Rhetoric and Phenomenology of Art
Notes towards an understanding of rhetoric

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1. Within the context of a necessary investigation of the elements which go to make up the contemporary understanding of rhetoric, I wish to draw attention to what may be called the "the phenomenology of art," a methodological approach which, whilst neither springing exclusively from the field of rhetorical studies in the strictest sense, nor exclusively concerned with rhetorical ideas, has nonetheless given rise to an approach which is extremely significant for rhetoric and which has produced some important critical studies.[1] I am using "phenomenology of art" here to refer to that line of aesthetic reflection which finds its point of focus in the thought of Luciano Anceschi, with respect to the ideas of poetics [*poetica*] and "institutions of poetry" [*istituzioni della poesia*], and which has its theoretical basis in the philosophy of Antonio Banfi and his rejection of a single-level reflection of art in favor of a multiple-mode aesthetics carried out within an open organization of knowledge.[2]

Where does the point of contact lie between an insistently philosophical aesthetics and rhetoric? A passage from Banfi makes the connection clear. In his introduction to a translation of Lon-

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[Translated from the Italian by Christine Richardson]

ginus' *On the Sublime,* published in 1949, we find the following indications:

> Romantic art and modern and contemporary art in general admits and even appreciates the irregularity of its subjective effects as a proof of its full expansive capacity. In this way it justifies the fact of being able to be considered as a simple opportunity for causing such an imaginative and emotional development. Ancient art, because of its origins and of the ethical and social function which it exercised, was more concerned with controlling, guiding and coordinating these effects and for this reason it has a principally oratorical intentionality. As a result, the principles and rules of rhetoric have a double meaning in ancient literature. On the one hand, they indicate the formative structure of the reality of art in its independence of existential reality from which it nonetheless draws its worth as an imitation and idealization. On the other hand, these rules control the emotional and imaginative after-life of art as they create, one might say, art's definitive horizon as not only aesthetic principles but as hedonistic or moral principles. [. . .]
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> The development of classical rhetoric thus offers a valuable field of analysis for the phenomenology of art and for the clarification of the complex structure which lies at the base both of the aesthetic independence and the human effectiveness of ancient art and which thus determines the typical idealizing nature of art. The ease with which the subjective aesthetics of lyricism and of intuition has eliminated rhetoric and dismissed it as an empty product of classification and intellectualistic analysis is an effect of the special nature of modern art, particularly in its romantic manifestations. In truth, it is only through the study of the system of rhetoric that the creation and value of ancient art is understandable and appreciable and that the lines of continuity in its historical development may be discerned. It is only through the function of rhetoric that the bounds and connections of the various directions of reflection on art can become clear.[3]

Prior to the experience of modern art, rhetoric seems to be a "definitive horizon" and "the formative structure of the reality of art." This is a definition which seems at first sight to fall within an opposition between ancient and modern art. While such an opposition is quite permissible in a *critical* perspective, it is by no means satisfactory in a *theoretical* perspective. However, the "ancient"/"modern" theme plays another, far more decisive role in this passage: indeed, the overshadowing of rhetoric—"The ease with which the subjective aesthetics of lyricism and of intuition has eliminated rhetoric"—is an effect of modern art, an effect of "the special nature of modern art."

Here we can see that a precise distortion has been effected on rhetoric by modern thought. The devaluation of rhetoric is not a natural effect of the modern on the ancient but rather an intended and particular denial of the reality of art.

2. It would be easy to trace in Banfi's formula "subjective aesthetics of lyricism and of intuition" a veiled allusion to Benedetto Croce. While not denying Banfi's strong opposition to Croce's philosophy, I shall turn aside, at least for the moment, from the duel with Croce in order to step back a little from the formulae and histrionic gestures of "denial" and "ransoming" of rhetoric and try to follow the development and use of certain motifs and meanings which are important to the idea of rhetoric. In this way, I shall attempt to demonstrate the specific sense of the connection between rhetoric *and* phenomenology of art which I use in my title.

Significant elements for our analysis may be found in the second half of the nineteenth century against the background of Croce's philosophical obliteration of rhetoric. Herbert Spencer's "Philosophy of Style" (1852) presents a good positivist example of the naturalization of rhetoric. Spencer's argument is characteristically neat and to the point. Having subordinated conventions to natural gifts and usage, he then affronts the question of the principles of style:

