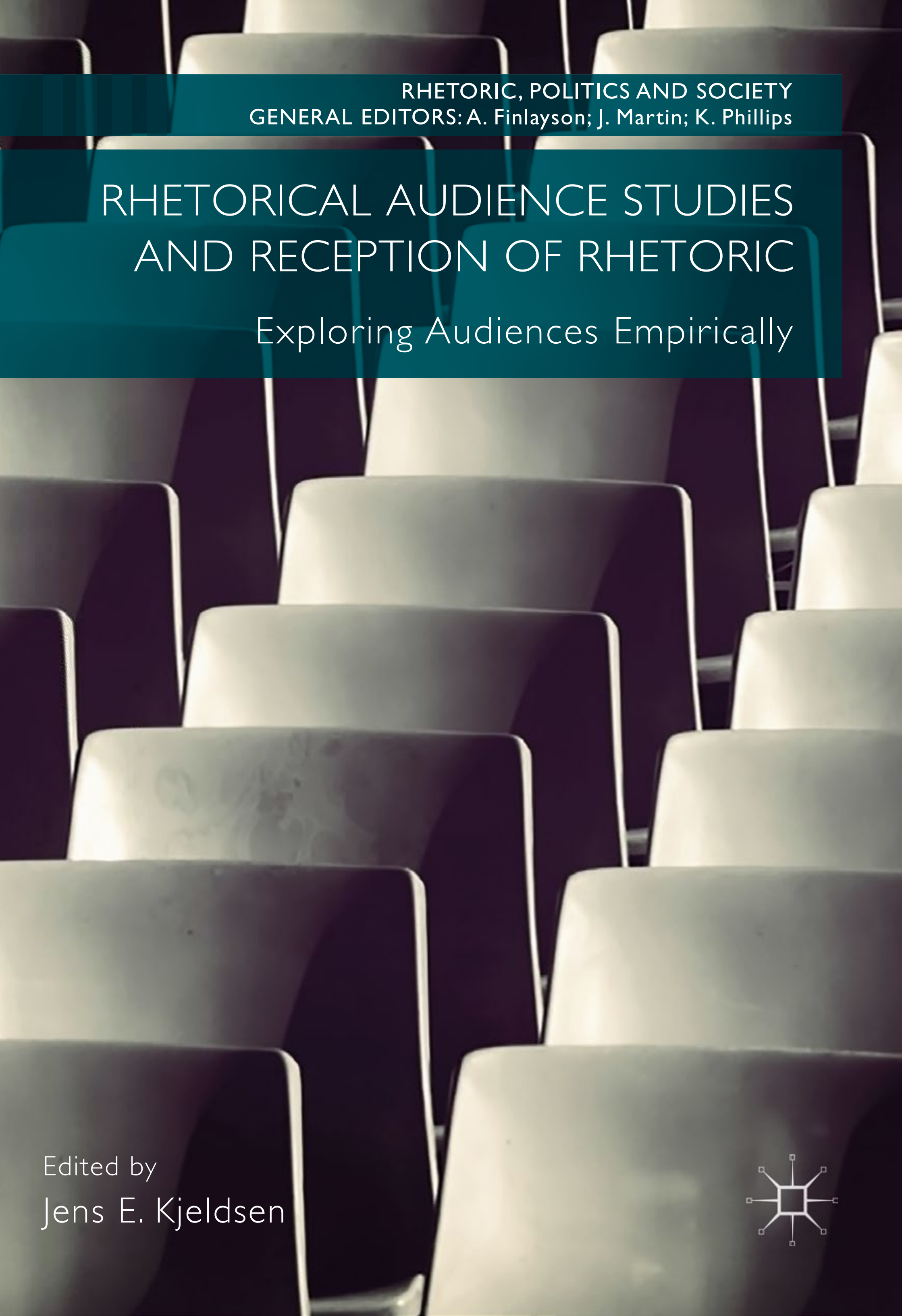

RHETORIC, POLITICS AND SOCIETY
GENERAL EDITORS: A. Finlayson; J. Martin; K. Phillips

RHETORICAL AUDIENCE STUDIES AND RECEPTION OF RHETORIC

Exploring Audiences Empirically

Edited by
Jens E. Kjeldsen

Rhetoric, Politics and Society

Rhetoric lies at the intersection of a variety of disciplinary approaches and methods, drawing upon the study of language, history, culture and philosophy to understand the persuasive aspects of communication in all its modes: spoken, written, argued, depicted and performed. This series presents the best international research in rhetoric that develops and exemplifies the multifaceted and cross-disciplinary exploration of practices of persuasion and communication. It seeks to publish texts that openly explore and expand rhetorical knowledge and enquiry, be it in the form of historical scholarship, theoretical analysis or contemporary cultural and political critique. The editors welcome proposals for monographs that explore contemporary rhetorical forms, rhetorical theories and thinkers, and rhetorical themes inside and across disciplinary boundaries. For informal enquiries, questions, as well as submitting proposals, please contact the editors: Alan Finlayson: a.finlayson@uea.ac.uk James Martin: j.martin@gold.ac.uk Kendall Phillips: kphillip@syr.edu

More information about this series at
http://www.springer.com/series/14497

Jens E. Kjeldsen
Editor

Rhetorical Audience Studies and Reception of Rhetoric

Exploring Audiences Empirically

palgrave
macmillan

Editor
Jens E. Kjeldsen
Department of Information Science and Media Studies
University of Bergen
Bergen, Norway

Rhetoric, Politics and Society
ISBN 978-3-319-61617-9 ISBN 978-3-319-61618-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-61618-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017954961

Cover illustration: Claudia Fernandes / EyeEm

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

Audience Analysis and Reception Studies of Rhetoric

Jens E. Kjeldsen

Without audiences, there would be no rhetoric. Understanding audiences, therefore, is essential for understanding rhetoric. If we do not understand when, how and why audiences are influenced by communication, or see how they negotiate and reject rhetorical messages, then we do not understand rhetoric. In light of this, it is surprising that rhetorical scholars have paid so little attention to audiences—or to be more precise: to empirical audiences. This book encourages researchers to do more studies of empirical audiences and their reception of rhetoric. The chapters offer examples of central methods of understanding reception and empirical audiences: historical approaches such as archival-historical methodology and historiography, interviews and focus group research, protocol analysis, ethnographic participation and observation, appropriation as reception and finally triangulation, where the researcher applies several methods in unison. While these methods are common in media studies, anthropology, cultural studies and other fields of research, they are surprisingly rare in rhetorical studies.

