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Each tale chases another
Metaphorical representations, non-linearity and openness of narrative structure in Italian Opera from post-WWII to *It makes no difference*

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at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
for Ph.D. in Creative Practice, Music

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Abstract

This work addresses the demands of framing a theoretical problem and practice-based research and it therefore comprises two parts: a thesis and a composition. The thesis discusses the narrative structure of post-WWII Italian avant-garde opera in conceptual terms and demonstrates how it develops on three principal features: the metaphorical representation of socio-political conditions, the non-linearity of the dramaturgy, and openness to a plurality of interpretations. My composition *It makes no difference* contributes both as a new musico-theatrical work and an outcome of the discussion presented in the thesis.

The main text is composed of three main chapters, each respectively dedicated to the features of socio-political representation, non-linearity and openness. Each chapter is in turn divided into two sub-chapters: the first presents the contextualisation and analysis of post-WWII Italian experimental operas, the second explores *It makes no difference* in relation to both these operas and the above three features.

The discussion examines those works that have most significantly experimented with socio-political representations, non-linearity and openness. These include Luigi Nono’s *Intolleranza 1960* (1961), Sylvano Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* (1966) and Luciano Berio’s *Opera* (1977). At the same time, it omits both those operas relying on traditional operatic principles and those others that, although being experimental, do not focus on the three features this thesis puts forward. This study considers post-WWII Italian avant-garde opera in cross-disciplinary terms and highlights the necessity of discussing it in relation to disciplines other than those proper to the genre of opera, including prose-theatre, literature, politics and philosophy.

The composition, on the other hand, provides a synthesis of the above three features: *It makes no difference* develops a multi-narrative structure whilst providing a representation of contemporary Italian socio-political life and epitomising the concept of openness. At the same time, it integrates theatrical and literary elements and combines traditional notation and graphic scores.
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©Simone Spagnolo
Mrs. Martin: What is the moral?
Fire Chief: That's for you to find out.

Mme. Martin: Quelle est la morale?
Le Pompier: C'est à vous de la trouver.

Eugene Ionesco, from La cantatrice Chauve
Introduction

This work discusses the principal features on which the narrative structure of post-WWII Italian avant-garde opera is based. It comprises two parts as it addresses the twofold demands of framing a theoretical problem and practice-based research. My composition *It makes no difference* constitutes an initial contribution, both as a musico-theatrical work and an outcome of the discussion presented in this thesis. In the main text, I suggest a consideration of post-WWII Italian opera in thematic terms, whilst including my composition in the discussion. In pursuit of comprehensive research, I will also include a number of non-Italian writers and works that have been influential on post-WWII avant-garde Italian opera.

I have observed that composers such as Luigi Nono, Luciano Berio and Sylvano Bussotti have predominantly cultivated their interests in a number of narrative elements that can be summarised as follows: the metaphorical representation of socio-political conditions, the non-linearity of the dramaturgy, and openness to a plurality of interpretations. These three features constitute the innovations and experimentations in Italian opera since 1945, leading this genre to unique creative trends. Following this line of argument, the analysis of *It makes no difference* highlights some innovative aspects and demonstrates how this work develops these three features. *It makes no difference* is an opera based on multi-narrativic principles that aims to represent metaphorically today’s Italian socio-political conditions. At the same time, it also represents an evolution of post-WWII Italian operatic experiments. Moreover, its structure draws from the concept of *opera aperta* (open work), which maintains that a ‘work of art [constitutes] an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations’.¹

Current academic literature on metaphorical representations, non-linearity and openness in post-WWII Italian Opera is not only modest, but also fragmented in discussions of either individual authors or works. At present, the sole text about contemporary Italian opera (Raymond Fearn’s *Italian opera since 1945*), highlights ‘the absence, up to the present moment, of any study of the musico-theatrical developments which have taken place during the period in question’ (from 1945 onward),² an absence that Fearn partly addresses. Although Fearn’s work is a valuable source of scholarship, the author presents Italian post-WWII opera *in toto*, providing a chronological

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overview that places together both experimental works (as for example operas by Luciano Berio and Sylvano Bussotti), and those based upon traditional operatic principles (such as the operas of Nino Rota, Luciano Chailly and Camillo Togni). Secondary literature and related research material is found in texts such as Luciano Berio’s *Un ricordo al futuro* (Remembering the Future, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 2006) and Alessandra Lucioli’s *Sylvano Bussotti* (1988), among others. Still, these works are about individual composers, therefore they do not specifically discuss Italian opera in general and they do not contextualise the composers’ creative trends within their broader historical and artistic context. Consequently, my work here differs from the aforementioned, in that my attention is directed towards the consideration of post-WWII Italian opera in conceptual, rather than chronological terms.

The works I choose to include in this discussion are exclusively drawn from those that have most significantly experimented with metaphorical representations, non-linearity and openness. These include Luigi Nono’s *Intolleranza 1960* (1961), Sylvano Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* (1966) and Luciano Berio’s *Opera* (1977). At the same time, I leave outside the discussion those works that have not manifested an interest in the three features this thesis puts forward. Such works include those operas relying on the traditional operatic principles of linearity and entertainment, as for example Nino Rota’s *Il cappello di paglia di Firenze* (1955), Luciano Chailly’s *Ferrovia soprelevata* (1955) and Lorenzo Ferrero’s *Mare nostro* (1985). In addition, this thesis does not take into account those other works that, although being experimental, do not focus on the three features this thesis discusses. Examples of these works are Salvatore Sciarrino’s *Perseo e Andromeda* (1991) and *Luci mie traditrici* (1998), operas that base their experimentations on musical and sonorous parameters.

Structurally, this thesis is composed of three main chapters, each respectively dedicated to the features of metaphorical representation, non-linearity and openness. Each chapter is in turn divided into two sub-chapters. The first is dedicated to the historical context and analysis of the aforementioned operas, the second explores *It makes no difference* in relation to these three features. However, although the overall discussion is confined to contemporary Italy, this work does not examine the issues of Italianness or nationalism in Italian post-WWII opera. It instead provides a line of argument that highlights a conceptual creative trend.