> good composition is far less dependent on acquaintance with its laws, than on practice and natural aptitude. A clear head, a quick imagination, and a sensitive ear, will go far towards making all rhetorical precepts needless. [. . .] Nevertheless, some result may be expected from a familiarity with the principles of style. [. . .]
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> No general theory of expression seems yet to have been enunciated. The maxims contained in works on composition and rhetoric, are presented in an unorganized form. Standing as isolated dogmas—as empirical generalizations, they are neither so clearly apprehended, nor so much respected, as they would be if they were deduced from simple first principle. [. . .] But, however influential the precepts thus dogmatically expressed, they would be much more influential if reduced to something like scientific ordination. In this as in other cases, conviction is strengthened when we understand the why. And we may be sure that recognition of the general principle from which the rules of composition result, will not only bring them home to us with greater force, but will disclose other rules of like origin.
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> On seeking for some clue to the law underlying these current maxims, we may see implied in many of them, the importance of economizing the reader's or hearer's attention. To so present ideas

> that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort, is the desideratum towards which most of the rules above quoted point.[4]

Though Spencer tends to avoid the use of the word "rhetoric," preferring the terms "grammar" or "style," he proposes as valid and possible a rhetoric which is a deduction and definition of techniques which will achieve an efficient use of language, working from scientifically based "first principles." When these principles are encompassed in an economy of mental effort,[5] they give rise to a general theory of expression which brings into play a notion of language as both vehicle and hindrance of thought:

> Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for conveying thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple, the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result. [. . .] How truly language must be regarded as a hindrance to thought, though the necessary instrument of it, we shall clearly perceive on remembering the comparative force with which simple ideas are communicated by signs.[6]

It is significant here that the idea of efficient use of language is not connected to any notion of expressive embellishment. At most, the efficient use of language is resolved in the extra-linguistic efficiency of gesture or sign. The instrumental nature of language with regard to thought reveals it to be not only an obstacle or hindrance to thought (and here lies the usefulness of clear, persuasive rules which may be deduced from a general theory of expression), but it also allows it to be re-absorbed into the immediate, simple, natural expression of gesture from which it first emerged, distinguishing itself in the more complicated form of language.

Rhetoric is "naturalized" according to a theory of expression which continually tends to dissolve the specific linguistic element. Expressiveness, or expressive efficiency, is traced back to the natural condition of the gesture, and rhetoric is reduced to a pre-existing feature which is defined in terms of emotions, sentiments or passions rather than in linguistic terms. Thus psychological factors come to be given primary importance in many late-nineteenth-century treatments of aesthetics.

I. A. Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), although never specifically mentioning Spencer, can be seen as a perfect antithesis to the "Philosophy of Style." Richards' idea of rhetoric as the study of verbal ambiguities and their relative corrections is a re-

verse image of Spencer's efficiency.[7] Richards places even further back in the history of rhetoric such a "fallacy" which sees only the problem of how to use in the best possible way the evident undeniable powers of expression which words already contain. Spencer works within a vision of language seen as a ready-made tool to be used in the best possible ways, while Richards' view of rhetoric as a study of verbal ambiguities sees the precariousness of words not as a casual accident in the use of language but as the very nature of linguistic meaning. The mechanism of metaphor matches the mechanism of verbal signification and has its roots in the theorem in which verbal meaning functions as delegated efficiency of omitted contexts.

Confronting Richards' idea of rhetoric with Spencer's, rhetoric takes on a linguistic consistency but with respect to a linguistics of the *signified* rather than the *signifier* and remains within a *semantics* still very open to psychological elements.[8]

3. Benedetto Croce's obliteration of rhetoric through the identity of intuition and expression postulates a clear de-psychologization of the idea of expression, midway between the extremes of Spencer and Richards. For Croce, expression is identified as a type of knowledge which is appropriate to the dialectics of the Spirit, as intuitive knowledge. As a result, it has no requirement of any type of psychological content. However, following Croce's argument consistently, we go beyond even this. The specific linguistic element is obliterated in the single legitimate science of expression, that is, aesthetics. For Croce, beauty is successful expression or simply expression.[9]

In order to fit this concept, rhetoric has to be reduced to the simulacrum of the "double form."[10] Once rhetoric has been reduced to the theory of decorated expression, and seen as merely an embellished re-elaboration of simple expressions, it can then be governed and obliterated by the identity of intuition and expression. While Spencer naturalized rhetoric in the context of psychophysical expressiveness, Croce annuls it in the conceptual device of a theoretical category. In both cases the idea of rhetoric is reduced to the idea of a technique for treating a verbal material which already exists or is otherwise accessible. In both cases language moves away towards something other than itself, be it immediate natural expression in the one case or an all-inclusive totalizing mechanism of the identity of the categories of intuition and expression in the other.

