

STUDI D'ITALIANISTICA NELL'AFRICA AUSTRALE
ITALIAN STUDIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

VOL. 29 No. 1 (2016)

ISSN 1012-2338

Italian Studies in Southern Africa (e-ISSN 2225-7039) appears online on the AJOL website (<http://ajol.info/index.php/issa>). The journal is listed in Google Scholar, BIGLI (Bibliografia Generale della Lingua e della Letteratura Italiana) www.bigli.it, Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Studies_in_Southern_Africa and EBSCO Discovery Service. See also the Association website: api.org.za.

Editor / Direttore responsabile

Anna Meda (University of South Africa)

Co-editors / Con-direttori

Franco Arato (Università di Torino)

Giona Tuccini (University of Cape Town)

International Editorial Board /**Comitato scientifico internazionale**

Andrea Battistini (Università di Bologna)

Francesca Bernardini (Università “La Sapienza”, Roma)

Guido Bonsaver (Oxford University)

Giuseppe Conte (Imperia, Italy)

Graziella Corsinovi (Università di Genova)

Biancamaria Frabotta (Università “La Sapienza”, Roma)

Walter Geerts (University of Antwerp)

Pietro Gibellini (Università di Venezia)

Sarah Patricia Hill (Victoria University, Wellington)

Rena A. Lamparska (Boston College)

Massimo Lollini (University of Oregon)

Dante Maffia (*Il Policordo*, Roma)

Sebastiano Martelli (Università di Salerno)

Graziella Parati (Dartmouth College)

Paolo Puppa (Università di Venezia)

Luigi Reina (Università di Salerno)

Giuseppe Stellardi (Oxford University)

Rita Wilson (Monash University)

Sarah Zappulla Muscarà (Università di Catania)

Reviews / Recensioni

Anna Meda

Editorial Assistants / Aiuto-redazione

Anita Virga (University of the Witwatersrand)

Claudia Cala Fratini (University of South Africa)

Linda Parkes

Published by A.P.I.

(Associazione Professori d’Italiano / Association of Professional Italianists)

CONTENTS / SOMMARIO

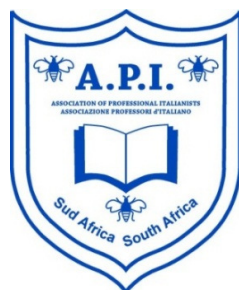
Bando Concorso di Scrittura Creativa v

Articles / Saggi

Angelo Castagnino	The Loneliness of the Judge	1
Claudia Fratini	Questions of 'Home' and 'Origin' in Valerio Massimo Manfredi's <i>Chiamira</i> and <i>The Ancient Curse</i>	23
Paola Quazzo	Music in Town: The Musical Shells of Calvino and Vladislavić	44
Giovanna Sansalvadore	The Zombie and his Italian Half Brother: the satiric use of the zombie myth in the short story <i>Zoologo</i> , by Niccolò Ammaniti	62

Notes and Gleanings / Note e curiosità

Marco Carmello	Il <i>Giornale di campagna</i> di Carlo Emilio Gadda. Per la definizione di un profilo politico	81
----------------	---	----



*Consolato Generale
d'Italia Johannesburg*



BANDO CONCORSO DI SCRITTURA CREATIVA API 2016

L'Associazione Professori d'Italiano (API) indice un Bando di Concorso di Scrittura Creativa Italiano per il Sudafrica in collaborazione con il Consolato Generale d'Italia a Johannesburg, l'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Pretoria e la Società Dante Alighieri di Johannesburg. Le modalità del concorso saranno le seguenti:

1. Il **tema** del Concorso è libero.
2. Possono partecipare al Concorso tutti i residenti in Sudafrica. Le opere devono essere inedite, originali, frutto esclusivo del proprio ingegno e in lingua italiana. Non sono ammesse traduzioni e/o

adattamenti di testi altrui. Il Concorso è composto da due categorie e ciascuna di esse divisa in due sezioni:

- a) **Categoria Giovani:** possono partecipare tutti i giovani fino ai 25 anni di età, in una delle seguenti categorie:
 - Sezione Poesia: invio di un massimo di tre poesie.
 - Sezione Narrativa: invio di un racconto di massimo 1500 parole.
- b) **Categoria Adulti:** possono partecipare tutti gli adulti dai 26 anni di età, in una delle seguenti sezioni:
 - Sezione Poesia: invio di un massimo di tre poesie.
 - Sezione Narrativa: invio di un racconto di massimo 2000 parole.

3. Per tutte le categorie la scadenza per l'invio dei testi è il **1 settembre 2016**. Tutte le opere devono pervenire in formato elettronico come allegato file Word all'indirizzo api@api.org.za. Inviare il testo in copia singola, includendo le seguenti informazioni in un documento separato: nome, cognome, data di nascita, numero di telefono, indirizzo email, categoria cui si intende partecipare e dichiarazione che il testo è frutto esclusivo del proprio ingegno.

4. La partecipazione al Concorso è gratuita.

5. Saranno premiati i vincitori per ogni Categoria e Sezione, i quali saranno contattati individualmente via email entro la metà di ottobre. La serata di premiazione si terrà a ottobre presso la sede della Società Dante Alighieri di Johannesburg. Inoltre, per tutti i testi premiati e i testi segnalati dalla Giuria è prevista la pubblicazione sulla stampa italiana in Sudafrica.

6. La **Giuria** è così composta:

- Anita Virga (University of the Witwatersrand)
- Anna Meda (University of South Africa)
- GionaTuccini (University of Cape Town)
- Alida Poeti (Società Dante Alighieri di Johannesburg)
- Federica Bellusci (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal)
- GiannellaSansalvadore (UNISA)

Il giudizio della Giuria è insindacabile.

7. Per informazioni e domande scrivere a api@api.org.za

8. La partecipazione al concorso implica di fatto l'accettazione di tutte le norme indicate nel presente bando.

ARTICLES / SAGGI

THE LONELINESS OF THE JUDGE

ANGELO CASTAGNINO
(University of Denver)

Sommario

La tendenza a caratterizzare il giudice come un personaggio solo nasce nel romanzo contemporaneo da ragioni sia storiche sia narratologiche. L'indipendenza del giudice è spesso minacciata dalle pressioni politiche, cui si sommano i roveli e le crisi interiori tipici di chi ha la responsabilità di giudicare gli altri. Lo studio della solitudine e dell'isolamento del giudice permette un paragone tra scelta narrativa e necessità storico-sociale: il fine di questo saggio è discutere il rapporto tra la caratterizzazione letteraria del personaggio e le implicazioni socio-politiche del ruolo.

Key Words: Law – Forensic Novel – Legal Thriller

Only one year before the assassination of Giovanni Falcone, French journalist Marcelle Padovani collected a series of interviews with the judge in the book *Cose di cosa nostra* (1991). In it, Falcone lamented the loneliness of those who fight organized crime in Italy, prophetically establishing a connection between isolation and death: “Si muore generalmente perché si è soli o perché si è entrati in un gioco troppo grande. Si muore spesso perché non si dispone delle necessarie alleanze, perché si è privi di sostegno” (Falcone & Padovani, 1991:171). These words invited greater participation from Italian institutions in the struggle against the mafia, as Falcone and

other investigators have often been left alone in their attempts to reestablish the authority of the State in those areas where the influence of the mob predominates. In addition to this form of institutional isolation, contemporary Italian literature has also addressed the uneasiness inherent in the role of the judge and the enormous responsibilities that accompany it. From the standpoint of the narrative construction of the loneliness of the judge, contemporary novelists have been strongly influenced by Dante Troisi's *Diario di un giudice* (1955), a book that highlights both the existential crisis of its protagonist and his helplessness in the face of a problematic judicial system.

This article examines the construction of the judge as a character in the contemporary Italian novel; Italian writers have made the condition of isolation a cornerstone of their characterization of judges. The works discussed, selected for their representation of judges as isolated outsiders, misfits in the Italian judicial system, will establish, I argue, a connection between the narrative aspect of characterization and the socio-historical implications of the figure of the solitary hero who fights for justice. After highlighting the legacy of Troisi's diary on the construction of the judge character in contemporary novels, the article will focus on the works of Leonardo Sciascia, Andrea Camilleri, Giancarlo De Cataldo, Carlo Lucarelli, Giorgio Fontana, and Mimmo Gangemi. The topic here discussed will also foster reflections on the *romanzo giudiziario* as a genre, its function in today's Italian literary landscape, and its relation with the detective novel.

A certain degree of skepticism toward the administration of justice traditionally distinguishes Italy, a country where, for example, the judicial system has delivered disputable results on the so-called *misteri d'Italia*, a series of investigations in which the authorities have covered up their ambiguous involvement in illegal activities. This historical background has contributed to the diffusion, among Italian citizens, of a sense of distrust towards political and judicial institutions. When Italians analyze the events at the center of a trial, they often disregard the official judgment and construct their own truth, arguably as a form of defense from powerful people and their ability to mislead the public. As Gundle and Rinaldi observe, the typical trial of an alleged murderer usually "is accompanied by press

speculation and interpretation that leads to the adoption of positions as to the innocence or guilt of the identified assassin. These attitudes, once fixed, will outlast any verdict of the courts. The case will be then kept alive in the public mind by those who do not accept the official outcome” (Gundle & Rinaldi, 2007:3). This separation between common citizens and the institutions of justice is not a recent phenomenon. The unpopularity of the current judicial system dates back several decades: already in 1964, Giuseppe Maranini remarked that “Sopra un punto almeno credo che tutti gli italiani ragionevoli siano d’accordo: la giustizia del nostro paese versa in condizioni deprecabili. Nessuno, solo che possa farne a meno, si rivolge al giudice per difendere il suo diritto; e troviamo, al contrario, un’avversione istintiva e vivissima nel cittadino comune, comunque chiamato ad avvicinarsi agli uffici giudiziari” (Maranini, 1964:13). More recently, twenty years of *berlusconismo* have increased public mistrust of the *magistrati* who, according to right-wing leader Silvio Berlusconi, are politically biased and, with their investigations and verdicts, try to impose a political agenda that conflicts with the popular will as expressed through elections. Recurring attacks on the judicial system have been a cornerstone of Berlusconi’s electoral campaigns, and they can be summarized in the following statement, which is indicative of the climate established during Italy’s *Seconda Repubblica*: “Questi giudici sono doppiamente matti! Per prima cosa, perché lo sono politicamente, e secondo sono matti comunque. Per fare quel lavoro devi essere mentalmente disturbato, devi avere delle turbe psichiche. Se fanno quel lavoro è perché sono antropologicamente diversi dal resto della razza umana”¹. As a consequence of this political climate, it should come as no surprise that Italian novelists have characterized judges as isolated and lonely, a distinguishing feature that will emerge from the analysis of the authors discussed below.

The problems deriving from the interference of politicians with the administration of justice intertwine with the uneasiness that typically affects those who undertake the profession of judging their fellow

¹ The interview, initially published in the British newspaper *The Spectator*, was later reprinted by the Italian press with much clamour, and is cited here as it appeared in *Corriere della sera*, 4 September 2003.

citizens. Conscientious judgment implies the meticulous analysis of details and decisions, and fictional judges obsessively revise their own actions to see if they deserve the position of moral privilege that they hold. The characterization of judges often indicates the contradictory coexistence of two opposite elements: an idealistic enthusiasm for a career dedicated to the pursuit of truth and justice is counterbalanced by the practical aspects that regulate the law and demand rigid adherence to formalities. Thus, the construction of the judge character is often based on the inner crisis of a protagonist who is caught between professional disillusion and the difficult balance of professional and private life.

The discomfort described in Troisi's *Diario di un giudice* derives from the controversial combination of the responsibilities resting in the hands of a judge and the recognition of the limits of an individual, elements that have become central to the characterization of judges in the strictly contemporary Italian novel. The power conferred to the representatives of the law is enormous, as "condannare è come uccidere" (Troisi, 2012:34); at the same time, the narrator realizes how the judicial system dominates judges, and Troisi describes himself as a mere instrument, the medium through which society seeks revenge against those who break the rules set by the community. Along with concerns about his function as a simple instrument of the system, Troisi established two other cornerstones of the fictional characterization of judges: the impossibility of maintaining close relationships in the private sphere, and an obsession with death. The incompatibility of the judicial profession with a conventional family life is connected to the idea of sacrifice that accompanies the individual in the struggle against crime. In order to construct the figure of a solitary hero, it is necessary to highlight his abandonment of a regular domestic routine, and this sacrifice is even more amplified by its contrast with the predominant lifestyle of the 1950s, which saw the widespread acceptance of a standardized idea of family life. In Troisi's diary, the narrator fears a violent death, and his subconscious projects this fear in the form of a nightmare. For some of the authors that will be examined, death is not simply the end of a character's existence, but the interruption of his ongoing investigations and, in the most extreme case of self-criticism, the end of a review of all the trials that the judge has brought to a conclusion in his lifetime.

Many of the distinguishing elements of *Diario di un giudice* have influenced the representation of judges in the Italian novel of more recent years, particularly in regard to the judges' isolation from the world that surrounds them. This isolation is central to the characterization of the *piccolo giudice*, the protagonist of Leonardo Sciascia's *Porte aperte* (1987). In this historical novel, set in the fascist period, the judge is expected to issue a sentence of death to the murderer of three people. Although the death penalty would satisfy the regime and the public, it conflicts with the judge's moral compass. His rejection of external pressures results in a moral victory and a practical defeat, as the price to pay for standing by his principles is the loss of career advancement. The isolation of the *piccolo giudice* is twofold, connected both to the specific trial that he presides over and to the perception people have of his function in society. The first form of isolation emerges from the incompatibility of his role as an impartial judge with the interests of his family. His relationship with his wife is negatively affected by the judge's intention to choose a life sentence over the death penalty. Aware of the repercussions that this act of rebellion against the regime might cause, his wife supports the expectations of the *vox populi* and advocates for the maximum punishment for the defendant. As she asks "lo condannerete?" (Sciascia, 2004:364) to see if the demands of the public will be satisfied, she reinforces the feeling of isolation affecting the judge, and from which the familial setting no longer shields him: "sentiva, ogni giorno di più, come una indefinibile (definibilissima) minaccia, un senso di isolamento, un crescere della sua solitudine. E una domanda della moglie gliene aveva dato un senso doloroso e quasi ossessivo" (Sciascia, 2004:364).

This feeling of isolation suffered by the *piccolo giudice* intertwines with the public interpretation of his role in the southern regions of Italy: according to Sciascia, the only way for a judge to be integrated with society is to let money or friendship corrupt his impartiality. Any resistance to this expectation is interpreted as an attempt to live in a parallel world made of legal codes, where only the law exists, disconnected from the practical aspects of social intercourse. According to the *piccolo giudice*, a certain degree of isolation, expressed through a disregard of compassion toward personal acquaintances, is necessary to perform his duties correctly. This

attitude generates a disconnect from the specific Sicilian setting, that in this case is representative of how the relationship between common citizens and the law is interpreted in the South: “Il giudice, l’uomo che sceglie il mestiere di giudicare i propri simili, è per le popolazioni meridionali, di ogni meridione, figura comprensibile se corrotto; di inattuabili sentimenti e intendimenti, come disgiunto dall’umano e comune sentire, e insomma incomprensibile, se né dai beni né dall’amicizia né dalla compassione si lascia corrompere” (Sciascia, 2004:376). Sciascia depicts the isolation of the judge as sad but professionally desirable, because only a character who does not associate with others is able to act impartially and reject external interference. The loneliness of the *piccolo giudice* is the inevitable effect of his decision to defend his moral principles, a choice that is typical of many of Sciascia’s characters – idealists who sacrifice everything for a cause that nevertheless results in failure. In this case, the life sentence will be appealed, and a different judge will eventually impose the death penalty, so that the moral victory of the *piccolo giudice* cannot be enjoyed from a practical point of view: the protagonist follows his conscience but loses both his career and the possibility of saving the defendant’s life. In the clash between ideals and reality, the *piccolo giudice* reflects the condition of those characters that Peter and Jane Schneider describe as “almost asking to be made the victims they became” (Schneider & Schneider, 1998:253). In his brave refusal to meet society’s expectations and obey the regime, the judge also embodies the enormous difference between exceptional model characters and average citizens, an opposition that Sciascia has often represented in his novels.

The uneasiness that troubles the *piccolo giudice* has always been at the center of Sciascia’s literary production; he often expressed his difficulty relating to the responsibility of judging others. The topics of justice and its administration were present throughout his entire career and were, along with constant reflection on the mafia, the cornerstones of his work as a novelist, non-fiction writer, and polemist. Sciascia analyzed the figure of the judge from outside the judicial system, from the standpoint of an individual who does not want to share the dangerous responsibility of deciding the destiny of others. For this reason, the isolation of the protagonist is so evident in *Porte aperte*: just as he had observed among judges in real life, Sciascia separated

the *piccolo giudice* from the rest of society, drawing a line between those who deliver judgment and those who receive it. Ten years before the publication of *Porte aperte*, the author already had proposed a binary opposition between judges and the rest of society, from the point of view of an observer who does not dare to work inside the system of the law. Sciascia remarked how the possibility of an individual error in the administration of justice can never be ruled out, an assumption that motivates his opposition to such an extreme punishment as the death penalty: “Ci sono persone che hanno scelto e scelgono la professione di giudicare i loro simili secondo le leggi dello Stato e che hanno acquisito la capacità tecnica per farlo: io posso soltanto, da fuori, controllare che la «forma» non uccida il «merito» e che insomma non si commettano, in nome della giustizia, ingiustizie” (*Corriere della sera*, 12 May 1977). As happens with many of Sciascia’s characters, the *piccolo giudice* supports a vision of justice superior to what is merely written in legal codes, and he is caught between the interpretation of justice as a principle and its practical implications. From a more strictly historical point of view, *Porte aperte* depicts the moment in which Fascism transforms the judicial system and makes it serve the purposes of the regime. With the introduction of the death penalty and the *codice* Rocco, Fascism meant to impose the authority of a ‘strong’ State, in opposition to the leniency of the previous *codice* Zanardelli². The symbolic aspect is central to the historical interpretation of the novel: with his merciful verdict, the ‘little judge’ is identified as an obstacle for the implementation of the dream of a crime-free society. The death penalty is a key factor in the construction of such image because, in the intentions of the regime, Italian citizens should be grateful for its reintroduction, and they should despise a judge who expresses concern for the life of a violent criminal. The historical interlocutor of the judge is the character of the *procuratore*, who embodies the ideals of

² The symbolic value of the Fascist interpretation of the law even influenced the internal organization of the text that introduced the Rocco code. The first chapters of the text address crimes against the State, and are ideally presented as more important than crimes against the individual, which are discussed in the second half of the code. Stephen Skinner has recently edited *Fascism and Criminal Law* (2015), a volume including articles on the *codice* Rocco and its legacy on today’s Italian judicial system.

Alfredo and Arturo Rocco with intertextual references to the 1926 article *Sul ripristino della pena di morte in Italia*.

The internal struggle of the character becomes obsession in the figure of Leonardo Attard, the judge at the center of Andrea Camilleri's short story *La revisione*, contained in the collection *Gli arancini di Montalbano* (1999). The protagonist lives in voluntary isolation, focusing solely on an overwhelming attempt to review all the trials that he has presided over in his career. The construction of this grotesque character is the prelude to a tragic ending, and the story is constructed around the crisis of an individual whose conscience is tormented by the possibility of having wrongly convicted innocents. Conditions of both physical and emotional isolation distinguish Attard throughout the entire story. As soon as Attard moves to Vigàta, the narrator describes the judge in his first encounters with Montalbano as "sempre vestito di nivuro, sempre solo" (Camilleri, 1999:246). The voluntary separation of the character from the surrounding community is the element that emerges above any other in the narrative construction of Attard: "«Si è fatto amicizie in paìsi?» «Ma quando mai! Non lo conosce nessuno! Esce solo di prima mattina, si fa la passiatà e poi non si vede più. Tutto quello che gli serve, dai giornali al mangiare, glielo accatta la cammarèra che di nome fa Prudenza [...]»" (Camilleri, 1999:249).

The irresistible need Attard feels to review all his cases does not allow for any distraction, and the judge has to limit his interaction with the world outside his new house, now transformed into a gigantic warehouse containing thousands of folders and files. The understandable desire to review his own actions becomes, for Attard, a psychological disease, a fixation that is focused more on his qualities as a human being than as a judge. He is thereby comparable to many characters in the narrative production of Pirandello, because he takes an initially comprehensible desire to unreasonable ends. Attard is the victim of an obsession that takes the form of madness, and Montalbano promptly recognizes the signs of mental illness in the judge: "Montalbano si era di subito fatto pirsuaso che quell'omo aveva una malatia. Non una malatia del corpo, naturalmente, si trattava di qualcosa che lo maceriava dintra, che gli faceva la pupilla troppo ferma e fissa, come persa darrè a un pinsèro ritornante" (Camilleri, 1999:252). Attard is affected by a specific form of

obsessive-compulsive disorder: his obsession, the fear of having misjudged one of his trials, generates the compulsion, the need to review several thousand documents. The nagging thought that keeps digging into his conscience can only be satisfied when Attard eventually finds evidence of a mistake that convicted an innocent.

The difficulty implied in the responsibilities of a person who judges others emerges in all its tragic aspects, and the condition of isolation becomes even more extreme: “Dice che in quel villino ci vuole restare da solo, che non vuole fastidi” (Camilleri, 1999:257-58). Shortly afterwards, Attard commits suicide and puts an end to his own existence but, more importantly, to the review, a task that was always unreasonable and that, taken so seriously, could only lead to tragedy. Among the enormity of the files that Attard analyzes, his single mistake becomes more important than entire trials presided flawlessly. Montalbano destroys the evidence of Attard’s error in a verdict delivered fifteen years before; those files demonstrate the flaws inherent in a justice system that can convict an innocent person, and the *commissario* knows that such a disturbing fact must be repressed, because it could influence future investigations and his own conscience.

Camilleri introduces a similarly unreasonable character in *Il giudice Surra*, contained in the anthology *Giudici* (2011), written with Giancarlo De Cataldo and Carlo Lucarelli. In this historical novella, set in post-unity Italy, the isolation of the judge character derives from his being an outsider, a newcomer to Sicily after relocating from Piedmont. Efisio Surra naively fails to recognize the risks of the *fratellanza*, the origin of today’s mafia, and his lack of understanding is mistaken for heroism in the town of Montelusa. As with many characters in the tradition of Sicilian literature, the construction of the protagonist relies heavily on the opinion that others build of the newcomer, rather than on his actions and thoughts. His outsider status is, at first, reason for mistrust, because Surra, “come uomo, era solitario e di scarsa parola” (Camilleri, 2011:5). As the story unfolds, the reputation of the character becomes increasingly respectable, allowing him to challenge a social system based on intimidation. Surra embodies an ideal form of law that can only be applied when the judge is neither influenced nor distracted by the socio-historical setting in which he operates. Unaware of the risks that he takes when

he investigates Don Nenè, Surra survives several assassination attempts and completely disregards other threats against his life. The element that allows for the existence of such an amusing character is the different language that Surra and the mob employ. Nenè and the *fratellanza* send a series of signs that the judge is unable to decipher, and the short story is entirely based on this miscommunication between the clan that runs illegal business in Montelusa and the judge who cannot conceive of its intention to fill the gap left by the weakness of the State³. This tragicomic misunderstanding helps Surra build a reputation as a hero and, as the public acclaims him as the judge who stands firm in the face of intimidation, several citizens overcome their fears and begin to collaborate with the law. Surra's grotesque isolation becomes his strongest weapon in the fight against the *status quo* of Montelusa and its *omertà*. The message implied in Camilleri's amusing characterization of Surra is that, in the struggle against organized crime, it is necessary to support the values of the law *per se*, disregarding the elements that do not pertain directly to the application of the codes, such as the social and cultural settings surrounding the case. Surra introduces himself as the representative of a body of law that cannot be interpreted differently depending on the setting, and he believes that "se non coincide con quella del codice, mi viene difficile chiamarla giustizia" (Camilleri, 2011:30). The judge succeeds because he does not try to adjust to the town of Montelusa: he embodies the law in its purest and most impersonal form, and he cannot perceive the mob's threats because he lives in an ideal space in which literal respect of the law makes transgressions and exceptions inconceivable. Surra's lack of knowledge about this Sicilian microcosm becomes his strongest asset: even though he has an intention to read it, he remains ignorant of the contents of the 1838 report written by Pietro Ulloa, the first study to address the genesis of the mafia.

