

Retoryka granic Rhetoric of the Borders

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Rhetoric of the borders – a foreword

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Rhetoric of the borders – a foreword

“Borders” are among the fundamental concepts structuring human experience. They delineate identity, determine belonging, and mark the division between the familiar and the foreign. In social, political, and cultural discourses, borders function both as lines of separation and as points of contact. Rhetoric, as the art of persuasion, has the capacity to define and safeguard borders, but also to traverse and dissolve them. For scholars across disciplines, rhetoric provides tools for uncovering, analyzing, and describing borders in diverse discursive contexts – political, personal, and artistic.

This issue of *Res Rhetorica* has been conceived as a space for reflecting on the multidimensionality of borders – geographical, cultural, social, ideological, as well as metaphorical and digital. The collected articles demonstrate how borders are constructed, represented, and contested in communicative and media practices. The theme has been developed in collaboration with the Erasmus+ project *MigraMedia*, which focuses on the interrelations between migration, media, and culture. The project integrates academic research, pedagogical practice, and creative activity in order to better understand narratives of migration in Europe and beyond, as well as their impact on the social perception of borders and diversity. The American themes, which feature prominently in this issue, emerge from discussions during the international conference *Media in America. America in Media*, held for the fifth time on March 27–28, 2025, under the patronage of the Polish Rhetoric Society.

The problem of borders becomes especially pressing in contexts of their violation, fragility, or enforced protection, as well as in situations when they serve to divide and foster isolation. For this reason, we consider the topic particularly

timely. Borders may also be the result of conflict, which makes this issue of *Res Rhetorica* a natural continuation of the concerns addressed in issue 2 (2025). The volume brings together eight articles dedicated to the central theme, as well as a rich *Varia* section presenting a broad spectrum of rhetorical research. The authors reflect on diverse domains: from analyses of political and social discourse, through methodological perspectives to rhetorical approaches to cultural, artistic, and media practices. The issue is further complemented by a report from a scholarly event integrating the rhetorical community and two reviews of recent publications, one of them co-authored by the members of the Polish Rhetoric Society.

The thematic section opens with James Rushing Daniel (*Border trouble: capitalism, preventative counter-reform, and the immigration rhetoric of the U.S. Democratic Party*), who examines the Democratic Party's rhetoric on immigration, pointing to the manifestations of fascist discourse within the framework of liberal democracy. The author demonstrates how borders – both physical and rhetorical – become intersections of ideology, economic policy, and national identity.

In a similar vein, Alma Vančura (*Walls, borders, and the rhetoric of fear: A longitudinal study of Trump's campaign addresses*) investigates Donald Trump's speeches, where the figure of the "wall" and the "us versus them" narrative shape a rhetoric of fear and exclusion. Her analysis reveals the mechanisms of national identity formation and social mobilization in the context of migration crises.

The theme of cultural borders and memory is developed by Lisa Källström (*Gáttehis gáddi – strandless shores: Translation as witnessing in the Sámi novel "Far inte till havet"*), who interprets Elin Anna Labby's work as testimony to colonial violence. Källström underscores the role of Sámi Indigenous literature and its translation as rhetorical practices of salvaging marginalized voices, while borders manifest themselves in the realms of language and ecology.

Three further contributions turn to audiovisual media. Betül Ateşci Koçak (*Fractured borders and politics of resistance: post-9/11 through Rabiye Kurnaz vs. George W. Bush*) analyzes a film that portrays how, in the aftermath of September 11, borders became instruments of control, but also sites of resistance to dominant discourses of power. Ahmet İpşirli (*Digital portrayals of migration to America: a study of Peter Santenello's YouTube channel*) examines the *Border series*, arguing that digital media create a new "third space" for negotiating roles among migrants, guards, and audiences. Iwona Grodź (*"Liberating the eye from confusion": the rhetoric of space, identity, and migration in the films of Wim Wenders*) explores how the German director's cinema interprets geographical and cultural borders, envisioning otherness as an opportunity for encounter.

The final two contributions in the thematic section engage social perspectives. Ewelina Bańka (*LAW-Defense at the border: Margo Tamez's rhetorics of survivance*)

discusses the poetry and activism of Margo Tamez, highlighting her rhetoric of sovereignty and strategies of survival against oppressive border discourses. Parisa Delshad (*La Valla and the edge of sovereignty: a rhetorical study of protection and isolation in Melilla*) examines the experiences of residents of the Spanish enclave in North Africa, showing how the border, rather than symbolizing safety, becomes a source of isolation and the erosion of social bonds.

