

Contemporary Rhetorical Theories Współczesne teorie retoryczne

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SPRAWOZDANIE/REPORT

KACPER ANDRYCHOWSKI

UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW, POLAND
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5084-4453>
kandrychowski@uw.edu.pl

MARTA KOBYLSKA

UNIVERSITY OF RZESZÓW, POLAND
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6212-7873>
mkobylska@ur.edu.pl

CRISTINA RAMÍREZ

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, US
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4079-4007>
cristinaramirez@arizona.edu

JOSÉ LUIS QUINTERO RAMÍREZ

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, US
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9328-5372>
josequinteror@gmail.com

ANA VLAH

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, NETHERLANDS
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6829-6640>
a.vlah@uu.nl

**Sprawozdanie/Report: The 3rd International Rhetoric Workshop
(September 22-26, 2021), El Colegio de San Luís, San Luís Potosí, Mexico**

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Sprawozdanie/Report: The 3rd International Rhetoric Workshop (September 22-26, 2021), El Colegio de San Luís, San Luís Potosí, Mexico

The 3rd International Rhetoric Workshop (IRW), the latest iteration of this biannual workshop, was held online from September 22nd to the 26th in collaboration with El Colegio de San Luís, San Luís Potosí, Mexico. The IRW is a workshop for emerging scholars and PhD students in rhetoric. The concept of the IRW was born in 2015 and later developed by four scholars from Sweden and the USA: Erik Bengtson, Frida Buhre (both from Uppsala University), David Miguel Molina (Northwestern University) and Robert Topinka (University of Sussex). Since 2015 the IRW has cooperated with and received the endorsement from rhetorical organizations worldwide, including RSE (Rhetoric Society of Europe) and RSA (Rhetoric Society of America).

This year, the IRW theme was *Interdisciplinarity, Internationality, and Rhetoric*. It considered the many ways that our contemporary and established traditions of rhetorical theory and criticism inform global flows of meaning-making. In choosing this theme, our goal was to emphasize how the study of rhetoric intersects studies of interdisciplinarity and internationality. The 2021 edition's theme highlighted

the role of rhetorical studies in the practice of rhetoric in different communities. During the workshop we explored what identity-positions emerge from transnational flows of bodies, beliefs, and communication practices. We considered how race, ethnicity, and gender are rhetorically deployed as a political means to securing hegemonic conditions or undermining democratic processes. Some questions addressed: What rhetorical practices and processes confront, complicate, or help to sustain democratic cultures within an increasingly globalized world? How does rhetoric's transnational intellectual history cross borders? How can the work of translation contribute to the study of rhetoric across national borders? How do colonial legacies influence or complicate rhetorical conceptions of global citizenship and the idea of a global community? These questions were deliberately transnational, intersectional, global, and critical of our communities in order to push the boundaries of knowledge making.

The workshop offers young scholars in the global rhetoric community an opportunity to engage in each other's work and to connect with internationally renowned scholars. Held over three days, the IRW consists of (a) workshops in which participants review and discuss drafts of research with faculty; (b) a keynote address each day from internationally renowned scholars; and (c) faculty led roundtables engaging with topics relevant to the participants' research. Differing from other conferences in rhetoric, the IRW aims to break-down international disciplinary barriers to produce new communities of scholarship to address contemporary challenges. The IRW is especially interested in creating academic spaces where the voice of non-western scholars can be highlighted to actively resist the historic privilege of western academia. Finding the right institution to collaborate and hold the next IRW was of utmost importance. The organizing team sought a rich research and scholarly institution in Latin America that could provide connections to other institutions in the hemispheric region. The IRW mission holds to an inclusive and vibrant connection with scholars from around the world, and the IRW saw Latin America as a geographic location that meets the criteria for expansion of scholarly viewpoints. Further, having the workshop in Latin America also answered the call of many rhetorical scholars that argue for listening to voices of the southern hemisphere and of emerging democracies. The IRW settled on Mexico because it met these qualifications. The task now turned to finding an institution that could support the IRW in their work.

