *The International Rhetoric Culture Project*. According to this theory as Peter L. Oesterreich points out “humans are rhetorical beings who use persuasive speech not only to influence others but also to shape themselves” (Oesterreich 2009: 49). Due to the fact that this research project develops at a rapid pace – within five years there were six books under the name “Rhetoric Culture” published: *Culture and Rhetoric* (Strecker–Tyler 2009), *Rhetoric, Culture and the Vicissitudes of Life* (Carrithers 2009), *Economic Persuasions* (Gudeman 2010), *The Rhetorical Emergence of Culture* (Meyer – Girke 2011), *Astonishment and Evocation. The Spell of Culture in Art and Anthropology* (Strecker – Verne 2013) and *Chiasmus and Culture* (Wiseman – Paul 2014) – one can risk the thesis that we are now witnessing a crystallization of a new theoretical and methodological trend in anthropology, which can be described as rhetorical anthropology or “rhetorical ethnography” (Hauser 2011: 168). Researchers gathered around the *Rhetoric Culture Project* draw their inspiration from sources such as: ancient rhetoric (Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian), literary criticism (Kenneth Burke, Mikhail Bakhtin, Paul de Man), *rhetorische Anthropologie* (Hans Blumenberg), philosophy of language and culture (Wilhelm von Humboldt, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida), linguistic anthropology (Dell Hymes), symbolic anthropology (Clifford Geertz, James Fernandez), postmodern anthropology (Stephen A. Tyler). The expansion of the horizon of possible inspirations results in the adoption of a holistic rhetorical perspective in anthropological studies. Characteristic of this perspective is that apart from drawing attention to the tropological and persuasive dimension of human communication, the authors working within *Rhetoric Culture Project* include in their research on culture such rhetorical categories as: *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio, logos, ethos, pathos, topoi*. According to Strecker and Tyler, a holistic approach to rhetoric

in anthropology can “help overcome the state of limbo in which cognitive, symbolic, dialogic, and all sorts of discursive anthropologies had left us” (Strecker – Tyler 2009: 4).

Rhetoric in Anthropology

To recapitulate: the rhetorical turn in anthropology reflects three dimensions of rhetoric. First, one is the persuasive aspect of anthropological texts. It shows that the written text urge, persuade or lure its readers. The second aspect is the figurativeness of anthropological language. Rhetorical tropes and figures are not understood in terms of aesthetics, they are rather linguistic and mental tools that transform fieldwork experience into text, and therefore gain epistemological status. According to Jerzy Ziomek, rhetoric understood as the art of persuasion i.e. the practice used to influence opinions of an audience; is the rhetoric conceived as persuasiveness, refers to “the experience given in language and through language” (Ziomek 1990: 10). This observation corresponds with the idea shared by the authors mentioned in this article that all knowledge, including ethnographic is mediated by rhetoric. The third dimension of rhetoric, which appears in anthropological works, is the persuasive and figurative nature of culture and society. Here, the key idea is that both sides of the research process, while expressing opinions are compelled to use symbols, metaphors and other rhetorical tropes. Therefore, rhetoric becomes the fundamental dimension of human existence. For – as the authors of *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* recognize – “Rhetoric is an action human beings perform when they use symbols for the purpose of communicating with one another” (Foss – Foss – Trapp 1991: 16) and this process runs almost constantly.

January 2014

References:

- Baer, Monika: 2010 – Antropologiczny „inny”. Orientalizacja czy potencjał krytyczny? *Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej* 12–13: 5–25.
- Bazerman, Charles: 1988 – *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Brown, Richard Harvey: 1987 – *Society as Text: Essays on Rhetoric, Reason and Reality*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, Richard Harvey: 1990 – Rhetoric, Textuality and the Postmodern Turn in Sociological Theory. *Sociological Theory* 8: 2: 188–197.
- Brown, Richard Harvey: 2005 – The Rhetorical Turn in Social Theory. In: Ritzer G. (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*. V. II. London: Sage Publications: 645–647.

