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Monographic section Theatre and MICROTtheatres

Underground Performance: 20th-Century Theatre Defined by Political Emergency and Marginalization

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Abstract: Goal of this paper is the analysis of two contrasting theatre movements from very different political situation: the rise of the Rhapsodic Theatre during WWII in German-controlled Poland, and the postmodern, avant-garde dance pioneers of the 1960s at Manhattan's Judson Memorial Church. As underfunded, marginalized, and even illegal collectives, they used the scarcest of resources available to make profound contributions to theatre and to their countries.

Key words: Rhapsodic Theatre, Poland, Judson Memorial Church, Emergency, Marginalization, USA.

Theatre is a crucial means of preservation and progression of national and cultural identities. As a result, it can be argued that art is inherently political. This has made receiving government support – no matter from the ‘West’ or ‘East’ – a challenging, and sometimes dangerous, feat throughout history. It is through a lens of emergency and the underground that I consider two contrasting theatre movements from very different political situations. Specifically in this paper I will look at the rise of the Rhapsodic Theatre during WWII in a German-controlled Poland and after under the influence of the Soviet Union, compared to the postmodern, avant-garde dance pioneers of the 1960s at Manhattan's Judson Memorial Church. Ultimately, I will present how these two movements set the stage for contemporary art today. As underfunded, marginalized, and even illegal collectives, they used the scarcest of resources available to make profound contributions to theatre and to their countries.

1. Emergency

According to the Oxford Dictionary (henceforth *OED*), ‘emergency’ is defined as “a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action”. With reference to Poland, the nation entered an undeniable state of emergency when the Third Reich and the Soviet Union divided and conquered it in 1939. The ‘immediate action’ many citizens felt compelled to undertake was either undercut or prohibited by the totalitarian occupation. George Orwell famously said that the most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history (Orwell 1949), and the regime did just that: cultural genocide began sweeping the country with widespread censorship, suppression, and persecution. Polish theatre, in particular, was explicitly prohibited:

The theater was treated and utilized by both the Nazis and the Soviets as an important tool for maintaining their grip on their populations; it served political rule, ideological indoctrination and the education of the masses, especially the youth, and generally speaking, was intended to form a new breed of perfect citizen: an obedient subject of the totalitarian state. From the political point of view, theater was for propaganda (Braun, 1997: 300).

This contrasted a very long history of a Polish value system “cultivating values of freedom, independence, individualism, multi-nationality, and tolerance” (1997: 301). Though I will touch on it later as a different contextual container, it should be noted now that these values are distinctly American as well.

Furthermore, any mode of religious theatre in particular was not permitted, as Poland had been declared atheistic by the regime. By law, totalitarian atheistic states were faithless. However, in the name of the communist state, traditional religions were often replaced by a sort of secular religion that had its own codified forms of worship. This was devastating for a historically devout Catholic people, and contrasted yet another long history within the nation of an “elusive but evident” connection between the theatre and the Catholic Church. When the Polish language was first prohibited in public under Russian law in the nineteenth century, the Catholic churches and the theatres were designated as the only exceptions:

Thus, theater was the only public, lay institution where Polish could still be heard. Church and theater became strongholds of Polish identity and repositories of the national spirit upon which the nation lavished its affection [...]. Church and the theater became a primary source of the originality and distinctiveness of the Polish theater. It endowed the theater with an

uncommon dignity and placed on it special responsibilities over and above purely artistic ones, giving it authority to intervene in matters of conscience, morality, spirituality, and national policy (1997: 301).

When both of these institutions and their intersections were banned, a disempowered theatre community fought back. They declared a clandestine boycott of German-controlled propaganda; entertainment they did not recognize nor identify with had replaced their way of life. They developed a large, illegal network of underground theatre in response, encompassing both performances and theatre scholarship. It was in these circumstances that the Rhapsodic Theatre arose.

This leads us to consider the etymology of ‘emergency’: “[It] comes from Mid-17th century: from medieval Latin *emergentia*, from Latin *emergere* ‘arise, bring to light’” (OED). ‘Light’ has a distinctly spiritual connotation, especially in this context, and can therefore be very easily applied to the nature of the Polish opposition. Their faith, in effect, was the ‘immediate action’ that needed to be taken in the face of ‘emergency’.

Fittingly, the Rhapsodic Theatre was established in a private apartment in Krakow in 1941 by director and actor Mieczysław Kotlarczyk. Joined by a small group of followers, including playwright and later Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyła, the group “was committed to a theatrical style that emphasized the text, spoken aloud with dignity and clarity, and contained a minimum of stage movements or spectacle” (Matson 2013: online). The focus for the actors was not to embody characters, but instead to speak *about* them in the third person – in this way, they held a sense of higher power over the drama. This approach amplified the religious subject matter and themes in their plays, very often not written for the stage. Any elements other than the spoken word were included only to complement it, and thus were of significant spiritual magnitude – music, dance and design were very stylized and no naturalistic, further contrasting the power of the rhapsody against humanlike proportions.

Wojtyła famously differentiated the function of the word in theatre from daily life in 1958 in an essay devoted entirely to the Rhapsodic Theatre:

Does not the word constitute an essential, primary element of any theater? Undoubtedly it does. Nonetheless the position of the word in a theater is not always the same. As in life, the word can appear as an integral part of action, movement, and gesture, inseparable from all human practical activity; or it can appear as ‘song’ – separate, independent, intended only to contain and express thought, to embrace and transmit a vision of the mind. In the latter aspect, or position, the word becomes ‘rhapsodic,’ and a theater based on such a concept of

the word becomes a rhapsodic theater. And so without entering into deliberations on the primacy of word or movement in the arts of the theater, we can safely assume that according to the rhapsodic principle, the word is a pre-element of the theater (Wojtyla 1987: 371).

The religious connotations of the word rhapsody hold important significance here. In the same essay Wojtyła goes on to declare that “rhapsodic performances have an ideological rather than a narrative character” (1987: 371) and that “the supremacy of word over gesture indirectly restores the supremacy of thought over movement and impulse in man” (1987: 372). This intellectual approach looks at theatre in an almost sermon-like dimension. Its reflective and streamlined tone – in contrast to typical drama driven by narrative – elicits a sort of subconscious reconstruction in its audience: “In all this too is the catharsis, the psychological purification, that the theater can bring about” (1987: 372). In essence, the Rhapsodic Theatre identified itself as an explicit ‘light’ for the Polish people. Wojtyła stated:

The impact of the performance is caused not by events, transferred in a literary manner from life to the stage, but by the problem itself . . . [it] acts, rouses interest, disturbs, evokes the audience’s participation, demands understanding and a solution [...] Theater discovers, theater unmasks, and he derives from it his concepts and even his strength” (1987: 373).

He was convinced that this fusion of the stage and the church was important not only to entertain the nation in hard times or to reconnect it to its past, but to provide spiritual guidance moving forward.

The theater company managed to put on six small productions in private apartments, basement buildings, and other bare spaces before it was put on hold temporarily in March 1943. After the war it received its own modest theatre, and while it had moderate success it was ultimately disbanded after a 25 tumultuous years. After a decade-long softening, the totalitarian regime’s hostility towards the church and all manifestations of religious theatre grew fierce once again. But the final nail in the coffin was a request from Kotlarczyk to then-Archbishop Wojtyła to publicly celebrate the theatre’s anniversary. It infuriated the authorities, and both the performance scheduled for mass and the organization were shut down permanently in 1967.

An important distinction here between Kotlarczyk and, say, fellow Polish director Jerzy Grotowski’s ‘poor theatre’ of the 1960s and 1970s is that Grotowski’s lacked the urgent and deeply embedded sense of ‘emergency’. It is not enough to compare the two movements using a broad brush of minimalism or spirituality; one must recognize the important political

implications, the clandestine underpinnings, of every meeting, rehearsal and performance that the Rhapsodic Theatre conducted. It is with this sense of scarcity and urgency that we cross the Atlantic Ocean.

2. Underground

The idea of an underground movement has long been identified with the counterculture. But ‘underground’ as a word has two distinct definitions that are important for our analysis. The first one is “relating to or denoting the secret activities of people working to subvert an established order” (*OED*). This can easily be applied to the Rhapsodic Theatre with a severity of ‘established order’ in the occupation, and the clandestine nature of the ‘secret activities’.

The second definition, “relating to or denoting a group or movement seeking to explore alternative forms of lifestyle or artistic expression; radical and experimental” (*OED*), is a more contemporary usage, and indicative of a context far less grave. Recalling the aforementioned long history of a Polish value system: “cultivating [...] freedom, independence, individualism, multi-nationality, and tolerance”, we can also see this as a very American mentality in which ‘underground’ holds a very different weight. While progressive Western movements do not have as dangerous of underpinnings as totalitarian rule, there are common threads of scarcity, marginalization, and anti-establishment progressivism.

In the 1960s, counterculture in America was becoming increasingly mainstream. In New York City in particular, economic decay and social upheaval were especially prevalent. The city was a national hub for protest movements of anti-war sentiment, civil rights, as well as the rise of feminist and gay movements. Immigration was steadily increasing, and the city’s white population began a mass migration to the northern and New Jersey suburbs. Post-war prosperity was waning with huge factories, and in effect their respective industries, shutting down.

Compounding on this national stress, the beginning of 1960s was a difficult time for the arts in New York City, as the National Endowment for the Arts would not be established until 1965. Their official internal history notes that the American dance field was artistically rich but lacked the resources to expand basic activities, such as increasing the number of performances, the number of dancers on contract, and their weeks of rehearsal and performance time (Bauerlein, Grantham 2009). This noted scarcity of resources for the dance community, in particular, in the mid-twentieth century draws a parallel with the Rhapsodic Theatre – both fields

lacked major support from the government and were, in effect, undervalued. This relegation to the periphery of society makes both ‘alternative lifestyles’, thus deeming them ‘underground’ with respect to our established definition.

During this time the Judson Memorial Church, built in 1890 with a Baptist denomination, was going through its own period of revitalization amidst a decline in membership. It aimed to “redefine what a church could and should be [...] [as] a faith-based institution that responds to the societal issues of its time and place by working and advocating for progressive change – with special attention to the needs of people that many mainstream churches tend to overlook or find undeserving” (<http://www.judson.org/history>). It began sponsoring an interracial, international residence for university students, opened the first drug-treatment clinic in the neighborhood, and operated abortion counseling and family planning services – hotly contested issues of the time. Churches have assumed many altruistic roles in modern history, but Judson took it to an impressively progressive scale. They were helping alleviate the ‘emergencies’ of its constituents and its neighborhood. The establishment of a resident Judson Dance Theater in 1962 was thus very much in line with this institutional ethos. As a platform it gave local up-and-coming artists unprecedented institutional resources, including free rehearsal and performance space. Through 1964 the collective presented works and research of then-unknown visionaries such as Yvonne Rainer, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, and Meredith Monk.

The choreographers of the Judson Dance Theater, and their collaborators, were radical in their destruction of convention, form, and theory within the field. They were methodical in their processes of performance, weekly workshops, and classes open to the public – to dancers and non-dancers alike. Aesthetics, space, and even the requisites for a ‘dance piece’ were all challenged, and ontology and phenomenology were incorporated into the creative processes:

It was a vital gathering place for artists in various fields who exchanged ideas and methods, seeking explicitly to explore, propose, and refute definitions of dance as an art form. The issues that concerned the group ranged from training and technique to choreographic process, music, performance style, and materials. There was no single prevailing aesthetic in the group; rather, an effort was made to preserve an ambiance of diversity and freedom. This attitude gave rise to certain themes and styles: an attention to choreographic process and the use of methods that metaphorically stood for democracy; the use of language as an integral part of the dance; the use of “natural”, or ordinary, movements; dances about dance (Banes 1981a: 167-168).

The Judson artists were highly political and functioned at the grassroots level with the Judson Church as their platform. They are a classic case study of an underground American movement. They pushed the boundaries of artistic conventions with the barest of resources, as their Judson residency filled only a few of countless holes in the field's basic operational framework. They were marginalized with no affirmation or fiscal support from society at large, and then succeeded with flying colors in changing the broader landscape of performance. As a result, the Judson artists have a permanent place in dance history, both nationally and internationally. And though the collective lasted only two years, it provided a crucial infrastructure for other institutions to sprout in the city (Movement Research, Dance Theater Workshop, among others). Additionally, the work it produced has come to define an entire generation of dance and visual art pioneers:

The influence of Judson continues to this day, for the Judson choreographers were not merely colorful eccentrics, but esthetic adventurers who made sometimes gleeful, sometimes messy, but always fundamentally serious investigations into the nature and structure of dance movement. Yvonne Rainer has said, "There was new ground to be broken and we were standing on it." Indeed, the Judson choreographers must have seemed to be shaking the very foundations of dance, for they tended to reject both the psychologically motivated dance-dramas associated with modern dance at the time and the musically based abstractions of neo-classic ballet (Anderson 1982).

Without these pivotal voices, it is hard to know where the dance world might be today. They not only contributed an incomparable body of work, but many of compositional devices and methods are still used and are being expounded upon. Steve Paxton's *contact improvisation* has spread worldwide and is incorporated into many prestigious conservatory curricula. Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto* sparked a whole swath of movement generation and scoring techniques. Trisha Brown's institutional and visual artist partners set the stage, and the collaborative tone, for many high-profile acts to follow.

Even though the Judson artists functioned on a different scale of emergency than the Rhapsodic Theatre actors, operating on scarcity and as an underground movement still had important implications. They provided the major undercurrents for much of contemporary performance art in the West, even though they were seen as a fringe movement in their time. Only in the history books, for example, are many great geniuses recognized for their contributions to society – working against the system, even if only philosophically, is an uphill battle not often rewarded in the moment. However, being marginalized from the mainstream has its advantages. Especially for progressive artists, having the freedom to push the boundaries of

our chosen mediums is a dream, and that is rarely possible in an institutional setting. Even the constraint of being devoid of resources, often times, can be a hidden blessing: a streamlined set of tools and money is sometimes the most conducive way to getting to the seed of an idea, devoid of gimmicks and workarounds. The Judson Dance Theater is an exemplary manifestation of this potential.

This was definitely the case for the Rhapsodic Theatre as well, as they were able to make profound contributions on a tiny, illegal platform. The circumstances in that moment in time were horrid, and it is difficult to imagine functioning, and producing, in a similar context. However, their accomplishments are an important piece of theatre history and have paved the way for many underground movements, Judson included, to take shape. In consideration of my own work, I look to both of these collectives for inspiration and guidance. An established performer and artmaker of ten years, an immigrant, in tens of thousands of dollars in debt, and with a President teetering on fascism, I function in my own state of emergency (though, of course, with crucial differences). But these examples guide me forward, pursuing progress in the face of hardship and marginalization. My case is only a metaphor for an entire generation of millennial artmakers, and we are all looking for our own ‘light’ and ‘alternative lifestyles’ to forward our crafts and national identities.

