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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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The complex system of Neoplatonic references in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

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"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by S. T. Coleridge is a complex work marked by elements of both creativity and conventionality. After a brief introduction about the conventional elements of the poem (the structure and style adopted by Coleridge in imitation of traditional ballads), this paper aims to analyse the intricate system of Neoplatonic references, both explicit and implied, that are present in the text. Hence, it proposes an interpretation of the poem which takes into account the influence of Neoplatonism on Coleridge's poem.

This ancient philosophy, as will be shown, provides the metaphysical basis for "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Some of the allusions to Neoplatonic theories are unambiguous (at least in the 1817 version, thanks to the addition of the Gloss) while others are more cryptic. In order to understand them fully, it is necessary to keep in mind the authors and works studied by Coleridge. In particular, the poem is indebted to Plotinus' *Enneads* and Michael Psellus' dialogue *On the Operation of Daemons*.

Firstly, as for the parallelism between "The Rime" and the *Enneads*, the main themes to be identified are the distinction between the One and the "many" and the cosmic circle of *emanation* and return to the source (*epistrophe*). In the poem, the One coincides with God, while the many are numerous – both animals and human beings. As far as the human characters are concerned, most of them, according to their behaviour, can be compared to the three types of men classified by Plotinus. As regards the animal world, the many seem to be arranged according to the hierarchical system typical of Neoplatonism. Also the structure of the poem, mirroring the tripartite interior process of change (from sin, through penance, to redemption) which the Mariner undergoes, can be read through the lens of Neoplatonism. As a matter of fact, a sort of *epistrophe* is present in "The Rime". It takes the form of different returns: that of the angelic spirits to the Absolute and that of the Mariner to his homeland.

Secondly, this paper will focus on the spirits and daemons in the poem. Also in this case, both complexity and creativity are at work. Indeed, at a deeper level, these supernatural characters can be recognised as the typical figures of Neoplatonic metaphysics: the daemonic and spiritual agencies acting as intermediaries between the intelligible world and the sensible one. Even though the arrangement of the daemons in the poem is not original (Coleridge draws inspiration from the classification proposed in Psellus' dialogue), the final result is creative. If in the 1817 text this system of references is clarified by the epigraph and the Gloss (in which the author mentions the philosophers Psellus and the Learned Jew Josephus, as well as the daemonic creatures in the poem), the allusions to the Neoplatonic world are also present in the 1798 version, in which there are subterranean reminiscences of Thomas Taylor (the English Neoplatonist) and the figure of the *torch bearer*.

In conclusion, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is to be understood as a multi-layered work, whose complex intertextual web is enhanced by the fact that every word and image conceals a world of hidden meanings to be unveiled.

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Trauma and the healing power of literature: A case study

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Bibliotherapy is a fast growing form of psychological help and self-help. It is widely used in neurological rehabilitation units, in psychiatric wards and day centres as a therapy for people with learning and mental disabilities. It has proved particularly useful in treatments of drug-addiction, acute eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders following various types of loss and trauma. Ex soldiers and victims of terrorist attacks also benefit greatly from guided or individual reading of poems and novels.

Bibliotherapy is not a modern invention. Plato insisted that the arts are sources of pleasure as well as healing instruments. Unsurprisingly, Apollo is the god of both healing and poetry. This classical view was particularly popular in the Renaissance: in *The Arte of English Poesie*, for example, Puttenham argued that poetry and music have the power to heal mind and body. I argue that the English Renaissance offers an excellent text for bibliotherapy: *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's poem includes a rich gallery of portraits of characters displaying marks of physical and/or psychological pathologies following various kinds of loss and trauma. The degree of the characters' acceptance of traumatic experiences as necessary and the transformation of their personality in terms of growth or regression are litmus tests of their spiritual state and virtuous energy, hence, within the view of flourishing dramatized in the poem, of the degree of their participation in full humanity. Some characters actively enact healing strategies while others choose immurement in chronic suffering. Spenser's texts emphasize the motive of waste and the futility of a life that has lost meaning and purpose. By laying stress on the consequences of immurement in the condition of sufferer on the psychological and physiological balance of individuals, as well as on their willingness to play an active role within their communities, Spenser's narratives function as powerful pieces of persuasion on the importance of endurance and resilience in personal growth.

In this light, Spenser's allegorical epic poem is a focal text for studies on the nature and practice of human flourishing in the perspective indicated by recent research in psychology. Spenser's narratives consistently suggest a notion of heroism based on exposure to trials that test the endurance of characters and boost their moral and spiritual energy. *The Faerie Queene* answers the call of positive psychologists for illustrations of "what it means to thrive under challenge" and "how human strengths . . . are sometimes forged in trial and tribulation" (Ryff and Singer 2003).

"Life is like a fugue": Discipline and creativity in Samuel Butler

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"Life is like a fugue: everything must grow out of the subject and there must be nothing new," claims the narrator of Samuel Butler's masterpiece, *The Way of All Flesh*, and the whole novel is dedicated to proving the thesis that one's actions and feelings are but the effects of one's previous experiences. As Butler had taken pains to demonstrate in his scientific essays, the individual life is not only influenced by its environment and family history, but also by the inherited "unconscious memory" of past generations. Not even scientific discoveries say something new – Butler's motto is that if something is "true, it must be very old" (*Life and Habit*) – as they are merely the acknowledging of what was already unconsciously known.

Even though in human life nothing new ever takes place, however, Butler does not reject the notion of creativity – nor its ethical counterpart, freedom – which is a pivotal element of his theory and his works. Butler does not see creativity as the abrupt appearance of something disconnected from its environment and its history. On the contrary, creativity is conceptualized (in a somewhat similar way to Henri Bergson's *élan vital*) as the gradual emergence of a new arrangement in what was already present by means of discipline and repetition. This holds true both in art and in real life since, as Virginia Woolf once noted, Butler's creativity came from treating life as a form of art and taking art as seriously as life. Butler described this complementarity as the dialectical tension between Law and Grace, that is, between the subjugation of the individual to the determinism of the material world, on the one hand, and the the ability to find a balance between its inner drives and the outside world, on the other.

In this paper I intend to analyze Samuel Butler's theory of creativity moving from both his scientific works and his novels and relying on the reflections of Gilles Deleuze, Slavoj Žižek, and Peter Sloterdijk. Thus, I intend to delineate Butler's ethic and aesthetic of variations, modulations, and repetitions based on the paradoxical balance between discipline and creativity, life and art, freedom and necessity, identity and difference since, as he claimed, "the extremes are alone logical, and they are always absurd, the mean is alone practicable and it is always illogical."

Remapping the language of fiction:
Creative steps from Virginia Woolf to Jeanette Winterson

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"The true artist is connected. The true artist studies the past […]. The true artist is interested in the art object as an art process, the thing in being, the being of the thing" (Winterson 1995: 12). This quote comes from Jeanette Winterson's 1995 essays *Art Objects*, where she declares her debt to the literary past, and to Modernism in particular. The fact of placing her own work in the Modernist tradition – rather than the Post-Modernist one – caused, at first, derision by critics, who considered Winterson "pretentious and pontificating" (Andermahr 2007: 3). In fact, her work is permeated by tradition, but of all the mothers and fathers of English literature, T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf are indeed the ones she feels more connected to, so much so that Winterson is indicated as one of Woolf's most direct heirs. Some critics, like Pynkett (1998), Onega (2006) and Van der Viel (2014), have actually explored such aspects in her prose, although, as Sonya Andermahr claims, "there is certainly scope for more analysis" (2007: 7).

One of the most striking examples of Virginia Woolf's influence is to be found in the creative making of the subject, which Winterson transforms moving from Woolf's concept of "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" and getting to what might be considered "anyone's mind in any possible day". Indeed she makes the very concept of genre disappear in novels like *Written on the Body*, and in so doing she answers Woolf's request to future women writers in *A Room of One's Own* to "refuse to limit a female character's subjectivity to one (feminine) discourse only" (1993: 87).

In my paper I wish to analyse, on the one hand, the role of the Modernist tradition, and of Virginia Woolf in particular, on Jeanette Winterson's creative process, in order to prove how Woolf's prose inspired Winterson to work on her more Post-Modernist "self-conscious and playful tendency to foreground the artificiality and linguistic nature of [her] own literary texts" (Onega 2006: 1). On the other hand, I wish to examine how Winterson changed her way of "reusing" literary tradition in the creative process following *The Powerbook*, the novel that marks the end of the first cycle of her fiction. In her website Winterson writes that "we have to recognise that Modernism and Post Modernism have changed the map, and any writer worth their weight in floppy discs will want to go on changing that map" if they want to "be part of what happens next". I will then show how Jeanette Winterson has been working on her own prose, over the last years, to achieve this goal and to forge her personal, distinctive voice.

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The stenographic creativity of Charles Dickens

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In 1828, when Dickens was 17 years old and working as a clerk at the legal firm Ellis and Blackmore, he decided to make a career move by learning shorthand in his spare time. It was a successful experiment and between 1829 and 1831 he went on to work as a freelance reporter in the ecclesiastical courts at Doctors' Commons and later as a parliamentary reporter. The influence of Dickens's shorthand learning on his verbal creativity has been suggested by a number of literary critics in relation to the "verbal explosion" of *Pickwick* (Marcus 1972), the "orality" of Dickensian style (Kreilkamp 2005; Bowles, in press), and in terms of its role in the "phonographic turn" of the nineteenth century (Gitelman 1999). However, these claims have never been explored in a way which convincingly connects the shorthand system to the fictional text. This paper aims to establish such a connection by analysing the structure and contents of the system that Dickens used, Gurney's *Brachygraphy*, and relating them to stylistic features of some of his fictional work, particularly *Pickwick* and *Bleak House*. It will also examine some hitherto neglected evidence – Dickens's own shorthand notebook, as well as the notes that he and his shorthand pupil, Arthur Stone, made in the winter of 1859.

The Gurney symbols are memorably described in *David Copperfield* as "despotic characters" and the difficulties that Dickens encountered learning them as "a sea of perplexity". I will argue that the particularly restrictive nature of the Gurney system may have activated unusual forms of mental alphabetic processing in the minds of its learners and that, since the learning and practice of the Gurney system would have automatized these processes, they may have had a lifelong effect on Dickens's fictional creativity, enabling him to manipulate consonant clusters and internal vowels to create new words. According to Marcus, Dickens's stenographic wordplay is an example of language being used in the "Pickwickian" sense – "a sense in which the word is seized creatively in the first instance, almost as a kind of doodle, a play of the pen, as a kind of verbal scribble or game". This paper fleshes out Marcus's idea of the "Pickwickian sense", arguing that it goes beyond the mere phonetic spelling of the dialogues in *Pickwick*. Stenographic intrusions will be shown to come in many guises in Dickens's fiction – as strange graphic marks and unusual forms of writing in narrative episodes, as characters playing with individual phonemes in their speech, or as stenographic patterns of letters in individual words.

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Complexity in Mary Shelley: *The Last Man*

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In 1821 Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote *A Defence of Poetry*. He uses the word "poetry" not only in a strict metrical sense but also in a much wider sense that includes the arts generally and even religious doctrines. In this essay we see how Shelley emphasises complexity in the way he highlights, speaking of Athenian drama, the need to unite a number of diverse elements into one harmonious whole. Complexity is also implicit in the following passage: "All high poetry is infinite…after one person has exhausted all of its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and unconceived delight" (Shelley 1926-1930). Richard Holmes makes the following comment: "Shelley believed that a great masterpiece had a quality of self-regeneration: it took on new forms and significance for its readers as it moved beyond its own time, and its own culture" (Holmes 1987).

This leads us to Mary Shelley's masterpiece *The Last Man*, published in 1826 after she had returned to England following her husband's death. The novel is set in the year 2073 in England, which has recently become a republic. The title, which was not original, is a reflection of Mary's state of mind, having lost not only her husband but all her children except one as well as friends such as Byron. She felt alone in the world and imagined a plague which wipes out the entire human race, except for Lionel Verney who, although a man, represents Mary. The novel explores such themes as the levelling of the class system as society disintegrates under the blows of the plague.

In my paper I want to show how the novel has acquired new layers of meaning since it was published. After publication it was soon forgotten and when in 1951 Muriel Spark published *Child of Light*, a biography of Mary, she provided a resume of the novel because she had had access to one of the few copies available. Spark, who was writing a few years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, made the point that "its theme, the complete annihilation of the human race, has more significance to present-day readers than it had in the author's day" (Spark 1951). Similarly, the theme of a plague, with the AIDS pandemic, has proved to be curiously prophetic even if, hopefully, AIDS will not wipe out the entire human race. In addition, the novel speaks of refugees who go to England in an attempt to flee the plague, thus anticipating the present migration crisis. Finally we may mention air travel which we of course take for granted. Mary imagines balloon air travel, but how many of the novel's first readers realised how prophetic she was?

In a word, *The Last Man* confirms and illustrates the quotation from Holmes.