J.E. Kjeldsen (✉)
Department of Information Science and Media Studies, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

J.E. Kjeldsen (ed.), *Rhetorical Audience Studies and Reception of Rhetoric*, Rhetoric, Politics and Society,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-61618-6_1

In the beginning, there was only text. Rhetorical research was more or less identical to rhetorical criticism. Even though neo-Aristotelianism encouraged attention to social settings, was eager to measure effectiveness and considered this effectiveness a function of audience adaption, text was king (Thonssen and Baird 1948). In the decades after the Second World War, rhetorical criticism, close readings and ideological studies were generally performed as textual analysis. Then the 1980s and 1990s witnessed an increased interest in empirical audience studies, reader response and reception research. The trend continued in media studies, cultural studies and other fields, where such approaches are now an important part of the research tools available. Strangely, though, rhetoricians lost interest in these methods and mainly went back to the text. Today empirical, qualitative audience studies are rare in rhetorical research. Reading the publications in rhetoric, the journals, books, and anthologies, we seldom find qualitative studies on empirical audiences. Given the fundamental importance of audiences in rhetoric, this is both peculiar and unfortunate.

Of course, rhetoricians have always been thinking about audiences. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle determines that there are three kinds of rhetoric, because there are three kinds of audiences. It is the listener that determines the end and object of the speech, and listeners are three in kind: either a judge to decide about things past (forensic) or future (political) or an observer of the orators' skills (ceremonial) (I.3). The main part of book II in the *Rhetoric* deals with audience matters by accounting for the various emotions and human characters that audiences may consist of (II.1–17).

Since the revival of rhetorical studies in the second half of the twentieth century, leading researchers in the field has contemplated on the role of the audience in rhetoric. In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define an audience as "*the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation*" (1969, 19; italics in text). While this may sound as an actual audience, *The New Rhetoric* only deals with the audience as a construction of the speaker (ibid.). In contrast to this view, Lloyd F. Bitzer's theory of the rhetorical situation more clearly approaches the audience as an empirical matter. A rhetorical audience consists of "those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (Bitzer 1968, 7). Bitzer's theory describes how certain situations and rhetorical responses transform individuals into a historically concrete audience. However, even though Bitzer describes the situations and audiences as real and publicly observable (Bitzer 1968, 1980), he does not examine empirical audiences.

The most common treatment of audiences in rhetoric are as instances of textually constituted constructions in the tradition of Booth's (1983) and Iser's (1978) notions of implied and implicit reader (e.g. McCloskey 1985). Edwin Black argues that every text has an implied author, which is not the real person of the author but the rhetorical presence of the author in the text. He calls this the first person. However, texts and discourses also have a second persona implied, "and that persona is its implied auditor". An implied auditor "does not focus on a relationship between a discourse and an actual auditor. It focuses instead on the discourse alone, and extracts from it the audience it implies" (Black 2013, 597). Black calls this implied audience "the second persona". This second persona can be judged, because "[t]he critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become" (Black 2013, 598). Philip Wander later described what he called "The third persona", which is "the concept of audience in rhetorical theory to include audiences not present, audiences rejected or negated through the speech and/or the speaking situation" (Wander 2013, 614).

A similar ideological approach characterizes Maurice Charland's treatment of what he terms the *constitutive audience*. Charland sets out to "show the degree to which collective identities forming the basis of rhetorical appeals themselves depend upon rhetoric" (Charland 2013, 437). In line with Althusser's theory of hailing Charland explains how rhetorical structures and appeals not only persuade people but also create, *constitute*, people. In an analysis of the rhetoric of the independence movement of Quebec, the French-speaking province of Canada, Charland demonstrates how the rhetoric of a white paper calls the Quebecois into being, thereby constituting them as an audience and a people.

In his studies of rhetorical argumentation Tindale explores the issue of audience identity and make-up (Tindale 2013, 2015). Using Perelman's universal audience and applying the notion of "cognitive environments" (Sperber and Wilson 1995), Tindale argues that the idea of "a fixed audience is as obsolete as the idea of a fixed argument, unmoored from the dynamic situation of which it is an integral part" (Tindale 2013, 529). Audience identity, he suggests, is especially important since questions of persuasion and evaluation of argument either depend on this or can in some way be reduced to it (Tindale 2013, 516). Even though Tindale is concerned with the cognitive environment of audiences, with audience identity and with the make-up of audiences in relation to their different subgroups, his account is still predominantly theoretical and philosophical.

These are some of the most cited and acknowledged accounts of audiences in contemporary rhetorical research. They all have one thing in common: They are speculative, theoretical constructions of the audience. Audiences are either perceptions of the speaker, implied by the text, left out by the text or constituted by the rhetoric. While all these accounts are essential theoretical contributions to our field, none of them deals with actual audiences or takes into consideration any kind of real reception or factual response given by an existing audience. Even though there has been some rhetorical research attending to actual audiences, studying reception (e.g. Condit 1990; Stromer-Galley and Schiappa 1998 [reprinted as Chap. 2 in this book]; Ceccarelli 2001; Kjeldsen 2007) and especially using ethnographic approaches (e.g. Middleton et al. 2015), rhetorical scholars have mostly limited themselves to textual analysis and rhetorical criticism. This is a pity because treating "audiences as hypothetical or easily manipulated or even beside the point" (Houck 2015, 283) will prevent us from understanding the workings, influence and effects of rhetoric.