The understanding of rhetoric against which Croce's position

stands and reacts is thus a naturalized rhetoric reduced in the combination of, in Spencer's terms, grammar and style. However, another annulment of rhetoric is also offered in the same period which is very different from Croce's position. To name but one among several contrasting speculations on rhetoric at this time, Michelstaedter offers a very different view.[11] For Michelstaedter, the illusory nature of rhetoric is a result of the impossibility of persuasion, the impossibility of possessing ourselves and our own life. He makes an analogy with weight which, always striving to reach a lower level, "is itself an impediment to possessing its own life and depends only on itself in the fact that it can do nothing but fall, it has no possibility of resisting its situation. Weight can never be persuaded."[12] Rhetorical illusion covers and hides the impossible possession of truth.

4. When criticizing the dogmatic rules of traditional ideas of rhetoric, Croce has often been assigned a liberating influence and his position hailed as one which affirmed the creative liberty of art in contrast to the confines and rules of rhetoric. This view belongs clearly to the romantic tradition and is of no particular interest here. It is more interesting to observe how, at the turn of the century, positions of normative rhetoric were explicitly re-proposed and to note the reactions these aroused in the climate of "psychological rhetoric." In France, an interesting example of this debate can be found in the dispute between A. Albalat, author of *L'Art d'écrire enseigné en vingt leçons,*[13] and Remy de Gourmont.

At the end of the nineteenth century in France, many scholars turned their attention to rhetoric, particularly due to the institutional changes which occurred in 1885 when the teaching of rhetoric was abolished in favor of "summary notions of the History of Greek, Latin and French Literatures." A.-Ed. Chaignet, for example, opened his *La Rhétorique et son histoire,* written at the turn of the century,[14] with the call for a systematic study of literature for the education and exercise of taste. The cultural climate was marked by a sense of the beautiful and an aesthetic taste, the belief in a literary value existing in a timeless dimension which governs history. Literature was considered superior to History of Literature. A contribution of Brunetière to this line of reasoning offers more carefully articulated and less diaphanous motivations for the necessity to which rhetoric responds: "It is for oneself but also for others that one writes and speaks."[15] Thus literature and art have a social mission to express and they show the worth of the communal word "which comes from the heart of our fellow

beings and reaches into our own heart," for "We cannot live by bread, algebra and exegesis alone."[16]

The call was for a *normative* rhetoric, if by this is understood a reasoned system of timeless laws and rules for language and thought as general, universal concerns of humanity. Such a theory of rhetoric was considered by many to be a didactic, pedagogical, even political necessity in France in this period.

Albalat has a much less ambitious and far-reaching objective, but is quite precise in his belief in efficiency.[17] He defends stoically the teachability of the art of writing and the concept of literature as a trade which can be learned and practiced like any other. Albalat's writings blend a monumental respect for "Literature" and "Great Writers" with a cast-iron faith in the teaching of techniques and the analysis of the trade through the study of the masters and their works. For Albalat, reflection takes first place as part of the work which modifies inspiration and spontaneity word by word: "You are not born original, you become original."[18]

However, the most interesting aspect of Albalat's work for our survey is the reaction it caused in Remy de Gourmont with respect to the concept of style. The crux of their dispute is this: while Albalat puts forward the idea that expressive facts stem not from "emotions" but from "will" by means of a conscious and conscientious process of work, Gourmont states that "style is a specialization of sensibility."[19] Such a definition stems from the theme of the psyche-physical unity of human beings, that is, of the continuity between the physiological and the psychological. This theme appears also in Spencer, and his "The Origin and Function of Music"[20] should be read in conjunction with "The Philosophy of Style" in this respect. For Spencer, music starts from the *voice*, from the physiological response to an emotion. The voice contains all the elements—tone, pitch, etc.—which the evolution of music has been concerned with discovering, gathering and condensing to use systematically.

The investigations of creative mechanisms springing from the idea of psycho-physical unity of the mind and the continuity between brain and thought move the understanding of rhetoric into the context of a psychology of invention.[21] There are many examples of this progression. Hennequin's *La Critique Scientifique*,[22] for example, proposes a model in which an initial aesthetic analysis, directed towards the discovery of the particular emotion produced by that emotion-producing machine, the work of art, is followed by a psychological analysis which sets out to find the equivalent structure to the mechanisms operating in the work of art in the

mind of the author. Lacombe's *Introduction à l'histoire littéraire*[23] suggests as the central mechanism of literary invention a psychology of the writer consisting of the sequence sensibility-memory-imagination-emotion-to-be-communicated. Lacombe also draws attention to an element diametrically opposed to the methodological psychologism which dominates his theory in general. This element is also expressed in the language of psychology, using the concept of suggestion.[24] The ability of expression of a poet or writer depends not on a "special" sensitivity but rather on a more highly developed "record of an emotion" which is substantially a "language record." A poet feels his or her own emotions and contemporaneously thinks about them (thus linguistically recording them); when the emotion-to-be-communicated is expressed, inspiration—that is, the wish to communicate emotions—is fed through the auto-suggestion to the verbal sign. Thus the expressive moment feeds back to the emotion-to-be-communicated.[25] This emphasis on the linguistic dimension finds its outcome in Lacombe in specific attention to rhetorical figures and in a reclassification of these figures whereby rhetoric is seen almost as the language of the psychology of invention.[26]

