

763
JIMENEZ H, J.
1999

Infinity: a Rhetorical Insight into Cosmological Revolution

di JULIÁN JIMÉNEZ HEFFERNAN

Introduction

The concept of cosmic Infinity, genetically bound to the Copernican idea of a sun-centered world, belongs to the broader textual frame of Modernity, a protracted label that encompasses a heap of kindred notions, like *Revolution* (Kant, 1922: 21) and *Coupure*¹ (Althusser, 1969: 16). Such notions belong to a catastrophe rhetoric inspired by the cognitive fracture occurring within Renaissance cosmological discourse (Cassirer, 1906; 1927; Rossi, 1971). In this paper I consider the meaning of the notion of Infinity in two texts, one by Thomas Digges and the other by Giordano Bruno. It is my contention that the textual dimension of such notion has been repeatedly dismissed. Interpreters have pointed to the uncertain gnoseological status of the two infinite-universe hypotheses: astronomical, cosmological, metaphysical, theological, mystical... The textual notion of cosmic Infinity seems to escape all interpretative logic and becomes hermeneutically unaccountable. The exegetic aporia that such unaccountability entailed, and the means employed by critics to resolve it, will be explored here. Moreover, I offer a text-oriented reading of the problem, reducing the cognitive strength of the texts in which the notion of Infinity appears to their underlying rhetorical dimension.

¹ Althusser first uses this term in *Pour Marx* (1965). The English edition (*For Marx*, London, Penguin, 1969) offers a discussion of this metaphor in the «Glossary», p. 249. In «A letter to the translator», pp. 257-258, Althusser explains his indebtedness to Bachelard, although the term is not to be found in his work. Moreover, Althusser asserts that his use of the metaphor is removed from Canguilhem's nonsystematic application of it. In *Lire le Capital* (Maspero, Paris, 1969) the French philosopher employs a number of related notions, like «mutation épistémologique» (I, 11), «décalage théorique» (I, 17), «changement du terrain», «changement d'horizon» (I, 24), «crise dialectique» (I, 28), «rupture épistémologique» (II, 11) all of which seem to announce the firmly established trope of the «coupure épistémologique» (II, 16).

1. Philology and Phenomenology

In 1576, the English astronomer Thomas Digges asserted, for the first time in a modern astronomical text, that the world was infinite. Ten years later, the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno defended the idea of an infinite universe. However, a divergence in the use of the concept did not pass unnoticed to the first readers (Johnson and Larkey, 1934; Lovejoy, 1936), though they got caught in deep bewilderment when they sought to identify the source of dissent. Likewise, an exegetic puzzle arrested the interpretation of a subsequent history of ideas (Koyré, 1968; Blumenberg, 1975). And yet, this hypothesis holds now as potentially true within the enlarged rationality of contemporary cosmology. Moreover, it allowed the consolidation of a deistic pantheism (Hegel, 1971: XII, 22-36; Dilthey, 1966: II, 326-342; Stern, 1977: 67-71; Blumenberg, 1975: 440-452; Ricci, 1990: 310-330), the gnoseological basis of a future romantic aesthetics (Stern, 1977: 156-179).

In spite of their obvious philosophical content, Digges' treatise and Bruno's dialogue have awakened a critical response that in many senses announces, while implicitly denouncing, a philological reading. Digges' text is an introduction to a late edition (1576) of his father's *Prognostication everlasting* (1553). In his edition, the son decided to add a diagram of the Copernican universe that substituted for the Ptolemaic one used by his father. In the description (Johnson and Larkey, 1934: 78) that encircles anagrammatically the *ultima sphaera mundi* of the Copernican universe, T. Digges speaks of «this orbes of starres» that «infinitely extendeth his self», while in the text, most of which is a free and rhapsodic translation of Book One of Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus*, he mentions the «huge infinite immoveable Globe» (1934: 81). Johnson and Larkey (1934), discoverers of the 1576 edition, declared hesitantly that the infinite hypothesis could result either from «metaphysical considerations or from scientific reasoning and observation» (1934: 105). Nevertheless they promptly yielded to the second possibility, reconsidering Digges' «scientific achievements» in the light of the new hypothesis and comparing them to Bruno's blurred «metaphysical speculations» (1934: 111). «However», they conclude, «the precise reasons which led Digges to assert that the universe should be conceived as infinite [...] must remain forever uncertain» (1934: 113). This hermeneutic fatalism is directly challenged by Lovejoy (1936: 116-122), when he explains the claim to an infinite-universe as a consequence of «a priori argumentation», deriving thus from «theological or philosophical premises». Almost identical is the interpretation

suggested by Koyré, supported by M.A. Granada (1992), who affirms that Digges put his stars in a «theological heaven» rather than in an «astronomical sky» (Koyré, 1968: 38). Blumenberg (1975: 421) seems, thus, the only one to conceive the infinite-hypothesis as the result of a logical operation, the attempt by Digges to remove («beseitigen») a contradiction («Widerspruch») from Copernicus' argumentation.

Bruno's *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* (1584) belongs to what Gentile called the «dialoghi metafisici» (1958, XXXI). The Italian philosopher employs the idealist «metodo estrattivo» (Rossi, 1969: 49) when he reduces the *physical* nature of Bruno's discourse to a *metaphysical* dimension, not in the sense of «speculativo» (Corsano, 1940: 129), but in the way Aristotle's *Physic* becomes «un corpo di dottrine puramente metafisiche intorno alla natura» (Gentile, 1957, XXXI). Paradoxical though it may seem, this idealist drive coexisted with a remarkable philological accuracy. However, Gentile used philology as an ideal, «un momento logico» (1991: 124) and not a fact. Hence, Bruno's dialogue opened itself as a forest to the philologist, fatally condemned to the solid vicinity of single trees but unable to seize the ideal whole (1991: 125).

