

American Society for the History of Rhetoric  
Symposium  
May 22-23, 2014

**Call for Papers**

The American Society for the History of Rhetoric invites papers to be presented at our 2014 Symposium on “Rhetoric and Freedom.” The Symposium will be held at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, San Antonio, May 22-23, 2012, immediately prior to the Rhetoric Society of America Convention. The day and a half meeting will feature keynote addresses and approximately four panels of competitively selected papers. Historically speaking, the ASHR Symposium has been a site of rich intellectual work animated by a collaborative ethos. AHSR prides itself on creating an environment in which scholars of all ages and all ranks join together for a sustained inquiry into a given topic. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or a new graduate student, please consider joining us for a stimulating discussion of “Rhetoric and Freedom.”

To be considered for the Symposium, please submit a one-page, single-spaced abstract to Susan Jarratt: [sjarratt@uci.edu](mailto:sjarratt@uci.edu). All submissions should relate to the Symposium theme (elaborated below), be composed in English, stripped of author identification, and submitted as either a Word Document or a PDF. All submissions must be received by September 30, 2013. Authors will be notified by the end of the year.

There is no cost to attend the Symposium, although all presenters must be members of ASHR. If you are not currently a member, you will be given an opportunity to join if your paper is accepted for the Symposium. For more information on ASHR, membership, and rates, see <http://www.ashr.org/home.html>.

**Rhetoric and Freedom**

“Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man only insofar as he is *free*”  
Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives* (50)

“Freedom’s just another word for nothin’ left to lose.”  
Kris Kristofferson and Fred Foster, “Me and Bobby McGee”

Freedom has had a long-standing, intimate, and fraught relationship with rhetoric. The 2014 Symposium invites reflection on the many ways freedom has joined, informed, come into contact with, served as a pre-text for, subtended theories of, fronted, and been compromised by rhetoric. Some of freedom’s historical and contemporary intersections with rhetoric may inspire thinking about this topic.

In ancient Greek cities, freedom--from slavery, paid labor, and other constraints such as gender--was a condition of citizenship and thus of rhetorical participation. When Rome conquered Greek cities in

the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C.E., it offered them a special status—"the freedom of the city"--distinguishing them from other colonies in recognition of their intellectual and democratic legacy. In colonialist ideologies from ancient Greece to Renaissance Europe to contemporary Western nations, cultures of "the East"--Byzantium, the Orient, the Mideast--are imagined in terms of "unfreedom." The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Age of Revolutions purported to bring liberty to citizens of the American colonies, France, Haiti, and elsewhere, while slavery and colonialism persisted. What is the relationship between liberty and freedom? U.S. imperialist ventures have been launched under the banner of freedom; consider e.g. Roosevelt's Rough Riders (organized in the bar of the Menger Hotel in San Antonio) and George Bush's desire to bring freedom to Iraq through military invasion. In the U.S. Civil rights era, freedom became a rallying cry against racism and segregation with Freedom Riders, grand oratory--"Free at last"--and other modes of expression (Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln's 1960 album, *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*.) Has freedom been achieved? Can it still serve anti-racist projects? Can a state give or take freedom?

Enlightenment rhetors celebrated freedom from censorship, and the battle continues today for free presses under oppressive regimes and for freedom of information in a world of national security interests. But the complexities of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century psychoanalytic and discourse theories cast a shadow on the potential for free speech, or *parrêsia*. Can one say anything and everything? Can one know what one says? Indeed, who speaks when something is said?

In the realm of science, freedom suggests escape from the determinations of biology, physiology, and neurobiology. Can the 21<sup>st</sup>-century brain function rhetorically in a context of freedom? What does rhetoric have to say about freedom in relation to norms of gender and sexuality? How do such fields of knowledge intersect (or not) with the prison industrial complex?

In a globalized world, freedom has become associated with first-world economic imperatives: deregulation, private property, and free trade. Freedom from government intervention in the U.S. is used as an argument against bolstering the social safety net and regulating gun ownership. What about academic or disciplinary freedom? Does or can it exist in the world of disciplinary silos, MOOCs, and continuous online experience? Is there such a thing as freedom of expression in a hypermediated world of visual spectacle? Is violence the consummate expression of rhetorical freedom or its opposite?

Proposals are invited that address these and related questions from any angle of rhetorically informed scholarship.