Beyond the thematic section, the *Varia* segment includes articles that illustrate the broad range of rhetorical inquiry: from political and social discourse analysis, through methodological reflection, to studies of cultural and artistic practices.

Magde Mohamed Nour and Jens Elmelund Kjeldsen open this section with *Charisma, ideology, and pragmatism: unpacking leadership rhetoric in initial COVID-19 responses in the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand*, which examines leadership rhetoric in the first months of the pandemic. Their analysis of Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, and Jacinda Ardern, using the CIP model, highlights the differences between charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic styles, and argues that effective crisis rhetoric relies on a flexible combination of strategies.

A particularly noteworthy contribution is Ewa Modrzejewska's *A rhetorical perspective on framing: Overview*, which systematizes research on framing. The author discusses the roots of the concept in the social sciences and humanities, outlines diverse methods of analysis, and underscores the affinity between framing and classical rhetorical topoi. Didactic in character, the article offers a methodological guide valuable to both scholars and students of rhetoric.

The pedagogical perspective is also developed by Luiza Rzymowska in *The problem of stress in oratory: an innovative application of Aaron Antonovsky's salutogenic model in contemporary rhetorical education*. She combines reflections on stage fright with salutogenesis theory, showing that speakers' stress can function as a resource in learning and development, while rhetoric itself can serve as a tool for strengthening psychological resilience.

Two further articles explore rhetoric's relationship with the arts. Marek Jeziński (*On family oblivion: The Soldiers' Song Festival in Kołobrzeg as a rhetorical negotiation of cultural meanings*) analyzes the festival as an instrument of propaganda and collective memory formation in the People's Republic of Poland, revealing its role in managing memory and forgetting. Edyta Frelik (*Rhetorical twins: the fractal and organic geometries of Benoit Mandelbrot and Tadeusz Mysłowski*) compares Mandelbrot's fractal geometry with Mysłowski's artistic forms, demonstrating that rhetoric can serve as a tool for interpreting abstract visual structures.

The last two contributions examine rhetorical applications in media communication. Monika Miłosz (*Campaigns on stroke prevention in linguistic and rhetorical terms*) studies the *Stop Strokes* campaign, reconstructing its structure through the classical categories of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*. The analysis demonstrates that the campaign's effectiveness depends not only on medical facts but also on emotional strategies and rhetorical figures. Dorota Miller and Marta Smykała (*Déjà-vu? Verbal-visual collocations on the covers of British, German and Polish weekly magazines as a way of perpetuating and amplifying conflict*) introduce the concept of "verbal-visual collocations" as a tool of multimodal analysis. They show how recurring image-word pairings on magazine covers create visual stereotypes and perpetuate political conflict.

The issue is further enriched by a scholarly event report and book reviews that deepen reflection on contemporary rhetorical scholarship. Joanna Nowakowska reports on the ninth edition of the *Rhetoric in Society* conference (Zagreb, June 18–21, 2025) – one of the most important rhetorical events in Europe. This year's theme, *Rhetoric in digital media*, gathered scholars from around the globe to discuss rhetoric's role in the era of digital media, artificial intelligence, and new forms of communication. The author also highlights the significance of the forthcoming jubilee edition of the conference in Warsaw in 2027, a landmark for the Polish rhetorical community.

In the reviews section, Konrad Kiljan discusses the collective volume edited by Rebecca Townsend, *Beyond Cold War: presidential rhetoric in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Group, 2023), to which members of the Polish Rhetoric Society contributed as chapter authors. The book makes a significant contribution to the study of political communication in Central and Eastern Europe, showing the presidency as a key site of political agency after 1989. The reviewer emphasizes the volume's combination of sound historical background with rhetorical theory and its contribution to internationalizing research on the region: from reflections on leadership during the transition to contemporary speeches by President Zelensky.

Finally, Magdalena Piejko-Płonka reviews Karolina Skowron-Baka's book *Feminism is veganism: why feminists should fight for animal rights* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2025). The author of the monograph demonstrates the inseparable link between patriarchy and violence against women and animals, proposing an alliance of feminism and veganism as both a social and ethical project. The review highlights that the publication functions simultaneously as an activist manifesto and as a valuable scholarly resource, illustrating how language and imagery can perpetuate oppression, but also serve as tools of solidarity and resistance.

We invite readers not only to engage with this issue but also to continue developing the questions raised here in research, teaching, and public debate. We hope the articles collected in this volume demonstrate that borders, whether geopolitical, social, or symbolic, possess considerable rhetorical potential. They can be conceived not only as lines of separation, but also as sites of encounter, dialogue, and negotiation of meaning. Reflection on borders is, therefore, also a reflection on rhetoric itself, which continually redefines its scope and tasks in a changing world.