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3 The term ‘entertainment’ refers to those operas that do not intend to metaphorically represent socio-political conditions, but rather base their dramaturgical creativity on themes unanimously considered frivolous. Examples include works in the style of Rossini and more generally the genre of *opera buffa*.
A well rounded discussion of metaphorical representations, non-linearity and openness within opera necessitated extending my research into a number of fields and disciplines. These not only include the interdisciplinary topics proper to the genre of opera, such as music, theatre, performance and design, but also prose-theatre, literature, politics and philosophy. Such topics are indeed vital for discussing post-WWII Italian opera and *It makes no difference*. Thus, this thesis is the outcome of cross-disciplinary research in that it provides a discussion that touches on and merges a number of topics. Similarly, *It makes no difference* has to be considered as a multi-disciplinary work.
CHAPTER ONE: metaphorical representations of socio-political conditions

1.1 Opera as socio-political vehicle

Composer Luigi Dallapiccola, writing in the 1970’s, described with the following words his feelings when conceiving his second opera Il Prigioniero (The Prisoner, 1950): ¹

More compelling than ever I saw the necessity of writing an opera that could be at once moving and contemporary despite its historical setting, an opera that would depict the tragedy of our time - the tragedy of the persecution felt and suffered by the millions and tens of millions. ²

Il Prigioniero was conceived in the 1940s, during the central and final years of the Second World War, a period during which Dallapiccola experienced the atrocities of the war and racial-political persecution. It should not be too hard to realise the composer’s necessity to denounce, through his art, the human condition of that time. However what is interesting here is that Dallapiccola intended to externalise such a necessity through operatic means, and that, at the same time, he wished to write a ‘contemporary’ opera ‘despite its historical setting’.³ He alluded to the idea of writing an opera depicting events from another era that could evoke similarities with his own time: an opera that could metaphorically represent his present.

This feature certainly does not only belong to Il Prigioniero, but, as we will see, it is a recurring element of the genre of opera. This first chapter will discuss opera as a platform for composers to present social conditions (both human condition and political ideology) and as metaphorical representations of their contemporary socio-political conditions. I shall begin with a brief historical outline, and subsequently focus on post-WWII Italian opera.

¹ Il Prigioniero is an opera in a prologue and one act, based on the short story La Torture par l’Espérance (Torture by Hope) by French writer Auguste Villiers de l’Isle-Adam and on La Légende d’Ulenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak (The Legend of Thyl Ulenspiegel and Lamme Goedzak) by Belgian novelist Charles de Coster.


³ Ibid., 51-52
1.1.1 From L’incoronazione di Poppea to Satyricon

Opera, throughout its historical evolution and diversity of themes, has always functioned as a medium for composers to express their thoughts and concerns regarding the socio-political conditions within which they were operating. Operatic social-political applications have been manifold: they for example celebrated historical and cultural origins, or protested against oppressive socio-political conditions, or represented the masses’ hearts and minds united by collective feelings. There are endless examples of this aspect of the genre of opera: Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (1642) denounces the seventeenth-century autocratic papal ruling of Rome which was perceived by republican Venetians as a direct threat to their liberties; John Gay and Johann Christoph Pepusch’s ballad opera *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728) satirised politics, poverty, injustice and opera itself, whilst focusing on the theme of corruption within society; Verdi’s *Nabucco* (1842) and its renowned chorus *Va, pensiero, sull’ali dorate* (Fly, thought, on wings of gold, also known as Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves) represented, and still does, the anthem for Italian patriots who were seeking to unify their country in the years up to 1861; almost all of Wagner’s operas can be said to be celebrating the grandiosity of German culture and traditions through the staging of Germanic mythological characters; Bizet’s *Carmen* (1875) depicted and denounced proletarian life, immorality and lawlessness; Shostakovich’s satirical opera *The Nose* (1928) used Gogol’s surreal story to represent the ineptitude and absurdity of Russian bureaucracy; Hindemith’s *Neues von Tage* (News of the day, 1929) and Weill’s *Die Bürgschaft* (The Bourgeoisie, 1932) portrayed the condition of contemporary life through the means of social satire; Dallapiccola’s *Il Prigioniero* (1949) depicted the horror of human persecution as a result of the Fascist and Nazi regimes; Manzoni’s *La Sentenza* (1960) and Nono’s *Intolleranza 1960* (1961) raised the political issues of the Italian post-WWII *Resistenza*.

All these examples demonstrate how the genre of opera has been a platform for socio-political thoughts. However, composers (and librettists of course) rarely inserted explicit elements of actuality in their works.\(^4\) They instead made great use of historical analogies, mythological tropes and semiotic symbols in order to present and represent the issues they were concerned with. In short, they used metaphors to epitomise their socio-political ideas. The aforementioned operas are an example of this: Monteverdi represented the ancient story of Nerone and Poppea as a metaphor

\(^4\) The exceptions that this sentence alludes to include a number of works, principally American, composed within the second half of the twentieth-century as for example John Adams’s *Nixon in China* (1987) and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991) (discussed later in this essay), and Philip Glass’s *Satyagraha* (1979).
for contemporary political tensions; Verdi set the historical event of the plight and exile of the Jews in order to establish an analogy with the Italian *Risorgimento*; Wagner adopted characters and settings from mythology to celebrate his country; Manzoni brought on stage the story of a partisan in a Chinese village, at the time of the Japanese invasion, as a symbol of the Italian end-of-WWII *Resistenza*; and so on.

Metaphorical representation is certainly a common aspect in opera (and music theatre). Particularly in recent times, as this thesis will discuss, metaphor, as a figure of speech, is used extensively to great effect by composers - and arguably by artists in general. The origin of such typology of representation is to be searched for within duality and the dialectical relationship between reality and representation, that is to say between the external-real world we experience as human beings and its representation provided by artists through their works. As a result of such dialectics metaphor earns a special place in contraposition with other symbolic figures of speech. As scholar Edward Cone says ‘the richest novel or drama is the one whose metaphorical elements are integrally and indissolubly bound up with the manifest subject - as opposed to conventional allegory on the one hand, in which the two strands run parallel without cogent connection, and to pure narrative on the other hand, in which the symbolic dimension is completely lacking’.5 This line of argument reveals that the enjoyment of a work of art resides in the inseparable connection and tension between the symbolic elements and its manifest aspects of tangible reality.

