The International Rhetoric Culture Project has stated in its theoretical outline that “just as rhetoric is founded in culture, culture is founded in rhetoric.” The first part of this chiasmus can readily be accepted, since cross-cultural research on speaker performance, memory techniques, social expression of emotion, practical reasoning, and the interrelation between speaking styles and political organization have provided abundant evidence that rhetoric is culture-specific. Extensive research in folklore studies, the ethnography of speaking, and linguistic anthropology have also proved this claim over and over again, the most spectacular cases being the use of parallelism and metaphor (e.g., Fox 1988, Fernandez 1991, Meyer 2007 for an overview). It is the second part of the chiastic assertion—that culture is founded in rhetoric—that is unfamiliar and seems more difficult to accept. How can culture be founded in rhetoric?

Earlier volumes of this series have already presented theoretical reflections and empirical cases that address the complex and ever-shifting relationship between rhetoric and culture. Each, however, focused on a specific aspect of the larger project. The first volume, *Culture & Rhetoric*, edited by Ivo Strecker and Stephen Tyler, opens up a whole range of possible connections between the two, both as academic fields of study and as basic phenomena of human experience. This is achieved in particular by highlighting the pervasiveness and imaginative power of figuration. The topic of the second volume, *Culture, Rhetoric, and the Vicissitudes of Life*, edited by Michael Carrithers, is how people talk themselves into, through, and out of existential predicaments. It focuses in particular on narratives and ambiguities—external as well as internal—of explaining, naturalizing, justifying, or overcoming dissociating crises and destinies. The third volume, *Economic Persuasions*, edited by Stephen
Gudeman, applies rhetoric culture theory to economics, a field that recently has been gaining explanatory prominence far beyond its nominal boundaries. The contributors to that volume reveal the rhetorical character of basic economic concepts. The book that you are holding in your hands addresses a complementary topic, namely, how culture emerges out of rhetorical action.

From “Dialogic” to “Rhetorical” Emergence of Culture

In recent years, across many fields, scholars have made constant attempts at finding models that free culture and communication from idealist and mentalist biases and situate them within ephemeral human practice. Alternative concepts such as discursivity, intertextuality, or dialogicality, however, are burdened and constrained by their background in literary and social criticism. For example, their reliance on “text,” which is a rather special form of communicative exchange, or the aim of establishing normative guidelines for rational discourse, guidelines that have little descriptive, let alone analytical capacity, are among their central features that one might not want to retain. Still, the basic concern to do justice to the situated, bodily, and often antagonistic character of cultural and communicative practices has come to be shared by numerous scholars throughout linguistic anthropology, interactionalist sociology, discursive psychology, and rhetoric studies. On the one hand, this is evidenced by newly introduced concepts such as linguistic ideology (Irvine/Gal 2000), meta-pragmatics (Silverstein 1993), embodied knowledge (Lakoff/Johnson 1999), persuasion (Cialdini 2001), or construction grammar (Lakoff 1987, Goldberg 1995). On the other hand, rhetoric studies in particular have begun to address issues far beyond formal speech and literary aesthetics by turning to topics such as popular culture (Mailloux 1989), identity, new media, race, or visual culture, and embracing ethnographic methods (Cintron 1997), which better allow taking account of social processes and cognitive dynamics.

In the light of these developments, we suggest that rhetoric might provide an adequate background for a contemporary, dynamical notion of culture. Rhetoric acknowledges the virtues of a discursive or dialogical approach, while simultaneously emphasizing just as much the material dimension of living bodies who communicate and, conjointly or in contention, create culture. For us, the most fundamental site of such creation, of the eponymous emergence, is the social situation itself rather than individual socialization or collective moments of a largely statistical nature. We maintain this preference from an earlier inspirational source to which the title of the present book alludes: The Dialogic Emergence of Culture (1995, hereafter Dialogic), edited by Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim. Their volume, well received by crit-
ics but still awaiting further utilization for anthropological theory building,\(^2\) presents a “dialogical critique of anthropology” (1995: 3) and aims at a theory, which is more embracing than preceding varieties of dialogical anthropology\(^3\) (e.g., Rabinow 1977, Dwyer 1982).

The editors of *Dialogic* emphasize that “the production of objects by means of discourse is already under way among the natives before any field-worker gets there” (1995: 2). They expand the Bakhtinian view that cultural knowledge emerges from dialogue by starting off with a brief anecdote related by Roman Jacobson about a Russian storyteller who told his tales in permanent dialogue with his audience, whose replies, responses, and reactions he continually integrated into the twists and turns of his narrative. In other words, Jacobson found that these folktales were dialogic in nature (1995: 1). To consider them monologic would be evidence of an academic “pathology.” The same applies to other forms of communication, so that most of our every-day language evolves as “an emergent property of dialogues” (ibid.). The argument holds true mutatis mutandis for culture—“cultures are continuously produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues of their members” (1995: 2).\(^4\)

This implies that individual action does not merely reflect social structure, but that structure emerges through social action in dialogue (1995: 5).\(^5\) Complex cultural patterns develop out of simpler interactions, yet no authorial agency is clearly identifiable (see Stoller 1994: 356). Tedlock and Mannheim here refer to the standard definition of emergence by evolutionary biology, which states, first, that new levels of organization have their own properties and are irreducible to their component parts, and, second, that they include “some degree of contingency” (1995: 9).

Thus, the first aspect of emergence is that it describes processes as being in a constant state of becoming, even as they are always drawing on former developments. Thinking about social processes in such a way makes sense not only for history but for any discipline that runs the risk of reifying non-physical non-entities (such as, say, “practice” or “culture”), even if only for heuristic purposes. Instead, we remain aware that “all of our closures are but possible openings” (Strecker et al. 2003), and that, both in social science and in quotidian life, “the object emerges out of the description only as the description emerges out of the object” (Tyler, chapter 15, this volume).

Secondly, the aspect of contingency is central—the whole is more than its constituent parts because it is not predetermined. In Tedlock and Mannheim’s model of cultural emergence through dialogical interaction, “every interaction takes place within specific social, institutional, and historical coordinates, all of which color the interaction at the same time as they are reshaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by that interaction” (1995: 9). Conversations, thus, are contingent “joint ventures” (Clark 1996) of their participants. Nobody is able
to fully anticipate the outcome, since conversations are affected by dynamics beyond their own reach and even by seeming bystanders, who now have to be understood as participants, too: they—be it through gesture and posture, or “rhythmic synchronization”—signal their stances or attitudes (Tedlock/Mannheim 1995: 9), thus contributing to the shaping of the dialogue, which thereby becomes a blend of different life stories, personal interests, and spatiotemporal conditions. “Any single participant is, indeed, positioned socially, but no single voice can be understood except in the context of all the others, against the background of the emergent social reality that both reflects and shapes their interaction” (1995: 14).

Tedlock and Mannheim emphasize that the acting individual is at “no point in this process … regarded as autonomous” (1995: 5). This problematizes the notion of “subjectivity,” and Tedlock and Mannheim are clear on that it has to be thought of as “an embodied constellation of voices” (1995: 8). Thus, the self, similar to Bakhtin's ideas, needs to be conceived as consisting of multiple selves, or of a “society of minds” as Hubert Hermans (2002) has put it, which interact with one another in dialogical fashion and polyphonic concerto. Accordingly, culture, dialogically emergent, cannot be fully understood through recourse to the separate actions of individuals.6

More than in the theory of dialogue, where properties of the whole seem to be retraceable to their constituent parts more readily, in rhetorical theory contingency plays a prominent role as basic to the human condition. As Hans Blumenberg (1981) has pointed out, lack of evidence caused by contingency provides the ultimate raison d'être of rhetoric. As people cannot always await sufficient information, as they are caught in a constant, inevitable need to act, their only means to overcome the uncertainties of their situation is resolute inward and outward persuasion. People constantly experience surprises, and they just as constantly try to rhetorically make sense of experienced contingency, i.e., in persuading themselves and others of one convenient interpretation out of a vast array of options. The constitutional problem for interaction addressed by Niklas Luhmann (by way of Talcott Parsons) as “double contingency,” with which he refers to the awareness of actors in a social situation of both their own and the Other’s contingency, can only be dealt with by rhetoric. Since interactants are black boxes to each other and can only interact by deploying “self-referential operations” (e.g., Luhmann 1995: 109f.), rhetorical success—an attitude change, a desired behavior—is the one and only measure of communicative felicity. Furthermore, since only the materiality of a subsequent action (or utterance) objectifies communicative success, rhetoric, through the possible change of the addressee's behavior, attitude, or opinion, fulfills the exigency of a quality leap inherent in emergence theory. Dialogue, as Tedlock and Mannheim expose it, merely displays supervenience, i.e., the
simple aggregation of a multitude of identifiable intertextual elements to a new organic textual feature.