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***Macbeth* per la regia di Luca De Fusco: tra psicanalisi e riti di passaggio**

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Abstract: Il contributo vuole esaminare la messa in scena del *Macbeth* di William Shakespeare diretta da Luca De Fusco, prima al Napoli Teatro Festival Italia e quindi al Teatro Mercadante - Teatro Nazionale di Napoli. In particolare, l'analisi prenderà in considerazione gli aspetti psicoanalitici, antropologici e rituali della produzione di De Fusco che legge la tragedia di Macbeth come un rito di passaggio.

Key words: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, De Fusco, Theatre, Freud, Jung, Van Gennep, Turner, Bloom.

Abstract: This paper aims at analysing the staging by Luca De Fusco of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* presented first at the Napoli Teatro Festival Italia and then at the National Theatre of Naples. Particularly, the analysis will focus on the psychoanalytical, anthropological and ritual aspects of De Fusco's production in reading the tragedy of Macbeth as a rite of passage.

Key words: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, De Fusco, Theatre, Freud, Jung, Van Gennep, Turner, Bloom.

La lettura di Harold Bloom del *Macbeth* di William Shakespeare, presentata in vari saggi e anche in una curatela nella famosa collana "Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretation" (Bloom 2003; Bloom 2010), guarda all'opera e ai personaggi del dramma shakespeariano in un'ottica specificamente psicanalitica. Il tormento e l'ambizione di Macbeth e della sua Lady sono un dramma ossessivo della mente dei protagonisti. In questo contesto, le streghe e il crescendo di sangue diventano materializzazione delle paure del Signore di Glamis e Cawdor e futuro Re di Scozia e consorte.

La lettura di Bloom prende, come noto, le mosse dalla precedente analisi psicanalitica effettuata da Sigmund Freud, in particolare nel capitolo dedicato a Lady Macbeth del suo *Some*

Character-types Met With In Psycho-analytical Work (Freud 1916),¹ dove egli analizza le motivazioni che spingono la donna ad agire in un determinato modo nel corso del dramma. Lady Macbeth, e Macbeth aggiungeremmo noi, rappresenta secondo Freud il tipico esempio di personalità e di individuo che cade in rovina per la propria ambizione una volta che tale ambizione sembra essere stata appagata. Come notano Rafael Rafaelli e Beatriz Schmidt (2008: 1-15), l'idea di Bloom è un prosieguo di quanto enunciato e analizzato da Freud, considerando aspetti che Bloom ritiene Freud non abbia preso in esame o abbia sottovalutato.

Nota tuttavia Agostino Lombardo nella sua “Introduzione” al volume di Mariangela Tempera (1982), che, se “ci limitiamo allo studio psicologico del personaggio, commettiamo un duplice errore. Sbagliamo perché un personaggio artistico non è un personaggio umano, non può essere giudicato con gli stessi criteri con cui giudichiamo un uomo [...]. Ma sbagliamo soprattutto perché questo tipo di approccio ci impedirebbe di cogliere l’importanza estrema che ha il linguaggio nell’arte shakespeariana” (Lombardo 1982: 10).²

Senza soffermarsi su questi punti, ampiamente dibattuti e sui quali è presente una notevole letteratura, è comunque importante citarli, poiché la chiave di lettura psicanalitica, così come il testo di Bloom, è sicuramente il punto di partenza per la messa in scena del *Macbeth* realizzata da Luca De Fusco e presentata prima al Napoli Teatro Festival Italia 2016³ e quindi nella stagione 2016-2017 del Teatro Stabile di Napoli, presso la sala principale del Mercadante.

Nota bene Mariagiovanna Grifi, ad inizio della sua recensione dello spettacolo, in occasione dell’anteprima al Teatro Festival, soffermandosi su come Freud abbia attribuito “a Shakespeare l’intuizione *ante litteram* del conflitto tra Es e Super Io, ossia tra i desideri più profondi ed egoistici dell’anima e la sua coscienza morale” (Grifi 2016). E ancora “Le due istanze psichiche tra cui è collocato l’Io sarebbero, secondo il fondatore della psicoanalisi, rappresentate da Lady Macbeth e da Macbeth durante il dialogo in cui la donna, risoluta e spietata, persuade il marito a uccidere il re per usurparne la corona. Sembra quasi che lo scontro avvenga dentro la testa del protagonista, come suggerisce il critico Harold Bloom” (2016).

De Fusco realizza un *Macbeth* che è una visualizzazione dell’io dei personaggi attraverso delle scelte registiche forti, che vanno a unire la messa in scena classica con elementi video. In tal

¹ Il testo è consultabile al seguente indirizzo web: <http://freudians.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Some-Character-Types-Met-With-in-Psycho-Analytic-Work.pdf>

² Al riguardo vedasi anche Lombardo 1971.

³ L’anteprima nazionale al Napoli Teatro Festival Italia è andata in scena il 19 e il 20 giugno 2016 presso il Teatro Mercadante.

modo, la recitazione dei protagonisti – Luca Lazzareschi e Gaia Aprea in particolare – viene, nei monologhi fondamentali del dramma, amplificata attraverso giganteschi primi piani proiettati sul tulle che è essenziale nel gioco scenografico. Una scelta che porta lo spettatore a proiettarsi all'interno della piscosi e dell'osessione di Macbeth e Lady Macbeth e della loro mente.

In un'intervista rilasciata a Giulio Baffi per “La Repubblica”, alla domanda di dove colloca, spazialmente sul palcoscenico il dramma di Macbeth e Lady Macbeth, De Fusco risponde: “Nella camera da letto dei protagonisti, una centralità evidente fisica e metafisica. È uno spettacolo sul tema del male e sulle origini del male e questa camera, con i suoi tanti specchi rimanda anche ad altre immagini anche non esplicitamente presenti nella scrittura di Shakespeare” (Baffi 2016).

La camera da letto dei protagonisti rimanda implicitamente a un concetto di intimità e di psicanalisi intima e familiare di protagonisti, così come di rilevanza sono i concetti di centralità fisica e centralità metafisica. La lettura che fornisce De Fusco, tuttavia, non si esaurisce solamente con la chiave psicanalitica freudiana o bloomiana, ma porta con sé una serie di altri elementi e di prospettive critiche di indubbio interesse.

Il *Macbeth* di De Fusco ha in primo luogo un fascino pittorico evocativo, parola che ritroveremo, e ambientale che riporta alla lettura visiva che dell'opera di Shakespeare aveva dato Johann Heinrich Füssli, in opere come *Le tre streghe* (1983) e *Lady Macbeth afferra i pugnali* (1812), ma anche precedenti e non necessariamente di ispirazione shakespeariana come *L'incubo* (1781) o *La follia di Kate* (1806). In un articolo del Museo d'Orsay si nota: “Attraverso *La follia di Kate* o *Le Tre Streghe*, Füssli dipinge lo spettacolo della follia, dell'avidità del potere e delle pulsioni inconfessate che ritornano a galla”.⁴ I personaggi di Füssli sono espressamente personaggi che vivono tra realtà e incubo, tra concreto e sogno, e così anche nel *Macbeth* i protagonisti sono in bilico tra un mondo reale e il fantastico, che spinge verso l'irrefrenabile le loro pulsioni. Sin dalle prime due scene, e facciamo nostro quanto portato avanti da Romana Zacchi nel saggio “Il dischiudersi di un mondo fittizio: le prime due scene di *Macbeth*”, si assiste nel *Macbeth* di Shakespeare al dischiudersi di un mondo fittizio: “Lo studio delle strategie adottate nella fase espositiva di un dramma costituisce uno dei problemi più stimolanti per chi si interessa di teatro, poiché in questa zona del testo drammatico chiedono imperiosamente l'attenzione del drammaturgo per le due istanze, altrimenti divergenti e conflittuali, della presentazione di un

⁴ Si rimanda all'articolo consultabile sul sito del Museo D'Orsay dal titolo *L'angelo del bizzarro. Il romanticismo nero da Goya a Max Ernst*, online: <http://www.musee-orsay.fr/it/eventi/mostre/al-museo-dorsay/mostre-al-museo-dorsay-maggiori-informazioni/1/article/lange-du-bizarre-35087.html>

mondo fittizio pre-esistente e pre-costituito all'atto della produzione, e della ricezione di quel mondo fittizio da parte del pubblico" (Zacchi 1982: 25).

Si tratta di due istanze altrimenti divergenti e conflittuali, che deve affrontare senz'altro anche il regista. Nella citata intervista, De Fusco giustifica così la sua scelta: "Una delle ragioni per cui l'ho scelto è che è uno dei testi più visionari di Shakespeare, in cui accadono tantissime cose non reali, dalle apparizioni delle streghe, alla visione del pugnale, al sonnambulismo di Lady Macbeth, alle apparizioni improvvise e inquietanti, all'avanzare degli alberi che fanno avverare la predizione infausta per Macbeth. Tutti segni fortemente contrassegnati dal tema del sogno, del delirio, insomma dell'irreale" (Baffi 2016).

L'irreale, così come anche l'inconscio, la pulsione e lo psicanalitico, sono sottolineati dalla commistione di recitazione dal vivo con elementi video e dall'utilizzo di videoproiezioni che frantumano, decostruiscono e ricostruiscono la psiche dei due protagonisti.

Come si pone quindi De Fusco dinanzi alle due istanze sottolineate da Zacchi? Leggiamo quanto scrive Zacchi sulla prima scena: "Nella sua brevità ed enigmaticità, la prima scena del *Macbeth* costituisce l'incipit drammatico, il primo impatto con il mondo fittizio, delimitato dal tempo scenico in cui, tra tuoi e lampi esplica l'interazione fra le streghe, interazione che è verbale, ma che presumibilmente sarà anche non verbale, nonostante l'assenza di didascalie in merito" (Zacchi 1982: 25-26).

L'enigmaticità, l'impatto con il mondo fittizio e l'interazione verbale, ma anche fisica, di movimento, danzata (in modo volutamente disturbante), viene letta da De Fusco attraverso una delle scelte più forti della sua regia, ovvero la raffigurazione della foresta, *limen* e linea di passaggio tra psiche e mondo esterno. La foresta, realizzata attraverso una videoproiezione, è allo stesso tempo realistica e irreale, fa parte, per l'appunto come linea di demarcazione tra due universi, del mondo concreto e vero ma anche del mondo fittizio che si dischiude e che viene continuamente attraversato da Macbeth.

Macbeth si pone, così, come il dramma dei dualismi e delle polarità. Scrive, a tal proposito, Valentina Poggi Ghigi nel contributo "Evocazione e invocazione in *Macbeth*": "Fra le polarità che presiedono alla dinamica del *Macbeth* le più evidenti, e le più sottilmente discusse dalla critica, sono certo quelle di luce e buio, innocenza e violenza, il latte dell'umana bontà e il sangue di guerre omicidi e stragi, fecondità e sterilità, sonno placido e incubo sonnambulistico" (Poggi Chigi 1982: 63). E ancora: "Queste polarità sono altrettanti aspetti della basilare distinzione tra

bene e male che viene radicalmente contestata dalla prospettiva di ambiguità e nichilismo morale inaugurata dal motto delle streghe [...] e suggellata dal protagonista” (1982: 63).

Nella sua lettura del *Macbeth*, Poggi Ghigi si sofferma sulla coppia oppositiva “evocazione” e “invocazione”, pur ammettendo che: “Se l’evocazione (lo scongiuro magico inteso ad asservire le potenze soprannaturali alla volontà umana) impregna di sé il dramma, il richiamo alla preghiera, che implica affidamento di sé a forze soprannaturali di cui si riconosce il potere provvidenziale, è invece saltuario o indiretto” (1982:63). Sullo stesso tema si sofferma Lombardo affermando che tutti i temi del *Macbeth* “contengono il loro opposto; in ogni elemento, in ogni parola di questo dramma c’è il suo opposto: la vita non è mai vista come fatto assoluto, univoco, ma sempre conflittuale, magari contraddittorio, come perenne ambiguità o contrasto” (Lombardo 1982: 13).

Il tema delle coppie opposite viene visualizzato per l'appunto da De Fusco attraverso la foresta *limen* che pone sin dall'inizio la sua demarcazione sul mondo bipolare del dramma. La foresta è in sostanza un confine tra potere e desiderio, altra coppia in opposizione ben chiara: “In Macbeth e in Lady Macbeth desiderio di potere e desiderio di simbiosi coincidono: il sogno di regalità prende forma in loro – come vedremo – in due modi completamente diversi, ma quasi subito viene formulato da entrambi come soddisfacimento del desiderio dell’altro, come necessità di essere «partner of greatness» (I.5 9). Fino ad arrivare ad un intrico magmatico in cui le due identità perdono i rispettivi confini. Nella simbiosi ogni forma di separazione è assoluta: essa viene percepita come la fine di tutto. Macbeth deve condividere la volontà omicida di Lady Macbeth, perché distaccarsi dal desiderio di lei significa negare la propria stessa virilità e quindi morire. A sua volta, Lady Macbeth deve trasformarsi in figura implacabile di morte, perché solo in questo modo può far emergere la volontà di potenza di Macbeth” (De Rogatis 2013: 1).

L'utilizzo della parola *limen* comporta una considerazione precisa. La foresta, fin dall'inizio, dà infatti una ulteriore chiave di lettura che solo parzialmente sembra allontanarsi dalla base freudiana dell'interpretazione di Bloom. La scena iniziale, così come realizzata da De Fusco, dà vita a un *Macbeth* che si sviluppa come un insieme di riti di passaggio, teorizzati da Arnold Van Gennep (1909), riti che sono necessari a Macbeth per avere il poi ruolo nella società (uomo e Re) e a Lady Macbeth, Lady inizialmente androgina, secondo la lettura di Tiziana de Rogatis, per essere regina e donna. Entrambi perderanno quel ruolo.

Nello specifico, un rito di passaggio, così come descritto da Van Gennep, è un rituale che segna il cambiamento dell'individuo da uno specifico status socioculturale a un altro, con il caso paradigmatico dei riti di iniziazione, ma anche altri avvenimenti come la nascita, la morte, il

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matrimonio Il rituale si attua, il più delle volte, in una cerimonia o in prove diverse, che, ad un'analisi più approfondita, seguono sotto molti aspetti quelle che sono le funzioni narrative enunciate da Vladimir Propp (1928), nella sua analisi della fiaba, o lo schema del viaggio dell'eroe di Joseph Campbell (1949) e Christopher Vogler (1992), ovvero il viaggio dell'Io per raggiungere l'Autorealizzazione, l'Individuazione e l'Illuminazione, basato sulla teoria degli archetipi di Jung.

