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The Force of Rhetoric: From James Baldwin to the Era of Digital Media

MA THESIS / DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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literature mentioned, and that this thesis has not been used in the source of other university

studies or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

Prague, 2024   Bc. Oksana Kozachukhnenko

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Introduction

Consider the task as important as writing a speech opening the twenty-first century. What are the problems to address? Who is the audience of the future? How to choose the tone? On Sunday, 9 January 2000 it was the "Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Street Cleaners" that was chosen to welcome the people serving Vatican City into the new millennium:

> Dear Friends!
> I thank the Lord who again this year has given me the opportunity to visit the crib you have prepared, as always, with deep feeling and great creativity. In expressing my gratitude to you for your cordial welcome, I extend a respectful greeting to the Mayor, to the authorities here, to the president, the directors and all the personnel of the Municipal Environmental Agency, as well as to their respective families.[1]

The former head of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II expressed gratitude for the "service" and "sacrifice", "cooperation" and "willingness" of the people of Rome and for living up "to the traditions that make it a welcoming and hospitable city," while being "well aware of what advantages the arrival of pilgrims and tourists brings to the entire urban community." In the first place, such wording of the address establishes the need to acknowledge the service of the religious community working class expressed in the address from the first-person perspective. Secondly, it uses unifying diction, the use of the plural 'we', to inaugurate "the beginning of the Year 2000, the Jubilee Year" followed by a factual statement "as these first days have shown," that positively emphasizes the benefits that the newcomers bring at the moment of time captured by the speech. Thirdly, this introduction of the third participant splits the focus in the address between the workers and the "great crowds of pilgrims and visitors" with contrasting examples

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[1] "Visit to the Crèche of the Sanitation Workers in Porta Cavalleggeri - Rome (January 9, 2000) | John Paul II." *The Holy See,* 9 Jan. 2000, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000109_presepe-netturbini.html.

of value statements through juxtaposition. It then proceeds with a clear emphasis on the

contribution and support of the other group: "Yours is really a very important task for the

community." Moderated passionate tone and direct language serve as an appropriate choice for

diction without exaggeration. This combination of rhetorical choices works to compliment the

audience while making a call to action a background theme.

This address showcases a powerful use of rhetoric in the recent period of the

contemporary world. It demonstrates the blend of canonical tradition and formal innovation

optimized for its historical context to extract the most from its medium. A wide-ranging use of

rhetoric in the Western world deserves an appraisal due to the extent to which it has been

integrated and up today only increases its influence in the information field. It is tantamount to

discourse across disciplines and spheres of social engagement. Implicit in contemporary cultural

theory, besides its overarching theme of rebelling against dogmatism, is the idea that particular

choices of rhetoric can provide alternative ways to analyze cognitive processes at different

levels: individual and social.

The recognition of the cultural unity of the West. It is important to emphasize that

analyzing rhetoric, arts, and culture requires a grounding in the context, and for this thesis, it is a

Western background. Western scholars cogitated on similar questions regarding the relationship

between human beings' treatment of each other, nature, and the universe. The traditions that

make Western intellectual life what it is today are the traditions that are built on the practices

descending from Athens and Jerusalem. Uniting Greek rationality with biblical interpretation, a

pantheon of the gods opposed to monotheism presents knowledge meeting wisdom. As

knowledge differs from wisdom, it appears to be a misguided decision to dispense with wisdom

in a search for purely rational knowledge. Scripture contains passages that allow us to think in a sophisticated symbolic way that is easily equitable to the rationality that comes out of Greece. The canonical narrative of the Western religion coming out of the Bible presupposes such treatment of God's word as that it is reality. Interpreted directly, this means that not only do things come into being with an act of linguistic expression but for religious believers, the authoritative word of God is a source of wisdom. Through religion, power acquires a personality, with intentions and communicates to human beings. It is the access to the divine in a humanly comprehensible form that allows us to speak about things of the ultimate concern to humans. This attribute of religion makes all the unhappiness ultimately mean something. In the nineteenth century, Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote: "I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness."[2] This idea repeated in various sacred practices is evidence that religious wisdom remains an enormous source of plenty of revelations about human nature throughout centuries. In other words, what has not been possible to express in the rational sense is achieved through the emotive attributes of religion. Taking a look at the organization of religious wisdom, we can see that it differs from untethered human rationality. It is no coincidence that the birthplace of rhetoric and democracy in Ancient Greece. Greek rationality is primarily a civic knowledge, otherwise nomos[3] (νόμος), a secular human interpretation of the law. It is distinguished between nature (physis) and convention

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[2] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Andrew MacAndrew. *Notes from Underground; White Nights; The Dream of a Ridiculous Man; and: White Nights Dream Ridiculous Man and Selections from The House of the Dead*, (New York: Signet Classics, 1961).

[3] "Nomos." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., https://www.britannica.com/topic/nomos-Greek-philosophy.

(nomos), as found in the Sophist debate on which parts of human existence are natural, and which are due to arbitrary convention. Laws favoring self-interest unadulterated by a morality that emphasizes the use of rhetoric in a sophisticated manner as the means available to satisfy desires begin to form.

Dialectic of rational and emotive. The era of Classical culture starting in Greece circa 600 BC and continuing through the Roman era represents approximately a thousand years where logos is the standard. Dogmatic Christianity survived the fall of Rome and left a profoundly emotional imprint until the Renaissance, the revival of cultural understanding of reason. The Renaissance is highlighted by a reorientation toward classical tradition, which is closely related to the revival of science. While Greek tradition, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the age of science of the late nineteenth century generally favor the discipline of the rational and put limitations on the non-rational, Biblical interpretation, Reformation, Romanticism, and Modernism promote the principle of emotiveness. To what degree the emphasis lies on either of them tends to vary according to the aspirations and intentions of different eras. Both are far from being mutually exclusive and are a recognizable part of intellectual thought as every human being has a rational and emotive part combined albeit differently pronounced. Therefore, the dialectic between reason and emotion traces through the entire tradition of Western culture.

Many faces of Rhetoric. Rhetoric balances the rational and emotive parts at all times of its use throughout centuries. Its multipurpose assets can be used to meet people's feelings and needs as well as to persuade with reason and knowledge. Its skillful and masterful application can raise mature opinions, enrich with wisdom, and provide equally valuable and creative means to detect and solve problems. In its Classical definition rhetoric is "a systematic and comprehensive body

of knowledge primarily intended to teach public speaking."[4] In the narrow sense, rhetoric is

defined as "an ability (dynamis, i.e., a faculty or power) in each case to see the available means

of persuasion."[5] Depending on the target of inquiry, rhetoric can be alternatively characterized,

for example as "one of the Western world's oldest disciplines", "a storehouse of communicative

tactics", "rhetoric is a people art", and "rhetoric is a kind of love."[6] Additionally, it also should

be noted that these definitions and approaches to studying and utilizing it can vary significantly.

It can be studied and divided into three branches: deliberative, judicial, epideictic, or five canons:

invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Lanham, 1991). Most typically it is

approached by being conceptualized for each period differently (Herrick, 1996, MacDonald,

2014). As can be seen from the text of the recently dated address in the opening, depending on

various historical contexts, the functions of rhetoric remarkably alter.

Research problem. To be able to see how rhetoric works as a dynamic discipline

integrated into various modes of life it deserves to be studied for its ability to transform linguistic

messages into power-altering reality through individual experience as well as en masse. This

thesis primarily aims to invigorate the study of rhetoric as a dynamic discipline analyzing the art

of communication, and various social engagements far beyond persuasion, through a multiverse

approach, to better understand contemporary rhetoric and to skillfully apply it to the reading of

social scenes where it plays its utmost important role. To be more context-specific, this thesis

inquires into the subject of rhetoric used in the discourse of social rights activism connecting the

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[4] Thomas O. Sloane, *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 104.

[5] Sloane, 109.

[6] Sloane, 109.

modernity of the 1950s and after, with the contemporary cultural context dominated by digital media technology to draw possible lines of complement and contrast. In modernity, rhetoric will be represented by a profile of the work of one of the Civil Rights Movement's leaders, James Baldwin. Since the contemporary era's parallel of human rights activism is decentralized, its major social media platform highlights will be taken as a representation of prominent cultural influence for contrast e.g. the Black Lives Matter movement. The comparative part of the analysis demonstrates the chosen rhetorical devices and how the Civil Rights Movement era profile of Baldwin's writing and public performance practices integrates into and differs from its contemporary counterparts in social activism culture evolving in the digital space of media platforms.

The major objective of this thesis is to reflect on the textual and intertextual connections among the chosen rhetorical devices and themes that have been appealing to audiences in the latter half of the twentieth century in contrast to the present moment. It observes the connection between the form and the function of rhetoric in the interaction with contemporary subjectivity in the context and its effects on identity formation in the changing conditions of interpersonal communication. This inquiry is estimated to reveal in this comparative process the differences and changes that take place, and more importantly, which vectors of change will continue playing a key role in the formation of rhetoric in the future discourse. This research intends to argue that a combined intellectual, pragmatic, and critical approach to operating rhetoric can de-weaponize it into a versatile composition instrument of effective representation and empowerment, conscious decision-making, and problem-solving, amplified by the potential of mass media technology and data literacy.

Research significance. The conviction in this thesis's purpose comes from the idea that by dismissing the opportunity to analyze the ways of rhetoric in the contemporary discourse the public misses out on the process of it becoming integrated into the larger structure of ever complicating the world with the levels of abstractions digital technology provides. This means that as rhetoric becomes one of the most underestimated and mercurial disciplines, its potentiality is available only to the influential few. Dismissing the discipline of rhetoric can be equated to giving away the power to influence, operate knowledge, and control the valuable narratives and processes that settle the present. Therefore, this thesis aims to enrich the seemingly insufficient supply of critical theory regarding the contemporary pressing issues concerning the sphere where rhetoric meets cutting-edge technology. The minor purpose is to contribute to the task of reconstructing a critical social theory for the present which explores more positive opportunities for the freedom of speech and expression to be exercised in the contemporary digital society. Consequently, it is expected to be concluded that rhetoric amplified by the technology of media, regardless of the private or public nature of its content, can better serve rather than poorly govern.