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A life of one's own: Browne's inward turn as a creative resource

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Besides being a physician, an amateur archaeologist and a refined stylist, Thomas Browne was also a champion of the creative exploration of human consciousness. "His immense egotism," Virginia Woolf maintained, "has paved the way for all psychological novelists, auto-biographers, confession-mongers, and dealers in the curious shades of our private life. He it was who first turned from the contacts of men with men to their lonely life within." (Woolf 1925: 20-21). Starting from this comment, my paper aims to analyse some of the most idiosyncratic passages of Browne's *Religio Medici,* considering this work as a novel and a creative mode of self-investigation in a world where the religious paradigm still shaped the literary expression of individual subjectivity. Paradoxically enough, Browne was claiming for a personal identity independent from religious convictions via a confession of faith.

   From this point of view, his work seems to stand in-between the devotionally introspective *Confessions* by Augustine and Michel de Montaigne's exploration of *l'humaine condition,* freed from any religious aim and labelled by Charles Taylor as the "inward turn" (Taylor 1989: 177). Browne pays homage to both sides of the "debate": his *Religio* remains a sincerely spiritual text without turning into the life narrative of a conversion, but rather classifying as a self-inquiry *per se*, which ultimately celebrates the magnificence of man:

> We carry with us the wonders we seek without us: there is all Africa and her prodigies in us. We are that bold and adventurous piece of nature, which he that studies wisely learns, in a compendium, what others labour at in a divided piece and endless volume. (Browne 1888: 340)

To appreciate Browne's originality and creativity, I wish to focus on the strong subjective stance of the "monologuing I" in the *Religio,* characterizing it as an "episodic self" (Strawson 2008: 190) in accordance with British philosopher Galen Strawson's speculations against the widespread dogma that conceives life as an entity which can be fully appreciated via narrative means only. Similarly to Montaigne, Browne, as I hope to demonstrate, prefers to make his individuality emerge through glimpses and fragments, rather than through a carefully structured diegetic architecture. This comparison with Montaigne helps placing Browne's endeavour within a new historical perspective, in order to demonstrate that his example shaped the subsequent incursions into the domain of life-writing up to Modernism and the Modernists' experiments with the literary transcription of consciousness. This may go some way to accounting for Virginia Woolf's enthusiastic praise of Browne's achievement, and also allow to shed new critical light on Browne's literary endeavour as innovative and challenging.

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Contaminations: The representations of gender in Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Cenci* (1819) and its afterlives in nineteenth-century Italian literature

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The work of Percy Bysshe Shelley reveals an interesting and complex dialogue with the literary tradition. Thanks to his classical education, the poet was able to read Ancient Greek poetry, drama, and philosophy in their original language, as his translations of Plato's *Symposium* prove. Shelley's "Hellenism" has been the object of much critical attention over the past decades (Wallace 1997; Schoina 2008; Canani 2014). Although it developed at a later stage, the influence that Italian literature and culture had on his writing seems equally relevant. In his biography, Thomas Jefferson Hogg notes that, while he was a student at Oxford, Shelley was still "ignorant of Italian", having "only read [...] but little of Italian poetry, even at second hand" (Hogg 1858). Between 1813 and 1814 the poet took Italian lessons with Cornelia Turner, who also introduced him to Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso (Bieri 2008). In addition, Shelley's years on the Continent were crucial to his own definition of an Italian literary canon, based on the assimilation of the works which, "in his estimation, best reflected or represented Italian literary culture" (Weinberg 2012).

Expanding on existing scholarship, this paper re-contextualises the representations of Italian culture in the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, with a dual focus on gender and reception studies. In this regard, I will examine *The Cenci: A Tragedy in Five Acts* which Shelley wrote in 1818. In his Preface, the poet offers a visual representation of Beatrice Cenci that is based on the portrait, allegedly by Guido Reni, which he saw at Palazzo Colonna in Rome. However, I suggest that the "beautifully tender and serene" demeanour (Shelley 1977) of the painting does not find its counterpart in Beatrice as depicted by Shelley, who stresses the young woman's opposition against patriarchal authority and its abuses. In doing so, my analysis is meant to ascertain whether – and to what extent – Shelley's remediation of Italy as a cultural signifier might be functional to articulating discourses of gender at a broader level.

As a second point, I will consider whether the coeval circulation of *The Cenci* in Italy might have been stirred by such discourses. To this end, I shall focus on Giovanni Battista Niccolini's drama *Beatrice Cenci* (1844) and Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi's 1854 homonymous novel as paramount examples of Shelley's reception in the mid-nineteenth century. Although Niccolini and Guerrazzi developed a well-known legend, their writings might be considered as instances of refashioning (Bolter and Grusin 1999) in that they acknowledge Shelley's tragedy as one of their *Ur-Texts*. Moreover, Niccolini's and Guerrazzi's versions of Beatrice Cenci seem to remediate Shelley's textual representation of gender, as the change they introduce in the titles of their works subtly suggests. As a final point, I will discuss these amendments and the insights they may offer on Shelley's reception in nineteenth-century Italy.

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"The farcical tragedies of *King Richard III*": The nineteenth-century burlesques

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Differently from what happened with other tragedies by Shakespeare (*King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*, for example), in the course of its afterlife *King Richard III* has never been turned into a comedy through the insertion of a happy ending. This play too, however, underwent a transformation of dramatic genre, which can be seen in the numerous (seven in total) burlesques and travesties that were produced in the nineteenth century. The play even had a pantomimic outcome in Stanfield James's *Harlequin King Richard the Third; or, the Magic Arrow and the Battle of Bosworth Field*, which was performed at the Queen's Theatre on 26 December 1853. The purpose of my paper is to look at the parodic treatment of *Richard III* in three burlesques produced in 1823, 1844 and 1868 respectively, and therefore also showing how the genre changed over time.

The first play that I have chosen to examine, like all the burlesques of those years, took John Poole's 1810 *Hamlet Travestie* as a model, and was intended for both performance (of which, however, there is no evidence) and reading. It is the anonymous *King Richard III. Travestie, A Burlesque, Operatic, Mock Terrific Tragedy, in Two Acts. With Songs, Parodies, &c.* By contrast, the two burlesques that were acted in February 1844 were primarily intended for the stage, and were prompted by the spectacular performances of Charles Kean at Covent Garden, in January. Accordingly, these plays abound with metatheatrical allusions. In my paper, I will look at one of these travesties: Charles Selby's *Kinge Richard ye Third; or, Ye battel of Bosworth field: Being a familiar alteration of the celebrated history [...], called Ye True Tragedie of King Richard ye Third, [...] A merrie mysterie in one act*. Although all the burlesques of *King Richard III* were based on Colley Cibber's version of the play, which was the one that was performed on the "legitimate" stage at the time, it is interesting to note that often the authors of these travesties reintroduced Shakespearean scenes and themes. Selby, for instance, differently from Cibber, made the ghosts of Richard's victims appear to Richmond too. The last burlesque of *King Richard III* to be published (and the last one I will discuss) was Francis Cowley Burnand's *The Rise and Fall of Richard III; Or, A New Front to an Old Dicky*, which was performed at the New Royalty Theatre in September 1868. Here, like in other burlesques of the period, the relationship with the source text was looser, and the author also drew on other plays by Shakespeare, like Cibber himself had done.

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From images to words: reading the complexity of Mrs. Ramsay's vision in *To the Lighthouse* through Vernon Lee's aesthetic empathy

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Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) was a prolific writer and essayist. Her psychological study of aesthetics – centred on the role of empathy – appears to have prepared the ground for a new modernist aesthetics (Zorn 2003) which is noticeable in Virginia Woolf's works. Scholarship has nonetheless emphasized the impact of other influential aesthetic sources, e.g. primarily Walter Pater (Meisel 1980) – of whom Lee was an early follower (Maxwell and Pulham 2006; Colby 2003) – and the Post-Impressionist movement (Bakos 2009; Goldman 1998). More recently, the deep affinity between the two women's writing has finally started being highlighted (Martin 2013; Leighton 2009; Schaffer and Psomiades 1999), thus suggesting a new and fruitful line of investigation.

The present paper attempts to read Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) through Lee's Psychological Aesthetics (Lee 1913; Lee and Anstruther-Thomson 1912), thereby also shedding light on some of the several connections between the two women's aesthetics. The focus will be more particularly on the character of Mrs. Ramsay, who perfectly embodies the ambiguous figure of the domestic woman so deeply problematized in Woolf's fiction (Blair 2007; Ogden 2005; Katz 2000; Armstrong 1987). The moments of intimacy lived by Mrs. Ramsay as she beholds the external reality through the window will be the main object of the present analysis (Minow-Pinkney 2010). Indeed, these moments exemplify how the ambiguous convergence of an aesthetic and a domestic attitude allows the woman to subtly fulfill her more obscure desires. Some meaningful elements that contribute to the creation of the domestic scene enclosing the woman's instants of sensual absorption will also be considered. The brown stocking is perhaps the most striking of these props which, by drawing attention to Mrs. Ramsay's domestic image, hide the rapture she actually experiences by looking outside the window. More importantly, however, the process of unconscious projection (Hussey 1986; Naremore 1973; Richter 1970) – constitutive of Lee's theory of Aesthetic Empathy – is the main reason why Mrs. Ramsay can remain unaware of the sensual impulses emerging under the sublimated guise of her visual contemplation. The complexity of such a vision, in fact, discloses dynamics that fully transcend the palpable world as ordinarily experienced in her naïve domesticity, thereby generating the overwhelming response she shows to have by simply gazing at the natural scenario (Scott 2012). The close reading of some textual passages will be obviously essential to the understanding of such an experience: words by themselves, in fact, empathetically "animate" the landscape that they either define or modify, thereby transforming it into the evident subject, object and instrument of the woman's final liberation. Far from being a harmless setting, nature thus becomes a powerful medium through which Mrs. Ramsay can express heartily – albeit unknowingly – a secretive side of her own womanhood.

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Myth, language and the urban nemesis: Mina Loy's urban poetry

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In my paper, I aim to explore Mina Loy's relationship with literary traditions and conventions in her highly creative and original poetic corpus. While Loy's poetry has been widely studied, and the author herself has been awarded a safe seat in the pantheon of the best-known Modernist writers – a position advocated by Pound himself (1917) – it still suits new research angles. My paper aims to shed light on Loy's writing process, where invention intertwines with deconstruction, annihilation and the manipulation of traditional language and poetic conventions.

Specifically, I will delve into Loy's original use of the "mythical method," at once applied to both content and form. In her so-called "urban poems," she often uses themes drawn from a shared mythical heritage, as well as poetic norm, to provide a sense of familiarity; yet, such elements of tradition look enigmatic once transplanted into the urban context, where they lose referentiality, rather effecting estrangement and alienation. I intend to explore the process through which myth becomes the simulacrum of a no-longer accessible knowledge, and poetic language hosts the frame for the dissolution of sense. We meet degenerate mythical characters such as a degraded Lucifer, who "serves cocaine in cornucopia," or a demoted version of Lethe, which lodges "posthumous parvenues" (Loy 1923). Urban landscapes are lit by the spectral opalescence of a ghostly moon, a distant echo of the silver moonlight traditionally associated with the virgin goddess Diana – in many of Loy's poems, such virginal paleness evolves, in fact, into the sterile glimmer of the neon lights.

The disquieting transfiguration of myth takes place – even more disturbingly – in a disarming clarity of language. Loy's urban poems hardly display the "logopoeia" (Pound 1917) she elsewhere employed: however short, verses are rich in rhetoric texture and read as structured and fluent. Yet words sound sharp and nude, arranged on the paper-space so as to mimic the tensions they explore: dynamics of fall are suggested by one- or two-word lines that evoke the vertiginous steepness of skyscrapers; apathy and anonymity of the urban crowd are conveyed through an extensive lack of punctuation.

As a critical consideration, I want to argue how Loy's dialogue with poetic conventions and traditions is inscribed in a wider narrative of deconstruction, rephrased in visual terms in her paintings and collages. There, the paradigm of degenerate myth and form is exposed in jarring combinations, which include, for instance, the body of Christ hanging from a clothesline and the exhibition of a classical half bust, which looks alien amongst buildings and factories. Rather than partaking in an already fertile debate on ecocriticism, I want to suggest how Loy's poetry and visual art point to an articulated critique of urbanisation through the use and subsequent dismantling of traditional patterns. Her use of myth and of poetic language therefore appears as a combination of collapsed frames aimed at exposing chimeras and curses of the city and unmasking its paradoxes: tradition and modernity, humanity and machine, individuality and serialisation.

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Fictional representations of the Alzheimer's brain: Lisa Genova's *Still Alice* and Samantha Harvey's *The Wilderness*

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In this paper, I will focus on the intersection between literature and medicine and specifically on the ways in which the "Alzheimer's brain" – that is, the neurological disorders and cognitive deficits associated with dementia – can be described by the language of fiction. As a matter of exemplification, I will take into consideration two novels: Lisa Genova's *Still Alice* (2007) and Samantha Harvey's *The Wilderness* (2009). If, as Virginia Woolf puts it, the brain is "the most unaccountable of machinery – always buzzing, humming, soaring, roaring, diving, and then buried in mud" (1979), we could say that the Alzheimer's brain is an obscure machinery, which stubbornly resists representation and comprehension. I will argue that these novels account both for the complexity of the ordinary mind, and for the chaotic workings of cognitively impaired minds. As a matter of fact, Genova and Harvey draw from different discourses. Quoting from Rita Charon (1993), we could state that *Still Alice* is the product of logico-scientific knowledge (it aims at replicating, universalizing, generalizing, and verifying, and, therefore, "its language must be nonallusive, nonambiguous, and reliable"), whereas *The Wilderness* is the product of narrative knowledge (it "seeks to examine and comprehend singular events, contextualized within their time and place", and its language is metaphorical, allusive, subjective).