- Burke, Kenneth: 1973 – *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*. The Regents of the University of California.
- Campbell, John Angus: 1990 – Scientific Discovery and Rhetorical Invention: The Path to Darwin's Origin. In: Simons, HW (ed.): *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: 58–90.
- Carrithers, Michael (ed.): 2009 – *Rhetoric, Culture and the Vicissitudes of Life*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Clifford, James: 1988 – *The Predicament of Culture. The Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press.
- Clifford, James – Marcus, George E. (ed.): 1986 – *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De Man, Paul: 1978 – The Epistemology of Metaphor. *Critical Inquiry* 5: 1: 13–30.
- Derrida, Jacques: 1982 – *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: 207–271.
- Domańska, Ewa: 2000 – Wokół metahistorii. In: White, Hayden: *Poetyka pisarstwa historycznego*. Ewa Domańska, Marek Wilczyński (ed.). Kraków: Universitas: 7–30.
- Douglas, Mary: 1966 – *Purity and Danger*. New York: Praeger.
- Ede, Lisa: 1992 – Clifford Geertz on Writing and Rhetoric. *Journal of Advanced Composition* 12: 1: 208–212.
- Fahnestock, Jeanne: 1999 – *Rhetorical Figures in Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fernandez, James: 1977 – The Performance of Ritual Metaphors. In: Sapir DJ – Crocker CJ (ed.): *The Social Use of Metaphor. Essays in the Anthropology of Rhetoric*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 100–131.
- Foss, Sonja K. – Foss, Karen A. – Trapp, Robert: 1991 – *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*. Illinois: Prospects Heights.
- Gasché, Rodolphe: 1999 – *The Wild Card of Reading. On Paul de Man*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford: 1973 – *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford: 1983 – *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford: 1988 – *Works and Lives: The Anthropologists as Author*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gross, Alan G.: 1990 – *Rhetoric of Science*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gross, Alan G.: 2006 – *Starring The Text: The Place of Rhetoric in Science Studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gudeman, Stephen (ed.): 2010 – *Economic Persuasions*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Habermas, Jürgen: 1983 – Interpretive Social Sciences and Hermeneuticism. In: Haan, N. – Bellah, R. N. – Rabinow, P. – Sullivan, W. (ed.): *Social Sciences as Moral Inquiry*. New York: Columbia University Press: 251–270.
- Hauser, Gerard A.: 2011 – Attending the Vernacular. A Plea for an Ethnographical Rhetoric. In: Meyer, C. – Girke, F. (ed.): *The Rhetorical Emergence of Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books: 157–172.
- Herzfeld, Michael: 2005 – *Cultural Intimacy. Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Kuligowski, Waldemar: 2001 – *Antropologia refleksyjna. O rzeczywistości tekstu*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.
- Lakoff, George – Johnson, Mark: 2003 – *Metaphor We Live By*. London: the University of Chicago Press.