The historical context of this novella set in post-unity Italy is particularly significant. It is remindful of the complex debate on which judicial system would best serve the interests of the new State,

³ The citizens of Montelusa credit the *fratellanza* for filling the void of authority left by central institutions. The establishment of a set of rules, albeit unwritten and based on abuse and violence, is considered necessary to avoid the chaos deriving from political instability.

as well as the difficulties in the administration of Sicily. The rejection of external interferences that characterized the island was exemplified, exactly in the same historical moment, by the *prefetto* of Girgenti, Enrico Falconcini, who was forced to resign because he was perceived as too strict in his literal interpretation of his mandate⁴. A northerner who tried to impose the law of the State on the South, Falconcini recollected his controversial experience in *Cinque mesi di prefettura in Sicilia* (1863). In his memoirs, the *prefetto* denounced the regrettable conditions of the province, pointing out how they interfered with its proper administration. He also established a relation between the lack of infrastructures and low quality of life: “E difetto fanno pure le strade alla squisitezza del vivere, alla franchezza del pensare [...] La difficoltà del viaggiare confina entro le mura domestiche la stima della civiltà, l’amore della scienza, la fede in sé medesimi” (Falconcini, 1863:20). While the genesis of the mafia and the *brigantaggio* precedes the process of national unification, it is in this period that a sense of disillusionment in the population fosters the growth of both phenomena. It also creates the premises for the perception of Sicily as ‘other’, following the tendency to represent the South as “associated monolithically with social and economic backwardness, political corruption, violence and criminality, in a way which has tended to disregard or minimize the differences in the multiple realities pertaining to the area” (Chu, 2011:59). Surra is unaware of the existence of the *fratellanza* and its repercussions on Sicilian society; his naive behavior contributes to the construction of an amusing character but, in the case of the Ulloa report, it also provides the crucial element that allows the judge to remain a (successful) outsider in the Sicilian setting.

In *La bambina*, Carlo Lucarelli symbolizes the isolation of the magistrate by keying on a specific trait of her physical appearance. A similar narrative device was used, for example, by Sciascia with the *piccolo giudice*, whose physical features are described as oddly young and small; these types of description increase the distinctions between

⁴ Along with the town of Vigata, the fictional district of Montelusa provides the setting for Camilleri’s narrative production. These locations are based on the town of Porto Empedocle and the city of Agrigento, the same area that was under the control of Falconcini. Camilleri authored the introduction to Falconcini’s memoirs in the edition that Sellerio published in 2002.

judges and the rest of society, at the same time reinforcing the difficulties they must overcome in order to influence society⁵. *La bambina*, judge Valentina Lorenzini, faces her investigations with a naive attitude that is similar to Surra's, but lacks the amusing aspects that distinguish Camilleri's character. While she is in charge of a case of bankruptcy, Lorenzini accidentally investigates a company that is illegally funded by the secret service, finding herself in what Falcone described as a *gioco troppo grande*. As in many stories by Lucarelli, the plot intertwines with the socio-historical background (in this case the early 1980s); the mysteries behind the *strage di Ustica* and the bombing of the Bologna Central Station justify the description of Italy as a nation in which the line between legal and illegal deeds is easily crossed. Among the stories discussed so far, *La bambina* is the first one to be structured quintessentially as a noir, the sub-genre that has narrated the contradictions of contemporary Italy in the last twenty years. As does Surra, the character of judge Lorenzini embodies a sad but meaningful message: only one who comes from outside the corrupted sociopolitical system can fight illegal practices. 1861 Sicily cannot produce a judge who does not accommodate the requests of the *fratellanza*, and 1980 Italy is likewise unable to support independent investigators in their attempt to uncover the relationship between institutions and the final part of the *anni di piombo*. Both Camilleri and Lucarelli introduce characters that use their status as naive outsiders to deliver, almost unintentionally, unexpected results. Although she is not as grotesquely naive as Surra, Valentina Lorenzini is introduced as inexperienced, and she suddenly discovers the existence of forces internal to the State (such as the infamous 'deviated secret service') that she, from the restricted perspective of her financial investigation, never suspected.

The isolation of Lorenzini becomes even worse because it implies a dichotomy that recurs in contemporary Italian crime fiction: the legitimate representative of the authorities is transformed, in the attempt to fight crime, into a force that attacks the State from the

⁵ In *Porte aperte*, the narrator remarks the opposition between the physical size of the judge and the overwhelming forces he fought: "Ogni volta che l'ho poi visto, e nelle poche volte in cui gli ho parlato, il dirlo piccolo mi è parso ne misurasse la grandezza: per le cose tanto più forti di lui che aveva serenamente affrontato" (Sciascia, 2004:389). A reference to the judge's age is evidently present in Alessandro Di Robilant's film *Il giudice ragazzino* (1994).

outside, and thus becomes a victim of the same authority she tries initially to impose. As the secret service chases Lorenzini down to silence her investigation, a moral dilemma over whether to defend a corrupted State at the potential cost of her life emerges, and the solitary heroine is once again left alone in her struggle to survive and make justice prevail. The nickname that people use to address Valentina, *la bambina*, summarizes all the difficulties she must face to be accepted. First, it indicates that she is a woman, and the administration of the law in Italy has traditionally been a male preserve⁶. The nickname is also indicative of the mockery with which colleagues address Lorenzini: having barely turned 30, there is a sense of distrust toward a person who has reached the respectable position of *giudice istruttore* so young, and the disapproval she endures is described in the feelings of her bodyguard:

Avrebbe potuto essere sua figlia, anche perché Ferro ce l'aveva davvero una figlia di trent'anni, ed era la secondogenita dei tre. E infatti gli scocciava starsene seduto davanti nella Ritmo in borghese della questura con quella ragazzina seduta dietro che leggeva il giornale. Sembrava un autista che porta la figlia del padrone all'università. (Lucarelli, 2011:46)

As it fosters an accusatory reflection on the hidden connections between the State and violence during the Years of Lead, *La bambina* is part of the recent wave of fictional productions that aim to create an alternative narrative of the *misteri d'Italia*. If historical truth is faulty or corrupted, the common ground between *romanzo giudiziario* and *noir* becomes a space in which to re-discuss the Italian past and shared memory, which is one of the qualities that have allowed the extraordinary popularity of crime fiction today.

In Giancarlo De Cataldo's *Il triplo sogno del procuratore*, a nagging thought ruins the life of judge Ottavio Mandati. His obsession, the arrest of Pierfiliberto Berazzi-Perdicò, the mayor of

⁶ Mario Mignone has remarked that the number of female judges increased in the years that followed the historical setting of *La bambina*: for example, prosecutors doubled between 1985 and 1992 (Mignone, 2008:333).

Novere and Mandati's lifelong rival, takes the form of a series of nightmares in which the antagonist is always able to escape conviction. The dream becomes the space where all the negative expectations of the judge, including his isolation from the rest of society, come true. In his dreams, Ottavio is the only person who realizes the illegal activities in which Pierfiliberto is involved and, as a consequence, the judge is left alone, heavily criticized by the public and his own family. The loneliness of the judge is so evident that Ottavio, aware of the impossibility of the State supporting him with another honest judge, prefers to fight alone: "Ma sì, chi se ne frega, benedetto sia il sogno, anzi, l'incubo, che mi ha fatto capire quanto sono solo. Ma meglio soli che male accompagnati" (De Cataldo, 2011:139). In Ottavio's dreamscapes, the several investigations he leads against Pierfiliberto do not ruin the accused's reputation, but rather the defendant is able to turn these accusations against the judge, an aspect that draws parallels between Pierfiliberto and several real-life politicians. In *Diario di un giudice*, Dante Troisi dreamed of his own death, while in De Cataldo's novella the alternative realm of the dream is the setting for the allegorical death of justice and the defeat of the judge. In the nightmares, the collaboration between the State and the criminal element, founded on mutual interest, takes shape in the form of a society that is willing to forgive powerful people in the hope that they can help distribute wealth among the population, even when such wealth is the result of illegal activity. The overwhelming powers acting against the judge make the fight unfair: the representative of the law has to respect every minor formal detail (for example, in the official request to obtain phone records for the investigation), whereas criminals can easily resort to corruption, receiving permission to erect buildings and profiting from the illegal disposal of toxic waste. The frustration deriving from such unfair competition emerges as a form of mental instability. While Camilleri's judge Attard projected his obsession on himself, Ottavio expresses all his rage against his antagonist, and the realm of the nightmare allows him to act in a way that would be unacceptable in court: "Dal profondo delle viscere gli partì un urlo terrificante, da bestia ferita. Si avventò sul dossier, quello vero, e prese a sventolarlo, in preda a un'ossessione malata. – Eh, no! Non mi fregghi! Non mi fregate! Nessuno mi frega! Qua dentro ci sono le prove! Qua c'è la verità!"

(De Cataldo, 2011:137-38). In the *Giudici* anthology, *Il triplo sogno del procuratore* is the only story that resolves the question of the isolation of the judge in an optimistic way. As he wakes from his dream on the day of the trial, Ottavio is not alone: his family stands by him, and he is ready to fight.

The figure of the solitary judge is at the center of Giorgio Fontana's *Morte di un uomo felice* (2014), a novel that was awarded the 2014 Premio Campiello. The socio-historical setting of the early 1980s, in the aftermath of the *strategia della tensione*, allows Fontana to draw extremely interesting connections between individual conscience and the social function of the judge. The uneasiness of Giacomo Colnaghi derives, above all, from his attempt to combine Catholic identity and his position as *sostituto procuratore* in the city of Milan. Colnaghi is introduced as unpopular in the workplace, where his superiors consider his ability to lead independent investigations a dangerous skill:

Il procuratore capo era in vena di discorsi e raccomandazioni velate di rimproveri: non apprezzava Colnaghi perché era un cattolico devoto, e perché troppo ironico per i suoi gusti; la sua indipendenza era mal vista, in un momento dove tutti erano occupati a definire meglio le proprie simpatie; e soprattutto, non amava il gruppo che aveva creato con la Franz e Micillo (che pure appoggiava per motivi diversi). Con il tempo, Colnaghi aveva imparato a ignorarlo. (Fontana, 2014:35)

Colnaghi differs from his colleagues in his interpretation of the role of the judge, because he refuses to be the passive medium between crime and punishment that Troisi described in *Diario di un giudice*, a book Colnaghi receives as a present from a friend. Rather than merely convicting left-wing terrorists, he feels the need to understand the reasons behind their attacks. The isolation of the character derives from his merits in the fight against terrorism and his being a model representative of the law. From the point of view of *Formazione proletaria combattente*, Giacomo is not simply a valuable antagonist, but his moral and behavioral qualities confer legitimacy to the institutions he defends. For this reason, and not merely because he

arrests several terrorists, he has to die: Colnaghi is an obstacle to their attempt to gain a popular consensus against a corrupt and unfair State that, thanks to honest people like him, can claim the moral right to impose its authority.

The crisis of identity within the judge originates in the contrasts between faith and law: as a Catholic, Colnaghi has been instructed to 'turn the other cheek', but there is no space for a similar attitude in his profession and in the specific historical setting of the early 1980s. The people who have lost their relatives due to terrorist acts expect the judge to become the instrument of their revenge, but Colnaghi cannot let emotions interfere with his job. Rather than exploiting the popular demand for extreme punishments, he believes that such measures can only result from the supreme judgment of God, and this aspect separates Colnaghi from the other characters in the book⁷. The judge explains his approach to the administration of the law with a statement that resembles a declaration of faith, in which the expression *credo* is used to appease a crowd that demands justice: "So che il mio compito finisce con una pena giusta per i colpevoli. Ma so anche che non basta. [...] Credo fermamente che un giorno Dio rimetterà ogni cosa, ogni ferita come ogni colpa, ma al momento mi rendo conto che non posso dire altro" (Fontana, 2014:7).

Family institutions, too, participate in the construction of Giacomo's isolation. The novel introduces an interesting intersection between past and present: the time in which Giacomo's story takes place is presented as the product of the actions of Ernesto, his father, who died in 1944 after joining a partisan group. Faced with the decision of whether to put their lives in jeopardy, father and son follow the same instinct: they both give priority to the ideals in which they believe, and the result is the abandonment of their families. Both Ernesto and Giacomo are eventually murdered, fully aware that their families will not understand their 'betrayal', an aspect that is amplified by their Catholic background.

Colnaghi's moral dilemma is inherited by his friend, Roberto Doni, the protagonist of Fontana's *Per legge superiore* (2011), a novel set in

⁷ Fabrizio De Andrè represented the opposition between divine and earthly justice in his song *Un giudice* (1971), the story of a frustrated man who becomes "arbitro in terra del bene e del male".

contemporary Milan. Doni's crisis involves the interpretation of true justice as a utopia: truth only matters as long as it can be proven inside the mechanisms of law, and the impossibility of defending the people that society marginalizes obsesses Doni. The distance between common citizens and the bureaucracy of justice, so deeply felt in Italian society, is allegorically represented by the description of the setting, and the microcosm of the courthouse metaphorically suggests the condition of the judicial system in Italy. The building in which the law is administered is unsafe and unstable, its physical aspect meant to showcase a voluntary separation from the outside world. This decaying ivory tower participates in the construction of Doni as emotionally distant from the rest of society. The records office, a labyrinth in which files are not properly catalogued and chaos grows worse as years go by and folders pile up, is the symbolic representation of the Italian judicial system and the unsustainable bureaucracy that makes legal procedures unreasonably lengthy. Allegory is widely present in Fontana's *dittico sulla giustizia*, and usually describes places and characters who are rundown, to transmit a more general idea of the dilapidated state of justice in Italy. In *Per legge superiore*, the metonymy of the decaying courthouse establishes a direct connection with the judicial system as a whole, while in *Morte di un uomo felice* the physical appearances of the characters are used for a similar purpose, when judges are described as weak and tired: "I tre si misurarono ancora un poco con gli sguardi, e di colpo si videro per ciò che erano: corpi smagriti ed esausti" (Fontana, 2014:13). These factors transmit the idea of justice as an inaccessible goal for common citizens and, as Di Ciolla has observed in her study on justice in Italian crime fiction, "the perception of Law as a repressive institution – one which calls individuals to account in compliance to an order which was created despite themselves, which operates obscurely and perhaps not entirely fairly, in places far removed from those commonly accessible to all – still remains" (Di Ciolla, 2010:183).

Strictly contemporary novelists have explored a different characterization of the judge, resembling in many ways the private eye of noir fiction. Mimmo Gangemi has introduced the figure of a magistrate-investigator, Alberto Lenzi, who symbolizes the frustration of the judge when confronted by the many impediments (political,

administrative, and practical) that make the struggle against crime impossible to win. Inspired by the influence that criminal organizations exercise in Calabria, Lenzi's investigations become pretexts to foster a reflection on illegal toxic waste dumping and the exploitation of undocumented immigrants. Once again, the judge is introduced as an outsider, an individualist unable to establish a constructive professional relationship with his coworkers. The sarcastic register that pervades *Il giudice meschino* (2009) and *Il patto del giudice* (2013) allows Lenzi to make a series of polemic and politically incorrect statements that set him apart from the idealistic approach found in Fontana's novels. The impossibility of undermining the dominance of the 'Ndrangheta destroys the possibility of creating a utopia of justice. As several clans initiate a deadly war for control of the territory, Lenzi's frustration resembles a declaration of impotence in the face of an evil force that is too deeply rooted in the local social system: "Io aspetto. Sì, aspetto il piombo. Che si consumino tra di loro. Più se ne consumano e meglio è. Non provo scrupoli. Loro ne provano per tutte le nefandezze che commettono? No. E allora non meritano la mia pietà" (Gangemi, 2013:112). Lenzi embodies a typical element of noir fiction: the lack of a clear distinction between good and evil qualities in the hero. When a series of vendettas eliminates several mobsters, the judge does not hide a certain satisfaction, a belief that divine justice is delivering the results that the institutions of law cannot. Lenzi "Stava a mezzo tra gli scrupoli e l'idea, blasfema ma pazienza, che, dove non era riuscita la giustizia terrena, stava riuscendo la santa mano di Dio" (Gangemi, 2013:140), and the physical elimination of criminals suggests a sense of defeat for the ideal of real justice⁸.

The characters examined in this article are presented as individuals in crisis, fragile, isolated from the rest of the judicial system, and uncertain about the possibility of positively affecting society through the administration of the law. From this perspective, the Italian contemporary *romanzo giudiziario* goes against the tradition of some of the most critically acclaimed authors of the twentieth century who,

⁸ In Gianrico Carofiglio's *La regola dell'equilibrio* (2014), the characterisation of judge Pierluigi Larocca as disillusioned is even more extreme, and it leads to his involvement in a group of corrupted representatives of the law.

influenced by the writings of Kafka, represented judges as perfectly integrated within what appeared as a parallel world distinguished by an alienating lack of emotion among members of the legal bureaucracy⁹. The judges here share an obsessive desire to reaffirm their individual identities and escape the expectations of the surrounding environment; this approach allows the authors to re-examine historical periods and events that have never been completely clarified. For this reason, the characterization of the isolated judge fits so well the settings of post-unity Italy, fascism, the *anni di piombo*, and the more recent past, marked by the transformation of criminal organizations from rural phenomena into international businesses. For all these historical periods, Italy still waits for a *just* narration of the events, and expresses through fiction the desire to “‘fare giustizia’ di una storia che sembra fatta di misteri e omissioni, di deliberati oblii e problematiche dimenticanze” (Adamo, 2009:259). In order to rewrite national history, the Italian *romanzo giudiziario*, especially in its most recent form, leans toward the *noir* and its uncertain distinction between good and evil characters¹⁰. The stories of judge Lorenzini and Lenzi, for example, unveil the responsibilities of the State in acts of violence against its own institutions and citizens, and all the characters studied here must act as outsiders in a system that does not match their extraordinary ethical, moral, and professional standards.

The opposition between exceptionally brave and capable judges and the rest of the judicial system finds confirmation in recent journalistic inquiries. Gian Antonio Stella and Sergio Rizzo’s *La deriva* (2008) and, more extensively, Stefano Livadiotti’s *L’ultracasta* (2011), have portrayed the administration of the law as a sort of ivory tower that rejects any communication with society and considers criticism as a form of intolerable interference¹¹. The judges studied in

⁹ In the detective novel, two notable examples are Bernardo Gui, the inquisitor of Umberto Eco’s *Il nome della rosa* (1980), and the judge who acquits Titano Silva in Antonio Tabucchi’s *La testa perduta di Damasceno Monteiro* (1999).

¹⁰ Despite natural similarities, the Italian *romanzo giudiziario* differs from the Anglo-Saxon legal thriller, mostly because the two sub-genres express profoundly different judicial systems. Among others, Remo Ceserani has remarked the incompatibility of the two systems in “Davanti alla grande macchina della legge” (2012).

¹¹ The study of Italian judges as belonging to a privileged *casta* has met the resurgence in popularity of the journalistic inquiry as a genre in today’s Italian literary landscape. Already

the present analysis emerge as exceptional examples of virtue and reaffirm a 'noble' approach to their profession that even involves serious risks for their individual safety. The often successful endings of the investigations that isolated judges coordinate present an interesting message: because the surrounding environment is corrupt and inefficient, only outsiders are able to deliver results, as their standards have not been lowered by the setting. For this reason, the judges who succeed in fighting crime are characterized in opposition to the rest of the judicial system, even to the extent of presenting them as amusing or grotesque characters. Loneliness causes the emotional crises of the characters, but it is simultaneously the key to their professional success. Thus, the figure of the judge embodies a contradictory and controversial relation with the setting of the novel: the character longs for support from the system, but realizes that individual sacrifice is the only way to avoid negative interference in the pursuit of justice. In contemporary Italy, this absence of collaboration has generated a dangerous phenomenon: the figure of a solitary hero who carries the burden of the fight against criminality, but who is clearly insufficient if institutions and common citizens do not join the struggle¹². The powerful message arriving from those who have sacrificed their lives risks misinterpretation if the responsibilities of justice are not shared by society as a whole, and the lack of support that Falcone lamented still calls for a change in the way crime is fought and discussed in Italy today.

in 1998 Indro Montanelli remarked the different approaches to the profession of the judge when he wrote: "Nella giustizia c'è un dieci per cento di autentici eroi pronti a sacrificare carriera e vita: ma sono senza voce in un coro di gaglioffi che c'è da ringraziare Dio quando sono mossi soltanto da smania di protagonismo" (*Corriere della Sera*, 24 August 1998).

¹² Parallels between judges and intellectuals emerge, for example, if one considers such figures as Pier Paolo Pasolini and Roberto Saviano, who both have become symbols of the individual struggle against illegality and injustice. In *Dimenticare Pasolini* (2013), Pierpaolo Antonello warns about the consequences implied by delegating to a single individual the denunciation of illegality. The faith in an *intellettuale-vate* who puts his own life in jeopardy for the sake of society, as Pasolini and Saviano have done, should not be abused in order to avoid direct involvement in the struggle against crime.

References

- Adamo, S. 2009 "La giustizia del dimenticato." *Postmodern impegno*. Eds. Antonello, P. & Mussgnug, F. New York: Peter Lang.
- Antonello, P. 2013 *Dimenticare Pasolini*. Milano: Mimesis.
- Camilleri, A. 1999 *Gli arancini di Montalbano*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Camilleri, A.; De Cataldo, G. & Lucarelli, C. 2011 *Giudici*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Carofiglio, G. 2014 *La regola dell'equilibrio*. Torino: Einaudi. Epub.
- Ceserani, R. 2012 "Davanti alla grande macchina della legge." *Between* II.3, <http://ojs.unica.it/index.php/between>
- Chu, M. 2011 'Crime and the South.' *Italian Crime Fiction*. Ed. Giuliana Pieri. Cardiff: U of Wales P, pp. 89-114.
- Di Ciolla, N. 2010 *Uncertain Justice: Crime and Retribution in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction*. Newcastle: Cambridge.
- Falconcini, E. 1863 *Cinque mesi di prefettura*. Firenze, Tipografia Galileiana.
- Falcone, G. & Marcelle, P. 1991 *Cose di cosa nostra*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- Fontana, G. 2011 *Per legge superiore*. Palermo: Sellerio. Epub.
- . 2014 *Morte di un uomo felice*. Palermo:

- Sellerio. Epub.
- Gangemi, M. 2009 *Il giudice meschino*. Torino: Einaudi. Epub.
- . 2014 *Il patto del giudice*. Torino: Einaudi. Epub.
- Gundle, S. & Rinaldi, L. (Eds.) 2007 *Assassinations and Murder in Modern Italy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maranini, G. 1964 *Giustizia in catene*. Milano: Edizioni di Comunità.
- Mignone, M. 2008 *Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Schneider, P. & Schneider, J. 1998 “Il caso Sciascia: Dilemmas of the Antimafia Movement in Sicily.” *Italy’s Southern Question: orientalism in one country*. Ed. Jane Schneider. Oxford: Berg.
- Sciascia, L. 2004 *La scomparsa di Majorana*, in *Opere, vol 2, 1971-1983*. Milan: Bompiani.
- . 2004 *Porte aperte. Opere, vol. 3, 1984-1989*. Milano: Bompiani.
- Skinner, S. 2015 *Fascism and Criminal Law*. Oxford: Hart.
- Stella, G.A. & Rizzo, S. 2008 *La deriva. Perché l’Italia rischia il naufragio*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- Troisi, D. 2012 *Diario di un giudice*. Palermo: Sellerio.

QUESTIONS OF 'HOME' AND 'ORIGIN' IN VALERIO MASSIMO MANFREDI'S *CHIAMIRA AND THE ANCIENT CURSE*

CLAUDIA FRATINI
(University of South Africa, Pretoria)

Sommario

Nel romanzo di Valerio Massimo Manfredi Chiamira (2001) / The Ancient Curse (2010) la nozione di casa è esplorata attraverso l'utilizzo di topoi narrativi tratti dal mito antico e dalla storia. Da un palazzo abbandonato in una città toscana alla comparsa, nei punti cruciali della narrazione, di un ragazzo coinvolto nel saccheggio di una tomba etrusca, gli spazi associati con il concetto di casa sono variamente impiegati nella creazione di un thriller che scava nelle profondità dell'animo umano. Particolare attenzione nel saggio è prestata al significato della tomba come 'spazio di riposo' e 'spazio di ritorno', così come al mito di Tages.

Key Words: Eruscan – Ancient Myth – Thriller

Better known for his historical novels, the likes of *The Alexander Trilogy* (1998), Manfredi's popular novels are widely read and cover a range of *genres* from thrillers to adventure and detective novels. In these novels, rather than respect the classical text as a story to be retold, Manfredi uses the classical sources¹ as raw materials to tell a new story through which contemporary issues pertaining to our society are explored. The mystery surrounding the modern narrative of these novels progressively unravels as the reader 'discovers' and/or applies prior knowledge of the myths and history of the artefacts

¹ For the purpose of this paper, a 'classical source' refers to a classical text as well as objects from the ancient and classical period seen as "current interpretations of ancient texts [...] in complex ways, constructed by the chain of receptions through which their continued readability has been affected" (Martindale, 1993:7).

employed in the novels, thus allowing for a dynamic reading of the text(s).