Why Do Rhetoricians Not Perform Audience Studies?

So, why don't we study empirical audiences more? One reason may be the redefinition of rhetoric as the study of meaning and symbol use that began in the late 1960s and developed in the decades that followed. Blair put it this way: "An exclusive focus on symbolicity diverts us from rhetoric's capacity to *do* things, rather than simply *mean* something" (Blair 2015, 41). Another explanation might be the movement towards critical theory and ideological critique, which—quite surprisingly—seems to consider reception, effect and real audiences rather irrelevant, or in Houck's words "a quaint scholarly anachronism in the age of domination and interpellation" (Houck 2015, 288). Houck also points to a more quotidian explanation: Doing empirical audience studies is cumbersome, time consuming, and it requires resources. It is much simpler and less demanding just to focus on rhetor and text, instead of trying to study the way real audiences are exposed to and negotiate the rhetoric they encounter.

The neglect of reception studies may also be connected to more ideological aspects of academic identity and scholarly self-understanding. The rhetorician sees himself as an intellectual who interprets the world and its rhetorical complexities through his special intellectual capacities and his academic ability to analyse and provide judgement. This puts the scholar in a privileged position. He becomes the "expert reader", the brilliant, discerning mind (cf. Middleton et al. 2015, 10f., Stromer-Galley and Schiappa, Chap. 2 in this volume). From this point of view, doing reception studies and listening to audiences entails a loss of position and power. In a more modest version of this self-image, rhetorical critics see themselves "function as surrogates for audiences" (Campbell 1989, 2). However, as Bjørkdahl and Carlsen argue in Chap. 10: critics cannot function as surrogates for audiences, simply because they are very different from those audiences.

Celeste Condit has argued that the growing emphasis on audience studies in the late 1980s exerted a pressure on rhetorical critics that had unfortunate consequences. The focus of audience studies on the polysemy of texts, active audiences, and the importance of decoding, challenged the legitimacy of speaker and text-oriented interpretative practices. On the one hand, it led a critic like Michael Leff to "retreat from responsibility to any audience at all" (Condit 1990, 333). On the other hand it lead a scholar like Michael McGee "to abandon text altogether in favour of the audience" (ibid.). Condit was disgruntled with McGee's claim that that texts in a traditional sense do not exist in our contemporary world and that "text construction is now something done more by the consumers than by the producers of discourse" (McGee 1990, 288). She did not, then at least, see audience research as an alternative. Such research, she claimed, had fallen into two intellectual voids. In the first chasm, social scientific audience research creates "false universals", and ethnographic studies produce particularistic analyses that are often "hopelessly individual". In the second chasm scholars that read audiences as their texts end up with a view of rhetoric that is "formless", since there are no texts proper consisting of content and form in a specific context—there are only fragments gathered by the critic. These failings, Condit claims, are "inherent in audience research because rhetoric is neither individual nor universal, but collective" (Condit 1990, 341).

Yes, rhetoric is collective and social, and there is much to agree with in Condit's paper. Still, I believe it underestimates the value of audience research in rhetorical scholarship. The chapters in this book are all good examples of how empirical audience studies provide valuable insights into rhetoric. Even Condit herself has demonstrated the value of rhetorical reception in her own studies (Condit 2013; Condit and Williams 1997). In one study of two viewers' responses to an episode of the television series *Cagney and Lacey*, for example (Condit 2013), Condit found that the "dominant reading" (cf. Hall 1980) of the episode was easily engaged by the viewer who agreed with the message, but required effort to resist by the viewer who disagreed. In spite of the possible polysemy of the episode, both viewers understood the dominant message, but only one agreed. This leads Condit to suggest that many texts may be *polyvalent* rather than polysemic ("polysemous"): Texts generally have a dominant or preferred reading, and people will normally understand it. While this has made some suggest that audience research is less urgent, Stromer-Galley and Schiappa see it as a reason to do more audience studies (see Chap. 2): If texts really are polyvalent, then reception-oriented studies are one of the best ways to examine when and how this is the case.

Why Rhetoricians Should Perform Audience Studies

As the chapters in this book illustrate, audience studies provide many benefits for rhetorical research. One value of such methods is that they provide an opportunity to examine the rhetorical, interpretative labour done by audiences. Rhetorical utterances have neither one unequivocal and definite meaning nor a universal deterministic effect on audiences (Stromer-Galley and Schiappa, Chap. 2, in this volume). That is why rhetoric has been termed the study of misunderstanding and its remedies (Richards 1936). We also know this from a broad spectrum of theories, which teaches us that audiences are always active participants in any communicative exchange. Reception theory describes how a reader must cognitively fill out the gaps and open places in any text (Holub 2003). Semiotics demonstrates how communication in general is polysemic and open (Eco 1979; Barthes 1977). Pragmatics and relevance theory shows how language works through implicature, requiring conversational partners to constantly make inferences (Clark 2013; Wilson and Sperber 2012). All these theories point to the fact that in communication, the audience does much of the communicative labour. This is particularly relevant for rhetorical argumentation, because it is enthymematic and leaves it to the audience to fill in the gaps and missing premises (Bitzer 1959). If we want to find out how the communicative work done by audiences is carried out, and establish what it means—which are essential rhetorical tasks—then the best way to find out is do audience studies (cf. Benoit and Smythe 2003).

