

## Marketing Web Writing and Rhetoric

The objective of this article is to demonstrate the usefulness of rhetorical tools for analysis of marketing texts published on the internet and to outline the phenomena which are interesting from the perspective of an educator and researcher on rhetoric in the discussed area. In reply to the crucial question how *ars rhetorica* is used or overused in communication nowadays, we can answer contrarily that it is definitely underused. The relatively new areas connected with communication, such as marketing or web writing, follow many rhetorical guidelines in practice. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that the inclusion of rhetoric as a theory and practice into education in the sphere of new communication-related domains helps build the full awareness of a persuasive communication participant, both as the author and the addressee of messages. Rhetoric provides the author with various kinds of instruments which facilitate persuasion, community building or establishment of one's own credibility. Most of all, however, rhetoric teaches how to express thoughts and meanings, so that a human being, together with a system of values and beliefs, should still remain the focus of communication. The author is convinced that the didactics and practice of rhetoric are indispensable for the human-centred communication.

**Schlüsselwörter:** web writing, persuasion, rhetorical devices, memoria

### Marketing Web Writing und Rhetorik

Ziel dieses Beitrags ist es, die Nützlichkeit von rhetorischen Instrumenten für die Analyse von im Internet veröffentlichten Marketingtexten zu zeigen und die Phänomene zu skizzieren, die aus der Sicht eines Pädagogen und eines Rhetorik-Forschers im diskutierten Bereich interessant sind. Wenn man auf die Frage antworten will, wie *Ars Rhetorica* heutzutage in der Kommunikation benutzt oder überbeansprucht wird, kann man feststellen, dass sie definitiv unterbraucht ist. Die relativ neuen Kommunikationsbereiche wie Marketing oder Web-Schreiben folgen in der Praxis vielen rhetorischen Richtlinien. Gleichwohl ist hervorzuheben, dass die Einbeziehung von Rhetorik als Theorie und Praxis in die Ausbildung im Bereich neuer kommunikationsbezogener Bereiche dazu beiträgt, das Bewusstsein eines überzeugenden Kommunikationsteilnehmers sowohl als Verfasser als auch als Adressat von Nachrichten zu stärken. Rhetorik stellt dem Autor verschiedene Instrumente zur Verfügung, die die Überzeugung, den Aufbau einer Gemeinschaft oder die Herstellung der eigenen Glaubwürdigkeit erleichtern. Vor allem aber lehrt die Rhetorik, wie man Gedanken und Bedeutungen ausdrückt, damit der Mensch zusammen mit einem System von Werten und Überzeugungen immer noch im Mittelpunkt der Kommunikation steht. Die Autorin ist überzeugt, dass Didaktik und Praxis der Rhetorik für die menschenzentrierte Kommunikation unverzichtbar sind.

**Keywords:** Web-Schreiben, Überzeugungsarbeit, rhetorische Instrumente, Memoria

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The comprehensive analytical and interpretative opportunities offered by the application of rhetorical tools to examine various artefacts, are confirmed in Poland by the studies published in the specialist scientific journals: "Forum Artis Rhetoricae" and

“Res Rhetorica”. Analyzing the range of issues discussed in these periodicals, we can notice that rhetoric, although still interesting for researchers as an object of historical studies (Nowaszczuk 2009; Lichański 2009, 2015), serves primarily to understand the contemporary multifaceted communication practices more deeply (e.g. Ornatowski 2015; Lewiński 2015:30). Moreover, rhetoric goes beyond the areas of functioning traditionally associated with it, such as politics, jurisdiction and occasional oratory (e.g. Karwowska 2009), and its affinities are much broader than poetics, grammar or dialectics (cf. Aczèl 2016). It is worth emphasizing that the rhetorical tools are also applicable in research on visual and audiovisual messages (Kampka 2011, Fiołek-Lubczyńska 2014, Sobczyk 2016, Modrzejewska 2017).