In *The Ancient Curse*, the 'home' and its various significations is explored through the creation of narrative spaces that re-evaluate the shifting meanings of 'homes': homes past and homes present. The theme of 'home' is thus approached not only through the physical description of what may traditionally constitute 'home', but primarily through the notion of home which is explored through the narrative spaces formulated around the reception of ancient myth and history. This relationship between the physical abode, 'home' and the development of the narrative becomes symbiotic. It is through the exploration of these physical spaces – houses, palaces, tombs and farms – that the narrative takes shape and transforms into a tale of horror, honour and restitution.

Set in modern Volterra, the ancient Etruscan town known as Velatri, the narrative follows the discoveries of the young archaeologist and academic, Fabrizio Castellani, as he becomes involved in a complex decoding of an ancient curse as it plays out in the present after the desecration of an unmarked Etruscan tomb. The temporal duality of the narrative, marked by the overlapping of the fate of Turm Kaiknas, an Etruscan noble and his family at the hands of the ruthless Lars Thyrrens, lord of Velatri, and Fabrizio's research into the origins of a seemingly unrelated statue dated to the same era enables the concept of 'home' to be argued as both physical space and abstraction of origin. Through Fabrizio's various physical investigations into the origins of the statue, *Ombra della sera*, the metaphysical, spectral spaces of the past become corporeal in the narrative of present.

The theme of 'home' is introduced in the opening paragraphs of the novel with the arrival in Volterra of the young archaeologist, Fabrizio Castellani and a description of his new lodgings:

Fabrizio Castellani arrivò a Volterra una sera di ottobre [...] Un amico di suo padre gli aveva trovato un alloggio a buon mercato in una fattoria della Val d'Era, a non molta distanza dalla città. Il colono se n'era andato qualche tempo prima, il podere era sfitto e lo sarebbe

rimasto ancora a lungo perché il padrone pensava di ristrutturare il fabbricato [...] La parte antica era fatta di sasso e coperta con vecchi coppi macchiati, a nord di licheni gialli e verdi, quella più recente di mattoni. Il terreno circostante, coltivato nel lato esposto a sud, allineava una decina di filari di grandi ulivi nodosi pieni di frutti e altrettanti di una vite bassa, carica di grappoli violacei con le foglie che cominciavano a variare dal verde verso il rossobrillante dell'autunno. Un muretto di pietra a secco correva tutto attorno ma appariva in più punti crollato e bisognoso di restauro [...] La casa gli piacque subito, soprattutto per il profumo di fieno, di mentastro e di salvia che riempiva l'aria della sera assieme ai voli delle ultime rondini, ancora riluttanti ad abbandonare i loro nidi vuoti. (Manfredi 2002:7-8)²

Fabrizio's new 'home' is comfortable, large and serene, however one cannot ignore the sense of isolation and abandonment that is created in the text. The description tells of a home that was inhabited, changed, vacated and now re-inhabited by a displaced individual.

Shelly Mallet (2004) in her paper titled, *Understanding home: a critical review of the literature*, describes the concept of 'home' as being more than just a place, as it is inhabited by family, people and things. It is a space of familiarity that even if not necessarily comfortable, within which one interacts, shares and lives activities and relationships. She continues to say that in her view, "home is a

² "Fabrizio Castellani arrived in Volterra one October evening [...] A friend of his father's had found him cheap accommodation on a farm in Val d'Era, not far from the city. The farmhouse had been vacant since earlier that year, when the previous tenant had left, having given up on the owner's grand sketchy plans to restructure the building... The oldest part was of stone, covered with ancient handmade roof tiles lichen-stained yellow and green on the north side, while the newer part was brick [...] The land to the south hosted a dozen rows of bog gnarled olive trees laden with fruit, as well as low vines still hanging with clusters of violet grapes and leaves that had started to turn bright red [...] He liked the house instantly, especially the scent of hay, mint and sage that rose through the evening air to meet the flight of the last swallows of the season, still reluctant to abandon their empty nests." (Manfredi, 2010: 1-2)

virtual place³, a repository for memories of the lived spaces. It locates lived time and space, particularly intimate familial time and space” (Mallet, 2004:63). In the above extract from the novel, this sense of “lived time and space” is exemplified through the emptiness and faded dreams conveyed by the abandoned farmhouse and reinforced by the flight of the last swallows that are “ancora riluttanti ad abbandonare i loro nidi vuoti” (Manfredi, 2002:8). The sense of space being emptied is both juxtaposed and qualified by the season. It is autumn, the season of harvest, where the fruits of the fertile summer cluster and weigh down the changing branches, ready to be plucked, reaped, laying the land or ‘home’ bare. Through the setting of the introductory chapter of the novel in a season of natural abandonment, Manfredi opens up a space for a narrative that becomes a repository for, and the re-enactment of, memory through the exploration of abandon ‘homes’. It transmits a sense of both past and present, where the present holds only echoes, shades of the past.

However, it is not only Fabrizio’s new abode that echoes of these shadows of past and present as he has relocated to Volterra to research an enigmatic Etruscan statue titled, *L’ombra della sera* (*The Shade of Twilight*), which is housed in the Volterra museum. The museum itself acts as a ‘home’ for ‘displaced’ objects in time. However, as Grimes points out in *Sacred objects in museum spaces*, “[t]his is not home; a museum in the biography of a stone goddess is the archetypal strange land where many trials must be endured” (Grimes 1992:422). Similarly to Grimes’ stone goddess, the statue in the novel is in a ‘strange land’; its provenance is unknown except for the fact that it dates to the Etruscan period. The question of displaced objects and people is a key trope used by Manfredi to develop the theme of ‘home’ in this novel and will be discussed further in this paper when interrogating central figures in the narrative, more specifically the image of the lost or home(less) child as manifest in the character of Angelo.

While at home in Florence, during a workshop on the restoration and preservation of ancient bronzes, Fabrizio chances upon a series of x-rays taken of a bronze Etruscan statue that are hidden in a drawer,

³ Within the novel, these ‘virtual spaces’ are created through the narrative as Fabrizio explores the physical spaces and homes in Volterra.

showing anomalies in the casting. This chance discovery will take him to Volterra, a Tuscan town where the physical statue is 'housed' in the museum. In the novel, the statue is named, *L'ombra della sera* and is an effigy of a young naked boy. The name of the statue in the novel refers to an actual Etruscan statue from Volterra by the same name which is, in fact, kept at the Volterra Museum, the origins of which are unknown⁴. It is believed that the Italian poet, Gabriele D'Annunzio bestowed upon this statue its enigmatic title of *L'ombra della sera* as it reminded him of the long shadows that fall at dusk. This observation is taken up again in 1988 and 2009 by the art historian and honorary inspector of the Soprintendenza alle Antichità of the Lombardy region, Piero Airaghi, who posits that the statue is in itself a representation of the shadow of a young boy.

True to Derridian form, the 'fictional sentence', in this case the fictional object, as represented by the statue, removes itself from its 'source', or 'home', to the point of no longer being a secret. The fictional object, the statue in being (re)homed in the museum is made visible to all. This double negation makes it accessible and arouses curiosity and is given a voice, albeit outside of its 'home'. The significance of this statue and how it relates to the narrative and the question of 'home' is by no means cursory, for it is through Manfredi's reception, not only of the D'Annunzian and Airaghi hypothesis, but also the use of a statue whose origins, or 'home' are unknown, that *l'ombra della sera* and what it represents in the narrative becomes a key to the exploration of the notion of 'home' and absence thereof.

[...] l'originalità del soggetto, la straordinaria qualità dell'esecuzione, l'intensa e la profonda suggestione che emanava lo facevano pensare a certe poetiche forme di scugnizzi realizzate da Vincenzo Gemito, ma anche alla potenza espressiva di Picasso e, allo stesso tempo, al

⁴ The statue was discovered by Antonio Francesco Gori in 1737 in the residence of the Buonarrotti family. About ten years after its discovery the statue entered the possession of Mario Guarnacci who then donated it to the Volterra museum, where it can be viewed today.

senso di esasperata fragilità dei bronzi più ispirati di
Giacometti. (Manfredi 2002:15)⁵

Through the use of the name of an actual statue in *Chimaira* (2001) / *The Ancient Curse* (2010), Manfredi creates a narrative space that rests both in the narrative of fact, as well as that of fiction, arousing the interest of the reader in the story behind the object. The statue starts off as a shadow, becomes corporeal through its description and fully formed in the appearance of a young boy that Fabrizio finds lurking in the shadows at Le Macine, a tavern-com-*agriturismo* run by a woman of dubious origins and nature. This metamorphosis from shadow to fixed notion to physical boy, plays out the myth of the Etruscan child-god, Tages and opens up discussion on the orphaned or 'home'-less child as well as the link between 'home' and 'family'.

Much of the traditional literature that deals with concepts of 'home', according to Mallett, would suggest an inextricable link between the idea of 'home' and 'family'. Authors such as Crow (1989), Oakley (1974) and Bernardes (1987) even go as far as suggesting that the two terms are interchangeable. As in Mallett (2004) referencing Gilman (1980), this would suggest that when these two terms, 'home' and 'family' are "conceived as inter-related or overlapping terms, home typically symbolizes the birth family dwelling and the birth family or family of origin"⁶.

Accounts of the myth of *Tages* come to us through the writings of Latin writers, such as Cicero, Ovid, Verrius Flaccus, and later through the Byzantine Joannes Laurentius Lydus. The overall consensus being that Tages emerges at plough-time⁷ from a deep furrow made by a ploughman.

The tradition is that, once upon a time, in the district of
Tarquinii, while a field was being ploughed, the

⁵ "The choice of the subject was incredibly original, the crafting extraordinary. The aura that emanated from the boy was intense and emotional, capturing all the poetry of Vincenzo Gemito's street urchins, the expressive punch of a Picasso, the exasperated fragility of Giacometti's most inspired bronzes" (Manfredi, 2010:9).

⁶ Mallett, 2004:73.

⁷ The link between the season in which Fabrizio arrives in Volterra and that of when Tages appears in the myth cannot be overlooked.

ploughshare went deeper than usual and a certain Tages suddenly sprang forth and spoke to the ploughman. Now this Tages, according to the Etruscan annals, is said to have had the appearance of a boy, but the wisdom of a seer. Astounded and much frightened at the sight, the rustic raised a great cry; a crowd gathered and, indeed, in a short time, the whole of Etruria assembled at the spot. Tages then spoke at length to his numerous hearers, who received with eagerness all that he had to say, and committed it to writing. His whole address was devoted to an exposition of the science of soothsaying. Later, as new facts were learned and tested by reference to the principles imparted by Tages, they were added to the original fund of knowledge [...] This is the story as we get it from the Etruscans themselves and as their records preserve it, and this, in their own opinion, is the origin of their art. (Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Divination* II.23. 50-51)

While Cicero confirms Tages as the origin of the *haruspic* discipline, it is in Lydus⁸ that the myth of *Tages* more closely deals with elements of origin and ‘home’ where the name of the ploughman who, while ploughing his field, cuts a deep furrow from which springs the child Tages, is identified as Tarchon, founder of the city of Tarquinia.

Within the narrative of *Chimaira* (2001) / *The Ancient Curse* (2010), the father-son relationship and its connection to ‘home’ is stolen through the lie that Turn Lars Thyrrrens spreads, stating that Velies is his bastard son. The similarity in the names of Tarchon and Thyrrrens and their positions as founder of Tarquinia and lord of Velatri respectively link their roles as ‘fathers’. However, whereas Tarchon is considered the ‘legitimate’ father of Tages, at least through what the surviving literature tells us, Thyrrrens is the father of Velies only through vicious rumour, spread by him to bolster his ego and eventually violate the ‘home’. The novel, and how it explores notions of ‘home’ and ‘origin’ through the myth of Tages, is thus

⁸ Lydus. *De Ostentis* 2.6.B as cited in Nancy Thomson de Grummond and Erika Simon (2006) *The Religion of the Etruscans*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

related both to the sculpture, *L'ombra della sera / Shade of Twilight* (effigy of Velies) and the young boy that Fabrizio finds lurking at Le Macine, Angelo stolen from his 'home' by the deviant Ambra Reiter and thereafter given a 'home' and father that do not belong to him.

The 'ancient curse' referred to in the English title of the novel, and the manifestation of the 'chimaira' referred to in the novel's original Italian title, are set in motion manifesting when the approximately 2.400 year old tomb of Turm Kaiknas, a well-respected and loved Etruscan noble, known for his valour and deeds of heroism, is disturbed by the tomb raider, Armando Ronchetti, also the first victim in the novel. When Fabrizio is asked by the museum director, Balestra – who is secretly working on the translation of an Etruscan gold slab – to oversee and conduct the excavation, what the young archaeologist finds, is nothing that he had expected. The tomb is bare except for a roughly carved stone sarcophagus and a cenotaph in solid alabaster of a regal young woman.

This is most unusual for an Etruscan burial as the tomb in this ancient culture especially from this period is richly adorned, a replica of the architectural home, creating a sense of being 'home' in comfort and security⁹. Often depicted in these tombs are elaborate banquet scenes where the dead are seen feasting like the living. One need only look at the banquet scene in the tomb of the Leopards at Cerveteri, the Dancers in the tomb of the Lioness at Tarquinia, the banquet scene from the tomb of the Shields in Tarquinia. The images of the guests, usually representations of the family, reinforce the idea of the tomb as 'home' and space of return and origin. It is also important to note that there is a marked lack of offerings and libations outside the tomb, symbolic of the family connection and of honouring the ancestors. This 'absence' reflects the thematic exploration of the idea of the tomb as a 'home' where the deceased and his spirit continue to form part of the family unit. In this case, the family is absent and thus the 'home' becomes a desolate space.

⁹ J. Douglas Porteous (1976:383) in his discussion of territoriality and how it relates to the 'home' as 'territorial core' points out that the concept of security not only encompasses physical security but includes psychic security and protection.

The first description of the tomb in the novel comes to us through what Detective Reggiani sees through the opening made by the tomb raider Ronchetti when investigating his brutal death at the site:

Reggiani poté vedere che era un vano abbastanza grande, forse quattro per tre e quindi doveva appartenere a una famiglia aristocratica, ma lo sorprese la mancanza quasi assoluta di arredo, a parte un affresco sulla parete di fondo che rappresentava quasi certamente Charun, il demone etrusco traghettatore dei morti. (Manfredi 2002:24)¹⁰

A further description is then given to us by Fabrizio when he later opens the tomb. What is interesting to note is that Reggiani's observation focuses on treasure, the tangible, the real fixed object, whereas Fabrizio's is more focused on the aspect of the tomb as representation of 'home' and 'family':

[...] una struttura ricavata nel tufo a imitazione della facciata di una casa, con un portone a due ante – che recavano scolpite le maniglie a mo' di grandi anelli – e un fronte triangolare adorno con il simbolo della luna nuova, o almeno così gli sembrò di doverlo interpretare; non un segno, non un indizio che potesse portare all'identificazione dei defunti che risposavano all'interno della funeraria. Gli parve anche strano che sul piano di calpestio non si fosse trovato alcun resto, o reperto o prova anche minima di una frequentazione. Le tombe erano visitate molto spesso e nelle ricorrenze di varie cerimonie religiose e commemorative, e davanti al loro ingresso aveva quasi sempre trovato, in altre occasioni di

¹⁰ "Reggiani could see that the chamber was quite large, about four metres by three, and so must have belonged to an aristocratic family. What surprised him was the absence of any sort of treasure inside, except for a fresco on the back wall which almost certainly represented Charun, the Etruscan demon who ferried the dead to the other world" (Manfredi, 2010:17-18).

scavo, le tracce dei riti sacrificali e delle offerte in onore dei defunti. (Manfredi 2002:30)¹¹

The uniqueness of the Etruscan tomb that seeks to replicate the 'home' thus rendering the deceased comfortable and at 'home', surrounded by loved ones in his/her travels to the underworld, and the absence of the imagery of 'home' in the tomb excavated by Fabrizio in the novel, are signs that something is 'absent'. It is precisely through this absence of 'home' that the theme of 'home' and its significance in the balance of events is explored.

Dovey (1985) explores the notions of 'home' in relation to migrants and travellers, establishing that journeys create "thresholds and boundaries of home, particularly boundaries associated with time and the experience of being at home" (Dovey 1985 in Mallett 2006:78). Within the Etruscan tomb, the deceased too is a migrant or traveller, travelling from the world of the living to that of the dead. However, the home is also the space where cultural, social and historical ideas are formed. The home therefore also becomes a space where ideas of who may or may not travel are formed. The spartan appearance of the tomb in the novel with the only fresco in it, that of Charun¹², would thus be an impediment to the deceased, a way of obstructing his/her travel to the other side, rendering the wait eternal with no union or memory of 'home'.

The contents of the sarcophagus are equally disconcerting as they reveal a mixture of faunal and human remains. The lid and inside of the funerary vessel are gauged by scratch marks indicative of the victim and his/her assailant being buried alive. Although not initially

¹¹ "The structure was carved directly into the tufa and imitated the façade of a house, featuring a double door with big sculpted ring-shaped handles and a triangular pediment with the symbol of the new moon, or so it seemed to Fabrizio. But there was no suggestion, no clue, as to who the bodies inside the burial cell might have been [...] What also seemed quite strange was the lack of debris or objects of any sort at the ground level; there were no signs of human activity outside the chamber. The Etruscans were known to have visited their tombs frequently, holding any number of religious and memorial ceremonies there, and the first thing you always found on a dig were the remains of rituals and sacrifices offered in honour of the dead" (Manfredi, 2010:24).

¹² Charun, Charu or Karun, contrary to what is thought is in fact the *psychopompoi* of the Etruscan underworld. He is often depicted with a hammer and is equated to the ferryman Charon in Greek mythology. The Etruscan god of the underworld is Aita.

evident to Fabrizio, this is the tomb of a *Phersu*. In the novel, Manfredi¹³ picks up on Semerano's (2003) discussion of the etymology of the word *phersu* in *Il popolo che sconfisse la morte: gli etruschi e la loro lingua*, dating it back to Babylonian times, thus restoring its meaning of 'scission', 'division' or part. Within the context of the narrative and its exploration of the theme 'home', the re-definition of the word becomes significant as the unravelling of the mystery behind the tomb and the neutralisation of the curse relies on the separation of the 'man' from the 'beast'. Therefore, just as the 'man' is separated from his 'home'/family through the practice of the ritual of *phersu*, he becomes reunited by the unravelling of the mystery behind the practice. But what would have been the reason to enforce such a brutal and violent practice? And what links the brutal murder of Ronchetti and others in Volterra to the discovery? It is in the answering of these questions that the role of the 'home' and the destruction and absence thereof is illustrated through the chilling story of Turm Kaiknas and his fate, revealed to Fabrizio in the most *augural* of ways – a dream. Through the inclusion of 'dream' as a determining factor in the unravelling of the narrative mystery, Manfredi taps into the history of divination in Etruscan times, further unifying the narrative of past with that of present.

After a night filled with danger, horror and murder, Fabrizio is escorted back home by Lieutenant Reggiani. He is exhausted and drifts off. It is in this almost trance-like, adrenaline induced unconscious state that he dreams the vision of the events of the past and the violation of the 'home' that off-sets the events in the present:

La sala era vasta, di forma rettangolare e adorna di affreschi che rappresentavano scene di simposio, illuminata da una doppia fila di candelabra da cui pendevano lampade di bronzo e di onice traslucido, abbastanza numerose da spandere una luce intensa e dorata, assai simile a quella del tramonto ormai spento. I convivanti, uomini e donne, giovani e fanciulle, erano adagiati sui letti triclinari davanti alle mense colme di

¹³ As both an archaeologist and writer, Manfredi would be aware of the works by Semerano in the field of Etruscan linguistics.

*cibi e alle coppe piene di vino e conversavano
amabilmente e in toni sommessi. (Manfredi, 2002:154)¹⁴*

In this opening scene of the dream, the reader is confronted with an image of 'home' that illustrates the social, convivial nature of the abode¹⁵. It is a space of light, comfort, merriment and safety – what one is led to believe is a typical Etruscan nobleman's home. It is the home of Lars Turm Kaiknas, celebrated hero of Velathri who fought off hordes of Celtic invaders thus safeguarding the city, his 'home' from the enemy. It is in his honour that the banquet is held. Also present at the banquet is the lord of Velathri, Lars Thyrrens. In the vision he is depicted as a large, imposing figure: “[...] *le larghe spalle e le braccia robuste erano quelle di un guerriero possente, di un uomo abituato a conquistare con la forza tutto ciò che suscitasse il suo desiderio*” (Manfredi, 2002:155)¹⁶. That evening, his desire is aroused by Lars Turm Kaiknas's wife, Anait. However, Anait has always ignored his advances, something that Lars Turm Thyrrens found infuriating to the point of spreading rumours that Anait's son, Velies was actually his, conceived during one of Lars Turm Kaiknas's long absences and hatching a plan to have his way with Anait that very night.

*Ma lei non ricambiava il suo sguardo, non si stancava
invece di contemplare il suo sposo, Lars Turm Kaiknas,
bello come un dio, forte e delicato come un fanciullo [...]*

¹⁴ “*The room was vast, rectangular in shape and adorned with frescoes that depicted scenes from a symposium, with guests laughing, drinking, leaning forward in conversation. A double row of candelabra with hanging lamps of bronze and translucent onyx lit up the room, so numerous that they filled the hall with an intense, golden light, like that of the sunset just passed. The dinner guests – men and women, young and old – were reclining on couches alongside tables filled with trays of food and cups brimming with wine, chatting amiably in low voices*” (Manfredi, 2010: 149). Italics in original text.

¹⁵ The scene depicted in Fabrizio's dream is also in stark contrast to what he finds in the tomb. The description of the hall in the dream is similar to what one would expect to find painted on the walls of an Etruscan aristocrat's tomb. This juxtapositioning of the two abodes further develops the theme of 'home' and its significance in the narrative.

¹⁶ “[...] wide shoulders and brawny arms of a mighty warrior [...] a man accustomed to conquering by force anything that aroused his desire” (Manfredi, 2010:150).

Era in suo onore e nel suo palazzo la festa [...].
(Manfredi, 2002:155-156)¹⁷

The debate on home and gender cannot be ignored in this passage as the palace is defined as ‘his’ palace, that of Lars Turm Kaiknas. However, although this may seem significant from a modern perspective, research into the role and position of Etruscan women seems to suggest that women, especially noble women enjoyed equal status to that of their male counterparts in society. Larissa Bonfante (1981) in her article, *Etruscan couples and their aristocratic society* points out that:

[...] women in Etruria participated more fully in the public life of their society than Greek and Roman women. They had their own names, and apparently passed their rank on to their children – the frequent use of both patronymics and matronymics in Etruscan inscriptions attests to the mother’s importance. Their visibility, not only alone but together with their husbands, leads us to imagine that they played an important role in Etruscan society where the family counted for more than the single individual male citizen.
(Bonfante, 1981:157)

What is significant however is the link between ‘home’ and ‘family’ and the role that the Etruscan woman represented in that society. It is this position of the woman as ‘home’/ family that Lars Turm Thyrens violates when he lures Anait away from Lars Turm Kaiknas, violating her, killing her innocent son and accusing Lars Turm Kaiknas of their murder when the horrified father and husband tries to save his son and removes the dagger from his fragile boy. The accusation is sustained by Lars Turm Thyrens he shouts:

¹⁷ “*But she never returned his looks. She never tired of contemplating her own husband, Lars Turm Kaiknas, a man as handsome as a god, strong, yet as gentle and sweet as a young lad [...]. The party was in his honour and in his palace [...].*” (Manfredi, 2010:150). Italics in original text.

'Avete visto con i vostri occhi! Tutti sanno che Turm Kaiknas ha sempre odiato sua moglie perché la sapeva infedele, sapeva che aveva partorito un bastardo, figlio di una relazione illecita.' (Manfredi, 2002:159)¹⁸

Only the lone voice of Aule Tarchna, Anait's brother, an augur that sees the truth and speaks out, attempting to restore the voice of 'family' and 'home' cries out:

'Menti! Mia sorella non ha mai tradito suo marito. Lo amava più della sua vita. E Turm Kaiknas adorava suo figlio. Mai avrebbe alzato la mano su di lui se non per accarezzarlo.' (Manfredi, 2002:159)¹⁹

However, the only witnesses to the crime are the victims, Velies and his mother, the core of the 'home'/family which has been destroyed. Thus Turm Lars Thyrrrens decrees that Turm Lars Kaiknas's supposed innocence will be tried by the trial of *Pherus* as 'null'altro che il giudizio degli dei può decidere di un crimine tanto orrendo da superare ogni immaginazione' (Manfredi, 2002:159)²⁰. When Aule Tarchna requests that Turm Lars Thyrrrens at least let him have the bodies of his sister and nephew, he is refused being told that their bodies would burn with the house. The destruction of the physical home in this scene emphasises the destruction of the concept of 'home' as represented by the death of Anait and Velies. The fact that the mother and child will not receive a customary burial where they would be returned to 'home' further compounds this violation.