I riti di passaggio permettono di legare l'individuo al gruppo, ma anche di strutturare la vita dell'individuo a tappe precise, che permettono una percezione tranquillizzante dell'individuo nel rapporto con la sua temporaneità e con la sua mortalità. Questo fenomeno ha dunque un ruolo importante per l'individuo, per la relazione tra questi e il gruppo e per la coesione del gruppo nel suo insieme.

Partendo da Van Gennep e successivamente dalla scuola di antropologia sociale britannica e dalla Scuola di Manchester, Victor Turner (1982 e 1986) sposta l'attenzione *dal rito al teatro*, come il titolo del suo fondamentale volume.

Turner si sofferma sul concetto di "dramma sociale" ("social drama"), che trova la sua prima manifestazione come rottura di una norma o infrazione di una regola morale, di una legge o di un costume. Si pensi, a tal proposito, a quanto questa idea di infrazione sia evidente all'interno del teatro greco in un serie di opere come quelle compongono l'*Oresteia* di Eschilo.

L'infrazione porta a una rottura, a una crisi e a un conflitto. Scrive Turner:

Un dramma sociale si manifesta innanzitutto come rottura di una norma, come infrazione di una regola della morale, della legge, del costume o dell'etichetta in qualche circostanza pubblica. Questa rottura può essere deliberatamente, addirittura calcolatamente premeditata da una persona o da una fazione che vuole mettere in questione o sfidare l'autorità costituita [...] o può emergere da uno sfondo di sentimenti appassionati. Una volta comparsa, può difficilmente essere cancellata. In ogni caso, essa produce una crisi crescente, una frattura o una svolta importante nelle relazioni fra i membri di un campo sociale, in cui la pace apparente si tramuta in aperto conflitto e gli antagonismi latenti si fanno visibili. Si prende partito, si formano fazioni, e a meno che il conflitto non possa essere rapidamente confinato in una zona limitata dell'interazione sociale, la rottura ha la tendenza a espandersi e a diffondersi fino a coincidere con qualche divisione fondamentale nel più vasto insieme delle relazioni sociali rilevanti, cui appartengono le fazioni in conflitto (Turner 1982: 130-131).

Il dramma sociale attiva, quindi, opposizione all'interno di una comunità, di una società o di un gruppo, e trasforma le opposizioni in conflitti che possono essere risolti o portare alla rottura definitiva.

Il conflitto nel *Macbeth* è centrale nella lettura che viene fatta da Lombardo che vede proprio nel conflitto uno dei principi strutturali dell'opera: "uno dei principi strutturali su cui

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quest'opera poggia è appunto quello della conflittualità, della contrapposizione di forze. [...] Il *Macbeth* sembra quasi il simbolo dell'arte drammatica poiché il dramma è fatto di conflitto, mira alla rappresentazione degli urti che ci sono nella storia, nel mondo, nell'anima degli uomini” (Lombardo 1982: 13). *Macbeth*, in buona sostanza, è un dramma sociale. E, in questo contesto, di cruciale importanza il concetto di *limen*, ovvero margine, che Turner riprende da Van Gennep e che poi svilupperà dal *liminale* vangenneppiano al *liminoide* nei suoi studi sulla performatività.

Secondo Van Gennep e Turner, i momenti di passaggio da uno status sociale a un altro, attraverso i riti, sono accompagnati da periodi di allontanamento dalla comunità in una zona liminale. Scrive Turner:

Van Gennep, come è noto, distingue tre fasi nel rito di passaggio: la *separazione*, la *transizione* e l'*incorporazione*. La prima fase, la *separazione*, delimita nettamente lo spazio e il tempo sacri da quelli profani o secolari (non è solo questione di entrare in un tempio: in più ci deve essere un rito che cambi anche la qualità del *tempo*, o costruisca una sfera culturale che è definita come “fuori dal tempo”, cioè al di là del tempo che misura i processi e la routine della vita secolare). Questa fase implica un comportamento simbolico (in particolare i simboli che rovesciano o invertono cose, relazioni e processi secolari) che rappresenta il distacco dei soggetti rituali (novizi, aspiranti, neofiti o ‘inizianti’) dal loro precedente status sociale. [...] Nel corso della fase intermedia di *transizione*, che Van Gennep chiama “margine” o “*limen*” (che significa “soglia” in latino), i soggetti rituali attraversano un periodo e una zona di ambiguità, una sorta di limbo sociale che con gli status sociali e le condizioni culturali profani ad esso precedenti o successivi, ha in comune pochissimi attributi, benché a volte di importanza cruciale. [...] La terza fase, che Van Gennep chiama *aggregazione* o *incorporazione*, comprende fenomeni e azioni simbolici che rappresentano il raggiungimento da parte dei soggetti della loro nuova posizione, relativamente stabile e ben definita, nel complesso della società (Turner 1982: 132).

Vi è quindi un allontanamento e una *separazione* dalla comunità sociale “normalizzata”, a causa della rottura di una norma legittima della comunità (la crisi di Turner), e attraverso una fase di transizione che si manifesta attraverso l'attraversamento del *limen* e il trovarsi in una zona liminale, di margine, si arriva al reintegro all'interno della società o al definitivo allontanamento se non vi può essere il superamento della crisi.

La foresta di *Macbeth* così come visualizzata e resa da De Fusco demarca, per l'appunto, il *limen* tra la società ammessa e con le sue norme (il regno di Duncan) e la zona di marginalità che causerà il conflitto tra gruppi sociali (*Macbeth* contro Malcolm e Macduff). Il regicidio di Duncan e il successivo omicidio di Banquo e della famiglia di Macduff sono riti di passaggio per *Macbeth*, al di fuori della legge così come costituita, che portano all'allontanamento prima del protagonista, quindi alla sua scalata al potere, al suo fittizio cambio di status (che viene annunciato sin dal

primo incontro con le streghe, quale Barone di Glamis, quindi Barone di Cawdor e infine Re) e infine alla sconfitta.

I riti di passaggio che si riscontrano in *Macbeth* hanno la doppia natura di riti come eventi irreversibili, secondo la definizione di Van Gennep e Turner, che hanno luogo una volta sola e allo stesso tempo reiterati, assimilabili quindi ai riti calendariali.

Il rito come evento irreversibile è individuale e viene vissuto dai due protagonisti senza possibilità di tornare indietro o di ripeterlo. Si pensi all'omicidio di Duncan. Macbeth non può commettere un ulteriore regicidio come rito di passaggio per se stesso. Ma allo stesso tempo il regicidio si presenta anche come rito “calendariale” per la comunità di sudditi, inteso come rito funebre di morte del re e salita al trono del nuovo sovrano.

Fa notare così Tiziana de Rogatis, riprendendo Kantowicz (1989): “Secondo una concezione anglosassone di origine medievale, il re ha due corpi: un *body natural*, materiale e transeunte, e un *body politic*, immateriale e immortale; il secondo dà legittimità extratemporale al primo, garantisce cioè la sua sacralità e la sua perenne continuità (il *body politic* passa da un re all'altro); d'altro canto il primo permette di incarnare fisicamente il secondo, di investirlo, attraverso la ritualità del corpo regale, di una simbologia visibile e condivisa dai sudditi” (De Rogatis 2013: 12).

Questa lettura antropologica di *Macbeth* nella messa in scena di De Fusco si accompagna, quindi, a quella psicologica basata su Freud e Bloom. Vi è infine una possibile terza chiave da prendere in considerazione, quella di una commistione tra teatro classico ed elementi video-artistici che porta a una disgregazione dell'immagine e a una sua destrutturazione.

Nell'introduzione al volume *Macbeth* (1992: 1-13) il curatore Alan Sinfield divide i temi e le chiavi di lettura dell'opera in “TRAGEDY”, “GENDER”, “STRUCTURALISM AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM” e “POLITICS”. L'idea di strutturalismo e post-strutturalismo, così come presentata da Sinfield, si addice alla lettura di De Fusco. Lo strutturalismo, come noto, guarda ai valori e alle funzioni determinate dalle relazioni reciproche dei singoli elementi linguistici, considerati parti di un ordinamento strutturale e di un insieme di fenomeni in continua interdipendenza e interazione. Evoluzione, più che opposizione, nel post-strutturalismo, prevalentemente francese, e nei vari ambiti delle scienze umane. Si pensi ai vari Derrida, Barthes, Deleuze, o Lacan. Al post-strutturalismo si lega, la decostruzione come strategia di lettura che, diversamente dalle metodologie tradizionali, non si propone di stabilire quale sia il significato di un'opera letteraria ma ne mette invece in evidenza le contraddizioni concettuali e linguistiche che

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le impediscono di emettere un messaggio pieno e coerente. Il testo diviene così una realtà “plurale”.

Sinfield guarda nello specifico ai saggi, riportati nella curatela, “Imperfect Speakers: the Tale Thickens” di Malcom Evans (69-78), “Subjectivity and the Soliloquy” di Catherine Belsey (79-91) e “Speculations: *Macbeth* and Source” di Jonathan Goldberg (92-107) che si soffermano sull’*instabilità* del testo e del linguaggio del *Macbeth* shakespeariano.

Il *Macbeth* di De Fusco ragiona e propone un testo e un linguaggio instabile e plurale, che frantuma e ricostruisce l’immagine, la scena e il dramma. Scrive Agostino Lombardo sul linguaggio del dramma: “Il linguaggio non solo accompagna l’azione ma l’approfondisce, suggerisce sempre nuove dimensioni, nuovi significati, fa continuamente travalicare all’azione i propri limiti, aggiunge sempre nuovi fili alla trama e al tessuto dell’opera” (Lombardo 1982: 13).

Le regia è anch’essa un linguaggio che approfondisce e suggerisce sempre nuovi significati che sono per l’appunto plurali.

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Health and Medicine in the Victorian Age: *Jekyll & Hyde* the musical

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Abstract: This contribution explores the representation of health and medicine in the Victorian novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert L. Stevenson and in the adapted musical *Jekyll & Hyde*. Starting with an investigation of 19th-Century medical practice, the paper will then shift its attention to Stevenson's portrait of Dr Henry Jekyll's character, and will conclude with a focus on the musical version, analysing both the libretto and the music of the performing art work.

Keywords: Robert L. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Victorian Age, medicine, health, *Jekyll & Hyde*, musical theatre.

1. Introduction

The seventeenth-century Baconian theory, according to which scientific knowledge is power, set the basis for modern progress. However, despite this century's important breakthroughs in the fields of pathology, obstetrics and vaccination, at the beginning of the 1800s medical practice still remained at a very rudimental stage, and it was to be seen more as a scary combination of chance and quackery (Robinson 2011). Literature on the matter focusses on the transformations in the scientific, technological and medical fields, stemming from the increasing awareness of the social issues of the time concerning people's health. In the first couple of decades of the nineteenth century, England faced an astonishingly rapid development and progress. As Youngson (1979: 10) points out

Early in the century, the patient's and the doctor's words are one. It is easy to hear the patient's voice in the doctor's case report. [...] But over the course of the century this symmetry fades. Doctors begin to sound like doctors, and patients' voices disappear (1991: 99).

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The negative outcome of the Industrial Revolution, the overpopulation of the cities, caused poverty and pauperism and subsequently terrifying hygienic conditions, a rapid spreading of pandemic illnesses and a higher mortality rate.

A turning point in the British history of medicine is marked by Sir Edwin Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* of 1842, which did not only outline the situation in detail, taking into account the sickening effects of delayed interments and providing statistics of the deaths from endemic, epidemic and contagious diseases, but also presented the necessity of appointing an Officer of Health, explained his functions and the jurisprudential value of such appointment (Chadwick 1842). Chadwick's *Report* resulted in the Public Health Act of 1848 which established a General Board of Health and empowered local authorities to establish local boards of health, to manage sewers and drains, wells and water supplies, gas works, refuse and sewerage systems, and slaughter houses, and to regulate offensive trades, remove 'nuisances', control cellar dwellings and houses unfit for human habitation, and provide burial grounds, recreation areas, parks, and public baths (Wohl 1984: 149).

This represented one step forward in the jurisdiction regulating Health and Medicine, and following the 1848 Act, several other acts were issued: the Compulsory Vaccination Act (1853), the Medical Act (1858), the Contagious Diseases Acts (1864, 1866 and 1869), the Repeal of Contagious Diseases Acts (1886), the Medical Act Amendment Act (1886), the Elementary Education Act (1893), the New Vaccination Acts (1898), the Midwives' Acts (1902), the National Insurance Act (1911), the Nurses Registration Act (1919) and finally the foundation of the National Health Service in 1948.¹

Nevertheless, mortality rates still differed immensely according to both diastratic and diatopic constraints. As it is noticed by Wohl (1984: 5), the more comfortable classes were guaranteed greater longevity by their "general standards of nutrition, living conditions, ability to isolate ill children, healthier occupations and working conditions". The concern with the conditions of the poor and life expectancy between various classes spread among Early Victorian reformers, whose investigations led to the production of surveys and statistics, which had a great dramatic impact on society. During the Victorian Age, the use of the "comparative statistical technique which was almost a cliché of early Victorian sanitary reform and which was designed to

¹ Carpenter's chronological outline also points out several other important facts related to health and medicine in the nineteenth century, concerning epidemics, medical schools, health professions, scientific discoveries and inventions (Carpenter 2010: xv-xvii).

play upon respectable Victorians' feelings of guilt and fear" (1984: 5) was widely spread among journalists and reformers, whose reports acquired much greater credibility when supported by numerical data "although the statistics were inaccurate and misleading" (1984: 5-6).² Despite the questionable reliability of the statistics, their abundance and the rapidity with which they spread through publications entail that research was being carried on, and the reports which stemmed from these investigations were proof that the causes of poor health conditions were being looked at in a new, more analytical and more critical way. This scientific perspective, which implies the problematisation of the observed phenomena, led to the formalisation of scientific theories³ which affected the medical practice of diagnosing, previously based solely on the patient's descriptions. The subsequent "disappearance of the patient's narrative" Fissel (1991: 92) followed the rapid pace at which medical progress developed during the century. As Fissel points out:

Early in the century, the patient's and the doctor's words are one. It is easy to hear the patient's voice in the doctor's case report. [...] But over the course of the century this symmetry fades. Doctors begin to sound like doctors, and patients' voices disappear (1991: 99).