Prof. Cristina D. Ramírez (University of Arizona) agreed to work as an organizing member of the IRW and quickly began the process of putting the IRW in touch with El Colegio de San Luís (COLSAN). COLSAN is located in San Luís Potosí, Mexico and is one of the premier research colleges, conferring both masters and

doctoral degrees a variety of social sciences and humanities studies. COLSAN is a “college” and is distinguished from the Mexican University system. COLSAN is connected to the Mexican federal research system, National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT). CONACTY is responsible for researching and establishing public policy in humanities, sciences and technology, and COLSAN is one of the twenty-six institutions that drives research innovation in Mexico. With this connection, the IRW connected with researchers, for example, at Universidad Autónoma de México in Mexico City.

COLSAN does not have a rhetorical studies program, which is true of most all institutions in Mexico. Rhetoric flourishes; however, in Latin America through national associations, such as the Asociación Mexicana de Retórica (Mexican Association of Rhetoric). During the IRW roundtables and working sessions, COLSAN and its research professors were able to learn about rhetoric as a theoretical and research lens.

In the IRW 2021 more than 30 participants came from eight world countries across four continents: USA and Mexico (North America); Belgium, Poland, Israel, and Croatia (Europe); Philippines (Asia); and Ghana (Africa). They were proficient in either English or Spanish language. However, it is important to note that hosting the workshop in a Spanish speaking country attracted those who had at least basic knowledge of both languages, interest in translation, interpretation, and cultural conversations. Most of the participants were PhD candidates and students, and young scholars: lecturers and part-time lecturers, independent and post-doctoral researchers, teaching assistants and instructors, assistant professors and *profesores investigadores* (research professors).

Before the main event, the organizers and participants met online for informal welcome drinks while they watched a presentation from the COLSAN representatives and a documentary film “People of Earth and Clouds” directed by Matteo R. Morales who explores the role of wind music bands in indigenous communities of Oaxaca, Mexico.

The IRW 2021 opened with two keynotes. In “The Rhetorics of Translation: A Feminist Method for Inquiry, Recovery, and Theoretical Application,” Prof. Ramírez stressed the importance of translation for rhetoric and proved that “rhetorics of translation” provide a way to investigate rhetorical texts that were written in a different language; in “Queer Rhetorics of Care in Neoliberal Capitalism,” Prof. Dana Cloud, an independent scholar, reviewed the feminist and socialist accounts of care in capitalism with an emphasis on their critique of capitalism’s privatization of social responsibility. During the second day, in “Rhetoric as a Pedagogical Model in the Field of Professions,” Prof. Gerardo Ramírez Vidal from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México covered various applications of rhetoric from

ancient to present times and the reflection of the rhetorical teachings and their purpose. In “Notes Toward a New Patriotism: Ethico-political Resubjectivation and The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” Prof. Barbara Biesecker from the University of Georgia spoke about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a unique commemorative WWII text with its own rhetorical function to fulfil. On the last day, in “Starting Boundary Work: Rhetoric and Beyond,” Prof. Maria Załęska from the University of Warsaw discussed a typology of ways in which rhetoric and other disciplines may be integrated.

At the core of the IRW 2021 were workshop pods during which participant continued developing their work, reflecting on how their projects had changed since meeting in June. The pods were conducted by the invited keynotes and two additional faculties, Igor Ž. Žagar, a professor of Rhetoric and Argumentation at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia and Communication Professor Robert Westerfelhaus from the College of Charleston.

Each day the IRW 2021 ended with roundtable discussions on issues regarding grant writing, job markets, publishing opportunities, rhetorical practice, and the future of the field of rhetoric. A space was also offered for social and cultural exchange in which the participants had a chance to discover the cuisine of San Luís Potosí and visit (virtually) a museum dedicated to the British-born Mexican artist and painter, Leonora Carrington.

The IRW, currently a non-formal organization, will continue to organize and host these events. We hope to create opportunities for PhD students and young scholars of rhetoric and related disciplines, regardless of their country of origin, work placements or socio-economic status, to share knowledge and experience with international peers, and to learn methods and findings from world-class researchers in this field. Although meeting in person is always preferred, keeping an online option (or a hybrid) extends the chance to reach broader audiences. Everyone interested in helping to achieve that mission, participating as a faculty or student, is invited to become a constituent part of future successful IRW events.