After returning the next day to gather whatever ashes he could of his sister and nephew, Aule Tarchna disappears, returning only on the day of the terrible ritual of *Phersu* when Turm Lars Kaiknas is to

¹⁸ "You've seen it with your own eyes! Everyone knows that Turm Kaiknas has always despised his wife because she was unfaithful to him, because she bore him a bastard, the fruit of an illicit relationship!" (Manfredi, 2010:154).

¹⁹ "You lie! My sister never betrayed her husband! She loved him more than life itself. And Turm Kaiknas adored his son. He would never have raised a hand except to caress him" (Manfredi, 2010:154).

²⁰ "Only the gods can judge a crime so horrendous it goes beyond all imagining" (Manfredi, 2010:154).

battle a ferocious beast with one arm tied behind his back and a sack over his head²¹. If he manages to kill the beast his innocence will be proved, if not, as is the inevitable case, he will forever be marked by his ‘crime’.

Lars Thyrrrens proclamò che quella era la prova della colpevolezza di Turm Kaiknas e ordinò di seppellire il Phersu con la belva ancora viva, nello stesso sarcofago, perchè continuasse a straziarlo per l’eternità. Alla sepoltura fu destinata una tomba isolata, costruita in un luogo solitario, e senza altra insegna che quella della luna nera. (Manfredi, 2002:161)²²

Aule Tarchna tries to symbolically reunite the family and restore a sense of ‘home’ in the tomb by placing an image of the ‘family’ through the introduction of an alabaster cenotaph of Anait²³ and a beautifully crafted statue of Velies, ‘the picture of melancholy and pain in a shape more similar to a shadow than to a living child’ with the blade that cut short his life forged in the bronze. He also places two gold slabs on which is inscribed an eternal curse:

‘Che tu sia maledetto sette volte, Lars Thyrrrens, sia maledetto il tuo seme e siano maledetti tutti coloro che in

²¹ The ritual described in Manfredi’s novel is reminiscent of the right wall of the ‘Tomb of the Augurs’ in Tarquinia. The panel depicts the practice of *phersu* or *persu* with two men, one of which has a sack / hood over his head, the other holding a rope / lead which is tied around the neck of an animal, presumed to be a dog. The hooded figure, probably a criminal is being punished for his action. When the figure holding the rope pulls on it, a spike is released in the collar of the animal, enraging it and causing it to attack the hooded man. It is worth noting that the reception of the image in the ‘Tomb of the Augurs’ within the narrative serves to reinforce the role played by Anait’s brother, Aule Tarchna, an augur, as restorer of the ‘home’.

²² “*Lars Thyrrrens proclaimed that this was proof of Turm Kaiknas’s guilt and he ordered the Phersu buried with the live animal, in the same tomb, so that the beast could continue to torture him for all eternity. An isolated tomb was designated for his burial, built in a solitary place, with no markings other than that of the black moon*” (Manfredi, 2010: 155).

²³ Anait’s cenotaph is reminiscent of the famous sarcophagus from Cerveteri of the husband and wife. Manfredi again disrupts the idea of ‘home’, family and union, by depicting a solitary image of the woman, violently torn from her loving husband and family, not only in life, but also in death.

questa città alimentano l'abominio del tuo potere, siano maledetti fino alla fine delle nove ere dei Rasna. Sia maledetta la bestia e siano maledetti coloro che la videro straziare un uomo innocente. Possano essi subire ciò che ha subito un eroe senza colpa e piangere lacrime di sangue [...].' (Manfredi, 2002:161)²⁴

With this, Aule Tarchna seals the tomb and reunites the family, restoring a sense of 'home'. However, when over time, the tomb is disturbed by tomb raiders, displacing those object that created a semblance of 'home' and balance, first by pillaging the statue, *l'ombra della sera*, then the gold slabs, the curse emerges as that balance and sense of 'home' which had been created in the past is disturbed. The 'home' is once again violated and the violence of the past re-enacts itself in the present until the 'home' and what it represents, has been eternally consolidated²⁵.

Manfredi achieves this consolidation through the narrative spaces created within the novel's mystery/thriller genre. According to Allan Lloyd-Smith (2004) some of the key features, amongst others, of the thriller genre include: innocent victims; subterfuge and plots; ancient houses, castles, monasteries, dungeons, crypts and passages, monstrous and grotesque creatures; pain, terror, horror and sadism (Lloyd-Smith 2004:133); and although *Chimaira / The Ancient Curse* employs many of the above features, the element of the 'innocent victim', is key to the consolidation of the concept of 'home'.

As the plot unfolds, the gold slab, statue of the young boy and the tomb all become part of the unravelling of the mystery and the restoration of 'home' through the intercession of the 'orphaned' child Angelo, his link to *Le Macine* and the old Caretti-Riccardi palace in

²⁴ "May you be damned seven times, Lars Thyrrens, may your seed be damned and may all those who in this city sated your thirst for power be damned with you, may they be cursed until the end of the nine ages of Rasna. Damn the beast and damn all those who witnessed the cruel murder of an innocent man. May they experience the same end suffered by a blameless hero and may they weep tears of blood [...]" (Manfredi, 2010:156).

²⁵ However, the violation and consolidation of the physical 'home' can also be read as the violation and consolidation of the pillaged ancient artefact, removed from its origins and displaced in both space and time. When these objects are then reclaimed by the relevant authorities, their story and 'origin' is dubious, they become (re)homed / 'consolidated' in an artificial space, the museum where they are subjected to a speculated 'dream' history.

the centre of town and the extinction of the 'inhuman'. Both spaces, the tavern and the palace tell stories of abandonment and resonate with echoes of 'home'. The palace, uninhabited for the past forty years except for a brief period when the current owner, Count Jacopo Ghirardini took up residence, employed a supposed cleaning lady, and then disappeared, is the 'home' of violence and terror, similar to the violence and terror found in the tomb.

If according to Lyotard (1993) in *The Inhuman*, one can only understand the inhuman in terms of its 'extinction' alongside 'the human', then the 'inhumanity' of Turm Lars Kaiknas's death can only be extinguished through the destruction of the human. Only once the link between the beast that is attacking the inhabitants of Volterra and the coming to fruition of the ancient curse placed upon Turm Lars Kaiknas is created can the 'home' as space of the 'human', be restored. It is thus through the violation of the notion of home that the 'home' as theme within the novel is explored.

While trying to locate the second piece of the gold slab, Fabrizio's leads take him out of the safety of his 'home' at Val d'Era to a tavern known as *Le Macine*. Here he meets Angelo hiding in the shadows. When Angelo follows Fabrizio home his link to *Le Macine* and the Caretti-Riccardi palace is revealed. For Angelo, both these places represent 'home'; *Le Macine* is the 'home' where he lives with his 'evil' stepmother Ambra Reiter and the Caretti-Riccardi palace his 'home' in as much as he is led to believe that his 'father' lives there. However, the home of his father is filled with horror, similar to the tomb, 'home' of Velies's father, Lars Turm Kaiknas thus linking the two children:

Aprì lentamente il battente della porta e proiettò all'interno il raggio di luce della pila. Al centro della camera c'era un animale del tutto simile a quello che aveva visto poche sere prima dilaniare il corpo di Pietro Montanari [...] era una specie di cane dal pelo ispido e irto, dalle grandi mascelle spalancate che mostravano zanne enormi. Aveva una coda grossa e piuttosto lunga

anch'essa coperta di un pelo fitto e arruffato. (Manfredi, 2002:185)²⁶

Although the image of the tomb is central to the plot of *The Ancient Curse* what resonates throughout the narrative is the theme of the 'innocent victim'. The victims of *Lars Thyrrrens'* are three: *Anait*, *Velies* and *Turm Kaiknas*, and although the plot revolves around the avengance of *Turm Kaiknas'* brutal death, it is the image of *Velies*, the child in the shadows that predominates and is key to the restoration of 'home'.

The manifestation of the ghost child *Velies* is present in the narrative of 'present' in the character of the orphaned child, Angelo, that Fabrizio encounters while trying to track down the second piece of the bronze tablet that contains the breaking of the curse. Like the Etruscan child-god *Tages*, Angelo reveals himself to Fabrizio in a rural setting, and like his narrative Etruscan counterpart *Velies* is revealed in shadow. His origins are unclear, and he seems to be, like *Tages*, parentless. All that is known is that he lives with his sinister step-mother in the derelict tavern, *Le Macine*, and according to him she abuses him. Kerényi (2002:32) in his *The Primordial Child in Primordial Times* notes that, "the child god is usually an abandoned foundling [...] Often [...] threatened by extraordinary dangers". Angelo is not a god, but then neither is *Velies*, yet their roles in the novel are 'god-like' for they become, past and present, the meters-out of justice and restorers of 'home' and metaphysical order. *Velies* as depicted by the image of the statue becomes a shadow of the concept of 'home', taken not only from his physical and metaphysical 'home' by the death of his parents and his murder but separated again over time by the removal of his statue from the representation of 'home' the tomb. He is in this sense, symbolically 'orphaned'. Within the narrative of present, he is physically represented by Angelo, the urchin that Fabrizio finds lurking at Le

²⁶ "He slowly pulled the door open and shone the beam of light inside. At the centre of the room stood an animal which appeared to be identical to the beast he'd seen ripping out Piero Montanari's throat [...] It was a kind of dog, with dense, bristly coat. Its huge jaws gaping in a show of enormous fangs. Its long, thick tail was also covered with shaggy hair" (Manfredi, 2010:181).

Macine and who follows Fabrizio ‘home’ to reveal his identity. Like *Velies*, Angelo is taken from his ‘home’ by the woman who runs the tavern *Le Macine* and who is involved in the pillaging of the tomb. It is through Angelo that the second and crucial part of the gold slab that reveals that the horror can only cease when “[...] la belva è separate dall’uomo [...] e] il figlio è [restituìto] al padre” (Manfredi, 2002:214)²⁷ and that *Velies*, Anait and Lars Turm Kaiknas can be reunited, restoring ‘home’ as in Mallett’s definition of it as a “repository for memories of the lived spaces [...] locating it] in lived time and space, particularly intimate familial time and space” (Mallett, 2004:63).

References

- | | | |
|---------------|------|--|
| Airaghi, P. | 1988 | <i>L’ombra della sera, la scultura etrusca conservata nel museo Guarnacci a Volterra: raccolta di studi sull’ipotesi di Piero Airaghi.</i> Italy: Comune di Rho. |
| --. | 2009 | La scultura dell’ombra della sera mi suggerisce l’emozione di questa ombra che diventa una presenza impalpabile e silenziosa che arriva al mattino con la prima luce e a sera se ne va. <i>Rassegna volterrana.</i> 86:7-29. |
| Bernardes, J. | 1987 | Doing things with words: Sociology and Family Policy debates. <i>Sociological Review.</i> 35:679-702. |
| Bonfante, L. | 1981 | Etruscan couples and their aristocratic society. <i>Women’s studies: An Interdisciplinary journal,</i> 8(1-2): 157-187. |

²⁷ “The beast is separated from the man [...] and] the son is returned to the father” (Manfredi 2010:211).

- Cicero, Marcus Tullius *De Divinatione*. trans. W. A. Falconer (1923) Classical Loeb Library. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Crow, G. 1989 "The post-war development of the modern domestic ideal", in Allan, G. & Crow, G. (eds). *Home and family: Creating the domestic sphere*. London: Macmillan.
- Derrida, J. 1995 *On the Name*. Edited by Dutoit, T., translated by Wood, D.; Leavey (Jr) J.P. & McLeod, I. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dovey, K. 1985 "Homes and homelessness", in Alman, I. & Werner, C. (eds). *Home environment*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Gilman, C.P. 1980 "The Home: Its work and influence", in Malos, E. (ed), *The Politics of housework*. London: Allison and Busby.
- Grimes, R.L. 1992 "Sacred Objects in Museum Spaces". *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses*, 21(4) : 419-430.
- Johannes Lydus *De Ostentis* 2.6.B. as cited in Nancy Thomson de Grummond and Erika Simon (2006) *The Religion of the Etruscans*. Austin: University of Texas Press. (Kindle edition, 74% - 76%).
- Jung, C.G. & Kerényi, C. 2002 *Science of mythology: Essays on the myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis*, translated by Hull, R.F.C. London: Routledge.
- Lloyd-Smith, A. 2004 *American gothic fiction: An introduction*. New York: Continuum.
- Lyotard, J.F. 1993 *The Inhumane*. Cambridge: Polity.

- Mallett, S. 2004 "Understanding home: a critical review of the literature". *The Sociology Review*, 52(1): 62-88.
- Manfredi, V.M. 2001 *Chimaira*. Milano: Oscar Mondadori.
- 2010 *The Ancient Curse*, translated by C. Feddersen-Manfredi. London: Pan Macmillan.
- Martindale, C. 1993 *Redeeming the text: Latin poetry and the hermeneutics of reception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oakley, N. 1974 *The sociology of housework*, London: Martin Robertson.
- Porteous, J.D. 1976 "Home: The territorial core". *Geographical Review*, 66(4): 383- 390.
- Semerano, G. 2003 *Il popolo che sconfisse la morte: gli etruschi e la loro lingua*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori.
- Thomson de Grummond, N. & Simon, E. 2006 *The religion of the Etruscans*. Austin : Texas University Press.

MUSIC IN TOWN: THE MUSICAL SHELLS OF CALVINO AND VLADISLAVIĆ

PAOLA QUAZZO

(Università degli Studi di Torino)

Sommario

L'articolo mette a confronto i testi per musica scritti da Italo Calvino e da Ivan Vladislavić, evidenziandone la comunanza di temi, toni e atmosfere. La produzione dello scrittore italiano nasce dal suo interesse per la musica e dalla sua amicizia con Luciano Berio e altri compositori; Calvino cercò di riformulare in maniera lirica temi a lui molto cari, quali la vita urbana e l'identità individuale e sociale dell'uomo moderno. Simili gli interessi del sudafricano Vladislavić, la cui affinità con Calvino, già manifesta nella sua produzione in prosa, si riflette anche nei testi musicali scritti per la compositrice italiana Lucia Ronchetti: essi presentano la metropoli moderna con uno sguardo ironico e postmoderno che si condensa (come già in Calvino) nella metafora della conchiglia.

Key Words: Avant-garde – Post-modernism – Metropolis

In a recent interview, Ivan Vladislavić admitted he approached Calvino's *Le città invisibili* because spurred by his readers: "Oddly enough, I only read *Invisible Cities*, which is the key text for me, much later. Some readers remarked that my first novel, *The Folly*, had clearly been influenced by *Invisible Cities* and so I thought I'd better read it to see what they were talking about" (Angelotti, Esposito, 2014:80). Notwithstanding his belated reading, *Le città invisibili* is the 'key text' for the South African writer so much as to quote it in the Author's Note at the end of his book *Portrait with Keys* (2006). Both authors were fascinated by the modern metropolis in terms of its spatiality as well as its sociality; for both of them the city is a challenge for its inhabitants and for any attempt at defining it. This fascination also reverberates in the texts they wrote for music.

They were both involved in these projects by a personal relationship with the composers: Calvino worked with a number of Italian and foreign musicians¹, among whom his friend – and a Ligurian – Luciano Berio; Vladislavić with the Italian composer Lucia Ronchetti, whom he met in Stuttgart in 2000. They were probably intrigued by the possibility of exploring a world, that of sound, which can only be partially reproduced by language. Although words obviously have a substantial musical nature, written words are mute: they can resonate only when they are read, and even in that case, they often resonate in one's private mind. These considerations help understand the powerful image of the shell, which recurs in both authors and in the librettos they wrote. Prose is but a shell, which resounds only if you press it to your ear and listen carefully. Also, for Calvino and Vladislavić, the city is a shell, and this entails a world of associations which touch upon many fields of human experience: nature, beauty, music, poetry, myth, fate all are evoked by the city-shell, the 'città-conchiglia' that lies on the shores of Italy and South Africa, and in most continents.

Calvino and Vladislavić's production for music is indebted to their earlier works in terms of texts, themes and perspective. However, the two writers are forced by the musical medium to sharpen, condense and intensify their language. This effect is achieved by a three-fold approach: re-writing texts, re-moulding themes, and re-defining perspectives, so that the pre-existing material is given new vigour, vividness and lyricism thanks to the new form and function it acquires. Calvino wrote a modern version of *Trovatore* by Verdi, he staged or transformed into lyrics some of his earlier tales, and investigated the city from the point of view of its sounds and noises, namely its speakers/inhabitants and the noise they make simply by living. Similarly, Vladislavić has re-written a German classic (Chamisso), has chosen portions of his *Portrait with Keys* and has given them a new arrangement, which is both visual and auditory. The theme of the city is approached by Calvino and Vladislavić with lyricism and irony, from a well-defined, precise point of view: that of

¹ Artists Calvino collaborated with are Sergio Liberovici, Piero Santi, Mario Peragallo, Bruno Gillet and Adam Pollock.

a middle-class man who looks upon city dwellers and events, speculates and gives his own interpretation of the hidden forces that draw urban people and shape spaces. This anthropological approach was sustained by the composers, whose musical pieces have a strong communicative intent, expressed through the use of voice and the musical theatre.

“Italo amava molto le canzoni in genere”, Berio remembered (1988:115), and indeed Calvino wrote songs which were meant to be popular folk songs. His interest in songs was due to their particular nature, in which words and music gain mutual reinforcement through correspondence and immediacy. In a song, words are easily understandable and the simplicity of the lyrics is reflected and enhanced by the simplicity of music. However, Calvino’s songs are not pure entertainment; on the contrary, they expand on the themes he dealt with in his short stories and novels: anti-militarism (as in the song *Dove vola l'avvoltoio*), memory (*Oltre il ponte*), anti-capitalism (*Sul verde fiume Po*), and women’s fragility or aggressiveness (*La tigre*). Modern city life is also presented in two songs about alienation: *Canzone triste*, and *Turin-la-nuit or Rome by night*. City life is here pictured from a two-fold social perspective: the working-class’s and the bourgeoisie’s. In *Canzone triste*, two spouses can only briefly meet between working shifts and their lives seem trapped and wasted in this alienating time flux². In *Turin-la-nuit or Rome by night*, Calvino depicts the habit of going to the cinema as an empty ritual which the bourgeoisie performs with *ennui*. In the songs two different types of routine are stigmatized for the same reason: a sense of giving up the *status quo* and renunciation to any possibility of real communication. Although records of the songs are not easy to find, from those available on the Internet we discover that the oral, colloquial form of the language used in the lyrics is mirrored by the linear, clinging nature of the music.

In *Canzone triste* and *Turin-la-nuit or Rome by night* Calvino carries on his critique of urban life in the tones and themes he had experimented in *Marcovaldo*, *Una nuvola di smog*, *La speculazione*

² The story was given a narrative form as short story and it was published with the title *Avventura di due sposi* in the collection *I racconti*, 1958.

edilizia in those same years, which also correspond to his political activism. In his songs, his *engagé* attitude interestingly meets 'la canzonetta', which is a tradition usually linked to light entertainment and escapism in Italy. The social edge of Calvino's songs reveal a consonance to the Turin movement of *Cantacronache*: a group of musicians, soon joined by writers, poets and intellectuals³, whose purpose was to "evadere dall'evasione" (Jona, 1958:5) and sing stories, chronicles or fables about common people's everyday life, difficulties and aspirations. It is not a naturalistic approach these artists advocated; on the contrary they shunned any neutral attitude in favour of a more critical, satirical or aggressive tone. This reflects in Calvino's songs, although he privileged a melancholic tone, mildly mitigated by his usual irony.

Irony can also be retraced in *La panchina* (1955), his first opera work, whose protagonist in pyjamas leaves his bed for a bench in the park in the hope of falling asleep. The story was later developed into a short story, published in *Marcivaldo* with the title *Una villeggiatura in panchina*. The difficulty of modern urban life is here addressed from the point of view of insomnia, which entails the problem of noise. The protagonist cannot find peace and silence in the city because noise surrounds him: the squabbling of two lovers, the songs of a drunkard, the invectives of prostitutes, the questioning of a policeman, the din of men working at repairing the tram-line. Finally, the newsboy's cry, as in a modern tragedy, announces the death of night, hence sleep too, killed by the day. While the songs focused on the alienation experienced by city dwellers both in their work routine and in their free time, in *La panchina* the analysis becomes more physical, showing how disruptive on human bio-rhythms are the consequences of disrupted natural time cycles. The metropolis that never sleeps is also a city whose inhabitants are unable to sleep, and hence to dream.

Disharmony, which is the central theme of the work, is paralleled at a musical level by parody and eclecticism. In her essay about *La*

³ Sergio Liberovici, Emilio Jonas, Michele Straniero and Giorgio De Maria were the founders of the group. Together with Calvino, other writers and scholars, such as Franco Fortini, Massimo Mila, Giacomo Manzoni, Piero Santi, Fiorenzo Carpi, contributed to the project. They also published a journal, *Cantacronache*.

panchina, Maria Corti, who was able to listen to Liberovici's score played by Gianandrea Gavazzeni, notes that "il parlato del libretto si alternava al cantato, al 'parlato con nota' e al 'suono di intonazione approssimativa'" (1978:203). She also highlights how the general effect was good, "soprattutto per la riuscita corrispondenza fra le parti ludiche del libretto e i *collages* musicali" (ibid.). However, after the play was performed at Teatro Donizetti, Bergamo, on 2 October 1956, the reviews were negative: the story, which was so far away from the traditional Italian melodrama, was accused of being neo-realistic and prosaic.

In the 1950s Calvino's main musical achievement⁴ was the libretto for *Allez-hop* (1959), which marked the beginning of Calvino's collaboration with Luciano Berio. They shared a common interest in structuralism, the philosophy of perception, and new theories on folklore and anthropology. Berio asked for Calvino's collaboration for *Allez-hop*, a "racconto mimico" which was performed at Teatro La Fenice, Venice, on 23 September 1959. The story is simple: a flea-tamer is performing his show in a night club, but one of his fleas rebels and jumps from one spectator to the other. The bored, insensitive audience of the night club immediately becomes alive, flirting and dancing. The flea moves from a businessman to the Head of the Police, then to politicians and ministers. A war breaks out. Then women stop the war. Finally, after the tamer manages to catch the flea, he realizes that the world without fleas would become boring again, so he frees all his fleas.

The opera includes six pieces for orchestra and two songs. Berio intended the songs as "due oggetti scenici, alla stregua di un armadio, un albero o una fontana" (1981:117) and "non hanno nessuna vera funzione musicale" (ibid.). But Calvino, who was enthusiastic about them, evidently did not consider them as subordinated elements. They deal again with the city. The first one is clearly New York: "Nella finestra guardo la città / con le luci della Fifth Avenue" (2004:679). The words of the songs and the description of the mime action, as

⁴ He also wrote *Lo spaventapasseri e il poeta* (probably, 1955), unpublished, which was intended for a ballet, and *Arie per l'opera buffa "Il visconte dimezzato"* (1958), written for the French composer Bruno Gillet and performed at the Opera Theatre in Montecarlo in 1961. Unlike *La panchina*, this opera work was successful.

well as the music, are simple and straight, as Berio admitted in *Intervista sulla musica*:

Musicalmente *Allez-Hop* non presenta alcun problema. Anche il rapporto musica-azione scenica è molto chiaro. Ma in tutte le realizzazioni – alcune delle quali assai pregevoli – c'è sempre stata la tendenza a complicare l'azione e a calcare e sovraccaricare le situazioni mentre invece la musica richiede un teatro diretto e immediato, fatto di gesti brechtianamente intesi, senza ridondanza e con una certa purezza di immagini. (1981:125)

After almost two decades, in the 1970s, Berio and Calvino worked together again in *La vera storia* (1977-1978) and *Un re in ascolto* (1978-1983), two works in which the narrative element is richer. This time the project was wider and more ambitious. However, although the collaboration was always friendly, it was neither simple nor easy, because Berio “come [...] in tutti i suoi rapporti coi librettisti, è stato sempre irritato dalla presenza di significati lessicali o storie che gli disturbavano il forsennato connubio coi suoni allo stato puro” (Umberto Eco, in De Benedictis, 2012:9).⁵ Indeed, Berio was more inclined to dismantling realism and conventional narrative techniques, while Calvino was interested in re-constructing plots as much as dismantling them, as his *contes philosophiques* and *Il castello dei destini incrociati* or *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* show. This is how the work progressed, in Calvino's own words:

Berio ha fissato una serie di momenti chiave, ognuno con una struttura drammatica e musicale ben precisa, e per ognuno di questi momenti mi ha chiesto delle parole che, senza precisare troppo l'azione, diano la sostanza della

⁵ This is how Calvino comments on his contribution to the first part of *La vera storia*: “I versi della Vera storia? [...] Versificavo pezzo a pezzo, secondo le esigenze che Berio mi chiedeva volta per volta, ma il disegno generale dell'opera lo sapeva solo lui e io non l'ho mai capito” (Calvino, 2000:1513).

comunicazione lirica. [...] come archetipo di libretto d'opera siamo partiti tenendo presente il *Trovatore*, ma questo schema di struttura drammatica, spogliato di tutto il suo armamentario romantico, traspare solo in filigrana come rapporto fra quattro ruoli fondamentali: il baritono e il tenore come fratelli-nemici che si contendono l'amore d'una donna, Leonora, mentre il contralto, Ada, è una figura materna che prende su di sé il dolore di tutti.” (1982:30)

The passage already summarizes the plot, which is modelled on Giuseppe Verdi's *Trovatore*. The title itself echoes the beginning of *Trovatore*: “la vera storia di [...] Garzia”. For Calvino and Berio, Verdi's opera is an archetype to disrupt: “Ma il momento decisivo è stato [...] l'individuare l'esatta posizione della *Vera Storia* rispetto all'«archetipo» opera lirica, posizione che non è di ribaltamento polemico o attualizzante or parodico, ma una sorta di sublimazione «concettuale» o più ancora «analitica»” (Calvino, 1982:31). This sublimation is achieved through contamination: musical references from *Trovatore* coexist with other influences, such as Brechtian *Sprechgesang*, jazz and Wagner.