5. The split in the understanding of style which appears between the totalizing position of psychologistic reduction and the independent, irreducible strength of the linguistic dimension becomes even wider in Gourmont. Gourmont is immovable in his conviction that style is part of the psycho-physiological condition of human beings:

> Style cannot be taught. It is completely futile to talk of the pedagogical aspects of the question. The real problem of style is a matter of physiology. [. . .] We write as we feel, as we think, with the whole of our body. Intelligence is only one of the modes of being of sensibility and it is certainly neither the most stable nor the most voluntary.[27]

Gourmont cites Buffon's maxim that "Le style c'est l'homme" as "the affirmation of a naturalist, one who knows that bird songs are determined by the shape of the beak, the form of the tongue and the size of the throat and lungs. The question of style concerns grammarians only if they are prepared to work from solid psycho-physiological notions."[28] Gourmont's views on philosophy repeat once again his belief that style is produced by the total act of writing, not merely by a surface verbal layer: "what is a doctrine, if not the verbal translation of a physiology?"[29]

Thus if style is a specialization of sensibility, all style must be involuntary. This physiological interpretation effectively precludes any role for education and instruction. In response to the

"professors of sociology" who have invented the idea of mentality, Gourmont states firmly that the brain is all or nothing, quoting Taine who had said that "the brain secretes thought just as the liver secretes bile."[30] Within this absolute physiologization of style, however, there appears an unsettling idea of literature whereby all art and literature and every social or cultural creation depends on the primary and primordial faculty of the lie. Gourmont sees the lie in terms of an opposition in physiological terms for it is what can be opposed to imitation, or the animal-type camouflage as an adaptation to the environment. Gourmont's idea of lie is revealed in his counter-opposition of Homer and Flaubert. Homer's precision is incapable of lying while Flaubert has an infinite ability in lying and provides his readers not with the exact sensation but with the confusion, which is visually absurd yet artistically admirable, of a "double et trouble" sensation.[31]

Trouble is the key word in Gourmont's "physiology," which is repeatedly and confusedly redoubled in any necessity and task, in any *logic* and any *event*. If there is a linear, consequential circuit which moves from sensations to word-images, to word-ideas, to word-feelings, this closed circuit is reactivated by the tendency of feelings to pass into action, which is in turn the source of our strongest and most acute sensations. However, "this resembles closely (perhaps too closely) the circulation of the blood. *Les troubles* of the circulation of ideas produce literature, art, games, culture."[32] With our "synaesthetic" tendencies we are closer to Flaubert than to Homer because we cannot separate the double or triple images which simultaneously arise when we think of a fact, in our brains *troubles* by tumultuous sensations.[33] Finally, for Flaubert, the true hero of Gourmont's study (at crucial points in the argument Gourmont adds a quotation from *Bouvard et Pecuchet*), the necessity of this *trouble* physiology becomes an active task:

> No matter what school he had been trained in, Flaubert would have become what he was, himself. Life is a filtering. Man's task in life is to clean his personality, to flush out all the waste products deposited there by education and to free it from all traces left there by what he admired as an adolescent.[34]

6. The dispute between Albalat and Gourmont may stand as an emblem of a conflict between a normative rhetoric and a naturalized rhetoric in which a notion of style is germinated and transplanted into a new field. Gourmont's aversion to normative rhetoric is not an aversion to a scheme of rhetoric in and by itself,[35]

but rather to a pedagogical role for rhetoric. For Gourmont and his idea of physiology, the intended receiver of such a pedagogical role does not exist, for humanity is something else entirely. What can be produced by means of a rhetorical training or instruction has nothing to do with art. These are problems which, although more basic and less soul-searching, are nonetheless close to those outlined by Michelstaedter. In the early years of the present century there are many reappearances of such themes, with frequent echoes of Nietzsche, turned to the subject of rhetoric with discourses on being, truth and language.[36]

