

BOOK PROJECT: PROPOSAL

BOOK TITLE:

A Companion to African Rhetoric

NEED STATEMENT

African Rhetoric is gradually emerging as an important area of interest in the humanities and the social sciences. There are regional and continental organisations that have started promoting African Rhetoric not only as an academic discipline, but also as a social practice in politics and other aspects of social life. The African public sphere is as diverse as its rhetoric. The African Association for Rhetoric is taking the initiative to produce a fundamental reader or reference material in form of a compendium that will be used in teaching senior undergraduate and graduate students in African Rhetoric. The continuous neglect of a fundamental and pivotal publication to assist in teaching rhetoric, specifically, African rhetoric further emphasises the frustration encountered by scholars interested in teaching rhetoric, specifically, African Rhetoric. Designing a project of this magnitude certainly requires sensitivity to not only political, cultural, scholarly, methodological, scientific, economic, legal, medical, psychological, literary, social and deliberative applications, but also those relating to the material conditions of African peoples and Africans in the Diaspora.

This proposed publication is intended to serve as one of the fundamental reference material in African Rhetoric: hence, the title, *A Companion to African Rhetoric*. This Book Project has secured commitments from seasoned scholars, with an interest in African Rhetoric, to make contributions to an unprecedented compendium that hopefully will form the basis for scholarship and curriculum development in African Rhetoric. This volume will be divided into three broad parts: History of Rhetoric, relevant theories and methodologies and contextual/situational discussions on rhetoric on the continent having disciplinary *foci*. Altogether there will be around twenty five main chapters. The need for this publication has arisen following recent development in rhetoric and the coordination effort of some scholars who seek to promote rhetoric on the African continent. It is further premised on the idea that before meaningful advancement can be made there is need for a project that will lend clearer definition to the study of rhetoric on the African continent and give direction to rhetoric curriculum at higher institutions.

AIM

The main aim of this project is to embark on a multidisciplinary definition and consolidation of African Rhetoric for the purposes of heightened research and scholarship in African Rhetoric.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Produce a multidisciplinary companion to African Rhetoric
2. Involve as many scholars with an interest in African rhetoric with the hope of continuous engagement with African Rhetoric

3. Establish a basis for the study of African Rhetoric through this landmark publication and the importance of rhetoric in all aspects of society

CONTENTS OUTLINE

1) PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preface will be a short write up on the background to the project and the motivation. It will highlight the progress that scholars have made in growing developing the discipline on the continent and beyond. This section will also pay tribute to all the organisations and individuals who have been instrumental in the promotion of African Rhetoric and have lent support to related projects.

2) INTRODUCTION: AFRICAN RHETORIC

This chapter will define African Rhetoric and situate it broadly along with other propriety continental rhetoric (s). This chapter will establish the indigeneity of rhetoric on the continent. Its philosophy, practice, scholarship and performance. This chapter will not only situate African Rhetoric along other continental rhetoric (s) like classical, European, American and Chinese, but answer the question: what is African Rhetoric? This chapter will examine the function, types and historical periods in the evolution of African Rhetoric. The chapter will further look at the problematics of African Rhetoric and the parameters for 'doing' African Rhetoric. Finally, the chapter will harmonise the themes in different chapters in the volume and provide a general overview of chapters in the Companion.

3) RHETORIC OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND RHETORIC OF PRIVATISATION IN THE MEDIA OF AFRICA

Nyasha Mboti
University of Johannesburg

Abstract:

This chapter shows that media in Africa, in order to justify their continued existence, deploy rhetoric of two main kinds: rhetoric of public service, and rhetoric of privatisation. State owned public service broadcasters typically draw on the Reithian ideal of serving the broader public without fear, favour, or profit-seeking. Private media, on the other hand, draw on the ideal of the free market. However, lines often blur as state media often make money and private media claim to be serving the public good. I demonstrate that both the rhetoric of public service and the rhetoric of commerce fall far short of the ideal of i) being organic to Africa and ii) being Africa-friendly. The chapter outlines an agenda for the replacement of these two Eurocentric forms with an autochthonous, Africa-friendly media rhetoric.