From a musical point of view, the most interesting aspect of *La vera storia* is its double structure: it is divided into two parts, quite different one from the other, yet very closely related. While the first keeps a narrative and theatrical form, the latter is a further development or rather re-telling of the first: “un rimontaggio, libero e quasi privo di nessi causali, della prima [parte], insomma una *Twice-Told Tale*, per dirla alla Hawthorne” (Arato, 2007:95). As Berio clarifies in his lectures at Harvard:

“La Prima Parte si manifesta con le immagini e la gestualità di un racconto popolare, la Seconda Parte sembra non raccontare più nulla: *pensa* la Prima Parte. Nella Prima ci sono protagonisti vocali, nella Seconda c'è una collettività vocale. La Prima Parte è concreta e la Seconda è sognata. La Prima non ignora la scena operistica, la Seconda la respinge. La Prima Parte è

«orizzontale», estiva e all'aria aperta, la Seconda è «verticale», invernale, notturna e in città. La Seconda Parte diventa un'oscura parodia della Prima.” (2006:88-89)

It is striking how Berio specifies that the second part is associated to the city, whereas the first has an outdoor ‘flavour’. It is indeed evident that the events in the first part take place outdoors, nevertheless it is an urban environment: the characters (protagonists, storytellers, crowds, and guards) are all city dwellers who never leave streets, squares, and other city buildings such as the palace and the prison. The very first scene takes place in a square whose light and classical solemnity recalls De Chirico’s paintings: “La piazza vuota nel sole accecante di mezzogiorno: in fondo, un solenne edificio bianco che pare carico di storia” (2004:691), and this sets up the space in which the action proceeds. Moreover, the dramatic action is essentially a political action because it involves the entire *polis*: its citizens and its rulers. The two groups alternate: the former periodically bursts in unsuccessful rebellions against tyranny, the latter use violence to keep their power. It is a primarily urban dynamics; indeed it reflects Italy's social and political situation of the time: “*La vera storia* è figlia del proprio tempo, perché registra il circolo vizioso di ribellione e repressione nell'Italia degli anni Settanta” (Arato, 2007:93). A menacing power hovers over the many carnival feasts which shake the city periodically. Political terror mingles with popular hopes and actions for freedom:

CORO: Dentro di noi
L'offesa il rancore la rabbia
Adesso tutto è fuori
La speranza l'attesa
Ciò che noi siamo è fuori
Sarà la vera festa
Il fuori è il nostro spazio
(Calvino, 2004:702-703)

It is worth noting that freedom and hope coincide with possessing a space: “Il fuori è il *nostro* spazio”, “Il fuori è il *nostro* fuori” and opposition to the political violence is not only mental but primarily physical: “Resistete alla forza / Sbarrate piazze e strade” (2004:703). Evidently many examples of such resistance can be found in history, but this becomes apparent in cities whose spaces are not easily accessible to people, since some categories (women, the disabled, minorities, social subordinates etc.) are not allowed. South African cities, together with many others, offer examples of spaces which are still not owned, because they are physically shunned by people. In a city like this, power too, especially tyrannical power, feels unsafe: “IVO: Ho in mio potere una città ma ogni potere vive nel sospetto” (2004:698).

The third important work by Calvino and Berio is *Un re in ascolto*. Since at the basis of the opera is a careful analysis of the act of listening⁶, Calvino invented the story of a king who tries to listen (or spy) every kind of noise coming from his palace, his courtesans, and his people. Berio agreed on the idea but heavily intervened in the text so that the final libretto can be said to be the product of Berio’s hands using Calvino’s words. He transposed the initial story into a play-within-the-play context: the king is an impresario, surrounded by actors, singers, and other theatre workers. They assist him while, debilitated by a disease, he dies dreaming of a wonderful future for his theatre. The work openly draws on Shakespeare: the king/manager's name is Prospero, and one of his actors is Friday (a modern version of Caliban, drawn on Defoe).

From a musical point of view, Massimo Mila noticed that *Un re in ascolto* is organic and coherent, notwithstanding its fragmentary structure. However, it is far from any traditional opera patterns or from any idea of bel canto. All symphonicism is fragmentary and unpredictable, but music and words share a common ‘zyklisches Wiederkehr’ (Berio in Restagno, 1995:111), with verbal and musical

⁶ This opera was born out of a dictionary entry: Calvino loved Barthes and Havas's entry for the word ‘ascolto’ in the *Enciclopedia Einaudi* (1977), as did Berio. He particularly liked the three levels of listening that the linguist pinpointed: listening to tracks and hints (typical of animals), listening to decipher and anticipate (human beings at their first evolutionary state), and listening for social purposes.

leit motifs periodically emerging. The opera, Mila noticed, is dominated by vocality and the listener is surprised by the naturalness of the singing: contiguous notes follow one another, especially in Prospero's baritone arie. His pieces are "un declamato melodico flessuoso che ha il peso e la stanchezza della riflessione" (Cosso in Restagno, 1995:124).

Calvino's original idea of a political-sentimental *pièce* about power is not completely accepted by Berio: the composer limits the story to the world of drama. The text taken here into consideration for analysis is the original one, thus summarized by Calvino: "Il re, per trovare la donna che aveva sentito cantare nel primo atto, invita al palazzo musicisti e cantori e cantatrici e darà un premio alla voce più bella. Così spera di ritrovarla, ma non sa che una voce che canta davanti al re non può essere la voce del desiderio che lui ha sentito. [...] Poi tutto dovrebbe finire con una congiura di palazzo e una rivoluzione popolare" (2000:1481). Calvino's text starts with a beautiful parallelism between the palace, where the king lives, and the ear:

Padiglioni volute timpani chiocciole labirinti: il palazzo è
l'orecchio del re.
Qui i muri hanno orecchi.
Qui tutti i muri messi insieme formano un enorme
orecchio.

Tendaggi porte segrete spiragli cunicoli trabocchetti: il
palazzo del re è fatto per nascondersi e spiare.

Il re non ha bisogno d'orecchi. Il re ascolta con gli
orecchi altrui.
(2004:731)

Playing with idiomatic expressions ("Qui i muri hanno orecchi") and words which can be referred both to architecture and the physical structure of an ear ("padiglioni, timpani, chiocciole, labirinti"), the writer literally makes a metaphor concrete: "il palazzo è l'orecchio del re". Farther on, the metaphoric palace and the concrete ear expand into a city: "la città-conchiglia" (2004:738). Although the king spies

on the city, he cannot understand it and feels estranged: “Il re s’affaccia al balcone; guarda i tetti; cerca di riconoscere le vie; non si ritrova” (ibid.). In Ivan Vladislavić’s *Double Negative*, the photographer, looking down on the city from a hill, feels the same difficulty in understanding Johannesburg:

‘You think it would simplify things, looking down from up here,’ he went on, ‘but it has the opposite effect on me. If I try to imagine the lives going on in all these houses, the domestic dramas, the family sagas, it seems impossibly complicated. How could you ever do justice to something so rich in detail? You couldn’t do it in a novel, let alone a photograph. (2010:45)

Understanding a city from the outside seems an impossible task for both the photographer and the king.

This very purpose – to help understanding a city – is at the basis of *Rumori da monumenti* (2007), a composition by Lucia Ronchetti, on texts by Ivan Vladislavić. The work was presented as final outcome of a stay in Johannesburg made by the composer in 2008, inside the project ‘*Into...*’. Such project was sponsored by Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt and Siemens Arts Program, in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, as an attempt to grasp the essence of a city by music⁷. “*Rumori da monumenti*” distances itself from Ronchetti’s previous production in its focus on urbanism⁸. However, the fact that she had not tackled such a topic in her other works is not surprising, since the main characteristic in her career and production seem to be heterogeneity of inspiration, fuelled and sustained by her travels. Born in 1963, she studied in Rome, then she specialized in Paris.

⁷ The composition was first performed on 6th March 2009, at the Konzerthaus, Berlin, by the Ensemble Modern conducted by Sian Edwards. Lucia Ronchetti was the only Italian composer taking part in the project and she spent a month in Johannesburg.

⁸ She had already composed a piece on Rome, but she had focused on the sound of its doors: “I recently wrote a piece for German radio (Deutschlandradio Kultur), *Il Castello di Atlante*. It is a portrait of Rome through the sound of its doors: doors which vary according to age, size and material, each one of them unique with their own creaks and squeaks. The work was about memories of the past” (Ronchetti, *Interview 1*).

After that, numerous other scholarships and periods of study, in Stuttgart, New Haven, New York and Berlin. In her university dissertation about Bruno Maderna – a close friend of Luciano Berio – Ronchetti developed an interest in electro-acoustic media, a field in which she specialized at IRCAM, in Paris. In the last few years, Lucia Ronchetti has been working on the compositional treatment of the voice (an interest she shares, again, with Berio), collaborating intensively with the Neue Vocalsolisten of Stuttgart, one of the foremost European ensembles specialized in contemporary vocal music. In Stuttgart she met Ivan Vladislavić. Their first collaboration was a piece for musical theatre exploring the concept of otherness: *SchlemihlBendel*, in 2000, which is an adaptation of *Peter Schlemihl* by Adelbert von Chamisso.

In *SchlemihlBendel*, Vladislavić continues exploiting the technique of fragmentation which contributed to the success of *Portrait with Keys*, but he gives it a sort of dialogic form. As the title suggests, and as the visual outline of the libretto emphasises (italics and standard script), the text consists in alternating two speaking voices: Schlemihl and Bendel. The former corresponds to Chamisso's protagonist, while the latter keeps only the name of Schlemihl's servant, since in the libretto he is a metal scrap collector living in the streets of Johannesburg:

This is the story of Peter Schlemihl, a young man with ambitions and no prospects, who struck a foolish bargain and ruined his life – only to strike a better bargain and recover its true purpose. He was a European and he lived, in the way that people live in stories, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This is the story of Josiah Bendel, a congenital servant with a sense of history, who collected scrap metal in the streets of Johannesburg. He was an old man and an African, and he lived at the close of the twentieth century.

The two men are juxtaposed as to highlight their differences – young/old, European/African, 19th/20th century – but also to show their similarities: they are both outsiders, socially excluded and they share a common destiny (chosen or not) of servitude.

Of Schlemihl's story, only his wanderings around the globe, thanks to his magical seven-league boots, are taken into account. Such wanderings are paralleled by Bendel's wanderings in search of metal scraps. Vladislavić adds one more walking figure to his literary catalogue, but this time there is a musical quality in his walks: "I am a collector of noise and iron. I love the sound of rusted chains, creaking bedsteads, empty drums. The batwing bones of umbrellas splintering underfoot. Bars. Any resounding thing that declares my persistence in the world. Above all: bells." (Vladislavić, 2000). When Bendel moves, a whole range of different clatter, jingling and rattling emerges from his trolley "filched from Pick 'n Pay" (ibid.). In the end, music, city and writing join together in the beautiful final image in the libretto: the loose typewriters keys Bendel found one day in the streets, collect themselves and start working. It becomes alive and it metamorphoses into a creature which speaks with a musical rhythm. However, it is not the production of music which is here emphasised, but its connection to the production of words: words that are flimsy and inconsistent. They are "like a shadow" (ibid.). This could be Vladislavić's interpretation of Chamisso's classic: Peter Schlemihl lost his words to narrate the world, but there is the African Bendel who picked them up and put them into music.

Lucia Ronchetti's collaboration with Vladislavić about city description continued in *Rumori da monumenti*. This composition sprung out of Ronchetti's involvement in the 'Into....' project, in which she explores sub-urbanity. In two interviews published on the website of the 'Into...' project, it is possible to outline the process which led to the composition. For Ronchetti, the knowledge of the city is prior to the arrival in the city itself and it is built on the reading of Vladislavić's works, but she also used a wider variety of readings, related to literature as well as music and arts.

In *Interview 1* she highlights some concepts that feature in the composition: mythology, utopia-distopia, exploration, space. The utopian-distopian perspective plays a leading role, since she admits

her intent is “to develop a fictional dialogue on the utopia and dystopia of Johannesburg”. Therefore, the notion of mythology (in the form of memory), of exploration (in the form of experience) and the idea of space make up the theoretical framework which contains a composition for solo recorded voice and ensemble using fragments from Ivan Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys*. The voice will be realized by a South African actor under the direction of Minky Schlesinger. In this way, a South African voice will be included, reading an English text full of topographic names, specific words of Johannesburg, showing the unicity of linguistic local sounds.” In the score I will certainly integrate some results of my acoustical inquiry in the formal *andamento* and also in sound texture, without, however, using concrete quotations or examples (Ronchetti, *Interview 2*).

Therefore, from the musical point of view, the composition aims at including as many different elements as possible in order to mirror the heterogeneity of the big African metropolis she has experienced personally, in the month she spent in the city.

The texts provided by Vladislavić are fragments from *Portrait with Keys*, re-arranged in a new order. The libretto is divided into eleven parts and a coda. The topics, as indicated by the author, are: 1-island, 2-prospecting, 3-boundaries, 4-city vs. township, 5-islanders, 6-objects, 7-water, 8-objects, 9-barriers, 10-metro, 11-on the plane, coda-shell. In the “Notes on second draft”, which Ronchetti kindly sent me, Vladislavić underlines the symmetry of the structure: “This version is more strictly symmetrical than the first one. The sections are grouped in pairs around the central section (#6). These pairs are linked thematically. If you imagine them listed one below the other, and then joined in pairs by a bracket or semicircular line, you would have a shell-like structure, made of layers around the central section”. The close-knit net of correspondences between fragments (pairs and internal sets) recalls Calvino’s careful designing in *Le città invisibili* and *Il castello dei destini incrociati*. Like careful and inventive architects, the two authors draw maps of their work, giving them a visual outline that coincides in both writers with the image of the shell.

Such a metaphor is the lyric climax of a narrative movement which started from “the nature and materiality of the city”, as Vladislavić

himself pinpointed in the “Notes”. With “nature” we must assume that natural elements, water in particular, are to be included in the description but they not constitute the real nature, or inner quality of Johannesburg. Indeed, it will be soon apparent that water is not abundant at all and that the green areas in the city are man-made, while the wild veld around the city still keeps marks of the mining exploitation. The inner quality or the true nature of the city, therefore, lies more in the human will and action, which intervened in a land whose wealth was hidden underground and had to be dug up with labour. That is the reason why modern Johannesburgers are still “islanders” and “prospectors”: with these past figures, they share autonomy and a certain practice with materials. The “materiality” of life is reproduced in Part 6 in a long list of objects which look like a pile of rubbish. Among these poor objects, there is one single human being: “a black woman”. Rubbish is typical of cities and tells a lot about the social and economic structure of a city, as Calvino also highlighted in *La poubelle agrée* (1977). Here it is associated to the subordinates: black people and women. The reference to the victims of discrimination is also stressed in Part 4, where “the white city” and “the township” are contrasted through the difference of materials: “steel and glass” on the one hand, “cardboard and hardboard” on the other. Without spending a word on social issues and economic reports, Vladislavić manages to write a social critique as impressive as a pamphlet, on the consequences of apartheid and the new challenges of modern democratic South Africa. The materials and the list of objects, together with the human figure are powerful in showing the dystopian element that Ronchetti saw about Johannesburg. Calvino used rubbish as a metonymy of human life; likewise, Vladislavić uses materiality – discarded pieces of materials – as a metonymic strategy, which allows him to keep his impartiality as a narrator, but to convey his sense of dismay as an onlooker.

For Ronchetti and Berio the human voice has been a major source of study, for its musical as well as semantic characteristics; for Calvino and Vladislavić musicality has played a key role in their prose, in terms of rhetoric as well as theme. What propelled and favoured their meeting was a common concern about human beings, especially their contemporaries. There is in both authors, though with

different foregrounding, the same attention and curiosity about their times and the stage of social evolution they are witnessing. Both Calvino and Vladislavić chose to put people at the centre of their works for music, investigating topics such as anonymity, alienation, uprootedness, tyranny and exploitation. They described how people mould and are moulded by the environment they live in, and by the economical, social, ideological forces that interweave in human society. Their activism could be defined ‘political’ in the sense that involves wondering/wandering about the *polis*, intended as a primordial community of human beings. The very theme of noise, which is the *fil rouge* of their works, is strictly linked to the *polis* because noise could not exist without people: firstly, because they produce most of urban noise; secondly, because noise could not exist without an ear which detects it and a mouth which calls it so. The metaphor of the shell, on which Calvino’s and Vladislavić’s views converge, coagulates all these themes, and joins the human with the natural, the visual with the auditory. By linking water, sound and beauty, the shell summarizes human life but also city life. Finally, the shell symbolizes the poetical experience, i.e. an ever-negotiated balance between form and content, whose purpose is to ‘resound’ as much as ‘narrate’ our times.

References

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------|---|
| Angelotti, N. & Esposito, M. | 2014 | “Dragging the history behind in brackets”.
Intervista a Ivan Vladislavić. <i>Italian Studies in Southern Africa/Studi d’Italianistica nell’Africa Australe</i> . 27. 1: 80-91. |
| Arato, F. | 2007 | <i>Lettere in musica. Gli scrittori e l’opera del Novecento</i> . Novi Ligure: Città del silenzio. |
| Baranelli, L. (ed.) | 2012 | <i>Italo Calvino. Sono nato in America. Interviste 1951-1985</i> . Milano: Mondadori. |
| Berio, L. | 1981 | <i>Intervista sulla musica</i> . Ed. by Rossana |

- Dalmonte. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- , 1988 La musicalità di Calvino. In: Bertone, G. (ed.). *Italo Calvino. La letteratura, la scienza, la città*. Genova: Marietti. 115-118.
- , 2006 *Un ricordo al futuro. Lezioni americane*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Calvino, I. 1982 La vera storia. In: *La vera storia. Programma di sala*. Milano: Edizioni Teatro della Scala.
- , 2000 *Lettere 1940-1985*. Baranelli, L. (ed.). Milano: Meridiani Mondadori, 2000.
- , 2004 Testi per musica. In: Barengi, M. & Falcetto, B. (eds.). *Romanzi e racconti III*. Milano: Meridiani Mondadori, 637-761.
- Capozzi, R. (ed.) 2013 *Tra Eco e Calvino. Relazioni rizomatiche*. Milano: EM Publishers.
- Corti, M. n.d. Un modello per tre testi: le tre “Panchine” di Calvino. In: *Il viaggio testuale*. Torino: Einaudi, 201-220.
- De Benedictis, A.I. (ed.) 2012 *Luciano Berio. Nuove prospettive. Atti del convegno. Siena. Accademia Chigiana. 28-31 ottobre 2008*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki.
- Hoffmann, H. 2008 *Lucia Ronchetti*. <<http://www.luciaronchetti.com/en/texts/lucia-ronchetti-en/p5-28-772>>.
- Jona, E. 1958 *Cantacronache*. Numero unico, Estate, 5-6.
- Miller, A. 2007 “Delving in the Toolbox Ivan Vladislavić interviewed by Andie Miller”. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 42, March, 131-143.

- Pöllmann, R. 2009 *The secret of Lucia Ronchetti*. Catalogue Ronchetti Rai Trade. <<http://www.lucia-ronchetti.com/en/texts/the-secret-of-lucia-ronchetti-en/p5-28-770>>.
- Restagno, E. (ed.) 1995 *Berio*. Torino: EDT.
- Ronchetti, L. n.d. *I assembled a Colourful Musical 'Compilation'*. <<http://www.i-n-t-o.de/en/komp-lucia-ronchetti-interview.html>>
- . n.d. *Interview 1-Interview 2*. <<http://www.i-n-t-o.de/en/komp-lucia-ronchetti-interview.html>>.
- Splendore, P. 2011 *Double Negative and TJ*. An Interview with Ivan Vladislavić. *Anglistica* 13.1: 53-61. <<http://www.anglistica.unior.it/sites/anglistica/files/06%20Vladislavić.pdf>>.
- Varese, C. 1988 "Calvino librettista e scrittore in versi". In: *I. Calvino. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Firenze. 26-28 febbraio 1987)*. Falaschi, G. (ed.). Milano: Garzanti. 349-368.
- Vladislavić, I. 1993 *The Folly*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- . 2000 Bendel *Schlemihl*. Unpublished text. Courtesy of the authors.
- . 2006 *Portrait with keys: Joburg & what-what*, Cape Town: Umuzi.
- . 2009 *Rumori da monumenti*. Unpublished text. Courtesy of the authors.
- Vladislavić, I. & Goldblatt, D. 2010 *TJ Johannesburg photographs 1948-2010 – Double negative*, Contrasto: Roma.

THE ZOMBIE AND HIS ITALIAN HALF BROTHER: THE SATIRIC USE OF THE ZOMBIE MYTH IN THE SHORT STORY ZOologo BY NICCOLÒ AMMANITI

GIOVANNA SANSALVADORE

(University of South Africa, Pretoria)

Sommario

Il mito dello zombie, utilizzato spesso sia nella letteratura dell'orrore sia in quella gotica, viene ripresentato da Niccolò Ammaniti, scrittore italiano pulp, nel racconto intitolato Zoologo. In una trama che mette a confronto l'ambiente urbano italiano con una tradizione sciamanica africana, il personaggio dello zombie viene usato come portavoce di un commento ironico sulla società italiana degli anni Novanta, caratterizzata da un consumismo banale e popolata di giovani ossessionati dalla moda e dalla pubblicità. Il saggio si propone di analizzare il racconto nell'ambito del pulp italiano definendone le originali tecniche di demistificazione.

Key Words: Pulp Fiction – Gothic Novel – Consumerism

Literature almost invariably finds itself in the Janus-like position of simultaneously looking backward – relying on established traditions and conventions – whilst also striving to be ground breaking and innovative. This apparent contradiction has never been more noticeable than in the later years of the twentieth century when postmodern sensibilities attempted to find a voice with which to express the uncertainty and irresolution of a world in flux. In keeping with the concerns of the “post industrial” (Nicol, 2006:565, quoting Bell, 1973), the “post-Fordist” (Nicol, 2006:565, quoting Harvey, 1989) and “late capitalis[m]” (Nicol, 2006:565, quoting Jameson, 1984), literature witnessed a rise in fragmentariness associated with the “new sensibility” (Nicol, 2006:565) of postmodernism. The

multi-culturalism, brought on by the hitherto unprecedented growth of the power of the media – following the market globalisation in the later decades of the twentieth century – fostered an environment in which common cultural concerns were simultaneously addressed in similar ways. More so than ever before in the past, images, ideas and texts now started circulating freely, creating a network of interlinked discourses that encouraged the flattening of time and space in the process of re-evaluation of the individual text. With what Brian Nicol calls “ironic knowingness” (Nicol, 2006:567), the self-reflexivity of the textual focus becomes a definite trend towards ironic commentary.

The most important and interesting aspect of satire is its cumulative nature, whereby disparate and varied references allow the text to become composite works that rely on a vast network of intertextual referencing for their meaning. As in many other instances of literary subversiveness, associated with the fragmentariness loosely called ‘postmodernism’, the Italian pulp movement of the 1990s, focused around the *giovani cannibali*¹ (young cannibals), set about breaking the perceived respectability of the Italian literary writing scene by stitching together layers of social criticism with linguistic experimentation and bloody, violent imagery. Although not specifically adhering together as a formally defined literary group, their shared ideas about writing gave them a communal approach to literary commentary. Along with their penchant for ‘extreme’ writing – splatter iconography – and the influence of American films, the *giovani cannibali* also experimented with writing modalities and genres. Therefore, while using disparate literary traditions as building blocks, these writers variously addressed thorny issues at the heart of the industrial world.