Not only are rhetorical texts polysemic, it can be difficult to determine exactly what and where the rhetorical text is. While traditional rhetorical criticism analysed discrete and clearly demarcated texts, a researcher in our contemporary and fragmented media environment will often find it challenging to determine which text an audience has actually experienced (Kjeldsen 2008)—or even who the audience is (Livingstone 2004; Radway 1988; Tindale 2013). This is especially pertinent online where communication is constantly produced, copied, shared and changed. Online communication is interactive, intertextual and transitory. It is increasingly segmented and personalized by the use of algorithms, creating different texts for different groups—even for individuals. In this situation, the best way of finding out which texts—or rather flow of communication—people have experienced is to talk to them or observe them.

Audience studies not only help us see that texts are polysemic and audiences are active, but also that audience interpretation and decoding are not completely free and incidental (Condit 2013). Audience studies, then, are not only a way of understanding the power of the audience, it is also a way of understanding the power of rhetoric—in situ and in general.

Audience and reception studies also offer a way to understand "the other". If we truly wish to understand the persuasiveness of appeals we find surprising, or even worrisome, we will not find good answers by speculating about the values or (lack of) intelligence of the audience. If we seek answers only by putting ourselves in the place of "the other", playing the role of people different than ourselves, we will neither understand them nor the rhetoric they find appealing. It is obvious, for instance, that the rhetoric of Donald J. Trump in the US election campaign of 2016 was received very differently by supporters and opponents. To many, the appeal and success of Mr. Trump's rhetoric was surprising, almost inexplicable. The answers could have been found by paying more attention to the audiences that found his rhetoric convincing, for instance, through studies of the reception of his speeches and tweets.

Finally, as pointed out in Chap. 12 by Kjeldsen and Andersen, *reception-oriented and ethnographic approaches* offer a way for rhetorical research to acknowledge the impact and effect of rhetoric without relying on a simple transmission model of communication. Rhetorical reception studies acknowledge that rhetoric has the power to do something to audiences but also that audiences have the power to do something to the rhetoric they encounter. The main aim of rhetorical audience studies is to understand the interaction between the rhetorical situation, the characteristics of the utterances, and the audience uptake and its negotiation of the rhetoric. Instead of moving conjecturally from textual traits to assumed effect, reception studies allow the researcher to also move from response to text, in order to establish the rhetorical traits that may have contributed to the response.

Doing Rhetorical Reception and Audience Analysis

This book is not a handbook of research methods. There are plenty of these for the student who wants the nuts and bolts of reception studies that uses archival research methods, interviews and focus groups, protocol analysis or ethnographic methods. However, even though *Rhetorical Audience Studies and Reception of Rhetoric* is not a methodological handbook, it does seek to offer a basic understanding of how audience research are carried out. It also aims to offer an understanding for the value of these methods for the study of rhetoric—as well as the value of rhetorical theory for the methods.

In providing a basic understanding of the craft of rhetorical audience studies, it is informative to distinguish between three types of rhetorical research texts (Fiske 1986; Gentikow 1998, 1997). *Primary texts* are created by a rhetor: a speech by Churchill (Chap. 3), political ads from a party (Chap. 4) or a piano concert by Edward Elgar (Chap. 7). Such texts are the most studied though history of the study of rhetoric, and the most used research method in the field is rhetorical criticism of these.

Secondary texts are naturally occurring reactions and responses to primary texts that are not initiated by the researcher. This could be applause to a political speech or letters to the editor about it; it could be comments in a commentary section (Chap. 12), attributions of iconic images (Chap. 11) and the liking and sharing of material on social media (Chap. 5). The amount of secondary texts have increased vastly with online communication and social media, allowing everybody to comment and provide responses at any time. The distinction between primary and secondary texts is fluid. Reactions and responses to rhetorical texts can be viewed and analysed in their own right as primary texts, and they may lead to new reactions creating other secondary texts. As instances of reception of rhetoric, secondary texts are relevant object of studies, because they offer natural responses to rhetoric and allow the researcher to establish connections between the rhetorical situation, the rhetorical utterance and the responses it evokes (cf. the textual-intertextual analysis of Ceccarelli 2001).

Tertiary texts (also called empirical texts) are scholar-generated texts such as qualitative interviews (Chaps. 10 and 12), focus group conversations (Chaps. 4 and 5) or protocol analysis (e.g. think-aloud readings, cf. Chaps. 6 and 7). Survey material and different kinds of texts and research data created through experimental approaches are also tertiary texts.

Whereas secondary texts are notations of responses that occur in real time without the influence of researchers, tertiary texts are generated by artificial and constructed research situations. These forms of texts, thus, are also labelled *data made*, while primary and secondary texts are labelled *data found* (Jensen 2012). The benefits of secondary texts are that they provide the researcher with access to the more immediate real-life reactions. Research leading to tertiary texts, on the other hand, makes it possible to understand reception where secondary texts are not available. The scholar-generated texts also make it possible to choose the primary texts for reaction, to select the material that is most suited for the research questions and to control the types of response to be studied. Having informants looking at selected forms of pictures, for instance, could either help the researcher to explore how visuals cue arguments in audiences (Kjeldsen 2015b) or how visuals evoke emotions.

Ethnographic rhetorical research can include all three types of texts and will sometimes be a fusion of these. Ethnographic observation and participations, for instance, can generate notations and descriptions of rhetorical behaviour and response in actual communication situations, which is a form of data found. At the same time such ethnographic accounts often depend on the researcher intruding in the normal rhetorical situations and the reception of the audiences in case. To the extent that this leads to a change in the usual behaviour of the audience, the accounts should be considered an instance of data made, a form of tertiary texts.

The chapters in this book are both academic contributions in their own right, and introductions to different forms of rhetorical audience and reception research, functioning as examples of selected qualitative and reception-oriented approaches. The remaining part of this chapter provides brief accounts of these approaches by suggesting how they are carried out and how they relate to rhetoric. They are historical approaches, focus groups and qualitative interviews, protocol analysis and think-aloud reading, participatory rhetoric and rhetorical ethnography, appropriation and triangulation of methods.