Philology was also used to determine the influence of Bruno's ideas within the English Renaissance literary scene, by tracing back the textual genealogy of certain cosmological overtones (Coffin, 1937: 175-194; Sacerdoti, 1990: 243-412; Yates, 1964: 205-290; Praz, 1946: 233-251; Mazzeo, 1964: 44-59). In search for a «metaphysical pathos», Lovejoy (1936: 10-14) chooses the «principle of Plenitude» (1936: 116) as the conceptual function in Bruno's dialogue, and traces his infinite hypothesis back into scholastic thought, Plotinus and Plato's *Timaeus*. This fascinating textual track is left untrodden. Most interpreters working inside Lovejoy's full-scale cultural map, like Nicolson, limit themselves to following the textual hints of psychological or emotional preconceptions. According to Nicolson, poetry metaphorizes science. Such misconception seemed particularly suited to Bruno's infinite, whose «vision», according to Bartholomèss (1847: II, 47), «joint la poésie à la philosophie». Fortunately, this perfunctory view has been drastically corrected by critics like Tuve (1957: 252-272), Mazzeo (1964: 53-59), Fletcher (1964: 70-146) and Battistini and Raimondi (1990: 147-153), more sensible to the blurred boundaries between philosophical argumentation, poetic figuration and cosmic representation. Within Nicolson's view, shared by Tuzet (1965: 24), textual relations are dissolved into a promiscuous pot of animistic influences, the turbulent manifestation of a particular «time spirit» (1960: 157) or

Zeitgeist of which Bruno (not even his texts) is seen as a louder scream. The textual genealogy «of the ideas of infinity» is, according to Nicolson (1960: 158), «of little interest to us». Such a disinterest echoes Gentile's conception of philology as an illusory exercise of the reader's groping intelligence, blinded by the screen of massive minute information and unable to see what is really *given* in the text. And this, the already-given, the always-there-and-never-to-be-seen meaning of the text, is the idea of Infinity. The mysterious givenness (*Gegebenheit*) of this idea is but the obverse of the ineffable intuition (*Anschauung*) of the author that gave it birth. Philology yields here to the urgent claims of a Phenomenology: Infinity is interpreted as a pathological event, a sort of irrational «ivresse» (Tuzet, 1965: 56) or «ebrezza» (Troilo, 1918: 22) that takes hold of Bruno's intellect. This modality of reading is an example of Bachelard's dreamy «poetic of space» when applied to the earth-bound space of the poetic. In this *patho-historiography*, interdisciplinary judgement becomes a simple measuring of emotional impacts. Infinity stands thus as a given object, and yet accessible only by non-rational means. Michel (1962) adheres fully to the phenomenological assumption, which he explicitly derives from Husserl, of a phenomenal horizon of the given, the «absolute *Gegebenheit*» (1973: II, 31) or «données des faits» (Michel, 1962: 25). Any sensible experience of objects standing beyond this horizon, «Blickfeld» that Bollnow judges «irreal» (1976: 74), is made to depend on a deeper intuitive perception, dominated by a dialectic between «Offenheit» and «Unendlichkeit» (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 305).

As Blumenberg (1975: 16-31) rightly argues, the Copernican revolution entailed a large-scale transformation of cursory gnoseological assumptions, provoking the split of human perception into a «Schauen» (seeing) and a «Durchschauen» (seeing through). So far so good. The problem arises when he identifies the «Durchschauen» with the non-rational faculty of intuition, and makes the infinite-hypothesis hinge on it as resulting from a pure negation of conceptuality («pure Negation der Begreiflichkeit»), the result of an ecstatic mystic enrapture («eine theoretische Ekstase, einer Unendlichkeitmystik von religiöser Prägung», 1975: 429). Such a view, summed up in the oxymoron «misticismo logico» (Rossi, 1981: 17), gives little or no space to the power of discourse in the creation of the new cosmology, as it makes it flow out of the burning creativity of the *contemplator caeli* or, as Merleau-Ponty would put it, from the fading «foi perceptive» (1964: 17) of the *kosmotheorós* (1964: 150). Bruno's philosophy becomes, in this view, the space of an original transparency, streaming from his «ursprüng-

liches, intuitives und unmittelbares Sprechen» (Hentschel, 1988: 176). Therefore, Infinity can only be referred to in an oblique fashion, through the phenomenological semantic of self-evident Vision («Anschauung») and intuitive immediacy or «Unmittelbarkeit» (Broch, 1977: 172; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1979: 122-124; Perelman, 1964: 236-248). «Vision obsédante, motivation secrète», the idea of an infinite universe is, according to Michel, an internal conviction («cet infini intérieur») a reality already received by an internal vision («l'en deçà du discours») and later confirmed in the intellectual axiomatic light of truth («l'au delà du discours»): «Le problème de l'infini était résolu avant d'être posé: le cœur a parlé avant la raison» (1962: 62-71). This phenomenology-oriented cardiology is but a minor chapter in the idealistic encyclopedia of human pathology. Interpretation turns into a diagnosis-guessing exercise, a highly advisable practice if it were only more confident in the (*written*) word of the patient, i.e. the author. What Michel calls the heart is just what phenomenology-oriented philosophy of language, and the related phenomenal linguistics, refer to as intentional meaning (Melandri, 1990: 182-212; Derrida, 1967: 53-66). In conclusion, a phenomenological reading assumes the utter semantic accountability of texts, transparent both in its authorial intentions and in its referential extensions. Insofar as the material, written nature of the text is thus willingly overlooked, phenomenological readings degenerate, as De Man pointedly denounced, in a «doing away with reading entirely» (1986: 30).

2.1. Immanent reading: Prefatory gnoseological assumptions

In spite of the discrepancy between Bruno's and Digges' texts, they partially coincide on the level of their explicit cognitive assumptions. Digges announces that the heliocentric system is the outcome of a *rational* effort intended to dispell the «monstrous loathsome shape of error» (1934: 78) pervasive in all versions of the Ptolemaic system, and originating in the abuse of human senses. Copernicus' achievement is seen as the result of «reason and deep discourse» (1934: 79). In *De l'infinito*, Reason becomes the cognitive faculty with which the dialogue claims to be written: «giudizio naturale», «discorso naturale», «giudizio e determinazione», «solettissima inquisizione», all of which transcend the limited cognitive sight of astronomical reasoning and sensitive perception. Filoteo affirms: «l'infinito non può esser oggetto del senso», and concludes: «a l'intelletto conviene giudicare e render

raggione de le cose absenti e divise per distanza di tempo ed intervallo de luoghi» (Bruno, 1958: 368). According to Filoteo, Truth is located «ne l'oggetto sensibile come in uno specchio, nella raggione per modo di argomentazione e discorso, nell'intelletto per modo di principio e di conclusione, nella mente in propria e viva forma» (1958: 369).