Their focus is on the loss of the individual personality in the emotionally flattened, inter-personal relationships typical of the talk show environment, the loss of self in the drug and drink fuelled nocturnal wanderings of their dysfunctional characters and the moral

¹ Their name was derived from their first published anthology, Ammaniti, N. [and others]. Brolli, Daniele (Ed.), 1996, *Gioventù cannibale. La prima antologia italiana dell'orrore estremo*, Torino: Einaudi.

disjunction on all levels of human interaction. These issues are presented with a postmodernist flair for “[...] pluralities, chaos, instabilities, constant changes, fluidities, and paradoxes [that serve to] define the human condition” (Fuat & Venkatech, 1995:243). Their subject matter is drawn from the extremities of daily living in the urban environment: a single, often unlikely, but realistically plausible event pushed to its extreme consequences and garnered with imagery of extreme and irrational violence, strong language and a lack of ethical consequentiality. Behind the facade of well-to-do affluence, their literary characters exhibit an amoral and antisocial worldview that lacks accountability while endorsing an overwhelming consumerism that underscores their extreme individual angst. The cities of the Italian industrialised north are the settings for most of the stories. The characters move about in an environment thick with the trappings of ‘modern living’: the shopping malls, city streets, apartment blocks or seedy night clubs. The *denouements* of the tales – often in short story form – hinge around ironic twists that reveal the dichotomies at the root of a society that pretends to be good, beautiful, educated and modern but which is, in fact, empty, ruthless and superficial. The only ‘truth’ at the centre of this fictional world is the ousting of a formerly accepted moral order in favour of the branded product and the empty trappings of consumer culture. However, the display of unremitting horror, like the presence of the violent and the arbitrary, juxtaposed to the everyday life of middle class Italy, hinges on an incongruence that belies their interest in ironic commentary.

In spite of the loss of values in the society that they highlight, the ethical framework around which the works of these authors is structured still directs the reader to one of the traditional roles of literature in society; that of guide in the evaluation of societal norms. This strong moral core at the centre of their works recalls the ethical framework of much English Victorian writing, towards which these authors sometimes lean for inspiration. While using the easily identifiable *trash* of the American ‘slasher’ genre for shock effect, the *giovani cannibali* also rely on subtle literary networking as a tool for social commentary. In refocusing the readers’ attention to the literary thematic content of their works, these writers force readers to take a

closer look at their own society with allegorical and critical distance. Their aspiration towards “the adjustment of the reader’s terms of perception” (Sinibaldi, 1997:28) leads them to borrow vastly from disparate literary traditions in order to use these with ironic re-adaptations to their own specific needs. The splatter genre with its focus on a single arbitrary event of low moral or ethical meaning but with a great deal of visual impact, the slang of modern urban sub-cultures, what Sinibaldi calls the ‘contamination’ (Sinibaldi, 1997:30) from other media, the graphic novel and the comic strip with its predominantly visual, highly abbreviated form marked by a conspicuous lack of psychological characterisation meld together in a pastiche of influences and references.

Ammaniti’s short stories display a conscious reliance on numerous iconic traditions against which his own texts are intended to be read. Through the filter of these traditions he is able to comment on cultural and historical issues at the root of his own social ‘present’. His works have been called “a strange meaningful medley in which can be found cinematic and literary horror, Italian B grade comedy, American films made for television, images from advertising and, occasionally, some readings of the classics”² (Pezzarossa, 1999:18) in which elements of the neo gothic, borrowings from canonical Italian literary figures such as Landolfi and Buzzati as well as secondary traditions such as Gothic fiction co-exist as background stage setting for his new texts.

The Gothic mode with its enticing repertoire of horror³, uncertainty and the shifting nature of reality provides a rich seam of source material. Traditionally a literary haven in which issues of identity, uncertainty and cultural angst could be investigated in a fictional framework outside of social and cultural norms, Gothic writing has been revisited often for its rich source material. In its

² “una miscela espressiva singolare, in cui rientrano l’orrore cinematografico e letterario, la commedia all’italiana di serie B, telefilm americani, le immagini della pubblicità e, a caso, qualche lettura di classici” (traduzione di chi scrive).

³ According to Adriana Cavarero terror is associated with the instinct to flight while horror is associated with the inability to act in the face of extreme fear. “In contrast to what occurs with terror, in horror there is no instinctive movement of flight in order to survive, much less the contagious turmoil of panic” (Cavarero, 2009:8). Therefore, it would seem reasonable to equate horror with the impulse towards literature.

heyday in the late 18th century and early 19th century, Gothic literature could be credited with distancing and making sense of a world in which rapid social and scientific changes threatened a social and historical stability that was largely taken for granted. Similarly, the social norms of 1990s Italy, bolstered by innumerable television channels, offering unremitting sexist, consumeristic and fatuous subject matter, were hardly conducive to cultural debate or ethical re-evaluation. Functioning as the voice of criticism within a society “drowned in a sea of commodification”⁴ (Pezzarossa, 1999:39), Ammaniti’s use of the Gothic genre provides an ingenious and fun key to the critical re-reading of contemporary Italian society. Every century has its prevalent anxieties. Finding a means for dealing with prevalent anxieties is particularly central to the understanding of the Gothic in the current era⁵. Gothic writing’s principal means for achieving its true nature of “barometer of anxieties” (Bruhm:2002) is its use of layers of conventions interposed between the fictional world and the surrounding actuality, thereby forcing a re-evaluation of reality and allowing for an alternative viewpoint.

The short story *Zoologo*, first published in the 1996 collection *Fango (Mud)*, uses an array of intertextual references that create a codified dialogue derived from a long standing narrative tradition. This is almost the short hand of horror writing with referencing of popular images from innumerable primary as well as second-rate books and movies.

At first sight the use of the Gothic imagery in Ammaniti’s story appears to be at the level of what Fred Botting has called ‘candygothic’ (1996:134), or the gothicising trappings superficially utilised for the sake of ambience. On closer reading, however, Ammaniti is more careful, using a network of references that use the staples of the genre as literary markers and which lead the reader step-by-step into the unfolding of text. If genre can be seen as “[...] an autonomous entity, [...] as a sealed packet of meaning” (Grey, 2006:3)

⁴ “immersa nel mare della mercificazione”

⁵ Refer to Bruhm, S., “The Contemporary Gothic: Why we need it”. In: *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002).

these models are more than stylistic borrowings. They become the building blocks for an alternatively parodied text.

Images are reduplicated as allusions, often peripherally for both their inherent meaning as well as for the impact of their imagery. Allusions to famous preceding texts create a pastiche of narrative *loci* within which to establish the credentials of the new text, *Zoologo*, as a trustworthy member of the genre ranging from *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* to *The Turn of the Screw*. In this paper reference is being made to these specific texts because they are well known canons that highlight important Gothic literary elements despite not being the immediate models for Ammaniti's short story. Quoting Grey "If our textual world is populated by intertextual ghosts, this [intertextuality] is a system that allows for texts to haunt, target, and beleaguer others, and hence for counter-discursive struggles for both meaning and textual power" (Grey, 2006:40), the ghost text allows allusions to traditions, genres and echoes to inform the later image with the 'powers' of the first if not its actual immediate presence. In themselves these texts have formed the 'Ur' text for most modern Gothic writing. Many more texts of equal importance could be quoted in the genre. As "[...] genre codes serve as shorthand to tell us what is going on [...]" (Grey, 2006:28), the "sense we make of any text relies upon our genre literacy, and upon our overall understanding of its generic grammar" (Grey, 2006:45) thus helping the writer to find a shortened path to the nucleus of the textual message. The area of influence, a general underlay of referred images and textual echoes, is a network of texts from which a multiple range of images are drawn. Built into the notion of intertextuality are the allied notion of irony and parody. Although it is true to say that rewriting is not necessarily parodic in the sense of the consciously subversive with regards to the original, rewriting nonetheless veers closer to parody than not. In *Zoologo*, Ammaniti brings textual allusion into play by using familiar form and images from numerous texts and films in order to facilitate the entry of the reader into a text that will attempt to expose modern failings and present day monstrosities.

Coming as it did at the beginning of a period of ethical uncertainty brought on by revolt against the tenets of the Enlightenment as well as

angst in the wake of powerful cultural and scientific developments of the 19th century, the Gothic became what Beville describes as “[...] the true voice of that which is unspeakable: un-representable” (Beville, 2009:41). Representing the unspeakable is done by interposing many layers of literary conventions, thus allowing the Gothic genre to use its predetermined structure as vessels for the channelling of these unspeakable ‘fears’. The conventions that govern the Gothic text are an integral part of its meaning. For Ammaniti, the unspeakable has shifted from the personally relevant to the generally applicable: the consumer society of the Italian 1990s has taken on the shifting loss of definition and identity that characterises the latter day Urban Gothic. The demons that used to inhabit the old Gothic, immediately recognised by the reader in the paraphernalia of Gothic trappings, are the reduced versions of themselves, reborn in the context of an intellectually diminished society. When Ammaniti borrows elements from other sources, these iconic images are used to show a *papier maché* horror, stock images that, due to their familiarity and assiduousness, no longer have the power to horrify the reader but function as signposting for the literary mode. Mimicking the society that it seeks to describe, the Gothic of the story *Zoologo* is a purposefully created surface pastiche of structural images and tired allusions.

Structurally, the most important borrowing is the framing device which sets the scene for the story itself. In most Gothic texts the main story is introduced by a narrative frame on the outside of the main events; the letters by Walton on an expedition unrelated to the central story of Dr. Frankenstein and his monster, the manuscript written by the shady, and already deceased governess, to tell her horrible tale of the wards haunted by the ghosts of her predecessor Miss Jessel and her lover Peter Quint, or the travel diary of Jonathan Harker, the narrator/traveller first encountered in the forests around the Castle of Count Dracula, whose story recounts, via a series of other diary entries, the tale of the vampire. *Zoologo* opens with a framing scene distanced from the tale by the device of the recounted memory (“I remember well”⁶, Ammaniti: 201). The fictional setting frames a

⁶ “Mi ricordo bene”. Similar words open the retrieved manuscript of the governess in the main section of Henry James’s *Turn of the Screw*: “I remember the whole beginning as a

group of academics telling each other stories in the convivial environs of a pseudo-English pub (“It was small and crowded and attempted to resemble an English pub with its wooden panelling and beer mugs hung above the counter”⁷ (Ammaniti: 201) set in a suburb of Bologna (Ammaniti: 201), a Italian city actually at the centre of the development of the Italian pulp literary movement. The fictional setting duly encapsulates the reader in the fireside story-telling tradition that structures the suspense and resultant literary intrigue. The frame is used to dissociate the story – a past and traumatic event – from the telling, the reliving of the terror in a present time. The first narrator, whose role in the narrative process is to pass on someone else’s story, creates a distance that preserves the mystery, rendering it unassailable.

Setting the original tale in what Punter and Byron call “the location that is no more” (2004:51) the distanced narrative, held in check by the frame, allows for an estrangement of the story in the present of the moment of telling and relates it to an event that is safely contained in a distanced past. The terror encapsulated in the recounted story is thus not part of either the life or the present of the listener but part of the life of the ‘Other’. The story is thus mediated via the narrator who is able to pass on the thrill of the terror but not the potential danger.

The use of the remote or historic past tense⁸ in *Zoologo* and the first person narrator whose words, ‘quoted’ by the italic typeset normally used in reported speech, sets the scene for the second narrator – a figure, Cornelio Balsamo, defined by traditional Gothic features – “[...] small dark eyes and a long, pointy nose [...] a rather dark and tenebrous look”⁹ (Ammaniti: 203) – whose tale forms the main body of the narrative. Like Shelley’s character, Dr. Frankenstein, whose scientific experimentation is creation of life,

succession of flights and drops, a little see-saw of the right throbs and the wrong” (James, 1971:158).

⁷ “Era piccola, affollata e cercava di assomigliare a un pub inglese con quei muri rivestiti di legno e i boccali appesi sopra il bancone.”

⁸ The Italian story uses the *passato remoto* which is usually associated with historical writing.

⁹ “[...] occhi piccoli e scuri e un naso lungo e appuntito [...] un aspetto assai tenebroso”

Balsamo's research is in the regeneration of limbs in the giant lizards, also known as the Dragons of Komodo Island in Indonesia. However, his research involves the regeneration of severed limbs of the dragons which he himself has severed. ("He studies the regeneration of limbs in the Dragons of Komodo Island. I knew that he had amputated the limbs of more than a thousand giant lizards in order to see the phenomenon of scarring"¹⁰, Ammaniti: 203).

In the story's frame, the use of a familiar tone creates a sense of intimacy that draws the reader into the magic circle of the storytelling moment. The parody of the fictional narrator maintaining the anonymity of the 'true' story by changing the name of the subject who is a fictional, zombie-professor of biochemistry, brings the story into the realm of the television docu-drama, which blurs the boundaries between the fictional, the semi fictional and the fictionally 'true' ("It is a true story and I will intentionally change the names of the protagonists in order to protect their anonymity"¹¹, Ammaniti: 204).

The audience listening to the horror story is traditionally coerced into becoming a captive to the telling of the tale; the fireside storytelling as evening entertainment in which a group of people are quasi-forcibly gathered together by social convention (*The Turn of the Screw*), the necessity for telling the horror at the narrator's deathbed (*Frankenstein*), or the alleviation of boredom on an evening during a conference out of town, ("Alone after the congress with the only option of returning to my squalid little hotel room, my colleagues had invited me to go drinking with them"¹², Ammaniti: 201). The reason for hearing the story focuses the reader's attention on the narrative moment, thus providing the required suspension of external time and the exclusion of everyday life in the narrative moment.

The core of the story, once reached through the portal of the frame, transposes the zombie myth to the familiar Gothic setting that is also

¹⁰ "Studiava la rigenerazione degli arti nei varani di Komodo. Sapevo che aveva amputate le zampe a più di mille lucertoloni per vedere i fenomeni di cicatrizzazione."

¹¹ "È una storia vera e cambierò intenzionalmente i nomi dei protagonisti per proteggere il loro anonimato."

¹² "Dopo il congresso essendo solo e con l'unica possibilità di ritornarmene in albergo, nella mia squallida cameretta, i colleghi mi avevano invitato ad andare con loro, a bere."

part of the pulp *mise en scene*. The protagonist, the incapable, bumbling but well meaning student, Andrea Milozzi, on his banded motorbike, “was riding his *Ciao* in the frozen night”¹³ (Ammaniti: 206). His reluctant intervention against a group of racist thugs on behalf of a homeless black immigrant – the relevant issue of xenophobia at the centre of so many political debates in contemporary Italy – leads to his murder at the hands of members of right wing thugs that are part of the political landscape of contemporary Italy (“little street fascists”¹⁴, Ammaniti: 208). The immigrant, Karim, emblematic figure of the itinerant worker in the Italian contemporary city, whose fictional biography recalls the death of Jerry Masslo in 1989, in the town of Villa Literno in Campania, where Karim’s history is also set¹⁵ (“He had only managed to find some work during the summer at Villa Literno. He picked tomatoes. He was paid in kind. In autumn, when it started getting cold, the work had ended”¹⁶, Ammaniti: 212), links the story to yet another political reality of 1990s Italy. Andrea’s reluctant, but morally correct sense of duty towards the homeless man leads to his own beating and subsequent fatal knifing. However, Karim, a shaman in his native – unnamed – small country in West Africa, is a link with a world that is alien and mysterious, a distant location inhabited by stereotypical medicine men and esoteric occultists:

In Africa, he has been an important man in his tribe, respected by everyone. He was the medicine man and the man of magic. He had learnt his magic arts from his father who had learnt them from his grandfather and so forth till the beginning of time. He had learnt the secrets of medicine and of herbs, how to speak to the dead and

¹³ “Andrea correva sul suo Ciao nella notte gelata.”

¹⁴ “Andrea riaprì gli occhi e ululò.” “Andrea si guardò un po’ in giro e ululò alla luna.”

¹⁵ Jerry Masslo, a political refugee from South Africa, had settled in Italy where he became an itinerant worker, picking tomatoes in Southern Italy. He was murdered in a racial attack in Villa Literno in the summer of 1989.

¹⁶ “Solo durante l’estate era riuscita a trovare qualcosa, a Villa Literno. Raccoglieva pomodori. Lo pagavano a cassetta. In autunno, con il freddo, il lavoro era finito.”

how to recall them from their sleep. He had become the priest of the afterlife, he had glimpsed the banks of Hell in his trances¹⁷. (Ammaniti: 212-213)

On witnessing Andrea's brutal killing on his behalf, Karim invokes the return of his spirit from the gods and Andrea is restored to a form of semi-life typical of the zombie.

Again, the core of the story refers back to the Gothic archetypal binary split between the here and the esoteric 'there' where the spirit world in all its nuances can be encountered. But the fearful status of the living dead in Ammaniti's story is reduced. Like the average member of Italian society in the 1990s, the zombies are:

[...] caught in a monotonous longing. The last thing that they experienced in their past life transforms itself in a base and simple instinct, ancient and primitive, and because they are unconscious beings, they don't understand it, but they passively abandon themselves to it.

They live, if that can be called living, irrationally, on the periphery of the simplest norms of communal living and of morality. They are basically crude and bad mannered¹⁸. (Ammaniti: 214)

The attainment of sublime terror involved in the Gothic is, however, lacking in this much reduced and essentially irrelevant social structure within which the story unfolds.

¹⁷ "In Africa, nella sua tribù era stato un uomo importante. Rispettato da tutti. Era l'uomo della medicina e della magia. Aveva appreso le arti magiche da suo padre che le aveva apprese da suo nonno e così fino all'inizio dei tempi. Aveva imparato i segreti della medicina e quelli delle erbe, come parlare con i morti, richiamandoli dal loro sonno. Era divenuto il sacerdote dell'oltretomba, aveva visto nelle sue trance le sponde rocciose dell'inferno."

¹⁸ "[...] incastrati in un monotono desiderare. L'ultimo anelito che hanno avuto nella vita passata si trasforma in un istinto basso e semplice, primitivo e antico, ed essendo esseri incoscienti non lo comprendono, ma ci si abbandonano passivamente. Vivono, se la loro si può chiamare vita, irrazionalmente, al di fuori delle norme più semplici di convivenza e moralità. Sono in definitiva rozzi e maleducati."

The unwelcoming urban Italian setting favoured both by the pulp environment as well as the Gothic tradition is exemplified in the cityscape – “The alley was narrow and full of cardboard boxes and trash that obstructed movement”¹⁹ (Ammaniti: 206), melds with the night-scape which is the privileged terror-time of the gothic tale in which “[t]he city slept silently and very few cars bulleted away in the cold of the night”²⁰ (Ammaniti: 207), where “[...] a side alley shrouded in impenetrable darkness”²¹ (Ammaniti: 206) emblematises the loneliness and squalor of the urban reality. The psychological interiorisation of the dark and dangerous city, derived from the Victorian tradition of the Dickensian-type Urban Gothic in which “drains replace devils” (Mighall, 1999:62), encapsulates both the terror and the alienation of the modern psyche, and is readily recognised by readers of the modern Urban Gothic tale. However, the Urban Gothic of Ammaniti’s story transposes the filth of the degenerated urban environment to the types who inhabit the locale, the dark soul of the city is associated with the ruthless blankness of the violent people who “[...] continued kicking the one on the ground”²² (Ammaniti: 207). The facelessness of the thuggery of the modern, dislocated city in which unnamed assailants “[...] were beating someone”²³ (Ammaniti: 206) typify the undefined agents of the violence – the ‘they’ of the attack on Karim – which also draw this story into a universality of horror that is at the core of Pulp’s ethical questioning of modern society in which alienation and social disintegration are the elemental ‘truth’.

However, death turns out not to be the worst outcome. By concession of the gods, Andrea’s spirit return to his body, couched in the iconography of numerous B rate movies, in which the character, “Then bit by bit [...] slowly descended and fell once again into the

¹⁹ “La vietta era stretta e piena di scatoloni di cartone e rifiuti che ostruivano il passaggio.”

²⁰ “La città dormiva silenziosa e solo poche macchine sfrecciavano nel freddo della notte.”

²¹ “un vicolo laterale chiuso in un buio impenetrabile”

²² “I tre continuavano a prendere a calci quello a terra.”

²³ “Stavano picchiando qualcuno.”

body, shuddering and filling it again of something akin to life”²⁴ (Ammaniti: 214).

The central figure of the story, the zombie, reverts to yet another tradition. In its original symbolism the zombie is a terrifying embodiment of the loss of human quality, or in Haitian terms, “an expression of the memory of slavery” (Mzilibazi Kjone: 3). In the words of Rene Depestre, “The zombie is ultimately a slave deprived of his soul, of his sensibility, of his *imaginaire* and reduced to the state of an exploited object like an ass or a machine” (Mohamed B. Taleb-Khyar, 1992:553). While this core meaning is always at the centre of the zombie myth, Ammaniti’s story only very superficially refers to specific Haitian iconography.

Ammaniti again makes extensive use of stock images and intertextual webs that are familiar to the reader from a plethora of movies and comic strips in which the zombie makes his formulaic appearance in order to more easily enlist the reader’s familiarity; “Andrea opened his eyes again and started ululating”, “Andrea looked around for a bit and ululated at the moon” (Ammaniti: 214). His walk is described with the familiar iconography of the zombie movie: “He didn’t walk at all harmoniously, but swayed slightly and rocked on his rigid legs”²⁵ (Ammaniti: 215); “Teetering, he reached Regina Elena Avenue”²⁶ (Ammaniti: 215). His ululating screams and gyrating head are redolent of the second rate horror movie; “His head. His head was turned 180 degrees”²⁷ (Ammaniti: 215); “It was strange to see the face, the neck and then the back and bum and on the other side his hair down to his chest”²⁸ (Ammaniti: 218). The act of vomiting green slime in the empty nocturnal bus journey (“The young man twisted his mouth, pinched his nose and vomited an incredible amount of

²⁴ “Poi piano piano precipitò più giù e cadde di nuovo nel corpo, scuotendolo e riempendolo di qualcosa di simile alla vita.”

²⁵ “Non camminava proprio armoniosamente, sbandava un po’ ai lati e ondeggiando sulle gambe rigide.”

²⁶ “Arrivò su viale Regina Elena traballando.”

²⁷ “La testa. La testa era girata di centottanta gradi.”

²⁸ “Era strano vedere la faccia il collo e poi la schiena e il sedere e dall’altra parte i capelli che gli finivano sul torace.”

warm green slime onto the old woman”²⁹ (Ammaniti: 222) is more visually important than literarily necessary. Our reading of the imagery is here determined by the familiarity that we have with the movies, comic books and advertising where the figure of the zombie makes a clichéd link between the notion of living dead and the society against which he is juxtaposed.

While Gothic fiction is often tied up with issues in which the thematic focus “[...] is the nature of identity [...]” (Lamb, 1992:307), in Ammaniti’s reworking the mythical elements skirt those original layers of meaning while focussing on the dichotomy at the heart of current society. The nature of identity that Ammaniti’s story interrogates is only peripherally that of the monster. In the monster’s confrontation with the world, the measure of the society that surrounds that monster is far more important. While in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* the monster cannot find acceptance in a world that has cruelly predetermined its definitions of good and bad, beautiful and ugly, as well as a strict understanding of the ontological origins of existence, in the modern Italian context the monster finds his place in an environment in which the definition of identity is in keeping with a society that lacks clearly defined terms to describe that identity. As concerned as this society is with designer labels and the value of appearance, the inhabitants of this ‘world’ cannot tell the difference between the zombie and other notions of reality.

Utilising familiar text with their baggage of associations and references allows the writer the opportunity to short circuit long and laborious intertextual references as “[...] a method of inscribing continuity while permitting critical distance” (Hutcheons, 2000:20). The ironic mode thus relies on the inclusion of disparate intertextual echoes that enrich and broaden the base of reference and “prepare [...] us for the text, and prepare [...] the text for us, so that any resulting meaning, power, or effects that the text may be seen to possess are in part a function of the already read” (Grey, 2006:26).

²⁹ “Il ragazzo arriccìò la bocca, strizzò il naso e vomitò addosso alla vecchia una quantità sproporzionata di pappa verde e calda.”

The ontological bases on which existence is posited are still at the centre of the writer's explorations. However, the benchmark of 'identity' available to the modern context is none other than the latest fashion or the current fad. How, in fact, can the zombie be identified as semi-dead when all around him only the semi-real life of the television show or drug junkie are the ultimate reality? A state of semi-existence is already the essence of this society. The zombie's knowledge of biological detail does not stem from his human qualities, yet his 'abilities' – the prodigious memorising of lists of biological names – are prized even though they no longer reflect the human in him. The appearance is all and, as such, even the zombie can find his place in a social milieu that understands nothing outside facile appearance.

