

Raffaele Perrotta

THE SIGN—SYMBOL CIRCUM-SCRIBING-ITSELF

With the *Birth of philosophy*, many other things were engendered. The Greek language is disciplined, metalinguistically, and there ensued a proliferation of disciplinary bodies. The sophist noonday of the Parmenidean *πάντ'ονομ(α)* undergoes the Platonic attack first, then the Aristotelian bridling. Lastly, and definitively, the subjugation of language,¹ and the process of its languages;² and the decreeing of World and the Foundation of World, right at the nodal locus of the genesis of philosophy; permit the attainment of the theoretical field of 'interpretation'. 'Sense', and the apparent 'countersense'; the logical aporetic; the un-de-finable *abyssal* "wisdom" of the Logos of the Western Morn; all are being relegated to the margins of Knowledge, taking the back seat: temporal accident of a wholly incipient cognitive

development. Before *declared* 'philosophy', the early philosophers, who do not this name bear, are the audacious wayfarers on the un-nameable, and/or many-named, main road.

The early philosophers, who do not this name bear. . . the aureate Pythagoras, perhaps; or the obscure Eraklitos? The Mediterranean shores are embellished by words destined to make proud, as categoric thought blossomed and grew out of proportion, the cosmic and fatal consciousness of the Hegelian 'Lord'. The originary structure is neither structuralism nor geneticism. The birth of philosophy secularizes the Search for sacrality, which was proper of the sacrifice of the morning priesthood. The 'sign' becomes referent, while the eye, dazzled by the glare of wisdom, and the mouth, which used to utter meaning-less sentences,³ — and rhetorics, also, as the only salvation from onto-logic unsurmountability — , became the logic suitable to the new, self-possessed, theoretical man: the interpreter: a proud and clever 'critic' on the scene of reading. Thus the epistemic axis derives its origin from the World-Foundation couple, precluding access to the Cosmic-Abyss couple — the 'treatise', with its scientification, casts myth and its innate form as 'symbol', into the ir-rational, in the shadows.

And yet, the birth of philosophy and its history and its tradition and its schools and diatribes notwithstanding, the primigenial One, lightning and thundering, leaves one aghast: "Wiederum kann uns die Sprache einen Wink geben. Im Zeitwort 'leeren' spricht das 'Lesen' im ursprünglichen Sinne des Versammelns, das im Ort waltet."⁴

Leeren, Lesen. . .having-declared-itself, 'philosophy,' referring to Logos, engages a struggle with no holds barred and to the last drop of blood (of the 'spirit' itself), in order to attain the Law of Logos, and thence a dialectic — and totalizing — 'comprehension' of the essential gathering of the Cosmos and its 'forms'. From the epi-stemic problem of the Logos (the so-called presocratic knowledge) to the epi-stemics of the Logos. Philosophy proper — the ancient, Greek kind, from Plato to Aristotle — has marked⁵ the 'sense' of Western Knowledge (of Culture — 'culture', cultivation of spirits). Today, the issue of thought should be undertaken in the name of Logos, with a theoretical rather than a historical effort, beyond Dialectics, assuming the demeanour of Hermeneutics, and establishing the 'terms' of the gnoseologic and ontologic discourse (of the text). Hermeneutics is the presupposition of: the 'limit' of knowledge in 'terms' of the discourse (of the text) of Knowledge. With a footnote, in Capitals: for the self-in-scribing sign 'knowledge' is the self-transgressing limit — symbolically.

The birth of philosophy created proselytes, and has had a continuity continu-

ing to today. Like the Greek language, so all languages that followed in the wake have suffered the incident lancet of *taxonomic* Metalanguage: the *referential contrivance*. The World, with its 'foundations,' set up a barrier in front of the Foundation and its ontico-empirical regions of scientific reason. *The episteme, far from being the revelation of the dramatic plunging-into-the-abyss of the word, and therefore far from being epi-steme or rather pro-blem, be-comes a formalizing procedure.* Will of World (the aulic of *Weltanschauung* and *world-view*) theorizing Earth — rendering-clear⁶ of History. And yet, the dexterity of *techne* buries itself again, much like its means of realization. The Earth — the *History of the Earth* — is iterative: 'formation' and 'reformation' — the pointedness of 'revolution'. The Earth continues on its path despite the World's stillness. But the 'world' — *doxa* and 'opinion' — is the obstinately faithful friend to *virile* man; and *the World is a Mode*. Highest sally of wisdom: *war*. From the *theorizing* 'world' to the *warring* 'world'. To be at peace with oneself and the world: to be at war with oneself and the world. *Peace in war.*