Departure from logocentrism in research does not mean that the original object of study has been exhausted: after all, public addresses and speeches, as products of the art of rhetoric, are still an important aspect of the social life in the political, religious and even psychological dimensions (which is confirmed by the popularity of TED conferences). The inclusion of new objects into the scope of researchers’ interests confirms the universality of the system of notions and rules developed on the ground of the classical theory of rhetoric and an opportunity to apply them in ever new contexts. Paraphrasing a thought of Jerzy Ziomek, we can claim that the system of rhetorical rules constitutes a superior arrangement, a higher level organization, “superimposed” onto the codes which are the original components of a communication act (cf. Ziomek 1990:11–12). Therefore, irrespective of the relations between the codes, their coexistence or domination, and regardless of transformations within the technology of message transmitting, rhetoric will render their holistic analysis and interpretation possible. As a communication framework, rhetoric is characterized by flexibility and capaciousness, as long as the act is constituted by speaker-speech-audience, irrespective of their shape and forms of participation.

As Lichański writes (2017:21): “Thus, we are doomed to rhetoric, whether we want it or not. As soon as we abandon a safe shelter of formalized languages, we enter the field governed by Her – Rhetoric, the Former and the New Queen of Sciences and Arts”.

Despite the fact that the researchers of rhetoric appreciate theory and possibilities of its application in various branches of science, the demand for intensification of educational activities connected with rhetoric is still relevant. Positive practices appreciating rhetoric in school education (cf. Szurek/Szurek 2016), as well as the workshops organized by the Polish Rhetoric Society<sup>1</sup> are the reasons for satisfaction. Moreover, rhetoric has taken an established place in university education, e.g. in the curriculum of journalistic, linguistic or philosophical studies, and the Catholic University of Lublin offers a unique study programme in “Applied Rhetoric”. However, it is possible to observe enhancement

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Rhetoric in primary schools – argumentation during Polish language and mathematics lessons – workshops for Polish language students and primary school teachers, organized on 25 May 2018 in the Institute of Literary Research in Warsaw.

of rhetorical practices mostly in the areas traditionally connected with words, whereas awareness of rhetoric is still relatively low in the social sciences in which communication plays a major role, such as economics or management. For instance, with respect to the curriculum of the “Management” study programme run at three universities in Lublin, only the Catholic University of Lublin offers a lecture directly referring to rhetoric. Hence, a question arises whether theory and practice of rhetoric can be useful in such areas as marketing and web writing if its role is limited or even marginalized in the academic education. It happens despite the fact that rhetoric understood as a persuasive communication theory offers techniques which help present content in a form adjusted to the audience, in the “most spectacular and effective” way, as Lichański writes (2006:69), which is desirable in marketing. Therefore, a thesis can be put forward that the principles of **ars rhetorica** are still insufficiently recognized and popularized on the Polish scientific and educational ground.

The objective of this article is to demonstrate the usefulness of rhetorical tools for analysis of marketing texts published on the internet and to outline the phenomena which are interesting from the perspective of an educator and researcher on rhetoric in the discussed area.

It should be added to our discussion that the multidisciplinary character of rhetoric and its versatile uses, which are its assets, can paradoxically hamper the development of this branch in Poland, because it does not belong to the general scientific disciplines. Therefore, attempts should be made to include the achievements of rhetoric into the mainstream research in the humanities, philosophy and social sciences (Budzyńska-Daca 2018),<sup>2</sup> as well as to emphasize its fundamental significance in all communication-related areas.