Historical Approaches to Rhetoric and Reception

Researching rhetorical audiences empirically seem to exclude the study of historical situations and audiences. We are far removed from the historical events we wish to understand, without opportunity to talk to people who experienced the speeches or the other kinds of rhetoric in case. Even if we could talk to audience members who were present at the time, they would be limited by the shortcomings of memory. Still, there are sources and ways of understanding reception of rhetoric in the past. Amos Kiewe (2015), for instance, has studied the letters sent to Franklin D. Roosevelt after his First Fireside Chat. After Roosevelt's speech on the banking crisis, trust in the banking system was restored, people redeposited money, and the US economy recovered. Was this an effect of the speech? Yes, the speech was a primary cause for the renewed trust, Kiewe argues (2015, 187). The thousands of letters sent to Roosevelt document the citizens' renewed trust and their intentions of redepositing. Kiewe establishes the success of the speech by collating the macro-level effects in the economy and the micro-level effects of the sentiments expressed in the letters.

In a similar way Houck and Nocasian (2002) have examined Roosevelt's first inaugural address, telling the nation that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (1933). They studied the creation, drafts and final version of the speech, the context, and the letters and telegrams sent to Roosevelt in the immediate aftermath of the delivery. The speech restored confidence in the nation and administration. By correlating the patterns of response, the reception, with the rhetorical strategies in the text, and the intentions of the president and his speechwriters, they show how and why the speech succeeded. However, they also move beyond correlating, by showing that careful study of reception "can reveal the organic nature of text and context", in order to "gain greater insight and understanding into how a text actually worked within a historical moment to influence an audience" (675).

In the UK Amy Whipple (2009) has examined the reception of the infamous anti-immigration "Rivers of Blood Speech", delivered in 1968 by the right-wing conservative politician Enoch Powell. While consulting both opinion polls and previous readings of the speech, her approach was to qualitatively study the reaction in a sample of 2000 of the over 100,000 letters Powell received after the speech. Like much audience analysis, Whipple's study seems to say more about the audience than about the speech itself. She shows that many of the people who wrote to Powell apparently had misunderstood what he was trying to say; instead, they strongly approved of what they *thought* he was saying. The speech did not persuade the audience to take a new point of a view but triggered an outpouring of already existing sentiments.[1]

In Chap. 3, Richard Toye uses a similar *archive-based methodology* to examine the empirical responses to post-war speeches by Winston Churchill (Toye 2013). Toye's approach uses sociological research done by the British authorities including questionnaires and diaries. Like Kiewe, Whipple, and Houck and Nocasian, Toye insists on examining rhetoric in historical and situational context. Their approaches urge us to take into consideration the ideas and values of the time as well as the constraints of technology and communication forms used. Read together, these studies offer general topoi of research for doing reception studies of speeches from the past:

1. *Context*. Establish the historic and situational circumstances surrounding the speech.
2. *Creation of speech*. Examine and assess evidence that casts light on the drafting process of the speech. This may include the so-called context of anticipation (Toye 2013, 69), which is the writer's understanding of the audiences, their possible objections to the message and the thoughts on how one might meet them in advance. Knowledge about this may be found in archives containing letters, drafts and other material. Biographies and media material may also be a source of knowledge to this.
3. *Text and delivery*. Perform appropriate rhetorical analysis of manuscript and delivery. If possible, check delivery by attending to the original audio or film where it exists. Evidence of interruptions, laughter or applause can be very useful. As pointed out by Max Atkinson (1984), different forms of audience responses to delivery can be read as a barometer of approval. The immediate response to a speech can also be determined through descriptions of delivery and response found in newspapers, biographies or other historical texts.
4. *Reception and response*. Establish a wider understanding of the reception by examining material such as memoirs and diary accounts by people who were physically present. Numbers for radio and television listeners may provide a sense of the size of the audience. While such numbers and statistics may not be perfect, and may only apply certain parts of the population, they can provide a sense of the

> relative popularity of a given speech. Newspaper and radio editorials as well as commentaries can be used as sources for audience response. Public or scientific statistics and studies of reception and public opinion can also be consulted. Toye, for instance, used the results of the research organization Mass Observation and the Home Intelligence reports of the Ministry of Information. This gave access to field reports, letters and diaries by members of the public (Toye 2013, 231–232).

Toye points to Anna Greenwood and Andrea Bernardi (2014, 917) for a condensed explanation of the method of the historian relevant for rhetoricians. This explanation is worth reproducing here as well:

> Key is the investigation of primary sources (archive work), the selection of them (historical data is not the sum of historical documents), the acknowledgement of hermeneutics (documents need interpretation), the triangulation of sources (sources need to be verified and put in a hierarchy of credibility), the verification of memory gaps or over emphasis (one needs an awareness of the possibility that the past can be either deleted or invented), thick contextualization (events should only be understood in a context), critical analysis of documents (correspondences may be written with tacit objectives) engagement with the historiography (showing an awareness of critical approaches that have subsequently been applied to the data by other historians).

Empirical sources of audience responses, then, are essential for understanding the reception and significance of rhetorical utterances such as speeches. In this way, we understand history through rhetoric and reception, but we may also understand rhetoric and reception through history. In Chap. 9, Hertzberg demonstrates that an understanding of rhetoric in our time may depend on an understanding of specific historical trajectories. He shows how the significance and effect of the rhetoric in public meeting by Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka must be understood through the historical development of the political repertoires of Buddhist monks in relation to norms and exceptions.

In spite of the value of examining the effect and audience responses of speeches and other kinds of historical rhetoric, such reception studies are still rare in rhetorical criticism. Why? Ignoring the study of effects in rhetoric, Kiewe suggests, is not as much a matter of inaccessibility of sources but mostly a matter of an anachronistic theoretical framing. Most historical acts do leave "some record of their reception and of reaction to them", and many rhetorical works from the past two centuries have been "commented upon in official records as well in the popular press, pamphlets, or diaries" (Kiewe 2015, 189). Since such sources often are available, it would be foolish not to consult them.

