

SIMONE REGAZZONI, *IPEROMANZO.*

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I immediately mark an aspect that strikes. Simone Regazzoni's book moves with a certain agility on the edge of a dizzying void: the crisis of *logos*. Author's ability to condense a large and complex picture into a small volume is surprising, especially since the synthetic construction of the book does not seem to affect its analytical capacity. On the contrary, this construction is the result of a precise approach of the author, which aims to draw in its peculiar features a general picture, its critical point and the possible way out of a problem that has long interrogated philosophy in an increasingly pressing way. The starting diagnosis is unequivocal: crisis of the *logos* means impotence of philosophy as "true discourse, concatenation of concepts"¹; the *logos* is no longer able to describe what Jacques Derrida called "the game of the world", that is, the "space of a reality as a complex network of references that does not envisage any center, any presence, any truth" (p. 14). The *logos* becomes mute facing the extreme complexity of the modern world. The paradox in which theoretical thought is lost lays all in this aphasia of philosophical discourse, coping with something whose presence is felt but cannot be named. But what exactly does philosophy no longer seem able to say? It is a matter full of elusive conceptualizations but which can be framed in a first approach as multiplicity, or difference.

It is not, at least not only, an empirical difference, a difference between beings, the one with which we are dealing, but something more complex that has been focused more

¹ The translation of the quotes in the text is mine.

and more clearly by the keen gaze of some philosophers. Starting with Nietzsche, who by erasing the “real world” has also brought down the second pole of dualism: the world of fiction, of unreality; thus, opening to multiplicity, difference, and to a becoming resistant to conceptualization (p. 31). That becomes even clearer with Derrida. He discovers in language something less and something more in relation to its philosophical use, that is, that capability of “crossing, in a peculiar way, a space of meaningless signs, opened by the non-origin of the *differance*” (p. 34). And it is precisely the quasi-concept of *differance* that leads us to the edge of the events of this peculiarity of thought that now we have to recognize and say. Or to try to say. It is a “anything else”, an “out of everything”, or an “absolutely other” (p. 29) which, although extraneous to the actual, is not outward to the real but is part of it as possible, as virtual. Now, this absolute otherness tends to exceed the formal constructs of rational discourse consolidated in the *logos* of the tradition. Since the world now reveals itself as consisting of dimensions or levels exceeding the conceptual perimeter, it is no longer enough to organize concepts to describe it. The philosopher could be terrified by such a challenge. Shall we, then, have to surrender to the end of philosophy several times predicted during the twentieth century?

Regazzoni’s proposal could be summed up as follows: instead of giving up philosophy, it must be strengthened; instead of surrendering to the extinction of the metaphysics of *logos*, one should concentrate the efforts on the space left empty, because it is just there that the “anything else” emerges. This operation, however, does not consist of a passive contemplation, but of “giving *birth* to a new paradigm” (p. 24). This “anything else”, we could say, must be brought to the surface.

Given up the idea that philosophy could dominate its own crisis (p. 49), other ways must be practiced to restore its strength. It is necessary to experiment new forms of writing, capable of exceeding the limits of *logos* (p. 13). Regazzoni suggests to accept the idea of Friedrich Schlegel (p.11), to return to the origin of philosophy as *logos*, to return to the moment when Western thought has deliberately chosen the rational discourse separating it from *mythos*, and from irrational narration, from the *mimesis* of poetic language. The author suggests that is necessary to return to the moment when the *diaphora*, that is the conflicting difference between philosophy and poetry (p. 22), and rational discourse and narrative and novel, was established. The author agrees with Schlegel’s thesis that the novel is “*the Platonic dialogue of our time*” (p. 13); indeed Plato had already sensed a certain theoretical potential of narrative writing embracing the dialogic form as the structure of its philosophical discourse; this awareness did not escape to Nietzsche’s acumen (p. 55). A particular phenomenon corroborates the idea that the

novel maintains a secret and deep link with philosophy: “the crisis of philosophy interlaces with the rise of the novel”; such an intimate link, that its developments can even be read as “a *metamorphosis* of philosophy into novel” (pp. 13-14). In that case, it is possible that Plato’s discontinuity between philosophy and narration was not the necessary realization of a *telos*, but a deliberate action – although deemed indispensable for a long while in Western thought – carried out on different but non-antithetical language levels which now have to be reconnected.

