

Claudia Stancati

RHETORIC THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
IN PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE:
THEORY AND ANALYSIS OF FICTIONS

Abstract

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in Europe and in USA, the linguistic turn of the contemporary philosophy seems to take place without and against the rhetoric which is about to loose a great deal of its power in the field of public communication indeed (pragmatics is not yet developed), and, banned from logic and sciences, it became only literary criticism. In 1902 the abolition of the rhetoric's teaching in the French school, can be considered an instance of how it went under such a shadow, although creating in some philosophers, linguists and logicians an huge disappointment.

In much more recent times, instead, there has been a new trend that we could define the rhetorical turn of the contemporary thought. In fact, after Roman Jakobson who has built semantic on rhetoric, and after that Chaim Perelman has placed it at the base of every form of reasoning, the rhetoric again is at the center of the scientific thought. Books like Edelman's *Bright Air* or Gibss' *The Poetic Mind* put under a new light the importance of cognitive values of rhetorical mechanisms.

This article deals with two authors who seem to be the masterminds of this change: Hans Vaihinger and Giovanni Vailati. Just at the beginning of the twentieth century, in Germany and Italy they published works in which the rhetorical processes are examined because they are cognitive models not only in poetry but in scientific field and general knowledge too. In other words they are extremely flexible structures of thought that can solve scientific puzzles and they also can be at the bases of some disciplines like mathematics or jurisprudence.