Embracing emergence, and a correspondingly limited directorial power of intention, thus has the epistemological advantage that we are wary of all naturalizations of social life, be it in structural functionalism or any other deterministic research program. Karin Barber describes this danger by identifying two diametrically opposed sides—one “proposes that the normal situation is inertia, stability and repetition. What needs to be explained is how and why change happens … [t]he other model starts from the opposite assumption—that everything that happens is new, unrepeatable and not wholly predictable from what went before” (2007: 25). Sympathetic to the second stance, she refers to G. H. Mead in stating that “scientists and historians seek to find rational order and stretch this back to that the present may be seen to follow from the past; but in fact time itself is constituted out of a succession of ‘interruptions.’… The past is ‘as hypothetical as the future; the present, defined by the emergent, is constantly breaking new ground” (2007: 26). The explanandum is therefore how the idea (or illusion) of continuity, pattern, and direction comes about—in Barber’s catchy phrase, “how people go about solidifying the flux of social life” (ibid.)—rather than why and how change happens. Agency, as the authors of Dialogical have put it, therefore emerges out of the intersubjective dialogical situation. It is neither situated in the autonomous subject as in existentialistic conceptions, nor in any kind of transcendental agent as in idealism.7

Hence, again applying the heuristic model of the chiasmus, neither does the orator fully master their discourse, nor does the discourse entirely master the orator—“rhetoric is taken as an uncertain and provisional social project” (Battaglia 1995: 2). Rather, as agency and structure are co-emergent and mutually determinant, so are culture rhetorically emergent and rhetoric culturally emergent. Philip Chase (2006), after the discoveries of so many facets of “animal culture” by ethologists, claimed “cultural emergence,” not culture, to be the one determining, qualitative difference between humans and animals (for an early viewpoint, see Galpin 1937). Culture created by humans is the only culture that can become the frame of reference, toolbox, and building-kit for the creation, or even escalation of further culture. Thus humans, as the only animals, are able to leave their biological determination and create a self-referential culture (see Csányi 1994, Levinson 2005). According to Chase, the “socially created coding” that emerges out of interaction may lead to behavior that—being already motivated by other codes—can even be detrimental to “individual evolutionary success” (2006: 1f., 49). In doing so, Chase dissociates the analysis of interaction from assumptions of “functionality.”

While the notion of culture thus might be used in reference to the entirety of phylogenetic evolution and human history (and rhetoric has certainly
played its part in it) as well as to the question of how the individual becomes culturally socialized (or “enculturated”—another moment where rhetoric is crucial), the issue we are mainly engaged with in this volume is different: the much more situational emergence of cultural phenomena that solidify only afterward in institutions, conventions, or other forms of cultural memory.

Seeing the creation and reproduction of culture as a truly dialogical process wherein individual authorial agency cannot be assumed, how do Tedlock and Mannheim understand meaning? Instead of locating it in the preformed intentions of interacting individuals, they put it as “an emergent property of performance, conceived as a fully engaged social event and constructed jointly through the actions of all participants in the event” (1995: 13). As a rhetorical approach would add, these multiple voices within us are rhetorical insofar as they are laden with will and power (see Du Bois, chapter 2, this volume).

However, if the individuals who act dialogically are already dialogically socialized, and think dialogically, can any subjectivity, any quintessential individualism be assumed as driving forces of structuration? How can we conceive of individual agencies as vectors in dialogue when the individual is already essentially dialogical? When the individual has inescapably internalized social structure and culture through past dialogues? When, moreover, it is actually thinking against imagined dialogue partners even in internal dialogues (G. H. Mead’s “generalized Other”)? The present book suggests that rhetoric (as opposed to dialogue) overcomes this dilemma, for rhetoric emphasizes the role of power in conversation, the experience of one individual imposing their will on another. Moreover, the notion of rhetoric also highlights the human body as one of the factors involved in interaction. The production of utterances and other actions is a bodily activity requiring energetic effort and involvement, so that these actions do not only possess a symbolic, but also a material aspect (see Meyer 2009: 28, 46). One consequence is that actions do not only transport ideas, but also all kinds of affective qualities and bodily presences, as becomes evident in the famous Wittgensteinian expression that “meaning [is] a physiognomy,” quoted in John Shotter’s contribution to this volume (chapter 1).

This sometimes even collision-prone materiality of dialogic interaction was also emphasized by Bakhtin in his earlier work (e.g., 1981: 340, 405). Later, Bakhtin step-by-step gave up this position for one that more decidedly argued for an intertextual notion of the dialogic, a usage still commonly encountered today: that speakers talk by borrowing and reusing the words of others. As the later Bakhtin says: “Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is elated by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word ‘response’ here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supple-
ments, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow
takes them into account” (1986: 91; see also 1986: 76, 125, 150). This move in
Bakhtin’s notion of dialogue, from a materialistic conception to a more idealis-
tic one, might well mirror his life and times. From his rhetoric-saturated world
of Soviet propaganda (see his hostile remarks on rhetoric in, e.g., 1986: 150),
he pleaded for a more thorough consideration of dialogue (although in a dia-
lectical sense at first) in order to raise awareness of the mutually collaborative
activities in producing utterances, thus providing a counterpoint to contem-
porary top-down declarations of ideologies. Conversely, today many scholars
advocate the concept of rhetoric out of their dialogue-saturated democratic
world of civic institutions and politically correct ethics of discourse.

Therefore, a compelling reason for us to replace “dialogue” with “rhetoric”
is that Tedlock and Mannheim’s approach is not sufficiently clear in explaining
what happens when models, definitions of the situation, or individual inten-
tions made manifest in dialogue, happen to conflict and collide. Tedlock and
Mannheim merely assume that “social events require the tacit collusion of the
participants, who implicitly agree that they are interpreting the events within
the same general framework” (1995: 13). By introducing the term collusion,
they do in fact evade the danger of excluding conflict from interaction by ac-
knowledging that the emergence of dominance relations is part and parcel of
this interactional play of track-and-respond. For, while collusion does not im-
ply consent to, it definitely entails compliance with dominance relations. Still,
as Strecker and Tyler (2009: 3) have already stated, the terms collusion and
compliance inevitably refer back to persuasion: how can collusion be produced
in interaction if not rhetorically? Tedlock and Mannheim seem aware of the
power dimension in interaction when they write that dialogical actors are “so-
cially positioned . . . , embodying vectors of power and authority,” and they “are
always specific individuals with specific histories of interaction with the other
participants in the performance” (1995: 13). But they do not enrich the ano-
dyne and inoffensive concept of “dialogue” with ideas of power, dominance,
and fight.

So whereas dialogue, in Bakhtin’s later writings and also in our everyday
understanding, is by definition non-(ant)agonistic, or, to take up the ancient
Socratic term, non-eristic, rhetoric calls to mind the successful, energetic ora-
tor who bends the audience to his will and manipulates people’s desires, who
can even overwhelm the subjective Other, manipulate their most inner self,
their desires, dreams, feelings, who can exploit them, violate, damage, change,
shape, or seduce them, and at the very least monopolize their attention by any
means available (see Oakley, chapter 14, this volume). Rhetoric, as Kenneth
Burke says (1945: xvii), adds on to its dialogical “you and me’ quality” the
dimension that it is willfully “addressed to some person or to some advantage,”
that it intends “to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents” (1950: 41). Dialogue, at least in its widely held normative sense, evokes an overly harmonic love-fest, whereas rhetoric emphasizes the open or clandestine attempt at seizing the Other’s inner being, which is principally understood as malleable. The chapter (10) by Alexander Henn in this volume presents a drastic example of a transition from collusion to collision, analyzing how a translation process, originally born out of a genuine interest in an Other, is turned on its head and becomes instead aimed at the cultural destruction of this very Other.