Although such a metaphorico-representational system is true of the majority of operas, it has to be pointed out that from the modern period onward, particularly from the years between the two world wars, composers aimed to present their socio-political dramas through the insertion and dramatisation of elements belonging to their contemporary world. Such elements ranged from settings to characters, from environments to topics. For instance, in Goffredo Petrassi’s *Morte dell’aria* (Death of the air, 1950), an inventor, wishing to challenge the ability of the man to fly, leaps from the highest terrace of the Eiffel Tower - the most powerful icon of modernism at his time - surrounded by reporters and observers. Petrassi, in order to make a statement about the human wish to ‘discover the limits of the possible, however disastrous the result might be’,6 stages modern characters, instead of historical ones, through a metaphoric plot. A further example is Giacomo

6 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 38.
Manzoni’s *Atomtod* (1965).\(^7\) This opera portrays ‘events immediately before and after the atomic disaster and represents on stage the dehumanisation of individuals facing the catastrophe’.\(^8\) The realisation and fear that humankind was starting to live in a nuclear age was crucial during the first half of the 1960s, and *Atomtod* presented this issue not only through metaphors, but also by incorporating settings and characters directly related to that matter. Finally, John Adams’s *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991) should be mentioned, probably the most performed socio-political opera of our times. Adams himself defined his opera a ‘dramatic meditation’ or ‘reflection’.\(^9\) This work’s plot narrates the hijacking of passenger liner Achille Lauro by the Palestine Liberation Front in 1985, and the resulting murder of Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish-American passenger. In this opera, through the usage of a real story of his time, Adams made strong political statements, almost without incorporating any historical metaphor.

The inclination to insert in the dramaturgy explicit facts or topics of current socio-political life has never been the ultimate concern of Italian composers, neither in the past nor after the Second World War. Their concern has always relied on the usage of historical metaphors and/or fictional parallelisms, avoiding any attempt at explicit linkage between the on-stage action and real socio-political life. It is as if Italian composers have always agreed with Cone’s idea of ‘the richest drama’,\(^10\) which, as mentioned above, believes in the indissolubility between the metaphorical element and the aspects of experienceable reality. An explicit symbolic dimension, for Italian composers, has always been felt as essential for the construction of dramatic representation. It could be argued that they have never been willing to bend their dramaturgical creativity in favour of practices narrating explicit real stories related to real socio-political conditions, as in John Adams’ works mentioned above.

Such a symbolic dimension arguably reaches its apex with Bruno Maderna’s *Satyricon* (1973). Although the composer wrote his opera hastily and under conditions of rapidly failing

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\(^7\) It is interesting to notice that the title *Atomtod* (Atomic Death) was given in German, as it explicitly references the nuclear annihilation and the Nazi holocaust.

\(^8\) Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 81.

\(^9\) For further reference see the following articles:

health,\textsuperscript{11} his work has a strong metaphorical intent and a lucid wish to depict the socio-political condition of his time. The metaphorical intent is related to the choice of the text: \textit{Satyricon} is based on the Roman classic homonym by Petronius. This work is not only the first example of novelistic writing\textsuperscript{12} but also, and most importantly, a portrayal of the decadent Roman society of its time (first-century AD). Maderna’s choice to adopt this text shows a clear link with his wish to create a socio-political opera.\textsuperscript{13} As Raymond Fearn explains, \textit{Satyricon}’s principal intent is that of ‘containing at its heart a metaphor, a picture of later Roman decadence and depravity which represents, at the same time, a grotesque image of present-day society, with its money-grubbing materialism, capitalism, and corrupt self-serving’.\textsuperscript{14} Maderna himself underlined this point in an interview on Dutch Radio after \textit{Satyricon}’s première: \textsuperscript{15}

I chose the \textit{Satyricon} text some time ago. In it a society is portrayed which, in many ways, is neither better nor worse than ours. [ ] I believe it would be difficult to find an image as close to our own reality as that given by Petronius in his description of Roman decadence, [ ] my aim is to make for the theatre a political act, and it was for this reason that I was drawn to this text.\textsuperscript{16}

1.1.2 Zeitoper and the representation of actuality

In order to focus our attention on post-WWII Italian opera, I shall now examine the dramaturgy of mid-twentieth-century socio-political operatic works. I shall begin by discussing a number of non-Italian works and creative trends that have been influential for Italian composers. In doing so I shall frame the musico-theatrical context from which Italian opera developed its main features.

\textsuperscript{11} Bruno Maderna died on the 13th of November 1973 in Darmstadt.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Satyricon} is a \textit{prosimetrum} novel of the Latin literature. The term \textit{prosimetrum} indicates a rare literary genre in which prose and verse alternate in a balanced manner.
\textsuperscript{13} It is interesting to note that such a metaphor of Roman decadence and Petronius’ work itself, has also been explored by Italian film director Federico Fellini in his cinematographic masterpiece \textit{Satyricon} (1969). This work, like Maderna’s opera, depicted the Italian socio-political condition through a historical parallelism. \textit{Satyricon} was also an acclaimed Italian satirical television show broadcast in 2001 and conducted by Daniele Luttazzi. It was characterised by a long initial monologue featuring satirical lines and jokes covering the whole political spectrum.
\textsuperscript{14} Fearn, \textit{Italian Opera since 1945}, 139.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Satyricon} was premiered in Scheveningen, Holland, during the 1973 Holland Festival.
As hinted above, the composers’ trend of inserting explicit elements of actuality within the framework of their operas began in the period of transition between the end of romanticism and modernity. Although composers reacted differently to such artistic evolution - reactions that depended on their cultural and musical background - it is possible to spot a precise stylistic genre that channeled composers’ wishes to talk about their contemporary times by using facts of actuality.\footnote{This genre is known as Zeitoper.}\footnote{The word Zeitoper translates literally from German as Time Opera, meaning therefore Opera of its Time (or better Opera of the Now). Zeitoper is a term that, in the 1920s and 30s, defined a kind of theatrical work inspired by the norms of the New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit). It was based on documentary techniques, used in newspapers and illustrated magazines (Zeitung or Zeitschrift), being applied to musical theatre and it was markedly anti-romantic and ironically irreverent with regards to the aesthetic idealism. The Zeitoper presented its subjects within contemporary daily urban life, among the symbols of the new bourgeois comfort, and the purpose of its dramas was social satire. In musical terms the Zeitoper was characterized by a sharp neoclassical and estranged language, with elements deriving from jazz, parade and dance music. Significant examples include Ernst Krenek’s Jonny spielt auf (1927), Paul Hindemith’s Hin und zurück (1927) and Neues von Tage (1929), and Kurt Weill’s Die Bürgschaft (1932).}

In general terms, the word Zeitoper refers to those works based upon the application of newspaper documentary techniques to the music-theatre, in the form of both opera and musical theatre. These works presented themes of actuality regarding current events and topicality. Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi call the Zeitoper works ‘“anti-opera” operas that traded on the political and social issues of the days’.\footnote{Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, The New Music Theatre: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.} In this way the so-called Zeitoper remodulated the metaphorical function of the dramaturgy and made innovations in the intrinsic narrativic process of music-theatre. Writer and theatre practitioner Bertold Brecht, who worked extensively on this genre with composer Kurt Weill, intended the Zeitoper as a didactic opportunity capable of generating socio-political awareness. It was Brecht, in fact, who coined the term Lehrstück, an essential theatrical principle exploring the possibilities of learning through acting, playing roles, presenting postures and attitudes. With the Zeitoper, actuality became the strongest means of socio-political representation. As a result the figure of speech of metaphor resettled from a historical axis to a present reality.