1. Literature Review: from the Classical period to the contemporary

1.1. Overview

This Literature Review chapter is devoted to existing literature and research that covers three major topics: The classical approach to rhetoric, the significance of recent and contemporary cultural theory, and the analysis of the scope of James Baldwin's work in the 1960s. It aims to provide an overview of both the Classical and original definitions of rhetoric, its growth into a discipline, and fast top-down integration into various levels of the society formations, critical to livelihood, communication, and negotiations. It examines how the shape of public discourse in its key features, realized through the legitimization of rhetoric, purposefully intersects with the construction of reality.

The first part is devoted to the summary of rhetoric and its key characteristics as a discipline in a large historical overview. It starts with the revision of its origin in the Classical rhetorical canon of Ancient Greece examining noted literary tropes, and figures of speech. This part continues with the contemporary era and The New Rhetoric. It concludes with an examination of the effects of rhetoric in various spheres of influence, including social functions of rhetoric in the construction of reality, and practical manifestations, e.g., performative activism. The second part of the review is devoted to the recent and contemporary philosophical and scholarly tribute to the cultural and literary studies regarding the chosen rhetorical themes and devices. The third part briefly provides the scholarly examination of James Baldwin's life work, including its original perception as well as a part of the revival movement in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. The concluding fourth part provides a summary of the three major themes and defines the space to position this research relevance. The purpose of this work

is to review the role of rhetoric in contemporary society and to highlight the potential pros and cons of rhetorical performance in the three most popular areas of communication: mass media, business and politics, art and culture.

1.2. Rhetorical discipline – a historical overview

The degree of development of the problem of rhetoric in the Classical period. The first recorded developments in rhetoric date back to the Sophists. However, in their interpretation, rhetoric turned into the art of persuading anyone of anything: the Sophists believed that the most important thing was to learn how to "enchant" with speech. To oppose, Plato, who criticized the sophists, thought differently about the goals and objectives of rhetoric. The philosopher believed that the most important goal is to search for truth, when the participants in the dialogue are connected by a common goal. This approach, although it made it possible for rhetoric to gain ethical support, did not allow for solving actual rhetorical problems. Subsequently, these tasks are approached by Aristotle, who created the theoretical and ethical foundation for rhetoric, marking the main quality of speech, clarity, which especially today serves as a key to distinguish between persuasion and manipulation. The task of rhetoric, as conceived by Aristotle, is to make the moral principles on which social life is based, as appears in his philosophy, become more life-affirming than selfish and material practical considerations.

In the era of late antiquity, oratory occupied the highest place in the educational system. A distinctive feature of medieval Byzantine and Western European rhetoric is that its main purpose is preaching and engaging in theological polemics. In the era of Cartesian rationalism, rhetoric loses its primary public spotlight, since it is believed that reason is powerless in isolation

from experience and logical deduction. Rhetoric is supported only by the educational system, and therefore, in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, rhetoric began to be understood as the science of argumentation mainly through the written medium: the social significance of oratory at this time is reduced, and the value of written literature - religious and political journalism, philosophy, document by contrast, increases. As a result, the rhetoric of individual style is gradually developing. It dictates the rules and creation principles of specific types of works: court speeches, sermons, letters, business documentation, etc. The events of the twentieth century revealed the problem of manipulating consciousness due to the proliferation of mass media. Interest in rhetoric grew in the twenty-first century anew due to the awareness of the technological impact of digital media on the private domain of human life. After all, learning the technique of persuasion and skillfully applying it is only a part of what it means to be successful in contemporary terms.

Classical rhetorical canon. The rhetorical composition can be considered at the level of general interpretation (semantics), verbal construction (syntactic), and verbal expression (pragmatics), which is manifested in the Classical division of general rhetoric into inventio (invention), location (disposition) and expression (elocution). Inventio is the discovery or creation of the material text based on a clear and distinct idea of the appropriateness of the statement: what, to whom, for what purpose, by what means, where, when, under what circumstances, with what consequences it is necessary to report and what should be kept silent. It can be studied and divided into three branches: deliberative, judicial, epideictic, or five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Lanham, 1991). Most typically it is

approached by being conceptualized for each period differently (Herrick, 1996, MacDonald, 2014).

Dispositio, another theme in classical rhetoric, studies the composition of speech. Speech must be expressive of its intention and correctly structured. It is vital both for the written medium as well as oral performance as complex text is always perceived worse and more slowly than graphically structured and concise text.

    Effects of Rhetoric – spheres of influence. Rhetorical influence can be presented in this familiar situation from experience: the audience/listener is not clear on the issue communicated. The speaker clarifies this question to the listener/listener in a special way, making the answer extremely clear, thereby explaining, as it were, removing the burden of the listener's hesitation. The listener pays for this by accepting the picture of the world reconfirmed by the speaker. This is the rhetorical work of persuasion: the words are the same for everyone, we are just trying to put them together in a new way. Rhetoric teaches us to select suitable master keys, because some words give power, others revoke it. Different ways of clarifying, and persuading can be arguments or other sorts of tricks - that is, such techniques that classical rhetoric could avoid as they apply in the space between rhetorical and manipulative practices. For contemporary rhetoric, the impression may be that what matters is not how close or far the speaker is from the truth but what is much more important is what words the speaker considers necessary to say at the moment. Their decision to say one way or another is dictated by certain motives. in regards to their audiences. It is worthy to mention, developing from the previous point, a special type of rhetorical manipulation, where the inequality of opponents and the asymmetry of influence reaches an extreme degree, when manipulation and verbal abuse are disguised as rhetoric.

Rhetorical construction of reality. Our boundaries and our possibilities are set by language: in recorded history, to practice presence, and in planning out the future. Rhetoric empowers the vision of how this reality is shaped. With the help of rhetorical devices, we turn to language as a potential universality of meanings. It has long been acknowledged that whoever controls the language controls the mind, and thus transforms the present reality into the reality that a skilled speaker needs. The success of zombification is guaranteed when the zombified believes that everything that happens is natural and inevitable. To do this, a false reality is used to project upon it the vision, in which an overt control will not be felt and which has the potential to replace the reality of the listener. What are the commonly used techniques that generate needed reactions from the audience? It can be, for example, verbal aggression. Let us ask ourselves the question: why do insults, rudeness, and mockery arise at all? This effect is based on a specific mechanism. What happens when we argue/discuss/talk? Having heard the sounds of speech, we convert them into words, evaluate them with the help of patterns and patterns that language forms for us through culture and society, and then select the appropriate answer. It is what we voice most of the time. We simply process the input information based on a huge number of cultural codes, our individual preferences, and our unconscious impulses. As a result, we all find ourselves between the rhetorical stick and the rhetorical carrot, and a person can be considered as a kind of relay - an intermediate point on the line of communication between realities.

It also occurs that the game of distributing suffering and happiness is endless, so we strive to enjoy and dodge pain at every moment of our lives. Of course, such manipulation of consciousness is impossible without interaction. A person can become a victim of the

substitution of concepts only if they act as an accomplice. Manipulation is the lure of a new reality where better than before, skillful rhetoric creates emotional-informational tension and release chain. Such exposure to the rhetoric of shamelessness provides the shortest route to manipulating a person.

1.3. Recent and contemporary role of rhetoric in cultural and literary criticism

Despite having its original developments as a discipline in the Ancient world, rhetoric is far from being an antique art. Majorly perceived as such and formed into a concept for the first time in history in ancient Greece it has evolved together with language and the world's needs that it satisfies. Rhetoric has been a discipline under change. In the early modern and contemporary periods, rhetoric came to provide an alternative to and sometimes a crucial dimension of philosophy for investigating and making cogent arguments about particular matters. It becomes more about the audience than about the identity of the speaker now. And yet, who controls the language controls the consciousness is a subtle theme of most contemporary debates, as passionate cultural debates are closely connected with language control and freedom of speech.

The purpose of this work is to consider the tasks of rhetoric in modern society, to highlight current problems of oral communication in the three most popular areas of communication: mass media, business and politics, and cultural comment. This thesis aims to describe existing strategies in different types of speech, one of the rhetoric's highest influential grounds being political speeches. The information environment in which we live makes our world accelerate. The dynamics and variability are not temporary signs of the current world development stage, but already permanent property. The significant acceleration of

communication processes makes the information space increasingly saturated. It is not surprising that in the current conditions, the importance of communication skills is significantly increasing: from the ability to conduct business negotiations at work or with the kids at home, to small talk, eloquence, and proficiency of a non-native speaker in another cultural environment.

Along with the acceleration of the world in which contemporary society exists, it is necessary to take into account the influence of another large-scale process - digitalization. It is in connection with the digital age and big data that the widespread distribution of such communications as mass communications and intercultural communications should be considered. As mentioned earlier, mass media communications are compared to the extension of government authority, which once again indicates its symbolic importance for contemporary society. It is in this regard that it is necessary to consider the contemporary phenomenon of mass media communication as a specific development of language and rhetoric that has gained exceptional popularity today.

1.4. James Baldwin's life work – a social commentary through the lens of criticism

James Baldwin's life spans sixty-three years to include his most fruitful periods in his thirties, between the 1950's and 1960's. This period is also connected to Baldwin's departure to Europe and the discovery of an even more multicultural environment as well as the discovery of Baldwin, the writer coming from America, by Europe. Although working with several forms of writing, which fall into the period called "confessional poetry", he was known for his commanding presence at public events, where he used the poetic means and rhetorical qualities that he was accumulating from the experiences he wrote about, in his oratory performance. As a

writer, James Baldwin has often been regarded first and foremost as an essayist. This observation is evidenced in articles by various critics, such as Langston Hughes, F. W. Dupee, and Robert A. Bone. More recently, a number of more varied and sophisticated readings of Baldwin's writing have emerged, the collections of essays by Dwight A. McBride, D. Quentin Miller, Lynn Orilla Scott.

The most recent studies survey Baldwin's work from the perspective of identity attributes. Indeed, much of his work is thoroughly built around various aspects of identity such as, but not limited to, gender roles, gender performativity, sexuality, orientation, ethnicity, etc. The studies point out Baldwin's incredulity at categorization. They argue that he saw that categorizations tend to become instruments of power through which relations of inequality and oppression are produced and maintained. This is where Baldwin's thinking assumes a position of resistance against the tradition of Western modernity which may be seen as largely based on such categories as gender, race, sexuality, and class. Baldwin was far ahead of his time in his questioning and challenging the essentialist conceptions of identity that these categories entail. Others in their works point out that despite the undeniable scope and variety of Baldwin's influence, his fate in literary history rests upon his refusal to attach himself to any single ideology, literary form, or vision. Marlon B. Ross offers a useful interpretation of Baldwin's position in that he wants to explode those categories, offering not a protest but rather a critique that disables the categories from retaining their oppressive power.