Referring to Charon's distinction, I will claim that in *Still Alice*, Genova employs the representational practices and conventions of neurocognitive sciences for tracing a literary (yet scientific) portrayal of Early Onset Alzheimer's Disease. As in logico-scientific discourse, this story throws light on obscure brain areas by providing scientific and objective (yet fictional) descriptions (Barthes 1989) of their mis-functioning. The novel's language is documentary and scientific, its structure is conventional and linear. Thus, readers can access the brain of an Alzheimer's patient and monitor the progression of this syndrome.

In *The Wilderness*, Harvey resorts to monologues, confabulations, and unconventional associations, and to the language of narrative knowledge, in order to convey the "incessant shower of innumerable atoms" (Woolf, "Modern Fiction", 1925) falling upon the extra-ordinary mind of an Alzheimer's patient. From this point of view, *The Wilderness* mimetically and poetically portrays the incoherent cognitive patterns and language of a disrupted mind: the novel shows (rather than describes) a seemingly unaccountable experience, and the Alzheimer's patient's mental processes and modes of communication are reproduced, including the most illogic and unintelligible ones.

The Alzheimer's narratives taken into consideration exemplify the complementarity of scientific and literary discourses inside the mind, and the wealth of fictional tools for representing the Alzheimer's brain: neuroimaging can be complemented by fictional images, lost memories can be replaced by creative memories, and the brain can be scanned through language and storytelling in order to access and account for its most obscure, disrupted, and unaccountable areas.

Elizabeth Bowen's idiosyncratic style

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Highly successful during her life, but then fairly neglected until the last decade of the twentieth century, Elizabeth Bowen has received widespread critical acclaim since then. Bowen's style has often been defined as "odd", a difficult feature to pin down, derived from some idiosyncratic features of her writing.

Probably a consequence of her inherent condition of in-betweenness, place plays a major role in her fiction, as Bowen herself recognized. Houses, in particular, are central to her work, both to her novels and short stories, but also to her autobiographical writings. *Bowen's Court*, as a matter of fact, is both the story of her family's Big House and her deflected autobiography, but also *Seven Winters*, a short autobiographical text, centres on a house, her family house in Dublin. Both texts were written in London during the war, as were her wartime short stories and the novel *The Heat of the Day*: they all emphasize the importance of houses in her fiction, at a time when houses, like other testimonies of civilization and continuity, were in danger, thus endangering the very essence of personality.

In addition to her fiction, Bowen's non-fiction also gives readers clues to interpreting her attitude to writing: in an essay, the author compared the fundamental elements of the plot to "the perpetual furniture of rooms" and in a Postscript to a collection of short stories, she equated writing stories to opening doors, as if fiction were her ultimate dwelling. She certainly gave objects primacy in her fiction, to the point of making them almost characters, and rendering them intrusive at times, certainly over-charged. The tension between emotion and apparent quiet actually characterizes her fiction, in which unrestrained forces can enter from cracks on the surface.

This paper will examine how the combined rendering of places, houses in particular, and "the perpetual furniture of rooms" are expressed in Bowen's fiction and consider their function, which is never decorative. It will take examples mainly form Bowen's autobiographical works – which lay such a strong emphasis on both places and houses – in an attempt to undertake that most difficult task, namely, understanding what makes Bowen's style "odd", in other words, highly idiosyncratic.

Beyond the discursive frame: Words, visuality and imperialism in English travel accounts of the early modern world

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Taking cues from Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other* (1983), as well as from W.J.T. Mitchell's *Picture Theory* (1994), this paper will show that literary complexity also has its roots in "the relation of the visible and the readable", and that the latter is "an infinite one". In effect, the boundaries of texts and images may not always be clear, and meaning, depending on specific aesthetic needs, migrates from one expression code to the other.

Travel writing is a particularly rich genre from this perspective. It may lack "iconotexts" (Wagner 1995, Louvel 2016), which are typical of ekphrastic poetry, but its pictures are meant not only to reinforce, diminish, or even transcend the semantic value of words, but also to convey robust ideological messages. It was so over the centuries, when realism was a priority (Acheson 2016), and it seems clear that, even in late Elizabethan and Stuart years, pictures also symbolised Britons' aspirations to colonise and "appropriate" the exotic "Other" (Hadfield 1998).

Evidence of the key role that these issues have in early modern travel accounts can be found in Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (1590), Thomas Herbert's *Some yeares travels into divers parts of Asia and Afrique* (1638), John Ogilby's *America: being an accurate description of the new world* (1670), as well as John Struys' *The Travels of John Struys through Italy, Greece, Muscovy, Tartary, Media, Persia…* (1684). Starting from a comparative analysis of selected texts and pictures, the paper will show that describing and interpreting Africa, Asia, and America entailed "ordered narrative" and "scientific exploration" (Pramod K. Nayar 2008: 9), but that visuals were carefully chosen to clarify cross-cultural issues, fill the blank spaces in some particular passages, as well as offer a more complex vision of reality.

What kind of pictures is found in those accounts? What is their structural and semantic function? Apart from the artistic reproduction of the "strange creatures" in far distant countries, and of the natives' controversial morals and manners, the anthropomorphic depictions of the "Other" were essential for the authors to focus on "facts", thus excluding all "allegorical" intents (Elizabeth Sutton 2011: 85), and to build upon the dynamic relation between texts and visuals to convey specific messages (Rose Marie San Juan 2011): in fact, although there were not any deformities or "markes" on the "natives" naked bodies, pictures were utilized to define new identities, and were instrumental in Britons' pre-colonial discourse (Clare Jowitt and Daniel Carey eds. 2012).

The paper will focus on the relation between norm and complexity/creativity in early modern travel accounts, thus clarifying possible discrepancies between words and images. They will also reveal salient cross-cultural issues in the English pre-colonial process, as well as its limits and contradictions.

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The Winter's Tale: The creative cycle of a story

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This paper intends to analyse the forms of the creative journey of *The Winter's Tale*, from the first narrative writing by Robert Greene in *Pandosto* (1588), to its dramatized recreation in Shakespeare's romance, *The Winter's Tale* (1613), to the contemporary narrative version offered by Jeanette Winterson in the novel *The Gap of Time* (2015). Through the analysis of these texts it will be possible to develop a theoretical reflection on the concept of creativity from a diachronic perspective, also taking into account the specific modes of literary expression in the individual texts and investigating the writing strategies adopted in the shift from one literary genre to another (narrative romance, drama, novel). Special attention will be given to the structure of the literary discourse which, in this story, depends to a large extent on the organisation of its spatial and temporal dimensions: if Greene develops his narration on a linear and sequential plane, Shakespeare breaks the story in two totally different parts divided by a long span of time, whereas Winterson chooses to start with the second part of Shakespeare's story and then proceeds to recover past events through the film narrative strategy of flashbacks. Other technical aspects of the literary discourse will be examined, including the voice of the narrator and the different strategies adopted to convey the full emotional impact of the story. In this respect, greater attention will be given to Jeanette Winterson's rewriting of the Shakespearean play: as the title of the novel suggests, "the gap of time" could also be seen as an invitation to consider how a story can be readapted, after four hundred years, and made successful for a totally different kind of audience, in a totally new re-creation which makes the novel absolutely enjoyable in its own right, by proposing an original creative (though faithful) reading of a story. The characters are contemporary, but the novel maps itself onto the play, whereas the action is transplanted from Shakespeare's fantasy kingdoms of Sicilia and Bohemia to London and to a deep-South American city reminiscent of New Orleans. Despite her faithfulness to Shakespeare's storyline, Winterson manages to keep us gripped, also by providing her characters with rich backstories. If much of what happens within Shakespeare's romance (in particular the famous closing scene, in which the statue of Hermione turns out to be Hermione herself) remains unexplained, Winterson provides us with interpretations of the characters' behaviour. Shakespeare leaves blank spaces, posing questions to which we have to find answers of our own; *The Gap of Time* is Winterson's answer.

"The old order is changing, the new has hardly visibly arrived": *The Good Soldier* between Modernism and Edwardian realism

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Like many of his fellow Modernists, Ford Madox Ford was aware that the world around him was changing. He believed that the writer's task was to convey new and old truths in the language of the present day and he devised a literary technique, impressionism, which he applied to *The Good Soldier* (1915). "A challenge in matter and method alike", according to Ford himself, the novel, a writerly text *par excellence*, requires the reader's attentive cooperation in order to produce meaning. The author resorts to a number of fairly innovative narrative strategies which systematically and consciously challenge the conventions of the genre and defy the public's expectations, questioning and subverting many of the features commonly associated with the traditional novel.

However, although undoubtedly an example of literary Modernism, *The Good Soldier* still retains some Edwardian features, showing a continuity of sorts with Victorian realism. Ford does not rely entirely on his impressionistic method, maintaining that, in order to impress the reader, the novelist must also use "a great deal of what one may call non-impressionism" – a mixed, partly Modernist and partly Edwardian, technique that he especially employs in character depiction. Moreover, while a very demanding author who expects the reader to be receptive, patient and searching, Ford does not want to renounce the devices of popular literature altogether – "the devices of a prostitute", in his own words – such as suspense, plot, love interest, which are meant to attract a wider audience.

The aim of the paper is to shed some light on Ford's attitude to literary innovation and the reading public, also through a comparison with Virginia Woolf, whose theories on the novel appear to be very similar to Ford's, but whose writing practice differs from his in being far more advanced in the rejection of the traditional novel. As the result of the encounter between Modernism and Edwardian realism, *The Good Soldier* is an interesting example of the negotiation between convention and innovation which inevitably takes place when "the old order is changing, the new has hardly visibly arrived".

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Palimpsests of power in Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others*

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Moving from Louis Althusser's notion of "interpellation" and Michel Foucault's conceptualisations about power discourses, my paper takes into consideration Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* in order to interrogate the effects of the internal reorganisation of military forces in India, which was carried out after Partition in the '50s and '60s.

The then young Indian state *de facto* deprived tribals of their lands for profit, using them to build dams through which to obtain electricity or giving them to corporations such as Steel Authority of India or mining companies. Also, the complicity of the State with wealthy landowners and moneylenders made possible the ruthless exploitation of impoverished farmers and sharecroppers by putting the police and other military apparatuses in the service of powerful monetary interests. By blurring the line between truth and fantasy, the military proved instrumental in establishing a climate of fear which upheld the new agrarian reforms proposed in those years. They, in turn, brought about the brutality of the Naxalite movement and endorsed a new regime of power centred on the nascent intellectual and political elites.

Military forces were employed not only to repress and stifle any form of dissent or protest, but also creatively to produce normative discourses about dangerous and backward subjects which represented a constant threat to national growth and development. The "modernity" of the nation-state relied on the symbolic binding of tribals to cultural processes which fixed them in an imaginary of fear. Outcast groups were forced to reify instances of violence and degradation which legitimised the use of force both pre-emptively, and as acts of retaliation. The police, the institution which was supposedly meant to protect the weak, turned into their worst enemies by associating physical violence with the creation of a climate of uncertainty which ultimately marginalised the worst-off in the eyes of public opinion. Mukherjee shows how such biased forms of knowledge traversed the different networks composing the social body in its entirety. In his novel, one can see how those cultural constructions were embedded in the idea of the Indian nation itself, as tiles scattered across every field of social life, from the workings of large social institutions to the day-to-day interactions taking place in the narrowness of the nuclear family.

The immutability of the conditions of the poor is tragically determined also by the hypocrisy of those pretending to care for them, such as the members of the Communist Party. Their political action is ultimately revealed by Mukherjee as only aimed at gaining more power within the forming political system of the nation, rather than actually produce a positive change in the life of those whose suffering and difficulties were displayed to gain political relevance. Mukherjee's literary talent here consists in his ability to mirror the violence perpetrated in the Northern regions of India against rebelling communities of dispossessed farmers with the apparently negligible envies and discriminations within the Ghoshes, a moderately wealthy family living in Calcutta which is also a major topic of interest in his novel.

"In the garb of ancient Greece": Late-Victorian women poets and the gendering of Classicism

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By the 1870s the connection between ancient Greece and Victorian England was an established one. As Henry Fanshave Tozer asserted in 1873, "Greece occupied in ancient times a position in many respects similar to that of England at the present day". The idea of Greece as a model of moral purity and aesthetic grandeur predominated in the British élite, while Hellenism became the epitome of male cultural hegemony. With the opening of the first universities for female students, the "sweetness and light" of classical studies were increasing challenged by women intellectuals.