4) AFRICAN ORAL TRADITION: A 21ST CENTURY PERSPECTIVE.

National Polytechnic of Namibia
Rewai Makamani
rmakamani@nust.na

Abstract:

African oral tradition embodies African knowledge systems that give direction and impetus to the life of African people. Historically, African oral tradition is often given as reflecting the resilience by Africans as they exploit their environment in order to survive as a collective. This perspective configures it as a tradition that connotes how Africans adapt to change in various spheres of life such as social, religious, economic and political change associated with the life of African people in various historical epochs. The engine behind African oral traditions is African rhetoric – rhetoric as is/was practiced by African people. In Africa the custodians of rhetoric were/are the elders. These are charged with the responsibility of transmitting African knowledge systems through generations by the word of mouth. In this chapter, it is argued that values such as Ubuntu, collectivism, morality, respect, kindness, love and benevolence, espoused by African oral traditions are still relevant in the 21st century hence the need to reinvent an interest in African rhetoric through various interventions anchored in African education delivery systems. The study thus seeks to argue a case of how education systems in Africa can be revitalised to incorporate African rhetoric as a strategy of inculcating Ubuntu driven values that helped and maintain social cohesion among people in the past. As viewed in this study, education systems in 21st century Africa need to be anchored by African oral tradition grounded in rhetoric. This would boost social cohesion and development on the continent.

5) RHETORIC, PHILOSOPHY AND THE HORIZONS OF AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE

Omedi Ochieng
Communication department
Denison University
Granville, OH 43023

Abstract:

Unlike the dominant strain of the North Atlantic intellectual tradition, African intellectual formations have not historically posited an opposition between philosophy and rhetoric. This chapter begins by articulating an account of how African rhetorical texts have constructed the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy. I then argue that African intellectual traditions, by demonstrating that rhetoric and philosophy are inextricably interanimated, offer capacious accounts of intellectual practices as ways of life.

6) YORUBA CHANTS AND CHANTING AS RHETORICAL DEVICES

Yomi Daramola, Femi Abiodun & Segun Titus
Email addresses: yomolu77@oauife.edu.ng; femoo@gmail.com; &
segungeneral@gmail.com

Department of Music
Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Abstract:

Chants and chanting among the Yoruba are primordial rhetorical devices. They existed not only as part of the culture but importantly and most often as culture determinants. Among the Yoruba, just like in many parts of Africa, chant is a 'performed speech' which is popularly referred to as 'heightened speech.' Many researches continue to confirm that the most popular public speaking device in Africa is music performance where musicians can express, impress and make comments in various exaggerated styles. There is however little or no studies investigating Yoruba chants as rhetorical devices. The focus of this chapter is to examine the Yoruba chants and chanting modes as they persuade and dissuade the performers and the audience into psychological awareness of information and experience induced by hypnosis (heightened suggestibility). As a non-literate society, this form of 'orature' among the Yoruba usually performs the job of orally presenting and representing the unwritten traditions of the people and preventing them from going into oblivion. Most of the cultural rejuvenations that happen among the people today were based on the oral memory and rhetorical data base of chants. The exchange of knowledge and sometimes, the transfer of it during the use of these rhetorical devices cannot be underestimated. Most often, the elements of the people's culture such as religion, music, psychology, economy, communalism and socialization are relived through them. This was argued within the social character theory that the practice of art is at one and the same time an essentially social practice. The contextual discussion of Yoruba chants as rhetorical devices showed that chanting in Yorubaland defines a rhetorical transition, reformation and transformation of Yoruba philosophy, social political system, economic status, moral and religious essence, judicial administration and power of agency. This chapter will analyse data that demonstrate evidence of rhetoric in Yoruba chants. It concludes that Yoruba chants (a creative art), and chanting (a performative art) possess rhetorical devices by which the soul, mind and spirit of the Yoruba people can be ordered, re-ordered and invoked to justify their thought, emotion and behaviour at a time.