This essential need is confirmed in a special edition of “Journal of Marketing Management” (2018, vol. 34) devoted to the connections between the two areas: **Marketing (as) rhetoric**. In the introduction to the volume, the editors of the issue: Chris Miles and Tomas Nilsson (author of “Rhetorical business. A study of marketing work in the spirit of contradiction”) emphasize that the majority of marketing researchers do not know the sources of theory of rhetoric and typically associate it with verbosity and manipulation. What is interesting, the editors notice the similarity between manipulation objections directed at rhetoric and at marketing. Despite reluctance of researchers to identify marketing with persuasion, the editors distinguish three present trends in which rhetorical instruments are used. Firstly, the application of epideictic strategies in promotional actions, as well as the application of the theory of tropes and figures predominantly in advertising research, including the visual aspect. This is also the most studied field in the Polish research which combines marketing issues with the rhetorical analysis (Lewiński 2008, Loewe 2008). Secondly, there is a smaller group of researchers who view marketing

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth supporting the efforts of the Polish Rhetoric Society aimed at recognizing rhetoric as a subdiscipline.

in the categories of rhetorical production and in their studies refer to the categories of ethos, logos and pathos in various professional practices. Thirdly, the editors mention the scientists who consider marketing as a whole to be an example of rhetoric (Miles/Nilsson 2018:1259–1262). The review of research on this issue is summed up by the editors with the following question: “... we might legitimately complain of a generally slow uptake of rhetorical theory. How can a tradition of persuasion that is thousands of years old, and so fundamental to the constitution of Western intellectualism, be so roundly ignored in a discipline and profession which is, however one might define it, so seriously concerned with the influence of consumer demand?” (Miles/Nilsson 2018:1263).

In order to prevent this negative tendency, the researchers distinguish seven issues relevant to the theoretical and practical problems of marketing which should become the subject of a wider debate: studying rhetorical proofs to expand research on branding; rhetorical strategy and marketing strategy; rhetorical timing and improvisation; rhetorical style; epideictic and marketing; competition and agon; marketing practitioners as homo rhetoricus.

Referring to a broad concept of including marketing activities into the sphere of rhetoric, suggested by the editors, we can try and make a claim that a vast majority of texts published on the internet have a persuasive and marketing character. Even the content of the primary informational function first has to attract a potential reader (mostly by means of a catchy title), and next to encourage the reader to follow the thread (e.g. by using hyperlinks), in order to make the reader accept the presented vision of the world as convincing or adopt the suggested attitude to the described phenomena, and in the case of using the **refutatio** right – at least to involve the reader into discussion and hence to generate traffic desired by the content publisher. A similar situation is with the literary forms published in the social media (Perzyńska 2017). Apart from the intended aesthetic effects and the expressive function, they are aimed at building a dedicated community of readers and to give them pleasure (**delectare**), and thus to boost the author’s popularity.

Marketing texts published on the internet can represent various media genres: both these well-known from the traditional media, such as advertisements, sponsored articles, interviews, reviews, and these typical of the internet, such as social media posts, blogs or newsletters. However, irrespective of a genre used, online texts are written according to different rules than the ones intended for print. In the area most broadly described as web writing (or, in a more popular version, as copywriting<sup>3</sup>),

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<sup>3</sup> Web writing has the broadest meaning as it refers to writing any website content intended to arouse readers’ interest and fulfilling the technical requirements connected with the place of publication. Copywriting is a part of this activity but it can also go beyond it, e.g. writing texts for traditional media. A copywriter is a person who is the originator and the author of a text, and is responsible for each stage of content creation, in which a copywriter resembles an orator responsible for preparing a speech. However, a copywriter is usually anonymous, and his

a special approach to creation of content enables us to look for convergences with rhetoric: primarily the usable character of texts and the focus on a potential addressee (Wrycza-Bekier 2011:5).

- The following two factors play the decisive role in creation of online messages: technological: that is search engine optimization of content, decoding of online messages depending on a medium: phone, laptop, tablet; composition strategies connected e.g. with above / below the fold.
- pragmatic: the basic function of online texts is their subordinate role with respect to expectations of a reader. Gerry McGovern writes in “Killer Web Content”: “Internet is always about performing a task. The fundamental principle of the internet is: know your readers and their most important tasks. Show them only the content that helps them complete their tasks. Everything else gets in their way” (Wrycza-Bekier 2011:43).