Medical professionals in the nineteenth century were university trained⁴. The three main figures who were given institutional and legal permission to practice medicine by the State were physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries. Physicians were also called Dr and were usually Oxford or Cambridge graduates. They formed the top category and were considered gentlemen. They charged relatively high prices and belonged to the upper classes. Their education focussed more on the Humanities and the Classics, but they were poorly trained in the medical field. Surgeons

² Wohl presents an extract "from a considerably longer table in the *Lancet*", a radical medical journal founded in 1823 by surgeon and democrat Thomas Wakley, in which the average age at death is reported. The table takes into account six different districts (Rutland, Bath, Bethnal Green, Manchester and Liverpool) and three social classes (Gentry and Professional, Farmers and Tradesmen, Labourers and Artisans). What is pointed out is that although the gap might have been exaggerated by the inaccuracy of the statistic, there still remained a great difference in life expectancy between the rich and the poor.

³ Romano (2002: 93) affirms that "the events of the 1870s, the experiments, the publications, the public and private debates, transformed the rather diffuse beliefs about the causes of disease of the late 1860s into the germ theory of the 1880s. Germs were not discovered, or seen for the first time in this period. Their construction did not involve their literal manufacture, but they were the result of a process that involved the exchange of materials, ideas, and technique among researchers". As she notices, despite the lack of scientific discovery of the germs, the debates among professionals were fundamental for scientific progress and the formulation of the theory.

⁴ The practitioners' education ranged from university study in the classic Greek theory of the body as a system of humors (fluids) to a few years of apprenticeship with a local surgeon or apothecary, which might or might not have been accompanied by a few months of hospital attendance or a short course of medical lectures of perhaps both (Carpenter 2010: 4).

were mostly trained by apprenticeship and were only allowed to treat external illnesses, while internal diseases remained a prerogative of the physicians; their fees were modest, which made them adhere to the rising middle class, and they could also dispense medications. The lowest end of the spectrum is represented by apothecaries, “who were regarded as mere tradesmen because their main function was to sell medications, although they also gave advice, primarily to the lower classes” (Furst 2000: 109). These were sided by a number of other practitioners. In the first place, being the Church in the position to confer legitimacy to medical professions, the clergy was “often entrusted with the cure of bodies as well as souls” (Bynum 1994: 2). Moreover, “wise women, herbalists, good samaritans, midwives, itinerant drug peddlars, ladies of the manor, mountebanks, and quacks also dispensed advice and recommended medicines” (1994: 2). Carpenter adds to this list also people who practiced as “venereologists (specialists in venereal diseases), smallpox inoculators, itinerant oculists, traveling quacks or healers, and those who simply advertised themselves as surgeons or practitioners of «physic»”(Carpenter 2010: 4).

According to Acknerknecht, in this period there were three typologies of medicine: bedside medicine, which was popular in Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the 1700s, hospital medicine, more specifically localised in Paris between 1794 and 1848, and laboratory medicine, whose predominance increased afterwards and until modern times. The history of medicine’s failure to analyse the formal changes in the medical professions which occurred at the beginning of the century is attributed to a “reluctance of medical historians to abandon the traditional tripartite classification as a framework for the study of the medical profession in this period” (Waddington 1977: 164) in favour of a modern, professional, bipartite division which considers hospital-based consultants and general practitioners, the former category enjoying considerable advantages over the latter (Waddington 1977: 170). Moreover, medical historians have focussed mainly on what is generally referred to as hospital medicine, leaving the other two terms of Acknerknecht’s threefold distinction (Cunningham 2002) obscured. Nonetheless, the progress of nineteenth-century medicine was thoroughly affected by the experiments carried on in the laboratories, which developed from the “private chemical workrooms of the start of the century to the huge state-funded institutes of the end of the century” (2002: 4).

The role of the laboratory acquired increasing importance during the nineteenth century all over the world, leading to a real revolution in the way of making medicine, in its professionals, its institutions and the places where it was practiced.

2. Literary doctors: beyond health professions

Posen's four-volume series *The Doctor in Literature* (2005, 2006, 2010, 2013) brings together "a total of some 1500 extracts from approximately 600 works of fiction where medical doctors appear as major or minor characters" (Posen 2010: 1) and underlines the recurrence of medical issues in literature. Medical themes as well as medical and paramedical figures, whether real or fictional, have been populating the performing arts in the broadest sense, appearing in all genres, such as prose, poetry, drama, films, musicals, video games, TV series, music, painting, photography and sculpture. Moreover, there is a real and increasing interest in the doctor as a person. The doctors' institutional role, played within the walls of the medical *tόπος*, is abandoned in their private lives, where they reacquire the humanity of the self. In the second volume of his series Posen writes that

fictional literature, from works by Nobel laureates to doctor-nurse romances, reflects this extraordinary interest in the doctor's private life. Multiple novels, short stories, plays and poems discuss doctor's families, their relationships with their colleagues, their attitudes towards religion and politics and their lack of attention to their own health (2006: 2).

The literary depiction of the medical theme is therefore fundamental, because it "reveals more fully than history the social realities in the dilemmas that physicians and patients alike" (Furst 2000: xi) have to face.

As it has been illustrated, the development of medicine in the nineteenth century is to be seen as a great march of scientific progress, which caused different responses. Such variety of reactions, which went "from enthusiastic embrace of the new to doubts, falterings, skepticism, and downright rejection" (2000: xi), are investigated and disclosed by the literature of the period, thus proving the centrality of these themes and highlighting the opposing reactions regulating the dialogue between science and literature.⁵ Literature welcomes medicine in the Victorian period

⁵ The variety of literary representations depends on the persistency of the medical theme in literature and, because of the incredible amount of works, it is necessary to set criteria according to which a selection is made. Posen, for example, states such criteria at the beginning of each volume, making the reader aware that despite their literary merit, some works may have been left out. "Works not available in English are, with few exceptions, not included. Medical clowns such as those portrayed in Elizabethan plays are not discussed. Medical murderers, deliberate inducers of diseases, salespersons of organs for transplantation and other sinister characters such as appear in clinical conspiracy novels, are also omitted from this series, even when the perpetrators have a licence to practice. [...] Autobiographical material has generally been avoided though some exceptions were made for pertinent material" (Posen 2010: 3).

more than ever before with a varying relevance gradient within its vast production. The medical theme may or may not be at the centre of the narrative, but it provides the reader with information about the medical history of that age.

George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, for example, portrays the clash between two juxtaposed reactions to medical progress: the conservative one and the innovative one: the former personified by the inhabitants of Middlemarch and the latter by the character of Dr. Tertius Lydgate. The perception of Lydgate's innovativeness in *Middlemarch* is skeptical; however, despite the general disapproval raised among his peers, mostly jealous of his success, Eliot's portrait of this character as a loyal professional⁶ earns him some followers as well.

Another type of Victorian doctor is presented by Trollope in his *Doctor Thorne* (1858). Trollope's sensitiveness to the social issues of the time leads him to analysing Thorne's profession in relation to his status in the hierarchical social system more than his actual medical practice. Thorne's distant connection to an aristocratic family indeed gives him some social prestige, yet the connection is too distant "to enable him to command respect automatically by virtue of his "station" in the class hierarchy" (Furst 2000: 40). Despite this, Dr. Thorne is considered a very good physician, as he "fulfilled the traditional function of being a "confidential friend".⁷ Trollope's attention to social issues enhances his work with a realistic portrayal of a society whose judgement was solely based on social status and where doctors "were assessed by their manners, bearing, and appearance rather than their actual professional expertise" (2000: 40).

3. Dr Henry Jekyll

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is another Victorian novel which portrays the public and private life of a doctor. Despite the non-centrality of the medical theme to the development of the plot, the references to the medical world are several. Henry Jekyll's medical qualifications, in fact, "serve as plot devices but do not lead to any recognizable clinical activities" (Posen 2010: 3), however, the novel "has medico-historical implications too [...]; it represents an oblique commentary on the public apprehension of the research laboratory in the later nineteenth

⁶ As Furst notices "Lydgate's excellent knowledge of medicine at first brings him repeated success, above all in making the right diagnosis", and in his dealing with Fred Vincy's case of typhoid fever he shows his loyalty to Vincy's former surgeon, Wrench, by meeting with him "to discuss the case so as not to be seen as stealing patients from others" (Furst 2000: 110).

⁷ Furst uses Worthington Hooker's phrase, coined in his 1849 treatise *Physician and Patients* in which he described the ideal relationship between a doctor and his patients (Furst 2000: 41).

century” (Furst 2000: 138). Stevenson’s attachment to medicine is to be considered a necessity more than a mere interest, in fact the relationship between the author and the medical theme is intrinsic in his own life, marked by a failing health, and ended by a cerebral hemorrhage.⁸

Henry Jekyll is an eminent physician whose titles are explicitly listed: M.D., Doctor of Medicine, D.C.L., Doctor of Civil Law, LL.D., Doctor of Law, F.R.S., Fellow of the Royal Society (Stevenson 2001: 21).⁹ This character is purposely depicted as a figure between a professional medical practitioner and a mad scientist (Fiorato 2013: 99-121). Such position is made more borderline by the perpetration of his purposes in a laboratory, which, on the one hand, is the place where the doctor’s scientific research is carried on, but on the other remains forbidden to any individual besides the doctor and his alter ego. In virtue of that very inaccessibility all the activity that goes on behind its doors is unknown, and therefore looked at with suspicion. It raises interest in the others, who are at the same time scared, repelled and attracted by its secrecy. When Mr Utterson was received in the doctor’s laboratory “he eyed the dingy, windowless structure with curiosity, and gazed round with distasteful sense of strangeness” (*JH*, 76). From the outside, Jekyll’s experiments are “macabre, grotesque, and morally repugnant” (Millhauser 1973: 296).

The permeation of the scientific and medical themes throughout the novel is emphasised by the discursive style Stevenson utilises for his medical characters: Dr Jekyll and Dr Lanyon. Jekyll presents his research scientifically in the statement of his own case, starting from his observations:

I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering. And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly toward the mystic and the transcendental, re-acted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual (*JH*, 76).

⁸ Stevenson’s health, described in biographies as “poor”, “ill”, “miserable”, “failing” or “bad”, was the cause of his restless existence forced to a “frequent journeying between the Adirondacks, California and the South Seas in search of a climate that suited his failing health” (Jones 2003: 56).

⁹ All quotations from Stevenson’s book will from this point on be noted in parenthesis with the page number preceded by the abbreviation *JH*.

He then states his thesis: “I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two” (*JH*, 76), and the description of the procedure of the experiments:

I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion (*JH*, 77).

This is followed by the observation of the effects from the assumption of the drug, both physical and mental:

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill-race in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine. I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations; and in the act, I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature (*JH*, 78).

Everything is kept track of in a very rational and scientific way, according to a methodological procedure that had long proved infallible. Jekyll is aware that his results are not conclusive and admits that this is only the point he has reached in his life: “The state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines. [...] my narrative will make, alas! too evident, [that] my discoveries were incomplete” (*JH*, 76,79). Jekyll’s experiments aim at separating the two natures that he feels are struggling to coexist within his self, as he realises that “man is not truly one but truly two” (*JH*, 76). Instead of compounding a drug that is capable of controlling and shaking “the very fortress of identity” (*JH*, 54) and separate his two natures, he comes to embody “a kind of inverted Prometheanism”, as he creates “not life from death, but a new evil life from an old good one; [...] so Hyde is Jekyll yet is himself” (Millhauser 1973: 296).

Despite being the same self, Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde do not share the same physical appearance, as Dr Jekyll notices: “I now had two characters as well as two appearances” (*JH*, 80).

He feels “younger, lighter, happier in body” (*JH*, 80) and has lost in stature: he is smaller and slighter. He “became, in [his] own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever” his body seems “not strong enough to contain the raging energies of life. The powers of Hyde seem[ed] to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll” (*JH*, 92). Because of the tautological relationship established between the two terms of the identity, Jekyll is aware that by killing himself he will also kill Hyde, but is reluctant to do so because he is fascinated with Hyde’s love for life. Still, in the end he must surrender to his alter ego and allows him to take complete possession of his corporal identity:

Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? or will he find courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end (*JH*, 94).

Quite an opposite view of medicine is personified in the novel by the character of Dr Lanyon, who despite being Jekyll’s same age “stands forth as the patriarch when he speaks for medical orthodoxy in denouncing Jekyll’s deviation into pharmacological experimentation” (Veeder 2005: 127). The doctors’ opinions about each other explain the resentment they feel towards each other’s activity. In Lanyon’s words Jekyll is “too fanciful” (*JH*, 23) and “began to go wrong, wrong in mind” (*JH*, 23), and Jekyll describes Lanyon as “a hide-bound pedant [...], an ignorant blatant pedant” (*JH*, 31). Nevertheless, Jekyll’s resumption of his former existence, which starts after Carew’s murder, involves a return to Lanyon and therefore to clinical medicine, which can be seen as a readjustment of Jekyll’s double alienation: on the one hand his “personal estrangement” (Veeder 2005: 128) from Lanyon, and on the other his “professional disengagement from orthodox medicine” (2005: 128). Jekyll considers orthodox medical practice as a way to sanity, however, he is the cause for its end, because he, as Hyde, kills Lanyon. Hyde’s words to Lanyon betray Jekyll’s secret identity, for he tells him

you remember your vows: what follows is under the seal of *our* profession. And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors – behold! (*JH*, 73, emphasis added).

The possessive adjective “our” is Jekyll’s voice through Hyde’s body, because there is no such professional sharing between Hyde and Lanyon, for Hyde is not a doctor and therefore “there is

no reason for Hyde to care about either Lanyon's «material views» or Jekyll's «transcendental medicine» (Veeder 2005: 128). However, behind Hyde's rebellion against repressive authority, there lies Jekyll's personal rebellion against an institution he no longer belonged to.

4. The representation of medicine in the musical *Jekyll & Hyde*

Wildhorn and Bricusse's revisiting of Stevenson's story highlights some aspects that remain more marginal in the novel. The musical is much more concerned with Jekyll's own feelings towards his research and the controversial dichotomy which stems from the effects that the love for his job has on his love for Emma Carew,¹⁰ a character who does not appear in the book. *Jekyll & Hyde* presents four scenes where Jekyll is seen as a doctor, either practising his profession, fighting for his cause or conducting experiments in the laboratory. These are the prologue, the meeting with the Board of Governors at St. Jude's hospital, the experiment before the transformation in the laboratory and the meeting with Miss Lucy Harris in his own house.

