

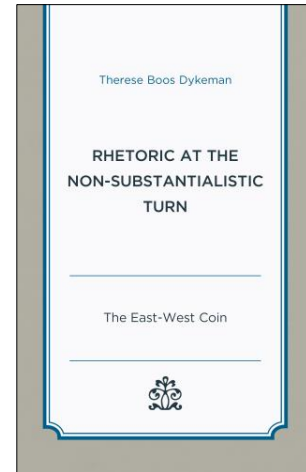
Therese Boos Dykeman, **Rhetoric at the Non-Substantialistic Turn: The East-West Coin**, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018, 211 pp., \$91.70 (hardcover), \$76.00 (ebook).

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Ancient Chinese critics believed that good writing has the “head of a phoenix” in that it is beautiful and attractive, the “belly of a pig” in that it is rich and dense, and the “tail of a cheetah” in that it is precise and powerful (Tao, 2012, p. 95). Therese Boos Dykeman’s ***Rhetoric at the Non-Substantialistic Turn: The East-West Coin*** meets these standards well. The author introduces Lik Kuen Tong’s “Field-Being” philosophy to the realm of rhetoric, draws from both East and West classical and contemporary rhetoric studies, and demonstrates a nonsubstantialistic turn from Being to Becoming in comparative rhetoric and global communications. The book connects ontology and rhetoric; harmonizes East–West differences in thinking; and points out the in-flux nature of rhetoric, communication, and planetary life.



Structurally, the book opens with an introduction of the Field-Being philosophy. The author contrasts West substantial versus East nonsubstantial thinking. The West substantial thinking focuses on Being, things, and unchanging objects, notably addressed by Aristotle, David Hume, George Berkeley, and Friedrich Nietzsche; the East nonsubstantial thinking emphasizes Becoming, relations, and changing activities, as demonstrated in Confucianism and Daoism. The author does not simply support the distinction. Instead, she argues that both East and West rhetoric contribute to the Field-Being rhetoric, which, as a “third eye” (p. xx), has adapted to the “borderless, boundless, and fluid” world (p. xix) and facilitated mutual understanding and communication in the global community. The opening of the book attracts readers with an innovative standpoint that is rooted in an alternative theoretical foundation.

Subsequent chapters gradually delineate the third-eye position. Chapter 1 dives into the fundamental concepts and theoretical underpinning of Field-Being rhetoric. The “Eastern water” and the “Western land” distinguish East–West rhetoric from the perspectives of discourse and language (p. 1). Chapters 2–6 elaborate on Field-Being theory by exploring the five turns of rhetoric: power (energy), ethics, art, creativity, and politics, respectively. Specifically, chapter 2 introduces three features of rhetorical power. First, such rhetoric power is creative, for it can generate an evolving truth through its fabrication of narratives and discourse (the Western viewpoint) and through its listening with silence (East). Second, rhetoric power is mediating because it bridges participants of interpersonal and civic communication with propriety. Finally, rhetoric power is effective, as it aims to be persuasive, esthetic, and sympathetic. The nonsubstantial turn of rhetoric power acknowledges its energy in both articulation and silence, abstraction and concretion, and changes in flux. Chapter 3 discusses both East and West viewpoints on the ethics of rhetoric. In the East, Confucianism emphasizes the communal nature of being and Daoism advocates for “pure man” as the incarnation of the ethical person (p. 69). In the West, ethos was integrated by Greek

philosophy and rhetoric. However, East and West diverge, both in theory and practice, in their interpretation of morality. Field-Being rhetoric includes both East and West, conforming with Tong's "Field Principle" that "all unity of plurality is founded in an undivided wholeness" (p. 70). Chapter 4 addresses rhetoric as an art by focusing on the concept of eloquence from nonsubstantial (ancient Afrocentric and Asiatic) perspectives and a substantial (Eurocentric) perspective. Field-Being unifies both perspectives by identifying the nonsubstantial nature of rhetoric—"it retains ambiguity and in part lies beyond what can be known by the most insightful critics of rhetoric" (p. 99). Chapter 5 explains rhetoric as creativity by introducing abduction as "the most creative kind of logic" (p. 119) and "the logic of discovery" (p. 114). The author explains the differences between abduction and other kinds of logic including induction, deduction, reduction, and analogy. Chapter 6 argues that nonsubstantial East political rhetoric values harmony, while substantial West political rhetoric values an individual nation's interest. However, the main tenet of Western substantial politics is shifting—from valuing national interest to valuing communal happiness. Such a shift constitutes a nonsubstantial turn. Chapter 7 defines global community, identifies problems within, and offers solutions about Field-Being rhetoric as a global discourse that can enhance the general well-being of humans. The conclusion is brief but powerful in that it reemphasizes the importance of nonsubstantial rhetoric in benefiting the well-being of the global community.