- Leach, Edmund: 1976 – *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected. An Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude: 1966 – *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lubaś, Marcin: 2003 – *Rozum i etnografia. Przyczynek do krytyki antropologii postmodernistycznej*. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.
- Marcus, George E. – Cushman, Dick: 1982 – Ethnographies as Texts. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11: 25–69.
- Marcus, George E. – Fischer, Michael M. J.: 1986 – *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- McCloskey, Deirdre: 1998 – *The Rhetoric of Economics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Meyer, Christian – Girke, Felix (ed.): 2011 – *The Rhetorical Emergence of Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Mokrzan, Michał: 2010 – *Tropy, figury, perswazje. Retoryka a poznanie w antropologii*. Wrocław: Katedra Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej.
- Mokrzan, Michał: 2012a – Clifford Geertz i retoryka. O zwrocie retorycznym w antropologii. In: Szafrński, A. A. (ed.): *Geertz. Dziedzictwo – Interpretacja – Dylematy*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL: 101–121.
- Mokrzan, Michał 2012b – Retoryka i władza w antropologii społeczno-kulturowej. In: Kampka, A. (ed.): *Między znaczeniem a działaniem. Retoryka i władza*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SGGW: 109–124.
- Myers, Greg: 1990 – *Writing Biology: Texts in the Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich: 1989 – *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*. Sander L. Gilman – Carole Blair – David Parent (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oesterreich, Peter L.: 2009 – Homo Rhetoricus. In: Strecker, I. – Tyler, S. A. (ed.): *Culture and Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn Books: 49–58.
- Pels, Peter – Nencel, Lorraine: 1991 – Introduction: Critique and the Deconstruction of the Anthropological Authority. In: Nencel, L. – Pels, P. (ed.): *Constructing Knowledge. Authority and Critique in Social Science*. London: Sage Publications: 1–21.
- Rabinow, Paul – Sullivan, William M. (ed.): 1979 – *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*. The University of California Press.
- Risjord, Mark: 2007 – Ethnography and Culture. In: Turner, S. – Risjord, M. (ed.): *Philosophy of Anthropology and Sociology*. North Holland: 399–428.
- Rorty, Richard (ed.): 1967 – *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rorty, Richard: 1978 – Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida. *New Literary History* 10: 1: 141–160.
- Rusinek, Michał: 2003 – *Między retoryką a retorycznością*. Kraków: Universitas.
- Sangren, Paul S: 1988 – Rhetoric and the Authority of Ethnography: Postmodernism and the Social Reproduction of Texts. *Current Anthropology* 29: 3: 415–424.
- Sapir, David J: 1977 – The Anatomy of Metaphor. In: Sapir, D. J. – Crocker, C. J. (ed.): *The Social Use of Metaphor. Essays in the Anthropology of Rhetoric*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 3–32.
- Sapir, David J. – Crocker, Christopher J: 1977 – *The Social Use of Metaphor. Essays in the Anthropology of Rhetoric*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Simons, Herbert W: 1990 – Introduction: The Rhetoric of Inquiry as an Intellectual Movement. In: Simons, H. W. (ed.): *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: vii–xii.
- Stomma, Ludwik: 2002 – *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX wieku oraz wybrane eseje*. Łódź.
- Strecker, Ivo – Tyler, Stephen A.: 2009 – Introduction. In: Strecker, I. – Tyler, S. A. (ed.): *Culture and Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn Books: 1–18.
- Strecker, Ivo, – Tyler, Stephen A. (ed.): 2009 – *Culture and Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Strecker, Ivo – Verne, Marcus (ed.): 2013 – *Astonishment and Evocation. The Spell of Culture in Art and Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Tedlock, Dennis – Mannheim, Bruce (ed.): 1995 – *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. Chicago: University of Illinois.
- Tyler, Stephen A: 1986 – Post-modern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document. In: Clifford, J. – Marcus, G. E. (ed.): *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 122–140.
- Tyler, Stephen A.: 1987 – *The Unspeakable. Discourse, Dialogue and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Tyler, Stephen A.: 1991 – A Post-modern In-stance. In: Nencel, L. – Pels P. (ed.): *Constructing Knowledge. Authority and Critique in Social Science*. London: Sage Publications: 78–94.
- Van Maanen, John: 1988 – *Tales of the Field. On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.
- White, Hayden: 1978 – *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- White, James B.: 1985 – *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of Law*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Wiseman, Boris – Paul, Anthony (ed.): 2014 – *Chiasmus and Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Ziomek, Jerzy: 1990 – *Retoryka opisowa*. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo.

Contact: Michał Mokrzan, PhD Assistant Professor; Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Wrocław, Poland;
e-mail: michal.mokrzan@uni.wroc.pl.

Rétorický obrat v antropologii

Resumé: Článek je věnován teoretickým a metodologickým úvahám, stejně jako praktické aplikaci dvou aspektů rétorického obratu v sociokulturní antropologii. Spojení „rétorický obrat“ je zde použito pro lingvistický a konstruktivistický obrat, který významnou měrou poznamenal současný stav společenských a humanitních věd. Zaměříme-li se na vztah antropologie a rétoriky, zjistíme, že rétorický obrat s sebou přinesl úvahy o rétorice antropologických textů, o jejich přesvědčovacím a obrazném rozměru. Na druhé straně se rétorický obrat vztahuje k výzkumné perspektivě v antropologii, soustředěné na interpretaci společnosti a kultury, v níž hrají významnou roli nástroje a koncepty rétoriky.