And yet, what is the point in advancing this pre-emptive gnoseological elucidation, which seems both a warning and excuse? Cosmic infinity had always posed a problem of cognitive legitimacy. An infinite universe could never be *astronomically* hypothesized. «Sive igitur finitus sit mundus, sive infinitus, disputationi physiologorum dimittamus» had been, after all, Copernicus' (1975: 72) resigned invitation, which Digges translated as «But whether the worlde have his bounded or bee in deede infinite and without boundes, let us leave that to be discussed by Philosophers» (Johnson and Larkey, 1934: 91). Hence, the only way-out was to regard the infinite universe as being the outcome of *natural discourse*, identifying *natural* with *psysical* and thus inserting it within the legitimate tradition of Aristotle's *Physics*. And although that is exactly what Bruno intended to do, his dialogue *De l'infinito* offers a sharp contrast between its prefatory gnoseological claims and its effective discursive outcome.

2.2. «Argomentazione»: The failure of Reason

According to Bruno's gnoseological map, *De l'infinito* ought to be regarded as a «discorso», one of the two ways in which truth is made to dwell inside Reason. In fact, *De l'infinito* could be read as a cluster of hard-pressed arguments against Aristotle's cosmological design. And yet, it exhibits a typical dialectical structure, with few true syllogisms and plenty of confutative question-answer scuffles. Actually, *De l'infinito* fails to provide any *physically* valid proof. When Blumenberg speaks of «pure Negation der Begreiflichkeit» he refers to the way physical assumptions are here destroyed, rendering the dialogue *physically* unaccountable. Blumenberg is here identifying Concept and Reason. We find a confirmation of this in any authoritative account of Bruno's ideas (Koyré, 1968: 47; Cassirer, 1922: 289-230). Moreover, Bruno's dialectical devices are not acceptable. At a certain point of his argumentation, Filoteo says: «Questa illazione diciamo noi che non vale fisicamente, benché sia logicamente vera» (1958: 425). And yet, Bruno's inferences («illazioni») seem neither *logically* nor *physically* («naturaliter loquendo», Bianchi, 1987: 13) true. The «postillatore

napoletano», an early and perceptive interpreter, denounced the scandal of deficient argumentation. «Che chimera!, Qualia monstra!» (Granada, 1993: 120) was his outcry against the faultiness of Bruno's syllogisms, as they drew conclusions from unsupported premises (the divine *potuit sive voluit* confusion) in a clear *petitio principii* fashion (Aristotle, *First Analytics* 64b, 26-35, *Second Analytics* 74b, 5-15).

How is it then conceivable that, in spite of such gnoseological unfitness, the dialogue succeeds in conveying a message of undeniable cognitive import? Neither Michel nor Blumenberg can answer this, since both place the infinite-hypothesis within the non-discursive realm of intuitive (in)sights. We must search for other *discursive* means. Let's focus on its rhetorical *mise en scène*. The very beginning is an eloquent, sturdy display of dialectical skill. The scholastic «Technik der Fragestellung» (Grabmann, 1909: II, 151-157) is here (Bruno, 1958: 369) playfully baffled: «Come è possibile che l'universo sia infinito? / Come è possibile che l'universo sia finito? / Volete voi che si possa dimostrare questa infinitudine? / Volete voi che si possa dimostrare questa finitudine? / Che dilatazione è questa? / Che margine è questo?». *De l'infinito* becomes a dialectical theatre, the scenery of a textual *agonism*. Filoteo erects his own text by trying to dismantle Aristotle's arguments in favor of a closed world. The agonistic nature of this *disputatio*, which has misled many critics to believe it a real «réfutation» (Bartholomèss, 1847: II, 152), entails a progressive loss of referentiality. *Ad rem, ad rem* (1958: 370), is Fracastorio's desperate plea. In fact the dialogue, which already began in a rhetorical suspension («troppo a lungo ne avete tenuto sospesi» *ibidem*), never fully escapes from this verbal closure. This is a belated confirmation of what Aristotle's texts openly denounce: the inescapable verbal dimension of all cosmological research. According to Wieland, Aristotle's cosmological propositions must be related to his linguistic research on the sense (*Sinn*) of the basic concepts of physics, such as cause, change, principle...². Aubenque has sufficiently explained how both *semantic univocation* (1962:

² «Alle Philosophie ist Sprachkritik» had been Wittgenstein's (1921, 4.0031) warning to high-pitched metaphysicians, and this *caveat* has successfully helped to lay the foundations of contemporary, text-oriented readings of philosophical works. A splendid example of such readings is Wieland's interpretation of Aristotle's *Physics*, where he shows how «Sprachanalyse» and «Philosophiehistorie» (1970: 110) share a common discursive origin. Moreover: «Vor allem ist damit auch keine kosmologische Aussage impliziert Aristoteles fragt nicht inhaltlich, was die Prinzipien des Werdens in der Welt sind, sondern er fragt formal, in welchem Sinn wir überhaupt vom Prinzipien des Werdens sprechen» (1970: 139).

118-120) and *predicational logic* (1962: 110-112)³ stand as methodological conditions to Aristotle's (textual) understandings of reality. Aristotle's predicational logic was subordinate to a preliminary lexical investigation. Before a syllogism was built, semantic univocation in the physical discourse had to be restored. Such restoration implied a revisionary reading (or misreading) of pre-socratic cosmological texts. According to Filoteo, Aristotle would have operated a textual manipulation in his reading of those discourses, rendering undecidable their actual, primary sense. The distinction between «parole» (words) and «sentimenti/intenzioni» (sense) is central in the discussion and explains what exactly is the extent of Aristotle's misreading. When discussing the «void» as a physical concept, Filoteo blames Aristotle for ascribing it a meaning («intenzione») that no earlier philosopher would have endorsed: «laonde, prendendo il vacuo per nome ed intenzione secondo la quale nessuno lo intese, vien a far castelli in aria e distruggere il suo vacuo e non quello di tutti gli altri» (1958: 394). The idea of a destruction of the earlier philosopher's arguments is a charge repeatedly levelled against Aristotle. Such destruction was a methodological and deliberate strategy in all of Aristotle's (mis)readings.