The most important attempts to capture the unspeakable with writing were not successful, nevertheless they are particularly instructive. Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida understood the need to entirely draw from the resources of writing, for example with Barthes’ idea of an “Absolute Romance” (p. 24), or Derrida’s idea of a “Total Diary” (p. 39). Emblematic, however, the fact that both were not able to go beyond intuition, that in both the project of total writing has not seen the light but in a twilight shape, as fragments, drafts, stutters of a language still to be invented. But the check mate of Barthes and Derrida, their inability to pass through the “ghost of literature” (p. 40), was not vain. In fact, it leaves something fundamental to those who want to deal with this task: the desire; the solicitation to face the ghost and pass through it, severing the last ties with the metaphysics of the *logos*. Not only the author does not fear this spectre, instead – and above all – he is not afraid to abandon his master in the crossing, recognizing that deconstruction (as indeed hermeneutic) is a very important but now consumed moment of this passage (p. 28). In this way, Regazzoni proves that he learned from his master the most difficult lesson, grasping his most arcane inheritance, the only one that Derrida really considered such: deconstruction not as a notion but as the practice of writing the *differance*, experienced until its most radical implications. Therefore deconstruction as a “polyphony” (p. 107), as a definitive break with “the I think” and opening to a story made *by* and *of* multiple voices; a story whose most appropriate positioning would be that of the novel, precisely: polyphonic instrument, “machine to produce multiple interpretations” (p. 109).

The novel becomes thus a device capable of exploring the virtual, that, breaking into modernity, has enlarged the real. The virtual is sifted from the novel as “the potential multiplicity of what can be told” (p. 81), but also as manifold of structures of the narrative, where literature becomes “the combinatorial game of telling possibilities” (p. 82). From novel to hyper-novel then.

No surprisingly then, that the most successful - though not yet definitive - experiments of this new paradigm come from literature, not from philosophy. With Italo

Calvino the hyper-novel makes its appearance (p. 88) as a stack of autonomous plots, while in Umberto Eco it becomes “philosophical space” (p. 89), popular and accessible to everybody. In David Foster Wallace, the hyper-novel is pushed to its extreme consequences, acquiring the multiplicity of what can be told until the “explosion of the plot as a principle of order” (p. 99). Although in the right direction, these examples show the difficulty of maintaining the coordination between the different levels that this writing requires (p. 100), i.e. “hyperseriality” (p. 101). This difficulty can be overcome by shifting the field of storytelling from the plane of the page to the depth of the video; whose fertility as an expressive frontier had already been sensed by Foucault and Deleuze. Frontier beyond which, today, we would find the *complex TV* (101-102); according to Regazzoni, a new field of philosophical experimentation.

One of the following questions, implicitly raised by the book, - thus, perhaps, revealing its true speculative potential - asks: how far can we go dealing with the crisis of the *logos*? Regazzoni, carrying on the approach of Derrida and looking at what philosophy itself had rejected, uses literature to explore multiplicity. It is fair however to wonder if tools useful for this purpose can be traced elsewhere as well. If the problem posed to philosophy by the difference first of all has an impact on the concept, other efforts could be also considered that, precisely in the same years of Barthes and Derrida, have exerted from outside a constant and fruitful conceptual pressure on philosophy. This is the case, for example, of ethnology (Lévi-Strauss) or psychoanalysis (Lacan); borderline observation points for human sciences that were able to mitigate the vagueness of multiplicity, by outlining it in the inexhaustible richness of cultures or the elusive iridescence of the Ego. These are just examples, taken from writer’s point of view, which, however, demonstrate the extent of the question opened by Regazzoni, and, in general, the analytical perspectives that philosophy is able to mobilize to face the challenges of modernity.