Graduate School for the Humanities

Registration Form Valorisation Grant

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PhD Project Title:
Rhetorical analysis of Cicero's Caesarian speeches

Start PhD project:
1 March 2016

End date PhD contract:
28 February 2020

1. What sort of activities would you like to implement and who are the stakeholders of your initiative?
in attachment

2. Please explain the social benefit of your project and demonstrate the knowledge utilisation of your PhD project.
in attachment

3. Please consider a detailed planning consisting of a timeline of deliverables as well as a budget plan to implement your initiative. All spendings must be planned for 2017.
in attachment

Attachment (if applicable)
valorisationgrantproposal_rvg.pdf
Valorisation Grant: Creating Rhetorical Awareness
Rosa van Gool – r.vangool@let.ru.nl

1. What sort of activities would you like to implement and who are the stakeholders of your initiative?

We are living in a time of increasing political upheaval: in 2016, we have seen more polarized political campaigns than ever before, for example in the United Kingdom and the United States. Rhetoric is an inevitable – if not essential – part of campaigns.

My valorisation proposal is twofold: on the one hand, it aims to add depth to the application of rhetoric to modern political contexts. On the other hand, it attempts to widen the knowledge and hence awareness of the phenomenon of rhetoric.

To achieve the first goal, adding depth and a critical attitude to the uses of rhetoric, I work together with a speech writer of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Thomas Hart. Together, we will organize a lecture for speech writers and media relations officers of the Dutch government in The Hague. By this activity, I aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge on rhetoric, and actual application of rhetoric for political purposes. In order to maintain this bridge beyond a single event, we aim to launch an online platform for discussions on rhetoric, meant for the audience of this lecture as well as others with an interest in rhetoric. The platform will regularly pose a rhetorical problem, question, or simply a notable example that could benefit from rhetorical analysis; participants from science, politics, and other branches of society are then invited to reflect upon this theme from their area of expertise. The lecture in The Hague will serve as a nice offline starting point to kick start this online community. As the online discussion progresses, we – as moderators – will update the website with a short overview of the most interesting insights, before moving on the next topic. Hence, this platform will eventually come to function as a treasury containing different views on rhetoric. Stakeholders in this branch of the project are mainly people working in politics, such as speech writers, spokespeople, media relations officers, but also politicians themselves, either directly by participating in the lecture, or indirectly, through the team surrounding them.
The second goal aims a different target group: the future voters, the future of society. I intend to make young people aware of the existence of rhetoric, in order to be critical towards it and recognize it, but also to apply it for their own good cause. This goal of **widening** knowledge of rhetoric will be achieved through a workshop, delivered to final-year students at secondary schools. This workshop will be similar to the one given at ‘**De Nacht van Rome**’ in May 2016, to an audience at discussion center De Balie in Amsterdam: in a team of three – actor, speechwriter and me, as a scientist – we taught the basics of giving a good speech to a wide audience, mostly academically educated; we received enthusiastic responses from different sides. The workshop will of course be adapted to the level of secondary school students. It will also take a somewhat wider scope; its goal is not only to use rhetoric well, but also to recognize its misuses, i.e. ‘empty rhetoric’ and a lack of actual argumentative validity, and to oppose this kind of persuasion with a sounder and more solidly grounded rhetoric. The workshop of May 2016 provides me with some experience, an existing format, and a team, that will make preparation of this workshop feasible. In addition to this workshop, I will also devote my **column** on the website of literary magazine **De Gids** to the same goal of creating awareness of rhetoric among a wider audience, beyond academia and politics.

2. **Please explain the social benefit of your project and demonstrate the knowledge utilisation of your PhD project**

The two branches of my project primarily target two vital groups of society: those working in politics now (speechwriters, spokespeople, media officers, politicians), and those voting and determining our near future (young adults finishing secondary school). In my project on the Roman orator Cicero, and especially the speeches he delivered under the reign of the dictator Caesar, I learn a lot on the ways in which politicians manoeuver. These techniques have not changed much since, at least not in their general strategies, even when working in an altogether different context. Therefore, learning about ancient strategies of persuasion and, sometimes, manipulation, provides people with a better awareness of the strategies they use themselves, and moreover, that are used by others against them. Such awareness is vital for a healthy democracy, in which citizens are equipped to make critical decisions. This condition applies not only to the most visible level of national elections, but also to regional or local
politics. And even, on a smaller scale, to the well-being of institutional democracies such as schools, hospitals or companies, where members of the student or employee advisory board engage in political debate.

3. Please consider a detailed planning consisting of a timeline of deliverables as well as a budget plan to implement your initiative. All spendings must be planned for 2017.

January  Orientation on building of website, finding web designer
February  Preparation of lecture in The Hague
March    Lecture at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Hague
April    Preparing content for website & launch
May      Launch Online Rhetorical Platform
June     Preparation workshop for secondary school students
July     Writing first summary of the results of online discussion
September Workshop for secondary school students
October  Popular column on website of literary magazine De Gids
November Second summary of the results of online discussion

Deliverables:
- website
- two summarizing essays on first discussions on the online platform
- lecture
- workshop
- popular column

Budget plan

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<td>Building website</td>
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<td>Traveling reimbursement speakers workshop</td>
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