At the same time, the Zeitoper is the result of the radical development that was taking place in theatrical art forms at the time. Theatre was rapidly changing to a more realistic representation of
daily contemporary life, particularly bourgeois families and environments.\textsuperscript{21} This significantly affected the idea of drama and narrative. Authors such as Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco, among others, not only led a radical rethinking of the dramaturgical concepts within theatre and opera, but also stimulated composers towards new thematic and structural visions. In Italy - where composers working in the period after Puccini, particularly those operating from the 1940s onward, were strongly determined to regenerate the genre of opera - there had been attempts in the world of theatre to bring portrayals of real life on stage even a few decades earlier. For instance think of Luigi Pirandello’s works and his ‘Theatre of Absurd, which [Pirandello] had been pre-figured in many [of his] plays’.\textsuperscript{22} Other authors who worked in this direction include playwrights Edoardo de Filippo and Dario Fo, who delivered ‘theatrical innovation [...] with realistic portrayal of bourgeois family-life at its most frenetic’.\textsuperscript{23}

Giorgio Strehler’s production of Brecht’s \textit{Threepenny Opera} at Milan’s Piccolo Teatro in 1955 can be said to mark the beginning of a radical rethinking, at least in Italy, of the genre of opera.\textsuperscript{24} After this, Strehler undertook a process of dramaturgical elaboration both in Zeitoperistic terms and with regards to theatrical experimentation. From the mid-fifties in Italy there was virtually no avant-garde or experimental composer whose operas, and music theatre, was not affected by the dramaturgical transformations elaborated by the world of theatre.

In a few cases it is even possible to notice seemingly explicit literary allusions between theatre and opera. Sylvano Bussotti’s provocative work \textit{La Passion selon Sade} (1966) begins with an \textit{ouverture} that sees the presentation of the three characters: \textit{Justine-Juliette}, a female voice, the \textit{Figurina} (Figurine), described as either a male or female child or a doll, and the \textit{Comparsa} (Extra), a mime.\textsuperscript{25} Here \textit{Justine-Juliette} enters the performance space while drawn on by a chain held by the \textit{Figurina}. They are followed by the \textit{Comparsa} who holds a whip. An echo of the ‘appearance of

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The most significant theatre works that move in this direction were initially those by Bertolt Brecht written after 1920 and subsequently those by the proponents of the Theatre of the Absurd, who included Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov and Jean Genet. These authors' works addressed the social issues of their time and centred on the absurd meaning of life. Their work primarily focuses on a mistrust of language as a means to convey the human situation.

\item Fearn, \textit{Italian Opera since 1945}, 60.

\item Ibid., 59

\item It should be noted that some passages of \textit{Threepenny Opera}’s text are taken from John Gay’s original text of \textit{The Beggar’s Opera} (1728), on which Brecht’s work is based.

\item Information about the characters of Bussotti’s \textit{La Passion selon Sade} can be found in the score, published by Ricordi Italia, or on Casa Ricordi’s website at this link: \url{http://www.ricordi.it/catalogue/products/la-passion-selon-sade/} (accessed on 4 April 2012)
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
Pozzo and Lucky in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot,* linked by a rope and also driven on by a whip’ is evident. In addition it is interesting to notice how Bussotti expressed such action not only through musical material and written instructions. As Example 1 shows, the composer encapsulated the whole theatricality within a graphic-score that presents the visual depiction of the action and its embodiment within the score.

**Example 1:** Page 6 from Sylvano Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* (1966)

Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. If we consider the term *Zeitoper* in its literal meaning of Opera-of-its-Time and disassociate it from the aesthetic movement it is connected to (that of anti-romantic and anti-idealistic New Objectivity), it is possible to state that all socio-political operas, despite their metaphorical application, can be defined as *Zeitoper*. This allows us to use the term *Zeitoper* to indicate those operas that document and

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26 The original French text of *Waiting for Godot* was composed between the 9th of October 1948 and 29th of January 1949; though the première took place on the 5th of January 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone, Paris.

27 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 103.

represent the Zeit (the Now), and consequently a particular time’s conditions and ideology. It is evident that the concept of Zeitoper is being slightly forced here - with a forced rupture between its literal meaning and aesthetic implication - in order to recycle a term having a precise meaning to describe an aspect common to all socio-political operatic works: that of being historical documents. Such a terminological twist demonstrates that there is no exact term describing the common quality of socio-political operas as historical documents. Hence, we could choose to adopt the word Zeitoper as a term able to describe the mutual aspect that all socio-political operas possess, that of being historically descriptive. Moreover the need to apply a terminological twist demonstrates that socio-political operas are indeed not unanimously considered historical docu-representations.

These considerations imply a considerable number of observations and possibly objections, but the central point should be clear: all socio-political operas are historical docu-representations and, as a term defining such properties has not yet been coined, we could suggest the possibility of adopting the term Zeitoper, independently from whether these operas present historically displaced metaphors or facts of actuality.

Although the genre of Zeitoper is not widely considered to be a crucial step within the evolution of opera, it has had a considerably strong, yet implicit impact on mid- and late-twentieth-century Italian composers and operatic development. Still, it has to be highlighted that the aspect of the Zeitoper that generated interest and influence does not lie in the musical language. It instead resides in the theatrical peculiarities and dramaturgical visions, elements that enhanced the roles of librettists and/or theatre authors. It is on these aspects that I shall now continue our discussion.

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29 Such as ‘what elements determine an opera to be representative of a time?’ or ‘can an operatic representation objectively represent a time?’, or ‘can the composer (and librettist) be considered as historians, to some extent?’.