Professor Ermini, strict professor of the department where the zombie student Andrea must sit his examination, presides over a Gothic laboratory akin to Dr. Frankenstein's *sanctorum*, "a large hall full of stuffed animals, lined with jars holding organisms in formalin, posters showing the steps of evolution"³⁰ (Ammaniti: 226). But unlike Dr. Frankenstein, whose crisis stems from his deep understanding of the consequences of his choices and actions, Professor Ermini is taken in by the appearance of knowledge and the external signs of erudition. The zombie student is able to recite the names, therefore he deemed to be a gifted student. In such an intellectually bankrupt society, little counts outside of appearance.

The zombie finds his place in this society because the society itself no longer contains its own markers to identify 'being' or 'achieving'. The monster has become the gothic hero in a society that no longer recognises heroes. In reworking the sublime terror of the Gothic sensibility to the comic strip figure of the zombie zoologist, Ammaniti achieves a "signalling of distance" (Hutcheons, 2000:31) by redirecting the reader's criticism towards the workings of his own familiar social environment. In Ammaniti's *Zoologo*, the 'monster' who is also the estranged 'Other' of the gothic genre, is akin to the

³⁰ "[...] in una grande sala con animali impagliati, vasi con organismi in formalina, cartelloni raffiguranti le scale evolutive"

'us', otherwise understood to be the "good society" ("società perbene"), that sees itself in glowing terms in the Italy of the 1990s. The conceptual gap between the actuality of this society and the imagination it has of itself is crystallised in the figure of the zombie. As the latter can no longer extrapolate any relevant 'meaning' from life in the contemporary city, the same society has no means with which to differentiate between real life and semi-life, between the living and the living dead. Thus, the ironic mode in the works by the *giovani cannibali* is a means of admitting the reader into a text with the end of achieving a comment and condemnation of a society's 'blind spots' and lack of self-evaluation. Not only is the ironic mode "[...] an important way for modern artists to come to terms with the past [...]" (Hutcheons, 2000:101), but its understated jocularly is the only critical tool whereby the present can be highlighted, dissected and found wanting.

References

- | | | |
|---------------------|------|--|
| Agger, B. | 1991 | “Critical theory, post-structuralism, postmodernism: Their sociological relevance.” <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 17: 105-131. Accessed: 03/02/2011. |
| Ammaniti, N. | 1999 | <i>Fango</i> . Milano: Mondadori (reprinted 2005). |
| Antoni, C.G. | 1990 | Review: “History and culture in Haiti: Carpentier, Césaire, Dadié.” <i>Black American Literature Forum</i> , 24(1):177-184. |
| Bayer-Berenbaum, L. | 1982 | <i>The Gothic Imagination Expansion in Gothic Literature</i> . London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. |
| Bernardi, C. | 1999 | “Experiments in writing and criticism: Ricercare 1993-1999” <i>Bulletin of the Society for Italian Studies</i> , 32:3. |

- Beville, M. 2009 *Gothic-Postmodernism. Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity*. Postmodern Studies, 43. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Bloom, C 1996 *Cult Fiction. Popular Reading and Pulp Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Botting, F. (ed.) 1995 *Frankenstein: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Basingstoke & London: Macmillan.
- Botting, F. 1996 *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom*. Routledge: London.
- . 2008 *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions*. Routledge: London.
- Bradshaw, D. & Detmar, K.J.H. (eds.) 2006 *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brolli, D. (ed.) 1996 *Gioventù cannibale la prima antologia italiana dell'orrore estremo*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Bruhm, S. 2002 "The contemporary Gothic: Why we need it". In: Hogle, J.E. (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cavarero, A. 2009 *Horrorism. Naming Contemporary Violence*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Carroll, N. 1981 "Nightmare and the horror film: The Symbolic biology of fantastic beings." *Film Quarterly*, 34(3):16-25. Accessed: 29/06/2008 16:17.
- Cornwell, N. 1990 *The Literary Fantastic: From Gothic to Postmodernism*. New York: Harvester

- Wheatsheaf.
- Davis, W. 1988 *Passage of Darkness. The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Fuat Firat, A. & Venkatesh, A. 1995 "Liberatory Postmodernism and the re-enchantment of consumption." *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(3):239-267.
- Grant, B.K. 2010 "Screams on screens: Paradigms of horror." *Loading...*, 4(6):1-17.
- Grey, J. 2006 *Watching with the Simpsons. Television, Parody and Intertextuality*. New York: Routledge.
- Heffernan, J.A.W. 1997 "Looking at the monster: 'Frankenstein' and film." *Critical Inquiry*, 24(1):133-158.
- Hume, R.D. 1969 "Gothic versus Romantic: A revaluation of the Gothic novel", *PMLA*, 84(2):282-290.
- James, H. 1971 *The Aspern Papers, The Turn of the Screw, The Liar, The Two Faces*. New York, Augustus M. Kelley.
- Jameson, F. 1984 "The Politics of theory: Ideological positions in the postmodernism." *New German Critique*, 33: 53-65.
- Lamb, J.B. 1992 "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Milton's *Monstrous Myth*". *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 47(3):303-319.
- Legrain, P. 2003 *Open World: The Truth about Globalization*. London: Abacus.
- Lucamante, S. (ed.) 2001 *Italian Pulp Fiction: The New Narrative of the Giovani Cannibali*. Madison [N.J.]: Dickinson University Press.

- Lustig, T.J. 1994 *Henry James and the Ghostly*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Milbank, A. 2002 "The Victorian Gothic in English novels and stories, 1830-1880" in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miles, R. 2002 "The 1790s: The effulgence of Gothic". In: Hogle, J.E. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion of Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mighall, R. 1991 *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nicol, B. 2002 *Postmodernism and the Contemporary Novel: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Palmieri, F. 1990 *Satire in Narrative*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Pezzarossa, F. 1999 *C'era una volta il pulp. Corpo e letteratura nella tradizione italiana*. Bologna: Clueb.
- Punter, D. & Byron, G. 2004 *The Gothic*. U.K: Blackwell Publishing.
- Sinibaldi, M. 1997 *Pulp: la letteratura nell'era della simultaneità*. Roma: Donizelli.
- Stoker, B. 1983 *Dracula*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taleb-Khyar, M.B. 1992 "Rene Depestre in *Callaloo*." 15(2):550-554. *Haitian Literature and Culture*, Part 1.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS / NOTE E CURIOSITÀ

IL GIORNALE DI CAMPAGNA DI CARLO EMILIO GADDA. PER LA DEFINIZIONE DI UN PROFILO POLITICO

MARCO CARMELLO
(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Abstract:

The aim of this note is to analyse Gadda's Giornale di campagna, first part of the Giornale di guerra e prigionia (War and imprisonment journal) looking for the founding elements of Gadda's political thought. The note investigates the Giornale in order to explain Gadda's political opinions also in the framework of Giorgio Agamben's theory of bare life.

Key Words: First World War – Journal – Bare Life

Almeno fino a tempi recentissimi, il problema di un Gadda politico è stato riportato solo alla determinazione del rapporto fra l'autore milanese e il regime fascista. Che, per diverse e valide ragioni, così dovesse essere, non importa dire in queste brevi pagine. Basti solo pensare che l'opera più scopertamente politica del convoluto Eraclito di Via S. Simpliciano è proprio quell'*Eros e Priapo* costruito interamente intorno al nervo esulcerato del fascismo, non si sa se come necessità di una presa di posizione morale, resa corrusca dalla lunga bisogna di un silenzio forzatamente conformista, o come esibizione di un antifascismo a posteriori, obbediente soprattutto a quel senso di terrore da cui pare essere infiltrata la parte finale della

vita di Gadda, oppure ancora come lamento di innamorato deluso¹.

Eppure, la risoluzione di questo nodo, fondamentale per una retta ermeneutica dell'opera gaddiana, non è forse raggiungibile se non considerando il rapporto col fascismo entro le coordinate che, fin da subito, definiscono l'atteggiamento di Gadda verso la vita sociale in genere. È qui che si trovano le giuste chiavi per tracciare il profilo "politico" dell'Autore, profilo di cui l'ambivalente, e direi quasi bipolare, rapporto col fascismo è certo il capitolo più importante: ma è un capitolo che rischia di rimanere muto quando non venga inserito nella trama generale della vicenda.

In accordo con la linea di analisi scelta, inizio questo breve percorso nella scrittura gaddiana ben al di qua dei testi solitamente scelti dalla ricerca sul Gadda politico², che verte di solito sulla produzione compresa fra gli anni Trenta e gli anni Cinquanta del '900; scelgo quindi di iniziare la mia ispezione dall'origine stessa della scrittura gaddiana, vale a dire quel *Giornale di guerra e prigionia* (d'ora in poi GGP) che, pur pubblicato per la prima volta a metà degli anni Cinquanta³, rappresenta la scaturigine di tutta la successiva scrittura.

All'interno del più vasto *Giornale* scelgo di appuntare l'attenzione sul solo *Giornale di campagna* (d'ora in poi GC), in cui si leggono annotazioni che vanno dal 24 agosto 1915 al 15 febbraio 1916. Il *Giornale di campagna* rappresenta una pericope narrativa conclusa

¹ La valutazione di *Eros e Priapo* è probabilmente destinata a cambiare entro pochi anni, se è vero quanto si annunciava, nel convegno edimburghese del 2012, riguardo la nuova edizione del *pamphlet*, che apparirà per i tipi di Adelphi. In attesa che l'edizione appaia, consentendo dunque di valutare – per ampiezza e qualità – il materiale inedito e di determinarne le ragioni dell'esclusione, qui si sospende ogni giudizio di merito.

² Per il Gadda politico, e per alcune delle affermazioni contenute in questa sede ha avuto, per me, molta importanza Stellardi (2006:135-143; ma utile per il nostro discorso è l'intero volume); segnalo anche: Hainsworth (1997:221-241) e Donnarumma (2002), che però consideriamo solo tangenzialmente, essendo espressamente dedicati a fascismo ed antifascismo; rappresenta invece una fonte interessante l'articolo, ormai datato, di Guarnieri (1981:92-118), che tratta esplicitamente il Gadda politico, come anche, soprattutto per lo sviluppo della posizione dell'Autore dall'interventismo al fascismo, passando attraverso il nazionalismo, De Matteis (1985) e Benedetti (1887).

³ Per tutte le notizie editoriali rimando alla nota che Dante Isella (Isella, 1992:1103-1128) appose alla sua edizione del testo, apparsa nel IV volume delle Opere di Carlo Emilio Gadda (1992, Garzanti). È questa l'edizione di riferimento da cui si traggono le citazioni del *Giornale di campagna*.

della vita di Gadda: si apre infatti con la nomina dell'Autore a sottotenente della Milizia territoriale, con destinazione al 5° reggimento Alpini (Gadda, 1992:441), per concludersi col suo breve ritorno alla casa milanese di Via S. Simpliciano in occasione di una licenza successiva al corso di addestramento per ufficiali di complemento.

Oltre alla cronologia interna dell'opera gaddiana, che vede GC come primo scritto continuativo di sufficiente ampiezza, per il quale è possibile parlare, nonostante l'occasionalità e l'assenza di una struttura portante, di una certa unitarietà, che viene certo conferita a queste note proprio dalla situazione in cui esse vengono scritte, va anche tenuta presente la necessità, già autoriale, di rielaborare un vissuto, sentito come grave, dirimente rispetto alla vicenda biografica, nel senso se non di un'interpretazione quanto meno di una prima presa di coscienza data dal semplice distanziarsi dall'accadere degli eventi fissati nella scrittura⁴.

È dunque questo particolare aspetto della natura documentale del GC, che registra la vita del ventiduenne Gadda nel lasso di tempo immediatamente successivo alle manifestazioni interventiste, cui prese parte con entusiasmo⁵, ma immediatamente precedente alla partecipazione diretta al conflitto, che inizierà ad essere registrata a partire dal 4 giugno 1916⁶ nel *Giornale di guerra per l'anno 1916*, ad avere qui particolare importanza. Nel momento stesso in cui l'Autore passa dalle ragioni ideali che lo indussero, insieme a molti altri giovani intellettuali della sua generazione, a sostenere l'intervento a fianco dell'Intesa a quello in cui, concretizzatosi l'intervento, partecipa, volontario, allo sforzo bellico italiano, si inserisce la necessità di interporre fra sé e la realtà la scrittura, una scrittura che è già chiamata a rendere conto dello scollamento inquietante fra idealità e pratica della vita militare.

È in quest'ambito di scrittura, che inevitabilmente si esprimono anche le riflessioni sulle condizioni socio-politiche che istituiscono

⁴ Si veda anche, sui diari gaddiani, Daniele (2009).

⁵ Per la biografia del giovane Gadda l'ovvio richiamo è al classico Roscioni (1997).

⁶ Con una significativa lacuna di circa tre mesi fra l'inizio di questo nuovo giornale e la conclusione di GC. Lacuna che ha, se è corretta l'interpretazione che si abbozza qui, una sua più che incidentale importanza.

quel conflitto, un conflitto che, come presto si vedrà, Gadda tende precocemente a segnare nei termini di ordine/disordine e disciplina/indisciplina. È però importante notare come per GC, come per gli altri testi di GGP, come per il complesso dell'intera opera gaddiana, si possa parlare più di espressione politica che di vera e propria riflessione politica.

Un dato, forse il dato più costante, certamente uno dei più significativi, di tutta la storia gaddiana è proprio il fatto di un'assenza, o, come forse sarebbe meglio dire, di una denegazione della riflessività dell'ambito politico, che, in uno scrittore costantemente in tensione fra teoresi ed espressione, fra riflessione e rottura degli schemi del dicibile, si pone sempre dal lato dell'espressionismo più viscerale e doloroso. La scelta del materiale che proporrò obbedisce ad un criterio di rilevanza: si tratta quindi di trarre da GC quei passaggi che più di tutti sono indicativi di un'attitudine, di un tono, di una maniera di accostarsi al campo del politico, inteso nel senso ampio di campo della tensione sociale, che Gadda manterrà, ed anzi acuirà, nell'opera successiva.

La scrittura di GC è immediata, come più volte dice l'autore, è *currenti calamo*, di un'immediatezza spesso ignara del procedere anche solo liminalmente occultante della prosa levigata e rivista⁷, è quindi, per quanto ci riguarda, scevra di vincolo politico già nella sua stessa genesi. Ma basti sull'argomento questa semplice e cursoria osservazione.

All'interno di GC, che offre alcuni interessanti spunti di riflessione, scelgo di tracciare un percorso che considera materiale tratto esclusivamente dalle seguenti annotazioni diaristiche: 24 agosto 1915; 9 e 20 settembre 1915; 6, 9 e 27 ottobre 1915, tutte scritte ad Edolo; 27 e 30 novembre; 30 e 31 dicembre, da Ponte di Legno e, da ultimo, 16 febbraio da Milano, dove l'Autore si trova in breve licenza – è questa l'annotazione conclusiva di GC –. A queste si aggiunge, esclusivamente per l'esergo della pagina, la notazione datata «8

⁷ I criteri rigidamente restitativi e conservativi che portano Isella a riconoscere nell'originale, al netto delle successive censure cautelative dell'edizione Einaudiana del 1965, l'autentica volontà autoriale (Isella, 1992), confermano quanto si sta qui dicendo sulla natura della scrittura di GC.

gennaio sera» (Gadda, 1992:518) da Ponte di Legno⁸.

Il materiale testuale cui si è appena accennato è attraversato dal filo conduttore della dialettica fra l'idealità dell'interventismo, che spinse Gadda prima a volere la guerra, e poi a parteciparvi come volontario, da un lato e la disillusione per la realtà dell'organizzazione militare dall'altro.

La disillusione gaddiana si muove lungo differenti assi: c'è l'esacerbarsi del giovane ufficiale di complemento contro l'incompetenza dei superiori e la pigrizia delle truppe – due temi che trovano nell'invettiva contro sergenti, marescialli e furieri il loro punto d'incontro –, ma c'è anche l'insofferenza del volontario interventista verso chi vede nella guerra momento di profitto o piaga da evitare a tutti i costi. Tutte le opposizioni sembrano però ricostituirsi intorno ad una polarità che già qui assume l'importanza definitiva che avrà nella successiva poetica gaddiana, quella dell'opposizione ordine/disordine.

Mi concentro soprattutto sulla nota datata «Edolo 27 ottobre 1915 ore 16» (Gadda, 1992:481-483), che rappresenta un punto di svolta nel percorso tracciato poco sopra, poiché vede un Gadda che, avendo ormai preso la decisione di lasciare la Milizia territoriale per raggiungere gli Alpini, cerca di anticipare sempre più il momento dell'arrivo in prima linea e quindi della partecipazione attiva al conflitto.

Seguiamo l'andamento della nota attraverso la citazione di tre passaggi:

Mia sorella e mia madre sono naturalmente poco liete
della mia decisione [...] Ma io devo e voglio combattere⁹.
Lascio che i porci, i ladri, i cani e gli impostori
sgavazzino e faccio il mio dovere. Quanti giovani,

⁸ Accanto alla data si legge: «Diario del Gaddus», e sotto il motto «Sempre in culo a Cecco Beppo!» (Gadda, 1992:518). L'«epigrafe», che, data la posizione, deve intendersi come motto per l'intero 1916, rivela, nell'eccesso pragmatico, almeno due cose: da un lato la forte implicazione ideologica che Gadda sente verso la guerra, dall'altro però anche una situazione personale critica, che abbisogna, in uno scritto privato, di rimarcare la primigenia opzione ideale fortemente provata dai primi sette mesi di addestramento militare.

⁹ Necessità riconfermata nelle note datate Ponte di Legno 30 e 31 dicembre 1915 (Gadda, 1992: 514-515 e 516).

appartenenti a tutte le classi sociali ma specie al popolo, si son messi al sicuro nelle armi e nelle mansioni della paura, della vigliaccheria! Quanti con cavilli, con sofismi, con gran teorie giustificano la loro poco eroica condotta! –¹⁰. (Gadda, 1992:481)

A questo primo passaggio, ad inizio nota, segue la discussione col collega Marchini che:

[...] dice di essere individualista, di non voler adattarsi all'idea dei più, di aver ripugnanza delle guerre, ecc. ecc. Fin qui benone. Ma quando gli chiesi se [...] la Francia e la Russia avevano diritto di lottare o dovevano darsi mani e piedi legate alla Germania. E allora solo l'Italia che io credo minacciata nella sua stessa esistenza dal Germanesimo strapotente doveva lasciarsi fregare? [...] andò poi a finire sulla iniquità dei trattati, cosa giustissima, ma che non c'entrava [...]. (Gadda, 1992:481)

Alla lunga, arruffata discussione fra i due segue la chiusa, che leggiamo quasi in fine nota, prima della rapida notazione di alcuni fatti quotidiani di vita militare:

– Io sono addolorato, costernato di vedere tanta cattiva ideologia e così poco spirito di sacrificio: ma mi risponde l'individualista che il sacrificio non è ammesso nel suo sistema morale. Eppure *l'indegnità morale* da un lato (ladri, egoisti, poltroni, indolenti, incapaci) e *l'errore ideologico* (derivato soprattutto da ignoranza e da mancanza di metodo) sono tra le cause principi della nostra presente miseria –¹¹. (Gadda, 1992:482)

Come spesso accade in GC, anche qui l'Autore segna un momento di

¹⁰ Punteggiatura dell'originale.

¹¹ Punteggiatura e corsivi dell'originale.

passaggio importante del suo presente con una riconsiderazione dei fatti e dei suoi personali moventi.

L'evidente contrapposizione fra la purezza umana e morale del combattimento e l'indegnità di chi vi si sottrae – contrapposizione rimarcata in termini sociali¹², come opposizione fra l'ordine borghese, di cui l'autore si fa esplicitamente portavoce, e il disordine popolare –, evidente nella prima citazione, passa attraverso la confutazione di quegli argomenti che Gadda giudica opposti alla sua concezione (seconda citazione).

La confutazione viene intesa dall'Autore non come confronto fra argomenti di pari dignità, ma come opposizione fra l'ordine discorsivo della giustizia/giustizia e l'inganno eristico dietro cui l'indegnità morale nasconde la sua rivolta contro la "purezza" del combattere. Da qui quella sorta di chiasmo contenutistico, cattiva ideologia/poco spirito di sacrificio/indegnità morale/errore ideologico, che emerge nella terza citazione ma rappresenta una chiave di lettura fondamentale non solo per GC ma per tutto il GGP.

Vi è dunque una squalifica di tutti gli argomenti che siano contro il «sacrificio» in forza del fatto stesso che solo dal sacrificarsi deriva quella dignità morale che preserva dall'«errore ideologico», quindi da qui quella contrapposizione fra ordine e disordine attorno cui si addensa lo sguardo gaddiano sui fatti della guerra, uno sguardo però che non può fare a meno, proprio in forza della petizione di "onestà ideologica" che l'Autore si impone, di notare come il disordine arrivi a toccare quelle stesse istituzioni militari che dovrebbero invece essere ferreo baluardo del buon ordine morale¹³.

Cosa emerge dalla breve ispezione che si è condotta? Credo sia utile, per rispondere, richiamare due passi: il finale della nota presa a Precasaglio il 18 novembre 1915 (Gadda, 1992:494-495) e la breve nota del successivo 19 novembre (Gadda, 1992:495), in cui troviamo,

¹² Secondo una direttrice evidente nei materiali del *Racconto di anonimo italiano del '900*, che sarà però presente in tutta l'opera gaddiana.

¹³ Si vedano a riguardo soprattutto i seguenti passi di GC: 9 settembre, dove ad esser visto come inutile è il falso eroismo che deriva da incapacità militare (Gadda, 1992:458) e 20 settembre e 14 ottobre, dove viene stigmatizzata la corruzione e l'incapacità nell'approvvigionare adeguatamente la truppa (Gadda, 1992:468-468 e 475); 6 ottobre, in cui il tiro polemico è rivolto contro l'indolenza di ufficiali e truppa nel compimento del dovere (Gadda, 1992:472-473).

di fatto, un *unicum* in GC, la celebrazione di alcuni caduti durante atti di eroismo. La seconda nota, quella del 19, in cui si narra la morte di due ufficiali, i tenenti Pozzi e Pechini, morti per aver recuperato le salme di due compagni – episodi che Gadda definisce «d'una grandezza omerica» (Gadda, 1992:495) – danno la caratura dell'ordine ideale gaddiano: è, prima ancora che un ordine fatto di nazionalismo e conservatorismo, un ordine che si potrebbe definire “neoclassico” nel tentativo di seguire una linea di condotta in cui alla chiarezza del pensiero segue, anche a scapito della vita, la semplicità dell'azione. In questa mazziniana classicità¹⁴ però non è compresa alcuna distanza fra ragioni dell'ideale e ragioni dell'azione: il ventiduenne Gadda interventista vuole una guerra in cui il groviglio del vivere finalmente si scioglia secondo l'ordinata regola del dovere e dell'azione militare. Il fatto che così non sia, pur mettendo in crisi la radice stessa della personalità gaddiana, non spinge però l'Autore a rinunciare a quest'orizzonte, che egli assume con una forza di necessità che va oltre il portato ideologico.

Usando l'opposizione che Giorgio Agamben traccia fra vita nuda, *zoé*, e vita piena, *bíos*¹⁵, ci si potrebbe spingere a dire che proprio l'ideale in cui Gadda chiude il suo *bíos*, quell'ideale appunto neoclassico, cui egli si avvinghia per necessità, lo porta a una vera e propria apocalisse della *zoé*, che tanto più potentemente appare quanto più viene sottoposta ad una disperata negazione. Non importa qui rilevare come questa sia una delle più potenti cause dell'ispirazione gaddiana, importa invece notare come la scissione, per Gadda irreparabile, fra i due piani, *bíos* e *zoé*, definisca una scelta negativa verso l'ambito politico, una scelta che è propriamente pre-politica proprio nella petizione ideologica che esclude la vita nuda, in quanto elemento di disordine e perturbazione, dall'ambito politico. È da questa negatività verso la *zoé*, una negatività che va oltre la semplice e mortifera esigenza di un ordine borghese – poiché, ed è questa la scoperta che Gadda farà in guerra, anche quell'ordine è menzogna inficiata dalla *zoé* –, che andrà letta la paradossale vicenda politica dell'autore.

¹⁴ Mazzini ritorna più volte in GC.

¹⁵ Si veda soprattutto Agamben (2014).

Bibliografia

Opere

- Gadda, C.E. 1992 *Giornale di campagna*. In Gadda, C.E. *Giornale di guerra e prigionia*, a cura di Isella, D. In: Gadda, C.E., *Saggi, giornali, favole e altri scritti*, vol. II. Milano: Garzanti: 437-523.