Therefore, the central subject of online communication is a reader who decides about the way of reading/viewing/scrolling a text, selects information which is interesting to him or her, reads impatiently and without much concentration, omits large fragments of a text and reads in the time and circumstances selected by him- or herself. Largely due to these reading habits, web writers use such tools as: inverted pyramid structure, catchy titles, division of a text into subsections with subheadings, selection of attractive visual and multimedia material and hyperlinks.

The communication model outlined here, in which an addressee influences the form of a message even before its publication, poses a challenge to authors, which can be analysed in the context of rhetoric. Interactivity, an opportunity for an addressee’s direct reaction or potential influence on the shape of a message do not influence significantly the basic tasks of an orator who, preparing a speech, adjusts it to the needs of a specific audience: their expected attitude to the issue, potential moods and demographic factors, which is discussed by Aristotle in Book II of “Rhetoric”.

In case of web writers, anonymousness of the audience and inability to distinguish a specific reader can be problematic. This is why, one of the basic tasks recommended both by theoreticians and practitioners of the discussed profession is to identify the target reader and to create his or her online persona; to recognize his or her needs, interests, beliefs and the language used by him or her (Wrycza-Bekier 2011, Jabłoński 2018). Similar recommendations are formulated by theoreticians of 3.0 marketing which transforms the customer orientation into humanocentrism respecting “human aspirations, values

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or her responsibility is mostly economic and not connected with ethics. There are many variants of copywriting, mostly depending on a function which a given text is supposed to have: SEO copywriting, creation of valuable content for particular target groups (content copywriting), or creation of texts adjusted to mobile devices (m-writing). Practitioners emphasize that a copywriter should be skilled both in marketing and in creating persuasive content.

and spirit” (Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2010:19). It is also worth mentioning that in all the three areas an important role is played by the relationships between publishers and audience, and by construction of the common meanings, notions, systems of values, symbols and associations which determine the effectiveness of communication, and hence the fulfilment of intended persuasion functions.

Thus, the tasks of web writers can be subordinated to the basic goals of rhetoric:

- drawing the reader’s attention to a message (**captatio benevolentiae**);
- maintaining the reader’s interest by providing relevant information (**docere/delectare**)
- encouraging the reader to act: leave a comment, share own experiences, recommend articles to friends, return to the text, and ultimately to make use of the publisher’s offer (**movere/delectare/probare**).

Further convergences with rhetoric can be observed in the qualities of an online functional text, enumerated by Joanna Wrycza-Bekier (2011):

- conciseness,
- succinctness,
- clarity,
- readability,
- transparency of language,
- hypertextuality,
- conversationality.

All these qualities can be assigned to five stages of text formation (**officia oratoris**), where conciseness and succinctness originate from the invention level, clarity – from the sphere of disposition, readability and stylistic simplicity belong to the area of elocution, while hypertextuality forms the environment of a message which can be analysed both at the level of disposition and action understood as presentation of the final version of the text with its multimodal environment.

On the other hand, conversationality is a manifestation of having a reader in mind – from the stage of content planning until its publication. It is shown in direct address to a reader, answers to anticipated questions, presentation of advantages, encouragement to action through using the imperative, arousal of desired emotions, or evocation of positive associations. A good speaker – **vir bonus, dicendi peritus** – using the persuasion techniques, treats an addressee as a partner in communication and a co-creator of the oratorical action (cf. Korolko 1990:138).

The technological aspect of communication and the user-friendly solutions, e.g. web usability – the basic tool of e-marketing, or user experience (Słowik 2018), are conducive to applying rhetorical tools. The rhetorical architecture of online information transfer is already an object of research and is interpreted in various ways e.g. as a meta-theory of design,

the web as a “rhetorical place”, or digital rhetoric as an “art of identification” instead of a traditional “art of persuasion.” The cited concepts by Gesche Joost, Nicholas C. Burbules, Erika Lindemann and Daniel Anderson are discussed in detail by Maria E. Pobieżyńska in her article (2015). It is worth mentioning that the last presented approach separates traditional logic from its modern version in a rather artificial way, because identification as a tool of community building has been used already since antiquity, and was manifested for instance in Aristotle’s lecture on affections, especially on benevolence.