30 A term defining opera as historical docu-representation has been coined. This is ‘docu-opera’, or ‘documentary opera’. An example of this is the aforementioned opera, Nixon in China by John Adams. This work is an artistico-dramatic ‘representation of a historical event, depicting heads of state and/or leaders of a nation, who were still alive when the opera was written and first performed. (Nixon was still alive when the opera was premiered).’ [Anthony J. Elia, ‘Nixon and Books at the Opera’, On Books and Biblios: a Blog About Books and Their Semiotic Functions in the World, <http://onbooksandbiblos.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/nixon-and-books-at-opera.html> (accessed 9 May 2013)]. Further discussion about other examples of ‘docu-operas’ (such as Mark-Anthony Turnage’s Anna Nicole and Jerry Springer: The Opera, Thomas Adès’s Powder Her Face and Jonathan Dove’s When She Died) can be found on: Andrew Clark ‘Access new arias’, Financial Times, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/3e553dbc-2fe3-11e0-a7e6-00144feabde0.html? ftcamp=rss#axzz1D8w2qWpB> (accessed 9 May 2013).

However the term ‘docu-opera’, as these examples demonstrate, solely refers to representations of historical events taking place when the opera was written. Their representation of actuality is fully explicit, and it does not rely on metaphorical elements that create historical analogies or dramatic tropes.
1.1.3 The influence of expressionist and epic theatre on Italian post-WWII opera

As suggested above, the theatre works of Bertold Brecht, Samuel Beckett, and other experimental theatre writers had a significant impact on Italian composers. This became a phenomenon which had its most visible consequences on post-WWII Italian stages and in opera houses. In Italy this historical period was characterised by patriotic, anti-war and anti-persecution feelings. As Raymond Fearn explains, ‘Brecht’s form of political theatre fitted easily with the Resistenza element in Italian post-war culture, that is to say with the social and political concerns which had been the dynamo of “Neo-Realist” literature, art and film, [...] and this combination proved enormously powerful in the forms of “political” opera which Manzoni and Nono developed’.

In ‘Alcune precisazioni su Intolleranza 1960’ Luigi Nono discussed the text he set to music in his opera and explained how he drew from a number of sources. These include an extract from Brecht’s An die Nachgeborenen (To Posterity, 1934-1938), which the composer used for Intolleranza 1960’s final chorus. Although Brecht was a vital author for Nono’s artistic vision, the composer maintained that the musico-theatrical experience Brecht and the Zeitoper composers proposed resided in the dramaturgical content, rather than the musical language. In his essay ‘Possibilità e necessità di un nuovo teatro musicale’ Nono articulates this idea as follows:

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32 ‘Alcune precisazioni su Intolleranza 1960’ (Some clarifications about Intolleranza 1960) is an essay by Luigi Nono written in 1962. It can be found in:

33 ‘Possibilità e necessità di un nuovo teatro musicale’ (Possibility and necessity for a new musical theatre) is an essay by Luigi Nono written in 1962. It can be found in:
Other musicians gave life to a particular experience, not so much important for technical-musical language matters, but instead for the modernity of ideas and fight for their theatre: Bertold Brecht was its fulcrum.

The aspect of Brecht’s epic theatre that principally influenced Nono was the ‘non-Aristotelian conception [...]’, experience, in its relationship with the audience, illuminated by a precise human and social commitment. Similarly, Luciano Berio recognised the extraordinary power of Brecht’s theatre in both dramaturgical and political terms. His interest was addressed to two peculiar aspects. The first is Brecht’s conception of on-stage action, an element able to evoke ideas and messages that contradict the final dramaturgical outcome. The second is Brecht’s ability to construct dramaturgical events capable of generating non-literal citations. These had the purpose of waking memories and references. Berio himself highlights these aspects as follows:

Text, music, costumes, settings, lights: all have a citational character, and together they produce a performance made up of a series of separate situations and tableaux, leading to an epic dilation of the whole, and creating in the spectator - in Brecht’s own words - a tension directed not toward the outcome but toward the development of the action, which, as we know, was meant to be politically instructive.

However Berio never centred his works on explicit socio-political ideas. He instead predominantly dedicated his theatrical attention to narrative manipulations (a point discussed in Chapter Two).

A further aspect of Brecht’s theatre that was crucial to Berio, Nono and other avant-garde Italian composers, was the relationship between the drama and the audience. Brecht maintained the idea that actors, and particularly choruses, should ‘appeal to the pragmatist in the spectator. They call on spectators to free themselves from the world represented on stage and from the

34 The ‘other musicians’ Nono refers to are Kurt Weill, Paul Hindemith, Hans Eisler and Paul Dessau.

35 Luigi Nono, ‘Possibilità e necessità di un nuovo teatro musicale’ in La Nostalgia del Futuro, Scritti scelti 1948-1986, ed. Angela Ida De Benedectis and Veniero Rizzardi, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2007), 118. Original quote in Italian: ‘Altri musicisti diedero vita ad un’esperienza particolare, importante non tanto per questioni di linguaggio tecnico-musicale, quanto per la modernità di idee e di lotta del loro teatro: Bertold Brecht ne era il fulcro.’ In this thesis there are numerous quotes from Italian sources which I have translated into English myself. In some cases, when such quotes are poetically written or linguistically complex, I cite the original Italian version too.


representation itself”. In discussing his Die Dreigroschenoper (The Threepenny Opera, 1928), Brecht wrote the following instruction for the actors:

As for the communication of this material, the spectator must not be made to adopt the empathetic approach. There must be a process of exchange between spectator and actor, with the latter at bottom addressing himself directly to the spectator despite all the strangeness and detachment.

Brecht’s theatre-of-ideas, through real-life representations, had the implicit task of stimulating audience awareness toward the evoked themes. It is possible to find an example of this praxis in Mother Courage and Her Children (1939), when in Scene Seven Mother Courage sings: ‘What else is war but competition, / a profit-building enterprise? / [...] / War isn’t nice, you hope to shirk it, / you hope you’ll find someplace to hide. / But if you’ve courage you can work it, / and put a tidy sum aside’. This passage’s statements and the use of the generic you create the double function of providing comments on the represented action and stimulating the audience’s opinions. Such novelty resulted in a synthesis that provided both a superimposition of expressive elements and the independence of the parameters composing the drama. Berio, again, highlights such aspects:

The kind of critical rationalism that Brecht’s epic theatre imposes on the stage and the stage/audience relationship, against the idea of illusionistic and consolatory theatre, implies the autonomy of the various level of expression and of all the elements that make up the representation.

As a result of these observations composers incorporated such scene-audience relationship in their works. This operation served the purpose of disassociating the dramaturgical images, texts, sounds, etc, from the authors’ voices. In so doing the audience experiences the authors’ points of view and also the voice of the audience itself, which is implicitly staged through the operatic medium. The ‘appeal to the pragmatist in the spectator’, thus, puts the audience actively within the drama.

