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nixen

garlanded oder crowned oder writhed [ri:thd]

Flaubert

Mallarmé:

Mais, en vérité, il n'y a pas de prose: il y a l'alphabet et puis des vers plus ou moins

serrés: plus ou moins diffus. (OC, 867)

die Blume des Mundes

Powell: make more sound as before

Friedrich Kittler

MOUSA OR LITTERATURA

Für uns gehört die Dichtung seit langem schon zur Literatur, ebenso das Denken. Man findet es in der Ordnung, daß die Dichtung und ihre Geschichte literarhistorisch abgehandelt werden. Es wäre töricht, diesen Zustand, der weit zurückliegende Gründe hat, zu bemängeln oder gar über Nacht abändern zu wollen. Gleichwohl - ist Homer, ist Sappho, ist Pindar, ist Sophokles Literatur? Nein! Aber sie erscheinen uns so und nur so, auch dann, wenn wir dabei sind, literarhistorisch nachzuweisen, daß diese Dichtungen eigentlich nicht Literatur sind. Heidegger, Was heißt Denken?

Strangely enough, a simple question has seldom been posed: Why do we call the totality of written texts by the name of literature?

1

As you know, literature is a Latin term, derived from littera, a letter in the alphabet. Just as its Greek predecessor, to gramma, could be enlarged to become grammatike techne, the elementary training in reading, writing, and finally singing, so the Latin counterpart, the etymologically much more obscure littera, could develop a term encompassing the totality of written texts, whether in verse or in prose.

We learn however from Heidegger and only from him, that, as regards the history of being and saying, each major translation has been a dramatic event (1). One urgent task of media history is to make this evident in technical precision. To recall just Heidegger's most prominent example: Greek *lógos*, meaning both speech and reason, the words that we say as well as the relations that hold, turned in Latin translation into a binary opposition between *oratio* and *ratio*, speech and ground. In this way, the knowledge of poets or rhetors on the one hand, that of philosophers or scientists on the other remained no longer two mouths of a same voice, but drifted into institutionally separated fields.

Surely, dull Romans in general and stupid Cicero in particular would not have been able to draw this very distinction by themselves. It had to be preceded by Hellenistic Greeks, above all by Aristotle. Almost at the beginning of his famous *Poetics*, Aristotle stated that the book of Empedocles, although written in hexameters, had nothing to do with Homer simply because the *logos* proffered by Empedocles dealt with *physis*, the nature, and the songs proffered by Homer with myth (1447b17-20). There remains, however, the very fact that Aristotle had to draw this distinction. In doing so, he included the Sicilian "physiologist" in his own philosophic predecessorship, whereas poets such as Homer became excluded from philosophy proper for the precise reason that Aristotle's whole *Poetics* just dealt with them. Strangely enough, Aristotle did not find this distinction on the presence or absence of *mimesis* in these different discourses, his only criterion was metrics. To quote: "*epopoiía*, the making of words, can either be done in naked words only or rather in one or more than one meters" (1447a28-1447b8). This stated, Aristotle came to a remarkable, although seldom remarked conclusion: Up to now, he wrote, a common word designating both poetry and prose has not yet come up and their distinction itself is literally anonymous, without name (1447b9). "Up to now": this means that for almost five hundred years, from Homer to Aristotle, a beginning and an end, Greeks did neither know nor need literature. Just as Averroes, the Arabian translator of the *Poetics*, if we are to believe Jorge Luis Borges (2), will seek in vain for the meaning of bygone Greek drama, so Aristotle himself has already sought in vain for the meaning of future literature.