Furthermore, the author discusses the principles of the captology theory: an extremely inspiring perspective on computer technology aimed at persuasion. Even though the name is an acronym of “Computers As Persuasive Technologies”, on first reading it can also be associated with rhetorical **captatio benevolentiae** which, in the technological context, can be used to design such websites that shall win favour with the addressees and encourage their visits.

The “captological” approach is confirmed by the analysis of WordPress content management system in which a researcher on rhetoric will pay attention to the “Readability analysis” section concerning both distribution of content and the style of its presentation. Thus, the solutions suggested have a normative character and, with respect to **dispositio**, refer to:

- using subheadings which help readers scan through the content and find valuable information. Subheadings are also useful in segmentation of the content and in arrangement of arguments, and should be inserted after every 250–350 words. It is important that the sentence beginning the headline should contain the core information, elaborated on in the paragraph. Apart from benefits for readers, the skilful usage of headlines helps a text reach a higher position in a search engine and highlights the key phrases;
- keeping an appropriate length of paragraphs – according to the findings of website architects, a properly constructed paragraph should contain ca. 150 words. This length makes it possible to maintain clarity of the thoughts presented and to elaborate on the thoughts in succession. Moreover, this mode prevents excessive digression and departure from the subject. It also points to the new understanding of the appropriateness (**aptum**) category, that is purposefulness, functionality and relevance to the subject. In web writing, appropriateness means primarily care for readers and for their comprehension of the presented content, as well as an order of the reasoning, keeping to the point, closing one thought in one paragraph, as well as clarity and simplicity of expression.

With respect to **elocutio**:

- sentence length – the system calculates length of sentences on the basis of the number of words contained in them. If sentences longer than 20 words account for over 25% of the text, the author will be advised to make them shorter. Comprehensibility of

- the message, which determines the effectiveness of persuasion in rhetoric, is the fundamental value both for search engine algorithms and for readers. Too long sentences can obscure the meaning of a text or discourage a reader from following the complicated reasoning. Hence, the advantages of the internet style are: clarity (**perspicuitas**) and conciseness (**brevitas**). It does not mean that no compound or ornamental sentences can appear in a text, but it is important to mix them with simple sentences and to take care of the message clarity in the first place;
- using the passive voice – according to the readability indicator, the whole text can contain ca 10% sentences in the passive. Using the passive voice is not conducive to building mutual communication, creates a distance between the author and readers and reduces readability of a text. A well-prepared text should also give pleasure to a reader (**delectare**) and involve a reader in the presented content. Similar advice appears in creative writing and storytelling guides – replacement of the passive with the active voice facilitates commitment of an addressee;
  - checking successive sentences to examine whether the neighbouring sentences begin with the same words. When it happens, the system advocates variation, but in the case of rhetorical guidelines it precludes e. g. the use of anaphoras. What is interesting, the instruction demonstrates understanding of this rhetorical device. If the author wishes to emphasize a certain phrase on purpose, placing it the beginning of neighbouring sentences, the author can ignore the system's recommendations. The algorithm used does not understand the rhetorical device and does not analyse the meaning of the text. In this case, it is important for the web writer to apply consciously the rhetorical terms used for amplification;
  - using transition words – in a well-prepared text, conjunctions, prepositions and particles fulfil two functions: firstly, they organize the reasoning and can indicate the particular stages of the text, but primarily they add stylistic variety. Although in this case the stylistic variety is limited by the maximally simple style of expression, a text still may comprise various tropes and figures, such as: enumeration, simile, contrast, emphasis, or circumlocution. Furthermore, metaphors and similes, selected appropriately to the subject, play an important role in both rhetoric and marketing communication: they introduce vividness into the text and thus engage various channels of the user's perception.