Focusing on dialogue, Tedlock and Mannheim, as well as the other contributors to Dialogic, underemphasize the permanent play of individuals with their own intentions and those of others in the interactional endeavor, as part of strategies to ambush each other by verbal force and “dangerous words” (Brenneis/Myers 1984). Intentionality, addressivity, attribution, motivation—all these concepts of social, psychological, and linguistic theory require some appreciation of the inchoate individual will, be it the Nietzschean will for power or the biological will for existence (see Geist 1978; or a newer discussion in Ross et al. 2007). The Bakhtinian notion of “true dialogue” they employ, that is, “a social field across which multiple voices and multiple cultural logics contend with each other” (Tedlock/Mannheim 1995: 4) or in “dialogy as a relational dialectic grounded in complementarity and diversity, rather than antagony and monopoly” (Albro/Berkley 1999: 39), rings hollow in its idealism. It recalls Jürgen Habermas’s normative pragmatics where the focal force operant in communication is the “peculiar non-coercive force of the better argument” (1973: 137). But already to speak of interactional or dialogical coordination (e.g., Marková et al. 1995, Clark 1996: 82–91) entails thinking of something to be coordinated, be it intentionality or will, some subjectivities to be made intersubjective through interaction.

Our references to intentionality and will do not mean to deny, but rather to affirm that participants are caught up in emergent situations beyond their own making; but we suggest that the concept of dialogue that enables us so well to think of the intersubjectivity in social life does not do full justice to the “multiplicity of voices” invoked by Tedlock and Mannheim and their contributors. Participation in a dialogue entails being involved with one’s personality, responsibility, and anticipation (see Du Bois, chapter 2, this volume). People participate in interaction in a holistic way, as acting selves and bearers of “embodied experience,” as the advocates of an anti-Cartesian notion of self and society have introduced it (e.g., Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, Simmel, Mead, etc.; also Shotter, chapter 1, this volume). Thus, with rhetoric, we expand the dialogical field from the space in between interactants to also embrace their selves, their very subjectivities that, strangely protected and sacrosanct in the notion of
dialogue, are the very target of rhetoric. The cultural product of a dialogue is then not necessarily a polyphonic opera, but might also be merely one voice that has overpowered the others, or one voice fusing together the many, whose multivocality is not retraceable any more, and where the outcome, to put it in terms of emergence, has acquired a new quality irreducible to its component parts. The concept of intentionality, prominent in many Western approaches to language and action, such as speech act theory or pragmatics, has also rightly been criticized by linguistic anthropologists for its bias on the autonomous individual based on Western folk models of the person (see Duranti 2006).

Thus, in the exploration of intentional efforts in persuasion, we have to move beyond the individual, strategic agency of the rational actor. For this, Dialogic has laid the groundwork. To say that human beings act dialogically rightfully refers to their awareness of intersubjectivity (also a theory of mind [ToM]), which leaves them responsive to the verbal or nonverbal clues they perceive, often in a habitual and barely conscious way. What is missing from this approach is the power of persuasion—the signals we give, the claims we make, the vectors of power we exude. They are initiated by will and creativity, aimed at stirring others and ourselves into action (and not, as in dialogue, merely into interested contemplation). We humans can open up to dialogue just as well as we can close down to it at times, and are cognitively equipped to even venture into the fantastic, or into madness, and be brilliantly creative as well as insanely antisocial, monad-like, shutting out other voices against our better knowledge. Only then can one render intelligible in more than an evolutionary sense why people even speak dialogically when they “talk to themselves” (Dialogic 1995: 7). Thus, dialogue is only one side of the rhetorical medal, the, in one way or the other, collaborative side, whereas its obverse is the voluntary or involuntary retreat of the individual into their subjective self. It seems overdue to integrate the dialogical and the voluntaristic in one rhetorical approach. For just as there are instances where an overarching history moulds its subjects, there are also moments when the competent individual may make history through prudent, kairotic rhetorical action.

What we take from the introduction to The Dialogic Emergence of Culture is, thus, an awareness of the nature of culture: that it emerges, and keeps emerging, from human interaction. In advocating rhetoric we suggest a model of emergence that takes account of both the oscillating forces of the cooperative and the confrontational in interaction and of the individual as genuinely social yet existentially willful. By reason of its power to create unity as well as fragmentation (see Hogan 1998), rhetoric, as we propose it, must be conceived as more wide-ranging than dialogue, for it is constituted both by will and by dialogue, in fact by the constant back and forth feedback between the two. It then stands for the permanent oscillation of actors between the intersubjec-
tive and the subjective, or between the situation and its constraints, and the individual and their will. It can neither be reduced to subjectivity nor to intersubjectivity, but is constituted by the situational interaction between both (see also Hariman 1995: 183).

Previous Narratives on Rhetoric and Culture

The pursuit of the present book has many predecessors in the humanities even in pre-academic times—but also contemporary, differently worded approaches (see Meyer 2009). In tracing some ideas from the early Sophists up to current thinkers, we want to ground our claims about the rhetorical emergence of culture in a long tradition of scholars who have attempted to not only reconcile simplistic oppositions of agency and structure, body and mind, and matter and idea, but who have tried to render intelligible how culture can arise from seemingly dispersed individual actions and interactions.

The idea that culture is created by rhetoric was already proposed in antiquity. At the time of emerging Greek democracy the power of persuasion was the great mystery of the time, and Gorgias marveled how “discourse is a great potentate, which by the smallest and most secret body accomplishes the most divine works; for it can stop fear and assuage pain and produce joy and make mercy abound” (1999: § 8). Speaking is social action and much of social action is speaking, and as only rhetoric was considered capable of organizing social life, the Sophists held it in high esteem, performing it in public and teaching it, sometimes even claiming that, as an art, it enabled all humans “to make the weaker argument the stronger” (Protagoras; also Aristotle 2004: 112/II, 24.1402A18–27). Isocrates, heir to the sophists, praised the “power” of persuasion in the development of societies and cultures, saying:

Because there is born in us the power to persuade each other and to show ourselves whatever we wish, we not only have escaped from living as brutes, but also by coming together have founded cities and set up laws and invented arts, and speech has helped us attain practically all of the things we have devised. For it is speech that has made laws about justice and injustice and honour and disgrace, without which provisions we should not be able to live together. By speech we refute the wicked and praise the good. By speech we educate the ignorant and inform the wise (1928: 326).

In contrast to the later rhetorical tradition, the Sophists held that rhetoric comprises all kinds of human expressions and sociality and is not restricted to specific social settings or genres (see Baumhauer 1986, Schiappa 1992, 1999). Evidently, Isocrates, just as the authors of Dialogic as well as of the present vol-
ume, asks how we may grasp the question of individual action in the process of history. He seems to suggest that neither the rhetorical actor nor a transcentental teleological program constitute the sole driving force in the creation of humanity. It is rather the “inborn power to persuade,” which urges us to act and interact and thus creates the continuous impulse to change. With the concept of such an inborn power, Isocrates offers a possible reconciling moment in the classical social science opposition between approaches emphasizing the rationally acting individual and approaches highlighting structural determination of cultural practice: his actor is not determined but tries to determine others, he acts willfully, but is constrained in many ways and not a fully rationally homo economicus.

The rivaling and eventually triumphant positions of Plato and later, though less radical, of Aristotle, promoted a conceptual (and political) reduction of rhetoric to monological eloquence, and a semiotic divide between the orator and the audience (see Hauser, chapter 7, this volume). The intentionality residing in speech was now facilely assigned to the speaking person, and questions of understanding were assigned to the relation between the two. Persuasive action, then, was seen as a direct result of the orator’s will as related to concrete historical circumstances. However, the orator is rarely the real master of his audience or of the rhetorical situation (see Zebroski, chapter 13, this volume), but is subject to constraints and contingencies that he cannot fully control. Some centuries later, Cicero, while agreeing with the Sophists on the constitutive importance of the interplay of rhetoric and culture/social life (1967: 23–27), presented rhetoric merely as an art and technique completely under the thorough control of man, which had to be acquired through education (see Robling, chapter 12, this volume).

The idea that culture emerges out of rhetorical action was (with the notable exceptions of the early modern philosopher Vico—as John Shotter reminds us in chapter 1 of this volume—and of Nietzsche) not taken up again until the linguistic turn and the New Rhetoric at the beginning of the twentieth century. Kenneth Burke was among the first to rediscover rhetoric as a way to deal with the paradox of human sociality. Anticipating current insights of brain research, he said that although humans are separated from each other as physical beings, they are psychically “con-substantial” (1950: 21) and use language and symbols in order to identify with one another. If all of us were incommensurably different, language would be in vain, and if we were all of one mind, we would not need language. Rhetoric acts in the middle ground between identity and difference, it induces cooperation and harmony as well as discord and misunderstanding. Through the constant process of inward and outward persuasion, individuals acquire social and cultural competence and learn to understand themselves: “If [the individual] does not somehow act to
tell himself (as his own audience) what the various brands of rhetorician have
told him, his persuasion is not complete. Only those voices from without are
effective which can speak in the language of a voice within” (1950: 39).