Baldwin's refusal to subscribe to any one single political ideology, that is, in other words, his refusal of labels and categorizations. Unfortunately, his ambivalent position as an outsider, residing between and outside different political stances also seems to be one of the main reasons

for the decline of his popularity and perceived significance in the later stages of his career.

Nevertheless, with his work, Baldwin illustrates the direction of African American thought and

culture in the late twentieth century, and yet, manages to go beyond the language that categorized

him as a minority. Baldwin uses rhetoric in the way that he is never retelling the same story,

using the same voice, or speaking to the same audience.

2. Methodology applied

This thesis statement has only support in the context of profound use of critical theory, as it is an integral part of the core of the critical framework used to contextualize the influence of rhetoric in the contemporary. The main thrust of my thesis is to reflect on the textual and intertextual connections among the chosen rhetorical devices and themes that have been appealing to the audience in the later half of the twentieth century in contrast to the present moment, revealing in this comparative process the differences and changes that have taken place, and more importantly, which vectors of change will continue playing a key role in the formation of rhetoric in the future, perhaps shaping its value as an autonomous innovative interdisciplinary field more explicitly seen for its contribution to social sciences.

The purpose of this research is to argue that a combined intellectual, pragmatic, and critical approach to operating rhetoric can 'deweaponize' it to a versatile composition tool of effective representation and empowerment, conscious decision-making, and problem-solving, amplified by the potential of mass media technology and data literacy. There are minor supporting theses that I would like to argue alongside the main one. This thesis's major value is aimed to enrich the seemingly insufficient supply of critical theory in regard to the contemporary pressing issues in relation to the spheres of cutting-edge technology. The minor purpose is to contribute to the task of restructuring a critical social theory for the present which explores more positive opportunities for the freedom of speech and expression to be exercised in the contemporary digital society where culture and economy are arguably most prominently shaped by the technology of mass communications.

In the critical framework in support of my thesis, I attempt to include recent and

contemporary theories questioning and enabling the discussion of forms of power, systems, and information in the broader spectrum of culture, in particular, to map certain ways that power relationships can shape cultural practices. With the addition of rhetorical analysis to cultural studies and criticism to be able to understand the need and to handle more democratically the naturally appearing need to use persuasion and negotiation in performing daily tasks. In my methodology, I am going to rely on a literature review. In this meta-analysis, I will parse the analyzed texts in various forms: non-fiction and fiction writing, and speeches. The empirical theoretical part will be counterbalanced with an experimental approach that is going to be employed in the analytical part – the analysis of rhetorically effective devices and their effects on the audience, including data from online journals and other digital platforms for the contemporary analysis part.

Taking its best influences of foundations of contemporary rhetoric from socially proactive discourse constructed by James Baldwin, the analysis will comparatively contextualize it alongside the contemporary cultural criticism of rhetoric from the combination, on the one hand, the American literary critic and theorist Fredric Jameson, and on another hand the continental philosophy of Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard. Certain conclusions will purposefully seek out definitive trajectories that can contribute to the task of finding new possible ways of attaining freedom of speech and expression in the contemporary cutting-edge technological society, where culture and economy are arguably most prominently shaped by the technology of mass communications.

3. Multiple applications of rhetoric as seen in the life work of James Baldwin

To inquire into the question of what rhetorically efficient instruments, both in the discourses of the Civil Rights era or in the contemporary period, have participated in the battle both against authority as well as in conformity, this chapter will focus on the discussion of the life work of James Baldwin. Particular attention is paid to the author's comparing art to confession, a characteristic of his own largely autobiographical signature writing, — that writing (taken in the broadest sense of creative capacity to produce texts) out of "one's own experience"[7] is a potent practice of grounding subjectivity in social reality without submission to conformity.

James Baldwin's life work – a diachronic digitalization of achievements. James Baldwin's life spans sixty-three years to include his most fruitful periods as a creator in his thirties, between the 1950's and 1960's. This period is also connected to Baldwin's departure to Europe as well as the discovery of the world of James Baldwin, the artist. Although working with several forms of writing, which fall into the period called "confessional poetry", he was known for his commanding presence at public events, where he used all poetic means and rhetorical qualities that he was accumulating from the experiences he wrote about, in his oratory performance. Among the works used for the reference are the novels *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), *Giovanni's Room* (1956), as well as "Sonny's Blues", "This Morning, This Evening, So Soon" from short stories collection titled "Going to Meet the Man", first published in 1965.

Baldwin's incredulity at categorization. The most recent studies survey Baldwin's work from the perspective of identity attributes. Indeed, much of his work is thoroughly built around

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[7] James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

various aspects of identity such as, but not limited to, gender roles, gender performativity,

sexuality, orientation, ethnicity, etc. Such a socially active figure as Baldwin has his finger on the

pulse of the change. However, he saw that categorizations tend to become instruments of power

through which relations of inequality and oppression are produced and maintained. This is where

Baldwin's thinking assumes a position of resistance against the tradition of Western modernity

which may be seen as largely based on such categories as gender, race, sexuality, and class.

Baldwin, by positioning himself outside of the labels, remains far ahead of time in his

questioning and challenging the essentialist conceptions of identity that these categories imply.

Marlon B. Ross offers a useful interpretation of Baldwin's position in his article "White

Fantasies of Desire":

> According to Baldwin, protest fiction plays up the illusion that we can understand
> injustice by fictionally representing the categories on which that injustice is based.
> Instead, Baldwin wants to explode those categories, offering not a protest but rather a
> critique that disables the categories from retaining their oppressive power.[8]

Baldwin's refusal to subscribe to any one single political ideology, that is, in other words, his

refusal of labels and categorizations may be perceived as an attempt to create an objective

position that would enable a more free conversation on the level of concepts instead of more

subjective opinions. Unfortunately, his ambivalent position as an outsider, residing between and

outside different political stances also seems to be one of the main reasons for the decline of his

popularity and perceived significance in the later stages of his career. Lynn Orilla Scott's *James

Baldwin's Later Fiction* is a much-needed initiative to end the neglect of Baldwin's later novels.

Scott suggests that most earlier accounts of Baldwin's later works have failed to understand the

consistent relationship of these novels and essays to his earlier work, "building upon, revising,

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[8] Miller D. Quentin, *James Baldwin in context* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 36.

and refocusing it, but never abandoning the critique of American racial and sexual identity"[9].

The author emphasizes the way in which Baldwin "traverses the cultural divide between the

fifties and late sixties," caused by the tension between the crisis of nonviolence and the rise of

militancy in the protest movement.

Offering to explore rhetoric used by Baldwin in his narrative styles, pecial attention must

be paid to the contrast between Baldwin's practices in the context of his time versus the

contemporary scene, particularly highlighting a more active power of language to shape society.

Comparing the effective principles of contemporary rhetoric, with media platforms and

audiences evolving continuously, the core principles of powerful rhetoric remain to be brevity,

emotional and ethical appeal, and last but not least, logic. Although it is a question of the current

state of social discourse that has not yet shifted from the vital pursuit of meaningful change,

rhetoric today undoubtedly contains in it the influences carried from the past. This and

subsequent chapters delve more in-depth analysis of the rhetorical techniques used by Baldwin

across his different life works, evidencing that not only his mastery of language but more so the

power of rhetoric in his style, made his works and personal character stand out in the

ever-present and valuable discourse of social critique and transformation.

Baldwin's talent is applied not only across different literary genres but also, discourses.

Among various mediums of communication, Baldwin chooses speeches and addresses for

spoken discourse and literary forms of novels, short stories, and essays for written texts. The

latter gets Baldwin recognized by several critics particularly often, with some critics, e.g., Robert

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[9] Scott, Lynn Orilla. *James Baldwin's Later Fiction* (Michigan State University Press, 2022), 13-14.

A. Bone goes as far as claiming that *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is the only novel form in which

Baldwin has succeeded. However, such critique should be taken with a grain of salt, due to Bone

being an appraiser of more traditional themes of the novel forms, which he writes in "The Novels

of James Baldwin," in *The Negro Novel in America* (1965)[10]. Even if a different selection of

literary forms allowed Baldwin to explore different topics more in-depth and detail, a more

limited and focused essay form enables the writer to use a more convincing and argumentative

tone especially when discussing and debating his position on social issues.

Mastering the essay form, Baldwin in his own collection of essays "Notes of a Native

Son" (1955) explores themes of identity and race in American society. In his essays, the author

includes several distinct rhetorical and literary techniques that make Baldwin's name stand out

among other distinguished essayists. For example, autobiographical narrative allows Baldwin to

interweave personal experiences with exploration of broader social analysis, making the tone and

the subject of his critiques both relatable and profound. In "Notes of a Native Son" the author

juxtaposes the narrator's turbulent relationship with his father:

> I had not known my father very well. We had got on badly, partly because we shared, in
> our different fashions, the vice of stubborn pride. When he was dead I realized that I had
> hardly ever spoken to him. When he had been dead a long time I began to wish I had. It
> seems to be typical of life in America, where opportunities, real and fancied, are thicker
> than anywhere else on the globe, that the second generation has no time to talk to the
> first. No one, including my father, seems to have known exactly how old he was, but his
> mother had been born during slavery. He was of the first generation of free men. He,
> along with thousands of other Negroes, came north after 1919 and I was part of that
> generation which had never seen the landscape of what Negroes sometimes call the Old
> Country.[11]

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[10] Robert Bone, *The Negro Novel in America*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965),
175–85.

[11] James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press,
1984), 2.

Close examination of family ties contrasts with the backdrop of racial tensions in America.

Baldwin continuously uses contrast and juxtaposition between disparities and contradictions

within American society, and the intimate perspective, the close individual angle.