It is also worth noticing that the key words, sometimes overused, have their grounds in rhetorical *memoria*. By repeating the phrases which are important to the core message, the authors reduce the risk of omitting an important fragment of the text and anchor the desired information in the readers' minds.

The issues connected with **memoria** become especially significant in the context of persuasive communication on the internet, because they make it possible to see again the rhetorical memory function, transferring a chore of remembering from the speaker onto the addressee.

The first change with respect to comprehension of memory took place under the influence of popularization of writing, so much disapproved by Plato. As Monika Grzelka writes (2017:85): “The logic of writing transformed the organization of the society, affecting the issue of memory through a complete change in the perception of forgetting, separating it from people and their minds and transferring it into the sphere of a general, always available archive, in the contemporary times – into digital resources. *Memoria* is replaced with mnemonics which, using various methods, makes memory more lasting and extends its scope”.

Similarly, Jerzy Ziomek (1990) and Mirosław Korolko (1990:124–129) wrote about memory as an art of memorizing based on the topography of oratorical places, located in imagination, and about a way of remembering them by means of images.

Nevertheless, a broader perspective on this problem can be observed already in the Roman rhetorical tradition. In Cicero’s writings (“On the Orator”, II, 355–356) it is worth paying attention to the questions about the issues an orator is supposed to remember. Antonius asks: “Is it about memorizing what you learned while taking up the case, what you thought about it yourself? Or should thoughts and the whole vocabulary be engraved in memory? Or is it about listening to whoever is speaking to you, or whom you should answer so that their words not only flow through your head but appear to be engraved in your mind?”

Thus, the point is not only memory techniques and training which, without doubt, help improve both the ability of registering and evoking sensations, and also the scope of remembering. Placing a speaker in the role of a dialogue participant and an addressee of a message, Cicero indicates that the **memoria** potential pertains not only to oration itself, but it permeates all stages of creating a speech, because it builds the repository of knowledge of a speaker who knows “what to say, what to reply and what still remains.”

Furthermore, Quintilian speaks in the same spirit (“Institutes of Oratory”, XI, II-1) when he calls memory a “treasury of speech”. He does not put a speaker in the role of a message author, but in the first place he points to the reception abilities of a speaker, as necessary for creation of resources and perception of messages. Memory is presented as an intermediary between mind which dictates a topic or argumentation, and expression. Nevertheless, memory is an imperfect medium, because it depends on the physical condition and natural predispositions, so its function is not as important to Quintilian as its properties. In a further part of his discussion, Quintilian questions the legitimacy of using extensive mnemonic techniques, although he by no means negates the sense of memory training. However, he offers a simpler method of memorizing, which can also be discovered while analysing the guidelines of content management software:

- division of a speech into smaller parts, respecting the natural boundaries of parts of speech (appropriate length of paragraphs);
- a sequence of remembering parts connected with relevant words (transition words);

- marking the parts that are especially difficult to remember (subheadings);
- using symbols that evoke associations (tropes; key words);
- whoever makes the right division, he shall never get lost in his speech (the order of paragraphs reflects the order of thoughts);
- ordering (**disposito**).

Having a closer look at Quintilian's guidelines we can notice that **memoria** supported not only the oratorical action, but also all stages of an orator's work, and the practice of an ancient orator is reflected in the contemporary systems of producing convincing material. A skilful use of key words by a marketing web writer helps create a message that becomes embedded in memory of an addressee. Moreover, enhancement of content with sounds, images or words evoking visual associations facilitates the ability to memorize, which was noticed already by both Cicero and Quintilian.