40 Bertold Brecht, Mother Courage and Her Children, trans. Tony Kushner (London: Methuen Drama, 2009), 70.
41 Berio, Remembering the Future, 107.
42 Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, 90.
At the same time the spectators represent the masses, the population, and therefore the general opinion. It is this human category that composers, through their socio-political operas, aim to give voice to. Let us consider a couple of examples: Goffredo Petrassi’s *Morte dell’Aria* \(^{43}\) features a small off-stage female chorus, which almost constantly comments upon what happens on stage and describes with the words “Certo a sicura morte!” (Certain, for a certain death!) the danger to the Inventor of leaping in the air (Example 2).

Example 2: Bars 65-71 from Goffredo Petrassi’s *Morte dell’aria* (1950) (vocal score) \(^{44}\)

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\(^{43}\) *Morte dell’Aria* is a one act opera by Goffredo Petrassi. It is based on a libretto by Toti Scialoja and was first performed at Rome’s Teatro Eliseo in 1950.

\(^{44}\) Goffredo Petrassi, *Morte dell’Aria* (vocal score by Vieri Tosatti), (Milano: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1951).
In these passages the choir’s suggestive off-stage non-presence, acts as the voice of the masses’ conscience, hinting to the protagonist not to challenge human possibilities. Such a feature recalls Brecht’s ideological conception of the choruses, as these had ‘to reveal to the spectator the right manner of behaviour, to exhort him to form an opinion, to avail himself of his own experience, to control’. It is only through such a process that the audience indirectly becomes part of the dramaturgy. A further example is to be found in Manzoni’s La Sentenza (1960). This opera explores the representation of the individual and the mass through the musical analogies of solo and choral singing, epitomising the relationship between these two identities. As Fearn explains ‘the heart of the dramatic action in La Sentenza lay in the conception of individual and collective responsibilities, and the musical distinctions between the sections of solo-singing and of choral utterance were therefore crucial in the work’s overall effectiveness. Whether individual or collective, the characters in the opera inevitably become symbols of the human conscience’.

These two works, which stand as examples for many others, demonstrate how the audio-visual impact of the choir functions as a medium of significant metaphorical strength. The choir is able to give life to the voice of conscience, through which spectators recognise themselves and their common ideals.

However, it can be argued that the most evocative example of such choir-audience metaphorical representation is to be found in the aforementioned Coro Finale from Intolleranza 1960 (Example 3a and 3b). In this passage Nono presents the final moral of his opera by indeed employing the choir, which, through a Brechtian procedure, epitomises the silent voice of our human conscience - or at least what the composer believes human conscience should be.

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45 Brecht, Scritti Teatrali, 50-51.

46 Fearn, Italian Opera since 1945, 63.
Example 3a: *Coro Finale* (bars 577-579) from Luigi Nono’s *Intolleranza 1960* (1950) (full score)

Example 3a and 3b show how the whole sonorous effect of *Coro Finale* is assigned to the choir: it performs the whole finale without any orchestral or instrumental accompaniment until the very end of the opera. Furthermore, as hinted earlier, the lyrics of *Coro Finale* come from Brecht’s *An die Nachgeborenen.*\(^{48}\) They read as follows:

TO POSTERITY
You, who shall emerge from the flood
In which we are sinking,
Think -
When you speak of our weaknesses,
Also of the dark time
that brought them forth.

For we went, changing our country
more often than our shoes,
In the class war, despairing
When there was only injustice.

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\(^{48}\) It may be important to notice that Nono did not use the entire text of *An die Nachgeborenen*, but selected and set to music only a portion of Brecht’s poem. The original text comprises three parts, from which Nono used only about half of the third; more precisely the first strophe, the beginning of the second, and the last four lines. *An die Nachgeborenen* has also been set to music by Hanns Eisler (1937).
But you, when at last it comes to pass
That man can help his fellow man,
Do not judge us
Too harshly. 49

The allusions to the wickedness of war and class war, to injustice and to fraternal collaboration between men are unequivocal, and are common to both An die Nachgeborenen and Intolleranza 1960. In contrast to Morte dell’Aria, Coro Finale’s choir is not off-stage, but Nono equally provides it with the function of symbolising the voice of human conscience. The choir of Coro Finale is a Chor der Bauern (Chorus of Peasants), epitomising the voice of the population, a lower social stratum.50

Aside from the social themes of fraternity and intolerance for the war, Nono’s choice of using Brecht’s text also has some political implications: ‘from the 1930s Brecht’s theatrical, poetic and literary production adopted a character of implacable condemnation of Nazism’,51 and An die Nachgeborenen belongs to that exact poetic phase.52 Thus, the origins of this poem demonstrate the parallel link between Nono’s antifascist Resistenza feeling - a specifically Italian end-of-WWII

49 The text quoted here does not represent the entire poem An die Nachgeborenen. It is only the section of the text that Nono used for his Intolleranza 1960’s Coro Finale.

The original German text (below) and the English translation (above) are taken from the website Antiwar Songs http://www.antiwarsongs.org/canzone.php?lang=en&id=4683 (accessed on 16 April 2012). As indicated on Antiwar Songs website, the English translation is by H. R. Hays and it is quoted from the website Modernist Poetry Tribe, http://modernistpoetry.tribe.net/thread/e4bc64d6-5ba4-46a2-bfd9-486e758427be.

Original German text: An die Nachgeborenen:

Ihr, die ihr auftauchen werdet aus der Flut / In der wir untergegangen sind Gedenkt / Wenn ihr von unseren Schwächen sprechet / Auch der finsteren Zeit / Der ihr entronnen seid. / Gingen wir doch, öfter als die Schuhe die Länder wechselnd / Durch die Kriege der Klassen, verzweifelt / Wenn da nur Unrecht war. / Ihr aber, wenn es soweit sein wird / Daß der Mensch dem Menschen ein Helfer ist / Gedenkt unserer / Mit Nachsicht.

Italian translation: A coloro che verranno:

Voi che sarete emersi dai gorghi / dove fummo travolti / pensate / quando parlate delle nostre debolezze / anche ai tempi bui / cui voi siete scampati. / Andiamo noi, più spesso cambiando paese che scarpe, / attraverso le guerre di classe, disperati / quando solo ingiustizia c'era. / Ma voi, quando sarà venuta l'ora / che all'uomo un aiuto sia l'uomo, / pensate a noi / con indulgenza.