In "Many Thousands Gone," Baldwin highlights the contrast between the tough reality of

African American lived experience and the idealized, literary and media representation:

> The story of the Negro in America is the story of America - more precisely, it is the story of Americans. It is not a very pretty story: the story of a people is never very pretty. The Negro in America, gloomily referred to as that shadow which lies athwart our national life, is far more than that. He is a series of shadows, self-created, intertwining, which now we helplessly battle. One many say that the Negro in America does not really exist except in the darkness of our minds.
> This is why his history and his progress, his relationship to all other Americans, has been kept in the social arena. He is a social and not a personal or a human problem; to thinking of him is to think of statistics, slums, rapes, injustices, remote violence...[12]

In these essays, contrast and juxtaposition play a main rhetorical role, the goal is to evoke the

audience's logical thinking, not bypassing the emotional and ethical appeals, in the judgment of

the subject matter of complex social topics. In addition to this, an analytical and reflective tone is

used by the author in order to balance out the emotive appeal:

> But this is not the story which native Son tells, for we find here merely repeated in anger, the story which we have told in pride...It is addressed to those among us of good will and it seems to say that, though there are whites and blacks among us who hate each other, we will not; there are those who are betrayed by greed, by guilt, by blood lust, but not we; we will set our faces against them and join hands and walk together into the dazzling future when there will be no white or black. This is the dream of all liberal men, a dream not at all dishonorable, but, nevertheless, a dream. For, let us join hands on this mountain as we may, the battle is elsewhere.[13]

This collection of essays invites the audience to ponder deeply on complex social issues while

being smoothed from emotional tension by the characteristic of Baldwin's style, used also in

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[12] Baldwin, 25.

[13] Baldwin, 44-45.

prose, contemplative, and analytical tone. Baldwin reflects on his experiences without losing the cool of a factual argument, building up for the reader to have a balanced perspective to explore broader themes of cultural alienation and identity. A more rational tone is necessary to critique societal norms in an effort to expose underlying prejudices, and in this role, irony and satire, come to the author's aid. For example, Baldwin utilizes irony in his critique of Richard Wright's Native Son (1940) in "Everybody's Protest Novel" to have his audience question the portrayal of African American life in middle-twentieth-century protest literature.

Another example of powerful rhetoric used in nonfiction is "The Fire Next Time" (1963). Although it contains two essays, "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to my Nephew on the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region of My Mind," it is one of Baldwin's most influential works. In part it is so due to Baldwin's developed confidence in the essay form, but also, the writer's use of the key rhetorical strategies, such as a direct address in "My Dungeon Shook":

> Now, my dear namesake, these innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen, have caused you to be born under conditions not very far removed from those described for us by Charles Dickens in the London of more than a hundred years ago. (I hear the chorus of the innocents screaming, "No! This is not true! How bitter you are!" - but I am writing this letter to you, to try to tell you something about how to handle them, for most of the do not yet really know that you exist. I know the conditions under which you were born, for I was there.[14]

In addition to the direct address, personalization is used in the second "Down at the Cross" to amplify the immediacy and intimacy of the message in the address. In this essay to his nephew, the author uses personalization to establish an emotional connection:

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[14] James Baldwin, "The Fire Next Time" (1st Vintage International ed.), (New York: Vintage Books,1993), 6.

You very soon, without knowing it, give up all hope of communion. Black people, mainly, look down or look up but do not look at each other, not at you, and white people, mainly, look away. And the universe is simply a sounding drum; there is no way, no way whatever, so it seemed then and has sometimes seemed since, to get through a life, to love your wife and children, or your friends, or your mother and father, or to be loved. The universe, which is not merely the stars and the moon and the planets, flowers, grass, and trees, but other people, has evolved no terms for your existence, has made no room for you, and if love will not swing wide the gates, no other power will or can.[15]

Here Baldwin uses a direct personal pronoun to address his nephew in a direct manner, creating an urgent tone, but also conveying a sense of proximity and familiarity with his nephew, and indirectly, with the reader, "You were born where you are born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and for no other reason." Such a personal manner of address establishes a strong emotional connection with the audience, opening the reader's mind and heart, and connecting emotive and rational aspects together. Such technique of direct personal address to the audience, is undoubtedly, a profoundly used one for its potent rhetorical effect, often in religious sermons and political speeches. It lays the ground of familiarity, a relation through reference before it establishes a strong emotive or logical connection.

Similarly to nonfiction, in his works of fiction, for example, in the novel, e.g., *Giovanni's Room* (1956), Baldwin adds to the personalized immersive and direct experience a stream-of-consciousness technique. In addition to using already mentioned techniques from nonfiction such as contrast and juxtaposition to induce a powerful rhetorical effect, the author uses a stream-of-consciousness style in the narrative of the novel that allows the reader to follow a more intimate exploration of the narrator's inner thought process and emotional life. In the novel, the main character's reflections on his life and desires, and particularly, his love life and

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[15] James Baldwin, "The Fire Next Time" (1st Vintage International ed.), (New York: Vintage Books,1993), 6.

his relationships, are rendered in an introspective narrative tone, letting the readers deeper into his internal conflict, e.g., his struggle with his sexuality and identity. Both internal e.g., lack of comfort and stability in his life, and external conflicts, e.g., societal prejudices against the display of same-sex relationships, are framed in the novel as part of the character's existential quest in search of self-acceptance, freedom, and authenticity in a current human condition.

3.1 Discussion of formal and functional aspects of rhetorical analysis

Firstly, the formal aspect of rhetoric in the process of literary analysis will be discussed. This defines the respective goals and roles of the text analyzed and specifies the formal characteristics of the rhetoric used. The rhetorical choices are the key element in the literary analysis, especially as they shape the form and content of the text. Secondly, attention will be paid to the instrumental or technical aspect of the text's analysis consisting of processing operations that are performed by specified rhetorical devices. An excerpt from the novel *Giovanni's Room* (1965) gives a glimpse of how many different rhetorical devices work together, the figurative aspects supported by the formal progression of the narration, to create in synchronization an undoubtedly touching story concerning identity, and sexuality in the society. The parallelism of syntactic constructions, characteristic of the author's psychology-focused narrative, paired with the inversion, the repetition of the conjunction "and" that creates the melody, all this in total sets the reader up for a perception of the character's experiences:

> I ached abruptly, intolerably, with a longing to go home; not to that hotel, in one of the alleys of Paris, where the concierge barred the way with my unpaid bill; but home, home across the ocean, to things and people I knew and understood; to those things, those places, those people which I would always helplessly, and in whatever bitterness of spirit,

love above all else.[16]

Besides literary means that help artistic expression, the reader's attention is drawn by the skillful use of the pronoun "those" as an amplifier, giving an inner monologue a more spoken discourse, naturally sounding quality. In this context, the pronoun "those" seems to transfer from the directing function of an object to a feature, which charges the feature with a special impact of expressivity. The role of repeating the personal pronoun "I" together with alliteration in this text is not irrelevant to the rhythmic-melodic structure of the phrase:

> I had never realized such a sentiment in myself before, and it frightened me. I saw myself, sharply, as a wanderer, an adventurer, rocking through the world, unanchored. I looked at Giovanni's face, which did not help me. He belonged to this strange city, which did not belong to me.[17]

A deviation from such lyrical narration causing a mood shift is achieved by the use of repeated exclamations in the middle of the thought progression:

> I began to see that, while what was happening to me was not so strange as it would have comforted me to believe, yet it was strange beyond belief. It was not really so strange, so unprecedented, though voices deep within me boomed, For shame! For shame! that I should be so abruptly, so hideously entangled with a boy; what was strange was that this was but one tiny aspect of the dreadful human tangle, occurring everywhere, without end, forever.[18]

Both narrative planes, ironic and lyrical, frequently intersect in the story. It allows the narrative to switch between the planes of inner consciousness and exterior reality where characters interact. Sometimes the ironic remarks penetrate into the lyrical element of the narrative, as if softening the seriousness of the latter. The third plane of narration is the deepest, it accompanies the relationship aspect at the core of the story, first, between two central characters, and secondly, between the main character and his inner self. Since the overt exhibition of these relations is

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[16] James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Penguin Classics, 2001), 69-70.

[17] Baldwin, 69.

[18] Baldwin, 69.

condemned by society, the author communicates them in an intimately perceptible manner. Only

in this brief piece of text, the author has used several literary devices for a broader purpose than

artistic aesthetic expression. The text aims to impact the reader by connecting the emotional and

logical sides in different planes of narration. Literary devices of alliteration, anaphora,

amplification, inversion, and parallelism in persuading the reader about the sincerity and honesty

of the character's feelings, become rhetorical means of the reader's engagement.

Beyond the use of various rhetorical devices, Baldwin the writer uses various other

formal aspects to engage the reader. The omniscient voice in which *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

and *Another Country* is written, is not unique to the novel form. *Giovanni's Room* and *Tell Me

How Long the Train's Been Gone* have first-person narrators. Baldwin's narrator describes

mainly what they have not seen, the absent subject or issue is described through the storyteller's

experience of it:

> Underground, I received my first apprehension of New York neighborhoods and,
> underground, first felt what may be called a civic terror. I very soon realized that after the
> train had passed a certain point, going uptown or downtown, all the colored people
> disappeared. The first time I realized this, I panicked and got lost. I rushed off the train,
> terrified of what these white people might do to me, with no colored person around to
> protect me - even to scold me, even to beat me; at least, their touch was familiar, and I
> knew that they did not, after all, intend to kill me - and got on another train only because
> I saw a black man on it. But almost everyone else was white.[19]

Here, at issue is the main character's immersive perspective allowing the reader to see the

invisible issue that frightens him the most - the fear of prejudice and racism towards him. The

city of New York is described through the socio-cultural and political perspective, where the

narrator is able to draw the reader closer to the fear of his existence. Baldwin's personality as a

writer shows through the first person perspective in the way that his immersive technique of

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[19] James Baldwin. *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (New York, N.Y. : Dell, 1968).

writing draws the reader into the context, while not describing a lot of objects or meticulously constructing the scenery, but developing emotions and characters with the depth of lived experience, seducing the reader with the drama of Baldwin's language. Such reflexive and, on occurrence, stream-of-consciousness style, creates a powerful effective rhetorical narrative. The reader is immersed into an intimate exploration of the storyteller's thinking process and is granted access to their immediate emotions, making the reader's experience almost indistinguishable from the narrator's "I" despite the little is known about him and even less similar to his experience is from the contemporary reader's.

3.2 Instrumental aspect of rhetoric

While there are a plethora of ways to differentiate between parts of rhetoric, its categories of forms, functions, and the list of individual rhetorical devices are not fixed to a specific number, as there is a broader range of each and every device studied separately, the following most commonly known rhetorical choices are going to be discussed further, due to their broad scope of usage: anaphora, irony, metaphor, parallelism, personification, simile. Additionally, the focus on phraseology and uniquely toned combination of the distinctive units of literary and rhetorical features, otherwise, style, will help determine how the connection between formal and functional aspects of analyzed texts is realized. The fourth aspect of new rhetorical analysis, in order to be successful, requires a complementary mode of cooperation among social theories. The fifth and final aspect of the analysis is temporal in nature and may be thought of in terms of communication circumstances that unfold as sequential events that combine other social processes. These sequential forms of communication process represent successive intersections

of different aspects of culture, a series of momentary configurations of social contacts, roles, and impacts that cumulatively determine the overall course of social development.

