

Rhetoric in Italy

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Preface

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Preface

In Italy, rhetoric is having a second renaissance, after the one in the seventies, which followed the publication of the Italian edition of the *The New Rhetoric. A Treatise on Argumentation* by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. At that time, it was brought back by the studies of Umberto Eco, Ezio Raimondi, Andrea Battistini, Bice Mortara Garavelli, Renato Barilli, Gianfanco Folena, Michele A. Cortelazzo, Carlo Paccagnella and Lea Ritter Santini.

Today, the dispersion in communication is over, both in manuals for writing and in coding of institutional and business languages (Marazzini 2000, 243-266) and rhetoric returns as an interpretative attitude towards the world and its many languages, starting from the political one (Feder 1999, Desideri 1997).

Our intention is to provide this issue of Res Rhetorica with an example of the renewed Italian interest of the art of persuasion. We owe this renaissance to a handful of qualified academics, but mostly to two of them, who built a bridge between the first and the second renaissance with their so impressive continuity and methodical study. We are talking about Bice Mortara Garavelli and Andrea Battistini. The academic of Turin fully legitimized the new rhetoric, proposing it in the fundamental texts of the academic studies not only in humanistic fields. Andrea Battistini proved, with his studies of Vico, Galileo and all the Italian literature that Benedetto Croce, the main opponent of rhetoric, was right and wrong. He was right, since Battistini's studies on Galileo confirmed the assertions of the philosopher of aesthetics about the persuasive use of tropes in the scientific language. But Croce was also wrong, since in the fundamental book *Le figure della retorica* – written in 1983 with Ezio Raimondi under the previous title of *Retoriche e Poetiche dominanti* – Battistini revealed how true it was that in Italy rhetoric and poetics never stopped to interact, even when in antithesis.

We want to dedicate this issue of Res Rhetorica to the professor Andrea Battistini, whose studies keep on nourishing those who approach the ancient art of eloquence free of national prejudices coming from the ideological condemnation of the art of persuasion, even when using it without knowing and with not always having successful outcomes, in the name of the simplicity of eloquence, clarity and communicative spontaneity.