Once rhetoric has moved away from the idea of a normative system, it can develop in the context of the discussion and concept of style which may be found in many central areas of contemporary culture. The concern with style forms a dense interweaving of motivations and methodologies which cannot be adequately contained under the simple heading of "stylistics." The notion of distortion represents perhaps the most characteristic indication of the complexity and richness of the present situation. Once normative ideas have been abandoned, the conceptual mechanism of the idea of a norm (with its latent content of deviation and transgression of the norm, of distortion) becomes available for use in considering the validity, the possibility of legitimization and the practicability of a new idea of style. This is important for at least one reason. In *Langue et techniques poétiques à l'époque romane*,[37] Paul Zumthor entitled one of his chapters "L'écart rhétorique" and was careful to attribute the source of the term to Valéry. This seems to me to demonstrate quite clearly that the cultural vitality of the idea of *distortion*, or *écart*, is not only due to the interest of linguists and theorists of stylistics but also to the fact that the idea draws on one of the principal currents of twentieth-century poetry, on what Valéry defined as pure and absolute poetry.[38]

While Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* tended to resolve rhetoric into semantics and a linguistics of the signified which privileged the idea of *ambiguity*,[39] the problems and internal crises of the supporters of psychologism gave rise, through the responses of opposition which these provoked at the beginning of this century, to a stylistic rhetoric which was more concerned with a linguistics of the signifier and which gave prime importance to the idea of distortion. It is quite possible to read Roman Jakobson's famous article on "Linguistics and Poetics" as an attempt to summarize and to crystallize in a scientific manner—working from a linguistics of *functions*—the ideas of *distortion* and *ambiguity*.[40]

7. What do these fragments from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century offer us for an understanding of rhetoric? They range from a pedagogy of style which has its last line of resistance in using the works of the masters as exemplars, to theories of a psycho-physiology of style which both absorbs and rejects ideas laid down by a naturalized rhetoric. Their varying elements and intentions of meaning reveal an illuminating series of problems, a *referent of signification* [*referente di significazione*] for that variegated tendency in nineteenth-century culture which gathers up rhetorical terms and concepts, and brings them together in the *idea of style* [*tema dello stile*].

Let us turn once again to the passage from Banfi quoted at the beginning of this article. While Banfi's emphasis on rhetoric cannot be simply explained in its general methodological movement as an opportunistic attack on Croce's views, neither can it be satisfactorily inserted in the ideas of rhetoric outlined above. For Banfi, rhetoric seems to be operating closer to the *idea of tradition* rather than to the *idea of style*.

The idea of tradition is not entirely incompatible with a normative rhetoric, of course. However, normative rhetoric often has the tendency to confuse and obscure the idea of tradition by presuming it to be a set of values which can then be applied. This confusion appears in the above-mentioned work of Brunetière, "Apologie pour la rhétorique," which concludes with the argument against the substitution of rhetoric by literary history, in the name of the project of "classical French teaching." Since classical French literature is essentially oratorical ("our greatest writers did not *see* themselves write: they *felt* writing"[41]), rhetoric has an undeniable historical-exegetical necessity. Although in this instance Brunetière's argument is couched in terms suitable for a discussion of school curriculum and pedagogy, elsewhere he uses a more elevated sphere of reference when he states that a "classical" literature is conceivable only because of the universality of values which it represents. Thus the intended recipient of the pedagogical force is not merely pupils in the classroom but is the whole of humanity. It is needless to state that such ideas stood little chance of acceptance or survival against the turbulent views of the following century.

Leaving aside pedagogic presumptions and normative assertions of values, the idea of tradition takes on new life as a means of questioning the present, and of ways of going about things in the present.

The importance of Valéry with respect to the *idea of distortion* was pointed out above, but another equally influential poet may be called upon here. In T. S. Eliot's study "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1920), the conditions of creating poetry are examined. Eliot turns his attention to the need, for the poet, of a historical sense which is "a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together. . . ."[42] According to Eliot:

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered. . . .[43]

The past is renewed by the present as the present is supported by the past. The poet must therefore undergo a permanent *extinction of personality*, the poet must "surrender himself wholly to the work to be done."[44] We are a long way here from style seen as a "specialization of sensibility."

Anceschi moves on from this idea in Eliot of tradition as a changing order and sees in Husserl the idea that the past, or what is considered finished and set, a past which is silent and multilayered, can be remade and can be made into the present in relation to a future horizon, which exists as an *intentional prospective*.[45] However, if it is the future, as a project of doing, which enables the past to be made present, the present life of the past is possible because the linking up of comprehension occurs within the unity of the community of communication. It is realized within the framework of language as an intersubjective mediation, language not as a mere exchange of information but as a connection in a community for which the setting of spoken language in writing guarantees both a continuity and a continuation.

A word (a work of art) is not alive simply because it has the quality of an authentic event (there are many possible modes of authenticity: coincidence with the a priori synthesis intuition-expression, being rooted in the integral totality of human being, etc.), but rather because it continues and lasts in the intersubjective intentional work of language, of the community and of the human possibility of projecting from the present. Such an idea of tradition gives rise to an attention to objective structures of the work of art itself, objective structures understood not as facts which can be reduced scientifically to validity with any preexistent discipline,

but as structures which are objective in the sense of having a quality of lasting intention which cannot but outlive them.

