

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910462153503321
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Titolo	Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology : Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture / / Walter J. Ong
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, N.Y. : , : Cornell University Press, , [2012] ©1971
ISBN	0-8014-6632-6 0-8014-6633-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (358 p.)
Disciplina	808.04
Soggetti	Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Preface -- Contents -- 1. Rhetoric and the Origins of Consciousness -- 2. Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style -- 3. Tudor Writings on Rhetoric, Poetic, and Literary Theory -- 4. Memory as Art -- 5. Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite -- 6. Ramist Classroom Procedure and the Nature of Reality -- 7. Ramist Method and the Commercial Mind -- 8. Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field -- 9. Psyche and the Geometers: Associationist Critical Theory -- 10. J. S. Mill's Pariah Poet -- 11. Romantic Difference and the Poetics of Technology -- 12. The Literate Orality of Popular Culture Today -- 13. Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	This is not a book on rhetoric in any narrow sense, but rather concerns its general ambiance and also some of its quite specific manifestations. The thirteen chapters that comprise the book move chronologically from the Renaissance up to the present time. Chapter 2 shows the continuity of verbal expression during the English Renaissance with earlier speech and thought patterns before the invention of writing. In the third chapter, a detailed report is given on the entire production of English-language books on rhetoric and poetic and literary criticism or theory during the Tudor age, from the late 15th through the beginning of the 17th century. The fourth chapter indicates the central significance of the art of memory. The chapters from 5 through 12 treat the interrelationships between social institutions and modes of

thought and expression (Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite; Ramist Classroom Procedure and the Nature of Reality; Ramist Method and the Commercial Mind; Swift on the Mind: Satire in a Closed Field; Psyche and the Geometers; Associationist Critical Theory; J. S. Mill's Pariah Poet; Romantic Difference and the Poetics of Technology; and The Literate Orality of Popular Culture Today). The final chapter centers on the history of the humanities to show that they have not been the same in all ages, and that they are always in a state of crisis.