7) AFRICAN RHETORIC AND LITERATURE: A STORY OF WORDS AND WAYS.

Aaron X. Smith
Temple University, USA

Abstract:

Africa, the continent of deified scribes, the first University and the invention of papyrus. Africa, the universal mother of arts and sciences. Africa, the land of Nommo (the spoken word) The African conceptualization of Nommo elevates the power and potential of the spoken word to the realm of transfiguration and the divine. Through an in-depth Afrocentric analysis of Rhetoric and African Literature I will endeavor to elucidate the multi-faceted relationships between African Rhetoric and Literature throughout history. Africa, as the mother of Literature and Rhetoric exists within a uniquely pioneering position in the history of communicative creativity. The ways in which literature and rhetoric transmit spiritual beliefs, historical narratives and African's

eternal connection to the ancestors, the universe and themselves will be interrogated throughout this section of the text. Some primary elements that will be discussed in this chapter include the history of the African Literary tradition, and the ways in which African conceptualizations and artistic perspectives influenced rhetorical traditions and literature throughout the world.

Beginning in classical Africa with a number of mighty highly advanced civilizations including the Dogon, Nubia, Songhay, Mali and Egypt, this chapter will walk through the world's richest historiography of words and writings. Special attention shall be paid to notable rhetoricians and writers including Djehuti, Balla Fasséké, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and others. Details regarding the developments of these African mediums of expression will be complimented and contrasted with a look into how African traditions originate from a cultural location, which often differs greatly from the Eurocentric conceptualizations of rhetoric and Literature. One of the primary distinctions that will be manifested within this work is the historical African connections between; literature and life, rhetoric and righteousness. The tradition of utilizing stories as teaching tools, conveying lessons of morality, cultural heritage, ancestral veneration, universal balance and creation has been a cornerstone of African literature and rhetoric for countless generations.

This rhetorical, literary historical, cultural analysis will walk the reader through text and time, providing informative and inspiring African examples of what occurs when art moves beyond imitating life and instead directs life.

8) THE TRANSNATIONAL ARCHIVE WOMEN LEADERS: A UNIQUE RHETORICAL PROBLEM

Tarez Samra Graban
Associate Professor, Florida State University, U.S.A.
Faculty Research Fellow, UNISA, R.S.A.

Abstract:

This chapter extends a common challenge in transnational archival work toward rhetorical theory building, in order to offer one explanation for why it can be challenging to write (or rewrite) the rhetorical legacies of African women leaders in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Tripp (2003) has argued that sub-Saharan African women defy easy explanation regarding how they mobilise politically, while Gunde (2015) has argued that a kind of mediated misogyny determines how long they remain politically active. Such misogyny toward African women undoubtedly is rooted in cultural and political causes, but this argues that misogyny is also archival, fueled by the presence or absence of memorial spaces that have been constructed or erased through transnational circulation. The transnational archival challenge is a dualistic one—*how to remember accurately without erasing the methods and motives by which historians remember*—and it creates a unique rhetorical problem. For example, Cooper demonstrates how the historical erasure of a West African archive occurred as a result of that archive's 'transmission' through imperfect individual and communal powers of recollection (2010: 258). Duarte and Belarde-Lewis outline several challenges in labeling the cultural materials of indigenous archives, ultimately arguing that indigenous cataloguing can be considered a kind of decolonised historical work if it is done well (2015, p. 678). And Burton describes the importance of bringing archival logic—that is, arguments about 'how archives are created, drawn upon, and experienced by those who

use them' (2005: 6)—to bear on the writing of transnational cultural histories. Because the transnational archive often is not indigenous, rhetorical sovereignty—or, the question of who the archive ultimately represents—becomes secondary to rhetorical agility—or, the question of how best to analyze the memorialisation of African women leaders' rhetorical practices and philosophies, and how to identify the various influences on their memorialisation. In response, this chapter makes two arguments about the uniqueness of this rhetorical problem: (1) firstly, some readers' ability or inability to historicise African women's leadership stems, in part, from the ontology of a transnational archive that is neither wholly bound to Eurocentric postcolonialism nor fully accepting of Africanist ideologies; and (2) secondly, accepting the transnational archive as a liminal ideological space for African women leaders is essential for developing rhetorical analytic methods that make it possible, not only to historicise African women's performances in these leadership roles but also to embrace the idea that they may rhetorically reinvent these roles as they occupy them.