Rhetoric at the Non-Substantialistic Turn should prove attractive to many audiences. It can serve as a guidebook for junior scholars interested in comparative rhetoric and philosophy with its comprehensive coverage of both East and West rhetoric. Must-read classical rhetorical scholars such as Aristotle, Confucius, Zhuangzi, and Laozi, along with contemporary thinkers such as Lu Xing, Mao Luming, Stephen Toulmin, Susanne Langer, and Debra Hawhee, are presented too. Clearly, the author is learned in the rhetorics of different cultural contexts such as India, China, Japan, and Europe. For example, in chapter 1, when explaining the difference between West and East cultures, the author expounds upon Nūshu, a regional minority Chinese discourse. For senior scholars, the book offers a novel fusion of views, one that diverges from the West-East divisiveness in comparative rhetoric. The book invests in lively contemporary conversations by identifying the uses of rhetoric and problems challenging the global community such as climate change, Internet abuse, technological disparity, and gender discriminations.

That is not to say the book is perfect. Some minor revisions would go a long way toward enhancing the book's impact. Complex concepts such as "karma (karmic)" (pp. 19, 32, 36, 54, 112, 150) and "entivity" (entivities) (pp. xv, 183), repeatedly used throughout the book, need further clarification of their nuanced meanings so that readers can comprehend fully the conceptual spaces in play. Moreover, about the concept "eloquence" from chapter 4, the author might wish to consider Vico's (1996) definition, which emphasizes the knowledge storage as an evaluating standard. Vico (1996) believes an "eloquent" person is rare because, to be one, an individual must not only have an inordinately large knowledge base covering a range of topics but also know how to select from this storage in a context-appropriate manner (pp. 17–19). Such an inclusive viewpoint conforms more to the nonsubstantial turn of Field-Being theory.

Therese Boos Dykeman is an independent scholar. She penned the book as a tribute to her friend and colleague, Lik Kuen Tong, who recently passed away. Field-Being rhetoric is explicitly influenced by Tong's Field-Being philosophy in dialogue with Western ontology. By implementing Field-Being philosophy into rhetoric, Dykeman acknowledges the intertextuality between objects and language and rhetoric's

energy in shaping and creating realities. Field-Being rhetoric also speaks to argument fields, invented by Stephen Toulmin (2003). Although both use “field” to construct their theoretical foundations, Field-Being emphasizes the relational, communal, and contingent nonsubstantial turn of rhetoric and communication, which relies on both West and East thinking. Yet argument fields, characterized by its decisiveness and rigidity, are an archetype of Western substantial rhetoric.

Different from argument fields, Goodnight’s (1982) argument spheres center on uncertainty and contingency as the nature of rhetoric and public deliberation. Spheres are curves that acknowledge flexibility and change. Goodnight (1982) categorizes argument spheres into the personal, the technical, and the public and argues that public deliberation is being encroached upon by media spectacle and personal feelings unsupported by evidence. His idea of argument spheres has an interesting dialogue with Field-Being rhetoric. As a scholar trained in Western academia, Goodnight (1982) challenges the classification that West is substantial and East is nonsubstantial. Both theories agree on the importance of the mobile, relational, and communal perspective of rhetoric, which is a nonsubstantial turn—a world in flux, our attitude of humility, and an endeavor on communal well-being.

Above all, *Rhetoric at the Non-Substantialistic Turn* offers an innovative retooling of rhetoric as a global discourse that reconciles hemispheric traditions. It also touches on the possibility—and necessity—of East–West mutual understanding and cooperation about its shared challenges and objective to improve the general well-being of a world in flux. Besides its theoretical contribution, the book’s comprehensive nature and skilled comparative exposition are valuable for both academia and the broader global community.

References

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