In the history of being, therefore, the word *litteratura* did start an epoch. It introduced a proper name at a place where there had remained an empty space that not even Aristotle, keen though he was in coining new and more general concepts, dared to fill. This, however, is tantamount to say that all histories of Greek literature, how many lectures and books they may have filled in the course of European humanities, are mistitled and moreover misleading. When Nietzsche in a course of lectures addressed from 1874 to 1876 to his students of classical philology heavily

stressed the fact that Greek poetry was an oral performance, no written text, he did so under the antiphrastic title "Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur", history of Greek letters (3). It would have been wiser to question this very word instead of distinguishing between implicitly written philosophy and oral poetic performance. For Aristotle, as Nietzsche did not fail to remark, was nicknamed "the reader".

What, then, would be at stake if we ceased from putting Greek poetry under the general label of literature as it rightfully has been attached to all later writing in Europe? What distinguishes Greek verse from a distinction that blurs its singularity? To make a long answer short, we could say: the gods. To chose a historically more sober approach, let us start with the question of the alphabet itself. When and why did the Greek grámmata, the one and only model of all European alphabets, and therefore literatures as well, came into being?

2

As you know, the Greek alphabet originated as an adaption of some semitic writing system probably developed and used in northern Syria. The unique, but fundamental difference between the two laid in the fact that, from the very beginning, five consonantic signs in the semitic system changed their pronunciation into that of five vowels. Otherwise, quite a lot of Homeric words - such as eao, I let - would have left no trace at all. To conclude from our most recent archeologic evidence, this transformation must have taken place some time before 775, since the earliest Greek inscription discovered so far, and strangely enough at a site near Rome, dates from about these years. It is just five letters long, but not fewer than three of them are the vowel signs Epsilon, Ypsilon and Iota. Together with two consonants, Lambda and Ny, they formed the first letters of the Greek word eulinos, good linen.

Now, consonantic alphabets can easily be written and read by native speakers who know to orally supplement the missing vowels. It was precisely for this faculty that Johannes Lohmann, one of my greatest academic teachers, spoke of a specific poetry inherent in Semitic languages and alphabets (5). For strangers, however, purely consonantic alphabets tend to be as unreadable as they are unspeakable. The poetic wonder of saying and singing simply fails to occur. Notwithstanding this, the common opinion still holds that archaic Greece invented the first and only vowel alphabet on earth for practical, namely commercial purposes. Although that earliest inscription found near Gabii was part of a grave offering, is it still read as an advertisement for good linen. Greek merchants would have sailed, probably from the eastern island of Euboea whose letter-forms are conserved in most

Italic alphabets, especially the Etruscan and Roman ones, to the far West, exporting not only merchandise, but by the way their letters, too. In the same contingent way, but somewhat earlier, Euboa itself would have imported its alphabet from Syria.

Among classical scholars, only Barry B. Powell has recently put into question this thoughtless, if not capitalistic prejudice. Why do we think the USA are ever lasting? The very fact that Etruscans and Romans could, with a delay of one century, adapt the Greek alphabet to their own languages, is telling. Obviously, vowel signs makes it desirable and feasible to store in wax or on paper the very sound of languages, be they native or foreign. "Speech, as it were, has become immortal", proclaimed Thomas Alva Edison just after, in 1877, having invented his phonograph, precursor of the grammophone (6). The same holds true, following Powell, of the Greek alphabet. Who else figures this immortal speech better than the Muse out of whose divine mouth Homer proclaims to have heard both Iliad and Odyssey. All countries and peoples, Walter F. Otto used to say, worship young bridal goddesses of sweet flowing water, be they Northern nixen or Greek nymphs, but only Greek myth has given birth to the Muses (7).

Socrates informs young beautiful Phaidros very plainly that Muses have not been around forever, but are born at a time later than mankind. That is why some mortals, nympholeptic or ravished by precisely this historical event, became cicadas just in order to sing themselves forever and a day (Pl. Phdr. 259 B) .

Music is your only friend
until the end.

In the same vein as Plato, Diodorus of Sicily contested the Greek alphabet's usual derivation out of Semitic and formerly Phenician scripts. Instead, he ascribed it to the Muses, daughters of Zeus. To quote: "The god gave them powers to invent the letters, to compose the words, and to pronounce poetry" (V 74).