By pointing out the gap between the intended meaning («boules-thai») and the actual written articulation («diarthroun») inside the discourse of his precursors, Aristotle would have dispelled their discursive contradiction, unveiled and restored the hidden textual meaning (Aubenque, 1962: 79). Such procedure announces the founding maxim of modern hermeneutics, «der Ausleger soll besser verstehen, als dieser sich selbst verstanden hat» (Dilthey, 1966: XIV, 707), preliminary stage in the process that Dilthey called «Nachkonstruktion», and comes paradoxically close to some *deconstructive* interpretations⁴, shar-

³ Predicational logic operates on the assumption that objective qualities ontologically linked to substances can be linguistically mirrored in propositions that link predicates to substantives. Such mirroring, Wieland argues, does not presuppose a distancing opposition between the ontological realm of the subject (*sachlich-gegenständliche*) and the linguistic realm of the predication («sprachlich-grammatische», 1970: 151). Both realms are made to coalesce inside the all-embracing frame of language («der sprachliche Umkreis» (1970: 140), «der Bereich der Sprache» (1970: 97) and that means that all «physical» intelligibility («Begreiflichkeit») must come to terms with the categorial structure of discursive reality: «Die Sprache ist so eine Bedingung der Möglichkeit alles Wissens» (1970: 144).

⁴ Dilthey was, of course, paraphrasing Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik*: «Die Aufgabe ist auch so auszudrücken, die Rede zuerst ebensogut und dann besser zu verstehen als ihr Urheber... so müssen wir vieles zum Bewusstsein zu bringen suchen, was ihm unbewusst bleiben kann». Nachkonstruktion, as Dilthey conceives it, would restore the unity of the work: «Das materiale Prinzip der Hermeneutik ist Theorie der Nachkonstruktion des Werkes aus der Sprache unter Individualität des Schriftstellers auf Grund des Verständnisses von Sprachen und Gedankenproduktion in ihrer Einheit» (1966: XIV,

ing a distinct inclination to a close-reading approach and the same drive towards the uncovering of hidden semantic insights. Hence, by such a detour, we return to Filoteo's original denouncement, namely, Aristotle's *destruction* of his precursor's texts, and the consequent need to restore the original sense. It is not enough to say that Bruno was a «terminologischen Nonkonformist» (Hentschel, 1988: 176). Bruno intends to restore a meaning which, for Aristotle, is but the unconscious («unbewusst», Schleiermacher would say) external concealment of the intentional one. Despite his efforts to become *rational* («ambisce tanto di esser stimato razionale o, come vogliam dire, logico», 1958: 399), Aristotle is identified with the Sophists, due to the virtuosity of his destructive misreadings. Only Bruno, actor in the same textual theatre («nel medesimo teatro», 1958: 388) of presocratic philosophy, could misread Aristotle's misreading and reenact the original semantic ambiguity. What Ciliberto calls «centralità ermeneutica» (1992: 221) in Bruno's philosophy refers to the depth of his lexical investigation. Filoteo had already stated the convenience of interpreting the abstruse conceptual vagaries of the theologian's discussions, on the issues of God's power and will, as the result of a poverty of terms (*penuria nominum*): «Elpino. Or perché dunque hanno quel modo di dire, se non hanno questo modo di intendere? Filoteo. Per penuria di termini ed efficaci risoluzioni» (1958: 388). Such judgement must be subsumed into the full-fledged lexical revision that opens the way to textual destructive corrections. The cognitive power of *De l'infinito* rests primarily, and perhaps ultimately as well, in the semantic revision of the term «infinite».

To summarize, the dialogue offers a critical account of gnoseological issues which is superimposed on the cursory cosmologic discussion. Such an account works as an undercurrent that puts into question the cognitive validity of the surface outcome of any cosmology text, especially Aristotle's, but most dangerously Bruno's. Claims to rational discourse or «discorso naturale» are raised in order to weaken the legitimacy of Aristotle's cosmological discourse. But if we read Bruno's

707). Deconstruction, as we learn in Derrida and De Man, questions the validity of semantic premises (preconception = hermeneutic *Vorverständnis*) in the reading approach to a text, exactly what, in Wieland's words, Aristotle does in his agonistic confrontation with his precursor's texts: «Es besteht also auch die Möglichkeit, dass minunter ein bestimmtes Vorverständnis destruiert werden muss, bevor die Sache selbst untersucht werden kann» (1970: 104). It's not accidental that the Italian translator uses «decostruire» instead of «destruire», since the labelling has become, even in German, a very flexible matter: «Destruktion und Dekonstruktion» in Gadamer (1985), and also «Abbauen», «Zerstörung», etc.

dialogue in the light of that concrete *rational claim*, we witness the progressive dissolution of rational devices and their replacement by strictly dialectical (topical or rhetorical) strategies of text-building. I am particularly interested in the aberrant dimension of these dialectical structures, which accounts for the narrative nature of Bruno's dialogue.

2.3. «Discorso»: De l'infinito as the narrative allegory of an impossible trope

Shortly after Fracastorio summons the contenders to break through dialectical suspension towards some kind of referentiality, Burchio implores: «Venite presto a qualche raggione, Filoteo, perché io mi prenderò spasso de ascoltar questa favola o fantasia» (1958: 370). By defining the argument as a «favola» or «fantasia», Burchio designates the real threat of the dialogue. Any rational method can degenerate in a narrative allegory. It was Aristotle's contention that both the philosopher's resistance to accept the mathematical notion of the infinitesimal and the philosopher's acceptance of the notion of cosmic Infinity were the result of an error (*errare*). This error consisted in a loss, a deviation from the main path of the argument – «come per similitudine, nell'errore che si fa nel principio di qualche camino» (1958: 401) – preventing it to proceed straight from the first principles (causes of *aitiai*) to the consequences. The Greek word for path or way (*hodós*) is inscribed in the notion of method (*met-hodós*). Bruno translates Aristotle's simile by using precisely the idea of the *camino* (way/path/road) and the idea of error («errare» = to wander). Method means «research» in Aristotle's *Physics*, and becomes a synonym for philosophical investigation in Scholastic texts, identified with *scientia*, *ars* and *doctrina*. During the Renaissance, with the works of Melancthon, Agricola and Petrus Ramus (Howell, 1956: 146-245; Vasoli, 1968; Ong, 1958), its meaning changed and its rhetorical dimension prevailed over its strictly logical dimension. Ramus' dialectical *methodus methodorum* was a variation of Agricola's intimately rhetoric place-logic: the progress of reason depended on the appropriate selection of *loci* (*topoi*), the places of discourse. As Ong (1958: 92-130) has brilliantly suggested, Reason developed into (rhetorical) patterns of strongly visual power, as it progressively abandoned its original logico-predicative nature. It therefore becomes highly tempting to re-read (or mis-read) Aristotle's warning as a prediction of the risks of deviated, place-oriented, non-predicational methods, namely the infinite loss of the ar-