Studi

- Agamben, G. 2014 *L'uso dei corpi. Homo sacer 4.2*. Vicenza: Neri Pozza.
- Benedetti, C. 1987 *Una trappola di parole: lettura del Pasticciaccio*. Pisa: ETS.
- Daniele, A. 2009 *La guerra di Gadda*. Udine: Gaspari.
- De Matteis, C. 1985 *Prospezioni su Gadda*. Teramo: Giunti & Lisciani.
- Donnarumma, R. 2002 *Fascismo*, In: Pedriali, F. (ed.) *A Pocket Gadda Encyclopedia, Edinburgh Journal of Gadda Studies, 2, Supplement n. 1*.
[<http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/Italian/gadda>]
- Guarnieri, S. 1981 *Gadda scrittore politico?* Nuova rivista europea, 24: 87-95.
- Haisworth, P. 1997 *Fascism and Antifascism in Gadda*. In: Bertone, M. and Dombroski, R.S. (eds.), *Carlo Emilio Gadda. Contemporary Perspectives*, Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press: 221-241.
- Isella, D. 1992 *Nota al Giornale di guerra e prigionia*.

- In: Gadda, C.E., *Saggi, giornali, favole e altri scritti*, vol. II. Milano: Garzanti: 1103-1125.
- Roscioni, G.C. 1997 *Il duca di Sant'Aquila. Infanzia e giovinezza di Gadda.* Milano: Mondadori.
- Stellardi, G. 2006 *Gadda: miseria e grandezza della letteratura.* Firenze: Cesati.

BOOK REVIEWS / RECENSIONI

Manuela Marchesini, *La galleria interiore dell'Ingegnere*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2014, pp. 188.

Qualunque lettore di Gadda sa che l'immaginario dello scrittore milanese è pervaso non solo di influenze letterarie, ma anche di forti impressioni derivate dalle arti visive, e soprattutto dalla pittura del rinascimento, del manierismo e del barocco italiani. La sua personale e amorosa ricezione di questo vasto patrimonio iconografico è in parte collegata (benché mai pedissequamente) al lavoro interpretativo condotto negli stessi anni da influenti critici d'arte, e in primis da Roberto Longhi; e – sempre – incorniciata in una prospettiva che non si riduce all'apprezzamento tecnico-estetico-impressionistico, coinvolgendo invece forti valenze – oltre che soggettive e emotive – anche ideologiche, e in particolare etiche. Se si pone mente all'insistenza con cui l'Ingegnere, in saggi ben noti, riconduce l'analisi teorico-letteraria (la "Poetica") a un ben più ampio quadro di riferimento concettuale (la "Metafisica"), e simultaneamente a un ineliminabile radicamento nel concreto tessuto sociale e storico ("i fatti"), sistematicamente individuando nell'aspetto morale (l' "Etica") la chiave di volta dell'intero sistema (che però non è mai chiuso e compiuto), ci si porrà nelle migliori condizioni per tentare di capire come interpretare anche il rapporto fra parola scritta e immaginario pittorico nella sua pagina; ma non è questa la sede giusta per sviluppare tali complesse correlazioni di carattere filosofico (non si dovrebbe però mai dimenticare, sia detto per inciso, quanto importante sia stato l'aspetto filosofico nella variegata formazione intellettuale del giovane Gadda – né lo dimentica l'autrice del volume in questione).

Il lavoro prende le mosse, come dichiara il titolo stesso, dall'idea di quella che Giorgio Pinotti ha definito la "galleria interiore" dello scrittore, ossia la "serie d'immagini appartenenti alla grande tradizione italiana, non solo letteraria ma anche pittorica, attraverso

cui Gadda si autorappresenta e, proiettandosi, si trascrive” (11). La fruizione di quelle potenti tracce mnestiche, in altri termini, non è mai distaccata analisi intellettuale, ma invece, da un lato, intenso coinvolgimento umano, e, dall’altro, focolaio espressivo, sempre attivo (talvolta esplicitamente) in parallelo alla creazione strettamente linguistica. Il momento in cui le due dimensioni si incontrano apertamente è quello dell’*ecfrasi narcissica*, ovvero della verbalizzazione (e inventiva, personalissima ricreazione) dell’opera pittorica all’interno della scrittura, romanzesca o saggistica. L’esempio indubbiamente più calzante (e statisticamente prevalente) è quello del Caravaggio, pittore carissimo al Nostro; ma anche Raffaello, Tiziano e tanti altri artisti compaiono nel vivente museo che l’opera gaddiana progressivamente costruisce.

L’analisi si dispiega su tre capitoli e tende a mettere l’accento sul filo conduttore dell’ “onnipotenzialità”: in Gadda le tensioni polari non si risolvono in dicotomie a tenuta stagna, ma tendono invece a dar luogo alla compresenza di possibili anche opposti, per esempio il reazionario e il sovversivo, il tragico e il comico, il maschile e il femminile. Ne risulta una lettura aperta e mobile, aliena da caratterizzazioni definitive, col risultato – per esempio – di “derubricare Gadda dal conservativismo reazionario”, non però per crocifiggerlo a qualche altro stendardo ideologico: infatti, “Gadda narratore mette in discussione la logica binaria, romantica e idealistica che è sottesa all’alternativa di commedia e tragedia, parodia e ironia, classico e barocco” (13). Il gesto primario di Gadda – secondo l’autrice – è di tipo ludico e, nella terminologia mutuata da Giorgio Agamben, «profanante».

L’aspetto forse più interessante del libro è il concreto raffronto fra il fondamentale contributo di Longhi alla critica d’arte (e alla re-interpretazione della storia della pittura italiana) e la lettura deformante e molto soggettiva che Gadda, all’interno dei suoi scritti, e avendo a mente la lezione longhiana ma non ripetendola servilmente, propone dello stesso repertorio iconografico. Si arriva così, soprattutto nel *Pasticciaccio*, a una sorta di combinazione dell’*erotia narcissica*, narrativamente realizzata da Gadda anche mediante un uso dissacrante del modello dantesco, con la trascrizione verbale, o *ecfrasi narcissica*, della tradizione pittorica italiana. Gadda dunque amorevolmente

conosce, abbraccia e rispecchia – profanandoli – tanto tanto il passato letterario quanto quello artistico.

Ciò implica che evidenziare le gallerie mentali dello scrittore significa anche rivelare un meccanismo cruciale del suo procedere creativo, e avvicinarsi al più intimo plesso della sua scrittura. Non essendo tale procedere mai lineare, esso disegna – se contemplato nel suo insieme evolutivo, dal *Racconto italiano* fino al *Pasticciaccio* – delle polarità figurative a corrente alternata, dove per esempio Raffaello (e Michelangelo) identificano l'estremo di un campo magnetico, all'altro estremo del quale troviamo Caravaggio (e Tiziano).

Tanti sono i motivi specifici di interesse del lavoro in esame; per esempio, l'autrice sposta il centro di gravità femminile del romanzo dalla figura di Liliana (personaggio toccante, ma anche irritante nella sua “subalternità di principio, indiscussa, all'*auctoritas*” maschile, 58), a quello di Assunta Crocchiapani, la vergine assassina che, “giusto il principio d'onnipotenzialità e polarità, è non solo Lucifero ma anche Madonna” (79-80).

C'è inoltre un ampio e attento lavoro di analisi degli ultimi capitoli del romanzo, e in particolare dei luoghi e degli abitanti della località Due Santi, “romana malebolge d'epoca fascista popolata di ruffiani e mezzani, seduttori e ladri” (71), il cui simbolico emblema è per l'appunto (e non casualmente) il ben noto e eponimo affresco edicolare. E si arriva così, passo dopo passo, a una interpretazione del *Pasticciaccio* (edizione Garzanti) che, rifuggendo dalla dominante tragica, mette invece l'accento su una coesistente filigrana “*paradisiaca*, positiva o *comica*, che stravolge, Agamben direbbe, profana, sia il comico dantesco che il moderno, romantico e manzoniano” (78). Il romanzo (nella versione in volume) porta dunque a compimento le premesse teoriche (agnostiche) della *Meditazione milanese*, mediante una “*compresenza* di paradisiaco e infernale che Gadda impone ai capitoli VII-X, per inscenare i quali il narratore collassa la polarità dantesca d'inferno, purgatorio e paradiso integrandola ecfrasticamente alla longhiana di Rinascimento e Barocco, su di uno spettro che va da Raffaello e Michelangelo a Caravaggio e Tiziano” (79).

Il parallelo con Dante diventa sempre più insistito: “gli sforzi di Dante poeta nel Paradiso – come di Gadda nei capitoli VII-X del

Pasticciaccio, a parte il fatto che il moderno pellegrino non si lascia alle spalle né la corporeità né il dolore – sono di resa poetica o narrativa d’una visione che è in linea di principio irrepresentabile, sulla scorta di processi ottici riflessivi che la nostra immaginazione riesce però ancora ad afferrare” (122). Si tratta proprio di “una rivelazione laica e immanente”, di un “comprendimento che è anche un autocomprendimento e quindi anche un’orgogliosa autoaffermazione; la verità ingravallo-gaddiana con la v minuscola: Assunta *c’est moi*” (89). L’effetto globale di questa forte ri-contestualizzazione dantesco-flaubertiano-freudiana è nulla meno che una rivalutazione, in positivo, del portato globale dell’opera dell’Ingenere, e del significato del suo lascito.

Trionferebbe dunque, nel *Pasticciaccio*, una meravigliosa ambiguità (stilistica, ideologica e sessuale), “antidealistica e antidualistica”, che – coerente con le postulazioni (onnipotenzialità, istinto della combinazione) visibili già negli anni venti – stravolge l’ideologia conservatrice e fascista, mettendo l’accento, a tutti i livelli, sulla contaminazione e sull’impurità: “Don Ciccio si specchia e si autocomprende in Assunta Crocchiapani condividendone tutto, responsabilità o colpa d’omicida traditrice ma anche innocenza d’umiliata e offesa dalla nevrosi di Liliana, felicità d’essere donna e d’essere uomo, carnale Lucifero e tizianesca occhi di pupa Madonna, soggetto e oggetto non solo di cristiana compassione ma anche di laicissimo orgoglio” (97-8). Ma si tratterebbe anche di un trionfo del Gadda narratore, dopo tanti tentativi incompiuti o falliti (*Retica*, il *Racconto italiano*, *L’Adalgisa*, la stessa *Cognizione*): “il *Pasticciaccio*, romanzo a tutti gli effetti sia conandoyliamente che letterariamente completo e concluso, riporta la vittoria squisitamente narrativa che Gadda aveva sempre perseguito” (98).

“Mistero religioso” e “realità biologica dell’eros e della procreazione” (133) finiscono per rivelarsi coincidenti, come Ingravallo (“un novello pellegrino Dante”) misticamente percepisce nell’epifania finale e risolutiva. In questa rivelazione Gadda, “superate prudenza e stitichezza”, inscena e annoda “una combinatoria o sovrapposizione di significati ch’è libera e plurale ma non indeterminata” (134), proponendo così un *pendant* narrativo “ai contemporanei sforzi di rielaborazione o superamento del paradigma dualista, posthegeliano o postdialettico che dir si voglia, che oggi

porta il nome d'intellettuali e filosofi quali Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito e Giacomo Marramao" (136).

Si tratta di una prospettiva indubbiamente stimolante, oltre che foriera di interessanti ricerche ulteriori; e che, tuttavia, non convince interamente. Su due punti salienti, in particolare, mi trovo in disaccordo; in primo luogo, come si è detto, l'autrice discerne una forte continuità nel percorso di scrittura dell'Ingegnere, che raggiunge il suo culmine nel *Pasticciaccio*, in particolare indicando una fondamentale sintonia fra le idee espresse nella *Meditazione milanese* (postuma) e il secondo romanzo. Al contrario, io propenderei per un'ipotesi di discontinuità: col finire degli anni venti Gadda archivia sostanzialmente le giovanili ambizioni romanzesche e filosofiche, e comincia a scrivere in una modalità che definirei "residuale", che esclude nei fatti la possibilità di ogni compiutezza, concettuale o narrativa, sia essa ideale, strutturale o stilistica.

In secondo luogo, devo confessare di far non poca fatica a seguire l'autrice nel parallelo minuziosamente istituito fra il *Pasticciaccio* e la *Divina commedia*, e in particolare fra i finali delle due opere. Non dubito che Gadda sia spesso in bilico fra il grottesco e il sublime, il comico e il tragico, l'infernale e il paradisiaco: ma la sovrapposizione della coppia Ingravallo-Assuntina a quella Dante-Beatrice (nell'ottica di una dissoluzione dei sensi – e dei sessi) non convince. Il dubbio che alla fine blocca e sospende il giudizio e l'azione del commissario mi pare più facilmente riconducibile a un rifiuto o impossibilità (di stampo fondamentalmente dostojevskiano) di risolvere la questione della responsabilità del delitto in termini semplicistici di giustizia criminale e codice penale (conclusione, del resto, in linea con le elucubrazioni filosofiche sul groviglio delle cause e concause, che aprono il romanzo) – specialmente quando entrambi siano incarnati in un sistema politico sostanzialmente corrotto, quale quello fascista.

Detto questo, la ricchezza e l'originalità degli argomenti presentati è tale da consigliare la lettura di questo snello e interessante contributo a tutti gli studiosi e appassionati dell'opera di Gadda.

Giuseppe Stellardi

CONTRIBUTORS / COLLABORATORI

MARCO CARMELLO is *profesor interino* in the Department of Italian Studies at Complutense University of Madrid. His interests range from Italian literature to theory of literature, aesthetics, linguistics and comparative philology. He is author of two books: *Extragrammaticalità. Note linguistiche, critiche e filosofiche sull'ultimo Pizzuto* (Torino, 2012) and *Lo spazio sospeso di Angelo Fiore: una lettura del "Supplente"* (Palermo, 2014).

ANGELO CASTAGNINO (PhD University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) is Assistant Professor of Italian at University of Denver. His research focuses on the social function of crime fiction and the role of the intellectual in Italian society. He is the author of *The Intellectual as a Detective: From Leonardo Sciascia to Roberto Saviano* (Peter Lang, 2014). His next book, currently in progress, is a study of historical crime fiction. He has published articles on the intellectual as a character (Luigi Pirandello, Marco Malvaldi, Alessandro Perissinotto).

CLAUDIA CAIA JULIA FRATINI is a graduate of the University of Pretoria, where she received her BA degree, majoring in English, French, and Psychology. She holds Honours' and Master's degrees in English Literature, and has taught English both at the University of Pretoria and at private schools. From 1999 she played an active role in the field of cultural development through the Italian Institute of Culture in Pretoria (Cultural Office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). She is currently a Lecturer in the Department of English Studies at the University of South Africa. Her interests range from Classical Reception in contemporary literature to creative expression in World War II. She is currently working towards a PhD which

explores how the past is received and reworked within Valerio Massimo Manfredi's popular fiction.

PAOLA QUAZZO is a high school teacher in Italy and holds a PhD in Postcolonial Studies from Turin University (Italy). Her interests range from comparative studies to translation, literature, visual arts and teaching strategies.

GIOVANNA SANSALVADORE is Head of World Languages and Literature at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. She did her M.A. in 1981 on the late poetry of Eugenio Montale. She finished her PhD in 1990 on the postmodernist writer Giorgio Manganelli. She has taught Italian Language and Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and at Unisa. Her interests are in contemporary Italian writing with special emphasis on Pulp Fiction, the Gothic novel (in both England and Italy) and postcolonial writing in Italy; she is currently working on a comparative study in fictional historiography focusing on the novels of Michele Mari and Peter Ackroyd.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS / INFORMAZIONI PER I COLLABORATORI

Italian Studies in Southern Africa is published bi-annually and aims at providing a forum for academic discussion on all aspects of Italian culture. The journal features articles on the Italian language and literature and, since it is one of the primary aims of the journal to foster multi- and interdisciplinary study and communication, contributions are invited from all writers interested in Italian culture, irrespective of their specific disciplines. Contributions of a less theoretical nature which provide an insight into Italian culture, especially as it manifests itself in Southern Africa, will also receive attention.

Each article will be critically evaluated by two referees. Notice of acceptance or rejection will be communicated in writing to the author with reasons for the readers' decision.

Copyright on all published material is vested in A.P.I. When submitting an article for publication in *Italian Studies in Southern Africa/Studi d'Italianistica nell'Africa australe*, the author automatically accepts the following conditions: 1. If published, all copyrights on the article are ceded to A.P.I.; 2. The article has not been published nor is in the process of being published anywhere else. Contributors must seek the Editor's permission when a reprint of an article is envisaged. The Editor reserves the right to amend the phrasing and punctuation of any article as may be deemed necessary.

Opinions expressed in contributions are those of the authors, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, the Editorial Board or by A.P.I.

Guidelines

- Contributions in Italian or in English should be submitted preferably as an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word format. The text of the manuscript must be preceded by a brief summary (approx. 10 lines) in English for Italian texts and in Italian for English texts.
- Although longer articles may be considered for publication, a length of 7 000 words (about 15 printed A4 pages) is set as general guideline.
- The article should be supplied with a cover page on which only the title of the article, the author's name and address and professional affiliation appear. The article itself should then start on the subsequent page, with the title and summary (about 100 words).

Manuscripts that do not adhere to the house style of the journal will not be considered.

Style Sheet

- **Typescripts**, in their **final** draft, should have double spacing and occupy one side only of a page of about 2000 strokes (about 30 lines of 65 strokes each). It should be clear from the manuscript which words or parts of the text are to be set in italics, in block capitals or in small print.
- **Quotations** in the body of the text longer than 5 lines should be indented and in single spacing. Omitted text should be indicated by an ellipsis (three dots in square brackets). The corresponding numbers are affixed as superscripts, without parentheses **after** the full stop. References should be in brackets and follow the punctuation.
- **Bibliographical details** of references should be provided either in the bibliography or in footnotes. The bibliography, if used, should be arranged alphabetically, as follows:

Holland, N.N. 1979 *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare*. New York: Octagon.

Massimo, J.L. 1970 "Psychology and gymnastics." In: George, G. (ed.) *The magic of gymnastics*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Sundby 4 Publications: 31-33.

Potter, A.M. 2010 "Religion and the literary critic." *Literator*, 10(1):66-76. April.

Pratt, M-L. 1977 *Toward a speech act of literary discourse*. London: Indiana University Press.

- **Titles of publications and journals** are given in italics. No quotation marks are used with titles of journals. In the case of journal articles, articles from newspapers and contributions in collections the relevant page numbers should be quoted. The abbreviated Harvard method of reference should be used.
- **References in the text** are done as follows: Anderson (1982:305) or (Anderson, 1982:305)

- **Footnotes.** The number (without brackets) should be put to the left of the punctuation mark as a superscript. The footnotes (with indication of the number) should appear on the same page (not at the end of the text) and in single spacing. The numbering of footnotes in the text should be consecutive.

Contributors are encouraged to preserve a copy of the manuscript since the publisher is not responsible for loss of, or damage to, typescripts submitted to this journal. No material submitted to the journal will be returned.

Contributors attached to a South African academic institution receiving DHET research funding are charged R80-00/page as page fee for their articles.

Contributions and correspondence for the Journal to be sent to the Editor:

Prof Anna Meda
P.O. Box 786501
Sandton 2146
RSA

Tel. +27- 823982129
Fax +27- 866481476
E-mail: segreteria.issa.sa@gmail.com

PRICE LIST: Annual Subscriptions 2016

Printed version

South Africa

R90.00 (RSA, individuals)

R180.00 (RSA, institutions)

R 0 (members of the Association of Professional Italianists)

All other countries

US\$50 (abroad, individuals)

US\$60 (abroad, institutions)

US\$0 (members of the Association of Professional Italianists)

Postage fees not included.

Price per single issue:

South Africa

R45.00 (individuals)

R90.00 (institutions)

All other countries

US \$35 (individuals and institutions)

Postage fees not included.

Payments may be made directly online.

Find all information on <http://api.org.za/issa-2/subscription> (in English)
or <http://api.org.za/issa/tariffe-abbonamenti> (in Italian).

Alternatively, payments may be made also electronically:

Electronic payments and orders:

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ITALIANISTS

ABSA Bank

Bank Account No: 9056609619

Sandton Branch

Branch Code: 63 200 5

Swift Code: ABSA ZA JJ

Electronic order files to be sent to:

Hon. Treasurer, Mrs A. Poeti, email: alida.poeti@api.org.za

A.P.I.
PUBBLICAZIONI / PUBLICATIONS
ATTI / PROCEEDINGS

- 1) **XIII Convegno Internazionale/International Conference:**
Antichi moderni. Gli apporti medievali e rinascimentali all'identità culturale del Novecento italiano/The contribution of Middle Ages and Renaissance to Italian cultural identity in the 20th century (Città del Capo/Cape Town, 4-5 Settembre/September 2014).
Numero speciale/Special issue, vol. 28, no 2 (2015). Articoli scelti tra le relazioni presentate al convegno/Selected articles from the papers presented at the conference.
- 2) **XII Convegno Internazionale/International Conference:**
Finis Terrae Finis Mundi. L'Apocalisse nella cultura e nella letteratura italiana/The Apocalypse in Italian culture and literature (Durban, 26-27 Settembre/September 2013).
Numero speciale/Special issue, vol. 27, no 2 (2014). Articoli scelti tra le relazioni presentate al convegno/Selected articles from the papers presented at the conference.
- 3) **XI Convegno Internazionale/International Conference:**
Tempo e spazio nella cultura italiana e oltre/Time and space in Italian culture and beyond (Città del Capo/Cape Town, 7-9 Settembre/September 2000).
Numero speciale/Special issue, vol. 14, no 2 (2001). Articoli scelti tra le relazioni presentate al convegno/Selected articles from the papers presented at the conference.
- 4) **Identità e diversità nella cultura italiana**
Identity and Diversity in Italian Culture
- 5) **Power and Italian Culture and Literature**
Proceedings of the IX International API Congress (Johannesburg, 1995).

Potere cultura e letteratura italiane
Atti del IX Congresso Internazionale dell'API (Johannesburg, 1995).

- 6) **Immagini letterarie italiane della donna / Immagini dell'Africa nella letteratura italiana**
Atti dell'VIII Congresso Internazionale dell'API (Città del Capo, 1993).
- Italian Literary Images of Woman / Images of Africa in Italian Literature**
Proceedings of the VIII International API Congress (Cape Town, 1993).
- 7) **Novella e racconto nella letteratura italiana**
Atti del VII Congresso Internazionale dell'API (Pretoria, 1991).
- Novella and short story in Italian Literature**
Proceedings of the VII International API Congress (Pretoria, 1991).
- 8) **I minori**
Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale dell'API (Johannesburg, 1989).
Questi Atti sono usciti in un numero speciale doppio della rivista (n.4/1990 - n.1/1991).
- The minor writers**
Proceedings of the VI International API Congress (Johannesburg, 1989). These Proceedings have appeared in a special double issue of this journal (n.4/1990 - n.1/1991).
- 9) **Letteratura e mitologia / Rapporto fra la letteratura e le altre arti**
Atti del V Congresso Internazionale dell'API (Città del Capo, 1987).
- Literature and Mythology / The Relation between Literature and the Other Arts**
Proceedings of the V International API Congress (Cape Town, 1987).
- 10) **Atti del IV Congresso dell'API** (Grahamstown, 1985).
Proceedings of the IV API Conference (Grahamstown, 1985).
- 11) **Atti del III Convegno dell'API** (Johannesburg, 1983).
Proceedings of the III API Conference (Johannesburg, 1983).
- 12) **Atti del II Convegno dell'API** (Pretoria, 1982).
Proceedings of the II API Conference (Pretoria, 1982).
- 13) **Atti del I Convegno dell'API** (Johannesburg, 1981).
Proceedings of the 1st API Conference (Johannesburg, 1981).

ASSOCIAZIONE PROFESSORI D'ITALIANO / ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ITALIANISTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016-2017

President	Dr Anita Virga (Wits)
Vice President	Dr Giovanna Sansalvadore (UNISA)
Hon. Treasurer	Mrs Alida Poeti
Hon. Secretary	Mr Christopher Fotheringham (Wits)
Editorial Committee	Prof. Anna Meda (UNISA)
Members' Representative	Dott. Enrico Trabattoni (Educational Director, Consulate General of Italy, Johannesburg)

The purpose of A.P.I. (Association of Professional Italianists/Associazione Professori d'Italiano), established in 1981, is to promote cultural exchanges and discussions on didactic and literary topics concerning the preservation and teaching of the Italian language and literature in Southern Africa both at school and university level, and to keep abreast with international developments in this field.

Congresses and Round Tables alternate every second year at various universities and cultural associations where Italian is taught. All teachers and students of Italian, as well as anybody interested in Italian culture are invited to participate.

Membership fees are as follows:

RSA	R150 (Ordinary members) R100 (Students)
Abroad	US \$50 (Ordinary members) US \$25 (Students) US \$60 (Institutions)

Membership fees include subscription to this journal and are payable by the 28th February.

All enquiries about the Association and applications for membership and remittances should be sent to The Hon. Treasurer, Mrs A. Poeti, e-mail: alida.poeti@api.org.za.

For more information on the Association go to www.api.org.za. You can also find it on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/api.org.za>) and Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_studies).

To contact the association write to api@api.org.za.