The fourth aspect, where literary and rhetorical choices of a text come together to create a specific effect on the audience, must be studied contextually and with the combined application of different social and cultural theories. The exchange of meanings and roles between form and function in a text is important, but an even higher level of interaction is taking place, where text opens to different interpretations in a context, metatext. Kenneth Burke, exploring the subject of human motivation in the middle twentieth century, compares rhetoric to identification, well beyond what people say and do. In the introduction to *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969), Burke states:

> There is an intermediate area of expression that is not wholly deliberate, yet not wholly unconscious. It lies midway between aimless utterance and speech directly purposive. For instance, a man who identifies his private ambition with the good of the community may be partly justified, partly unjustified. He may be using a mere pretext to gain individual advantage at public expense; yet he may be quite sincere . . . . Here is a rhetorical area not analyzable either as sheer design or as sheer simplicity. And we would treat of it here.[20]

Learning to understand what identification means for each individual through the process of critical analysis can give a glimpse into our own thought composition, and reasoning, and can provide insight into other more complex conscious processes like decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity. And even more, when human interactions are involved, there are connections, and actions which carry motivations, and consequences. This connections between the origin of language, identity, and individualization has been a point of curiosity since the early years of linguistics as a modern discipline:

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[20] Kenneth Burke. *A Rhetoric of Motives* (University of California Press, 1969).

> The world of our experiences must be enormously simplified and generalized before it is possible to make a symbolic inventory of all our experiences of things and relations; and this inventory is imperative before we can convey ideas. The elements of language, the symbols that ticket off experience, must therefore be associated with whole groups, delimited classes, of experience rather than with the single experiences themselves. Only so is communication possible, for the single experience lodges in an individual consciousness and is, strictly speaking, incommunicable. To be communicated it needs to be referred to a class which is tacitly accepted by the community as an identity.[21]

In a verbal situation the hearer, above the other three elements of speech making the speaker, the subject, and the addressee, most often determines the speech's end and objectives. The effect that the speech or the address produces depends on the audience's interpretation and interaction with what is being said, within the symbolic system in a specific environment.

Often, speech involves presentation, both in verbal and non-verbal form. The purpose of lexical and phraseological layers in oratorical speech is quite definite - to make speech figurative, and accessible, and facilitate its perception. In addition to lexical and phraseological layers, oratorical speech is quite definite - to make speech figurative, and accessible. In addition to the lexical and phraseological riches of speech used by speakers, the combination of words and the order of their placement are of great importance. A word thrown by the orator carelessly, clumsily, destroys with it a useful thought. On the contrary, the word and the expression, adjusted into the necessary structure corresponding to it, acquire a special power and convey the thought more accurately, more vividly. Just as all painters use the same colors, but do not mix them in different proportions and combinations, orators use the same words, but combinations give them a difference. In everyday speech and in rhetorical one, the same words are used, but the orator, borrowing from everyday, colloquial speech, forms in accordance with the tasks and

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[21] Edward Sapir, *Language: An introduction to the study of speech* (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1921).

goals of their text, due to which the speech is either elevated, or average, or lowered, or

penetrating, too angry and accusatory. Certainly traceable in Baldwin's writing, the African

American tradition of oral culture, particularly in the form of quotations from old slave songs,

gospel and blues lyrics is an advantage for the artist aiming to convey their thought more

accessible, more vividly. In his essay "Autobiographical Notes" Baldwin recognizes the

influence:

> I hazard that the King James Bible, the rhetoric of the storefront church, something ironic
> and violent and perpetually understated in Negro speech—and something of Dickens'
> love for bravura—have something to do with me today.[22]

Time in the church was of considerable importance to Baldwin's later career both as a writer and

a spokesman, since it was there that he learned the powerful use of rhetoric, which became one

of the most recognizable characteristics in his writing and speeches. However, critic Lauren Rusk

notes the moderation in adaptation of the preacher's tone to suit a more balanced delivery:

> Though Baldwin displays certain preacherly desires and devices, he identifies himself
> instead as a writer and as a participant in literary life… Baldwin's writing is more
> impersonal, restrained, formal, and abstract than the tradition of preaching he comes
> from. Writing enables him to articulate feelings different from those characteristic of that
> preaching tradition—feelings such as ambivalence, uncertainty, humanistic hope rather
> than religious faith, and disillusionment.[23]

With religious influence in the early years of Baldwin's style formation, the author is able to

assimilate the influential rhetoric that has helped him produce a strong emotive effect. However,

another influence on Baldwin's rhetoric style is prominent in his reliance on civil political

African-American discourse, such as expressed in "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" by W.E.B. Du

Bois:

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[22] James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 13.

[23] Dwight A. McBride. *James Baldwin Now* (NYU Press, 1999), 380.

The bright ideals of the past,—physical freedom, political power, the training of brains and the training of hands,—all these in turn have waxed and waned, until even the last grows dim and overcast… All these ideals must be melted and welded into one… Work, culture, liberty,—all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster ideal that swims before the Negro People, the ideal of human brotherhood gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack.[24]

A few decades prior to Baldwin, Du Bois outlined his assimilationist strategy of resolving social and racial issues laying out the principles and strategy for influencing future generations to follow, including Baldwin's own attitude. He declares adherence to "the greater ideals of the American republic," and calls for complete racial equality, and foregrounds the importance of education, culture, civil rights, and freedom for black Americans in general. His vision of a better world in which social categorization would cease to function as an instrument of power and oppression reveals his emancipatory humanist approach building upon what Du Bois called "human brotherhood". In this attitude, Baldwin follows an example of African American assimilationist progressive thinking and develops a more ambitious vision concerning the advancement of the social position of African Americans.

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[24] W.E.B.Du Bois. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." 1903. In *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader. Ed. David Levering Lewis* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 28‑33.

4. Rhetorical analysis in four sections

The subsequent discussion chapter is divided into four sections. The first provides a sketch of the factors that make rhetoric, in one form or another, a universal function found throughout themes concerning human culture. The next section focuses on the distinctive features of modern and contemporary societies and examines the cultural context of rhetorical choices that have evolved to meet the needs of the people who live within them. The third section focuses on the specific forms of rhetoric in modern and contemporary societies and considers the factors and forces that have led to their differentiation. Finally, the last section offers an integrative framework for the comparative study of rhetorical use found in modern literature.

4.1 Universal function of rhetoric

At the current moment, there are two cognitive modes of understanding: logical and figurative cognition of the world. Often, through the characteristics of the concrete and the individual, we strive to express a large and general concept, a general property or phenomenon. In these cases, we think figuratively. Thus, imaginative thinking is the ability to convey the general through the individual. However, this ability, although inherent to human cognition, is developed differently in different people. The artist, firstly, due to his heightened perceptiveness, observes the singular, the individual more deeply, and secondly, they have great life experience and knowledge, they are capable of broad and bold sensations.

The relationship of word and image in a work of fiction is one of the most complex aspects of stylistics. A poetic image can be expressed not only by the figurative meaning of a

word e.g., trope, or by a special lexical-semantic device e.g., the figure of speech, but an image in the work of fiction can also arise when words are used in their direct meaning. It is quite clear that we are experiencing imagery born through metaphorization, i.e. the figurative meaning of the word. Words denote ordinary, commonly used concepts and are not images in themselves. Used in the literal sense of the word, they name objects or phenomena and, taken separately, do not create an image. But they are fraught with hidden possibilities of imagery. It is enough to group all these senses of the word in a certain rhythmic order, to subordinate their combination to an aesthetic task, or a poetic attitude, and the sum of the objective meanings of the words will reveal its figurative properties - we will get a vivid picture-image.

Does a poetic image exist separately from the word? Hardly so, like a thought separate from the word, it is a mere abstraction. The word is not a dead shell of thought, but its reality, its content, or meaning-bearing form. Thus, the imagery in a work of fiction is realized in language. On the one hand, one thought can be expressed by many synonymous words, which creates a different stylistic use of the word. There can be different sound designations of the same concept, among which there are neutral and emotionally colored ones. On the other hand, one word can include different concepts or different shades of the concept of homonymy, which leads to the economy of linguistic means, for example, 'military operation' and 'medical operation' - different shades of the concept. All words have been preserved in their original objective meaning and continue to play the role of a means of communication, i.e. they convey thought. However, in the complex of all words and their special placement, the stylistic category of imagery appeared. Imagery in a work of art is inconceivable without the word, outside the linguistic design. The word is dialectically connected with the image in the sphere of a certain

style. To tear them away from each other means to disturb the living fabric of a work of art. Among many figurative devices and stylistic variations permissible in different discourses, in fiction, it is particularly important to create trust through the connection that will allow communication, engagement, and interaction between the reader and text. This connection is based on the reader's engagement with different linguistic aspects that allow communication, in the form of interpretation of meaning by the reader, to take place. Such exchange is possible if the text offers space for deep thought, most commonly achieved linguistically through various literary and rhetorical devices, but also, through connections to themes, the style of the author, and very commonly, through the characters. As a general rule, character is determined not by each single more or less random action, but by the entire lifestyle of a person. Only in their meaning, individual actions of a person connect memory, language, other cognitive and chemical reactions necessary for even basic functions. The more complex the behavior the more connections occur, many of them without direct realization. Those events that determine the key moments of the biography, turning points in the life path, leave a certain imprint on the character. A writer who has decided to depict the character of a person must study their way of life, establish the essential features that determine their actions and deeds.