**Resonance: The Elementary Stimulant of Cultural Emergence**

One way to address the problem of emergence in culture is to take account of
resonance, which is accordingly recognized in the present volume as a universal
and basic feature of human existence. The notion of “resonance” emphasizes
that people “tune in” with their social, cultural, and ecological environment
(see Gallagher 1994, Strecker 2000, and also chapter 6, this volume), and, in
particular, it addresses unspeakable phenomena in interaction, such as body
language and spontaneous understanding. Whereas concepts like agency or
coordination tacitly imply a conscious conduct of humans in responding to
each other, resonance stresses the elusive power that is exerted in communica-
tion and that is not easily controlled or even consciously registered by us.
Resonance accords well with our view that social life is emergent and con-
stantly needs mutual adaptation. Subjectivity and objectivity are thus to be un-
derstood as mental concomitants of the intersubjective situation where people,
who are physically separated but mentally connected through their common
response to symbols, constantly and in a never-ending dialogue create their
subjective as well as objective worlds.

Unni Wikan—in seeking to get “beyond the words”—has explored reso-
nance as an alternative research method “that better enables us to heed peo-
ple's complaints, along with their joys … [it] allows us to see communication
within social relationships and to put what is unspoken and self-evident to
speakers into place before focusing on concepts and discourse” (1992: 470f.).
This can be achieved through “attending” and sharing as much of others’ day-
to-day worlds as possible. In effect, Wikan demands that anthropologists open
themselves up to resonance, which means to open up not only their minds
but also their hearts—for Wikan’s Balinese interlocutors effectively the same
thing: *keneh*, “feeling-thought” (1992: 463)—and listen to the unsaid, or even
unspeakable, that other actors want to convey. While Wikan has an ethical and
methodological agenda, it is clear that she also views resonance as a constitu-
tive element of interaction. This is where Pierre Maranda (chapter 3, this vol-
ume) comes in: “If we ‘resonate’ in unison or at least in some sort of harmony,
if we think that we feel approximately the same ‘vibes’ as our interlocutors, we
maintain and reinforce positive relationships. Orators work on such dynam-
ics when they aim at consolidating cultural inertia. On the other hand, when
they disrupt inertia through defiant or rebellious speeches, dissonance arises,
consensual vectors are no longer operational and dissent or even conflict may ensue.”

Thus, in this volume, resonance is understood as the ephemeral and elusive process that makes it possible and indeed attractive for us to coordinate with each other without being explicit about it. Resonance is a seemingly non-coercive force, a seductive power of culture and communication, which affects the body, the emotions, and the mind. Audiences for example do not merely strive to literally understand speakers, but are instead caught up in dense fields of concomitant associations and implications as well as their own bodily responses. As a speaker, we might only in the reactions of our opposites come to develop our conscious intentions. We experience the total communicative situation as a “physiognomy” (see Shotter, chapter 1, this volume), a “Gestalt” that affects us holistically, even with all its contingencies.

To use resonance in discussions of social interaction means putting a strong emphasis on the affective qualities of dialogic interaction, its unpredictable, sometimes poetically harmonious and sometimes disruptive instances. It is here where the Baconian definition of rhetoric as “applying reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will” may be inverted—we might as well apply imagination to reason in order to constrain somebody's will and intentions. Despite the worry of double contingency, humans—as physical beings—are principally open to external influences. They are exposed to forces that emanate from nature as well as from other human beings, through their voices (melody, rhythm, volume) or their bodily presence (posture, gesture, facial expression, movements, appearance, smell). Thus, the always bodily experience of intersubjectivity, along with the Burkean “deep propensity to address” (Carrithers 2009: 7) and our constant lookout for meaning and the attribution of intention to human or non-human Others, is inseparable from, indeed embodied in, interaction. Meaning is used here in a sense that is somewhat removed from referentiality; it serves—corresponding to the ethnomethodological notion of meaning—as a placeholder for the assumption of an actor that there is something unsaid behind the said, that there is still another rhetorical will at work, that another being, just as thrown into existence as oneself, is calling out: “So now for us meaning is not in some scarce and minuscule germ of abstraction secreted in the interstices of quasi-mathematical forms, it abounds instead in the resonating silence of the unsaid—in that possibility of all meaning” (Tyler 1978: 465; see also Strecker, chapter 6, this volume).

To attend to resonance also aligns with George Kennedy’s idea of rhetoric as the “energy inherent in communication,” the “emotional energy that compels the speaker” that is never fully absent in any interaction (1992: 2), well visible in the constant attribution of meaning motivated by will and intention to
the actions of others and oneself. Similarly, Paul Friedrich and John Attinasi, in *Dialogic* (1995: 35f.), use notions of “corporeal attraction” and “energies” of the participants in social discourse. Rhetoric, then, is an energetic and bodily, at least as much as a semiotic and mental, phenomenon, it is the means, and also the manifestation, of the perpetual adjustment of our expressiveness to the “physiognomy of the dialogic situation” (Shotter, chapter 1, this volume), and our intentions are constantly transformed in such energetic dialogues through which the “worded world strives to capture a non-worded practice” (Carbaugh/Boromisza-Habashi, chapter 4, this volume).

Several of the contributors to this book address the issue of how human interaction is caught up in uncertainty and ambiguity, how it is irreducible to prefigured, emergent, or ex post facto ascribed intentions of the interactants, how very little determinacy and evidence there are in which to ground beliefs. However, as the ancient notion of *kairos* implies, human beings have the ability to make productive use of crises. Stephen Tyler pointed this out some time ago:

> Our speaking presupposes that we do share in the same objective conventionality, and when we are rudely made to see that we do not, as when others misunderstand us, we do not, except in unusual circumstances, give up on speech, but we seek instead to repair the rents in our net of common intersubjectivity and to get others to understand us. When, in the course of practical affairs, we are confronted with the fact of the presuppositional basis of intersubjectivity, we interpret that revelation as a signal to re-establish and reaffirm its objective conventionality. Apprehensive at the incipient disintegration of our world of previously unquestioned common understandings, we do not retreat into desperately silent loneliness, but are impelled instead to reaffirm and accomplish that world through constructive negotiation. Thus it is that conventionality emerges from and is sustained in communication. Communication does not require just an objective conventionality, it needs conventionality which is at once subjective and objective. (1978: 148)

Tyler’s “constructive negotiation” corresponds to our rhetorical interaction, as it affirms the fleeting patterns we create to make sense of the world. Culture perpetually resonates with us in “concrete or virtual practices of discourse” (see Strecker et al. 2003). As the contributions to this volume emphasize, the rhetorical creation of culture comes about through emergent decentered or collective intentionality, which bears resemblance to an invisible hand, or even Maximilien Robespierre’s understanding of the revolutionary *volonté générale* (see Žižek 2007: xxi–xxiii). Such emergence embeds ephemeral micro-phenomena of resonance in a wider historical field, letting them coalesce into more or less permanent and observable social or cultural facts. Culture, thus,
is to some extent created, manipulated, and renewed through never-ceasing resonant phenomena as they are produced in intentional or unintentional acts of persuasion.

**Contemporary Parallels**

As we have seen, this book draws on one direct parent and various remote ancestors. Other books of the same generation as this one also bear a strong family resemblance as they address related issues. We have exemplarily chosen two recent publications, Nick Enfield and Stephen Levinson’s *Roots of Human Sociality: Culture, Cognition and Interaction* (2006), and Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold’s *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (2007), both of which are strong contributions to contemporary anthropology and address two questions that are important for this book: the question of creative action, and the question of sociality.