These very statements, in their glorious sequence, give to think. This very statement, Powell has translated from poetry to prose. His book on "Homer and the Origin of the Greek alphabet", published in 1991, discusses all possible arguments as to whether or not the Greeks developed their vowels in order to write down illiterate Homer's poems still in his lifetime, at his dictation. Powell cannot make out a single strong argument against his hypothesis, but discovers many archeological and epigraphical facts for it. First, the so called Black Age of Greece, at least on Euboa, was not that dark. Not merchants, but princes showing historic interest in their heroic past had also the means to procure writing material for what has come down - even to us - as 24000 verses. Second, there is a most conspicuous absence of any economic, commercial or politic texts conserved from the first cent-

uries of Greek writing. There are ownership marks, dedications, funeral inscriptions, as Jesper Svenbro has amply shown, but also erotic and even poetic texts. One of these latter, the famous Nestor cup discovered 50 years ago on the island of Ischia goes so far as to combine all three Greek joys Solon of Athens has named or sung: Aphrodite, Dionysos, the Muses, that is in poor and god-forgotten languages: women, wine, and song (Plut. Sol. XXXI 3).

The archaic inscription from about seven hundred thirty runs like this:

Nestor's cup I am, good to drink from.
Whom who drinks from it, on the spot will grasp
the desire of sweet-garlanded Aphrodite.

Four things at least may be underlined in these three lines: First, the cup itself addresses its readers, it is, in Svenbro's terms, a speaking object, something speaking to us right here. Second, in the Iliad, Nestor's cup was so huge that only a famous old hero could pour wine out of it (Il. XI 637 CHECK). The small cup found in an archaic graveyard, thus, clearly quotes the poem because the symposion in which it plays has to be equally dionysiac. Love's goddess herself, sweet-garlanded since the time when, in Homer's Odyssey, she slept with Ares (Od. VIII 267), will and shall bestow her erotic power on the drinkers. Forth and foremost, all these joys are not just written, but sung. The first line is a iambus, the two others perfect hexaxameters. Greek writing, as on the still older Athenian dipylon-cup, does not begin with laws some despot such as Hammurabi or some god such as Jahweh has dictated (7a); it originates in poetry. That is why the short toast closely mimicks lengthy homeric manuscripts that must have been shipped to Italy in order to be seen and read by the anonymous poet (8). The words - a rare exception in archaic Greek epigraphy - are cleanly separated from another; the double lambda in Aphrodite's epithet kallistéphanos - a second exception - is spelled out: obviously, to lengthen, prosodically correct, an otherwise short syllable and, that is, to give the written words back to song. For in Greece, lyrics are based on syllabic quantities, not accents or qualities as will be the case since Roman literature both at its archaic beginnings and at its Christian end.

Powell's hypothesis, therefore, if it holds, allows a new look on the whole of Greek poetry, even long after Homer's lifetime. This is what Powell has left us to do. For what does the little poem really do? Nothing else than to call down an immortal, the goddess of love, to a feast of mortals. This speech act, if you don't mind, is the proper function of Greek poetry. As you may remember, Austin introduced his revolutionary concept of speech acts

by quoting Caligula's statement: "Herewith, I appoint my horse Incinatus - hotspur in English - to the rank of Roman consul" (Suet. Calig. 55). In a deeply opposite, namely undespotic way, Nestor's cup endows a mortal, probably the prize-winning drinker, with Aphrodite's divine desire. For Parmenides, long before cybernetics, she is "the god who steers all" (Parm. CHK) and, that is, all desires. Without Aphrodite, no mortal, whether man or woman, would be able to love or to be loved. Thus, poetry on the one side, myth and ritual on the other are linked by a feed back loop: Poets call the gods, the gods come to poets, drinkers, and lovers. This coming distinguishes Greek gods from our three monotheisms since it derives the gods' essence, their being, from a more or less surprising, that is contingent existence. Whereas for Thomas of Canterbury, God's existence follows from its ontological essence, that of a perfect being, the essence of Dionysos, as Otto has shown against Nietzsche and Wilamowitz alike, is to be the god who comes in every sense of the word: orgiastic, narcotic, and sexual. That is why Dionysos needs poetry, not ontology. The oldest Greek poem, probably surviving from prehomeric times and sung by sixteen holy women of Elis, does nothing less than to perform this call:

Come, hero Dionysos,
into thy holy house
with Aphrodite's charming brides!
Shake your bull's foot!
(Plut. Mor. 299 B)

No wonder, then, that in Homer, higher than any narrative stands what Roman Jakobson has named the phatic function of speech: the poet calls the divine singers called Muses so that, inversely, divine singers may call the hero. The former takes place when the singer discovers his utter incapacity to tell each ship and hero waiting for their attack on Troy. Even if he were gifted with ten tongues, ten mouths, and an unending voice, Homer tells us, he could not compose this catalogue of ships without the aid of the Olympian Muses he calls. To quote: Your essence is to be goddesses, your existence to be present, and therefore, you know all (Il. II 485).

Once this gift of vowels, however, has taken place and the Iliad been written down, it can endlessly echo itself. That is why the Odyssey, written some decades later, introduces divine singing voices on the narrative level, too. Above all, the Sirens who got their name most probably from a Thracian title of Aphrodite herself just call Ulysses, the hero, to come to their island in order to know all - and this for the good reason that both of them, as they say, always already join two singing mouths into one honey-singing voice (Od. XII 184-191). It is as if the vowel alphabet's poetry, its deeply vocalic prosody, had made known it-

self to Ulysses. Just as Nestor's cup quotes the heroic Iliad in an erotic context, the Odyssey - and above all its two Sirens - presuppose almost certainly, as Pietro Pucci has shown, written manuscripts of Homer in existence (9).

3

Now, it would be as fascinating as time consuming to follow this interplay between calling poets and coming gods through the melic poetry from Sappho on. The same could be done for hymnic poetry from the Homeric hymns on. The hymn addressed to Delian Apollon goes so far as to finally address, instead, the island's young daughters themselves who sing and dance around the god: Whenever asked for the first among poets, they shall name a certain blind singer (Hom.Hymn App.). Thus, in clear high voices of girls or brides, nymphs or goddesses, the vowel alphabet stays on and on. For archaic wisdom since Hesiod and Epimenides, the same holds true. The former hears the Muses pouring their honeysweet truths and lies (Theog. xxx, the later listens to noone less than Aletheia, goddess of truth. Then, months or even fifty seven later, both of them will write down what they have heard. As Julian Jaynes and Bruno Snell forcefully suggested, there existed simply no self-consciousness in our Cartesian sense (10). Instead, following Jaynes, the gods appeared in acoustic hallucinations connecting one cerebral hemisphere to the other, whether in the case of Marduk and Hammurabi or that of the Sirens and Ulysses (11). The only two differences between Near East and Greece that escaped Jaynes' attention are those of gender and script. Whereas the oriental gods dictated their laws and threats to users of consonantic alphabets or syllabic scripts, the Greeks heard young women. A mere coincidence? Long ago, Samuel Butler wrote "The Authoress of the Odyssey".

Another topic to pass over is the obvious relation between poetry, sex, and gods in old comedy. Aristophanes never ceased to inspire his female choirs to invoke male gods, and his male choirs, ta aphrodisia as such. For tragedy, however, one might suppose the contrary. How could, in the tragical absence of gods from this earth, the old poetic interplay between calling and coming go on? How may the speech act of calling terminate not in a vain pious gesture, but in the act of gods who actually follow it? In order not to speak about the silly Euripidean deus ex machina who will arrive promptly with the tragedies' end, allow me some remarks on that most wonderful and dark tragedy going by the name of Antigone.