The degree and quality of individualization are determined by the general level of artistic development of a person. In different periods of the history of humankind, in different countries, different peoples had certain ideas about the means of individualization. In James Baldwin's life work, it can be observed, for example, that the more realistic non-fiction, e.g., collection of essays differs from the short stories or novels in the degree and quality of individualization and characterization. In the short story "Sonny's Blues" from 1957 one reads that blues music is a

character of the story where the narrator remains nameless first person from whose memory most

other characters appear. Even a superficial comparison between the short stories written in the

same year 1956, "Rockpile" and "Sonny's Blues", convinces the reader that while creating vivid

individual characters of heroes, the author at the same time does not use such detail as physical

description in a large extent, does not resort to the so-called "background" or "undercurrent" of

events complexly interlocking the plot with the character development. On the contrary, the

individual character traits of the heroes are skillfully obscured by the author, in "Sonny's Blues"

even many character's names are not evoked, including the narrator's one. The idea of them as a

person is given in large and bright strokes:

> I couldn't believe it: but what I mean by that is that I couldn't find any room for it
> anywhere inside me. I had kept it outside me for a long time. I hadn't wanted to know. I
> had had suspicions, but I didn't name them, I kept putting them away. I told myself that
> Sonny was wild, but he wasn't crazy. And he'd always been a good boy, he hadn't ever
> turned hard or evil or disrespectful, the way kids can, so quick, so quick, especially in
> Harlem. I didn't want to believe that I'd ever see my brother going down, coming to
> nothing, all that light in his face gone out, in the condition I'd already seen so many
> others. Yet it had happened and here I was, talking about algebra to a lot of boys who
> might, every one of them for all I knew, be popping off needles every time they went to
> the head. Maybe it did more for them than algebra could.[25]

From this passage, it is clear that the reader is dealing with a psychological work, where the

character is subjected to judgments and exposure to societal evaluation. Psychological

individualization can give way to characterization by action, creative evaluation, evaluation by

another hero, finally, speech, interactions in dialogue, inner monologue. Although each genre has

its own specifics that require special study, this thesis' focus on James Baldwin's life work

observes selected texts with a varying degree of individualization. For example, in the novel,

Giovanni's Room (1965), one dominant quality or property of character, can not be favored over

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[25] Baldwin, James. "Sonny's Blues", *Going to Meet the Man*: Stories. (Vintage, 2013).

the sum of numerous qualities and properties, the influence of character on events, the conditioning of character by these events - in a word, over the artistic logic of character development. Naturally, all this requires maximum individualization.

If there is no such individualization, the heroes of the work of these fictional genres turn into abstractions, a one-dimensional mirror of simple statements, and do not differ from each other. The problem of character, therefore, of individualization, is especially important in the work of fiction. Thus, the short story, like a novel, shows coexistence not only as a result but also as a process of development and movement in the character's psyche. However, in the novel the author can freely comment on the actions of his characters, "But she smiles at once when I open the door, a smile which weds the coquette and the mother,"[26] give them various characteristics in the course of narrative development, "'I didn't tell you—we had an awful fight the night I went there, to get my things.' I paused. I sipped my drink. 'He cried.',"[27] resort to detailed lyrical digressions and landscape frames: "I remember that life in that room seemed to be occurring beneath the sea, time flowed past indifferently above us, hours and days had no meaning."[28] In the short story the character of the hero is created mainly with the help of speech characterization:

> "Oh, honey," she said, "there's a lot that you don't know. But you are going to find out." She stood up from the window and came over to me. "You got to hold on to your brother," she said, "and don't let him fall, no matter what it looks like is happening to him and no matter how evil you gets with him. You going to be evil with him many a time. But don't you forget what I told you, you hear?" "I won't forget," I said. "Don't you worry, I won't forget. I won't let nothing happen to Sonny."[29]

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[26] James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Penguin Classics, 2001), 72.

[27] Baldwin, 156.

[28] Baldwin, 79.

[29] James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues", *Going to Meet the Man*: Stories (Vintage, 2013).

The psychic process is even more interesting, its forms, its laws. In short pieces, the author puts a lot of force to the depiction of the mental process. All chances of engaging the reader's mind with the psychology of the text created are used to focus on the portrait, the dialogue, the monologue, and the characterization by action. The ways in which the author creates the images of the hero in the work help trace the author's understanding of the characterization of the human psyche. In the details of the portrait of the hero, the reader catches the author's desire to convey the changeability, fluidity of the human psyche. The gaze of any person, including the hero, is changeable and inconstant, it reflects the state of a person only at a given moment. Therefore, the author writes:

> 'Maybe everything bad that happens to you makes you weaker,' said Giovanni, as though he had not heard me, 'and so you can stand less and less.' Then, looking up at me, 'No. The worst thing happened to me long ago and my life has been awful since that day. You are not going to leave me, are you?'[30]

Further, the author explains the reason for the psychological paradox, according to which the sad and hopeless look of the hero is called by another hero in a different way:

> He went to the sink and started washing his face. He combed his hair. I watched him. He grinned at me in the mirror, looking, suddenly, beautiful and happy. And young—I had never in my life before felt so helpless or so old.[31]

In this passage, it is not difficult to catch the philosophical premise of the artist. A person is natural and beautiful when they think not about themselves, but about others. As soon as the hero's thoughts wandered outside of themselves, their appearance was transformed. The fluidity of the human psyche can also be found in the portrait of the character, if there is such, in their speech characteristic, and internal monologues. Baldwin does not give a detailed description of

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[30] James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Penguin Classics, 2001), 110.

[31] Baldwin, 110.

the hero's appearance, he is primarily interested in details that convey the state of mind of the hero at the moment, because this is the shortest path that connects him to his reader through the text.

Until now, various artistic devices have been noted, with the help of which writers create typical characters of heroes, objectively reflecting the facts and phenomena of reality in their works. However, without the specific focus on such a significant factor influencing the figurative system as the ideological position of the writer and their subjective attitude to the depicted characters. Meanwhile, a lot depends on this factor, especially in prose, where the author has various opportunities and means to declare their ideological position. The author can convey this clash of opposite feelings through different external descriptive details. However, these details are in you, the reader. This combination of linguistic and figurative forms is not an ordinary still life. Together, in the text it works for the image, the feeling. Linguistic forms exist objectively, as a material form of an image, but then, when they are warped by consciousness, they create an image. In the process of the artist's subjective reflection of the objective world, an image is modeled, i.e., similar to sculpture. Words, unlike paints or plaster, are perceived as the fruit of the writer's consciousness, their fantasy and this illusion confuses the audience, as a result of which it seems to it that the artist first creates a complete non-verbal image and then begins to shape it with linguistic form.

4.2. Modern and Contemporary Rhetoric

The purpose of this thesis is to highlight the importance of studying and applying rhetoric especially as its various effects on the thinking process come to prominence in the age of social

media. With the addition of rhetorical analysis to cultural studies and criticism, it will be possible to better understand and handle in a more democratic way the naturally appearing need to use persuasion as even the most homogenous communities reflect a certain degree of internal irreconcilable differences in societal level nowadays. Especially in the digital society, where online presence requires arguably less focus, significantly cutting the attention span of an average person, the problem of polarization appears more prominent. The fast-paced information flow stripped of basic values like context, coherence, arguments, is designed to appeal to the subject who desires. In this environment, the person's critical thinking suffers the most. The ability to think critically reflects on the person's decision-making, lifestyle, and life choices, taking out the necessity of interpretation, reflection, and creativity.

On a more positive side, there are many possibilities of direction where history continues, and neglecting thinking critically can be a lesson learned. This is why language and literature in both written and spoken discourses are important to be reflected on and maintained, accommodating to the changing demands of society. Major shifts in society and culture first, started to gain a spotlight allowing the interest in the subject matter to gain traction, and secondly, were provided substantial coverage with the establishment of social sciences in the twentieth century. Some prominent names include Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, and Fredric Jameson. All four critics reveal academic interest in shared themes and distinct perspectives concerning fast-paced changes in society connected to increasing levels of abstraction. Each of these critics in their unique theoretical works, approaches the discussion of rhetoric's role in contemporary society structure and institutions, its relationship to power and knowledge, and its transformations in the postmodern digital era. Learning from some of these

critics' strategies and techniques developed in their various works, one can analyze the contemporary social and linguistic scene from a new perspective that was not available prior to the developments in the domain of cultural theory. The subject matter of rhetoric, if not the ground topic of some of these critics' works, is underlying all conversations and discussions connecting linguistics and culture. For Lyotard, influenced by the linguistic turn in philosophy, the point of critique is the shift away from the grand narrative of progress characteristic of Enlightenment, where the rhetoric of rationality and essentialism undermine the complexity and fragmentation of the world. Instead, localized narratives of modern and postmodern discourse gain more credibility as they are inclusive of a vast multiplicity of world views. He emphasizes the need for rhetorical strategies that embrace linguistic pluralism and translate into cultural ones. Focused more on the use of specific rhetorical strategies in the construction and legitimization of political discourses, Foucault analyzes linguistic practices that govern identity formation. In his turn, the rising prominence of different media and advertising in the twentieth century leads Baudrillard at the same time to elevate critical analysis to the discussion on the level of metatexts and references, where he observes how manipulation of images and signs leads to construct a perceived reality.

In addition to Lyotard, Foucault, and Baudrillard, cultural texts are examined for rhetorical strategies by Fredric Jameson with a focus on historical contextualization. Jameson, a prominent literary critic, and theorist, has extensively analyzed the role of rhetoric in cultural and literary analysis. In his works, he explores how rhetoric reflects and shapes socio-economic conditions of the twentieth century with key themes and examples of his observations on rhetoric use including works like *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic*

Act (1981):

> We must not briefly characterise each of these three semantic or interpretative horizons. We have suggested that it is only in the first narrowly political horizon - in which history is reduced to a series of punctual events and crises in time, to diachronic agitation of the year-to-year, the chroniclelike annals of the rise and fall of political regimes and social fashions, and the passionate immediacy of struggles between historical individuals - that the "text" or object of study will tend to coincide with the individual literary work or cultural artifact. Yet to specify this individual text as a symbolic act is already fundamentally to transform the categories with which traditional explication de texte (whether narrative or poetic) operated and largely operates.[32]

Particularly relevant in Jameson's analysis is the discussion of rhetoric's role in challenging ideological structures, assuming that literary and cultural texts are deeply embedded in their socio-political contexts. He argues that with the concept of the political unconscious one can illustrate how dominant narratives reflect and reinforce the dominant ideologies of their time. Further, Jameson extensively examines nineteenth-century realist novels and puts into question the bourgeois ideology prevalent in the themes of literature, art, and publications at the time which made the socio-economic conditions appear inevitable and outside of the control of large groups of people. The then-existing social order, he argues, is portrayed in these novels in such a realistic manner and details of description only to reinforce the experience of the order through the media of a novel.