The creative power of the individual as the wellspring of cultural innovation is the central focus of *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (hereafter *Improvisation*). For the authors, improvisation is the driving force of culture, since there “is no script for social and cultural life” (2007: 1). If culture is non-determinate, all actions making up social life stem from the human capacity to learn and to improvise. This should not be understood as hasty bricolage, or shoddy social workmanship. Rather, improvisation is a “cultural imperative” because the world is an unreliable place, and cultural conventions are at best “rules of thumb whose power lies in their very vagueness or non-specificity” (2007: 2). Thus, improvisation is the norm, not an exception or a deviation. It is evidence of creative adjustment and adaptation in a constantly shifting field, rather than a process that breaches a set of more static conditions, be they natural or cultural. This does not mean to say that there are no conditions, no “scripts” at all: improvisation has a temporal, a sequential component in that it can only be diagnosed where it references a previous convention. Instead of being thought of as random, improvisation in fact requires shared cultural “scripts” that have to be understood as prototypes around which actual practice mostly aligns in a scattershot pattern. Such patterns shift, too, and yesterday’s improvisation can quickly coalesce into today’s script, again inviting creativity and improvisation.

In their introduction, Hallam and Ingold invoke emergence as the nature of the world in anything but the name: “The improvisational creativity of which we speak is that of a world that is crescent rather than created” (2007: 3). “Crescent” vividly captures the developing and continuous yet twisted and branching path of culture, which neither follows blueprints nor remains at
predictable homeostasis. Life is, as Kirsten Hastrup’s chapter argues, “always spilling over into new histories, new ways of thinking and new complexities” (2007: 193). Her pithy Bakhtinian phrase here is “the eventness of being” (2007: 193f)—life is not configured, life occurs; or, referring back to Nietzsche, “being is becoming.” While individuals are thus not in full command of their actions, like agents in Aristotelian drama being “caught in the action” (2007: 196), anticipation plays a central role (2007: 199), especially in our reaction to our anticipation of a “story” (see also Oakley, chapter 14, on prolepsis, and Hauser, chapter 7, on Burke, both in this volume).

As human beings are constantly engaged in reconciling emerging developments with the past they are prone to illusions, which are necessary for social life (2007: 198), and it is thus that we “perform a world into being … [w]e may even speak the world into occurring, because speech in itself is an act” (ibid.), and patterns emerge in retrospection or anticipation—in the end, “the eventness of being concedes to the illusion of wholeness” (2007: 199). The editors claim that improvisation is “relational, in that it is continually attuned and responsive to the performance of others” (2007: 1). But this relatedness, as they develop it, seems to refer only to individual “ways of life” (2007: 7), the paths persons travel. It does not refer to the relatedness to other persons, not even to cooperation and even less so to persuasion, struggles, or conflicts. The relation lies in connecting to antecedents and in carrying over to subsequent events, and not in having to deal with synchronically alternative and competing responses “to life’s contingencies” (2007: 2), and how people adapt to each other in creative ways, or try to convince each other. Even the editors’ idea of “copying or imitation” does not refer to the elementary social condition of interpersonal resonance or negotiated plausibility, but instead is claimed to demand a vague “alignment of observation of the model with action in the world” (2007: 5). For Ingold (2007: 52), the concrescent nature of the world entails that agency in the creation of culture does not lie in the dyad, nor in the creative individual, it lies “neither in persons nor in things, nor even in persons and things.” Instead, Ingold advances that, “agency ‘possesses’ the entities that … are caught up in it. This agency could be none other than the generative flux of the world itself in its continual concrescence, from which persons and things emerge and take the forms they do for the duration of their existence” (ibid.). It is certainly true that in most of the social situations we participate in, the decision to be an agent or a patient is beyond our control; still, to us it seems inconsistent to stress the necessity for human beings to constantly improvise and create culture out of existing features, but not to ground all this in human sociality, in interaction as well as in persuasion and in anticipatory moves such as intention attribution and attention maintenance. We would imagine that a discussion of the rhetorical *kairos* could have been a central ele-
ment of a work on improvisation, since *kairos* is all about well-chosen action, of doing the right thing at the right time in the right place. Human creativity as one important factor in cultural emergence has to be pursued not only into the human mind, or the creative individual, or in its historical imprint, but also in the social situation, the dialogical and rhetorical condition in which willful interactants jointly, through their mutual responsiveness, create something new.

The problem of human sociality—so surprisingly missing in *Improvisation*—has been thoroughly addressed from interdisciplinary perspectives in *Roots of Human Sociality: Culture, Cognition and Interaction* (hereafter *Roots*). With its focus on sociality in and out of the fine mechanics of interaction, *Roots* is moving in quite the opposite direction from *Improvisation*. The editors emphasize that the main characteristic of human interaction is that it is “built on intersubjectivity,” and is “enabling a brand of joint action that is truly open-ended in goals and structure” (2006: 3). Because of the principal inaccessibility of the Other’s mind, people interact by means of mutual intention attribution: “[H]uman social life is intricately structured through the attribution of actions, motives, intentions, and beliefs to fellow interactants” (ibid.).

Enfield and Levinson suggest that individuals are only motivated to react to an event if they can assume that it is not fully contingent, i.e., that it follows an intention, which they see as the most basic requirement for meaning. This is a familiar mainstay of interpretive anthropology since Clifford Geertz’s popularization of the Rylean “wink” and “twitch” distinction (1973). An eye blinks—one observer sees an involuntary, meaningless tic, another feels addressed in a conspiratorial manner, and yet a third recognizes that the wink is in fact a parody of a blink of somebody else again. Without the propensity for “intention attribution,” as Enfield and Levinson stress, participants in any social situation could never know anything, and could accordingly never act, let alone interact meaningfully. It is only through the projection of subjectivity, through a theory of mind (ToM), that we are able to interact, i.e., to create intersubjectivity—again with shades of Luhmann’s double contingency: “Recipients of others’ signals work on the assumption that such signals have been designed specifically for them to extract the intended meaning. In turn, senders of such signals design those signals in such a way as to take into account such an expectation of targeted design on the part of the hearers” (Enfield/Levinson 2006: 6).

Several concepts dwelled on in the contributions to *Roots*, such as Enfield’s “common ground,” William Hanks’s and Herbert Clark’s “commitment,” and Edwin Hutchins’s “distributed cognition,” provide useful tools for further explorations of the emergence of culture through dialogic interaction. “Common ground,” to briefly discuss one of these examples, is designed as the umbrella
term for “mutual knowledge” and “shared expectations”; it “serves the mutual
management of information” (Enfield 2006: 399). Following Paul Grice, En-
field describes it as “the open stockpile of shared presumption that fuels am-
pllicative inference in communication” (ibid.). In other words, it is a repertoire
of knowledge, not unlike the ancient *thesaurus rhetoricae* [the topics]. People
are compelled to maintain and reproduce this common ground with others,
as it both furthers “affiliation” in a public display of shared grounding and
“interactional efficacy,” as coded signals can be “leaner” (2006: 422). Enfield
points out that common ground is an important factor in the “communicative
economy” and provides evolutionary advantages. Much of *Roots* is based on
such an evolutionary perspective, both in relation to ontogeny and phylogeny.
Interaction, right from the start, is understood as an instrument that, particu-
larly for humans, secures evolutionary success. This brings with it a focus on
adaptation, i.e., on the functionally effective, and, of course, on emergence.
But since the authors’ approach works backward from how human interaction
optimally works, and how human adults are cognitively more capable than
infants, it ends up being teleological, and not open-ended. Somehow, there is a
mirror missing from these accounts, that is, a perspective that highlights those
aspects of culture, which can become detrimental for evolutionary success,
since, as Chase (2006) has stated, culture’s prominent property is self-referen-
tiality and not selective adaptation.

Throughout *Roots* there prevails a distaste of issues such as browbeating,
spell-binding, rendering someone speechless, of breach, madness, fanaticism,
and, very markedly, of the issue of coercion through power. To be sure, all of
these are adaptationally non-optimal strategies, which may well disappear in
the long run of human evolution; as of now, though, they are still around and
continue to trouble our lives, since—for example—the breach with some often
entails the cooperation with others. Through actions, verbal and non-verbal,
it is possible to render somebody mute, to overwhelm their capacities of pro-
viding an adequate response when (if at all) their turn comes around in the
interaction order. People can close their minds to prompting acts and invita-
tions by others, even if they understand full well what the other intends—even
if it means losing “interactional efficacy,” people can and often do demolish or
deny common ground, or at least compete over it. To clarify: we agree with
the old Schutzian insight that “conflict, just as much as co-operation, can only
be conducted within an overarching frame of intelligibility” (Heritage 1984:
70), or, in Levinson’s own words even, that “it is cooperative, mutual inter-
subjectivity that is the complex computational task that we seem especially
adapted to. Machiavellian intelligence merely exploits this underlying Hume-
ian intelligence that make intersubjectivity possible” (1995: 253). However, if
it is true that Machiavellian intelligence exploits the Humeian basic disposi-
tion, then human conflict and mutual damaging is a clear example of second order Machiavellian intelligence, i.e., an intelligence that has left the grounds of solely agonistic predator-prey interaction, and entered the ambassadors’ antechambers of disguised cooperation and deceptive collusion. As Joan Silk points out in a comment on Michael Tomasello’s “cooperation theorem” (2009: 119), “mutualism will not generate concern for the welfare of others. Instead, it will generate manipulative tactics. We don’t get from mutualism to Nelson Mandela, we get from mutualism to Niccolò Machiavelli.”