Studying historical orators and speeches through the reception of actual audiences is also a way of discovering alternative readings, avoiding mistaken audience conjectures about the reception (cf. Condit 1990; Ceccarelli 1998) and preventing anachronistic readings. Instances of rhetoric and oratory will always be closely connected to specific circumstances and must be understood in relation to these circumstances. Quentin Skinner has made a similar point about philosophy and the history of ideas. There "are no perennial problems in philosophy", he argues (Skinner 2002, 88). In order to understand philosophy and the history of ideas, he claims—and rhetoric we may add—one must see the intentions of the author in light of the specific audiences who was addressed.

Focus Groups and Qualitative Interviews

In the second chapter of this book, Stromer-Galley and Schiappa make a very straightforward statement: If you make claims or conjectures about audiences and their responses to rhetoric, then you ought to talk to these audiences. While it is generally impossible to interact with historical audiences, focus groups and individual interviewing allow the researcher to interact with actual and potential audiences.

While qualitative interviewing and focus group conversations have been common in decades in fields such as media studies, consumer research, cultural studies and political communication, these approaches are still rare in rhetorical studies. When rhetoricians actually use them, they are often considered as media or communication studies. Both qualitative interviews and focus groups involve asking informants questions and having them talk and elaborate about the issue in questions. Such methods are a valuable way of understanding how audiences react to communication, how they interpret, makes sense of, and mentally negotiate and argue with rhetoric.

The few rhetorical studies using interviews and focus groups illustrate the values of these methods for rhetorical reception. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, for instance, has used focus groups to examine the rhetorical use of television ads in the US presidential campaign between George Bush Sr.

(R) and Michael Dukakis (D) (Jamieson 1992). The campaign featured some highly inflammatory ads from Bush attacking Dukakis for being weak on crime. While rhetorical criticism of these ads can reveal their rhetorical potential, the focus group conversations conducted by Jamieson provided a more full and nuanced understanding of their rhetorical workings. Through research conversations, she discovered that the informants pieced the ads, or parts of them, together with fragments of news, speeches and other information. In doing this, they constructed their own coherent, but false, story saying that Dukakis had let 268 black murderers go free to kidnap and rape white people. We will never find such audience-constructed texts through traditional text analysis, because they only exist in the mind of the audience. The only way to access such texts is to talk to audiences.

Focus groups and interviews can also be used to establish the enthymematic reconstruction of argumentation by an audience. Most rhetorical argumentation omits parts and premises, leaving it to the audience to connect the rhetoric to their own experience and participate in the argumentative reconstruction by providing the left-out premises. In this way focus groups can "reveal underlying cognitive and ideological premises that structure arguments, the ways in which various discourse rooted in particular contexts and given experience are brought to bear on interpretations, the discursive construction of social identities, and so forth" (Lunt and Livingstone 1996, 96). Establishing the argumentative reconstructions of an audience is especially relevant in visual argumentation, since visuals do not explicitly express claims and premises in words. In the field of visual argumentation, focus groups have been used to establish that audiences readily understand visual rhetoric and argumentation, and demonstrated how visual tropes in pictorially dominated advertisements enthymematically cue audiences to reconstruct the intended arguments of the ads (Kjeldsen 2015a, b).

These examples illustrate the value of reception-oriented methods of interviews and focus groups. One of the biggest challenges for contemporary rhetorical criticism is that neither audience nor rhetorical utterances are discrete and clearly demarcated. This has made it increasingly difficult to determine what an audience has actually heard, seen, read, or in any way experienced, of a specific rhetorical utterance. We may examine the tropes, figures and arguments in a speech by the President or Prime Minister, but no ordinary person will experience the rhetoric in the same way. In the multimediated society of today, few people watch whole speeches and debates. Most people experience only fragments of "whole texts" as short messages on Facebook or Twitter, as Snapchats or short excerpts in the news; they see a brief soundbite, a clip on YouTube, or hear the retelling and explicit comments and evaluations by reporters, bloggers, friends or colleagues. When most people never experience the full rhetorical text that we thoroughly examine as rhetorical critics, when there is no single, discrete text and when we do not know who the empirical audience is, interviews and focus groups may help us understand how *a selected* audience actually reacts to specific rhetorical utterances. This can be rhetorical utterances experienced in previous actual situations, or it can be utterances displayed or demonstrated in the research situation.

These issues are especially relevant for internet communication and social media. Here one user's movement through the online environment will be different from other users and thus expose her to a rhetorical "text" that is different from "texts" other users experience. Furthermore, in this movement, a user will often shift positions between being a consuming audience member and a producing rhetor. In Chap. 5, for instance, Eirik Vatnøy describes the ways focus group interviews can be useful methodological additions to rhetorical studies of social media. The fragmented, changeable and complex nature of an average Facebook feed challenges established understandings of what constitutes a rhetorical audience or a rhetorical situation. Vatnøy shows how focus groups can be used to study the vernacular rhetoric of social media platforms. He applies this method to demonstrate how Facebook users in different age groups offer very different readings of a political social media campaign. The problems of the media-saturated society are also addressed in Chap. 10. Here Kristian Bjørkdahl and Benedicte Carlsen use so-called spontaneous interviews to establish what citizens have remembered—and forgotten—of the communication about the 2009 Swine flu pandemic and the need for vaccine. They find that in spite of massive media coverage and extensive information efforts by authorities, the informants *mis*remember many aspects of the pandemic rhetoric and that they do so in certain patterns.