The first thing to know might be the fact that in the night after Sophocles' death, Dionysos made one of his appearances or comings: this time, however, not to anybody in the poet's audience, but on the contrary to a Spartan warrior just busy to take the

city of Athens. In this vision or rather audition, the god of tragedy told an enemy to honour Sophocles for having sung just as another Siren (Soph. fr. A 1, 15 Radt). Thus, it may be suspected already that the god's calling and coming did occur, while the poet was alive, in the choral parts of his tragedies. If you further compare Dionysos' praise of the Sirens with Horace's moralistic attacks on their sex appeal (Ep. I 2, 23-26), you may learn to measure the abyss dividing Greek poetry and European literature.

The second thing to remark is that Sophocles is said to have been the first tragedian who wrote not for himself as a possible actor any more. The reason not to do so was, as we read, his very voice (fr. A 5 Radt). More that of a Siren than of a Stenthor, it simply did not reach 34000 ears. Thus, Sophocles may be called the first poet in history who composed speeches and songs strictly for others. Nonetheless, he did not write literature. For these others, the actors, he endowed with the power of calling effectively call gods such as Dionysos. What was at stake in Antigone, therefore, is neither, as Hegel would have it, some dialectical conflict between a political and a familial sense of Greek *nómos*, nor, as Nietzsche would have it, some physiological conflict between dreams and hallucinations, Apollon and Dionysos. The only conflict, manifest already at the end of king Oedipus, arises between the life of Greek nymphs and the destiny of Antigone. Nymphs or brides have to enjoy, first, dance and song, second, their first night with a man and, third, a painfully born first child (O.T. 1480-1514). Only then they are women, not nymphs any more. Antigone, by contrast, has a bridegroom, but dies, first, without *hymenaios*, a wedding song for her, and, second, without any child by her (Ant. 907). So, she calls the subterranean prison where she will hang herself both her grave and wedding bed (Ant. 891). Literary critics would hear this as a poetic metaphor, that is, since Aristotle's Poetics (1457b1-2), the improper use of proper nouns, a play between the sound and sense of words. Heidegger, however, was the first to warn that this all too easy distinction would helplessly collapse without the equally Aristotelic distinction between *hulé* and *eídos*, the matter and form of beings (12). We may add that Sophocles died before the philosopher was born. So, it may be no chance in "Antigone" that finally, after two suicides, a bridegroom lies actually with his bride, embracing her in death.

Bodies without voices, however, just as matter without form, are no conclusive arguments. That is why Sophocles introduces the choir's voices. These hymns, in a never ending climax, proceed from god to god until both bodies and voices have truly performed tragedy's sense. The hymns begin with the calling of Helios, the sun just rising high above Athens' theater and Sophocles' actual play, they pass through invocations of invincible Eros present on

each sleeping bride's cheek, of his mother Aphrodite present in each deadly fight between brothers, and they end by ecstatically calling Dionysos, the god born out his mother's subterranean grave. Why shall he come, what can he do? The choir's answer is plain: Dionysos will bring back to his now mournful city the joys of nightly dances, cries, brides, and, in doing so, removes with his "purifying foot" the stain a despot has brought over the city. As you know, *kátharsis*, nothing else, was the goal of Greek tragedy. There remains, however, a slight difference between the poet's words and Aristotle's later definition. For the philosopher in his vain search for the still unknown word literature, it is tragedy which purifies unphilosophic souls, namely its spectators; in Sophocles, it is the god himself who comes with his raving brides to purify whole cities. How and where, then, did they all disappear?