gument and, in the case of earlier philosophers, the creation of a theory of Infinity.

In other words, Aristotle's discourse tried hard to dispel the threat of rhetorical aberration, that «dissémination non maîtrisable» (Derrida, 1972: 295) of polysemantic words. What I intend to suggest is that we can read Bruno's dialogue as the discursive (= *discurso*) outcome of a very concrete tropological aberration. To that end, I will employ De Man's notion of allegory as the narrative structure that results from a text's endless attempt to hide, or deconstruct, the aberrant dimension of one of its tropes (De Man, 1979: 162). In our case, the trope is the metaphor of Infinity, one of the terms that Aristotle apparently misread, mistook and eventually miswrote. The uncovering of the tropological dimension of the notion of Infinity, a rather unorthodox act of semantic restitution, is the textual event that triggers a narrative allegory or, as Burchio would say, a «favola» or «fantasia». Bruno's cognitive programme is inscribed within Lull's large-scale *scientia*, his *Ars Magna* or *methodus methodorum*. Many readers of Bruno (Cassirer, 1922: 279; Vasoli, 1958: 297-304; Rossi, 1960: 109-115; Klein, 1970: 79; Noferi, 1974: 367) have focused on his problematic notion of *Imagination* which in many ways can be identified with *Reason*. In fact, Rossi speaks of «logica fantastica» (1960: 109) while Vasoli uses «immaginazione razionale» (1958: 298), and both refer to Bruno's attempt to reduce into a system the cognitive mechanisms of the human mind when faced with a secondary world of shadows (*umbræ*), traces of the real things (Bruno, 1886: 20-21). The cursory explanation identifies cosmic Infinity with a cosmological embodiment of the mind's infinite capacity to combine in an additive process the images it receives through the senses. According to Cassirer, Bruno's new conceptualization of a heroic Reason accounts for the intimate relationship between Self-consciousness and Infinity: «So sehen wir den Begriff des Unendlichen mit dem Problem des Selbstbewusstseins in Beziehung gesetzt» (Cassirer, 1922: 281). But such vision overlooks the fact that the notion of Infinity was already playing a role within Bruno's combinatory logic of places. In his mnemonic treatises, Bruno speaks of an infinite «Campus» as the central *locus*, space of spaces, scenery of original indetermination. Infinity is repeatedly described as the «amplissimus sinus», one of the *sub-iecta* of the new imaginative, topical logic. «Nox», «Orcus», and «Chaos» are other equivalent metaphors (Badaloni, 1988: 40-41; Sabbatino, 1993: 48-52).

Bruno's interest in Rhetorics and Mnemonics arose from an attempt to do away with Aristotelian gnoseology, rooted in a sensuous empiricism and supported by a highly sophisticated description of the

logical behaviour of language. Bruno would have transformed the *subiecta* (first subjectus) of predication logic into places and the *adiecta* (first adjectives) into images, precipitating thereby the confusion of logic with topic (Rossi, 1960: 115). The notion of the infinite as negative *adiectum* (Mondolfo, 1943: 456) potential accident to any subject in Aristotle's logic, undergoes in Bruno's texts a process of inner transformations. From a potential negative accident, what Scholastic philosophers called a *Syncategorematic infinity* (*in fieri*) it is turned into a *Categorematic infinity* (*in facto esse*), i.e. a positive Infinity (Duhem, 1985: 46; Maier, 1983: 319-340). That operation was already effected by Gregory of Rimini, one of the few medieval philosophers to support the idea of cosmic Infinity, a *Transinfinite* described as *Chaos* (Maier, 1983: 358). Such identification of positive Infinity with the pre-socratic notion of Chaos implies a qualitative leap insofar as it clears the way towards pre-socratic textuality. Bruno follows this way and organizes the mythical content of pre-socratic cosmogonies into a method, a system of places and images that is made to underlie both the operations of memory – of the human mind in general – and the description of reality, i.e. his cosmology. He was clearly re-enacting Lull's reduction of the ten categories and the five predicables of Aristotle's logic into the substantial notion of Chaos, a confused mass containing the four elements, principle of cosmogonic indetermination responsible of reality (Yates, 1982: I, 96). Bruno's revision of classical rhetorics was primarily an attempt to lay out the grounds – «eine apriorische Vorstrukturierung» (Blum, 1980: 15) –, of a renovated knowledge.

Predicational logic was more than a functional tool within Aristotle's cosmology. His rejection of Infinity, as expounded by the Pythagoreans and others, was the argumentative core of his *Physics* only because he needed to safeguard a formal linguistic description of the universe in which both motion and the place of cosmic realities could be thoroughly accounted for (Jaeger, 1923: 316; Aubenque, 1962: 355). This description exacted the logical requirement of completeness and formal boundness. It is impossible to distinguish Aristotle's cosmological discussion of the (limited) place of the world from his logical discussion of the (limited) category of linguistic place. A topological limit is both the guarantee of access to the ontological nature of physical (cosmological) objects, as condition of *kosmische Ordnung* (Bollnow, 1976: 30), and the possibility of discourse itself, of rational symbolization or intelligibility. Aristotle's *Physics* (IV, 212b) and *Categories* (V, 2a) meet in this central issue of topology. And yet, as Aubenque has clearly shown, such a topo-logical positing of limits in