This paper underlines the complex intersections between late-Victorian Hellenism and women poets, who explored the area of classical literature and myth reading it in relation to a deeply engrained sexual politics of exclusion. In so doing, they had to contend with the misogyny of ancient philosophers besides facing the resistance of their contemporaries. Female Hellenism has been aptly defined as heretical, for women appropriated and revised Greek art in a new perspective, unsettling from within firmly rooted ideas about history, myth and the literary canon. Like Dionysus, they disrupted the Olympus, bringing chaos, violence and transgression into the calm grandeur of Greece. I will focus on the classical dramas by Augusta Webster, Amy Levy and Mathilde Blind, exploring how their revision of Antiquity questions male control over culture as well as contributing to the on-going debate about the Woman Question.

Glass, frames and mirrors in Virginia Woolf

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As Stanley Fish has pointed out, "literature is language […] around which we have drawn a frame, a frame that indicates a decision to regard with a particular self-consciousness the resources language has always possessed" (1980: 108-9). Images of glass, frames and mirrors represent basic tropes playing a significant role in Virginia Woolf's fiction, and are frequently used to reveal the nature of things in an act of visual perception (conceived as a tenuous point of connection/disjunction between the inner and the outer worlds), or the essence of a "scene" or character which is the object of scrutiny. For such reasons, framing and reflective devices provide both structural frameworks to her novels (in so far as they delineate the disputed border between life and art), and a metaphor for the act of literary creation, a symbolic materiality which reflects on the materiality of the text. Woolf is concerned with dual realms: subject and object, interior and exterior, boundaries between life and art as well as the merging of the two worlds; in this perspective, glass, frames and mirrors both separate and fuse, and provide the analogues for these double states of existence. The inner and the outer worlds of consciousness and objective reality reflect each other as the author moves back and forth between the thoughts of her characters and their relationships to people and objects outside themselves through specific textual frames. Accordingly, the imagery Woolf uses captures the essence of such movement and becomes a means through which the text focuses on the boundary between the character's mind and the world of the novel, or between the fictional world and the real one. Moreover, it highlights the importance of visual perception in her work, and self-consciously hints at the central issues of mimesis, narrative representation and self-representation, or the relationship between fiction and reality. While glass combines solidity with transparency, two essential qualities of a work of art according to Woolf, the notion of reflection appears to be an equally complex and resonant one. It may refer to the actual image given by a mirror (which not only encloses a scene but also reproduces it), as well as to the characters' states of consciousness, or the processes inherent in the creative imagination, thus indicating a Modernist absorption with self-reflection. It can, therefore, be said to embody the essence of Woolf's writing, particularly when revelations or epiphanic "moments of being" take place by means of transparent framing or reflective devices. In this sense, the frame of the mirror or window is used by Woolf to create a holding pattern representative of the ordering powers of art, a metaphor for the present moment capturing what otherwise becomes caught up in the fleetingness of life. This paper explores the frame and looking-glass motifs as a recurrent feature of Woolf's writing by analysing some relevant occurrences in different kinds of texts – non-fictional works such as *Moments of Being*, as well as the short story "The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection" or the novels *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *Between the Acts* – in an attempt to show how it functions variously as a surface upon/within which the self may be reflected or envisioned, and as a structural metaphor for the very process of writing.

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The self-effacing autobiographer: Recasting life writing in *Summertime* by J.M. Coetzee

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In *Summertime* (2009), J.M. Coetzee concludes his autobiographical project with a *coup de theatre*, staging his own death in what comes about as a brilliant piece of autofiction, which in turn reorients the reading of the first two volumes, *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002). In fact, their formal allegiance to the autobiographical conventions is testified by two very traditional (and resonant) autobiographical titles, a retrospective look, a chronological sequence of events, a balance between factual account and introspection, a consistent focus on the same subject (who happens to have the same name as the author but is obstinately referred to as "he" throughout the narrative) and above all an illusionistic inspectional attitude that posits the subject as someone who can and is being revealed. What is lacking, though, is the author's commitment to tell "the truth" about himself – a commitment that a postmodern, postcolonial and poststructuralist subject simply cannot undertake, as the foundational assumptions of modern autobiography (self-transparent subjectivity, sincerity of motives, fidelity in representation) have been swept away by several waves of structuralisms. The autobiographer is, by necessity, a fictioneer; and the only way to be sincere and truthful is to openly acknowledge these limits – which is an issue Coetzee has dealt with implicitly and explicitly since the beginning of his career as a writer.

Yet, what astonishes in *Summertime* is certainly not Coetzee's acknowledgment of his constraints but rather the deliberate interpolation of verifiable events from his life and the fabrication of testimonies whose only purpose seems to create a disagreeable image of himself. The book is the ostensible rough-draft of a biographical project by a certain Mr. Vincent who embarks on a series of interviews with people (mostly women) who were close to young Coetzee. Their accounts are manifestly biased, and the biographer's goal of disclosing the literary celebrity's intimate life borders on gossiping. The result is that readers close the book with the perception of knowing even less about Coetzee than what they knew when they first picked it up.

However, what at first sight may seem a complex device aimed at exposing the fallacy of any naïve autobiographical effort reveals, at closer inspection, a *pars construens* as well as further intricacy: an earnest concern with the alleged moral authority of the artist, which is discussed throughout the interviews blurring yet another traditional genre distinction between life writing and criticism, between the literary, the ethical, the political and the philosophical discourse.

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Mason and pre-wartime films: Patriotism and heroism in *The Four Feathers* and *Fire Over England*

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Alfred Edward Woodley Mason (1865-1948), though almost forgotten today, was a prolific novelist and playwright, a politician, a soldier, a traveller and a mountaineer. Born in a middle-class family but educated at Oxford, Mason's literary career started in the theatre but he achieved his biggest success in 1902 with the novel *The Four Feathers* (which was adapted for the cinema several times). A symbol of cowardice, the white feather represented for the protagonist both a crippling accusation and an occasion to regain the lost honour. At the beginning of WW1, inspired by Mason's novel, the White Feather Brigade, a para-military group of women, gave white feathers to men not in uniform with the purpose of calling them to their duty. Even though this practice was later harshly criticized, the novel was adapted (for the fourth time) for the cinema just before the outbreak of WW2 and released the day after Britain declared war to Germany, with a new use of the symbolic feather and a strong focus on duty and heroism.

Mason gave new light to the themes of courage and loyalty to the country a few years before the Second World War in the novel *Fire Over England* (1936), which depicts the adventures of a young Elizabethan secret agent who tries to save his country from the invasion of the Spanish Armada. A eulogy of Francis Drake and of the dedication and resourcefulness of the British people, *Fire Over England* was immediately adapted for the cinema in 1937. The story, though deeply transformed from the novel, embodied an overt call "for military preparedness" (Dunn 1996: 165) and a "propagandist warning to Hitler to keep 'Hands Off' by stressing the failure of a previous invasion attempt" (Everson 2003: 301). So effective were some of the scenes that they were re-used in the war-time propaganda film *The Lion Has Wings* (1941).

The paper will focus both on the novels and on the film adaptations highlighting how and why visual elements and themes were preserved or transformed in the passage from one medium to the other.

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Pre-face and portrait, likeness and appearance: Painting with the envenomed tongue of slander in *The School for Scandal*

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Sheridan's *School for Scandal* offers a wealth of literal and symbolic references to the value of portraiture, pointing to its role as social capital and evidence of "character". It is a play in which the overdetermination of certain props, such as the pictures and the screen, reveal a strong interest in *looking* and a demand for ocular proof that counter the more obviously central auditory power of gossip. The matter of aesthetic scrutiny also compellingly complicates the tension between character-subjectivity-surface which is implicit in the typological names of Charles and Joseph Surface. At one basic plot level Sheridan allows simple directness (Charles) to triumph over complexity (Joseph); but if we focus on the central female character – which indeed *fuses* simplicity and complexity – Lady Teazle, we see that the cautionary message about the misleading nature of appearances becomes particularly relevant at a moment in which the symbiotic relationship between the dramatic and the visual art was particularly strong and widely discussed.

I propose to explore the multilayered manner in which contemporary celebrity portraiture, theatrical portraits and, more subtly, the ballooning output of satirical prints on the excesses of fashion bear on two scenes in *SFS*. Around the borders of these theatrical moments lie the portraits of Elizabeth Linley, Sheridan's first wife; Georgiana Devonshire, the complex woman behind Lady Teazle; Anne Crewe, the play's dedicatee; Frances Abingdon, who premiered the role on 8 May 1777; and Elizabeth Farren who closed her career on stage, or as the fashionable phrasing went, "made her farewell appearance" as Lady Teazle in 1797 – all women whose "appearance in public", whether on stage, as a portrait at the Royal Academy, at a ball or canvassing for votes, was variously framed over the course of their lives. I propose also to put the two scenes I examine "in conversation" with certain aspects of the work of the artists who portrayed these women, Thomas Lawrence and Joshua Reynolds, highlighting how the recurring image of the *tongue* of slander links to the debate on *taste,* how the good and the bad Surfaces of the play link to the patina of their paintings and how their vision of classical and modern is questioned in contemporary satire on connoisseurship and fashion.

"Come, now a roundel and a fairy song": *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or Shakespeare's invitation to the dance

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This presentation concentrates upon questions of narrative, particularly Shakespearean narrative, across different performative domains in the attempt to re-member the very varied nature of entertainment in the early modern playhouse and the ways in which Shakespearean narrative may be produced for, circulated within and consumed by twenty-first century audiences. As was the case across early modern Europe, Elizabethan England engaged vigorously in dance culture at all levels of society. Whether at court, in the bourgeois household or in the village marketplace, there is evidence that communal performance through dance was enthusiastically embraced. Moreover, we know that dance constituted a significant element and expectation of an afternoon's entertainment at the London playhouses at the close of the sixteenth century, even if the performance were a tragedy. Amongst the productions of the 1590s, Shakespeare's early comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* repeatedly draws attention to dance as an agent for social cohesion and elsewhere for intimate experience. The first phase of this presentation will concentrate upon these early modern contexts for what was the great variety of fare on offer to late-Tudor theatre audiences, paying particular attention to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here, attention will not only be drawn to witness accounts of early modern theatre and to stage directions, but also to textual prompts which Shakespeare's text offers to its audiences. The second phase of this presentation will consider the ways in which the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries have turned back to this comedy, which involves a broad cross-section of social strata in terms of choreography and physical performance, in order to renew audiences' acquaintance with Shakespeare's narrative and to consider alternative understandings of its comic potential.

Complexity, challenge, and creativity: Zoë Wicomb's literary engagement with South African history

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If the traditional meaning of "Postcolonial literature" is literary practices meant to "go against" the reading of a specific culture imposed by a colonizer, with the passing of time it has become more and more evident to writers (and artists in general) that simply opposing the so-called "master-narrative" is no longer enough to account for what is happening in countries which gained independence several decades before. In South Africa things are particularly complex, since the apartheid regime imposed itself on a previously colonial country, where the two historical colonizers were in conflict with one another. It is mainly from the 1980s that a number of South African writers have been trying to respond to the challenge of a complex history in a complex way, employing textual strategies inherited from the "West" (from twentieth-century Western philosophers, historians, linguists, semioticians and literary critics), but at the same time adapting them to the specific needs of their own social and literary community.

Novelists like John Coetzee, Njabulo Ndebele, Zakes Mda and Zoë Wicomb are examples of South African writers who believe that literary complexity can respond more adequately to the "nightmare of history"; in particular, I would like to address the question of literary creativity drawing on the more as well as less recent literary production of Zoë Wicomb (born 1948): *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (1985), *David's Story* (2000), *The One that Got Away* (2008).

My aim in proposing this paper is not to go deep into the elucidation of Wicomb's novels, but to discuss her writing as representative of a literary trend that eschews (and fears) simplification. Actually, Wicomb does not only lay bare the ideological constructions of old and new colonial powers in South Africa, but she also challenges the national, domestic discourses of history and politics, produced by a country which is far from having overcome social discrimination and injustice. She takes into consideration more and less official histories, and submits minority narratives to the same scrutiny – to the same questioning process – that has traditionally been applied to the "grand narratives". Wicomb succeeds, for instance, in historicizing the emergence of national foundational myths (including the quasi-sacred myths of the anti-apartheid struggle), even if this means going against the expectations of the reader and proposing an approach to history which is much more complex (and sometimes arduous) than the traditional attack to British and Afrikaner ideologies of colonization and dominion.

In challenging readers' expectations, Wicomb also involves them in the production of sense; we often have to work our way through her texts in order to draw a meaning from what we read, but the effort is rewarded by the aesthetic enjoyment that her narrative affords. Making use both of postmodern literary techniques and of literary realism, Zoë Wicomb combines ethics and aesthetics, and succeeds in drawing the best from the literary "adventure": the capacity to unsettle received epistemologies and stimulate new ways of looking at things by providing, at the same time, a deep enjoyment of the experience of literature itself.

"Snow is a strange white word": A creative fusion of poetry and painting in Isaac Rosenberg's response to the First World War

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This paper aims to analyse the creative and complex ways in which Isaac Rosenberg, poet and painter, elaborated his experience of the First World War, by fusing the poetic medium with the pictorial one. Rosenberg's extensive training in the visual arts compensated for a promising, but raw talent in writing and allowed him to achieve a striking originality in the creation of imagery. From his first reaction to war to his growing awareness and participation, a close reading of selected poems will be proposed in order to investigate the different strategies he used to represent war before and during his period of active service at the front.