As an example of the analysis of rhetorical strategies operating within the cultural production, he takes Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900), focusing on the themes of colonialism and the complexities of moral judgment. The novel's narrative structure and the text's self-awareness about its storytelling techniques serve as an additional layer of critique to the

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[32] Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious*. (London: Routledge Classics, 2nd edition, 2002), 62.

imperialist ideology it portrays. Additionally, the text's self-referentiality, or, as introduced by Jameson, the concept of metacommentary, allows the text to comment on its own rhetorical strategies which adds a level of understanding of how rhetoric operates within cultural productions. Jameson's further research with the focus on literary theory highlights rhetoric's critical role in reflecting and shaping socio-economic conditions whereby rhetoric operates within cultural texts to reinforce or challenge dominant ideologies.

4.3 Force of Rhetoric

The emphasis on the rhetorical aspect as a part of a broader linguistic aspect at the core of this thesis positions this research in a broader discussion of the linguistic and socio-cultural sphere rather than a political analysis of identity. Although it should be noted, that there are features that are applicable for rhetorical discussion to start to resemble a political debate, e.g.: rhetorical as well as political analysis attempts to study polarized views, both domains' debates are not considered settled. More importantly, for both domains, the evidence of both linguistic and logical skills backed up by an understanding of cultural theory is an almost certain quality guarantee.

Reading Politically. In this thesis, the readings of James Baldwin's life work are based on the premise that African American literature is inherently political. The readings initiate on the textual level and work their way towards the socio‑historical contexts of the novels. The starting point is to locate the central problems in the texts and then proceed to trace the problems back to their sources in history and society. Although as a writer, James Baldwin's mastery of switching between different planes and themes and linguistic command of the narration undoubtedly, find

an application in the elegant prose of novels and short stories, he has often been regarded first

and foremost as an essayist according to observation evidence in articles by various critics, such

as Langston Hughes and F. W. Dupee. Here we are at the core of Baldwin's thinking, which

underlies all of his writing, fiction and nonfiction alike. To quote his own words:

> Our passion for categorisation, life neatly fitted into pegs, has led to an unforeseen, paradoxical distress; confusion, a breakdown of meaning. Those categories which were meant to define and control the world for us have boomeranged us into chaos; in which limbo we whirl, clutching the straws of our definitions.[33]

In Baldwin's view, these categories function to deny humanity itself, and they must, therefore, be

deconstructed.[34] Commenting on literary choices or genres, Baldwin argues, for example, that

protest novels do not, "question or transcend this categorization; instead, they propagate it."[35] In

"Everybody's Protest Novel" Baldwin draws attention to the ability of society "to convince those

people to whom it has given inferior status of the reality of this decree; it has the force and the

weapons to translate its dictum into fact, so that the allegedly inferior are actually made so, in so

far as the societal realities are concerned."[36] Although the categories of race and sexuality find a

central position among the themes of Baldwin's works, the underlying purpose of such placement

is to bring to light the most obvious aspect of these categories, their essentializing and reductive

qualities.

Baldwin's goal is to dismantle the power of these essentialist categorizations by writing

them into the clashing oppositions between individual and social life. It has become more clear

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[33] James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 24.

[34] Baldwin, 27

[35] Baldwin, 28.

[36] Baldwin, 25.

nowadays that these categories are socially and discursively constructed, as opposed to the prior perception of them as something inherent, given, absolutely ideal. That is why it can be noted that ahead of his time, Baldwin, by taking a stance against categorization, especially spelled out in his early essays, "Everybody's Protest Novel" (1949) and later in "Down at the Cross" (1963), has foreseen these categories soon to be seen critically rather than necessary. In the latter essay, he states, "Color is not a human or a personal reality; it is a political reality… and the value placed on the color of the skin is always and everywhere and for ever a delusion"[37] Yet, in many of Baldwin's works' the theme is a search for authenticity, self-reflection and self-assertion in the world of different cultures and social structures. Analyzing the identity aspect, in particular, how different parts of identity play a role in writing about minority cultures, James Ottery points out that "Such self-identification more or less guarantees any person a subjective position in language and thus to a sovereign sense, a secure yet fragile sense of what it is to be one self in a world of others."[38]

4.4 Rhetoric for Comparative Analysis

To defend the relevance of rhetorical analysis against its stigmatized image in the public eye, which extracts each context's most effective rhetorical techniques to be implied according to the needs and demands of its user, is a necessary part of the critical craft. With the addition of

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[37] James Baldwin. "The Fire Next Time" (1st Vintage International ed.), 1993. New York: Vintage Books.

[38] James R. Ottery. "'Who Are They and What Do They Have to DO With What I Want to Be?': The Writing of Multicultural Identity and College Success Stories for First-Year Writers." In Identity Papers: Literacy and Power in Higher Education, edited by BRONWYN T. WILLIAMS, 122–38. University Press of Colorado, 2006. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgp83.11.

rhetorical analysis to cultural studies and criticism, it will be possible to better understand and handle in a more democratic way the naturally appearing need to use persuasion as even the most homogenous communities reflect a certain degree of internal irreconcilable differences.

Non-verbal aspect of rhetoric. The discussion of the roles of rhetoric would not be sufficient without observing spoken discourse, particularly highlighting the broad scope of rhetoric application. In the contemporary world, heads of state, and ambassadors representing the international interests of different states, world associations, and organizations, all without exception, must take into account both the cultural context, as the place where the speech takes place, and the context of the speech, as in what occasion the speech takes place. Also, it is extremely necessary for a contemporary speaker to be sensitive to their audience. Today, it is no longer enough to be able to conduct oneself in public, that is, to use such non-verbal means of communication as posture, gestures, facial expressions, etc. Due to the increasing popularity of interactive types of communication, today it is extremely important for a speaker to have a good sense of context and references, both of which require a high speed of intellectual reaction. It is well known that a brilliant speech has a bright psycho-emotional impact on the audience and is the highest manifestation of the skill of public speaking. The most important condition for the effectiveness of an oratorical speech is contact with the audience. But how to create a generally neutral tone in a multicultural audience, establish contact between the speaker and the audience, and control the mood in a given environment? These are the problems that a modern and contemporary public figure faces regularly, with their presence required constantly and amplified by the media.

Historically popular formats of oral public performances are changing with the changing

nature of people's activities. The contemporary information and business space is becoming more and more saturated, the audience of a contemporary speaker is diversifying, the context of public speeches is expanding, and accordingly, new forms and genres of public speeches are emerging. The format and the subject of political discourse have been so powerful among other public performances that it has extended into other social discussions from the first glance unrelated. Mode of political debate or public performance has become popular among most neutral topics discussed. This can be effectively traced back to the influence and impact the structure of political discourse has on the audience. The goal of political discourse requires the speaker to organize speech activity in such a way as to attract voters to their side, to inspire a sense of the correctness of their actions, to invite them to include in their plans and campaigns. With these goals in mind, the speaker must choose the most convincing tactic, which is reflected in the choice of certain communicative strategies. Due to these factors in the choice of communicative tactics and strategies in political discourse influenced by the contemporary scene, the conclusion can be drawn that it will be based on the binary semiotic opposition between inside and outside perspectives. To summarize, the opposition between binary perspectives inevitably leads to fragmentation and polarization. In this way, the contemporary audience's attention is drawn to important factors that must be taken into consideration when preparing for a public speech. Particularly, the rhetorician needs to take into account both socio-cultural context and study the audience's background to make sure their readiness to reciprocate with the orator's delivery.

Regarding the psychological aspect of public speaking, one can note that in such a socio-political climate the audience expects special demands to be met by the speaker, and the latter must justify their role of consuming the audience's attention. After all, in the contemporary

world, one of the most valuable pillars of capital is the time of any given individual, their subscription, and attention invested in the following. To receive full support from them the speaker requires to assert that their message is unique, their expertise of the subject is uniquely valuable and their role in the subject is the most important. However, from the start, the audience builds their expectations based on the speaker's reliability. Before the audience invests in a later stage of the speaker's message, the latter must justify it. In the process of delivery, first attention must be paid to raising the audience's levels of empathy, which can lead them to establish connections and sympathy regardless of their familiarity with the speaker or the subject. In this process, the speaker's communicative skills are tested against their agility to accommodate the content of the message to various groups of audiences. At the same time, not only the basic level of cultural context in speech is important, but also its rhetorical literacy. The choice of communicative strategy and speech tactics for effective delivery allows the speaker to reliably convey the meaning of what is said and achieve the planned effect of communication.

Although another set of skills has recently obtained priority in gaining the emotive appeal to convince the audience of the speaker's credibility, at least, superficially super fast. Even prior to mass media, the non-verbal aspect of performance was deemed important in presentation. The listeners must feel confident in the speaker's behavior, see calmness and dignity in their composition, hear firmness and determination in their voice. Such a performative aspect of presentation plays a more and more important role nowadays with the visual media platform's ability to amplify the effect of the input message many times superior to the media of the past.

Even the most rehearsed and scripted oral presentation requires an element of improvisation, fast thinking in the moment. Sometimes, the elements of non-scripted instances

are remembered and analyzed the most for the non-verbal clues on how to help the audience interpret the message. A substantial amount of detail in the research of contemporary speakers is dedicated to the discussion of body language, setting, non-verbal performance attributes in general. Even with a relatively simple structure of the speech quick ingenuity and long-term attention are required. The need to communicate a large portion of information in the conditions of oral presentation involves memorizing not only the speech text but also large arrays of textual references and delivery details, which can not all be stored in human memory alone. In addition, the semantics and linguistic characteristics of the words and expressions used in the speaker's text play a great role in the emotional aspect of the impact of public speaking. The basis of any contemporary public speaking is the feeling of public sentiment, as well as a good knowledge of the audience's background including socio-political leanings and preferences. The cultural aspect of speech preparation changes the emphasis from speech etiquette reserved for particular instances or groups to focus more and more on relatability with a more generic crowd which thanks to mass media is able to access and interpret the text without directly engaging with it at no particular time.

When controlling the environment is too difficult, and the audience gets misled, or even worse, the purpose is misinterpreted, far more often we see that the irrelevant information, the mistakes, and the highly ambiguous narratives gain more traction than necessary. Particularly relevant in the contemporary age, hate speech selects national, gender, or religious characteristics as a target and, capturing the space of the mass media, generates the most ridiculous social generalizations that are required to create the image of the enemy. There are many recipes for such hurtful rhetoric. A subtle substitution of concepts can occur when key words take on a

different meaning and a person involuntarily begins to think in other categories. More detailed

analyses and countermeasures specific to the speech discourse are found in the following

chapter's discussion.

