

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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We would like to stress how indebted we are to Hiltgund Jehle for encouraging us to apply for funding, and advising us how to improve our proposal, for the first two Rhetoric Culture conferences. Later, Antje Gunsenheimer was similarly helpful in the preparation of the next two conferences, and guided us to success.

A thousand thanks to both of you!

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Over the years, many colleagues and friends encouraged us intellectually and emotionally as we embarked on the Rhetoric Culture venture. Much is lost in the mist of the past, but one early event still stands out clearly. In May 1995, Karl-Heinz Kohl had invited an international group of anthropologists and philosophers to fathom the question of “Anthropology and the Question of the Other.” It was there, as we debated the epistemological insecurities of anthropological theory with Tullio Maranhao, Stanley Tambiah, Debborah Battaglia, Vincent Crapanzano, Barbara and Dennis Tedlock, Unni Wikan, Frederik Barth, Volker Gottowick and others, that we first conceived the idea of a rhetorical theory of culture, which we explored more fully at the 1998 Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) in Frankfurt/Main. Karl-Heinz, who has always wished us well and believed in the worthiness of our project, hosted both of these conferences.

The support we received from Bernhard Streck was different but equally strong. He, with his staff and students at Leipzig University, contributed significantly during the early stages when we tried to conceptualize and formulate the Rhetoric Culture project. We still recall how, without hesitation, Anke Reichenbach hopped on the train one night to travel from Leipzig to Mainz so as to help and cheer up the Rhetoric Culture group during a moment of severe crisis.

Although we have already mentioned them in the preface, here we want to emphasize how much we owe to Christian Meyer, Anna-Maria Brandstetter, and Felix Girke. Without their good humor, creative imagination and dedication the Rhetoric Culture conferences and the present book would never have materialized.

After the first two conferences, the project consolidated and we received support from a widening circle of scholars who helped identify central topics for research, suggested to whom else invitations might be tendered, provided titles for our bibliography, and assisted in writing proposals for further Rhetoric Culture conferences. For the latter, we are especially indebted to Stephen Gudeman and Ralph Cintron. They contributed enormously to getting the Rhetoric Culture project rolling by way of email, phone, and face-to-face conversations with many others, in particular Jon Abbink, J. F. Bailey, Vincenzo Cannada-Bartoli, Ellen Basso, Donald Brenneis, Francois Douay, James and Renate Fernandez, James Fox, Gerard and Jean Hauser, Pierre Maranda, David MacDougall, Brigitte Nerlich, Jean Nienkamp, Todd Oakley, and Susanne Schröter.

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us into questioning and rethinking some of the basic assumptions and aspirations underlying the Rhetoric Culture project.

Although we tried to be international, most contributors to the Rhetoric Culture conferences came from Europe, North America, and Australia. Luckily, we had a strong contingent of scholars from Africa who widened and enlivened our discussions. We thank you warmly: Felix Ameka, Shifferaw Bekele, Andreas Eshéte, Mabilia Mantuba-Ngoma, Alula Pankhurst, Philippe-Joseph Salazar, Kwesi Yankah, and Baye Yimam.

After we held the (at times tumultuous) Rhetoric Culture conferences, we asked some of the contributors to sum up their views of what actually had happened. As our homepage (www.rhetoricculture.org) shows, Michael Carrithers, Ralph Cintron, Stephen Gudeman, and Keith Hart have done a wonderful job here. Their thoughtful summaries and comments deserve special thanks because they helped to establish the validity of the Rhetoric Culture project, and to uphold confidence during the long time that elapsed between the conferences and the publication of results.

When the time came to look for a publisher we were very fortunate to find that Berghahn Books was ready to establish a new series entitled *Studies in Rhetoric and Culture*, where the results of the Rhetoric Culture conferences could be published. Marion Berghahn and her daughter Vivian, both of whom hold degrees in anthropology, have a good understanding of the promises and pitfalls of our project and have carefully steered the present book (and those that follow) to completion. We would like to express our gratitude to them, as well as to the anonymous readers and Robert Hariman whose critical comments helped to restructure and improve the book.

Finally, we embrace and kiss our wives—Martha and Jean—and thank them for their (often teasing and ironic) support. In countless conversations they have contributed their professional knowledge of psychology, literature, anthropology, and linguistics to our emerging thoughts, and have encouraged us to call for a marriage between rhetoric and anthropology, and to explore the relationship between rhetoric and culture.