While attending the Slade School of Art in London, a leading institution with students such as Paul Nash and Stanley Spencer, Rosenberg became involved in the lively art scene of the early twentieth century, when European avant-gardes challenged the outmoded English portrait and landscape tradition. Working under the likes of drawing masters Henry Tonks and Fred Brown, the young painter developed an attentive eye for detail and a preoccupation for the human body which he would later exploit in his trench poetry. Inspiration also came from his much-admired predecessors William Blake and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with whom he shared the twofold vocation; following their footsteps, Rosenberg turned to a symbolic and richly imaginative style in writing, sometimes verging on obscurity.

When he learned of the outbreak of war, Rosenberg was in South Africa, hoping to cure his fragile health and overcome artistic frustration. His reaction to the event that shook the world is encapsulated in the poem *On Receiving News of the War*, whose first emblematic line, "snow is a strange white word", reveals both his poetic and pictorial response. By channelling his double artistic talent into the construction of a vivid and powerful image, Rosenberg is able to synthesize reality and transfigure the advent of war into a visionary descent of evil on Earth. Later poems such as *The Troop Ship* and *Marching – as seen from the left file* reflect his closer involvement in the action and show the "painter's eye" in the description of the visual details of the scenes and in the adoption of the peculiar perspective of an internal, but detached spectator. The attention he pays to colours and shapes, light and shadow, and the constant juxtaposition between images and symbols, realism and abstraction make him stand out among the other war poets, while drawing him closer to the Modernist war artists.

In conclusion, it will be argued that the recourse to painting techniques in Isaac Rosenberg's poems stems from the need to visualise and communicate the unprecedented experience of war, which defied representation and understanding. Through the fruitful fusion of two different media, the painter-poet succeeds in challenging the limits of language and creating a complex but relatable work of art of great imaginative power and intense witnessing.

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Teaching English literature from a chaos and complexity perspective: Future learn e-learning course on *Shakespeare: Print and Performance*

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Adopting a scientific approach based on the Chaos and Complexity Theory, literature can easily be analyzed as a complex system. Literature can be considered dynamic because its manifestations change over place and time. Moreover, almost all literary texts enjoy a kind of semantic and stylistic complexity that implies unpredictability within a linear pattern. Like all complex systems, literature does not aim at consistency or equilibrium, but rather it is open and susceptible to interpretation.

Although the Chaos and Complexity Theory is on the rise in the spheres of the natural sciences, anthropology and economics, it is still very much a new entry in the world of education. Notwithstanding this, its applicability and potential contribution to education is very interesting. The Chaos and Complexity Theory is a practical tool for understanding and developing education because it puts an end to cause-and-effect models, linear predictability and atomistic approaches to knowledge, replacing them with organic and holistic approaches based on relations within interconnected networks. Connectedness requires a distributed knowledge system where knowledge is not centrally located and consequently communication and collaboration become key elements of the Chaos and Complexity Theory. In its application to the educational field the Chaos and Complexity Theory is a child of the Postmodern age because it emphasizes the connectedness between emotions and academic learning, the student's self-organizational ability, and the use of collaborative and cooperative strategies in the classroom.

But perhaps the most straightforward application of the Chaos and Complexity Theory in education is related to the use of new technologies that enable distance learning through access to digital platforms. E-learning can give rise to a learning community that tends to avoid individual study and to improve group relations. Thanks to innovative teaching instruments such as videoconferences, chats, forums, blogs, wiki, repositories for essays sharing and so on, e-learning can help to give adequate space to the metacognitive needs of what Prensky defines as "digital natives", who prefer visual communication (images or videos) to the written page, have a reticular learning style, and view knowledge as unitary and not sectorial.

Future Learn is an on-line platform created by the University of Birmingham, the University of Warwick and King's College in London that offers four free on-line Shakespeare courses to both university teachers and students. All the courses provide a variety of stimuli from video-lessons and documentaries to chats, forums and web-bibliographies and give a final certificate if all steps are completed successfully.

After illustrating the many possible applications of the Chaos and Complexity Theory to the teaching of literature, the second part of the paper will give concrete examples of how e-learning can be effectively planned and used. One of the four Future Learn courses, the *Shakespeare: Print and Performance* (4 weeks, 2 hours per week), will be analyzed with regard to both its internal organization and to the learning strategies used to create a stimulating virtual environment where many of the applications of the Chaos and Complexity Theory in education find a practical realization.

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Not just 'a plaything of the imagination': Complexity and creativity in *Oedipus Tyrannus or Swellfoot the Tyrant* by P.B. Shelley

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In her "Note on *Oedipus Tyrannus*," Mary Shelley described P.B. Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus or Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820) as "a mere plaything of the imagination" (Shelley 1939), thus establishing a neat divide between this humorous play (regarded as a mere trifle) and the poet's elevated and politically engaged output. Up until recently, *Swellfoot the Tyrant* has been largely overlooked by scholars, whose critical efforts have been mostly directed towards *The Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound*, the other two highly acclaimed theatrical pieces composed by the poet in the same period, between 1819 and 1820.

Conversely, this paper sets out to highlight and explore the extreme complexity of *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, an experimental text in which Shelley's creativity forcefully succeeded in stretching the boundaries of conventionality. First of all, the originality of its textual construction will be emphasised. The play may be ascribed to the category of *mental theatre* devised by Lord Byron (the so-called unstageable dramas written for readers rather than spectators). Nonetheless, the very genre it seemingly belongs to is remarkably elusive: the play was published by Joseph Johnson as a *pamphlet*; despite its comical contents, the subtitle of *Swellfoot the Tyrant* suggests it is "a tragedy in two acts" (a rather peculiar division, if compared to the classical convention of five acts). Moreover, the text is characterised by hybridism, since it mixes elements typical of comedy, tragedy, pantomime, *burletta*, and the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, with its interaction of verbal and non verbal codes.

Secondly, the intertextuality of the play will be the object of a thorough investigation. *Swellfoot the Tyrant* draws from mythology and classical literature (Sophocle's *Oedipus Rex*, Aristophane's *The Frogs*, Aesop's *Fables*, to name a few), creatively altered and manipulated by the poet; the anonymous fictional author of the Advertisement to the play even claims his text is nothing but the faithful translation of the only surviving tragedy in an ancient triad (which, obviously, does not really exist). Clear references to Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, to Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, and to Shelley's own *Prometheus Unbound* and "Peter Bell the Third" contribute to enhancing the complexity of the play.

Finally, the intersection between *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and the contemporary political and historical scenario will be analysed. As will be shown, the play mirrors the controversy regarding Caroline of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel (the future George IV's rejected spouse), besides featuring allusions to the infamous "Peterloo Massacre", to the introduction of the Gagging Acts, and to the British colonial aspirations and their tragic aftermath.

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A Holiday Romance (1868) by Charles Dickens: The introduction of the child narrator in the Victorian literary background

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The works of Charles Dickens (1812-1870) are remarkable for his meticulous attention to the polyphony of surrounding society. Thanks to his personal experience as a child, his novels also reveal an intense concern about the vulnerability of children. Away from the description of exploited or abused children of his well-known major novels, the novella *A Holiday Romance* (1868) provides some enlightening reflections on the cultural representation of childhood during the last decades of the Victorian age. In my paper I intend to analyze Dickens's choice of introducing the child narrator in his novella, and emphasize why this innovation is so relevant in the context of Victorian children's literature.

During the long reign of Queen Victoria, we find in Britain an innovative social interest in children and their voices. For the first time, the child's perspective becomes a subject matter for discussion. Hence, the development of several social reforms and some literary experiments concerning the representation of children.

Published simultaneously in *All Year Round* and *Our Young Folk*, in four instalments between January and May of 1868, *A Holiday Romance* is a collection of four short stories, fictitiously written by four children, whose age ranges between six and a half and nine years. Notwithstanding the conventional presence of the adult voice in most books for young readers, in this novella Dickens for the first time ever endows the child narrator with a voice. Hence, his choice is indicative of a socio-cultural legitimation of childhood that increasingly characterizes the late Victorian age.

The four child narrators relate each a part of the novella from different viewpoints, displaying their different personalities, and making use of different literary genres. In this way, their young age does not become a limit. The characters even plot against their parents, inasmuch as children intend to educate the adults, emphasizing the importance and necessity of young voices in children's fiction. Hence, they indirectly endorse Dickens's belief in the importance of fairy tales, as stressed in "Frauds on the Fairies" (1853).

Furthermore, children's will to educate their parents in *A Holiday Romance* is a useful device to reveal the intended double readership of the novella, yet in a peculiar way. Whereas children's literature usually addresses a young audience overtly and an adult audience implicitly, Dickens's child narrators overturn this tendency: the narrators address an adult audience overtly, whereas the adult author writes for the young reader.

Over the years, some critics have pointed out that the brilliant introduction of child narrators in the novella is undercut by Dickens's biased description. In their view, Dickens's characters are represented through the filter of an adult writer, who shapes the description of the child by adapting it to a "Wordsworthian Romantic" idea of childhood. The adult voice, therefore, is implicitly inviting its young readers to follow the example provided by the innocent and naive characters. Dickens, however, was so pleased with his creation that he wrote to J. T. Fields, the American publisher of the novella, stating that "the writing seemed to me so like children's, that dull folks […] might perhaps rate it accordingly" (Susina, 2006:157).

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Juliet and Romeo back to Italy: An original form of "reappropriation"

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The story of Romeo and Juliet has been fertile ground for musical renditions; it has been reinvented in a number of musical adaptations ranging from symphonies, ballets and operas to musicals, and eventually transformed in mass-marketed pop music mainly directed at young audiences. One of the boldest and most sophisticated attempts is undoubtedly *Giulietta e Romeo* (2007), a two-act Italian production with the music of the French-Italian singer and composer Riccardo Cocciante and with a libretto by the poet Pasquale Panella. As I will argue, this work offers a unique opportunity to rethink Shakespeare and Italy from a suggestive contemporary Italian perspective.

What distinguishes this production from other musical adaptations is its strong intertextuality on a musical and textual level. By embracing forms of re-creation and re-vision, it creates a profoundly and intrinsically Italian version of the story, owing to a combination of Italian musical, literary and cultural traditions. At the base of the project there is the aim of keeping alive the interest in Italian culture and language by celebrating the country's important cultural heritage. As a matter of fact the production immediately reveals a strong Italian identity. It has been defined as an "opera popolare" (popular opera), a genre with some affinities with the Italian operatic tradition of Verdi and Puccini; in musical terms, the result is a combination of Cocciante's pop-rock background, contemporary pop-electronic music, operatic conventions and techniques, Italian musical tradition, all filtered through the memory of Nino Rota's tunes written for Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. On the other hand, Panella's libretto taps into Shakespeare's Italian sources: while adhering to the Shakespearean plotline, the author adds interpolations from Luigi da Porto's *Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti* (1530) and Matteo Bandello's novella (1554, 2: IX).

The present paper purposes to evaluate how this innovative rendition enacts a further exchange between England and Italy so that metaphorically Italy "reappropiates" its own story. *Giulietta e Romeo* is a fruitful encounter between different musical, literary and scenic traditions which reflects both the author's career and his particular style of adaptation. Cocciante succeeded in his aim, which is that of creating an experimental show with a strong Italian identity in terms of music, costumes, scenes, language, and portraying two Italian *Romeo and Juliet*. The combination of the Shakespearean tragedy with interpolations from the Italian novelistic tradition enriches the story with psychological nuances. The outcome, though, was not what he expected since the show did not have a long run nor did it tour beyond Italy. Nevertheless, it should still be praised and investigated as a valuable attempt to retrieve the Italian origins of the story and relate it using the varied palette of the Italian cultural tradition.

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Femi Osofisan's *Tègònni (An African Antigone)*: An example of contemporary rewriting

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In recent years, Sophocles' *Antigone* has been adapted in a variety of different contexts to address local, political and social issues. We may think of such works as Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes*, Athol Fugard's *The Island* or Roy William's *Antigone*. As a number of critical publications, including *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, *The Athenian Sun in an African Sky* and *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery* (to name but a few) demonstrate, *Antigone* is perhaps the only play, classical or modern, to have been (re)produced all over the world. Against this background, Femi Osofisan's *Tègònni (An African Antigone)* stands out as one of the most striking creative and complex examples of contemporary rewritings of Sophocles' tragedy. The first version of the play was commissioned and produced by the Theatre Emory of the Emory State University, Atlanta, USA, in the autumn of 1994, as part of the Theatre Department's "Brave New Works" project. Set in nineteenth-century Nigeria but dealing with issues of political freedom in the Nigeria of the 1990s, *Tègònni* engages at least three different time frames: that of the original Greek play, the British colonization of Nigeria in the late nineteenth century, and the military dictatorships oppressing Nigeria in the 1990s. Osofisan's fascinating play, then, intertwines multiple literary and cultural traditions, as well as different languages. As far as the former are concerned, not only does *Tègònni* draw on Greek drama but also on a number of Western and African sources, including British Romantic poetry and traditional Yoruba folklore. Osofisan's use of a variety of different languages similarly attests to *Tègònni*'s complexity. Some of the passages in the play are in Nigerian pidgin English and even in the Yoruba language (the text includes an appendix with the "clean English" equivalent of the pidgin). Osofisan's combination of multiple sources and languages seems to undermine or dismantle aspects of the cultural hegemony Greek drama can represent – particularly in certain non-Western countries, where classical culture stands for oppression and imperialism. Greek and Roman literatures were, in fact, often used to justify colonial projects or to prove colonial cultural superiority.

