

## Editorial

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Concrete, quick, elliptical; above all open to question, the «enthymeme,» like the example, deals mainly with contingencies. Unlike the example, which is used for induction, it is a rhetorical syllogism based on premises which are «often fewer than the regular syllogism». Moreover, «if one of these is well known, there is no need to mention it, for the hearer can add it» (Aristotle, *Rhetorics*, I 1357a). A path of thought tracing an uncertain and shaky inference in the boundless territory of the verisimilar, the enthymeme requires the effort of its reader or listener to fill in what is left implicit or incomplete. Its starting points are places inhabited by images and values, which are exposed to contrasting forces (that is, to other places of equal force while equally vulnerable) and subject to the condition of agreement, in order to be persuasive.

If rhetorical argumentation is indeed the original sphere of pertinence of the enthymeme, the noun is for us equally adequate (*aptum*) to delineate the boundaries of the literary experience. There, too, there is something missing and it is up to the interlocutor to build it up or even posit it. Paraphrasing Bachtin: I – person, word, text – am not self sufficient, I need the other to complete me, to know me and to express me, thus bringing me into being. There's more to it: the other – the hero – needs me to express him and know him, he needs an author who, from his border position, creates him as a complete whole. So did Franco Brioschi remind his students that «literature is first and foremost experience of the other». By this he meant that the alterity of the object of representation within the ritual frame of stating the exemplary event since the dawn of mankind, or, in a different field, the «synecdoche» of reference—language referring to what is other than itself.

«Enthymema» was born from the idea of a group of young scholars, aiming to build a space of inquiry and debate on the premises and modes of literary communication, which in the last years have been rather neglected in our country. After the season of structuralism, many scholars deserted literary theory narrowing down their object of investigation, or, on the contrary, setting off to explore the boundless ocean of culture. While until recently this could be considered as a widespread situation, nowadays Italy, more than most other countries, lacks spaces of reflection, elaboration and exchange of hermeneutic and analytical tools. The situation is different in Germany, France or in the US, where institutes such as the ICN (*Das Interdisziplinäre Centrum für Narratologie*) in Hamburg, the *European Narratology Network*, the *Centre de recherches sur les arts et le langage* at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales*, reviews like «Poetics Today» or the «Journal of Literary Theory» or websites like *Fabula* or *Vox Poetica* seem to flourish. These, indeed, have been the models, chosen interlocutors, and sources of information and material for our work.

The rhetorical and pragmatic foundation characterizing our project requires that the several figures of relationship inscribed in the noun *Enthymeme* be translated into facts. Hence the priority of translation. Since the main focus of our review is the theoretical

debate on literature, it has seemed necessary to fuel it by introducing and translating foreign authors who, in recent times, have produced relevant results both in the foundations and in the methodologies of literary theory. In a parallel way, we'd like to present Italian contributions, both published and original, which deserve to be known. We thus hope to foster a lively and open exchange through translation, making the Italian panorama cross lines of focus with the international one, towards an intense dialogue between different cultures and fields of research.

The work of translation undertaken in our first issue has already posed intricate – and intriguing – problems, doubts and questions. Many are the difficulties in providing satisfactory versions of a textual genre like essays in literary theory and criticism. These begin with vocabulary, where the burden of «allotropy» (the existence of an element in two or more forms) is huge and misleading. In its collaboration with scholars willing to take up this challenge, *Enthymema* would like to contribute to the elaboration of a theory of translation in literary studies, in a comparative and multilingual perspective arising from the constructive dialogue between different traditions and practices of translation.

«Review of literary theory, criticism and philosophy of literature»: we already mentioned theory, which, however, is indissolubly linked to and in fact presupposes the formulation of a critical judgment. In its turn, any critical judgment cannot avoid an examination of the techniques and the material – language – out of which the literary work is built, as well as the of instruments deployed for its investigation. Our linguistic, philological, and critical stylistic turn is a legacy of the tradition of Russian Formalism deriving from the best of structuralist and semiological scholarship – not to mention from our education. By establishing a respectful relationship with the text – considered first and foremost in its historical and social collocation – this method requires analytical rigor and refinement of methodological processes and hermeneutic categories.

«Online review». *Enthymema's* openness is in keeping with its online publication, which has a huge potential in terms of free and open distribution. Its cosmopolitan dimension, moreover, allows our work to reach both an Italian and a foreign public, immediately and for free, while respecting copyright.

The final part of our title bears a reference to philosophy. This is first and foremost a tribute to Franco Brioschi and to his philosophy of literature, elaborated during his short life. His students have tried to receive his legacy, each one, piece by piece. After five years, nostalgia and memory are still intense for the one writing these lines; unforgettable, for whoever got to know him, are his *ethos* as scholar and the rigorous nature and wide extent of his interests. Brioschi was an attentive and curious interlocutor, who united a theoretical perspective with the elegance and quickness of his reasoning; ontological parsimony with the generosity of his clear explanations. *Enthymema* is a legacy of his scholarship—not a belated one, but rather one full of promise, like the energy and commitment of the young scholars who first envisaged its existence.

In a famous aphorism of the *Novum Organum*, Francis Bacon opposes two kinds of functioning of the human mind: the empiricist and the dogmatic. The former are like ants, who keep amassing material; their work comes to an end once they have exhausted what they've been gathering. The latter, on the contrary, are like spiders, who spin their web in autarchic solitude, autotelically. Between these two extremes, it is possible to find a *ratio media*, similar to the bees' work: they do extract nectar from flowers, but they process and digest it with their own skills. We would like to read this opposition in an allegorical way, as the one between certain philologists and certain philosophers. Pure adamant theory is as sterile as a pedantic, though admirable, mass of data, in absence of

mutual consideration. Their «alliance» (*foedus*) is therefore to be hoped for and generates knowledge.

In a similar way, well aware of «signor di Verulamio's» words in the X Axiom of the *New Science*, Giambattista Vico describes the sphere of competence of both Philosophy and Philology: respectively «Reason» and «that of which human choice is author», from which the «knowledge of the true» on the one side and the «consciousness of the certain» on the other are born. This Axiom, Vico concludes, demonstrates «how the philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their reasoning by appeal to the authority of the philologists, and likewise how the latter failed by half in not taking care to give their authority the sanction of truth to reasoning of the philosophers»; his new science is meant to cope with this lack.

The invitation is the same for us: a collaboration, with respect for differences, between two modes and styles of research, to achieve a fruitful intersection. Curiously enough, the very form of this invitation, is the same: an aphorism, a maxim (gnome, statement or enthymeme). Both quotations, one might argue, are venerable stereotypes. Indeed they are, we answer: they are places inhabited by images and values, from which enthymemes can be extracted. Places exposed to contrasting forces (to other places of equal force and nonetheless equally vulnerable) and subject to the condition of agreement to be persuasive.

Translation by Sara Sullam and William Franke