Thus Levinson might be right in stating that “calculating optimal behaviour in agonistic interaction is a far simpler computational problem than calculating coordination: strictly speaking Machiavellian intelligence is child’s play, a lower-order computational ability; Humean intelligence (coordination through implicit contract) is the adult stuff” (Levinson 1995: 227). But exploiting Humean intelligence for disguised Machiavellian goals is a still more refined task, one which maybe only a portion of competent adults is ever able (and probably also willing) to perfectly master. This dark side of, as we want to put it, Humean-cum-Machiavellian, or second-order Humean) interaction, which is left out of the evolutionary approaches praising man’s “special capacity for social interaction” (Levinson 2006: 39), is of central interest to rhetoric, as it helps us think about the articulately cultural situations that are less harmonic and less cooperative than the ones described in Roots and, maybe, in Dialogic, too.

In human sociality, there is not only collusion, there is also often collision, and while most social interaction (also as reported and analyzed in this book) will have been intended to be “interpretable,” it seems advisable not to get too enthusiastic about human Humeianess. The attempt of Roots to show how cooperation and coordination are possible—even transculturally and across linguistic boundaries—is in principle commendable, but in its totalizing view of the harmonic aspects of human relations runs the risk of sidelining relations of domination, here euphemistically called “imperfections” (2006: 14). It is thus precisely because of the potential of culture to emerge in a self-referential way, and thus free from some of its biological constraints (Chase 2006) that humans are able—alas!—to disregard the rationales for their Humeian intelligence (as there are, e.g., reciprocity, mutuality, and shared sentiments; see Tomasello 2008), and instead to hyperbolize and indulge in their Macchiavellian inclinations.

To sum up, the present book is positioned firstly in line with Dialogic, inasmuch as both highlight the discursive emergence of culture, but it adds to the mix the dimensions of confrontation, will, and power in interaction. Secondly, like Improvisation, it stresses the creativity of individual action, but sees it grounded in sociality. Finally, along with Roots, it attends to the fine
mechanics of interaction and human sociality, but it does so without any reference to evolutionary adaptation and success.

This book does not intend to supply a ready toolkit for research and interpretation; it simply hopes to show how rhetoric allows for a more integrated understanding of culture in its dynamic and unpredictable aspects, as it comprehends the oscillation between the subjective and the intersubjective as the basis of emergence.

**The Contributions**

**Part 1: Intersubjectivity**

John Shotter opens up this first section with a discussion of “The Dance of Rhetoric: Dialogic Selves and Spontaneously Responsive Expressions.” He centers his chapter on rhetoric, emergence, and culture, and claims that the very realm of rhetoric is not monological oratory, but “the temporally-unfolding, living processes of everyday activities.” He situates rhetoric at the core of human experience and develops the picture of a living, dynamic, dialogical, and embodied self. Dialogue means for him firstly to respond to a particular situation not only with one’s mind, but with one’s whole being. Such responsiveness can be understood as a “realm of activity which is neither action that can be explained in terms of reasons, nor behavior which can be explained in terms of causes.” This use of *dialogue* aligns with Bakhtin (see above) and Du Bois (see below), as it explicitly goes beyond idealist notions of the unfettered exchange of detached views.

Our bodily participation in the world is the reason why we experience meaning holistically as a “physiognomy,” as Shotter says in reference to Ludwig Wittgenstein, and he points out that “like gestures, like facial expressions, like smiles or frowns, like exclamations of delight or outbursts of dismay, our utterances point outside themselves to a reality beyond.” Understanding others in social interaction is therefore more like understanding a theme in music than a logical theorem in mathematics. This is why rhetoric matters: it is music and reason, action and contemplation, poetry and prose all in one.

In the second chapter, “Co-Opting Intersubjectivity: Dialogic Rhetoric of the Self,” John Du Bois examines the tensions between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. He is interested in the achievement of actors “struggling to connect and contend with one another” and uses the concept of resonance for a description of what happens in dialogue, defining it as the “activation of affinities across utterances.” He elucidates discourse through the concept of the “dialogic moment,” which gives weight to stance-differentials and rhetorical
energies as speakers engage with one another. The stances actors assume have social consequences, and since we are already internally divided and contentious, our stances cannot but arise “in a condition of rhetoric.”

In chapter 3, “Echo Chambers and Rhetoric: Sketch of a Model of Resonance Theory,” Pierre Maranda develops a model for a probabilistic theory of communication. He uses a concept of resonance based on a model of mental and emotional “echo chambers,” in which our ideas and domains of semantics and imagery reverberate. Through socialization we grow up in shared representational universes and therefore find it more “natural” to link certain concepts than others. This means that in order for persuasion to be effective, actors try to resonate with their audiences in such a way that the connections they suggest seem to suggest themselves—which they in fact do. This resonance model, which has different emphases but similar interests as Du Bois’s approach, draws on several precursors and contemporary approaches in other disciplines, the most familiar one being Vladimir Propp’s classic *Structure of the Russian Folktale*, but then widens the scope to include all cultural domains. “Resonance” occurs when a speaker manages to “hit the right tones,” to steer the audience along semantic paths well established by cultural inertia (as in the case of commonplaces) or through glades full of dancing butterflies (as in the case of a successful metaphor or other improvisation). But of course there are also moments of misunderstanding and communicative disharmony. Maranda highlights the role of attention, memory, and imagination in these processes, and he grounds central concerns of this volume in a structuralist and cognitivist approach.

In “Discourse Beyond Language: Cultural Rhetoric, Revelatory Insight, and Nature” (chapter 4), Donal Carbaugh and David Boromisza-Habashi allow the Blackfeet to speak to us about a stance of listening and attending, which foregrounds different ways of speaking about nonlinguistic communication, and, correspondingly, about listening and resonating. The basic premise, so the Blackfeet say, is that “there are agents in communication with humans that are other-than-human.” Wisdom lies in listening to the wind and the water; and listening to wind and water is part of a general discursive form, and of cultural beliefs very closely linked to Blackfeet individual and collective identity. This Blackfeet “ethno-rhetoric” presents an explicit cultural critique of self, of mind, of Cartesian dualism, as revealing a lack of humility appropriate for human beings. What is called for in this Blackfeet discourse is constant anticipation, always to be ready to attend to the prosody of nature; to aim at sensory openness, to learn through different channels about oneself and reality; and acceptance of the limitation of words to do justice to our modes of experience. This is another approach to intersubjectivity, one which takes account of the
ironical aspects of the attempt to linguistically code pre-linguistic or non-linguistic experience.

Bernhard Streck takes us on a journey through some little-visited backroads of the shadow history of anthropology. In chapter 5, “The Spellbinding Aura of Culture: Tracing its Anthropological Discovery,” he reflects on early explorations of homo rhetoricus, and the way culture was understood as rhetorical—especially in the way it overwhelms rather than convinces the self and the Other. Streck focuses on the anthropologist who often was—and still is—fascinated by the aura of things. While hardly any researcher would deny this attraction, the enchantment as a rule does not survive the transformation of field experience into published sober monographs. This aura of the exotic, at times recognized under various names in the history of anthropology, takes its strengths from incomplete understanding, from the veil, from mystery, from evocation. It is the refracting surface of an ethnographic object, which holds our attention strongest. Streck shows how different schools in anthropology (the Kulturkreislehre, the configuration theory of culture, the Frankfurt School and French Surrealism, and even Bronislaw Malinowski) either refused or embraced the phenomenon of auratic fascination, and he finds in an early anthropology of costume (by Heinrich Schurtz and others) a precursor of the rhetoric culture project. For Schurtz, form was essential. Form is what persuades and holds attention, and form allows attribution of meaning, without the epistemological worry about “truth.” Rhetoric culture theory can build, argues Streck, on much that has come and gone before, which has attended to aura as that which communicates identity and difference, which shows and simultaneously veils.