Aristotle's cosmological discussion is done by means of a deeply aporetic language: an inevitable *penuria nominum* halts the writer in his attempt to describe the relation between the external (immanent) limit of the world and the action on the (transcendent) immobile motor. In short, Aristotle's text meets the logical predicament of trying to account for (topo)logical limits within a necessarily unlimited realm. The immanent and the transcendent cannot be discursively reconciled because immanence is the very possibility of discourse: the transcendental realm of the unlimited (in-finite), i.e. God's non-space, stands at the outward limit of physical intelligibility. This irreconciliation is not a threat to the logical impeccability of Aristotle's cosmological discourse, whose rational fitness is still unsurpassed (Jammer, 1963: 30; Koyré, 1971: 41), but it certainly helps to explain what Aubenque called «l'extenuation progressive du vocabulaire physique» (1962: 361). Likewise, it might help to gauge the magnitude of Aristotle's textual repression, that is to say, the extent of his misreadings. The texts of earlier Greek philosophers shrewdly operated on the assumption that conceptual and/or cosmic limitation was genetically linked to the notion of the «Unbound» or apeiron (Unlimited or Infinite), identified with «Chaos», «Nox» and «Tenebra» in Orphic theogonies. *Apeiron* means both Infinity (spatial Infinity) and Indetermination (qualitative indistinction), in any case a positive reality that preempts (anticipates, generates, envelops) reality. Aristotle represses that reality by expelling it from the topo-logical geography of the ontologically intelligible.

Bruno liberates the aberrant momentum of the pre-socratic metaphor of Infinity, re-investing it with all its primal logico-cosmological promiscuity and allowing it to unsettle Aristotle's textual positions. Far from being an innocent trope, the image of an infinite «Chaos» or «Campus» has got a specific cognitive force. We see it in the way Bruno, in his *Figuratio aristotelici Physici auditu*, (mis)read Aristotle's *Physics* by rendering tropologic or figurative the original cosmological concepts. Bruno «tropologizes» Aristotle's *Physics* by ascribing a concrete image (mythological characters or principle drawn from ancient cosmogonies) to each fundamental *physical* notion, i.e. «Principium-Minerva, Materia-thesis, Formam-Apollo...» and what really interests us «Infinitum-Iuno, Locuum-Chaos» and «Vacuum-Orcus» (Bruno, 1962: 136-137). Any reader familiar with Bruno's cosmological dialogues knows that concepts like Infinity, Void, and Place are hardly distinguishable, such confusion being precisely one of the polemic touchstones of his theory. Blum describes this operation as Bruno's particular «Rekonstruktion» (Blum, 1980: 17) of Aristotle's work, following a prior textual confrontation («Ausereinandersetzung»). The paradox of

such reconstruction is already evident in the title of Bruno's text, according to which Aristotle's *Physics* becomes «per imagines explicanda». The physical notion of space is explained through the image of Chaos. To posit an infinite and in(de)finite, aberrant principle of indetermination such as Chaos, «inchoatio omnium formarum, veluti in confuso et mixto» (Bruno, 1962: 23), as the spatial womb (*Locus*) of the universe is to invert drastically Aristotle's vision of a limited, bounded universe. Bruno (mis)reads Aristotle's *Physics* and uncovers the hidden presocratic cosmogonies that Aristotle's vision violently represses. The result of this textual transgression is immediate. He identifies Aristotle's transcendent and transcendental God with the immanent principle of natural reality (*Deus in rebus*), which results in the equation of the neoplatonic sun with the dark Abyss of indeterminate matter, major principle of indetermination, non-place in which the inscription of the determinate takes place. Chaos, Orcus, Nox, Hyle, Silva: Bruno will denominate positive Infinity with different images, drawn from teogonic and mythical sources.

The transumptive violence of this tropological carnival undermines the conceptual intelligibility of Aristotle's cosmological discourse. This is precisely the plot of Bruno's major narrative allegory, the dialogue *De l'Infinito universo e mondi*. Matter and Space are made one with Infinity, Potency and Act are identified within the First Divine Cause, the Final Cause is confused with the Efficient and Material Causes, ... these are the main sub-plots of the fable. The hypothesis of an infinite universe is not the result of an ecstatic intuition of the author, nor the sudden outcome of his metaphysical speculation, as it has been commonly regarded. I think that the cognitive strength of the infinite hypothesis derives from a textual transgression. Bruno inserts inside an argumentative plot, Aristotle's cosmological discussion patterned in predicative logic, a conceptual element, the metaphor of Infinity, that belongs to a radically different (textual) logic. The metaphor of Infinity infects the rational discourse with its ab-errant structure. No real dialectic confrontation occurs, only the progressive fraying of demonstrative thought. The result is the construction of an allegorical narrative. The dialogue narrates the impossibility of the discursive characterization of its protagonist, the metaphor of Infinity, a conceptual outrage that can only act as a textual undoer. What Burchio called a «favola» is in fact an allegoric fable of cognitive failure. Neither by «argumento» nor by «discurso» are we allowed a glimpse into the ab-errant image of Infinity. The reason is clear: by no means can a text exhibit the primal under-text, the realm of illegibility over which it builds itself, «il fondo notturno della grafia» (Noferi, 1974: 389). Infinity is

both the impossibility of ontological delimitation and the impossibility of logical conceptuality. «Est infiguratum et infigurabile» was the laconic definition of Chaos offered by Bruno (1967: III, 10), which he identified with Infinity insofar both work as containers of cosmic bodies, as undetermined and dimensionless receptacles of division and dimension. «Per se non scibile, per se non ens, prope nihil» (1958: 298), were some of the classic descriptions that Bruno offered of his notion of matter, a cosmological concept indistinguishable from Infinity (Stern, 1977: 44-45).