Nietzsche's question why the death of tragedy gave birth to philosophy, at least in its postsocratic sense, has to be posed anew. "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music" had nothing to say on Muses and vowels, divine feet and dead brides. Instead of answers, then, we are left with clues. (Anm. Lohmann)

A first, still poetic clue showed up when Euripides brought a young man called Ion on tragedy's stage. This proper name, commented at some length, means nobody else than "he who comes". Obviously, the gods and goddesses begin to go just as men start coming. And indeed, Ion is the fruit of a mortal bride who, at least in her afterthought, has been brutally violated by Apollon. Thus, Pan's cave on the northern slope of Athen's acropolis replaces Antigone's Thebean prison. The young man, however, cannot believe this tale or truth. In his and the poet's eyes, no god would transgress what we Europeans subjected to Roman law (Verg. Aen. VI 833) call sexual morals. That is why Ion goes on to deny that the god ever came to his unmarried mother. All counterevidences given he calls mere words from his mouth or, in an easy Latin translation, orationes instead of rationes. Litteratura, in other words, has made its first tragic entrance. The gods don't make love any more, at least before Jimi Hendrix' relevant song, they just metaphorize forbidden human desires. Only then can poetry, as Aristotle puts it, present characters more ideal than we are. While "the gods made love", this was all different.

A second clue is the fact that the same Euripides, in an almost lost tragedy, brought the Greek alphabet itself on stage. Geographically, if not historically correct, he ascribed its invention to a Euboean contemporary with Homer's Greek heroes. This hero goes at lengths to explain his enemies that the new alphabet will help not only them, but mankind in general, precisely because it plays on the difference between voiceful and voiceless signs, vowels and consonants. Every people can write down its

tongue. Unfortunately enough, the gods failed to pass this precious information onto two philosophers, namely Socrates and Derrida. Whenever the first, although a friend of Euripides, gave his beautiful male youth higher alphabetic lessons, he produced blatant nonsense: on the one hand, Socrates rightly divided the countable elements of the alphabet into vowels and consonants, on the other, he ascribed its invention to some foreign daemon who, being Egyptian, would rather have written uncountably many polyconsonantic hieroglyphs. Up to now, nobody on earth has been able to pronounce these scripts, simply because hieroglyphs lack vowels. This may be the hidden reason why Derrida, confounding Egypt and Israel, Athens and Jerusalem, did not even mention Socrates' utter stupidity; instead, he invented, as if it the history of being were sheer fun, an everlasting Occidental blindness: the infamous phonocentrism as a systemic confusion of speech and writing. (That I pass over our later accusation as being even phonologophallocentrists, you will please forgive me in Antigone's name.)

Now, only the Greeks' vowel alphabet may have given the pretext to confound different media; but its invention, contrary to Derrida's sophism, was rather the historically singular event of bringing them together. For some happy few centuries, sounds and signs played one game (Harris). We are strictly compelled to distinguish poetry from literature, Greece from Rome or later disasters. Thus, the question why Socrates and Derrida missed each single point of the alphabet, cries for an answer. Should we not expect it, finally as ever, from cool Aristotle?

4

The first and only Poetics begin with the statement that, when being is happy, we may freely dance, sing, and speak. Art is but this unending play on rhythms, harmonies, and untranslatable logoi. In dance and music, however, Aristotle shows almost no interest. (The same, by the way, holds true of numbers which the Greeks - in contrast to Romans - also used to symbolize by their letters.) In order to rediscover the logos of his own philosophy under the metaphorical veil of bygone poetry, Aristotle has therefore to analyze the logos itself. What are its parts, its last undividable elements? His answer: ta stoicheia, the alphabetic elements that usually and elsewhere, but never in the "Poetics", also are called ta grammata, the letters. As Svenbro, once again, has brilliantly shown, all these Greek natural elements, be it the four in Empedocles, the five in Aristotle, and even our many Nobel-prized ones, would never have been demarkable and insofar thinkable, had the totality of a spoken language not beforehand allowed its symbolic analysis (). Precisely this immemorial event, Aristotle's Poetics undertake to play back. He starts by writing down Gamma and informs his readers how unspeak-