History has its *sign* — of *earth*. Σήματα boil in Γεάμματα. The 'sign' is *inscription*. When, in comprehending and interpreting the historic sign (of the earth), a change into an *ars pro-ducente* is not desired, hermeneutics will re-echo the sign, semantically, and therefore grammatically. *The hermeneutic sign is the sign of sense, not the sense of the sign.* 'Hermeneutics' is *tran-scription*. *The science of the spirit is the science of history.*

Under the banner of the sign — *hermeneutics is drama*. Semantico-grammatical hermeneutics, whirlpooled⁷ by the recalling sign, probes deeply, by founding and sinking itself into the pro-found bottom of the back-ground⁸ of the historic sign of earth, whose s-hade obnubilates, blueyed, name of. *Hermeneutics is not formalism, and it is wild signifying of essentialism on the harsh and torn aftermath: the vagueness of Critical Reading.* Man who can know is *bìos-biòs*, in the a-nameable, alongside *techne-hybris*.

'Interpretation' is an act-of-violence. Is 'knowledge' an act-of-violence? *Is Wisdom' a dramatic hermeneutically symbolic — of the sign?* The uttered word of knowledgeable man is self-destined to become a *problem of science*. The stamp of hermeneutics takes the tragic greatness upon itself: majesty is an art name, the royal 'we'. The early-morn tingle of the West is the fabulous and tragic fable of Myth. The *limit* of 'knowledge' is the nebula of 'dialectics' con-founded with the symbolic circum-inscription of the sign. Excited affabulation — hermeneutics insisting. *Homohumus* (sur-rounding oc-cur-ring)⁹ is a symbolic perimeter. Thus, that's what the arts (of the sciences) announce. Man is a symbolic animal —emerging from humus:

a complex elaboration of sign. *Hermeneutics is correspondence with Sign*, very strongly elaborated into Symbol: the former burning with the latter, a double flame of one fire, an amplified voice. *Hermeneutics of Sign — Hermetics of Symbol*. 'Hermeneutics' — recasting of sign, and its reverberation, its rotating, its becoming red-hot. *Drama of Hermeneutics, of w o r d , in the semantic gorge of σήματα*, etymological of γέμματα: a *Boden* plunging-itself-into-the-abyss — chasm, jargon of gorgling gorge.

The 'tragic' Nietzsche names one name: Oedipus, people-character, vital and gnostic triad, luminous Apollinean tracing in a Dionysian jolting.

Constellation of the document. Splendor-scales, thickness-turgidity, glaring and lightning of Λόγοζ duplicity of Λόγοζ, of the ever-self-expanding Λοργοζ.

Faust and Mephistopheles — people-character from *Fiction* stirring fire — I am that same Goethe taken to the *nth* polyvalent power — a star with two faces, a real name masked with fantastical names. Goethe's text is a series of themes never transcended into system, the diary of a working day.

We wage war against the most cruel wars, we, worldlyzed,¹⁰ against the World-Mode — we, of the world.¹¹ *Curiositas* and World Literature, the w o r d with-cunning-seen¹² by matchless heroes, Socrates and Nietzsche. *The zero degree of writing — epi-steme, in other words, pro-blem, science problem. Those who descend into Hades must be heroes, must possess the brawn; Saying must insinuate itself into idiomatic expressions,¹³ it must excavate and expropriate the roots of signs. The descent into Hades is abyssal.*

Λόγοζ — der Ort. "Die Frage regt sich."¹⁴ *Patience and affliction of a scribe. Pathos.*

Λόγοζ — un-tran-slateable and un-sayable w o r d. Λόγοζ is πόλεμοζ — an alternating, a double serpent, both eagle and serpent, male and female, seed that dis-seminates-itself: Sense and its double — Double-Sense. Mundane mortals with two heads scind the w o r d.