The show opens with a prologue recited by Mr Utterson and Sir Danvers Carew in front of a see-through curtain behind which the scene is set in a hospital: Dr Henry Jekyll is attending a patient lying on a bed, whom the audience will later discover to be Jekyll's father, while a nurse, standing at the side of the bed, is holding a basin with water. During Carew's monologue, which introduces the character of Dr Jekyll as a “brilliant young scientist”, the see-through curtain goes up and Carew, Utterson and the audience join Jekyll in the hospital. The dialogue between Jekyll and Carew introduces Jekyll's theories and their reception among his peers:

JEKYLL: I know there's a means to reintegrate mind and emotion.
There must be.
CAREW: Your colleagues tell me your theories are infinitely more
dangerous than he [his father] is. They say you're
trespassing on hallowed ground when you experiment with
the human mind.

¹⁰ Wildhorn and Bricusse's adaptation introduces two female characters: Emma Carew, Jekyll's fiancée, and Lucy Harris, a prostitute. This does not represent an innovation, in fact already in 1887 Sullivan's dramatisation, as well as Irving's (1910) “elaborated the original tale heavily in accordance with the taste of the times, and both introduced a feminine character” (Gänzl 2001: 1017-18). Stage adaptations between 1887 and 2010 are over a hundred, divided in 80 stage plays, 12 musicals, 8 ballets, 7 radio dramatisations and 2 operas. See <http://www.robert-louis-stevenson.org/richard-dury-archive/derivative-works-stage-jekyll-and-hyde.html> (last accessed on 30/04/15).

JEKYLL: My colleagues are cowards, afraid of what they don't understand. [...] I'm at the point of perfecting a formula, a combination of rare drugs.

Carew's voice is the voice of medical orthodoxy, with which Jekyll strongly disagrees. He believes that his pharmaceutical research will allow him to find the cure to save his father. Carew appreciates Jekyll's strong belief in science, but poses a moral concern:

CAREW: I admire your tenacity, Henry, but I question your philosophy. Do you seriously believe your drugs will change what God has set in motion?

The first song Jekyll sings is "Lost in the Darkness", a short ballad, which is Jekyll's I-want song.¹¹ The song focusses on Jekyll himself, exerting a strong emotive function; Henry Jekyll sings about his own *I*, and in fact, the syllable with which each of the two stanzas end is /ai/: night-light, by-die, with assonances throughout the whole song in the words "I" and "find" in the sentence "I will find the answer" which summarises the I-want concept of the song, and on which an E, the highest note of the ballad, is hit.

In the changed plot of the musical, Jekyll wants to be given the chance to experiment his formula onto a human being suffering from illness. He makes this request to the Board of Governors of St. Jude's Hospital, presided by Sir Danvers Carew who, being Jekyll's future father in law, agrees on giving him the chance to submit his request in front of the Board. The characters of the Board are representative of aristocracy and institutional structures such as the Army, the Church, and the Law, they are introduced by Mr Simon Stride, "the Honorary Secretary respectfully recording the order of business" and Emma Carew's ex-boyfriend, therefore rival to Jekyll for more strictly personal reasons.

STRIDE: The Board of Governors of St. Jude's Hospital is now met. Sir Danvers Carew presiding. Also in attendance His Grace, the Bishop of Basingstoke, the right Honourable Sir Archibald Proops, Lord Savage, Lady Beaconsfield and General Lord Glossop.

¹¹ The Broadway version differs from the London version in which Jekyll sang *I Need to Know*, a longer, more proper I-want song, where he explained the purpose of his research more thoroughly. For a full text of the song see Wildhorn, Bricusse 1998.

The audience learns from Mr Carew that Jekyll's request had been "previously submitted in writing". The board is therefore aware of what the doctor is about to ask, and this raises general discontent among the Governors who soon start their loud opposition. They are interrupted by Carew, who allows Jekyll to speak for his own case. Jekyll is standing behind a podium with his notes in his hand, stage left and the Board are opposite him on the right. Stride too is on the right, sitting and typing the minutes of the meeting. Carew is the only character moving from one side to the other, representing with his wandering around the stage his uncertain and contrasting feelings towards Jekyll's request. He would like to support the doctor, yet he is limited by his institutional role. Jekyll explains his theory, supported by experiments held in his laboratory:

JEKYLL: Distinguished Governors, in each of us reside two separate natures, two distinct personalities. One dark, one light, one good, one evil. Now, it is the curse of mankind that these two extremes should be constantly at war. It is clear to me now that we have the power to divide this primitive duality of man into its separate components. To isolate what is functional from what is dysfunctional and to control these elements forever. My experiments with various animals have convinced me that this separation, the behavioural control of which I speak is more than theoretical. It is achievable! I must now be permitted to test my formula and my theory on a human subject.

The underscoring, the music which accompanies Jekyll's monologue, is a variation on the theme of *Lost in the Darkness*, because Jekyll's monologue is in fact the continuation of his I-want song. The music changes mood when Jekyll is interrupted by the lines of the outraged Governors

BISHOP: What? A human soul?
PROOPS: What?
L. BEAC.: What? To be prodded and tested like a laboratory rat?

Jekyll's request of "a man whom society has already abandoned as hopeless" declares how during the Victorian Age many ill people were left alone and treated as lesser creatures. Jekyll explains this with the opening line of the song *Board of Governors* which continues the scene.

JEKYLL: There are too many souls in a thousand asylums
Left there to rot for the lack of a plan
In the name of compassion and medical science
I can save many lives if you give me one man.

The undignified Governors' responses to the doctor represent respectability, the Church, the Law, and Ethics:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| BISHOP: | I'll tell you now, the Church will never sanction it. |
| ALL GOV.: | Sacrilege, lunacy,
blasphemy, heresy. |
| PROOPS: | Beware sir you're treading on dangerous ground
In legal terms I'd say extremely unsound |
| BISHOP: | Your lack of humility strikes me as odd
What makes you think you have the right to play God? |
| STRIDE: | The Bishop speaks for all of us
when he says you're playing God
There's such a thing as ethics
over which you ride roughshod.
You're a doctor, not our saviour,
Doctor Jekyll for a start,
But I judge from your behaviour,
you can't tell the two apart. |
| JEKYLL: | Dear Mr Stride I'm simply a scientist,
I have a code to which I remain true
I don't presume to the stature of moralist
I leave pretensions like that, sir, to you. |

This dialogue is representative of the conflicts raised when new medical theories clashed with the pre-existing and established authoritarian system, the old against the new. The tempo of the music changes from 6/8 to 12/8 when Jekyll replies to Stride, indicating that the discussion becomes increasingly anxious. A sudden and more drastic tempo change occurs when Jekyll begs the Board to allow him to have a man. The tempo goes from the hectic 12/8 to a square 4/4, indicating a radical change. Jekyll leaves the quarrel to return to his original purpose, and speaks to Carew intimately: "I know my fate is yours to choose / but if they win the world will lose / when I am on the threshold of success". He then turns to the Governors again, "I beg you Governors, you must say «Yes»". The tempo changes back to 6/8 and then to 12/8 when Lady Beaconsfield joins in with the line "Doctor Jekyll enough of your ranting, sir. / This is a hospital here to save lives", which takes the dialogue back to its previous quarrelling mood. The plurality of voices, tones and moods is also represented by the two key changes in the song, from D minor, to A minor, back to D minor again. The underscoring is never an ornament, but a fundamental and functional story-telling element which enables the audience to understand better the characters' feelings, because the "omniscient orchestra knows what is in the minds of the

characters even before the characters do” (McMillin 2006: 130). The scene ends with the Governors’ verdict which leaves Jekyll’s proposal rejected:

CAREW:	Distinguished Governors, your verdict please All those in favour say “aye” All those opposed “nay”
ALL GOV.:	Nay, Nay, Nay, Nay Positively, absolutely Nay!

The tempo change between Carew’s line, sung in 4/4 to the Governors’ final “Nay” in 3/4 stresses again their different attitudes towards Dr Jekyll.

Jekyll’s professional activity is represented in the show in the long and emblematic scene which precedes his first transformation into Hyde. While the scene at St. Jude’s hospital depicts society’s reaction to medical innovations, this scene explains Jekyll’s experiment and its procedure in detail. The scene opens in Jekyll’s living-room where he is left alone after Poole, the butler, has been dismissed. Jekyll’s thoughts lead him to the decision that he must be the human on whom to conduct the experiment.

After Jekyll’s reflection “Outside Jekyll’s Lab”, a chord introduces Jekyll’s I-am song “This is the Moment”, in which he states his decision to “leave all [his] doubts and demons on their way” and to continue with his plan. The song is a typical melodic ballad composed of two stanzas, a refrain, a bridge and the repetition of the refrain. The semitone rise in the key change from E major to F major indicates an ascension, as if Jekyll was being “carried away by passion”,¹² and in fact it is exactly on the key change that the actor takes off his jacket, as if it were society’s constraints from which he must set himself free. The number culminates in the final four-bar-long F on the word “all”, which is one of *Jekyll & Hyde*’s most famous show stoppers.

At this point, the semiotic capabilities of both the artistic and technical elements of the show combine in order to convey to the audience the most complete meaning of what is being represented on stage. During “This is the Moment”, Broadway’s sets move to transform the living-room into the laboratory. First the chairs, the chaise longue and the desk in Jekyll’s living-

¹² This expression is used by McMillin to describe Tony and Maria performing the song *Tonight*, from the musical *West Side Story*. Despite the lack of the love theme, it is possible to state that a rise in key generally indicates a rise in the singer’s personal involvement with the song (McMillin 2006: 56-57).

room move to the sides, then the backdrop depicting the wall with the fireplace and a picture hanging above it rises, giving the audience the impression that the stage is taking Jekyll to a lower lever, which is where the laboratory is. A table with candles and flasks, beakers and bottles moves upstage while a backdrop with shelves, cabinets and jugs is lowered. The light design is conceived so as to leave the actor and the table visible although creating a semidarkness all around, which gives the idea of a room where the lights are usually dimmed and the atmosphere is dark, in order for the audience to feel a “distasteful sense of strangeness”¹³ (*JH*, 39) and unease.

Jekyll starts the experiments singing “I must be wise / I must try to analyse each change in me / everything I see. / How will it be? / Will I see the world through different eyes?”. The rhyming syllable /aiz/ of the words wise-analyse-eyes, contains the word *I*s, as if the lyrics of the song were anticipating what is about to happen, that is to say the liberation of the second *I* from Jekyll’s inner self. Then, after rolling up his sleeve, he pours water onto it, dries it off with a towel and prepares to inject the drug directly into his veins, incongruently with Stevenson’s book, where the potion is drunk. He ties a ribbon around his arm as a tourniquet and then injects the potion. He takes his journal and writes down everything he notices, starting from sense-related observations:

JEKYLL: Salty, bitter taste, stings the gums. Warm in the gullet. A prickling heat spreading strongly through my veins. A light headedness, a light feeling of euphoria. (Laughter). No noticeable behavioural difference.

This final line raises general laughter in the audience. Jekyll continues his reflection singing

JEKYLL: Now the die is cast, nothing left to lose
Time alone will prove my theories through,
I’ll show the world.

The singing is abruptly interrupted by Jekyll’s recited line “Oh, dear God! Oh, God!” accompanied by a sudden change in the music. From the five 4/4 bars we abruptly go into a 5/4 bar which introduces the 12/8 bars of the second part of the song. These frequent changes in tempo emphasise the sense of instability of the transformation, which in fact goes back to a stable 4/4 in the song “Alive”, when the transformation is complete.

¹³ Jekyll’s laboratory in Stevenson’s novel is a “windowless” room, therefore dark.

The only other significant scene where medical practice is represented is when Miss Lucy Harris goes to Dr Jekyll's house after being harmed by a man. Jekyll receives her in his living room, draws a wheeled table with a basin and a jug of water closer to him and washes his hands before touching the girl's injured shoulder. He cures her by tapping her wound with cotton, probably soaked in some disinfecting liquid. Lucy confesses that she was harmed by a man named Edward Hyde. The liquid is stingy on Lucy's shoulder and she lets out a gasp of pain, to which Jekyll replies with "I'm sorry. I am so sorry." While the first apology is for the pain caused by his medication, the second, recited more intimately and in a lower tone is on behalf of his alter ego. While Jekyll mediates her, Lucy sings *Sympathy, Tenderness*:

LUCY: Sympathy, tenderness, warm as the summer,
offer me their embrace.
Friendliness, gentleness, strangers to my life,
they are there in his face.
Goodness and sweetness and kindness
abound in this place.
I am in love with the things that I see in his face.
It's a memory I know time will never erase.

This 3/4 ballad in B minor externalises Lucy's feelings for Henry Jekyll. The girl's upset state of mind is given by two concurrent factors: the minor mood of the melody, which moves insidiously between the semitones, and the *ostinato*¹⁴ rhythmic of the accompaniment, which gives the listener a sense of anxiety, almost as if Lucy's nervous heart-beat was marking the tempo of her sung thoughts.

¹⁴ *Ostinato* is an Italian term used in music to define "a persistent musical phrase or rhythm" (Kennedy 2004: 537). In this case, the rhythmic pattern composed by 6 quavers is repeated persistently for thirty-seven bars out of forty-three. Exceptions are bars 21, 27, 31, 38, 39 and bar 43, which is the last one and therefore presents the conclusive chord. See Exc. 1 and Exc. 2.

The musical score for 'Sympathy' from *Jekyll & Hyde* the musical. The vocal line starts with a piano dynamic, followed by a forte entry for the voice. The lyrics are: "Sym - pa - thy, ten - der - ness, warm as the". The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note chords.

Exc. 1

The musical score for 'Someone Like You' from *Jekyll & Hyde* the musical. The vocal line begins with a piano dynamic, followed by a forte entry. The piano accompaniment features eighth-note chords. The vocal line continues with "warm as the".

Exc. 2

The medication is not the focus of the scene, where the romantic theme sets in, leading, after a kiss between the two characters, to another show-stopping number. "Someone Like You", Lucy's I-want song, which has a very different taste from "Sympathy", and which represents the expression of hope that has now been lit in Lucy's heart. The stemming of such positive feeling is marked by the key change from B minor to F major, with a chord that allows Lucy to sing the first line of the ballad.

Besides the intimacy created by the lyricism of the romantic moment, some common medical practices of the Victorian Age are staged during this scene. Firstly, the reception of patients in the doctor's private house, and although Lucy is an unexpected guest and not a patient, she knows Jekyll is a doctor because he gave her his card, and she goes to him for that

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specific reason. Secondly, it shows some of the instruments used at the time in the medical profession, such as the wheeled table, the jug, the basin, cotton, the disinfecting tincture, as well as the attention to hygiene before touching the patient, which distinguishes Dr Jekyll as a physician who was used to dealing with upper-class people.