able this isolated meaningless consonant is. Then, in order to proceed from letters to a first syllable, Aristotle adds a Rho to the first letter, but no series of mere consonants will give a syllable to hear. So only after adding a final Alpha, Aristotle has reached his goal: Any voice (phone) can easily pronounce GRA as a composite, yet still meaningless syllable that, however, may always already become an element of meaningful words and finally sentences (lógoi). So, there remains just the question: in which word will GRA make sense? Aristotle, in other words, does simply not tell that he just has begun a noun such as gramma or graphe. At literature's origin, the letter itself, formerly hidden under the word stoicheíon, has been revealed. As if to prove this relation, Aristotle's analysis of speech parts ends with the statement that the whole Iliad, being a composite and meaningful voice, forms just one logos (1457a23-30). Thus, on a long way from gramma through lógos to Homer, Aristotle, in other words, has reworked the whole grammatike or litteratura of his school-days: In Homer, young Greeks used to learn reading and writing.

If, however, the logos is composed by phonai, not Mousai any more, what ontological relation does this imply? Aristotle gives his answer in calling phone, the voice, the matter of logos. So, we may inversely call the logos voice's form, its sense. All other definitions of eîdos and hule given by Aristotle - such as form and matter of statues or father and mother of babies - fade away as sheer metaphysics. The wonder of the Greek alphabet is it to make reading and understanding coincide: Aristotle as "the reader" himself does anágnosis, he comes to know.

After this conclusive Greek analysis, this switch from old dialects to the hellenistic koine, there remains just one open question: what about Barbarians and that is our voices?

According to the Gospels, Barbarians have only two options left, namely either to speak in many strange tongues such as Peter at Pentecost or to write in Greek such as Paul (11). That is why I conclude this short story of the Greek alphabet with some remarks on Paul's globally victorious option. In his first letter to the Corinthians and that is to Greeks, the Jewish writer does not really forbid international glossolalia, but imposes strict rules on it. Whereas womens' voices are totally forbidden in church, male delires have to articulate themselves to all others as musically as a well tuned kithara or aulos would do. Obviously, Paul has learned to enjoy and understand the two musical instruments of Greek education long before he studied Hebrew. So, every being, whether instrument or soul, Greek or Barbarian, thanks to the Greek alphabet, may learn to articulate itself. This holds universally true because, according to first Corinthians, chapter fourteen, verses ten to eleven, although there are many kinds of phone in the kosmos, no one is aphonon, voiceless. Or, to trans-

late literally: nothing is a mere consonant. For Christians, then, every being, with the probable exception of a certain tetragrammatical god, knows to write and pronounce vowels. Whereas letters kill, their breath spends life. For all the empires still to come ...

What I tried to prove, is just the contrary. Homer's Muse helped him more than ten tongues; his Christian reader's asexual love more than all tongues of men and angels (1. Cor. 13, 1). I have to thank Greek letters and Greek voices, our common mothertongue, in order to bring some German thoughts in English masquerade to your Swedish ears.

Footnotes

1 Cf. Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche. Pfullingen 1961, vol. II, p. 458 - 480.

2 Cf. J.L. Borges, La busca de Averroes. In: Obras completas. Buenos Aires 1965, vol. III/1, p. 91-101.

3 Nietzsche

4? Nietzsche, "Leser"

5 Cf. Johannes Lohmann, Philosophie und Sprachwissenschaft. Berlin 1965, p. 51 f.

6 GFT

7 Walter F. Otto

7a Cf. Karl Otto Wittvogel, Die orientalische Despotie. Schrift

8 Cf. Ernst Risch

9 Cf. Pietro Pucci, The Song of the Sirens. Essays on Homer. Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford 1997, p.

10 Cf. Bruno Snell, Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen. 2. ed. Hamburg 1948, p. 15-37.

11 Quite funilly, the only serious book on Paulus mentions Greek und Hebrew

just as an autobiographic foreplay, a joke of Emil Staiger's.

Cf. Jacob

Taubes, XXX. Not to mention Hegel, Nietzsche, Overbeck, and Burckhardt.

It did occur to no one that letters make us think.