The great mirror — baroque mirror, theoretics of mirror: Dialectics climbing the ontological mirrors. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." But, "beauty is difficult." The ontological de-termination extends itself into *discursivity*. The Λόγοζ stretches its own shadow over the enlightenment of reason — in-terminable terms, un-nameable names, in-finite finiteness: *dis-course*. "All you need is the formula $X = \infty$ and

everything is clear."¹⁵ Critique of Crisis — con-science of science, *problematically*. Heideggerian *Der Ort* — semantico-grammatical space-of-place, undoubted *letteral* 'semantics'. But the letter *breaks-through* (-the-bottom),¹⁶ The 'letter' of the *signifier*¹⁷ is *pro-found*. The symbol is *density of sign*. Topo-logy caves in, and the Aristotelean *theoria* takes notice of it: δοκεῖ ζε μέγα τι εἶναι καὶ χαλεπὸν ληθθῆναι ο τόποζ.

The spirit and genius of 'music'. The root of Music is *muse*. Memory is treasure of *muse*. Sign is memory. From silence — a cavern — the Muse. *The prophet hails forth from silence, tragically*: saying un-says: *di-scoursed*¹⁸ of 'dis-course'. Leaves of leaves¹⁹ — hissing of the sybil,²⁰ flight of the veil:²¹ time of the fragment, trace of sense (Sense). Music: an un-ex-plainable²² w o r d. The book: astonishment of Βιβλία. *Patience and affliction of a scribe — pathos: in-scribing is a metonymic bent in reading*. Scribe means also Librarian. Ibis. Knowing and not forgetting, abyssal knowing and not abyssal forgetting. Tran-scribed in-scriptions. Spoken speech and written speech²³ are the *conditions of speaker and writer*. *Spoken speech and written speech*: self-destined to speaking and in-scribing themselves.

"No diré las fatigas de mi labor. Mas de una vez grité a la boveda que era imposible descifrar aquel texto. (...) Un dios, reflexioné, solo debe decir una palabra y en esa palabra la plenitud."²⁴

History of the Earth — *territories*. The dimension of the spirit — provinces of the spirit. The Flower of Florence, the prize of the well, the gems of the rocks, the national Dante through Bonapartist glaxis, Magna Graciae restored to life by the European pilgrim Giordano Bruno, Hölderlin: the unarmed warrior. Germany: motto of Greek movement, *oder der Eremit in Griechenland*,²⁵ and, *questi è latino*,²⁶ expatriated and roaming the deserts (In the twilight, a whitening Western heavenly body, disinherited civilization unworthy, despite its legendary claws, of the *Land-of-the-Evening*, of the *twilight of heroes*), asking that the hero be executioner for the Fall, for the flashing, for the passing-by of the Millennium; and he asks for solidarity and determination, *pre-figuration of the Laws of Forms*, luxuriant Stello Effrena²⁷ tran-scribing, "Chino su una medaglia del Pisanello."²⁸

Italy My Country: the province of the spirit, the province of provinces of the spirit — degraded promontory of a degraded Europe — upsetting of the gradation of ΛΨόγοζ (*the science of the spirit is the science of history*). "Formosissima donnal L'armi, qua l'armi:"²⁹ countless city-states, earliest citizens accustomed to arms to

arts to science — from the Universal Italian of Fredrick II to the Tuscan Leopold;³⁰ and then, the rubbish of petty-bountiful-progressive Italy.³¹ But from beyond the ocean came Pound to teach forgetful Italians, of a Malatesta a Sigismund: the 'Italian' Pound. And after Mussolini's Fascism, Prezzolini's *Italy Is Finished: This Is What's Left*:³² civil death, December, 1981, a blank, rather void, ballot.³³