“Tenor in Culture,” chapter 6, by Ivo Strecker explores phenomena that are similarly elusive as the auratic fascination examined by Streck. Tenor is a musical concept, which in everyday life has been analogically extended to refer to “some kind of communicative mood and content that eludes univocal definition” and may also be applied to more embracing social situations and even culture as a whole. Ruth Benedict, Strecker argues, examined, for example, tenor phenomena when she contrasted Apollonian and Dionysian Patterns of Culture (1934), and so did Gregory Bateson in his ethnography of Iatmul male ethos (1936). Strecker presents a detailed overview of the term tenor as used in musical theory, in functional linguistics, and in the theory of metaphor. The latter is of particular interest, because it allows Strecker to recast I. A. Richards's theory of metaphor in terms of rhetoric and use tenor instead to “indicate the movement of thought and feeling that results from the co-presence, co-operation and interaction of the two parts that constitute a metaphor.” This is then connected to an ethnography of tenor phenomena in Hamar (southern Ethiopia). Various kinds of relationships that “involve an extension of the per-
sona and can be understood as aspects of what we call ‘face’” are examined to illustrate the tenor in culture.

**Part 2: Emergence**

Such an “ethnography of rhetoric” is called for by the first voice from the academic discipline of rhetoric in the present volume. In chapter 7, “Attending the Vernacular: A Plea for an Ethnographical Rhetoric,” Gerard Hauser provides an overview of “the vernacular” in his field. He starts with the addenda to Charles Ogden and I. A. Richards’s *Meaning of Meaning*, in which Malinowski tells of his struggle with the recalcitrant pragmatics of Trobriand speech. These quotidian processes arewhat rhetoricians of that period largely ignored, favoring instead “official discourse” as the object of their (often critical and politicized) analyses. It was with Kenneth Burke’s appreciation of performance, drama, and form, I. A. Richards’s attack on referential understandings of meaning, and Bakhtin’s reformulation of dialogic interaction that new strands started to form, but the detached stance of the rhetoricians persisted, who as a rule preferred to interpret leaders and writers rather than the man in the street. Hauser calls for academic activism, which would try and do justice to the urban vernacular. Public opinion, he argues, could best be studied by leaving the rhetorical armchair, so to speak, to take up methods from ethnography, such as participant observation.

The essay turns away from the previous discussions of intersubjectivity, serving to frame the subsequent texts, which are more ethnographic in nature, and each of which constitutes an attempt to deal with emergent phenomena. Thus, Hauser’s chapter provides a starting point to think about the subsequently arising issues of the social, temporal, and spatial situatedness of rhetorical practices (Weiner, Sapienza, Oakley), the violence of genre (Henn), and rhetorics and resonance in ritual (Girke/Pankhurst). Looking ahead, we find that part 3, which focuses on methodological reflections on agency and authority, is also already grounded in this contribution.

The first concrete example of a “rhetoric of the vernacular” is provided by James Weiner, in chapter 8, who describes how in Highland Papua New Guinea the rhetoric of the Foi resonates in different ways with their spatial surrounding in their “Enhoused Speech: The Rhetoric of Foi Territoriality.” In the author’s words, “the simultaneous emplacement of talk, and the enhoused talk of place” generate the “historical content of the Foi person’s relationship to and experience of lived territoriality.” Weiner illustrates this finding by two diametrically opposed ethnographic examples of how rhetoric connects with territoriality: In one exemplary debate the Foi “bring the territorial system into alignment with the historical-social alignment of men.” In a second debate re-
corded fifteen years later, however, the opposite strategy prevails, as “the social-political alignment of men was deemed to be subordinate to the territorial situating of a head-man and his community.” Thus, whereas the first example shows how kinship and descent are used as strategies legitimizing land allocation, the second example demonstrates how land tenure may be employed to explain kinship and descent. Talk, as Weiner says, becomes a “spatially-positioned activity” producing space as well as being produced by it. Weiner’s contribution is thus a good example of how rhetoric and culture constantly co-emerge and, in doing so, go beyond the previously acknowledged status quo.

Fil Sapienza investigates the rhetoric of Russian online communities in chapter 9, “Transcultural Rhetoric and Cyberspace.” The notion of “transculture,” as proposed by Mikhail Epstein, is indicative of the ways in which immigrant Russians deal with their own “being an Other” in their new US American environment. The internet has taken on a central role in linking people suffering from cultural alienation and loss of their roots. The traditional basis of community is here divorced from earlier referents, such as co-residence, language, commonplaces, rhetorical tropes (metaphor and metonymy) and language ideologies (i.e., “free speech” vs. “censorship”). How, asks Sapienza, do people rhetorically construct such virtual communities and then begin to accept them as more than just ephemeral acts of interaction? His most important finding is that these online communities not only serve the direct narcissistic needs of their members, but also attract internet users without immigrant background who join in and discuss about Russians in America. The users “perpetually diversify their own unique cultural experiences,” and refuse to identify with an apparently given cultural background. Thus, global virtual communities—despite their own ethos of integration—may really support an individual à la carte-approach to identity without requiring members to really feel committed.

Alexander Henn’s study “Jesuit Rhetorics: Translation versus Conversion in Early-Modern Goa” (chapter 10) provides an analysis of missionaries’ attempts at religious conversions in Goa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We are first given an account of the Jesuits’ efforts at mastering cultural repertoires, language as well as performative arts, apparently in order to better transmit the biblical message. Biblical stories were told from the pulpit in a style familiar to the formerly Hindu audiences, and Jesuits active in Goa were at pains to immerse themselves in these pagan traditions. Was this an attempt at intersubjectivity, at translation, as it superficially seems, asks Henn? Following his account, it becomes clear that an element of true mutuality was lacking, and that these initial efforts soon turned into a destructive practice. Hindu temples and idols were destroyed and churches were then built on the sites of these temples, the use of local languages was prohibited and the use
of the Portuguese language was enforced, and finally the very poetry that had been emulated was immolated. Henn’s argument that these two processes were not two different subjects, but really have to be seen as two sides of the same coin, namely the process of converting the Hindus of Goa to Christianity, puts us on guard for similarly proffered claims of “resonance” through immersion. Attempts to achieve intersubjectivity might not always be as harmless as one may want to believe.

Chapter 11, “Evoking Peace and Arguing Harmony: An Example of Trans-cultural Rhetoric in Southern Ethiopia,” by Felix Girke and Alula Pankhurst, in contrast, provides us with an ethnographic example of the persuasive power of joint action. The authors describe a peace ceremony in Southern Ethiopia that was hosted by elders from one of the ethnic groups in the region, during which the desired joint will for peace was invoked through joint ritual action. As the region is ethnically highly diverse, it is interesting to observe how the protagonists succeed in developing a common “rhetoric of ritual,” including metaphors and figures in the verbal as well as the nonverbal realm of symbolization, and how, step by step, the representatives of all groups concerned feel persuaded by this rhetoric and join in the common endeavor of peace building. The vow of peace is partly given through verbal declarations in public speech in front of the assembly and partly through joint ritual action such as the breaking and burying of spears. Particularly rich as an example of the creation of resonance among the participants is the blessing to which all participants respond in chorus.

Part 3: Agency

This final section starts off with a direct counterpoint to Girke and Pankhurst’s essay, offered by Franz-Hubert Robling’s in chapter 12, “In Defense of the Orator: A Classicist Outlook on Rhetoric Culture.” He returns to the rhetorical aptitude and prudence of the competent orator as it was conceived in antiquity. Rhetoric, as Robling insists, has to be understood as an art. The competent orator is not just someone who has the natural talent to capture an audience, rather he has to learn this skill in a long process of self-education, which also involves a thorough study of the cultural conventions of the people he addresses. This is the reason why culture emerges rhetorically: rhetoric requires the cultivation of performance as basis of successful oratory. In a historical overview Robling returns to the Sophists and to the ancient concept of kairos, the patience to wait for the right moment, the ability to find the right words and the knowledge to address the right auditors, and in a final part he applies his findings to an ethnographic description of an orator’s action during James Cook’s voyage around the world.
The question of “Rhetoric, Anti-Structure, and the Social Formation of Authorship” in the creation of culture is addressed by James Zebroski in chapter 13. Drawing on Steve Mailloux’s cultural rhetoric, Zebroski explores “the political effectivity of trope and argument in culture” using the example of gay authorship in the United States. He agrees with scholars who connect rhetorical epistemology with postmodernism but also notices that rhetoric features a “blind spot,” namely “the tendency to reduce all situations as diverse as they be, to a given situation in an existing social structure.” How does one overcome this blind? He finds the answer in Victor Turner’s anti-structure model: history constantly moves between structure and anti-structure, and rhetoric plays its role in both, affirmative as part of structure, and rebellious as part of the anti-structure. The formation of gay authorship is a good example of the co-emergence of rhetoric and culture first as part of the anti-structure and afterwards of the well-established structure. In his text, Zebroski analyses the slow but insistent rhetorical emergence of gay authorial culture in several well-identifiable historical steps.