5. Conclusions

The musical theatre's dramatisation emphasises the juxtaposition between medical orthodoxy and advancing experimentalism in the Victorian period, thus shaping Jekyll as an overreacher whose ideals clash with the restrictedness of the moral and ethical tenets of the period. In the prologue, Sir Danvers Carew describes Henry Jekyll as "a seeker of truth", but it must be noticed that the protagonist of Wildhorn's musical is not only the representation of Victorian's faith in medical progress through experimentalism, but also the personification of a more recent discourse on human rights whose popularity increased to peak in the 1990s when the musical was written and produced.

In the first scene, Jekyll asks Utterson whether it is right to abandon his ill father to his fate and thus "treat him like an animal". Jekyll sustains that despite being unconscious, on the point of death and terminally ill, his father "is a man [...] and] he has emotional responses as sensitive as any of ours". This poses the question of the lesser being, and explores *if and to what extent* psycho-physical impairment defines humanness. Although the causes of Jekyll's father's condition are not explained in the musical, it is clear that he is not a man of sound mind and memory. Jekyll's diagnosis is that his father's "mind, the memory which allows him to express those emotions, rebels now and refuses to serve him" and at the same time he claims that "there's a means to reintegrate mind and emotion". This reintegration is seen as the ground for humanness, which is medically based on the restoration of the functionality of whatever is seen as a dysfunction.

When Jekyll faces the board of Governors at Saint Jude's, which can be seen as an *ante-litteram* bioethical committee, he specifically asks for a "man whom society has already abandoned". The Governors are disgusted and outraged at the idea that "a human *soul*" is to be "tested like a laboratory rat". The Board, which Carew later defines as the "established authority" is antagonised by Jekyll's experimental proposal which represents an attempt to deconstruct the

Cartesian *cogito*, to which the members of the Board firmly adhere. Jekyll's request of a "volunteer" is ironised upon by one of the members of the board whose sarcasm in the comment "a volunteer mental patient, very good" underlines the Victorian belief that people in such situation were incapable of deciding for their own self. Jekyll's view in the musical reflects the postmodern approach to these issues, when he refers to the board as "not the established authority, but merely the established prejudice", thus deconstructing the Victorian ideal that ethical, medical and scientific *auctoritas* was to be determined by social class. This intertwines deeply with the discourse of the de-humanisation of the different, since the process of dehumanisation "embodies the elimination of the victims, but [...] also orchestrates the cancellation of the social memory of these victims" (Carpi 2005: 101).

Jekyll can find no "volunteer mental patient" on whom to test his drugs other than himself, and by rendering his own body the theatre of his experiments, he literally embodies the duality that is immanent in the concept of the *pharmakon* that is simultaneously poison and healer. As the pharmakon cannot be reduced to the series of oppositional concepts that it precedes and produces (Derrida 2004: 100), so the body and voice of the actor cannot be separated from the two characters – but truly one character – that he personifies. It is only through the musical that such dualisation is made possible, where the music and the lyrics merge with the actor's voice and body in order to specifically give a new voice to Stevenson's character's complex and articulated corporeal duality.

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**Monographic section
Theatre and MICROTtheatres
New Writing**

It's All About Chemicals¹

*Emilia Haljala*²

Direction notes:

The monologue is performed by one actress in a small studio. The performance can be performed for a single audience as one-to-one performance but also for a small group (max 10 people). The situation should feel cozy and realistic. The performer is speaking directly to the audience creating an intimate and intensive connection between the spectator and actor.

The atmosphere at the beginning should be awkward but positive and gradually towards the ending turn anxious and horrific.

The small studio is staged as a darkish living room with some simple decorations. Audience is told to wait behind the door, this is the only information that is given to them. The performance starts when the actress already as the character opens the door as if someone would have knocked on it. She is confused as she did not expect to see these people behind the door. After the first moment, she invites the audience in as her guest.

The text contains some possibilities for a verbal interaction with an audience. During the monologue, the character asks a few questions and the audience is free to answer. The actor should be able to adapt the script slightly depending on the audience's responses. The performance was originally part of a research project and therefore the police officer hands a questionnaire to the audience at the end. They have to fill it in before they go.

The actors do not come back on stage for a bow.

¹ The monologue has been performed for the first time in February 2017 in Sitges (Barcelona) directed by Emilia Haljala, starring Annamåd Hjortaa as "The Woman" and Emilia Haljala as "Police Officer".

² Emilia Haljala is a Finnish artist, actress, author and performer. After a BA in Acting and the IAB – Institute of the Arts Barcelona, she has started an independent theatrical and performative company, specialized in creative workshops. Fascinated by adapting real life stories to stage and film, she is also a documentary short-film maker with a collaborative artist group.

THE WOMAN

Hi, hello... come in. Sorry, this is really strange, I mean having visitors. I didn't expect anyone. Don't take it wrong, it's nice. It's just been a long time since... anyway. Have a seat. Would you like to have something to drink? (*Audience's response*) How are you? (*Audience's response*)

To be honest, I've been here just thinking, thinking about life. I mean more specifically about love. Trying to find a definition. What love actually is. Have you ever been in love? (*Audience's response*)

All the clichés become true, butterflies tickling in your belly, you are so full of the feeling that you forget to eat, it's impossible to focus because your mind wanders, all the time. You don't even want to sleep cause you are too busy thinking about the one and when you are together everyone else disappears. You become like a horse with blinders who obeys only one master, the love.

Isn't it scary that love actually causes a very strong physical reaction. The body releases neurochemicals called monoamines which speed up heart rate, triggers an intense rush of pleasure and replicates the effect of a Class A drug. It has the same effect on the brain as taking cocaine, and I'm not even kidding. Yes, love is a drug, in fact one of the most dangerous one. I wonder when they'll ban love, make it illegal like other drugs. It doesn't make you only high but addicted too.

All that happened to me three years ago, addiction at first sight. His charm was unexplainable and I was straight away high on this drug. You know the feeling when you see everything through the pink glasses? It was amazing how fast we bonded, sharing our deepest fears and secret dreams. He had the right answer to all my questions, even to the questions where I had never found any answer myself. He made me feel very special. I admired him more than anything, and he knew that.

Catch! He had finally got me in his hook realizing that this fish was dumb enough to be his pet. I was put in a fishbowl where I could not escape, and I didn't even want to. I became an object in the bowl that he could feed or watch starving. Things started to change. His words became my law. He started poking me instead of petting. Strong jealousy came into the relationship but I was even flattered because I thought he just wanted to protect me.

All I wanted was his best so I started changing, for his sake, I avoided all the attention from other people, I stopped wearing any make-up, I even cut off from my male friends.

Emilia Haljala

It's All About Chemicals

But that wasn't enough. I was just a disappointment to him. He got upset if the coffee wasn't ready on time in the morning, if I forgot to wish him a lovely day, if I didn't reply immediately to his messages he believed I was cheating on him. I was there for him 24/7 but it wasn't enough. I became a liar who was holding the curtain so that nobody would see what was actually happening behind the scenes. Nothing was seen but felt.

Little by little, my pink glasses started to discolor and day by day I saw more shades of grey. The butterflies in my belly nested larvae which started to gnaw my guts. It wasn't because of him, it was because of me. I wasn't good enough. Every time he called me a fat selfish whore, I wasn't insulted, funny isn't it? Each time I just became more terrified of losing him because I couldn't imagine my life without him anymore.

It's said that romantic relationships are like rollercoasters. But I honestly think this is more like an endless tightrope walk above the Grand Canyon without any safety equipment. You do your best to keep the balance but there is a constant fear of slipping off. Is it the adrenaline that makes you still do it? I know you might be thinking, why don't you just leave. I know, but it's not that simple. I feel like part of him lives underneath my skin, controlling everything I do.

Yesterday morning we fought, again. Last days I had been busy with my work and I was not able to give him enough attention. He threatened that he would easily find someone else to replace me. I was well trained to know what to do when he was sad or mad. Usually it was sex. Not for our but for his pleasure. I guess I felt horrible that I hadn't been there for him last couple of days so I wanted to surprise him. I bought new underwear, bought some really good wine and cooked him dinner. He got home really late which was very typical of him. He seemed happy about the surprise, we actually had quite a good time and for once everything felt right again, until we had sex. It was very far from making love, he came very fast and snapped at me "If you continue, I will piss inside you. Move away, I've had enough sex today." Yes, he did get the attention from someone else if I wasn't enough. He went to the bathroom and I stayed in bed crying as usual. When he came back to bed he whispered: "Sleep tight, let's smile in the morning if you are still alive."

I'm tired of crying.

I'm tired of being sad.

I'm tired of pretending.

I'm tired of feeling lonely.

I'm tired of being anxious.

I'm tired of feeling crazy.
I'm tired of being controlled.
I'm tired of remembering.
I'm tired of living on the edge.
I'm tired of missing people.
I'm tired of feeling worthless.
I'm tired of wishing I could start all over.
I'm tired of dreaming of a life I will never have.
But most of all, I'm just fucking tired of being tired.

It's all about chemicals, isn't it? Euphoric, addictive, poisonous chemicals that guide us to either jump off from the cliff or push the other person off.

(Knock on the door, "It's police, open up!", a police officer opens the door and walks in).

POLICE OFFICER

Miss, you have to come with me. Hands behind your back. *(Police Officer arrests her)*

THE WOMAN

Finally I am free.

(The Police officer takes her out and goes back to the audience.)

POLICE OFFICER

As a witness/witnesses, could you answer to a few questions. When you are done you can leave the paper on the table and you are free to go. *(Leaves)*



Annamåd Hjortaa in *It's All About Chemicals*, photo by Emilia Haljala.

Emilia Haljala

It's All About Chemicals

Scacco

Claudio Boschi¹

Personaggi

Dottore: 40 anni, stimato psichiatra.

Marisa: stessa età. Ha subito un fortissimo trauma e ha perso apparentemente l'uso della parola.

Ospedale psichiatrico. Un dottore riceve Marisa, ospite della casa di cura, per il suo colloquio periodico. Marisa non parla. Sono seduti, l'immagine è di un colloquio informale.

Marisa guarda fissa il dottore ad ogni domanda che lui le pone. La fissità di questo sguardo lascia trasparire un'aria di sfida nei suoi confronti.

DOTTORE

Buongiorno Marisa. Come stai? Aurelio mi ha detto che questa settimana è andata meglio. Ti sei finalmente relazionata anche con altre persone. Ho visto anche la partita di palla a volo di ieri in cui ti sei scatenata. Non sapevo che eri brava. Quando hai cominciato? Hai mai partecipato a qualche competizione sportiva importante? Hai mai praticato altri sport? Io sono stato campione regionale di scherma, lo sai? Conobbi così una delle mie fidanzatine. Sai cos'è la scherma? Che ne diresti se qui in ospedale organizzassimo dei nuovi corsi in palestra? Dimmi uno sport che ti piace e io vedo di organizzare qualcosa. Ti piacerebbe affrontare uno sport nuovo... un'altra disciplina... Potresti cominciare a dirmi qualcosa di te, dopo un anno di incontri... O meglio... dopo un anno di incontri potresti anche incominciare a dire qualcosa, no? Ti piacerebbe uscire? Una volta fuori qual è la prima cosa che vorresti fare? Hai degli amici che vorresti rivedere? Sai molti mi dicono che hanno un posto in cui vorrebbero andare. Tu ce l'hai? Dove vuoi andare Marisa una volta fuori di qui? Dimmi solo questo. Facciamo così: non ti domando nulla... dimmi

¹ Claudio Boschi, dopo alcune esperienze televisive, si è dedicato quasi interamente al teatro, dimensione artistica che lo vede maggiormente coinvolto. Negli anni ha affrontato sia il repertorio del teatro classico che la drammaturgia contemporanea italiana e straniera, con particolare attenzione al teatro popolare. Da sempre molto attento alla fase formativa si è perfezionato in diverse *master classes* focalizzate sul lavoro dell'attore, l'uso della voce, la lettura e interpretazione dei testi, dimostrando un occhio di riguardo allo studio e alla ricerca. Nel 2016 è tra i protagonisti di *Stasera c'è spettacolo? To play* per il Napoli Teatro Festival Italia.

solo di che colore è quella parete e giuro che per oggi ti lascio in pace. Di che colore è, dimmi un po'? E dai... È un buon affare no? Mi dici di che colore è, solo quello... e finisco di romperti le scatole.

Sai stavo pensando che sta andando tutto abbastanza bene e che potrei pensare di cominciare le pratiche per farti uscire da qui. Significherebbe solo che una o due volte a settimana vieni qui e parliamo un po'... solo una mezz'oretta, non è poi tanto se ci pensi... Allora? Di che colore è quella parete?

Mi piace fare quello che faccio. A te piaceva quello che facevi prima di venire qui? A volte torno a casa e guardo l'orologio. È sempre tardissimo. Ma non me ne accorgo che si fa tardi... cioè io entro a casa e lo vedo. Non riesco a lasciare questo studio fin quando non ho controllato tutte le vostre carte, fin quando non ho saputo tutto ciò che avete mangiato, quello che avete fatto durante il giorno... i vostri progressi, le vostre paure. Quelle sorpassate e quelle nuove...

Sai perché non ho una famiglia? Perché faccio tardi. Ieri ho fatto le due. Ho guardato le tue carte tutto il tempo. Io faccio tutto questo per te e tu non parli. Non lo hai mai fatto in un anno. Il trauma ha avuto come conseguenza l'impossibilità di parlare. Tutto fila. È un classico caso da manuale. Un'automobile transita per una strada di montagna a velocità non folle ma sostenuta. Quanto basta per perdere il controllo su un lembo di asfalto pieno di ghiaia. Forse qualcosa che aveva lasciato lì un camion che è transitato prima. L'automobile sfonda il guardrail e si cappotta in una scarpata. Perdere la famiglia in una sola volta è qualcosa che non si augura a nessuno. Vedere il proprio figlio catapultato davanti ancora sul seggiolino che non ha retto l'impatto staccandosi dal sedile posteriore, vederlo esalare gli ultimi respiri con grandi difficoltà e tanto sangue. In questo incidente oltre al piccolo anche il marito muore all'istante per una botta incredibile alla testa BUM! Per l'impatto.

Guidavi tu Marisa... È il senso di colpa che ti ha tolto la parola...