9) CLASSICAL RHETORICAL ETHICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN RHETORIC

Segun Ige
Howard University

Abstract:

This chapter draws on the seven identifiable ethical positions articulated by seven major Greek and Roman rhetoricians. The questions have been asked severally about orator's morality and for most receivers of the rhetorical articulations, the orator's ethical positions are not very clear. Knowing these positions for every student of rhetoric is particularly more critical to rhetorical education when ethical positions are becoming very blurred in public affairs. Classical Rhetoric has informed how African practice rhetoric, and for the most shaped even our conception of rhetoric. This chapter will also look at other ethical standards from different African culture to counterbalance the classical codes received through the works of ancient orators like, Protagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, Quintilian, and St Augustine. In this chapter, I shall also look at the public ethics based on the concept of *ubuntu* (South Africa) and *Iwapele* (Yoruba, Nigeria) and the Egyptian concept of *Maat*.

10) THE CONSTRAINT OF A RHETORICAL INVENTION: KWAME NKRUMAH AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

E. Opoku Mensah (PhD)
Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies
University of Cape Coast
Ghana
eric.opokumensah@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract:

The conceptualisation, formation and birth of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was arguably through the rhetorical invention of *Osagyefo* Dr Kwame Nkrumah within

a complex political context. The OAU was formed on the 25th of May 1963 at a Conference of Independent African Heads of State at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. On the eve of the formation of the OAU, Kwame Nkrumah delivered a speech at this conference. The analysis of this speech is the central focus of this chapter. What was the situation within which Nkrumah's rhetoric was set? What was the object of the speech, and, did it find space within the uncertain discourse of African unity at the time? Did the speech address the composite audience and what was their response? I contend that the success of Nkrumah's invention at Addis Ababa was largely hindered by key constraints which were inherent in the rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968). These constraints were born out of political developments which occurred before the OAU Conference. Nkrumah's failure to adequately address these constraints before and at Addis Ababa allowed them to finally eclipse the effectiveness of his rhetorical invention.

11) RHETORIC AND STATECRAFT: INSIGHT INTO FORMER NAMIBIAN PRESIDENT HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBAMBA'S SELECTED INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION SPEECHES DELIVERED DURING HIS TENURE OF OFFICE (2005-2015)

Jairos Kangira, PhD
University of Namibia

Abstract:

The flourishing democracy in the Republic of Namibia qualifies the country to be dubbed an 'Athens of Africa.' As a young nation that attained independence in 1990 after bitter years of war against white supremacist policies instituted first by German colonialism and second by South Africa apartheid, Namibia has become a beacon of hope, not only for its citizens, but also for the foreigners who have taken the country as a haven from the woes in their countries. The cosmopolitan nature of the foreigners' population attests to this. The flourishing democracy in this Southern African country is attributed to free and fair elections and the existence of the rule of law as opposed to the violation of basic human rights and dictatorship abound in many Africa states. This paper attempts to show the nexus between Pohamba's rhetorical presidency and his statecraft from 2005 when he took reigns as the Second President of the Republic of Namibia to the end of his term in 2015. Specific to this paper is the analysis of selected independence celebration speeches delivered by Pohamba during the stated period of his Presidency. In this analysis I will show how Pohamba used the speech genre in nation building. In these addresses, Pohamba underscored the democratic values that promoted peace, stability, unity, patriotism and reconciliation in a country that was ravaged by colonialism and apartheid for many decades. For upholding democratic values during his tenure of office, Pohamba became the 2014 Ibrahim Mo Laureate for Achievement in African Leadership.