It is hard to believe that Bruno's language is «eine eigenständige, durchaus rationale Sprechweise» (Hentschel, 1988: 178), although we acknowledge that through textual clash a new cognitive content («kognitiv Inhalt», *ibidem*: 178) may be conveyed. Figurative aberration disrupts logic and makes cosmological discourse vulnerable to the ineffability of negative theology. Here is where Bruno's dialogue strikingly encounters Digges' treatise. In both, the claim to rationality is raised only to be blatantly refuted. The latter ruins the astronomical rationality of Copernico's treatise by leaping across the boundaries of the ninth sphere and confusing Space and God in a hebraic-neoplatonic fashion. Such operation favoured the isolation of the ineffable, the confinement of the Infinite-Divine in a purely transcendental realm, the conversion of the World-picture into an Allegory of Knowledge. Bruno's originality rests, conversely, on a tropological violation of rational boundness which confounded Infinity, God, Space and Matter in the immanent realm of a chaotic universe, a firmer allegory insofar as it reintroduces the ineffable in the realm of the visible and contingent. In short, by making of Infinity a positive presence in the universe, Bruno allows the betrayal that Aristotle sought vehemently to rebuke: «La négation est comme l'index de la transcendance au sein de la finitude; elle est l'ultime recours laissé à l'homme par les ressources de son langage pour parler de la transcendance sans la trahir» (Aubenque, 1962: 363).

Julian Jiménez Heffernan, Departamento de Filologías Extranjeras, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Córdoba, Plaza Cardenal Salazar 5/n, 14071 - Córdoba España, tel. 0334-57-218119.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. (1965), *Pour Marx*, Paris, Maspero. English edition, *For Marx*, London, Penguin, 1969. Translated by B.R. Brewster.
- Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. (1969), *Lire le Capital*, Paris, Maspero.
- Aubenque, P. (1962), *Le problème de l'être chez Aristotle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

- Aristóteles (1988), *Tratados de lógica. Órganon*, Madrid, Gredos.
- Badaloni, N. (1988), *Giordano Bruno. Tra cosmologia ed etica*, Roma-Bari, Società Editrice Barese.
- Bartholomèss, C. (1847), *Jordano Bruno*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique de Lad-ragne.
- Battistini, A. and Raimondi, E. (1990), *Le Figure della Retorica. Una storia let-teraria italiana*, Torino, Einaudi.
- Bianchi, L. (1987), *L'Inizio dei Tempi. Antichità e Novità del mondo dal Bona-ventura a Newton*, Firenze, L. Olschki.
- Blum, P.R. (1980), *Aristoteles bei Giordano Bruno. Studien zur philosophische Rezeption*, München, Wilhelm Fink.
- Blumenberg, H. (1975), *Die Genesis der kopernikanischen Welt*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.
- Blumenberg, H. (1976), *Aspekte der Epochenschwelle: Cusaner und Nolaner*, Erweiterte und überarbeitete Neuausgabe von «Die Legitimität der Neuzeit», vierter Teil, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.
- Bollnow, O.F. (1976), *Mensch und Raum*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.
- Broch, H. (1977), *Das Unmittelbare in Philosophie und Dichtung*, in *Philoso-phische Schriften. Kritik*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, pp. 167-190.
- Bruno, G. (1958), *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, in *Dialoghi italiani. Dialoghi metafisici e morali*, a cura di Giovanni Gentile, terza edizione da G. Acqui-lecchia, Firenze, Sansoni.
- Bruno, G. (1962), *Opera Latine Conscripta*, public sumptibus edita, recensebat F. Fiorentino (F. Tocco, H. Vitelli, V. Imbriani, C.M. Tallarigo), 3 voll., Neapoli-Florentiae 1879-91. (recentemente pubblicato in edizione anasta-tica, Stuttgart-Bad Connstatt).
- Cassirer, E. (1906), *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neuen Zeit*, Berlin, B. Cassirer, 2nd ed. 1922.
- Cassirer, E. (1927), *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, Leipzig, Teubner.
- Ciliberto, M. (1992), *La ruota del tempo. Interpretazione di Giordano Bruno*, Roma, Ed. Riuniti.
- Coffin, C.M. (1937), *John Donne and the New Philosophy*, New York, The Humanity Press.
- Copernico, N. (1975), *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium. La costituzione generale dell'universo*, a cura di A. Koyré, Torino, Einaudi.
- Corsano A. (1940), *Il pensiero di Giordano Bruno nel suo svolgimento storico*, Firenze, Sansoni.
- De Man, P. (1979), *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- De Man, P. (1986), *The Resistance to Theory*, Minneapolis, University of Min-nesota Press.
- Derrida, J. (1967), *La Voix et le phénomène. Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl*, Paris, Épipiméthée.
- Derrida, J. (1972), *La mythologie blanche. La métaphore dans le texte philosophi-que*, in *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris, Minuit, pp. 247-314.
- Digges, T.A. (1934), *A Perfect Description of the Caelestial Orbes according to the most ancient doctrine of the Pythagoreans, lately revived by Copernicus and by Geometrical Demonstrations approved*, in Johnson, F.R. and Larkey, S.V., *Thomas Digges, the Copernical System and the Idea of the Infinity of the Universe in 1576*, in «The Huntington Library Bulletin», n. 5, pp. 69-117.
- Dilthey, W. (1966a), *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Dilthey, W. (1966b), *Das Hermeneutische System Schleiermachers in der Ausean-dersetzung mit der älteren Protestantischen Hermeneutik*, in *Gesammelte Schrif-ten*, vol. XIV, op. cit.
- Duhem, P. (1985), *Medieval Cosmology. Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of the Worlds*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- Fletcher, A. (1964), *Allegory. The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1986), *Destruktion und Dekonstruktion*, in *Gesammelte Werke, Hermeneutik*, vol. II, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr.
- Gentile, G. (1957), Edition of Bruno, G., *Dialoghi Italiani. Dialoghi metafisici e dialoghi morali*, 3d edition by G. Aquilecchia, Firenze, Sansoni.
- Gentile, G. (1991), *Giordano Bruno e il pensiero del Rinascimento, 1907-08*, Firenze, Le Lettere.
- Grabmann, M. (1961), *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode* (1909), Stutt-gart, Benno Schwabe & Co.
- Granada, M.A. (1992), *Bruno, Digges, Palingenio: omogeneità ed eterogeneità nella concezione dell'universo infinito*, in «Rivista di storia della filosofia», n. 1, pp. 47-73.
- Granada, M.A. (1993), Edition of Bruno, G., *Del infinito: el universo y los mundos*, Madrid, Alianza.
- Hegel, W.F. (1971), *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke*, vol. 20, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.
- Hentschel, B. (1988), *Die Philosophie Giordano Brunos-Chaos oder Kosmos? Eine Untersuchung zur Logizität und Systematizität des nolanischen Werkes*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lange.
- Howell, W.S. (1956), *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1973), *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, in *Gesam-melte Werke*, vol. II, Haag, Martinus Nijhof.
- Jaeger, M. (1923), *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, Berlin, Weimannsche Buchhandlung.
- Jammer, M. (1954), *Concepts of Space. The History of Space in Physics*, Cam-bridge, Harvard University Press. Italian translation *Storia del concetto di spazio*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1963.
- Johnson, F.R. and Larkey, S.V. (1934), *Thomas Digges, the Copernican System and the Idea of the Infinite Universe in 1576*, in «The Huntington Library Bulletin», n. 5, pp. 69-117.
- Johnson, F.R. (1968), *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England. A Study of the English Scientific Writings from 1500 to 1645*, New York, Octagon Books.
- Kant, I. (1922), *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Berlin, B. Cassirer.
- Klein, R. (1956), *L'imagination comme vêtement de l'âme chez Marsile Ficin et Giordano Bruno*, in *La forme et l'intelligible. Écrits sur la Renaissance et l'Art Moderne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970.
- Koyré, A. (1968a), *Metaphysics and Measurement. Essays in the Scientific Revolu-tion*, London, Chapman & Hall.