Between creativity and accessibility: Henry James and the Modernist preface

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In *Prefaces to Volumes of the New York Edition* (1907-1909), Henry James provided a detailed critical introduction to his own works. According to some scholars, among other reasons, he decided to write the prefaces because of the tepid reception and misreading of his novels. From a more general point of view, prefaces have been traditionally studied as prime domains for authorial communication to the reader about fiction — its design, the circumstances of its composition, and the author's intentions in writing it —, as marketing devices, as a form of *captatio benevolentiae* of the readership and so on. Nevertheless, Henry James makes a completely different use of the preface. Arguably, the American-born British writer sacrifices the accessibility and reception of his works for creativity and artistic freedom. Instead of being the locus of directives and simplification, James' prefaces become an opportunity to redefine the relation between the paratext and the text it accompanies. For this reason, the present study aims to demonstrate that James applies to the construction of the preface the same artistic vision that characterizes his fiction, that is to say, the "house of fiction" model. This, I think, is particularly evident in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* where the trope of the house of fiction is used in two different but converging ways. This point is central because it implies that James' prefaces are not designed to provide information and guidance for reading but are instead a form of exercises in style which present the same narrative structure that James adopted in his novels. In other words, the preface loses its paratextual status to become itself a sort of condensed fiction. In this way, combining his artistic vision with reception, the author answers the legitimate demand for intelligibility in a very peculiar way: a strategy that does not coincide with a dilution of the content, typical of the preface, but, on the contrary, with an increasing intricacy and complexity of the form. Indeed, negotiating a radical change in the author-text-reader relation — where the reader is asked to be an active co-creator rather than a passive recipient — James establishes a paradoxical relation with the reader because preface and novel lose their traditional function and redefine the terms of their mutual interdependence. Thus, preface and novel become specular because the former gives the reader the hermeneutical strategies for interpreting the latter and vice versa.

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Early modern textuality in new media: Shakespeare's afterlife in the "late age of print"

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The dialectics of conventionality and creativity finds one of its most fascinating expressions in the intersections between textual scholarship and new digital technologies, where the outstanding position of Shakespearean texts has gained increasing prominence in the academic debate of the last few years (Holderness 2003, Kidnie and Massai 2015). "What happens when the textual mystery of Shakespeare encounters the archival ambitions of modern information culture?" asks Alan Galley (2014: 40). In this "encounter" he envisages "one of the structuring contradictions at the heart of modernity: to remember the past is to change it" (2014: 40) As he points out: "to reproduce or transmit Shakespeare's texts through a new medium is to engage with some of the most textually and ontologically complex material in Western literary tradition" (2014: 160).

It is such complexity that this paper proposes to investigate, addressing the status of Shakespeare's textuality and its cultural authority in a highly digitalized landscape where new media embed, emulate and refashion older ones (Bolter-Grusin 1999) and a global networked audience can "repackage and repurpose existing Shakespearean materials from page images of early printed editions and manuscripts to recorded performances" (Bishop et al. 2014: 24).

If "Shakespeare on line is a densely textualized object" (Worthen 2003: 198), digital technologies exhibit and allow us to explore such textuality in unprecedented ways that epitomize, as I will argue, *immediacy* and *hypermediacy* as the dual traits of remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999). On the one hand, digital facsimiles of the playwright's folio and quartos offer an apparently immersive experience of Shakespearean textuality, somehow enhancing its sacrality. On the other hand, hypertextual editions of Shakespeare's plays allow links to an enormous hyper-mediated archive of sources, early modern texts, documents and performances that impinge on our reception of his intricate textuality and intertextuality, serving "as a substitute or prosthesis for the context that early modern playgoers provided for the play without conscious effort." (Bishop et al. 2014: 26).

What still deserves further attention, as I will argue, is the extent to which crucial aspects of Shakespeare's instable and pre-print textuality (Craigand Kinney 2009) can be better revealed by digital media that have historicized print-based notions of textual stability and authorial uniqueness, forcing them to "appear as corollary to a particular writing technology rooted in specific times and places" (Landow 1992: 34). The paper investigates remarkable instances of a manifold digital production in this perspective. If Alan Galey's *Visualizing Variations* dynamically shows textual variants of Shakespeare's plays, thus exhibiting their inherently fluid nature, the extensive employ of Kinetic Typography in the latest *YouTube* versions of Shakespeare's works "performs", so to speak, "the visuality of the written text" (O'Neill 2014: 23) in ways that echo Peter Greenaway's experiments with typographic fonts and handwriting in *Prospero's Books*, where Prospero/Shakespeare's quill leaves dark ribbons of ink on pages framed in overlapping and dissolving screens. From a different perspective, the three-dimensional and highly flexible architecture of David Small's *Virtual Shakespeare* goes far beyond releasing the playwright's texts from the constraints of a "page" and "screen". Such instances raise crucial issues, as I will show, about those processes of digitalization and remediation that transform texts into virtual artefacts, thus opening the way to more creative forms of textual reconstruction, transmission and adaptation.

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"Make it new": Metamorphosing William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* into a Postmodernist text. A study of Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time*

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Jeanette Winterson's fiction, by her own admission, is "full of cover versions" (*Weight*: xviii), retellings of stories, myths, and fairy tales from several sources. *The Gap of Time* (2015) is an instance of her dialogue with William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1623). Winterson opens up Shakespeare's play, leaving in place enough traces of the original text to provide evocative points of reflection for her readers, while encompassing alternative perspectives to "make it new" (*The Gap*: 286).

So, by its very nature *The Gap* lives on the tension between tradition – a canonical work used as a framework for Winterson's world of words – and creative (re-)interpretation, thus embodying various forms of complexity. At the level of language, the text is a polymorphic interplay of the poetic, the everyday, and the language of technology applied to video games, while evoking a heteroglossia of literary voices that enter into a dialogic relationship with the novel.

At the level of structure, complexity takes different forms: first, there is the constant use of intertextuality, not only with Shakespeare's play but also with Winterson's previous fiction, and a number of artistic presences and echoes. Second, her rearticulation of the play is marked by multiple border-crossings and fantastic journeys through time, space, genre, and gender; metafictional self-reflexivity and disruption of narrative linearity. In this sense, then, *The Gap* is one of those "strong texts [that] work along the borders of our minds and alter what already exists" (*Art Objects*: 26), opening a way into other realities.

In her novel, Winterson weaves three narrative strands that are held together by a series of devices: the mirroring of events and discourses in the different narratives; the reiteration of some of her familiar concerns, such as the theme of abandonment at birth and adoption which establishes an analogy between the writer and Perdita, the abandoned child of Leontes and Hermione; the presence of common images, motifs, and refrains in the whole text.

Through a range of highly original representational strategies, Winterson affects the cultural transformation of a canonical work and its gender dichotomies, and metamorphoses it into a multiple shape-shifting body, differently inflected in terms of gender and genre. She subverts and transgresses the borders of literary genre, thus recasting the structure, texture, and style of the work she dialogues with. Her retelling generates new complex characters who act within reversed systems of power relations and inscribe modern forms of gender-fluid identities. The result is a counter-narrative that is strongly polemical on some issues, a text that operates as her site of denunciation of, and resistance to, clichéd ideological binary oppositions and hierarchical power relations, and to the materialistic values of contemporary society with its ruthless exercise of power against the weak and the despoiled powerless.

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Remembering Dickens: *David Copperfield* on Italian television

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David Copperfield (1850-51) is a novel about memory, and about its power not only to evoke and stimulate a reflection on the past, but also to meditate upon it through memory's specific ability to construct a series of strikingly visual images of bygone times. As many scholars have noticed, David's childhood and adult life are recollected by the narrator as "moving" scenes and "shots", according to a peculiarly pre-filmic technique. David repeatedly admits that his (cinematic) memory is the only thing he has to "recollect" images from the past and to organize them in a coherent tale that recalls not only his personal *bildung* from suffering child to successful writer (and happy husband), but also the story of England itself in a particular phase of its development as a nation. Furthermore, Dickens's decision to use a first-person narration – a strategy he will also adopt in *Great Expectations*, another partially autobiographical novel – enhances the power of the (male) gaze to offer, at the same time, a *narration* of the past and a *depiction* of the past by means of a "point of view shot", or a "subjective camera". This is the reason why this "memorial" novel has attracted the interest of various television and film directors coming from different countries.

As foreseeable, the BBC has made *David Copperfield* a constant presence in its show schedule, since Dickens's text – reputed as *the* quintessential Dickensian (and Victorian) novel – may provide an occasion to meditate in nostalgic terms on the past history of its characters, as well as of the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, despite obvious cultural, linguistic and historical differences, the Italian version of *David Copperfield*, directed by Anton Giulio Majano and broadcast by the Italian Public Italian Broadcasting Company R.A.I. in 1966, stimulates similar reflections on the issue of (national) memory. Many Italian television historians have remarked that the "Reithian" style of the BBC (from the name of its first Director-General, Sir John Reith) had an enormous impact on the programming schedule of post-war European televisions, which alternated explicitly educational pieces (on history, art, culture etc.) and television adaptations from the classics. As far as Italy is concerned, a great part of its post-war unification and education processes in the second half of the twentieth century was determined and influenced by the "communicative normalisation" of the R.A.I. television programs, as Italian linguist Tullio De Mauro calls it, which allowed no local dialects, no sensational or immoral tales, and aimed at conveying politically and ideologically reassuring messages, in particular at a time of cultural, economical and ideological changes in Italian society. Majano's version of *David Copperfield* thus offered its Italian viewers an idealised image of the past based on memory, adopted to face the challenges of the present.

In line with the theme of the conference, my paper aims to reflect on the creative, complex and sometimes ambiguously conventional approach to Dickens's words in Italian televisual adaptations of a British classic novel.

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Describing poverty: The complexity of social sciences in Dickens's *Bleak House*

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According to a long-established convention, literary language is considered a discourse within the multiple discourses in a given national language, or a *parole*, within the more general *langue*. In fact, there are cases when the language of the novel, thanks to its polyphonic characteristics, strives to become more comprehensive and certainly more complex than the language of science, or the scientific discourse. A case in point is the social discourse in Dickens's novels, which expands the coeval social sciences in ways unpredictable by philosophers, social scientists, and politicians. Most Victorian middle-class gentlefolks were aware that a large part of the population lived below the poverty line. Yet they had only a partial knowledge of the issue, based either on partial sights (e.g. walking by St Giles in London) or on statistics and descriptions.

When Dickens takes up the subject of poverty, which he does often enough in his oeuvre, he adds layers of complexity to the issue in two basic ways. First, he adds an imaginative and emotional element, so that readers may visualize what it means to be destitute and how it may feel. The second way in which Dickens adds knowledge to the concept of poverty is by linking economic straits to other four related, but possibly distinct brands of poverty – in knowledge, in spiritual life, in emotional life, in health. As early as in *Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge how it feels to be poor, by hinting at the death of Tiny Tim. However, the Ghost (Dickens in fact) keeps his most striking insight for the end of the visit: immediately before his departure two ugly, repulsive children trouble the sight of Scrooge. The Ghost explains that they are siblings: Ignorance and Want, the children of Man. The Ghost admonishes Scrooge to beware of them both, but especially of Ignorance, a demon that was possibly also looming over the middle class.

Noticeably mere economic poverty is not so scary to the former blacking factory boy as the poverty that comes with cultural poverty. The author of the *Carol* went well out of his way to include these two allegorical figures, which are often absent from film and stage versions, and sometimes also from translations of the *Carol*, as, indeed, they are a bit eccentric in the Christmas tale. Dickens certainly saw that they were not consistent with the rest of the book, so he must have considered them an important insight. In fact a kind of complexity, since the two are hardly ever perceived as twins in the Victorian social sciences, but rather as cause or effect of the other. According to Victorian social science one should be "cured" with work and the other one with schooling (eventually to be paid for by hard work).

One can see at work a partition that Bruno Latour has described as a condition of modernity. According to Latour (*We Have Never Been Modern*), modernity is connected with the project of "partitioning" nature and culture, a process that took place sometime in the nineteenth century. Nature became the province of science, whereas culture is the province of humanities. To the modern man, only science can say anything true and practical, whereas literature can entertain him and uplift his spirit. As opposed to say physics, mathematics was simplifying social sciences by reducing it to statistics – a move satirized in *Hard Times*.