"Modern music must be understood as basically bare and rigorously scholastic. No music which still manifests a hint of romantic straying, or rhythmic slackening, or impressionistic color, will find access to the province of modern music. The 'sense' of modern music is cut and dry." *The condition of music*, properly speaking, as in Savinio. The *Condition of Music*, broadly speaking, as in hermetic 'hermeneutics' — *symbolic* 'signs'. Turning point of a hermeneutic score of years. 'Limit' of *knowledge*. Last twenty years of the *Saeculum*, 'my' *maturity*: the 'myth' of the *Sprache* and of the *symbolic animal*. *Recit hunique*. *Opus et silentium*: blessed librarian scribe. Not the (effimerous) 'seasons' of the Cultural Industry, but the 'epochal' co-involvement. *The sign — symbol circum-scribing-itself*.

TRANSLATION BY PETER CARRAVETTA

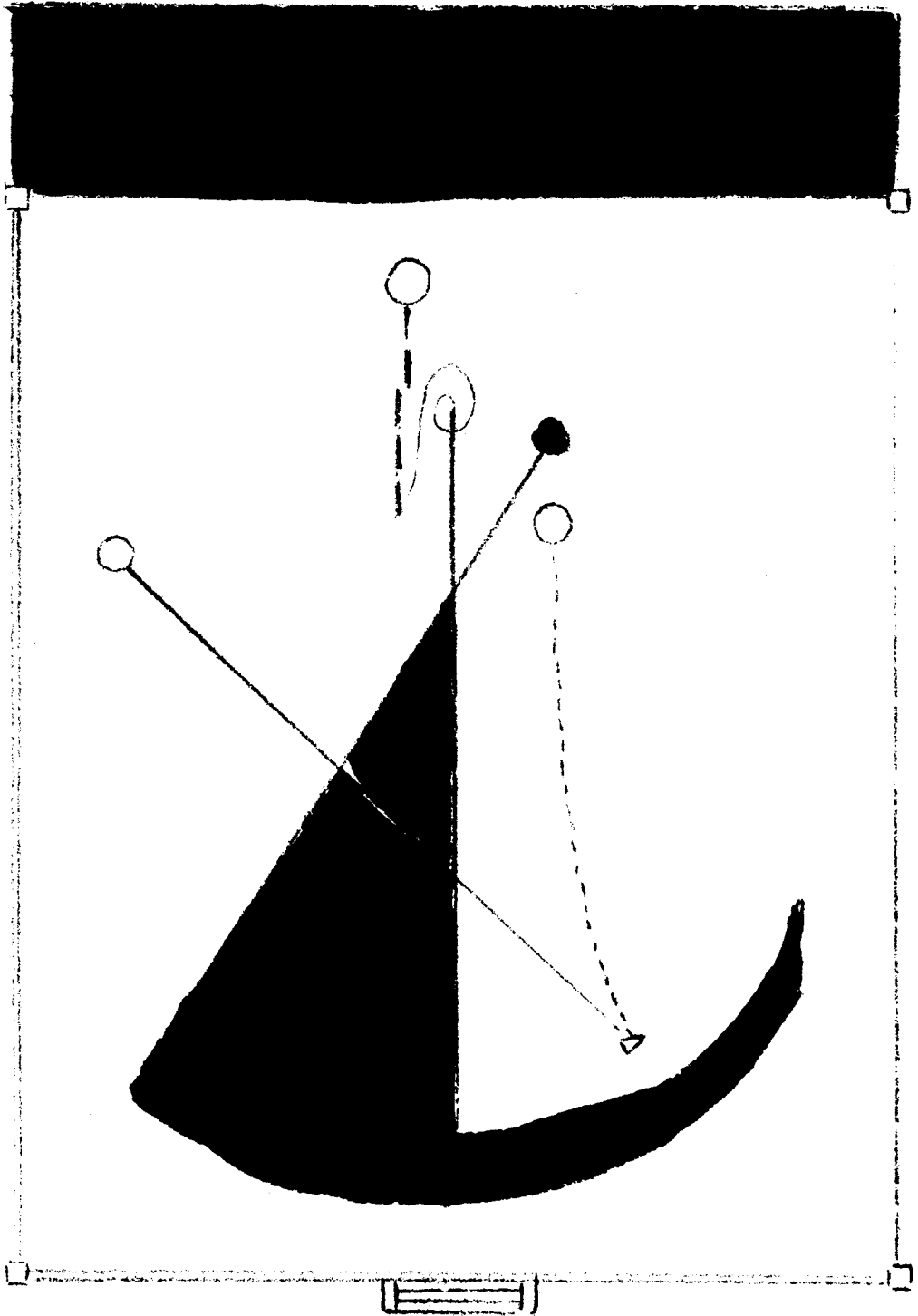
TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. *lingua*, natural language; cf. French *langue*.
2. *Linguaggio*, specific languages or codes; cf. French *langage*.
3. *significanti in-significanti*, lit. un-signifying signifiers, but the first term, *significanti*, can mean both signifying and meaningful, while the second term, in its unhyphenated form, *insignificanti*, means meaningless, or of little value.
4. Martin Heidegger: *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969.