I have lived in Namibia for the past ten years now and what interests me as a scholar in rhetoric is the democracy that the country enjoys as a result of an open political system and culture that is enshrined in the Constitution of this young African nation. What is more interesting to note is the way the ruling SWAPO Party Government has implemented the Constitution that gives all citizens the right to freely support political parties of their own on choice. In addition, I have observed the separation of

powers of the Judiciary and the State. In other words, the Government upholds the rule of law. The citizens enjoy an unrestricted and uncontrolled public sphere.

12) GRAPHOLOGICAL STRATEGIZING AS SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS OF LINGUISTIC HETEROGENEITY: TRANSLATABILITY AND ORALITY IN WRITTEN POETIC DISCOURSE OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION

Professor Mabel Osakwe
Department of English and Literary Studies,
Delta State University, Abraka. NIGERIA

Abstract:

This paper combines history and disciplinary application of rhetoric. It identifies some linguistic and paralinguistic problems amounting to rhetorical problems stemming from Africa's multilingual history, and shows how textual designing (or graphology) strategies have been adopted and adapted through poetry of written English expression to tackle them. The problems of translatability and predominance of oral expression are among the many problems stemming from expressing African literary forms in non African languages. Tackling these problems becomes more difficult as the mode of discourse shifts from spoken to written and a non- linguistically homogenous audience requiring translation even for untranslatable items. Textual visual designs examined here as possible solution strategies include: clearly demarcated graphic units such as spacing, stanza organization, lineation, capitalization, punctuation, print type and size. Some meaning-bearing potentials and stylistic significance of graphology are also identified and analyzed along with poets' space management and presentation of graphic substance. Poems examined reveal rather low level of conformity with conventional graphological categories in English language usages. Our analysis shows that their graphology is experimental; deliberately adopted and adapted in tackling problems such as; written-but-emerging-from-oral-form, translating to conserve yet conveying meaning/message. The graphological designs then are strategies for enhancing communication and conveying iconic, indexical, or symbolic meaning while overtly cushioning lexical items through the same means.

13) THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFRICA IN AU DECLARATIONS

Segun Ige
Howard University

Abstract:

Declarations are sites of constructions of social and political realities. These realities often occur on two levels based on the development and moral sensibilities of the leaders. Since the inception of the Organisation of African Unity, which later metamorphosed into African Union in 2002. This supra-national organisation has been the epicentre of activities in the construction of a new Africa. These constructions can tentatively be seen on two level, the intended and the actualised realities. These realities were mediated by the organisation's annual decisions and declarations made at the General Assembly of Africa's Heads of State. The 'actual' Africa cannot be said to fully

reflect the ‘intended’ African ‘composed’ in the declarations. This paper will examine the ‘declarative Africa’ in relation to Mckeon conception of rhetoric as an ‘architectonic productive art.’ The question should be asked: how can the African best use rhetoric in her policy making processes to ensure that the realities that are created in different countries best reflect the intentions of the General Assembly based on the facts that were available to the experts in generating the declarations? Analyses will range from Addresses by liberation struggle fighters on the continent to the Assembly to some major epidemics and crises and the attendant responses first by the organisations and then by some countries.

14) TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN RHETORIC: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL SCHOLARSHIP IN AFRICA

Yunana Ahmed
Department of English
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Gombe State University
yunanaa@mtu.edu

Abstract:

In the first issue of *African Journal of Rhetoric*, Ige (2009) raised fundamental questions on whether African rhetoric exists, and if it does, what traditional practices we can draw upon to discover what defines it. Years after, African rhetorical scholars are still grappling with related problems as how to characterize such a concept as ‘African Rhetoric,’ and determining how to critically approach African rhetorical study rather than simply justifying the identified need to conduct studies on African rhetoric. The problem becomes bigger when we understand that rhetoric is a term that whenever it is mentioned, automatically evokes accompanying Western ideologies that could affect its theorization from other cultures (Lyons, 2015). This is why perhaps Mao (2013) enjoins us not to ask “what is rhetoric” but rather seek to understand “what ... we do in rhetoric and how do we do it ... for the ‘what is’ question gestures toward, if not already predetermines, the existence of reality that is objective or free of social, cultural, and linguistic incongruities” (215). In search for ways to study and understand African rhetoric, this paper critically examines studies on African rhetorical traditions to argue that given Africa’s precolonial, colonial and postcolonial experiences, focus should not merely be directed towards the continent’s past alone, nor on the postcolonial context only; rather, there ought to be a dialectical relationship between the past and the postcolonial conditions, especially focusing on the different ways rhetoric has been employed in the new nation-states in a way that begins to talk back to the theories from the canon. This type of research must be data driven given that the concern is not to find answers to what rhetoric is, but to understanding its diverse functionalities and the various forms it takes within Africa’s cultural and social milieu.