50 In addition, it is interesting to notice that Nono added an extra musico-theatrical effect to Coro Finale: on the score, at the beginning of the final scene, he wrote a note saying Projektion des ganzen Textes auf der Bühne (projection of all the texts on the stage). These projections, composed of socio-political statements, had the purpose of enhancing and supporting the fight against injustice.


52 Brecht expressed his feeling of condemnation against Nazism in two collections of poems. These are Lieder, Gedichte, Chöre (Songs, poetries, choruses) and Svendborger Gedichte. Lieder, Gedichte, Chöre, published in 1934, critically outlined Germany’s path towards national-socialism and showed the continuity between the military Prussian tradition and Nazism. Svendborger Gedichte, written between 1933 and 1938, and published in 1939, showed an even stronger condemnation of Hitlerian politics.
sentiment - and Brecht’s literary fight against the spread of Nazism - a German, and possibly universal feeling.
1.2 *It makes no difference* and socio-political representations

One of the principal features of *It makes no difference* is that it aims to provide a socio-political representation of the current Italian condition. The following paragraphs will both discuss this feature and highlight the most important elements functioning as socio-political metaphors. However, in order to discuss such tropes, it is necessary to present the socio-political context in which *It makes no difference* is conceived. The following description of present day Italy may seem very detailed but it is designed to touch on the principal factors that influenced the constructs in *It makes no difference*, as for example the current political instability, its scandals and sentiments of precariousness.

1.2.1 Today’s Italian socio-political condition

The socio-political condition of today’s Italy is characterised by a number of aspects related to both national and international matters. On an international level, Italy is undergoing the repercussions of a global economic crisis that, since 2008,\(^53\) has expanded to almost all western countries. On a national level, numerous events reveal that political parties suffer from a structural and ideological crisis, which has generated a status of ideological confusion within Italian society. At the same time this condition reflects a reality that is not necessarily only Italian, but that can be found in a number of European countries, particularly the Mediterranean ones. I am here referring to those slow countries of the so-called two-speed Europe,\(^54\) which have also been recently given the acronym PIGS (Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain) - an acronym that somehow shows the image of these countries in the rest of Europe’s eyes. The principal mutual features of these countries, for the last few years and the time being, can be summarised as follows: high levels of unemployment, low

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\(^53\) On the 15th of September 2008 the American financial services firm Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy (the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history). This event is considered to be the beginning of the so-called Global Financial Crisis, also known as the 2008 Financial Crisis. This crisis is considered by many economists to have been the ‘worst financial crisis since Great Depression’ [David Pendery, ‘Three Top Economists Agree 2009 Worst Financial Crisis Since Great Depression; Risks Increase if Right Steps are Not Taken’, *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/02/27/idUS193520+27-Feb-2009+BW20090227> (accessed 11 May 2013)].

\(^54\) The phrase ‘two-speed Europe’, also called variable-geometry Europe, encapsulates the idea that different parts of Europe should integrate at different levels depending on the political situation of each country. Further reference to this subject can be found in: The Economist, ‘Coalitions for the willing. “Multi-speed Europe” is making a comeback, along with the constitution’, <http://www.economist.com/node/8629365?story_id=8629365> (accessed 22 April 2013).
gross domestic product, high levels of corruption, high levels of social injustice, and most importantly high level of political instability. To get an idea about such unstable socio-political condition one could simply browse thorough the principal national newspapers, for example:

**Il corriere della sera:**
- The electoral results deliver a situation that places the country in a state of deep institutional instability, for this reason we can only be seriously worried.  

**La Repubblica:**
- Sad records suffocate Italy [...]. In the Washington Newseum’s freedom of press map Italy is the only western European country coloured in yellow as “partially free”. According to Transparency International, Italy is one of the three most corrupt countries in Europe (with Greece and Bulgaria), worse than Ghana, Namibia, Rwanda. According to Ocse, Italy is third in the world for fiscal evasion, preceded only by Turkey and Mexico. We treat these and other problems as if they do not have anything to do with the crisis, with the social instability, unemployment, impoverishment of middle classes, dramatic growth of inequality.

**Il Fatto Quotidiano:**
- A picture that cannot give anything else than an image of deep political instability, of a country searching for a turning point, but with a political class totally incapable of applying it.

The number of crucial episodes that have characterised contemporary Italian socio-political history are many, and they all, in different ways, constitute the background to *It makes no__

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55 In some cases the gross domestic product is negative, which indicates that a country is in recession. The case of Greece’s bankruptcy is an evident example.


57 Salvatore Settis, ‘Rimettere in circolo la speranza’, *La Repubblica Online*, [accessed 22 April 2013].

difference. In order to illustrate my opera’s socio-political framework, I will provide an overview of this history. However I do not intend to dispense a full and analytical list of events - it would be an adventurous and inappropriate task for this thesis. I will instead chronologically summarise the principal episodes of the past few years with a bullet point list, whilst providing a more detailed discussion in the note below:

• 2008: Global Financial Crisis
• May 2008-Nov 2011: the centre-right wing government headed by Silvio Berlusconi lead the country
• Nov 2011: government/political crisis
• Dec 2011-February 2013: temporary technical government, which imposed the so-called politics of austerity
• From the Global Financial Crisis to nowadays:
  - Growth of impoverishment and increase of social inequalities
  - Rapid growth of the Movimento Cinque Stelle, a new political party with strong anti-political instincts
• Feb 2013: national elections, co-won by all three major parties, which each received about 30% of the vote.
• From Feb 2013: the country is governed by a coalition government which incorporated both right- and left-wing views 59

The latest national elections (held in February 2013) show how the entire population is not only evenly split by opposing views, it is also unable to choose which ideals to follow. In addition,
the last few years have been marked by an incredible number of scandals, all linked to corruption, theft of public money and events of an unethical nature. ⁶⁰

1.2.2 The representation of stable-instability

The link between *It makes no difference* and the current Italian socio-political condition relies upon a number of elements. The principal one regards an incapacity to understand the origin of conflicts and the respective responsibilities. *It makes no difference* reflects this aspect in that its characters are not assigned precise connotations and roles: they all appear struggling with individual or group conflicts. Neither the origins nor the consequences of these conflicts are shown within the frame of the narrative. All the characters seem to be attempting to solve their problems, but they plan actions that are never accomplished within the course of the work. As in Berio’s *Un re in ascolto* (1981-1983), there is no previous history establishing the nature and origin of characters and events. According to this vision, my intentions are to present a succession of events that not only do not lead to a development of the protagonists’ conflicts, but also avoid such conflicts resolving within the characters’ relationships. In every scene the protagonists seem to allude to the other scenes’ characters and events, yet there are no facts confirming the truth of such allusions. These, therefore, remain only possible, virtual connections. The whole work is governed by a constant and precarious stability relying on a sensation of perpetual instability. This was the starting

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⁶⁰ Some of these scandals include:

- Former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi was accused of bribery and juvenile prostitution with regards to *Ruby Rubacuori*’s case and the ‘*Bunga Bunga*’ scandal. For further reference see: Marco Marsili, *Onorevole Bunga Bunga: Berlusconi, Ruby e le Notti a Luci Rosse di Arcore*, (Lecce: Bepress, 2011).
point that generated the main concept of its socio-political representation. It is through the paradox of stable-instability that the social, institutional and political instability of today’s Italy is represented on the stage.