Another rhetorical subject that lends itself well to qualitative interviewing is the workings of ethos, image and authenticity. Since ethos is not a fixed quality in a rhetor, but an attitude in the audience towards the rhetor (McCroskey 2016, 82), it can only really be examined by talking to or interacting with audiences. In Chap. 4, Magnus H. Iversen addresses this by examining how different groups of people make sense of and talk about their experiences with authenticity appeals presented through political advertising. While authenticity and ordinariness is a celebrated quality in political leaders in Norway, Iversen's interviews reveal that leader authenticity also requires eminence. Authentic leadership is the combination of appearing as a true individual acting true to oneself, but with the right balance between closeness and distance, the right mix of proximity and eminence. The leader ought to be as us, but not completely.

Iversen's study also points to another advantage of reception studies such as focus groups: Doing interviews with rhetors (production interviews), performing rhetorical criticism of the "text" (television ads) and doing interviews with audiences (members of the electorate) allow the researcher to compare the intentions of the rhetor (the producer), the "encoding" of these intentions (the text) and the decoding by the audience (the reception). This serves as a good example of the ability of audience studies to connect intention, utterance and audience, without basing the rhetorical investigation on a deterministic transmission model of communication.

Qualitative interviews and focus groups are well-established forms of research, with an extensive literature on methodology (e.g. Kvale and Brinkman 2009; Schrøder et al. 2003; Flick 2014; Leavy 2014). This is not the place to provide an account of these research procedures, but it is relevant to point out a few central research topoi when using interviews and focus groups in rhetorical research:

1. *Choose between interviews or focus groups.* Interviews provide the opportunity to go in depth with one informant's experiences, thoughts and feelings, without being influenced by other participants. On the other hand, even though they are moderated, focus groups resemble the kind of conversations and discussions that actually takes place in vernacular or professional conversations. This allows the researcher to not only study *a* response from *one* person but to study the rhetorical *interaction between people* and their internal negotiations of meaning, arguments, opinions and attitudes.
2. *Determine the type and number of informants.* When conducting research interviews the number of informants can differ from a single person in a biographical interview to thousand subjects in a study in need of a representative sample (Kvale and Brinkman 2009, 113). For a qualitative and interpretative rhetorical study, a suitable number will normally be around six to sixteen informants, depending on the aim. It is also important to decide which type of informants will be the best type in order to answer the research question.

3. *Determine the size and number of groups.* When doing focus groups, the researcher must determine both the size and number of the groups. Group sizes can vary from around four to sixteen, but the most common is four to eight people. The number of groups depends on the study, but in qualitative rhetorical studies, everything from one to six can be appropriate. Some studies use even more groups.
4. *Develop and follow an interview guide.* When conducting focus groups, and especially when doing individual interviews, the conversations will normally follow a thematic interview guide that separate the session in themes and provide possible questions. This secures that the researcher cover the most relevant issues and ask the questions that best address the aim of the research. Such *semi-structured* interviews are generally the most suitable for researching rhetorical reception, because they keep the interviewees on theme, while simultaneously providing enough freedom and openness to let them express their own thoughts and feelings.
5. *Transcribe, code and analyse.* In order to make sense of the interviews or conversations, they should first be transcribed. Then they should be *coded*: organized in categories and classifications. Depending on the aim of the research and the size of the material, this can be done roughly in longhand or more precisely with data analysis and coding programmes such as NVivo, ATLAS.ti or MaxQDA. Finally, the material must be analysed in relation to the research questions. The coding procedure is the first analytical step.

While interviews and group conversations can provide a thick understanding of the effect of rhetoric on the informants as well as the way they negotiate and oppose the rhetoric, these results can rarely be generalized. Interviewing six, sixteen or even sixty hairdressers about a speech does not tell us what hairdressers in general think about the speech or about speeches as a rhetorical genre. Still, both interviews and focus groups are advantageous in rhetorical research, because these methods provide us with opportunities to study how people experience their roles as audiences and how they respond to rhetorical utterances.

While interviews allow us to examine in depth the response and interpretation of one individual, focus groups allow us to construct different types of audience groups and create simulations of certain aspects of rhetorical situations. In both cases, the conversations can be preceded by exposure to relevant instances of rhetoric. Interviews and focus groups, then, have the distinct advantage of tapping into the experiences, thoughts and feelings of an audience, and to have the audience elaborate and explain how they relate to the rhetoric in question. In contrast to textual analysis and traditional rhetorical criticism, the conversations with audiences provide understandings, readings and negotiations that are not limited to scholars' conjectures about the reception and effect of rhetorical artefacts. We may learn both what rhetoric does to people and what people do to the rhetoric they encounter. Such audience conversations, then, can both be used to prepare a rhetorical text analysis and to test or inform an analysis that has already been made.

Furthermore, as suggested: Audience analyses through interviews and group conversations are especially valuable in a fragmented and visually dominated multimedia society, because it may provide a sense of how people piece together many texts and fragments into a coherent rhetorical whole, creating narratives and "texts" that do not exist materially, but can be accessed through conversation.

Protocol Analysis

While qualitative interviewing and focus group conversations generally have informants talk about something they have experienced previously, *protocol analysis*, also known as think-aloud protocols, aims at registering mental activity and responses *while they occur*. In the so-called think-aloud reading, for instance, informants are asked to read a text aloud, pause and verbalize what comes into mind. The researcher makes audio or video recordings of the reading and the verbalizations, which are then transcribed and analysed. In principle, the process can be done with any temporal activity, for instance, having informants report what comes to mind when they are writing, browsing the internet or listening to music (Chap. 7).

The method was developed by the psychologists Anders Ericsson and Herbert Simon in the 1980s (Ericsson and Simon 1980, 1984 [1993]), where it was primarily used to register the mental processes of informants when dealing with problem-solving and decision making. They distinguish between *retrospective* and *concurrent* verbalization. In the first case, the researcher asks a subject about a cognitive process that occurred at an earlier point in time—as we know from qualitative interviewing. In the second case, the information is verbalized at the time the subject is attending to it (Ericsson and Simon 1980, 218). It is this registration of concurrent response that is the distinctive feature of protocol analysis.