15) PERFORMATIVITY, CONNECTIVITY OR THE LACK THEREOF IN AFRICAN PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC: NIGERIA’S PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI AS A CASE STUDY

Aliyu Yakubu Abdulkadir

Department of English
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Gombe State University, Gombe
aliyuabdul1@gmail.com

Abstract:

In *The African Origins of Rhetoric* (2009), Cecil Blake outlines the significant contributions that Africans have made to the origin and development of rhetoric which often go unacknowledged in contemporary discourses of the field, largely owing to the assumptions that the non-orthographic nature of African traditional rhetoric means it is either *unrhetorical* or inferior to Western rhetoric. The reality however, is that disparity lies in moral conceptions, worldview, and functionality. An ensuing problem is that African political leaders are failing to take cognizance of the innate performativity of the speechmaking process in Africa, leaning toward the contemporary Western scripted speech presented in a fixed, sitting position in front of a television camera. The consequences range from a bland output to a total lack of connection with the audience, even where information successfully passes. In some of his most recent speeches, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has exhibited these traits. In this paper, I analyze two speeches by the President: his address to Nigeria upon his return from a two-month medical vacation in London, and his Independence Day (2007) address. The paper argues that in both speeches, the President loses connection with his audience because rather than perform his speeches, he *delivered* them. The speech delivery process with its innate reliance on the written text meant something of the individuality and mien of the speechmaker in this case the President, is lost, along with it his meaning. Rather than hear *him* the audience hears his speechwriter. For Africa's political leaders to truly connect with their subjects, there is an urgent need to re-Africanize the speechmaking process through restoring the anthropological characteristics that worked so well for our ancestors.

16) A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO CALYPSO COMPOSITION: CARNIVAL AND MEMORY

Dr. Kela Nnarka Francis is a graduate of Howard University.
University of Trinidad and Tobago
rastacastro@gmail.com kela.francis@u.tt.edu

Abstract:

The simplest definition of calypso is that it is the folk ballad of Trinidad and Tobago (and by now many of the English-speaking Caribbean countries). It is a blending of many folk forms and influences: African rhythmic patterns, European instruments, and East Indian melodies. What is not so simple, however, is the definition of a *good* calypso. This is due, in no small part, to a lack of objective terms or criteria. This is particularly troublesome when adjudicating calypsos. Without concrete and teachable criteria, judges rely on emotional or personal responses to determine a calypso's 'goodness.' Thus, a calypso may be well constructed, well performed, and well received by the audience, but ranked low by judges because of bias or sentiment. While developing a standardized pedagogy for calypso composition will not eliminate the role of subjectivity in assessing calypsos, such a pedagogy will provide tools to balance

personal reaction with objective assessment of a calypso. Borrowing from essay composition and literary criticism pedagogies, this project proposes objective criteria for determining a good calypso including lyrical content, musicality, and performance/delivery. This new approach is explained further using audio-visual examples of each main characteristic/criterion, and the practical application of the approach through a prototypical workshop.