8. The explicit idea of a rhetoric is taken up again in that more intensive movement in considering the work of art which finds its realization in the notion of *poetics*. The first and most general sense of poetics lies in the desire to move reflection on art outside of an exclusive, petrified, philosophical methodology and to recognize the multiplicity of modes and levels and the different intentions which go to make up the work of art. Above all, poetics displays the intimate and inescapable connection between art and knowledge of art; poetics is also the poet's reflection on the craft of poetry, it is not a secondary activity which is carried out around the work of art but is an intention of sense which penetrates the work and is active in its structure. It is not an ideal or mental anticipation of the work of art but an active principle which intimately guides the very construction of the work of art.

It follows, therefore, that there is no work of art (object, event or experience which we consider to belong to the cultural sphere "art") that does not contain a thread of reflection on art in its structure. Anceschi has shown in his analysis of the notion of literary "institutions" that these are "a certain idea of principles created for doing, a certain plan of rules,"[46] which lead to an area of pragmatic reflection. Thus what we enclose in *the idea of poetics is both an intrinsic moment of art in the process of being made and the indication of a possible discourse and knowledge of art.*

This is the area in which this phenomenology of art rediscovers the relevance of rhetoric. It is when we work to build an image of the complexity of the work of art, which includes the objectivity of its structures, the intentionality of its project and the relationship between these two terms, that rhetoric reappears as an institutional framework and as a field of possibility of the work of art—naturally in the overlapping, the shifting, the layering and the interference with other frameworks and other possibilities.

Such a reappearance of rhetoric was earlier termed *the idea of tradition* not because it was intended to allude to something alive in the past which needed to be considered in order to understand that past nor even to indicate some improbable canon of essential values, but because rhetoric provides a crucial example of how "tradition" is an inevitable idea in any present which projects its own future, in the apparently minimal and inert everyday detail of doing things. E. R. Curtius noted with magisterial simplicity that: "Where literature is a school subject we have elements of a

systematized study of literature."[47] Similar appeals to the more humble, blind or even mechanical dealing with literary works begins a wealth of somewhat more fruitful theoretical suggestions made by many recent developments in the "theory" and "science" of literature.

Finally, if we are working within the framework of the structured work of poetics, *pragmatic reflection,* which is an intrinsic moment of art and an element in the knowledge of art, will give rise to the need for theoretical clarification. *Theoretical* should be understood here in the plural sense of theories, different ways and levels of grouping and solving problems. This clarification will produce a discourse on art in which we shall also be speaking, diversely but exhaustively, about *something other than art.* In this way, the rhetoric used in such a discourse will not be a rhetoric of the "restricted" kind but will be shown in the full breadth of its cultural spread, demonstrating relevance and usefulness in many areas and directions of knowledge and applicable to many widely differing forms and problems of cultural life.

1. Cf. *Il Verri,* 35/36 (1970), issue dedicated to "Institutions and Rhetoric"; E. Mattioli, *Studi di poetica e retorica* (Modena, 1983); F. Bollino, *Teoria e sistema delle belle arti,* Studi di Estetica, no. 3 (Bologna, 1976). The work of critics such as Renato Barilli and Fausto Curi is firmly rooted in this attitude, cf. R. Barilli, *Poetica e Retorica* (Milan, 1969) and F. Curi, *Metodo, storia, struttura* (Turin, 1971).

2. Cf. Luciano Anceschi, *Progetto di una Sistematica dell'Arte* (Milan, 1962); idem., *Le istituzioni della poesia* (Milan, 1968); Antonio Banfi, *Vita dell'arte* (Milan, 1947); L. Rossi, *Fenomenologia critica e storiografia estetica* (Bologna, 1983). It is significant to note that alternative readings of Banfi's aesthetic views also draw attention to themes closely related to the context of rhetoric: cf. D. Formaggio, *Fenomenologia della tecnica artistica* (Milan, 1953).

3. Antonio Banfi (ed.), *Pseudo Longino Il Sublime* (Milan, 1949), pp. 19-20. The importance of Banfi's reading of Pseudo Longinus' *On the Sublime* has been pointed out by E. Mattioli in his "Il Sublime nella lettura di Banfi" in *Antonio Banfi e il pensiero contemporaneo,* Atti del Convegno di Studi banfiani, Reggio Emilia, 13-14 maggio 1967 (Florence, 1968), pp. 430-4, and by L. Salvioni in his *Persuasione e grandezza* (Vicenza, 1985), p. 24.