James Baldwin utilized the power of rhetoric to challenge the status quo of racial

injustices, and discrimination present in the society of his time. He gained audience's attention

by convincingly debating these topics to become an influential African American writer and

social critic. The writer's rhetorical mastery has been profoundly noted in his essays and

speeches, such as "The Fire Next Time", "Notes of a Native Son," and "The American Dream."

Particularly individual characteristics that make Baldwin's works stand out are a blend of

personal narrative with a larger historical view together with social and moral commentary. To

combine all three aspects in a passionate but balanced text, he harnessed the power of rhetoric's

major appeals: pathos, ethos, and logos. To evoke emotional responses with his works was of

paramount importance to Baldwin's mission as a creator and an activist. His ability to convey

vivid descriptions of individual as well as collective suffering allowed him to elicit empathy

among his audience, both readers and listeners. Pathos in Baldwin is present and builds on high

contrasts:

> This means, in the case of an American Negro, born in that glittering republic, and the
> moment you are born, since you don't know any better, every stick and stone and every
> face is white. And since you have not yet seen a mirror, you suppose that you are, too. It
> comes as a great shock around the age of 5, or 6, or 7, to discover that the flag to which
> you have pledged allegiance, along with everybody else, has not pledged allegiance to
> you.[39]

[39] "Debate: Baldwin vs. Buckley," 1965-06-14, Film and Media Archive, Washington University
in St. Louis, Library of Congress, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the
Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC, accessed July 29, 2024,
http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-151-sn00z71m54.

His works are toned to balance out the peaks and the lows of the passionate delivery, only amplifying the audience's attention and guiding them along convincing arguments structured around the reference to the lived experience of Baldwin as a black man in America. It is evident from the details of the experience that Baldwin communicates further in the debate:

> This is being done, after all, not a hundred years ago, but in 1965, in a country which is blessed with what we call prosperity, a word we won't examine too closely; with a certain kind of social coherence, which calls itself a civilized nation, and which espouses the notion of the freedom of the world. And it is perfectly true from the point of view now simply of an American Negro.

Such apprehension of social context and delivery of its critical analysis has granted him not only popularity among many black people, who saw a connection through sharing the lived experience conveyed by Baldwin, but more substantial value, credibility among literary and academic cycles, publishers, and critics. With access to the academic debate space, Baldwin's critique moves to the next round of audience, and the topic he tackles is discussed on a state level. Here, his authentic experience and individual accounts of injustices are facing against moral authority in the sphere of ethics. Appealing to the ethos that resonates with audiences allows Baldwin to address the issue of systemic racism. Baldwin keeps the balance of all three appeals throughout the debate:

> It is a terrible thing for an entire people to surrender to the notion that one-ninth of its population is beneath them. And until that moment, until the moment comes when we, the Americans, we, the American people, are able to accept the fact, that I have to accept, for example, that my ancestors are both white and Black. That on that continent we are trying to forge a new identity for which we need each other and that I am not a ward of America. I am not an object of missionary charity. I am one of the people who built the country–until this moment there is scarcely any hope for the American dream, because the people who are denied participation in it, by their very presence, will wreck it. And if that happens it is a very grave moment for the West.[40]

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[40] "Debate: Baldwin vs. Buckley," 1965-06-14, Film and Media Archive, Washington University in St. Louis, Library of Congress, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the

As an artist who is clear and concise in his writing as well as in his speaking practices, he understands that for a topic as serious as social and racial injustice to be addressed seriously, it must be grounded in the power of facts. Baldwin's arguments are also grounded in logic and reason, despite the strong emotive tone in his various works. In his aim to dissect the origins of systematic racism, he analyzes the socio-political constructs of identity, and race, continuously grounding and substantiating his claims in historical context.

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Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC, accessed July 29, 2024,

http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-151-sn00z71m54.

Conclusion

The contemporary world is characterized by the quality of extreme polarization and a high degree of abstraction. In this world, the language with its multifaceted applications, especially due to the amplifying nature of the mass media, has gone through transformations to accommodate increasingly faster reality. As the world both real and digital has increased in the level of abstraction, there is more distance between one or more things. Therefore, the more we as humans amplify the abstraction, the harder it becomes for us to see each other as humans. Hence, it is not the abundance we need to manage or restrict, it is the abstraction. It is harder for us, human beings, to see each other as people, we appear as customers, shareholders, employees, online profiles, avatars, e-mail addresses, and expenses to be tracked. The human being has gone viral, and each generation is further and faster away from the world into which it was born.

The world has evolved as much as language does, at least, humanity's understanding of it, and judging by contemporary trends which are a more effective metric of measurement in a world with its fast-paced changing environment than traditions, rhetoric not only plays a vital role in the world and individual formation, but also, functions as the constant intermediary between the human decision making now, and consequently, the world of the future. Excluding rhetoric from the discussion of contemporary issues would be an impossible task, as it has deeply influenced many other concepts central to the human development of understanding its path and its progress in the world of symbols. From a philological point of view, contemporary mass media can be characterized by several properties: collective authorship in relation to interpretation, a unified system of ideological influence, rhetorical effectiveness of the text. Various media outlets reproduce the content of the reports provided by news agencies. Each mass

media outlet orients its messages to the needs of its audience, so the entire system of mass media creates a certain, not full image of reality, varying within the authorized limits. Mass information lives off advertising and sponsorship, or is listed on the state budget. The effectiveness of the mass media and, consequently, its financing is determined by the size and composition of the audience. To summarize, the advent of social media has revolutionized the landscape of rhetoric, which continues to change as we speak.

Traced in James Baldwin's life work, an undeniable interest in the rhetorical aspect of linguistics and its various roles in identity and culture formation, one notices how the force of rhetoric has evolved significantly. From the impassioned speeches, fiction, and nonfiction in the twentieth century to the dynamic and multifaceted communications prevalent in the social media era, cultural discourse continues to reflect how rhetorical practices transform society.

To acknowledge rhetoric as a part of communication, a feature that grounds human existence, in its complexity, one can not simply polarize their judgment of it in strictly moralistic terms of good or bad. Its moral or ethical applicability as it is would limit the discussion to a single point of view. Instead, the goal is to use rhetoric for comparative analysis. With the addition of rhetorical analysis to cultural studies and criticism, it will be possible to better understand and handle in a more democratic way the naturally appearing need to use persuasion as even the most homogenous communities reflect a certain degree of internal irreconcilable differences, as evidenced in history, literature, art, and as experienced first-hand, in the contemporary.

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Abstract

In this thesis I will inquire into the subject of rhetoric used in the discourse of social rights activism connecting the modernity of the 1950's and after, with the contemporary cultural context dominated by digital media technology to draw possible lines of complement and contrast. The major purpose of this thesis is to reflect on the textual and intertextual connections among the chosen rhetorical devices and themes that have been appealing to the audiences in the latter half of the twentieth century in contrast to the present moment, revealing in this comparative process the differences and changes that have taken place, and more importantly, which vectors of change will continue playing a key role in the formation of rhetoric in the future, perhaps shaping its value as an autonomous innovative interdisciplinary field. The purpose of this research is to argue that a combined intellectual, pragmatic and critical approach to operating rhetoric can 'deweaponise' it to a versatile composition tool of effective representation and empowerment, conscious decision-making and problem-solving, amplified by the potential of mass media technology and data literacy. Moreover, the thesis aims to enrich the seemingly insufficient supply of critical theory in regards to the contemporary pressing issues in relation to the spheres of media technology. Therefore, the minor purpose is to contribute to the task of critical social theory of the present which explores more positive opportunities for the freedom of speech and expression to be exercised in the contemporary digital society. From the past century in modernity, rhetoric will be represented by a profile of work, of among many talents, a writer and Civil Rights Movement leader, James Baldwin. The main focus of this thesis is to include the analysis of the profile of Baldwin's writing and public speaking and performance practices, with linguistic focus, e.g., syntactic-semantic and literary device

analysis, into the larger cultural analysis of contemporary state and forms of social activism

rhetoric. Furthermore, I will attempt to create a balanced framework of critical comparative

analysis to explore the connection between the form and the function of rhetoric in the

interaction with contemporary subjectivity in the context and its effects on identity formation and

individualization both on the individual and societal levels in relation to the changing conditions

of interpersonal communication.

Abstrakt

V této práci se budu zabývat tématem rétoriky používané v diskurzu aktivismu za sociální práva, která spojuje modernitu 50. let 20. století a po ní se současným kulturním kontextem, jemuž dominují technologie digitálních médií, abych nastínila možné linie komplimentu a kontrastu. Hlavním cílem této práce je zamyslet se nad textovými a intertextuálními souvislostmi mezi vybranými rétorickými prostředky a tématy, které byly v druhé polovině dvacátého století přitažlivé pro publikum v kontrastu se současností, a odhalit v tomto komparativním procesu rozdíly a změny, které se udály. A co je důležitější, které vektory změn budou i v budoucnu hrát klíčovou roli při formování rétoriky a možná budou utvářet její hodnotu jako autonomního inovativního interdisciplinárního oboru. Účelem tohoto výzkumu je ukázat, že kombinovaný intelektuální, pragmatický a kritický přístup k operační rétorice ji může "odzbrojit" na univerzální kompoziční nástroj efektivní reprezentace a zmocnění, vědomého rozhodování a řešení problémů, umocněný potenciálem masmediálních technologií a datové gramotnosti. Práce si navíc klade za cíl obohatit zdánlivě nedokonalou nabídku kritické teorie ve vztahu k současným palčivým otázkám ve vztahu k oblasti mediálních technologií. Vedlejším účelem je tedy přispět k úkolu kritické sociální teorie současnosti, která zkoumá pozitivnější možnosti uplatnění svobody slova a projevu v současné digitální společnosti. Z minulého století bude v modernitě rétorika zastoupena profilem díla, mezi mnoha talenty, spisovatele a vůdce hnutí za občanská práva Jamese Baldwina. Hlavním cílem této práce je zahrnout analýzu profilu Baldwinovy spisovatelské a veřejné řečnické a vystupovací praxe s lingvistickým zaměřením, např. syntakticko-sémantickou a literární analýzu, do širší kulturní analýzy současného státu a forem rétoriky sociálního aktivismu. Dále se pokusím vytvořit vyvážený rámec kritické

komparativní analýzy, abych prozkoumal souvislost mezi formou a funkcí rétoriky v interakci se

současnou subjektivitou v kontextu a její vliv na formování identity a individualizaci jak na

individuální, tak na společenské úrovni ve vztahu k měnícím se podmínkám mezilidské

komunikace.