17) CONCEPTUALISING 'FACE' AS FUNCTION OF IDENTITY: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Busayo Ige
University of Cape Town

Abstract:

The notion of 'self' drawn on by Brown and Levinson has connotations of stability and individualism, which are less appropriate to a complex African context which is in considerable flux. The notion of 'identity', in contrast, can be conceptualised as constantly emerging from the discourses employed in interactions; and it can be conceptualised in terms of both individuals and groups. This paper examines the paradox of power and solidarity as tools of face work that is drawn on to define and defend the preferred identities people in Africa seek to construct. By focusing on instances of face work in intercultural communication in South Africa, the study identifies some individual and group identities that are being constructed or reconstructed through the use of communicative strategies that signals who profess. Placing 'face' in juxtaposition with identity/ identities allowed me to perceive and analyse a core function of face in the multicultural and multilingual African context under, a rhetorical function which has received little attention to date.

18) FROM A RUGBY TURF TO A FESTIVE DOME: PRAISE POETRY AS A RHETORIC STRATAGEM IN POLITICAL DOMAIN

Stanley Madonsela
University of South Africa
South Africa

Abstract:

African culture has long been steeped in the oral tradition, which has provided communities and societies with various forms of transmission and a means of conserving their history, values, and other significant shared knowledge and experience. Oral traditions have helped societies to shape their understanding of their world and to communicate the important aspects of their culture. Such traditions are highly structured and are passed down from generation to generation, yet they evolve constantly. One of the important African oral traditional literary form is praise poetry. This chapter explores the relevance of praise poetry in African culture and argues that modern poets still have an important role to play in instilling values and cultural knowledge and teaching important lessons to both leaders and community members, especially in political domain. As a form of oral documentation, praise poetry has formed the subject of African literary studies dating back to the 19th century. Understanding praise poetry and its importance to societies requires the comprehension of not just one aspect of it,

but of the genre in its totality. Praise poetry employs different forms and conventions that seem to suggest a different interpretation of words and to elicit poignant responses. The focus here is on how Africans are using this rhetoric device in political domain to express their discomfort certain political issues.

19) RHETORIC AND RELIGION IN AFRICA: AN EXPRESSION OF LANGUAGE, SPIRITUALITY AND INCARNATIONAL DISCOURSE

Rufus Olufemi Adebayo
Department of Media, Language, and Communication
Durban University of Technology,
Durban, South Africa
rufusa@dut.ac.za / femolapes@yahoo.com
+27 74 200 7979 / +27 31 373 6422

Abstract:

This chapter, however, presents a model based on these dimensions of relationships between rhetoric and religion in Africa. African preacher's discourse, such as speaking in tongue, the rhetoricity and spirituality of the preacher's words, language, and of course the deployment of Aristotelian rhetorical appeals (*ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*) by the preachers, are investigated to see how religious rhetoric could be redefined and utilized to facilitate understanding of a set of rhetorical experiences, especially in the fields of communication, language, rhetoric and religious studies. The chapter anticipates that rhetoric for African religion is a model of epistemology developed from incarnational discourses and produced by the religious preachers. The author proposes a model for a more pronounced sacred incarnational discourse.

20) FROM BALLADS TO BATTLE RAPS: THE ORIGINS OF THE BADMAN IN HIP-HOP ORATURE

Dennis Winston
Department of English
Howard University

Abstract:

For nearly a half century, young black street poets from all over the United States have performed, modified, and reinvented the traditional badman figure. The badman trope is a central character in African American orature and first appears in the black oral tradition in the late-nineteenth century. He reemerges in hip-hop only slightly changed from his folk origins. Much like the trope's originators, rap artists conjure the historic figure of the badman to either vaunt about their lyrical prowess, ridicule their competitors, recount their sexual escapades, or threaten their adversaries with violence and sometimes death. Through contemporary boasts and toasts, hip-hop has given the badman figure a vast and completely unprecedented notoriety. This essay examines the relationship between early illustrations of the badman figure, and its various incarnations in rap music in order to highlight hip-hop orature as a critical site for intellectual inquiry in the study of the African American oral tradition.