4. Herbert Spencer, "The Philosophy of Style," in *Essays: Scientific, Political & Speculative,* Vol. II (1891; repr. Osnabrück 1966), pp. 333-34.

5. "Hence, carrying out the metaphor that language is the vehicle of thought, we may say that in all cases the friction and inertia of the vehicle deduct from its efficiency; and that in composition, the chief thing to be done, is to reduce the friction and inertia to the smallest amounts." Ibid., pp. 335-36.

6. Ibid., p. 335.

7. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, lectures given at Bryn Mawr College (1936). The references here are to Lectures 1 and 2.

8. Cf. idem., *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (London, 1924).

9. Cf. Benedetto Croce, *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (Bari, 1908), p. 90: "chiamo la bellezza espressione riuscita o espressione senz'altro."

10. The "doppia forma": cf. idem., "La Rettorica o teoria della forma ornata," in *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale*, op. cit., pp. 473-89.

11. Cf. C. Michelstaedter, *La persuasione e la rettorica*, ed. S. Campailla (Milan, 1982). The original text was published posthumously in 1913.

12. Ibid., p. 40.

13. A. Albalat, *L'Art d'écrire enseigné en vingt leçons* (Paris, no date but no later than 1901). Cf. also idem., *De la formation du style par l'assimilation des auteurs* (Paris, 1901).

14. A.-Ed. Chaignet, *La Rhétorique et son histoire* (Paris, 1888), VII-XXVII.

15. "Cest pour soi, mais aussi pour les autres qu'on écrit et qu'on parle." F. Brunetière, "Apologie pour la rhétorique," in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1 Déc. 1890), p. 690.

16. "Nous ne vivons seulement de pain, d'algèbre, et d'exégèse, mais de toute parole qui vient du coeur de nos semblables et qui pénètre jusqu'au notre." Ibid., p. 693.

17. Cf. *Les Ennemis de l'Art d'écrire* (Paris, 1905). Brunetière was among the opponents of Albalat, probably because he found the minute technical details proposed by Albalat unacceptable.

18. "Quant à l'assertion: 'On ne devient pas original, on l'est,' c'est une des plus criantes énormités qui se puissent lire, un de ces paradoxes contre qui proteste toute l'histoire de notre littérature. . . . Le rebours serait plûtot vrai, et l'on pourrait ainsi retourner l'axiome: 'On n'est pas original, on le devient'." Ibid., p. 235. "As far as the assertion, 'You do not become original, you are born original' is concerned, it is one of the most ridiculous falsities you will ever come across, one of those paradoxes which our entire literature cries out against. [. . .] In fact, the opposite is true: 'You are not born original, you become original'."

19. Cf. Remy de Gourmont, *Le Problème du Style* (Paris, 1902), pp. 41ff.

20. "The Origin and Function of Music" (1857), printed in Herbert Spencer, op. cit., pp. 400ff.

21. On the idea of invention in late-nineteenth-century culture, cf. P. Souriau, *Théorie de l'invention* (Paris, 1881).

22. E. Hennequin, *La Critique Scientifique* (Paris, 1888).

23. P. Lacombe, *Introduction à l'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1898). Cf. also my "Psicologia dell'invenzione e retorica dell'immaginazione" in *Profili e frammenti di idee estetiche* (Modena, 1984), pp. 259-70.

24. Cf. P. Souriau, *La suggestion dans l'art* (Paris, 1893).

25. Ibid., pp. 148ff.

26. Ibid., pp. 375ff. Among the criteria of classification of figures of speech there appear some notions with clear psychological associations: "avertissement," "précaution," "suggestion."

27. "On n'apprend pas à écrire, c'est-à-dire à acquérir un style personnel; sans quoi rien ne serait plus commun, et rien n'est plus rare. C'est le côté pédagogique de la question et le côté vain. Le véritable problème du style est une question de physiologie. S'il est impossible d'établir le rapport exact, nécessaire, de tel style à telle sensibilité, on peut cependant affirmer une étroite dépendance. Nous écrivons, comme nous sentons, comme nous pensons, avec notre corps entier. L'intelligence n'est qu'une des manières d'être de la sensibilité, et non la plus stable, encore moins la plus volontaire." (Gourmont, op. cit., p. 9.)

28. "Buffon faisait de la science. 'le style est l'homme même' est un propos de naturaliste, qui sait que le chant des oiseaux est determiné par la forme de leur bec, l'attache de leur langue, la diamètre de leur gorge, la capacité de leurs poumons. La question du style n'est du ressort des gammairiens que s'ils veulent bien s'appuyer sur de solides notions psycho-physiologiques." (Ibid., pp. 32-33.)