Ho fatto quarant'anni la settimana scorsa. Nessuno mi ha fatto gli auguri. Semplice nessuno lo sa. Sì qualche amico di vecchia data se n'è ricordato, ma pochi... Sì certo mamma e papà mi hanno chiamato. Mamma mi ha chiesto anche: "perché non vieni a casa a festeggiarlo?". Indovina un po'? Avevo da lavorare. Oggi invece compio 12 anni di carriera. Dodici anni in cui ho raggiunto risultati incredibili con i miei metodi con tutti i miei pazienti, nessuno escluso. Pensa a sessant'anni dove posso arrivare. Ma mi dispiacerebbe moltissimo se dovessi arrivarcì senza che sia riuscito nel mio intento con te.

Come ti sei sentita Marisa, quando hai realizzato che era tutta colpa tua? Solo colpa tua? Hai realizzato subito che in un attimo hai perso tutto? Non è bello essere gli artefici della distruzione dei legami più profondi che una persona può avere quali i propri familiari. Giusto? Dimmi Marisa, quanto si soffre? Io non lo so che significa. A casa non mi aspetta nessuno. E guarda un po' il fato: non c'è nessuno che aspetti te, adesso. Eccolo!

Ecco lo sguardo che fai. Quando entri in competizione, è quello lo sguardo che fai. Anche durante la partita di pallavolo ce l'avevi. Ora la domanda è: perché entri in competizione con me? Non vuoi che io vinca... in cosa non vuoi che vinca? La nostra partita è questa? Io voglio che tu parli, ma tu combatti affinché questo non accada. E che succederebbe se vincessi io? Qui non si tratta di te e dei tuoi problemi, del tuo trauma. No. Non più... qui si tratta inspiegabilmente di te e di me. È cambiata la dimensione: non è più un rapporto medico-paziente. E forse non lo è mai stato. Non è più un percorso che prosegue secondo le regole della medicina. Sono cambiate le regole. Stanno diventando personali, per te. Hai cambiato gli strumenti. Ci stiamo trovando a combattere con due armi differenti. Io continuo a cercare di parlarti. A usare le parole, la terapia, la scienza, l'esperienza... tu hai cambiato le regole, hai cambiato il campo di gioco, hai cambiato obiettivo. È come se avessi impugnato una pistola e ti stessi allontanando, mettendoti in sicurezza con la distanza ma avendo sempre il pieno controllo di tutto. Giochiamo ad armi impari adesso. Non so perché ma il tuo problema sono diventato io. È un dato di fatto... se mi sfidi in questo modo, e se sei lucida come io sono sicuro che tu sia, allora siamo arrivati ad un punto in cui non posso farci nulla. Devo lasciare che sia così. Devo assecondare il tuo silenzio. Marisa credi che questo possa accadere? Credi che io possa fermarmi qui? Credi che io possa permettere che la mia carriera, il mio lavoro, quello che ho costruito per anni, l'unica mia ragione di vita, l'unico senso delle mie cose, la sola e unica bussola della mia esistenza possa essere macchiata da un fallimento? Da questo fallimento? Tu vuoi questo. Maledetta stronza intelligente, perché mentre cercavo di capirti non mi rendevo conto che avevo aperto le porte alla tua intelligenza e al tuo intuito. Quelli che hai usato per attirarmi nella tua trappola psicologica, rendendomi il debole di questa battaglia. Brava complimenti, mi sento una merda. Era questo che volevi? Ora che sono davanti a te? Quello che ha perso. Mettendomi in questa posizione io non posso più fare nulla. Mi hai fottuto.

MARISA (*ride*)

DOTTORE

Mi hai fottuto.

(*Lui si rende conto di aver perso fiducia in se stesso per questo fallimento. Non è possibile farsi prendere in giro da un malato che tu stai cercando di guarire. Meglio ucciderla e nascondere la prova del fallimento*)

DOTTORE

Non credevo che potesse accadermi. Non mi è mai fregato dei fallimenti personali. Gli affetti non hanno mai contatto per me. Tutto passa, tutto perde di significato col tempo. Se dopo 10 anni dalla morte di tuo padre non piangi più allora significa che non è quello che conta. Ecco perché il mio lavoro è così importante. Un paziente che guarisce è una grande gioia sì, ma per lui e per la sua famiglia, non per me. Per me conta solo vincere, contro la mente umana. Il nostro cervello è un avversario difficile. È come giocare a scacchi contro i più bravi del mondo e io sono abituato a vincere, Marisa. Tu sei l'avversario che mi ha sconfitto, ma sai qual è la cosa peggiore? È che mentre tu vincevi io non me ne accorgevo. Hai mai giocato a scacchi Marisa? Sai cosa si sente quando il tuo avversario pronuncia le parole “Scacco Matto”? C'è una frazione di secondo nella quale dentro senti il vuoto... successivamente alla quale ripeti “non è possibile, deve essersi sbagliato, deve esserci un modo” e poi niente... ti accorgi che hai perso...

(*Caccia una boccetta che lentamente svuota tirando il tampone di una siringa*)

Io non posso perdere. Non in questo...

(*Comincia la colluttazione che lui descrive in tempo reale ad alta voce come a voler descrivere il suo piano ed il suo eventuale alibi che lo porterà ad iniettarle una dose troppo alta di sedativo*)

Ed è per questo, che ora tu stai avendo una reazione spropositata, Marisa. Ti stai dimenando e hai perso il controllo, il tuo raptus violento è diventato incontrollabile ed io mi vedo costretto a iniettarti un sedativo, forse è troppo, ma non ho avuto il tempo di calcolarne il giusto dosaggio mentre tu mi aggredivi immotivatamente, capisci Marisa? Lo capisci Marisa?

(*Marisa capisce che nella colluttazione ha poche speranze di uscirne vincente e grida*)

MARISA

Aiuto!

(*Il dottore si ferma, lei trema... La siringa cade a terra. La partita a scacchi in realtà è finita adesso*)

DOTTORE

Di che colore è quella parete?

MARISA (*stremata*)

È nera...

(*Lentamente, da ora, si muovono come se riprendessero una vita diversa. È finito il loro gioco quotidiano ed è tempo di ritornare al loro stato di pazzi. Lui prende la sua camicia di forza che precedentemente avrà nascosto dietro la scrivania e la passa a lei, che gliela rimetterà. La luce sfuma lentamente sull'immagine di loro appoggiati alla scrivania. Lui sguardo fisso, come fosse completamente spento; lei che guardandolo ride divertita del gioco appena fatto e impaziente di rifarlo il giorno successivo, uguale... come ogni giorno).*

Reviews

Emanuele Tirelli (a cura di), *La misura dell'errore. Vita e teatro di Antonio Latella*, Napoli, Caracò Edizioni, 2016, ISBN: 9788899904005.

Il primo merito del libro-intervista curato da Emanuele Tirelli, *La misura dell'errore*, è un merito implicito, ovvero quello di essere il primo volume dedicato ad una delle figure chiave del teatro italiano ed europeo degli ultimi decenni: Antonio Latella. Un primato dovuto anche alla riservatezza del regista che si è aperto con il giornalista e scrittore, fornendo quindi una testimonianza scritta del suo percorso creativo, artistico e intellettuale. Il volume si pone come un primo studio su Latella, un punto di partenza per chi si voglia avvicinare all'artista in ottica teatrale e comparata – e l'internazionalismo di Latella, da inserire in un orizzonte europeo, implica la comparazione –, ma fruibile anche ad un pubblico non specializzato.

Prima attore con Luca Ronconi, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Massimo Castri e Vittorio Gassman, e poi regista di alcune tra le più interessanti messe in scena di William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Jean Genet, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Eduardo De Filippo (e l'innovativa produzione di *Natale in casa Cupiello*) e Samuel Beckett, Latella è una personalità conflittuale e questo si evince personalmente dal volume di Tirelli.

Tirelli si focalizza, nelle sue conversazioni con Latella, con accuratezza sulla carriera artistica del regista, senza tralasciare il suo profilo privato. La vita privata, tenuta estremamente riservata finora, si interseca e influisce palesemente nell'attività teatrale latelliana, partendo proprio dal quel conflitto che Latella vive con la cultura napoletana – Latella, dice lo stesso artista, è nato solo per caso a Castellammare di Stabia –, che è, quasi sempre, sinonimo di teatro e teatralità. Latella, nato a Castellammare e poi in giovane età emigrato con la famiglia a Torino, deve continuamente confrontarsi con Napoli e con la sua eredità culturale, e – punto interessante che Tirelli sottolinea più volte – se la città non gli appartiene – anche teatralmente, essendosi formato a Torino e a Firenze alla scuola di Vittorio Gassman –, diverso è il discorso con la lingua: seppure a Torino, il napoletano è la lingua della famiglia, usata in casa e, per tale motivo, con tutte le sue sporcature, la più presente e vicina.

La conflittualità con Napoli – e il suo sentirsi non ascrivibile al teatro napoletano – lascia spazio nel volume alla traiettoria internazionale dell'artista, che, in effetti, vive un successo e un

riconoscimento ufficiale prima all'estero che in Italia. Si pensi al suo *Porcile* di Pier Paolo Pasolini, andato in scena al Festival di Salisburgo nel 2003 e che ha rappresentato una consacrazione.

Un ulteriore punto di interesse è il rapporto tra Latella e l'intellettualità *tout court*. Il tema è spinoso. Latella, senza una vera istruzione formale ma tanta esperienza sul campo – da bottega – ha sempre vissuto con grande problematicità il suo rapporto con i “maestri” e il suo poter essere iscritto alla cerchia degli “intellettuali”.

Su questi tre nuclei, che rappresentano la nota chiave e il *Leitmotiv* del volume, Tirelli imbastisce la sua conversazione-intervista, prendendo in considerazione quegli spettacoli chiave nella lunga attività latelliana, come il citato *Porcile*.

Valentina Temussi

(Institute of the Arts Barcelona / Liverpool John Moores University)

Johann Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans: How the Nazis Usurped Europe's Classical Past*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2016, ISBN: 9780520292970.

The English translation by Richard R. Nybakken of the instant academic classic by Johann Chapoutot (Sorbonne), *Greeks, Romans, Germans* brings about interpretative challenges from its very title because of the general noun “Germans” and of the subheading chosen for the volume. The original *Le National-socialisme et l'antiquité*, first published in 2008, was, indeed, more neutral, academic and less sensationalistic, as well as, i.e., the Italian translation of the work, simply *Il nazismo e l'Antichità*, recently published in 2017 by Einaudi.

Chapoutot focuses, effectively, on the use made by the Nazi party of the classical world, specifically the Greek and Roman, realizing an appropriation process of the ancient culture in order to give a “model” for the modern German society after Versailles. However, the Germans cannot be defined as Germans *tout court*.

Greeks, Romans, Germans proceeds through the main section in which Chapoutot defines the process of “appropriation” and re-using of the classics by the Nazis: 1. Annexing Antiquity; 2. Imitating Antiquity; 3. Reliving Antiquity. The point of Chapoutot, who is Professor of Contemporary History and not a Classicist, is extremely interesting and directly links Nazi racist ideology with the forced re-interpretation of the classical past. The author states: “We think of National Socialism as the apotheosis of racism in both words and deeds. But racism is an exclusionary practice: it is the distinction between friend and enemy based on a strict biological determinism that, taken to extremes, separates who get to survive from who must perish” (p. 3). Then: “The biological transmission of racial traits precludes any casual dalliance outside the kinship group, any genealogical digression” (*ibidem*) and “the Germans thus traced their line far back into the distant past of palaeontology and primeval forest (Urwald), through the Teutonic Knights and the Brothers of the Sword (Fratres Militiae Christi), Frederick the Great and Bismarck, to Hindenburg, and, finally, Hitler – the chosen one of the prophet and acme of the race” (*ibidem*).

It is here that Chapoutot’s book finds its key note, rightly underlining how the concept of *genos* is distinct from the one of ethos, and how the ideological racism of the Nazis needed

something more than mythical origins that are purely related to genealogy and biology. There is a clear problem of lack of cultural prestige: “In the Western hierarchy of civilizations, the coarse Germans did not possess the necessary historical refinement” (p. 5).

It is for this reason – and to give a “solid” base to racism in terms of ethos – that the Third Reich started a systematic appropriation of the classical world – the cultural world *par excellence* – hence using classical images and references in speeches, events and other fields of public and private life: an example of this would be the works of the architect Albert Speer or those of film director Leni Riefensthal.

Chapoutot has delivered a prominent volume that shows how history has been rewritten by National-Socialism – and usurped, using the subheading of the English translation – in order to annex the ancient Greeks and Romans to the Nordic Race, in a way that, according to the author, is even deeper compared to the one put into effect by Mussolini and Fascism in Italy.

Elena Scuotto

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Federico Leonardi, *Tragedia e storia. Arnold Toynbee: la storia universale nella maschera della classicità*, Roma, Aracne, 2014, ISBN: 9788854872578.

Il contributo di Leonardi prende in esame la connessione di storia e tragedia nel pensiero di Arnold Toynbee. Il volume analizza la sfida lanciata dallo studioso di storia e letteratura all'Università di Oxford, e politologo al servizio del governo inglese, per un periodo di tempo dimenticato dalla critica letteraria e dagli storici. Esso è strutturato in cinque capitoli seguiti da un'appendice che presenta due relazioni tenute da Toynbee rispettivamente nel 1920 e nel 1951, sulla lettura della storia attraverso la tragedia greca, metodo su cui si basa tutta la sua ricerca storica.

Come spiega Leonardi, Toynbee attraverso un'opera in dodici volumi, *A study of History*, fornisce una base per lo studio della politica internazionale prendendo come modello di civiltà globale la Grecia e la Roma antica.

Nella capitolo introduttivo Leonardi traccia un profilo dello studioso inglese che, nel dipartimento di *Literae Humaniores* di Oxford prima e negli uffici del *Royal Institute of International Affairs* dopo, di cui fu per trent'anni direttore, lavora all'opera della sua vita, dal 1934 al 1961, penetrando e rivivendo la storia contemporanea, afflitta da due guerre mondiali e dal risultato postumo di una guerra fredda, che aveva spaccato il mondo in due parti, attraverso le vicissitudini vissute dai Greci e dai Romani.

Arnold Toynbee nasce a Londra nel 1889 da una famiglia borghese e colta. Lo zio, di cui Arnold portava il nome per la sua prematura scomparsa, fu uno dei massimi studiosi ed economisti di Oxford dell'800, al pari dei suoi contemporanei Marx ed Engels. Fu egli stesso a coniare l'espressione "Rivoluzione industriale". Divenuto professore di storia e letteratura greco-latina nella stessa università dello zio, Toynbee, ricorda Leonardi, sentì subito un gran peso sulle spalle e un'eredità culturale enorme (p. 21).