In 1846-47 Dickens reflects upon poverty in connection with the Urania Cottage project, an asylum where former prostitutes can repent, learn the basics of housekeeping and then go to Australia to start a new life as married women. Clearly Dickens understood that poverty is much more than a figure below the standard income. He understood that causes for poverty are not to be understood and dealt with in separation.

This awareness is expounded in *Bleak House*, a few years later. Here four different brands of poverty are illustrated both singularly and in conjunction. We find several examples of

economic poverty; one of the most striking being that of Charley, an orphan girl of 12 or 13, who works her fingers to the bone washing clothes in order to feed herself and her younger brothers. Although she can neither read nor write, she knows the Bible, a profession, and her duty towards her family. Nemo, formerly Captain Hawdon, earns just enough as copyist to keep himself going and buy himself opium. He is not rich, but his poverty is eminently emotional. Such is the plight also of rich Lady Dedlock. Two or three characters are spiritually poor, the most striking example being Skimpole, the parasite who lives on other people's money. Cultural poverty is the plight of Krook, too obtuse to learn to read and write, and the bricklayers, who are also economically destitute, but would be far better off if the bread-winner were not addicted to alcohol. To these categories, poor health should be added, a kind of poverty that connects every social class.

The novel therefore becomes the site where the complexity of poverty is explored in all of its many different and combined forms. Dickens expounds the complexity of the social texture against the simplistic description of coeval scientist such as Malthus, Charles Booth, Beatrice Webb.

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PANELS

LITERATURE WORKSHOP

PANEL

And new philology calls all in doubt: Texts and the question of editing in Renaissance England

This panel offers an overview on the contribution of new philology to the study of early modern texts. A quartet of Italian scholars, themselves at the forefront of philological studies, discusses approaches, problems and discoveries, choosing different case studies (ranging from the project for a modern edition of a complete *Works*, to the question of manuscript transmission, to the identification of a lost play, and to the challenges offered by editing a translation) and inviting the audience to consider the different issues accruing to the editing of early modern English texts.

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Sir Walter Raleigh's (ghost) editors

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This paper will consider some of the problems related to the editing of the works of Sir Walter Raleigh – one of which, quite paradoxically, is to identify the editor(s) of the first 'complete' collection published in the modern era, the 1829 Oxford University Press *Works*. By means of an examination of specific cases, it will also illustrate the advantages of a case-to-case, evidence-based approach to both editorial emendation and the analysis of the material features of the manuscript and printed volumes containing Raleigh's texts.

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Meredith Hanmer's *Chronicle of Ireland*: Manuscript transmission and editing

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In this paper I propose to study the extant manuscript sources of the *Chronicles of Ireland*, an antiquarian work published in Dublin in 1633, in order to understand the genesis and editorial vicissitudes of an important text of the English Renaissance. In 1633, about thirty years after the death of its author, the first antiquarian study of Ireland ever to be written by a Protestant clergyman was published in Dublin by the historian James Ware. The author, Meredith Hanmer (*c.* 1545-1604), was an Anglican divine of the Church of England, who had had subsequent preferment in the Church of Ireland. The publication of Hanmer's *Chronicle of Ireland* was an illustrious collaborative enterprise between an antiquary of the standing of James Ware, and no less than a bishop and an archbishop. The editorial enterprise took place across St. George's Channel and linked Dublin, North Shropshire, and London. Furthermore, Hanmer's work was printed alongside Edmund Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*

and Edmund Campion's *Historie of Ireland*, so that through this posthumous edition Hanmer came to be linked to learning and antiquarianism, and to two towering figures of English religion, literature and politics.

Research in England and in Ireland has brought to light important archival evidence about the genesis and development of this unique work. Sources include the manuscript notes and historical papers collected by Hanmer in his lifetime, which, in the words of an early cataloguer "show that Dr Hanmer was on the edge of very interesting enquiries" (Mahaffy 1912: lxxxiii). This collection is likely to be the only extant source for the *Chronicle*; yet, its history, significance and relation to the text in print remain unaccounted for. This paper will explore the relationship between the manuscript notes and the posthumous edition in print towards an understanding of the genesis and editorial vicissitudes of this important text.

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Leicester's Men and the lost *Telomo* of 1583

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This paper proposes a new identification for the lost play *Telomo*, performed at court by Leicester's Men in 1583. Challenging previous hypotheses that the play might have been either about a character named Ptolemy or about one of the main character's friends from the Spanish romance *Palmerin D'Oliva*, this article suggests that the play may have dramatized either episodes involving Ajax Telamonius or his father or, as it appears rather more likely, the episode of "The vnkindly loue of Telamon to Castibula his frends wife" from Brian Melbancke's euphuistic romance *Philotimus. The Warre betwixt Nature and Fortune* (1583).

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The English Machiavelli raises his head again

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"All Estates and signiories wich haue had and doe beare rule ouer men, haue either byn and are Comon weales or Monarchies": thus begins Sion MS L40.2/E24, a small octavo preserved in Lambeth Palace Library, London, and recently rediscovered. It is written in a fairly clear *anglicana*, and offers a complete translation of Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince*. It is a welcome addition to the already known English manuscript translations preceding Edward Dacres' version (printed in 1640), and it has never been examined or discussed before. This paper will consider modalities of editing this early modern translation, against the background of recent editorial work such as the *MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations Series*, and above all of preserving for the modern reader the paratextual material that is a significant feature of the manuscript.

PANEL

"A culture of spectacular conflagration": Illegitimate theatre, culture and society, 1770-1840

The publication of Jane Moody's ground-breaking *Illegitimate Theatre in London 1770-1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) opened a new field for research on Romantic drama. Moody's book provided an innovative, interdisciplinary methodological framework which expanded significantly the textual, legal, and social basis for the study of Romantic theatre and its dramaturgy, offering a highly original focus on the relationship between canonical and "illegitimate" forms of cultural production. This panel intends to investigate the impact of such relationship on some crucial aspects of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century social and cultural life. The exploration of the relationship between authors, audiences, performers, critics, and cultural institutions allows a new understanding of British theatre as an important site for the negotiation of the tensions between transgression and convention; social norms and their contravention; canonical literary genres and popular culture. Topics discussed in the panel include the connection between the discourse of dramatic illegitimacy and radical politics; the tensions between social classes as reflected in different forms of performance and theatricals; the transgression of established boundaries between literary genres; the appropriation of canonical literary figures such as Shakespeare; the representation of illegitimate and popular performance in the visual arts.

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Theatre is "a pleasure for most social kind": Illegitimate performances as personal enjoyment and social improvement in Leigh Hunt's reviews

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Leigh Hunt was a frequent playgoer and estimated critic of the London stage. Although he deplored the "degradation of the modern theatre" (The Examiner, 1811), he portrayed theatrical amusement as a means to bring together different classes (K. Pratt, 2001). In my talk I will explore Hunt's critical comments on his experience as a spectator and a journalist, especially for what concerns performances belonging to illegitimate genres. As a site of "political, moral and indeed generic transgression" (J. Moody, 2000), illegitimate theatre appealed to Hunt for its political radicalism and cultural subversion. He believed that minor houses and illegitimate genres of extraordinary dynamic vitality such as pantomime, *burletta* or extravaganza were endowed with a political connotation which influenced all social classes. Starting from the analysis of those genres and the dramaturgy of illegitimate theatre, I will investigate Hunt's compelling response to the discourse of dramatic illegitimacy.

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"Have you seen the industrious fleas?" Visualizing the illegitimate

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John Orlando Parry's painting known as *A London Street Scene or The Poster Man* (1835) offers an extraordinary metonymic image of London's teeming entertainment industry, as condensed in the palimpsest-like quality of the countless playbills advertising theatrical spectacles, concerts, pantomimes, performances of all sorts. At the same time, the slice of underworld life it pictures, including the dexterous urchin pickpocket, conveys an immediate Dickensian appeal. The record of the spectacles on offer, iconized in the playbills struggling to make their way in the competitive space of the backyard wall – from Shakespeare to the "industrious fleas", to Paganini in his "solo concert"; from the "EXTRAORDINARY HIT OF *The Last Days of Pompeii*" to Thomas D. Rice's grim Jim Crow show – makes *A London Street Scene* a compelling visual agenda and a viable snapshot archive for considering the impact of this late season of the illegitimate within London's theatrical culture.

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The novel as illegitimate stage: Private theatricals at *Mansfield Park*

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The phenomenon of amateur theatricals became highly popular in Britain during the second half of the eighteenth century. As they were not open to the general public and therefore exempt from any form of licensing and censorship, private theatricals constitute undoubtedly one of the most interesting, and still insufficiently investigated, forms of "illegitimate" theatre during the Georgian period. Starting from a general assessment of the contribution given by this form of representation to the history of eighteenth-century theatre, this paper will discuss in particular the most famous example of fictional private theatricals: the staging of *Lovers' Vows* in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814). The episode will be reconsidered as a *mise en abyme* not only of Austen's attitude towards the theatre, but also of her understanding of the relationship between comedy and the novel as discursive modes. This approach will shed new light on Austen's own intertextual practices: the subtle dialectics she establishes with Elizabeth Inchbald by questioning and revising the thematic and formal features of different genres will allow a fresh understanding of the contrast between the "two heroines" of *Mansfield Park* and their relationship to male desire and authority.

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Romantic Shakespeare: Intersections in theatre, readership and science

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Romantic criticism portrayed Shakespeare as a rather ambivalent figure: as a symbol of the Establishment, Shakespeare was often appropriated and used with political aims by very heterogeneous groups, and regarded either as an emblem of aristocratic and regal values – the "philosophical aristocrat" who despised mobs and the populace, in Coleridge's words – or as a symbol of egalitarian and liberal ideals – a "liberal casuist", in one of Hazlitt's often variable characterizations of the dramatist. The partial and mostly ostensible attempt at "ex-nominating" Shakespeare from illegitimate theatres was not sufficient to make him a permanent symbol of conservative ideals, Englishness or the Establishment.

Processes of ideological appropriation of the national Bard also encompassed scientific discourse, with scientists such as geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875) using Shakespearean references and quotations to reinforce the appeal of their politically-oriented view of geology to conservative readers. Shakespeare came to be used as a determinant in the dialectics between art and science. While scientists such as Humphry Davy remarked that the influence of Shakespeare's works "is limited by the pleasure that they give" – since the object of poetry "is more to amuse than to instruct; the object of science more to instruct than amuse" – others began to look to dramatic poetry, especially Shakespeare's, as an indispensable source of instruction and scientific improvement, even providing excellent case-studies for their research. This paper will discuss how ideological appropriations of Shakespeare also informed the way in which a number of scientists of the day, such as Charles Lyell (1797-1875), Thomas Beddoes (1760–1808), his son Thomas Lovell (1803-1849), and John Conolly (1794-1866), used Shakespeare as a reconciling agency allowing scientific, anthropic and artistic interests to become part of a combined, interdependent vision.

PANEL

Writing for performance: New approaches to textual practice in twenty-first-century theatre-making

It has by now become commonplace to locate the complexity of drama as a genre in the dual or hybrid nature of stage plays, at once verbal, written texts and performances involving a plurality of non-verbal languages. Yet, while the fundamental interconnectedness of text and performance is generally acknowledged as the basic feature of drama, the core ingredient that sets playwriting apart from other forms of literary creativity, the nature of this relationship has historically been a matter of contention, and still today continues to be a central theoretical concern within the adjacent – and partially overlapping – fields of literary studies, theatre studies and performance studies, not least because it plays a pivotal role in their respective constructions of authorship and authority.

The increasing fluidity of boundaries between art forms and the desire of artists to create events rather than plays, thus blurring the distinctions between "dramatic", text-driven or "literary" theatre on the one hand, and devised theatre or performance art on the other, have led scholars and critics to advocate an integrated approach to theatre-making practices (see Worthen 1995, Lehmann 2006, Fischer-Lichte 2008, Radosavljević 2013). A growing body of evidence on the contemporary scene points indeed to the purposeful reconfiguration of the relationship between text and performance – conceived as transformational, rather than merely transpositional, and as a space for the audience's co-authorship and co-authority – as a prime motor of theatrical innovation in the twenty-first-century. While these textual practices disrupt the traditional notion of theatre as a conduit for text, and of staging a simple, one-way transfer of textual content into a different medium, the mutually transformative quality of the interplay between writing and enactment is perhaps at its most evident when intersemiotic translation occurs in conjunction with interlingual transfer. In this respect, the performative (re)creation of texts that travel across different linguistic and cultural systems add new and different perspectives to our notion of what constitutes "writing for performance" (Marinetti 2013).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the oppositional, hierarchical categories through which the text/performance nexus has tended to be described have "less to do with the relationship between writing and enactment than with power" (Worthen 1997: 12) and with specific ways of authorizing cultural production. Consequently, as they engage with the complexity of theatrical language, conceiving new forms of expression by fusing extant modes of representation, theatre-makers' concerns should be seen as not only aesthetic but increasingly social and even political in character (Rancière 2009).

This panel will focus on dramaturgical processes and practices which hinge on a creative engagement with relationship between text and performance, marking a transition from play-writing to theatre-making (Radosavljević 2013), diffusing previously perceived hierarchies, and opening up new spaces of creativity. Working within their respective areas of expertise, but moving from a common theoretical framework, panellists will rely on paradigmatic case studies in order to reach some common conclusions about the developments delineated above and outline their importance for a fuller understanding of literary complexity.