29. "La logique de l'oeil et la logique de chacun des autres sens suffisent à guider l'esprit; le sentiment inutile est rejeté comme une cause de trouble et l'on obtient ces merveilleuses constructions qui semblent de pures oeuvres intellectuelles et qui, en réalité, sont l'oeuvre matérielle des sens et de leurs organes comme les cellules des abeilles avec leur cire et leur miel. La philosophie, qui passe vulgairement pour le domaine des idées pures (ces chimères!), n'est lucide que conçue et rédigée par des écrivains sensoriels. [. . .] Que l'on se souvienne des invectives de Schopenhauer contre Hegel, de Taine contre les spiritualistes et des spiritualistes contre Taine. Il s'agissait de doctrines, sans doute, mais qu'est-ce-qu'une doctrine, sinon la traduction verbale d'une physiologie?" (Ibid., pp. 70-71.)

30. "Taine disait grossièrement: le cerveau sécrète la pensée comme la foie sécrète la bile. Les professeurs de sociologie, avec une hypocrite décence, insinuent doucement que le cerveau n'est peu-être qu'une concrétion de la pensée, qui se débarrasse ainsi de ses impuretés pour continuer plus fluide son voyage éternel dans le devenir. Demain, s'ils sont logiques, ils feront tourner des tables. Le cerveau est tout, ou rien; il est l'organe de la pensée ou un obstacle à la pensée." (Ibid., pp. 56-57.)

31. Ibid., p. 90.

32. "Cela ressemble beaucoup (peut-être trop) à la circulation du sang. Les troubles de la circulation des idées produisent toute la littérature, tout l'art, tout le jeu, toute la civilisation. Et tout n'est que matière, ou rien n'est matière. 'Bouvard ne croyait même plus à la matière'." (ibid., p. 82.)

33. Ibid., p. 91.

34. "Sorti de toute autre école, Flaubert fût pareillement devenu ce qu'il était, lui-même. La vie est un dépouillement. Le but de l'activité propre d'un homme est de nettoyer sa personnalité, de la laver de toutes les souillures qu'y déposa l'éducation, de la dégager de toutes les empreintes qu'y laissèrent nos admirations adolescentes." (Ibid., p. 104.)

35. The *Esthétique de la langue française* (Paris, 1899) reveals a minute attention to questions of language.

36. Cf. Samuel Ijsseling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (The Hague, 1976), Chapters XIII-XVI.

37. Cf. Paul Zumthor, *Langue et techniques poétiques à l'époque romane* (Paris, 1963).

38. Ibid. In *Poésie pure. Notes pour une conférence,* Valéry writes: "Toutes les oeuvres écrites, toutes les oeuvres du langage, contiennent certains fragments, ou éléments reconnaissables, doués de proprieétés que nous examinerons tout à l'heure et que j'appellerai provisoirement *poétiques*. Toutes les fois que la parole montre un certain *écart* avec l'expression la plus directe, c'est-à-dire la plus insensible de la pensée, toutes les fois que ces écarts font pressentir, en quelque sorte, un monde de rapports distinct du monde purement pratique, nous concevons plus ou moins nettement la possibilité d'agrandir ce domain d'exception, et nous avons la sensation de saisir le fragment d'une substance noble et vivante qui est peut-être susceptible de développement et de culture; et qui, développée et utilisée, constitue la poésie en tant qu'effet de l'art." (Valéry, *Oeuvres*, t. I [Paris, 1957], pp. 1456-57.)

Obviously it is not my intention to summarize or fix linguistic studies or the linguistic approach to style in the notion of *écart*. The interested reader is directed to a study by B. Terracini which predates the "rise and fall" of structuralism: "L'analisi del concetto di lingua letteraria," in *Cultura neolatina* XVI, 1 (1956), pp. 9-31.

39. In this respect, cf. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1930).

40. Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics," a paper given at the interdisciplinary conference on problems of style held at the University of Indiana in 1958. Printed in T. A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language* (New York and London, 1960), pp. 350-77.

41. "Notre littérature classique—et je dis pas seulement la prose, je dis aussi la poésie—est essentiellement oratoire [. . .] pendant deux ou trois cents ans, nos plus grands écrivains se sont non pas *vus*, mais ils se sont *entendus* écrire." (Brunetière, op. cit., p. 698.)

42. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1920/1964), p. 49.

43. Ibid., p. 50.

44. Ibid., p. 59.

45. Cf. Luciano Anceschi, "Krisis, Beilage III zu para. 9a," in *Progetto di una Sistematica dell'Arte*, op. cit., pp. 115-37.

46. Idem., *Le istituzioni della poesia*, op. cit., p. 19.

47. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1953; repr. 1979), p. 247.