

Differentia: Review of Italian Thought

Number 1 *Autumn*

Article 26

1986

Soledad

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Recommended Citation

Cappi, Alberto (1986) "Soledad," *Differentia: Review of Italian Thought*: Vol. 1 , Article 26.
Available at: <https://commons.library.stonybrook.edu/differentia/vol1/iss1/26>

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FLAVIO ERMINI: SOLEDAD

by Alberto Cippi

The solitude of the sailor who feels his way, who, in a sense, carves his way through the murky waters, and, then, pursues, and even invents, a "path" (and, of course, here, we are speaking openly in a metaphysical way), and does so without any encouragement, must also beckon to listless forms, in effect, 'wave' on (the puns, here, are all intended), and, ultimately, solicit unstable forms, even urging them into existence.

Good sense in such matters, a sense of discretion, so to speak, the 'path,' as such, amounts to the act of writing, but writing as a form, a discrete action, that might be able to discern (in the fog or mist of reified clarity, a principle [clarity] that has long hindered such actions), and then discard the "right" word, in favor of a style, in favor of 'literature.' We proceed by fractions, and the path itself is fractured; the style is, perhaps, one of fractured meaning; but, suddenly, it takes off (mixing and splitting metaphors—real style is a rowboat with wings, or the dumb mathematics of color misinformed, or the prodigal son of meaning, who, for a change, does not return home for his birthday), afloat, finally, it reaches for fate, gracefully plunging toward the heights of significance, but not without spying 'freedom' (like a label on the designer wings of an eagle, but a fractured eagle, flying gracefully, but with only one wing, designed by Calvin [Klein]). Afloat, it reaches up, toward its destiny, but reaches beyond (its capacity) to find what properly belongs to it in the unreachable—a meta-fate belonging to freedom-fighters on vacation, period. A pure, disembodied meta. An existential trompe l'oeil. Less than part, but more than the whole.

This is the 'mark.' The mark, our signature, the signature of the word itself, is born amid such fanfare. The mark, our prolonged stale transcendence (bureaucratic, red-faced, red-tape, epistemological clerks call it "la" trace—we call it "le" car) of the Self, the blemish we call ontological assertion, this mark, from whose circulatory path we borrow style, is born amid the fanfare of discrepancy and imitation.

From the ruffles of the self (the single winged eagle), the ruffling of the ontological coastline, from whose indentations we borrow style; from the margins of perception, from the limits of suspicion and disgrace, from the rippling voice of those lost at sea, from the Sirens to whom we, today, entrust, the fate of our aspirations, and the Odyssey of our desperation, the mark, our scar across the face of being itself, is born. From its phantasm, from its own shadow, from its demise, the mark is born to itself. Meta-vanquished by the journey back to itself. From its phantasm, a caravel, like the sail-like fluttering of a carrier-pigeon, is born. From its own logic, from the logic of disruption and 'smooth sailing,' from the logic of fractured deception (shall we call this 'truth?'), emerges the ruling in an astral shell. From these half-births and over-births, the mark is born. A delible, mobile mark, condemned to mutability, to the volatile climate of the frontier. No front, here, is ever placid. You never 'make your mark' here, so to speak. Nothing is stable, unless it is poised on its side, teetering on the edge of meaning, stable because it is infallibly discrete, fractured and disrupted.

Where do earth, water and sky begin and end, here, in this domain, the domain of the mark—on the frontier of fire? Endless, without beginning, nor exit, we find ourselves (ironically) in the domain of the tarnished white text of Flavio Ermini. Nothing, here, ends reliably, nothing ends in meaning, in the words we plant, in the maps we draw, in the cartograms we project—no gram in sincerity ends here. No path or journey obtains to territory, nor imagination expedite the loss of compass. Readings possess no anchor, here, no position of sorts. Nothing. No discontinuous yet grave thread fashions the fatal gods. There is no island we can pronounce, nor barely readable seal to interpretation.

There's no stamp of distinction, of difference, but in the unrestrainability of the tract, the path, the frontier of fire. No stamp of fatality, but in the irony that alludes to the driftwork of the continent—the frontier of fire. No stamp of reliability, except for the mark that tarnishes white sky, earth and water unreliably. For irony, read lapsus over emptiness, something missing over something void.

On this plateau, unmarked by restraint or reliability, is it possible to determine who is speaking? Is it possible to differentiate he who interprets from he who signals? He who dreams from he who commands irony? If we answer "the poet is capable (of all) of this this and more. It is only the poet who possesses the sincerity to command such distinctions." And so, the poet will proclaim: "I am the earth breathing." But having said this, having spoken even in the precious dialect of the wind, he intends (merely) what moves toward composition and stability, toward fixation and integrity, toward the story or myth of the sign and the stamp of memory.

But Ermini's text, on this side of the alphabet, on this side of History, neither wants nor demands an insignia: it simply moves, moves into itself, and out. It learns and knows, knows and moves beyond this knowledge. That's it! If you tried to describe it, this text that always moves before and beyond itself, with no regard for the usual fixatives, you would come up with nothing but enchanted spectra, chains of words split open by their own sounds, a permissive attitude toward prose, scenic lashes of poetry beating down on the language, a text flexing its theatrical tissues, and film-like fadeouts alternating with arrogant flashes of insight, music forever forthcoming, and the echoes of lallation.

Now the poet proclaims, again: "I am the water, earth and sky of the body breathing." But the proclamation does not necessarily weave them, nor the meaning of them, together. The claw blunt in the path, the footprint, the anthropomorphic calligraphy, the naturalized signal, the self-propelling index finger, the caustic insult: not according to intension do they pulsate, but in tension, in the tension of the dream, the intermittance, they pulsate.

It is exactly at this point, that Flavio Ermini, now so utterly detached from the flattery that attends, and literally "marks," if you will, the spectrum of the oral and the scriptic, the linear and the visual, casts his die.

Like the die, the poet's writing rolls and rebounds in its entirety; and like the die in the way it falls, the poet's writing resounds upon the occasion of Number!

It is upon this occasion that the writing achieves the levity, grace and whisper that bestow upon it origin, and permission for mutability and breath.

Perhaps, it is also upon this occasion that the destiny of the die (the pursuit of knowledge?) and poetry are truly attuned to each other.

What is certain, however, is that realization, if not recognition, will be the gift to him who listens to the passion of the die—'truth' amidst the luxury of metamorphosis.

*[Interpreted from the Italian by
Tricia Collins and Richard Milazzo]*