- Koyré, A. (1968b), *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.
- Koyré, A. (1971), *Le vide et l'espace infini au XIV siècle* (1949), in *Études de la pensée philosophique*, Paris, Gallimard.
- Lovejoy, A.O. (1936), *The Great Chain of Being. The History of an Idea*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Maier, A. (1983), «Infinito attuale», in *Scienza e Filosofia nel Medioevo. Saggi sui secoli XIII e XIV*, Milano, Jaca Book.
- Mazzeo, J.A. (1964), *Renaissance and Seventeenth Century Studies*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Melandri, E. (1990), *Le «Ricerche Logiche» di Husserl. Introduzione e commento alla Prima Ricerca*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Michel, P.H. (1962), *La cosmologie de Giordano Bruno*, Paris, Hermann.
- Mondolfo, R. (1943), *L'infinito nel pensiero dell'Antichità classica*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.
- Nicolson, M.H. (1960), *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the «new science» upon seventeenth century poetry*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Noferi, A. (1974), *Chaos, simulacro e scrittura nella teoria bruniana dell'immaginazione*, in *Letteratura e critica. Studi in onore di Natalino Sapegno*, Roma, Bulzoni, vol. I, pp. 361-408.
- Ong, W.J. (1958), *Ramus, Method, and Decay of dialogue*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press.
- Perelman, C. (1964), *De l'évidence en Métaphysique*, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, February, ried. in *Le Champ de l'Argumentation*, Bruxelles, Presses Universitaires, pp. 248-263.
- Perelman, C. and Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1952), *Logique et rhétorique*, in *Rhétorique et Philosophie. Pour une théorie de l'argumentation en philosophie*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France. Translated in *Retorica e Filosofia*, Bari, De Donato, 1979, pp. 55-85.
- Praz, M. (1946), *Studi sul concettismo*, Firenze, Sansoni.
- Ricci, S. (1990), *La Fortuna del pensiero di Giordano Bruno, 1600-1750*, Firenze, Le Lettere.
- Rossi, P. (1960), *Clavis Universalis. Arti Mnemoniche e Logica Combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz*, Milano-Napoli, R. Ricciardi.
- Rossi, P. (1969), *La storiografia dell'idealismo italiano*, in *Storia e Filosofia. Saggi sulla storiografia filosofica*, Torino, Einaudi.
- Rossi, P. (1971), *Aspetti della rivoluzione scientifica*, Napoli, Murano.
- Sabbatino, P. (1993), *Giordano Bruno e la «Mutazione» del Rinascimento*, Firenze, Leo Oltski.
- Sacerdoti, G. (1990), *Nuovo cielo, nuova terra. La rivelazione copernicana di «Antonio e Cleopatra»*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Stadler, M. (1986), *Unendliche Schöpfung als Genesis von Bewusstsein. Überlegungen zu Geistphilosophie Giordano Brunos*, in «Philosophisches Jahrbuch», I, Halbband, pp. 39-60.
- Stern, F.B. (1977), *Giordano Bruno. Vision einer Weltansicht*, Meisenheim am Glan, Anton Hain.
- Troilo, E. (1918), *Giordano Bruno*, Roma, A.F. Formiggini.
- Tuve, R. (1957), *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery. Renaissance Poetics and Twentieth-Century Critics*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- Tuzet, H. (1965), *Cosmos et imagination*, Paris, Vrin.

- Vasoli, C. (1958), *Umanesimo e Simbologia nei primi scritti lulliani e mnemotecnici del Bruno*, in *Umanesimo e Simbolismo* (Atti del IV Convegno di Studi Umanistici, Venezia, settembre, 1958) Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, Padova, CEDAM, pp. 250-304.
- Vasoli, C. (1968), *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo. «Invenzione» e «Metodo» nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo*, Milano, Feltrinelli.
- Yates, F.A. (1964), *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, London, Routledge and Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- Yates, F.A. (1982), *Lull and Bruno. Collected Essays*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wieland, W. (1970), *Die aristotelische Physik. Untersuchungen über die Grundlegung der Naturwissenschaft und die sprachliche Bedingungen der Prinzipienforschung bei Aristoteles*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Wind, E. (1958), *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, New Haven, Yale University Press.

SOMMARIO

L'ipotesi bruniana dell'universo infinito non è, come postula la critica di stampo fenomenologico, il risultato di una «intuizione» psicologica che va oltre i limiti del pensiero filosofico o del linguaggio stesso. Si tratta invece di una posizione testuale. Bruno inserisce la metafora presocratica dell'infinito (come Caos, Campo indeterminato oppure Vuoto) all'interno di un testo, come la *Fisica* di Aristotele, controllato dalla razionalità dimostrativa. Emerge dunque uno scontro testuale che giustifica, per di più, la dimensione antirazionale e tropologico-narrativa del dialogo *De l'infinito universo e i mondi*.