Chapter 14, Todd Oakley’s “Attention and Rhetoric: Prolepsis and the Problem of Meaning” connects the question of agency back to the issue of intersubjectivity with which this volume begins. To demonstrate how a rhetorical actor is able to grasp and keep an addressee’s attention, he presents an analysis of an advertising campaign aimed at US citizens, encouraging them to take part in the national census of 2000. He asks how “attention,” as a cognitive effort of the addressee, can be alerted, oriented, shared, selected, sustained, controlled, and harmonized through rhetoric. This links up with culture in that attention processes are fuelled by projections of a future through reaching back into experiences of the past, creating an anticipation of an imminent here-and-now. For rhetoricians and anthropologists alike, Oakley’s research on attention is a real eye-opener, for it provides many new concepts and a new mode of thinking about persuasive processes. Most importantly, he makes clear that agency can be distributed, even dispersed, and that “rhetoric” abounds not only in clearly distinguished speaker-hearer relations, but that persuasion is actually present in our minds whenever we “blend concepts” and conjure up “mental spaces.”

The book concludes with the chapter (15) “Emergence, Agency and the Middle Ground of Culture: A Meditation on Mediation” by Stephen Tyler. Tyler weaves together the basic ideas of the Rhetoric Culture Project with the issues of this particular volume (i.e., intersubjectivity, agency, emergence). In an essay that deals with quotidian struggles as much as with academic dilemmas, he shows how we try to make sense of our emergent lives, or indeed the emergent lives of others. In doing so, we often privilege certain forms of meaning-making over others, mark out laudable conviction from unsavory persuasion,
and assume that our agency (or, alternatively, the agency of other persona, however inanimate they are) conquers all. Tyler, in contrast, sees social actors as will-driven but lacking in scope, and thus advocates reserve in dealing with agency, as so many of even the thoughts we think and the things we feel are prompted by implicit connections between words and objects. This is where he offers us an escape: in the grammatical middle voice, which acknowledges will and action, but treads carefully both in ascribing agency and in establishing the position of the author in representation without on the other hand falling into the trap of ascribing agency to a structure external to agents. Rhetoric has traditionally overemphasized the orator and underestimated culture, whereas anthropology has overrated culture and undervalued the rhetorical agent. Consequently, Tyler grounds the whole endeavor of “Rhetoric/Culture” in the mediating slash signifying “the action and interaction that produces both object and subject as self-organizing systems.” Thus, what is needed, as Tyler invokes, is a chiastic relationship between the two: “just as rhetoric is founded in culture, culture is founded in rhetoric.”

For our project, this means that we do not want to get bogged down in “rhetoric” as yet another new panacea for all the ills that perennially befall the study of culture; neither do we want to return to the rhetorical turn of the 1990s. As always, theoretical innovation, critiques as well as consolidation, can only serve the enabling purpose of offering new perspectives on empirical problems, and it is with this aim that we have assembled the present volume. This book, then, only succeeds where it sensitizes readers of hopefully various backgrounds to the social and bodily conditions of communication, to the back-and-fro of actors who come to develop and realize their own intentions only in interaction with other will-endowed people and recalcitrant or tempting environments, and to the necessity of attending to the ever present phenomena of resonance, contingency, and persuasion.

References


Tedlock, Dennis, and Bruce Mannheim, eds. 1995. The Dialogic Emergence of Culture. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Notes

1. We are grateful to a number of scholars for valuable comments on earlier versions of this introduction, including Ivo Strecker, Jörg Bergmann, Nik Schareika, as well as the three anonymous reviewers.
2. Reviewers went out of their way to comment: Regna Darnell calls it “an exemplar for the recent turn toward dialogue” and parts of it “brilliant” (1996: 560–63); Asif Agha found it a “rare pleasure” (1997: 593) and extols its virtues over five pages; Robert Albro and Anthony Berkley (1999) take it as an opportunity for a comparative review essay (with *Rhetorics of Self-making* as foil); Bradd Shore also writes five pages, and invites Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim to reply (1998). *Dialogic*, then, was well-received critically, but we are aware of hardly any instances where the volume or its contributions are prominently referenced.

3. It is useful to recall here that *dialogic* does not derive from the Greek root “dyo-,” indicating a duality, but from “dia-,” meaning “across or back and forth” (see Tedlock and Mannheim 1995: 4). The central character of a dialogue, then, is its position “in between” the participants rather than in a dyad. Dialogues are thus open to more participants than just two, as often seems implied.

4. Corresponding to the initial claim that culture is created by rhetoric, the “culture” elicited and presented by the anthropologist in their ethnography has to be understood as a naturalistic peek at an ongoing dialogue, that is, on structuration in progress. In this sense, ethnography has the same epistemic status as dialogue in general: “ethnography is … a form of ‘culture making’ … like any other” (Tedlock/Mannheim 1995: 13; see also Shore et al. 1998: 218, Agha 1997: 593).

5. The phrase “First comes the making, then comes the matching,” going back to Ernst H. Gombrich’s *Art and Illusion* (1977: 99), and often used by Ivo Strecker in lectures and conversations, has been a constant reminder to the authors of precisely this constitutive inchoateness of the world as well as of social actions—our own as well as those of others—which we keep trying to “match,” to make sense of, in ex post facto rhetorical, internal, or external dialogue under the stern gaze of plausibility.

6. Already Émile Durkheim is credited with a concern for emergence. See Stephan (1992) for a biography of the concept, and Mosko (2005: 32f., 35) for a discussion that deals with the idea of self-organization and its various manifestations in the history of anthropology. As Bettina Heintz points out particularly well (2004), starting from Durkheim’s work, it has been common in sociology to conflate and confuse reductionist approaches (which assume that all macro-phenomena are the traceable result of micro-processes) and truly emergence-oriented work (which assumes that micro-processes cannot account for macro-phenomena, the latter being autonomous to a degree). As noted, our emphasis on the contingent moment of emergence puts us in the latter camp.

7. Examples of such god-terms were, among others, proposed by interpretive anthropology (culture), by Claude Lévi-Strauss (structure), by Michel Foucault (discourse), by Durkheim (society), and by cultural ecologists (environment). For structuralists such as Lévi-Strauss and poststructuralists such as Foucault, the agent of social life is structure or a similarly agentic discourse. Myth or discourse is manifesting itself through human action. Accordingly, in structuralism, the only ontological (or essential) being is structure, whereas humans only live biologically (or existentially/incidentally). Thus, man, rather than being the agent of life, is the patient of structure, as agency is overshadowed by patiency. Alternative social theories, such as Harold Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology, Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, Luhman’s social system theory, or Anthony Giddens’s theory of structuration have tried to grasp the relationship between structure and agency more as one of interaction and co-emergence than as one of one-way determination.
8. Slajov Žižek (2007) explains that the emergence of a general will, the turns and twists of which are determined by a vote, is not decided by the majority, but stated by it. The act of stating shows the minority that they have been mistaken about the collective will. That is, the contingent emergent is naturalized as—indeed!—destiny through the totalitarian concept of the volonté générale. This sleight-of-mind is worth keeping in mind when analyzing statements on contingency, determinism, debate, and compromise, as found in any ethnography.

9. The comment that “there is no reason … to limit the scope of social life to human actants” (2007: 7) is highly appreciated; human beings in fact do find meaning in other realms as well (see Carbaugh/Boromisza-Habashi, chapter 4, this volume), and the resulting models of intersubjectivity and the implied theories of agency and intention cast a welcome light on social life in general.