21) RHETORICAL ARTIFACTS OF AN ANCIENT AFRICA

Kermit Campbell
Colgate University, USA

Abstract:

A mere cursory glance at the collections of African orature by Harold Courlander, Ruth Finnegan, and Roger Abrahams reveals a vast array of oral forms of expression on the African continent. From prose narratives to proverbs to elegiac and lyric poetry, Africa is rife with rhetorical forms and performances. While these rhetorical forms in toto constitute what many observers call the African oral tradition, this oral tradition would be severely limited without Africa's grand tradition of epic poetry, especially the earliest epics representing the empires of Ghana (Wagadu), Mali, and Songhai. Each of these epic narratives renders an account of Africa's glorious past, a past in which legendary heroes fought valiantly for good and for what the people of the day deemed honorable. An in-depth analysis of these narratives, these discursive artifacts will demonstrate something quite unique among epics the world over, that is, the art or craft of what D.T. Niane refers to as the African orator, the *djeli* (Bambara) or *griot* (French) who is invested with the power of the spoken word.

22) AFRICAN RHETORIC AS AN EMERGENT SUBFIELD: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND REFLECTIONS ON CRITICAL ISSUES

Nancy Henaku
Doctoral Candidate
Rhetoric, Theory and Culture
Department of Humanities
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI.
nhenaku@mtu.edu

Ruby Pappoe
Doctoral Student
English Department
University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas
rpappoe@miners.utep.edu

Abstract:

Responding to calls for diversity in rhetorical scholarship (Lipson and Binkley, 2004; Mao, 2014) and the need to expand and rethink research on African rhetoric, this chapter reviews extant literature on African rhetoric as a basis for reflecting on critical issues that scholars and students of African rhetoric must engage with if we are to make significant contributions towards a comprehensive understanding of African communicative practices as well as enrich and interrogate mainstream rhetorical scholarship. Informed by the Akan concept of the *sankofa*, which underscores the

interconnection between the past and the present, but with expectations for the future, we argue that it is important to look back at what has been already done— i.e the state of scholarship in the area— so we can learn and adequately forge ahead for future research in the field. The review considers possibilities of earlier and present work while calling for reflections on the critical issues that these research raise as far as topics, contexts, methodological and theoretical perspectives are concerned. These observations would also enable us to speculate about the future of African rhetoric. We will collect published papers from the African Journal of Rhetoric as well as major rhetoric journals such as Quarterly Journal of Speech and Rhetoric Society Quarterly. Our practices for this critical review are informed by the assumption that African rhetoric, which is still being defined, may defy disciplinary boundaries. Consequently, we include research in allied fields such as linguistics (e.g. Yankah, 1995 & 2012; Agyekum, 2004) and orature (e.g. Finnegan, 1970). We also consider the question of rhetorical education and the problem of archive and the affordances and constraints they provide for future advancements of the field. The reflections will be imbued with suggestions for strengthening how we research African rhetoric and calls for considering the complex histories and contexts of African rhetorics beyond the modes of inquiry offered by mainstream rhetorical scholarship. Ultimately, this review will provide the overarching contexts for understanding the nature of African rhetoric— a discussion that, we believe, is crucial for a companion to African Rhetoric.

References

- Agyekum, K (2004). "Aspects of Persuasion in Akan Communication." *Legon Journal of Humanities*. 16, 1-26
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral literature in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lipson, C., & Binkley, R. A. (Eds.). (2004) *Rhetoric before and beyond the Greeks*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Mao, L. (2014). "Thinking beyond Aristotle: The turn to how in comparative rhetoric." *PMLA*, 129(3), 448-455.
- Yankah, K. (2012). *The Proverb in the Context of Akan Rhetoric: a theory of proverb praxis*. New York: Diasporic Africa Press.
- Yankah, K. (1995). *Speaking for the chief: Okyeame and the politics of Akan royal oratory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS (BIOS)

Readership: Since it is intended to serve as a reference material, this volume will appeal mostly to University Libraries across the globe, rhetorical scholars in Africa and North America and Europe, and other institutions whose operations relate to rhetoric, and general readership.

Corresponding editor: Dr Segun Ige: ige.segun@gmail.com

This Book Project is an initiative of the African Association for Rhetoric (AAR).