5. *segnato*, lit. "signed."
6. *e-videnziare*, in its etymological sense, *ex-videre*: to make very clear.
7. *risucchiata dal richiamo del segno*, lit. sucked up again by the calling again of the sign.
8. *s-fondo*; *sfondo* is background, but in its verbal form it means to break through, i.e.: I break through. *Fondo* by itself means bottom, but it is also the first person sing. of *fondare*, to found or establish.
9. (*circo-stante ac-cad-ente*); the last unit of *accadente* (pres. part. of *accadere*, to take place or happen), *ente*, means entity, as *ens* in Lat.
10. *mondizzati*, rendered worldly.
11. *mondiali*, attributive adj, as in the model: champion of the world.
12. *tra-guardato*; *traguardo*, as a noun, is both finish line and backsight of a fire arm. *traguardare* means to line up the sights on a fire arm or any instrument, therefore to look at a faraway object, to look askance, implying a detached but suspicious as well as an analytical squaring of the object. The semantic complexity relies also on the single parts of the words, where *tra* means between or among.
13. *modi-di-dire*, an important locution in Perrotta, properly "that's-the-way-we-say-it," therefore manner of speech.
14. Heidegger, *op. cit.*
15. Ardengo Soffici, early XX Century.
16. *s-profondare*; *sprofondare* means to go through or break through the bottom (of anything, even metaphorically). But *profondare* by itself means to go to the bottom, to fathom or to get deeply into something.
17. *significante*, which can also mean meaningful, or something to reckon with.
18. *di-scorso*; *scorso* by itself means bygone, ago.
19. *foglie di fogli*; *foglie* is leaves, as on a tree; *fogli* is sheets of paper, leaves of a notebook.
20. *sibilo di sibilla*; the play here is not etymological, but rather semantic-alliterative.
21. *volo di velo*; here also the suggestion is semantic-alliterative, as the two words are not directly related in Latin.
22. *in-s-piegabile*; note that the last unit, *piegabile*, means flexible, that can be bent.
23. *scrittura*, as in *écriture*, Writing, even Scripture. *Parlata* is properly "talked" or "spoken," "that which has been spoken"; and also one's way of talking, one's speech.
24. From Borges: *La escritura del dios*.
25. Subtitle of Holderlin's *Hyperion*, 1797.
26. Dante, *Inf.*, XXVII, 33.
27. Main character of D'Annunzio's *Il Fuoco*, 1900 (Eng. tr.: *The Flame of Life*).
28. "bent over a medal of Pisanello."
29. From Leopardi's *All'Italia*, 1818: "Thou very beautiful woman! My arms, to me my arms:"
First phrase of this paragraph is from same poem.
30. Roughly, from the XIII to the early XIX Century.
31. *l'Italietta*.
32. The book was originally written in English, and appeared after W.W. II.
33. *scheda bianca, anzi, nulla*; *nulla* of course also stands for nothingness, which is certainly part of the meaning the author wishes it to carry; *scheda* can be chart or schedae, also.

BEAUTY AND CRITIQUE

EDITED BY RICHARD MILAZZO



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