Leonardi mette in rilievo come alla base del lavoro del professore di Oxford vi sia l'uso della storia classica come modello per riflettere sulla contemporaneità, o meglio vi è l'uso del modello del mondo che la modernità ha definito antico per spiegare le cause e gli effetti di eventi circostanti. Attraverso un meccanismo osmotico, confrontando i fenomeni attuali con quelli degli antichi, che essendo finiti e completi possono assurgere alla funzione di modello di comparazione, si può giungere ad un livello di interpretazione dei fenomeni circostanti chiaro e

prevedibile. E ciò che è chiaro e prevedibile garantisce soluzioni adeguate non distruttive, perché, nella prospettiva di Toynbee, la storia è tragedia, tragedia in senso greco, ovvero dramma umano. Secondo Leonardi, la storiografia è per lo studioso inglese una storia comparata, ogni storia è lo studio di una o più civiltà, dunque la storiografia è storia comparata delle civiltà. Le civiltà sono società più estese sia a livello di spazio che di tempo rispetto ad uno stato-nazione o una città-stato, i quali a loro volta sono parti indivisibili delle società. Per cui sono le civiltà che secondo Toynbee, scrive Leonardi, costituiscono i campi intellegibili dello studio storico, come già Oswald Spengler – che è il punto di riferimento per Toynbee – aveva delineato in *Tramonto dell'Occidente* nel 1922.

In particolar modo nel terzo capitolo, Leonardi si sofferma sull'interrelazione tra storia e tragedia nella visione di Toynbee, per il quale ogni civiltà è l'insieme delle esperienze degli uomini. Gli uomini sono definiti come *animali eccessivi*, e «l'anima dell'uomo è votata alla finitezza, ma concepisce per natura idee infinite» (p. 79). Tali idee possono condurre l'uomo verso la tragedia, una distruzione che egli sa riconoscere razionalmente, ma non può evitare passionalmente. La tragedia, dunque, per Toynbee suona su tre note greche: *koros* (eccesso), *hybris* (comportamento esagerato) e *ate* (disastro) che conducono le civiltà in un viaggio verso il superuomo, poiché esse creano la *falsa trascendenza*, ovvero, come rileva Leonardi, “la scissione nel cuore dell'uomo fra sé in quanto uomo, quindi limitato, e sé, in quanto Dio, cioè potenzialmente illimitato, provoca una guerra interiore che si sfoga in una guerra civile” (p. 90). La vanagloria conduce l'uomo alla tragedia, cioè verso le guerre che, in senso tucidideo, nascono per impulsi di avidità e che portano a desiderare sempre più (il dominio). Ogni guerra tra stati, nota Leonardi, è ontologicamente una guerra civile scatenata dalla gloria ed è così in Tucidide come in Toynbee.

Per Toynbee, la storia è la trama della tragedia delle civiltà. Una trama che si divide in tre atti: nascita, sviluppo e fine (p. 67). Nessuna civiltà ha mai raggiunto l'immortalità. Si leggano, in traduzione, le parole di Toynbee riportate da Leonardi: “Gli studiosi di teatro, da Aristotele in avanti, vi diranno che quasi tutte le grandi tragedie in letteratura, presentano poche trame fondamentali. La mia supposizione è che le grandi civiltà che sono state create dallo spirito dell'uomo, se le analizziamo bene, potrebbero rivelare tutte quante la medesima trama” (p. 63). Dunque, ogni civiltà è una variazione di un'unica trama, la tragedia, ovvero la finitezza. E la storia è, in senso vichiano, qualcosa di vivo, dinamico, tragico, umano. La sua tragedia risiede nell'uomo. Ogni civiltà che ha cercato la gloria ha trovato la fine. Secondo Toynbee, la decadenza del mondo greco iniziò con la Guerra del Peloponneso: è infatti da questo momento che Atene

con la sua avidità di espansione si portò verso la sua stessa fine. Stesso declino tragico spetta a Roma (p. 73).

L'autore mette in luce come attraverso il modello greco e quello romano sia possibile spiegare le tre fasi di ogni trama, che muta per grado, dunque per qualità ma non per quantità, rispetto a quelle finite e complete del mondo antico. Le due guerre mondiali possono essere paragonate da Toynbee alle guerre puniche, uno scontro di civiltà, spinto da progetti ambiziosi ed espansionistici, dunque dalla sete di gloria. Nelle parole di Leonardi, “la guerra rappresenta la grande illusione delle civiltà. L'animale eccessivo getta nella guerra le sue deliranti attese, l'onnipotente, smisurata immagine di sé” (p. 82). A questo proposito, l'autore riporta le parole di Toynbee: “La guerra del 1914 mi sorprese mentre commentavo Tucidide agli studenti del Balliol, iscritti alla facoltà di *Literae Humaniores*, e, allora, improvvisamente, il mio intelletto fu illuminato. L'esperienza che stavamo ora facendo nel nostro mondo, era già stata fatta da Tucidide nel suo [...], dunque la differenza dei mondi è solo di grado, il mondo antico e quello moderno si presentavano filosoficamente contemporanei” (pp. 83-84). Come le guerre puniche e la Guerra del Peloponneso si conclusero con una grande espansione così le guerre mondiali condussero a dittature e a grandi imperi – o potenze – globali (p. 93).

Nell'ultimo capitolo, l'autore mette in rilievo la soluzione proposta da Toynbee. Partendo dal presupposto che la storia è tragedia perché fatta dagli uomini che sono fragili e vanagloriosi e confondono lo sviluppo con l'espansione, giungendo quindi alla guerra, con l'analisi storica e la comparazione con il mondo antico, l'uomo contemporaneo può percorrere un'altra strada, ossia quella che Toynbee definisce slancio vitale oppure federazione, cioè una condivisione dei frutti raccolti. Lo sviluppo economico come sviluppo spirituale può condurre a un nuovo ordine mondiale – e non a caso Toynbee è stato argomento di tesi per Henry Kissinger – fondato sulla convivenza pacifica. Questa soluzione, spiega Leonardi, è ritrovata da Toynbee nella Lega di Delo o nella Società delle Nazioni, in quei sovraorganismi il cui compito è stato di ridurre gli eccessi negativi delle civiltà incanalandoli in slanci vitali pacificatori. Solo in questo modo, attraverso la comparazione con il modello greco-latino, la civiltà contemporanea può evitare la sua fine e rendersi immortale, ed è questa la *speranza profetica* citata da Leonardi (p. 19).

Del resto l'equazione storia e teatro – nel caso di Toynbee la rappresentazione drammatica delle civiltà – fa parte della stessa natura della storia, uno spazio in cui, in cicli temporali, gli uomini rappresentano il loro dramma, la loro esistenza, la loro tragedia.

Leonardi specifica che le idee dello storico inglese, negli anni della Guerra Fredda, ebbero molto successo in ambito anglofono, tanto da divenire quasi un modello del blocco americano in antitesi a Marx. Henry Kissinger e Samuel Huntington si rivolsero a Toynbee e alle sue teorie per spiegare le geometrie della Guerra Fredda, così come anche il padre della *World History*, William McNeill e uno dei padri fondatori della Teoria delle Relazioni Internazionali, Martin Wight, furono discepoli dello studioso inglese (p. 31).

Nell'ultimo decennio, la sua figura è stata riscoperta a livello internazionale e anche in Italia: oltre al volume di Leonardi, gli sono stati dedicati altri contributi monografici, come quelli di Tagliaferri (2002), Castellin (2010) e Maggioni (2013), che tuttavia guardano alla totalità del pensiero toynbeeiano e non al parallelo specifico tra storia e tragedia trattato da Leonardi.

Ida Libera Valicenti

(Sapienza Università di Roma / Comenius University of Bratislava)

Mariagiovanna Grifi, *Chiamatemi Paola Riccara. Come una signora dell'alta borghesia napoletana diventò commediografa di successo*, Napoli, Il Mondo di Suk, 2016, ISBN: 9788896158111

Paola Riccara, nome d'arte di Emilia Vaglio, rappresenta una delle più interessanti figure di donne scrittrici e intellettuali di inizio '900 in Italia e, in particolare, in quell'ambiente culturale di grande fertilità che è la Napoli a cavallo dei due secoli. Scomparsa nel 1976, Riccara è da considerarsi a tutti gli effetti come una colonna del teatro napoletano. Troppo in fretta dimenticata, la sua presenza risulta invece capitale nell'evoluzione dell'arte scenica per le collaborazioni che la vedono impegnata con Eduardo Scarpetta, Raffaele Viviani, i De Filippo, ma anche a Roma con Ettore Petrolini, e sodale di personalità del calibro di Roberto Bracco, Luigi Pirandello, Renato Simoni, solo per fare qualche nome.

Pochi sono tuttavia i riferimenti biobibliografici su di lei, come, in fin dei conti, limitate sono le testimonianze e le messe in scena odierne delle sue opere. Tra queste si segnala, *Nu mese 'o ffresco*, forse il testo più famoso della sua cospicua produzione, portato alla ribalta in tempi recenti da Benedetto Casillo.

Per importanza, quindi, Paola Riccara si potrebbe porre su un piano simile a quello di Matilde Serao, seppure rimasta quasi totalmente sconosciuta al grande pubblico, così come agli studiosi e agli addetti ai lavori.

Pertanto, per una sua riscoperta, non è senza rilievo il recente volume di Mariagiovanna Grifi, *Chiamatemi Paola Riccara* che ne delinea, nello specifico, il profilo biografico come quello di "una signora dell'alta borghesia napoletana (che) diventò commediografa di successo".

Certamente della monografia di Grifi è possibile individuare alcuni pregi; in primo luogo un accurato apparato di note, a conclusione dei tre capitoli che compongono il volume; quindi una cronologia dei testi di Riccara suddivisi in "Opere teatrali" e "Poesie", con una breve introduzione ragionata. Ma se andiamo alla descrizione della vita, nonostante appaia precisa, è qui che riscontriamo alcuni dei limiti del testo. La ricostruzione storica è esaustiva nella sua suddivisione in tre capitoli, ma è il tono, a nostro avviso, ad essere errato. Il volume si pone infatti a metà strada tra lo studio e la narrazione, applicando una metodologia quasi anglosassone del saggio narrativo o saggio romanizzato (o meglio ancora biografia romanzzata).

Si veda l'inizio del primo capitolo, quasi *incipit* da romanzo:

Era un giovane alto e magro, la cui figura risultava ancora più gracile di fronte al corpo imponente di Emilia. Una donna robusta, dal viso dolce che celava un temperamento tutt'altro che mansueto. Quella signora elegante e possente stava per compiere cinquant'anni; di esperienze in teatro ne aveva fatte diverse e non si era mai tirata indietro, aveva affrontato le difficoltà senza timore di sbagliare, con fermezza e caparbietà (p. 15).

O ancora sull'esordio teatrale:

Il sipario si chiuse, un momento di silenzio e poi un forte applauso. Emilia era seduta in prima fila, mimetizzata tra le teste permanentate delle signore dell'alta società napoletana che avevano seguito con sorrisi maliziosi, ammiccamenti e un finto sguardo scandalizzato la commedia *Nu mese 'o ffrisco*, messa in scena il 26 febbraio 1916 dalla compagnia del Cavalier Pasquale Molinari al Teatro Nuovo. Mentre osservava l'entusiasmo del pubblico il cuore le si riempì di gioia: era il suo debutto e, anche se quelle persone non sapevano che fosse lei l'autrice, le avrebbe abbracciate una a una (pp. 24-25).

Da questi due soli esempi, appare evidente come il tono, il ritmo e lo stile dato da Grifi al suo volume sia quello della biografia romanzzata più che dello studio vero e proprio. E anche le varie personalità citate nel corso del volume, come Matilde Serao, i De Filippo, o Pirandello, si presentano quasi come personaggi costruiti all'interno di un'architettura narrativa.

Questo modo di impostare il discorso si pone pertanto come un limite non indifferente e un difetto per la monografia di Grifi. Se da un lato, infatti, *Chiamatemi Paola Riccora* ha sicuramente il merito di riportare alla ribalta una figura chiave del teatro italiano come Emilia Vaglio, le scelte stilistiche e metodologiche di Grifi fanno in modo che il suo volume corra il rischio di non porsi in futuro come fonte principale per studi che possano davvero riscoprire con continuità e profondità l'attività e la produzione della Riccora. Non sembra essere, in buona sostanza, questo un volume cui poter far eventualmente riferimento in studi successivi, poiché, pur essendoci certamente una puntuale ricerca delle fonti (come dimostrano le note e l'utilizzo di materiale dell'Archivio Personale di Emilia Vaglio), ciò che manca è una idea di scientificità e molto, come ho detto, sembra affidato ad una ricostruzione romanzzata.

Si prenda anche in considerazione la bibliografia. Se Grifi è attenta nelle note a conclusione di capitolo, così come nella cronologia delle opere e fornisce un indice analitico dei nomi, la bibliografia in sé sembra essere frettolosa e approssimativa, non ragionata. Quanto affermato si evince da ciò che l'autrice stessa scrive ad apertura della “Bibliografia essenziale”: “La maggior parte delle notizie riportate nel testo sono ricavate da articoli e recensioni pubblicati nelle seguenti

testate”, elencando poi esclusivamente i nomi dei vari giornali e riviste, ma senza fornire gli esatti riferimenti bibliografici che pure sarebbero stati essenziali (mancano il titolo dell’articolo, l’autore, la data, il luogo di pubblicazione). Segue poi una bibliografia tradizionale di 29 titoli, che non considerano contributi che riguardano il contesto in cui Paola Riccara si muove e lavora. Non vi sono, infatti, riferimenti a testi che avrebbero potuto costituire il *theoretical o historical framework* e che, al di là della semplice descrizione della vita della Vaglio, avrebbero potuto aiutare a creare una serie di rapporti precisi con gli altri grandi drammaturghi contemporanei o immediatamente successivi, e di cui, come detto, Paola Riccara è stata mentore.

Dal materiale raccolto e dalla sua rielaborazione Grifi ricava senza dubbio una narrazione romanzzata sul personaggio di Emilia Vaglio/Paola Riccara, non certamente un profilo critico, quando invece, per una prima vera riscoperta della principale autrice teatrale napoletana della prima metà del ’900 – insieme a Zietta Liù, nome d’arte della pisana, ma trapiantata a Napoli, Lea Maggiulli Bartorelli, grande scrittrice di teatro per l’infanzia –, sarebbe stato auspicabile maggiore profondità di analisi.

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