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Aesthetic and political transplanting in Tim Crouch's *An Oak Tree*

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Since the Eighties British playwrights have paid increasing attention to existing collections and museum spaces, and to questions of curatorship, attribution and art market, in order to address issues of authenticity, identity and spectacularization. Through the museum, playwrights question the status of art and its relationships both with the viewers and with the institution. An interchange – or "transplant", as Crouch defines it in his introduction to *England* – between theatrical space and museum or gallery space seems to have intensified over the last two decades. Intriguingly, if the stage imports museum and gallery motifs, the reverse is equally true as Tim Crouch has shown with his plays *England* (2007), conceived as a site-specific piece to be performed in an art gallery, and *An Oak Tree* (2005), inspired by British artist, Michael Craig-Martin's work by the same title (1973) and performed in the East Room at the Tate Modern. On both occasions Crouch seems to share the increasing tendency to use traditional museum or gallery spaces as a space for artistic activities and for interactions between artists/performers and collections/exhibitions – a site of artistic interventions where viewers are brought to "experience the work of art" (Serota 1996).

In my paper I will be investigating the way the playwright questions what he calls "the essential element" of theatre, starting from Craig-Martin's conceptual work of art and establishing a connection between performance space and gallery space. On the one hand, *An Oak Tree* unmasks the "de-materialised contract of belief that underpins all theatre" (Crouch); on the other, it puts on stage the disconnection between the performance and the indeterminate components that the realization of such a performance necessitates – a disconnection that is at the core of the artist's relationship with the audience.

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Creativity through texts and performances: Steven Berkoff's *The Secret Love Life of Ophelia* in Italy

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Steven Berkoff's *The Secret Love Life of Ophelia* was first presented to an Italian audience in 2012, about ten years after the play's debut in the UK. Since then, the text has been given two different productions, both of which have used and transformed the same Italian translation of the play in two completely different, but equally visceral and at times ironic, performances. In these two productions, Berkoff's spin-off of the Shakespearian classic has actually been treated as the first creative step towards a transformation of text, style, language and performance, all of which contribute to new visions in theatrical production and, relatedly, induce different modes of reception on the part of audiences.

The interconnection between what happens to texts when they are performed on stage and audience response becomes even more interesting as a ground for analysis when a play moves from a specific linguistic and cultural context to a new one (see Upton 2000, Krebs 2013 and Bigliazzi 2014). As underlined by Marinetti, "the social dimension of translation and the performative nature of culture are brought to the fore as productive new ways of studying translation in the theatre as a performative and social as well as a linguistic practice" (2013).

In this paper I will analyse the two Italian productions of *The Secret Love Life of Ophelia*, the first staged by Teatro Due Parma (2012) and the second staged by Teatro Piemonte Europa (2015). Both productions used my translation of Berkoff's play and my aim will be to understand how directors and actors have been experimenting with specific ways of staging the text, thus inspiring a specific relationship between text, performers and audience, essential for the reception of the play in the new Italian context.

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Inside the drama lab: Indeterminacy as practice in Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information*

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First performed in 2012 at the Royal Court Theatre in London, Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* is a prime example of an emerging brand of theatre work which has co-creativity in its structure and consciously depends on the interplay between text and performance to produce meaning on stage. With this recent piece, the revered veteran and relentless innovator of British new writing has penned not so much a play to be concretized in performance as a repertory of textual material awaiting the interpretation of an unusually free director – a creative leeway that was brilliantly exploited by James MacDonald, her regular director, in his staging at the Court. While Churchill's concern with the disparate facets of performance and its relationship to dramatic writing has been constant throughout her career, the dramaturgy of *Love and Information* breaks into new territory with its unprecedented reliance on the non-verbal supplements provided by the bodily work of actors, as well as by the production's visuals and soundscape, to bestow significance upon the dramatist's words. The

writer's sharing of authorial prerogatives, moreover, also extends to the domain of text, requiring the production to make choices that will significantly affect the play's narrative and overall structure.

In this paper I will offer a reading of *Love and Information* as a theatre laboratory, a thoroughgoing investigation of, at once, the potential of indeterminate performance and the possibility of embedding this potential in a drama script. I will also look at the implications of Churchill's tabula rasa aesthetics for the audience's role, arguing that by spotlighting the complexity of the theatre event, *Love and Information* ultimately constructs us as active co-participants in the production of meaning, enabling us to engage critically with our normalized practice of watching a play and processing theatrical information.

PANEL

Collisions and resurgences. The eighteenth century in Modernist and early twentieth-century literature

As Francis Haskell explains in his seminal *Rediscoveries in Art*, variation in taste, however disquieting, is quite common: it attests to the discontinuities in the lives of canons and may trigger ruthless and unexpected changes in aesthetic and literary values. In the light of such capriciousness, this panel will explore the revival and reappraisal of eighteenth-century artistic modes and characters as they start, surreptitiously at first, to colonize the literary imagination at the turn of the century, eventually affecting in more than one way the modern modes of writing. The eighteenth century trickles through British artistic consciousness through Walter Pater and Henry James, who – in the steps of the Goncourt brothers in France – re-appropriate the rococo taste and disseminate it around them. On the more philosophical side of things, the Green and Grose's edition of David Hume's philosophical works (1875) triggers a renewed (and sometimes new) attention for some defining features of the *Treatise*, such as uncertainty and doubt; curiosity is also awakened by Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876). Rather suddenly, lost or forgotten languages are made available to younger writers ready to use the eighteenth century as an antidote to the pervading presences of Victorian aesthetics. Thus, James Joyce engages crucially in a conversation with the new-born novel of Defoe and of course Laurence Sterne, while Woolf's attention spans from Alexander Pope and Augustan aesthetics to Jane Austen. Less obviously, writers such as Ford Madox Ford and Katherine Mansfield are also keen to chart the "enlightened" century which works contemporaneously as foil, mirror and interlocutor. Which goes without mentioning the critical work of Roger Fry and Edward Garnett, both passionately dedicated to eighteenth-century arts. The panel will therefore address the following question: Which eighteenth-century for the early twentieth? Why is it revived with a vengeance? How does its presence affect the aesthetic and textual dimension of Modernism?

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Intersecting narratives: Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* and eighteenth-century culture

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This paper wishes to directly engage with the revival and the at times problematic centrality of eighteen-century cultural, philosophical, and literary discourses in Ford's acclaimed war-tetralogy, *Parade's End* (1924-1928). Investigating how eighteenth-century discourses serve, as it were, as counter-narratives in Ford's novel, I intend to illuminate the shaping effect they had on his aesthetic quest and modernist agenda in more than one way. Not only does the eighteenth-century offer him an opportunity to further explore, review, and find possible

solutions to modern wartime experiences and problems, but also to re-think narrative modes and to propel forward aesthetic renewal.

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Woolf at the Scriblerus Club; or, Orlando meets the Augustans

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Travelling through centuries and genders, Virginia Woolf's Orlando inevitably finds himself/herself in eighteenth-century London and becomes acquainted with fictional and prominent historical figures such as Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift. My aim is to explore the thematic and stylistic presences of eighteenth-century cultural life within *Orlando* and to address the following questions: How do the literary features of the Augustan age resurface in Woolf's writing? What is the role of historical figures and their interaction with fictional characters in Woolf's biography? Finally, how does Woolf's engagement with this particular past articulate her modern point of view?

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Writing with David Hume: What do the Modernists do with impressions, sensations and perceptions?

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The paper charts the modes and ways of Hume's presence in the literary consciousness of the early twentieth century. Starting of course with Virginia Woolf, who enrols the philosopher in various novels (*Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse, The Waves* among others), but also interrogating Joyce's *Ulysses* and in particular the issue of perception as it is articulated by Berkeley (notoriously, Hume's foundation on the issue). Trading however on lesser known grounds, the paper argues that the critical idiom used by many modernists (Ford Madox Ford, Katherine Mansfield) and the ingrained structural "vacillation" of their narratives owes a lot to Hume's theory of impressions and to his scepticism.

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Moll & Co.: *Moll Flanders* among the Modernists

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By illuminating textual allusions as well as critical nodes in the works of three modernist writers (Forster, Joyce, Woolf), this paper will deal with the fortune and transformations of *Moll Flanders* in the early twentieth century. Together with Sterne, Defoe undoubtedly represents a landmark for Modernist novelists, providing a kind of "unconventional convention" with which they entertained a complex and fertile relationship. In particular, the paper will focus on the relationship between narrator, character and reader, seeing how, in Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, in Woolf's 1919 "Defoe" essay and in *Orlando*, and in Joyce's Molly's monologue, the character of Moll Flanders is constantly questioned in order to redraw the boundaries of a relationship, which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had become cantankerous.

PANEL

Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations in twentieth-century British drama

Shakespeare has always been an iconic author for British dramatists; whether worshipped with unquestionable reverence, abused or attacked by dissenters, he has always been centre stage. There is a long tradition of adaptation, in fact not only in British culture, which tries to re-appropriate Shakespeare and rewrite his plays in order to suit a certain intent or a given policy. In the last two decades, there has been an ever growing interest in the analysis of adaptations of Shakespeare's works, mostly in film or stage versions, but his haunting presence in twentieth-century British drama has not been fully acknowledged yet.
The aim of this panel is to investigate some plays that show new possibilities through which Shakespeare's works can be adapted, as well as revealing a new perspective from which to look back at his dramatic and theatrical world.

Since the late 1960s playwriting has been engaged in a productive dialogue with Elizabethan or Jacobean drama. Gradually during this period, the interest has shifted from a kind of "agon" with the Bard towards the exploration of the metamorphoses of Shakespeare's works on stage or across the media. These "variations on Shakespeare" must be intended as appropriations rather than traditional/conventional adaptations, thus focusing on the collaboration, rather than antagonism, with the dramatic tradition. The panel, therefore, aims at showing how Shakespeare's drama, especially from the 1970s until today, has been regarded as an organism in developing progress, rather than as a fixed object. This perspective, emerging from a survey of Shakespearean adaptations and/or appropriations, opens to alternative critical practices in adaptation studies that stress the relevance of intertextuality as a dialectical mode of access to the Shakespearean text.

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Nineties *Lear*: Neo-Jacobean echoes in Martin Crimp's and Sarah Kane's "in-yer-face" drama

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King Lear has inspired a wide array of contemporary British appropriations, from Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971) to Howard Barker's *Seven Lears* (1989). This paper explores the influence of the tragedy defined by Kott as "above all others the Shakespearean play of our time" on Martin Crimp's *The Treatment* (1993), a city drama set in New York whose scene of eye-gouging anticipated the vast range of atrocities staged in Sarah Kane's notorious *Blasted* (1995). Through a web of Shakespearean echoes, Crimp rewrites the metaphor of blindness and (in)sight and, along with the Bard (and Beckett), becomes a literary father for the *enfant terrible* of British theatre.

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Shakespearean metamorphoses in contemporary Scottish theatre: Women playwrights' revisionist dramas

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From the 1970s onwards, Scottish theatre has seen the emergence of women dramatists sharing the intention to re-vision and rewrite official history or the literary Canon in order to recover subaltern or marginalised voices, thus challenging preconceived assumptions about gender, class and race. Joan Ure's, Liz Lochhead's and Sharman MacDonald's rewritings of Shakespeare are part of this trend. However, Ure's *Something in It for Cordelia* and *Something in It for Ophelia*, Lochhead's *The Magic Island* and MacDonald's *After Juliet*, rather than critiquing the Bard (*King Lear, Hamlet, The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* respectively), deconstruct and re-adapt his works for a contemporary audience in order to highlight their infinite hermeneutic potential.

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What you will: Ethics, agency and advocacy in contemporary meta-Shakespearean appropriations of *Twelfth Night*

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Through an exploration of meta-theatrical and meta-Shakespearean appropriations of *Twelfth Night* the present paper will investigate the relationship between looking, doing and being complicit during a performance (audience agency), the ethics of watching spectacles of

suffering and issues of political advocacy and of religious orthodoxy. The plays I will take into consideration are Tim Crouch's *I, Malvolio* (2010) and Sulayam Al Bassam's *The Speaker's Progress* (2011).

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Post-holocaust Shylocks: Rewritings and appropriations of *The Merchant of Venice*

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In its stage history, *The Merchant of Venice* has been accused of anti-Semitism, and most of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century adaptations, rewritings, and appropriations deal with the elimination of this anti-Semitism. The rewritings rise often in contraposition (ideological, critical, historical) to *The Merchant*, as its revisitation, or merely as a free creation in which the play is treated more as a pretext than a pre-text. The paper will explore both parodistic, comical, and tragical plays such as Gurney's *Overtime* (1996), Leiren-Young's *Shylock* (1996), Schartz's *Shylock and Hid Daugther* (1947), Scott's *Shylock's Treausure* (1978), Pascal's *Shylock's Play* (2009), Egervari's *The Merchant of Venice in Auschwitz*, *The Maori Merchant of Venice*, which challenge the play as prequels, sequels, rewritings and appropriations.