While the classical think-aloud protocols generally engaged informants in an activity or task performance (e.g. playing chess or building something), rhetorical studies using protocol analysis may involve many kinds of rhetoric-related activity: reading, writing, attending speeches or debates, seeing documentaries or visiting homepages, or browsing the internet. In rhetoric, the approach has mostly been used to study writing processes. In the 1970s and 1980s Flower and Hayes (1981, 1977) used it to establish the underlying and goal-oriented processes that go into writing a text, and it was used to describe the differences in writing strategies between novice writers and expert writers (Flower 1986). In these cases the researchers had informants (i.e. writers) verbalize their thoughts and choices while composing and writing texts.

In the use of protocol research, we may use the term *thinking-aloud* to refer to the informants' verbal expressing of their thoughts. The *think-aloud protocol* is the recorded and transcribed text of the informants' verbalizations, and analysing these is performing *protocol analysis* (cf. Bengtsson, Chap. 6, in this volume). However, the term protocol analysis is also used to signify the approach as a whole.

Like participants in focus group conversations and qualitative interviews, informants in protocol settings are well aware that they are engaging in research activity occurring in an artificially created situation. The researcher, however, is normally less conspicuous in protocol analysis, and interview guides are normally not used. The aim is to have the informant engage with the material, with limited interference by the researcher, in order to see how the material affects the informant. In the procedure of protocol analysis in the psychological tradition of Ericsson and Simon, the researcher will not even ask informants questions or encourage them to elaborate, and the researcher will sometimes be placed out of sight in order not to interfere. In a humanistic rhetorical tradition, however, where the aim is often interpretative or critical, the researcher may gain better insight by asking questions and having the informant elaborate at certain points.

Protocol analysis can be used to study the goal-oriented thinking that goes into producing rhetorical communication (e.g. Flower's research on writing strategies). It can be used to test and evaluate rhetorical commination for practical purposes, much like usability testing in interaction design (Lewis 1982; Benbunan-Fich 2001). Examining how customers experience communication, letters or emails from companies, for instance, will help the companies improve the quality of their external communication (see Bengtsson in Chap. 6). Protocol analysis has also been used to investigate the construction of online ethos and credibility. Ethos is, as mentioned above in the part on interviews and focus groups, "an attitude toward a source of communication held at a given time by a receiver" (McCroskey 2016, 82). This is the reason empirical audience studies like protocol analysis are well suited to explore this rhetorical quality. Hoff-Clausen (2007, 2008), for instance, has let informants talk aloud while navigating political campaign sites, blogs and Wikipedia. She calls this kind of protocol research *user-oriented rhetorical criticism*, because she not only carries out user interviews and have members of the intended audience participate in protocol reading; as a rhetorical critic she also analyses and interprets the websites as rhetorical texts (e.g. Hoff-Clausen 2007, 102).

Mette Bengtsson has used protocol analysis to examine how readers of newspapers react to the implied audience in political commentaries (e.g. Chap. 6 in this volume and Bengtsson 2014). She first analyses the discursive audience construction in a corpus of 90 political commentaries, finding that the reader is constructed as a person "who is interested in the politicians as persons, their positions and strategies for gaining votes, not their arguments for political proposals" (Chap. 6). She then carries out eight read-aloud protocols, finding that readers do "oppositional readings" (Hall 1980) where they characterize the commentaries as "postulating" and experience them as having an "excluding" and esoteric language use. Bengtsson's studies point to the value of rhetorical studies that combine textual analysis and rhetorical criticism with reception-oriented approaches.

These are a few of the sparse amount of rhetorical studies using protocol analysis. Based on these and the research tradition in general, we may establish some general research topoi for this method:

1. *Choosing appropriate themes and research questions.* Since protocol analysis examines concurrent reception and provides closeness to the rhetorical artefacts or processes, it is especially relevant for two main types of rhetorical research questions: first, examining research questions that are related to being an audience of the rhetoric of artefacts communicating in time (reading texts, attending to audio-visual media, listening to a speech), and second, examining questions that are related to rhetors engaging in productive rhetorical

activities proceeding in time (composing texts, engaging in social media, commenting on online comment sections or participating in Facebook discussions).

2. *Selecting texts or tasks.* The researcher must select the texts, understood in a broad sense, that the informants must read or attend to or the tasks that they must perform. Text-oriented protocol analysis is especially valuable for examining audience reactions and reception; task-oriented protocol analysis is especially valuable for examining a rhetor's strategic, goal-oriented thinking. In online media, protocol analysis can be especially insightful, because the informant can move freely between internet sites and thus select and create her own text.
3. *Selecting informants.* It must be determined who and how many should participate. While think-aloud reading can only be carried out individually, some forms for protocol analysis can be done in groups. In Chap. 7, for instance, Kock has a group of people listening to music while each participant concurrently registers their thoughts and feelings in writing.
4. *Determining stops for verbalization.* In think-aloud reading stops for verbalization are essential, because they provide the space for the reactions of the informants. These stops must be selected strategically, so that they provide the researcher with the most informative reactions. Places for stops can be marked in the text or be prompted by the researcher. In protocol analysis that does not require reading, such as task-oriented activities or attending to multimodal material, verbalizing stops can be used but are not always necessary. Here informants can be asked to talk continuously or to stop when they feel like it.
5. *Introductory interview or follow-up interview.* Some research using protocol analysis begins or ends the session with short interviews, where informants address the text and the issue more generally. In this way an introductory interview can be a starting point for the thinking aloud, or the protocol session can function as a starting point for a conversation, based on the direct encounter with the text that the informants have just had.

As pointed out by Bengtsson in Chap. 6, other methodological choices for the protocol analysis must be made: choosing the setting, deciding on the duration, considering placement of the interviewer (next to or in front of the respondent) and deciding on transcription guidelines.