The rhetorical knowledge of memory processes is confirmed by the contemporary psychological research which is also applied in the marketing context. It is worth mentioning an article by Marta Spychalska (2012), in which the author analyses the advertising slogans and points to their recall as a desirable value in an advertising message. Similar convergences can be observed in the structure and properties of internet memes whose name stems from memetic theories, but it can just as well refer to **memoria** which builds the social memory (Pawlak-Hejno 2015). On the other hand, Anna Ewa Nita (2012:220) cites an interesting experiment by Elisabeth Loftus illustrating how the usage of particular words influences human memory. The experimenters showed the respondents a film presenting a collision of two cars and next asked them to estimate the speed of the vehicles. Before the test, the researchers asked a question using various verbs to describe the incident: *smashed*, *collided*, *bumped*, *conducted*, and *hit*. The experiment has proved that the usage of a dynamic verb: *smashed* affected the way of perceiving the event by the respondents: they estimated the speed of the cars to be higher and "remembered" the facts (a smashed windscreen) which actually did not occur.

The cited experiment confirms the important role of appropriately selected lexemes in communication. While the inept use of an excessive number of key words in internet marketing is irritating, they can be a perfect tool of effective persuasion when used carefully. Ordered thoughts, planned argumentation, care for clarity and relevance of the message also activate the memorizing processes of the audience. Moreover, the intended conversionality of the content plays an important role, and a reference to the oral culture, manifested e. g. in the dialogic character of the presented content, facilitates concentration and participation in the exchange process.

The online communication model, based on interaction and joint participation, makes an addressee co-responsible for "storing" a text, both in the virtual space (collecting, sharing, copying etc.) and in his or her own memory. An addressee can use this content also outside the web, such as e. g. a teacher during classes or a marketer using it as examples at a conference.

A web writer, aware of these opportunities, should prepare a message in accordance with the art of rhetoric, paying special attention to its attractiveness and recall which will enhance the primary persuasion goals. Such practices are facilitated by the systems supporting creation and distribution of content on the internet, providing authors with guidelines, the roots of which can easily be found in the classical theory of rhetoric. However, adherence to the rules is not enough to make messages valuable to the audience. A contemporary speaker has to take care of the quality of message if the aim is to establish communication. This is why, awareness and purposefulness of using rhetorical rules and terms, with care for the audience, are still the human tasks which, for the time being but nobody knows how much longer, cannot be replaced by algorithms.

Finally, it is worth adding that the interesting material for observation, analysis and practical studies can be found in the texts authored by people who are successful in their online marketing activity. It is worth subscribing the newsletter of Paweł Tkaczyk who uses the topos of an old or purposefully unfunny joke in his messages, but communicates with his readers implementing the *logos* strategy, in order to build his professional credibility. Extensive rhetorical **narratio** is used very well by Monika Górka, known as Doctor Story, who promotes her label by storytelling. On the other hand, Olga Budzyńska – Mistress of Her Time – combines skilfully the presentation of content with emotional involvement of the audience into numerous marketing activities: creation of an e-book, an online course, a support group or various motivational actions, seemingly not connected with the business profile, but supporting the relationships with the addressees.

An additional advantage is the fact that all the experts mentioned above participated as speakers at TEDx conferences. In the educational practice there is an effective exercise in which students give an oral presentation of a text prepared for online publication in front of their friends. As it usually turns out, the practice of oral presentation helps edit the content. It was observed already by Quintilian who recommended learning a text by reading it aloud. In the practice of web writing, the point is also to bring the text closer to live speech and to keep its dialogic character at various levels. Observation of good practices of masters and rhetorical analysis of their techniques can help answer a question about the qualities of effective communication, methods of building a loyal community of addressees, or credible presentation of one's offer.

Rhetoric as an art and theory of expression resembles the trunk of a tree out of which various communication-related branches are growing. Despite the passage of time, its fundamental rules do not become outdated: although their functionality or hierarchy may change with the development of communication means and platforms, their efficiency in accomplishment of persuasion goals remains the same. Therefore, theory and practice of rhetoric can be very useful in creation of content in relatively new areas, such as marketing or web writing. As demonstrated by the analysis of a template for website creation, systems support text writing in the formal and syntactic aspects.

However, the expression of thoughts and meanings is still the human domain which demands more knowledge and practice than the basic skill of using the language, that is mastering of rhetorical competences.

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