This aspect is evident from the first scene, in which the Narrator is seen to be incapable of understanding the meaning of the story she reads. Similarly, in the following scenes, mafioso-like characters discuss the vile actions they intend to carry out and groups of ordinary people look for someone to blame. None of them, by the end of the work, manage to finalise their intentions. It is as if their stories and wills are left abandoned to their present conditions, incapable of seeing or aspiring to any future. Moreover, there is no sensation of temporality across the alternation of events, in the sense that the *fabula* does not show any past nor future: every action is inescapably locked within the on-going stasis. It is in such an impasse, in this form of perennial *stallo*, that the Italian contemporary condition is represented. *It makes no difference* depicts a state of industriousness without purpose, within which individuals are unable to define what is good or bad, what is right or wrong. And so is the audience: the spectator is left without a precise opinion about the nature of individual characters, as s/he is unable to sympathise with any of the figures, independently from their actions. However, such a process does not occur because the characters’ profiles are neutral, but instead because they all show an essentially bivalent personality: they are both good and bad, right and wrong. All characters are both the cause and the effect of their own dramaturgical status, an aspect that further reflects the Italian society.

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61 *Fabula* (from the Latin fable, discourse) is a term employed in narratology. It originated in Russian Formalism and indicates the chronological order of the narrated events, the story.

62 *Stallo*, meaning stalemate (impasse), is a term very often used in today’s Italy to describe the unmovable, blocked state of the country from a social and particularly political point of view.
1.2.3 Three aspects of socio-political representations: characters’ bivalence, guilt and perpetual questioning

Within this representational framework, *It makes no difference* presents three further metaphors: characters’ bivalence, guilt and perpetual questioning. These are applied to both the characters and the lyrics. The different protagonists reflect the range of Italian society: they set up a number of stereotypes that encapsulate the essential characteristics of Italian contemporary life in accordance with the *tipi plautini*, the Roman author’s theatrical models. Such *tipi* are exemplified by the figures of the mafioso characters and the choir. There are three mafioso characters and they are named after the legendary ancestors of the Italian Mafia: Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso. In *It makes no difference* these three characters act as metaphors for bad Italians, the corrupted ones (those directly and indirectly mentioned above). However, for compositional and dramaturgical reasons, they are not presented as a trio, but are divided into a duo (Osso and Mastrosso) and a solo (Carcagnosso). Their bad profiles are instantly set as they appear on stage in Scene Two: here Osso and Mastrosso, handling respectively a knife and a gun, call each other names in a Totó-like manner, showing the audience who they are (or better who they represent). Scenes Two and Seven are dedicated to Osso and Mastrosso, and Scenes Four and Nine to Carcagnosso. Scenes Three, Five, Eight and Fourteen feature the choir. This is named Common People and represents the mass, that portion of the country outside of illegality and corruption. The Common People somehow

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63 According to the Oxford Dictionary, the term bivalence, from the Latin *bi-* (meaning *two*) and *-valere* (meaning *being strong*) signifies ‘the existence of only two states or truth values (e.g. true and false)’ [Oxford Dictionary Online, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bivalence?q=bivalence> (accessed 3 July 2013)]. This term, in its adjectival form *bivalent*, is also used in biology to indicate a pair of homologous chromosomes.

I make use of the word bivalence (and bivalent) to recall its Italian twofold meaning. *Bivalente* (the Italian for bivalent) has both a figurative and linguistic meaning. The first indicates the quality of having ‘two possibilities of development or interpretation’ [Dizionario di Italiano del Corriere della Sera, <http://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario_italiano/B/bivalente.shtml> (accessed 3 July 2013)]. The second is a term used in linguistics and syntax. It indicates, according to French linguist Lucien Tesnière’s classifications of verbs, those verbs that need two elements (a subject-argument and a second argument) in order to constitute their meanings.

Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso are three characters originated from a fifteenth-century legend, which apparently has a seed of truth. This legend says that they were three brothers from Toledo in Spain, who, having to pay a debt with justice, were sent to prison on the island of Favignana (a small island opposite Sicily’s west coast), which at that time was Spanish territory. After about thirty years in prison, the three brothers left Favignana and separated. They each founded one of the three Italian mafias. Osso remained in Sicily, where he laid the foundations for *Cosa Nostra* (also known as Sicilian Mafia), Mastrosso crossed the strait of Messina to found the *'Ndrangheta* in Calabria, and Carcagnosso went up to the ancient land of *Campania felix* (the modern Campania), where he set up the *Camorra*. For further reference see: Enzo Ciconte, Vincenzo Macrì and Francesco Forgione, *Osso, Mastrosso, Carcagnosso: Immagini, Miti e Misteri della 'Ndrangheta*, (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2010).

65 Totò is the stage name of Italian comedian, film and theatre actor, writer, singer and songwriter Antonio De Curtis (1898-1967) - whose real name is Prince Antonio Focas Flavio Angelo Ducus Commeno De Curtis di Bisanzio Gagliardi. Totò was also nicknamed il principe della risata (the prince of laughter), and he is considered one of the greatest Italian artists of the twentieth century.
represent the good Italians, who suffer because of their precarious condition and perpetually seek someone to condemn.

However, both the mafioso characters and the Common People epitomise a crucial paradox: they are neither good or bad, their profiles own both qualities. The mafiosos allude to planning and committing bad actions in the name of good values (dreams, honour, virtue, pleasing superiors, etc.). Such allusions happen when for instance Mastrosso sings in Scene Two ‘You can do badly in your studies and have no talent, but if you will be able to please your superior you will make your way and overcome everyone’, or when Carcagnosso, in Scene Four, handles a bomb and sings ‘There is a virtue to defend, there is an honour to protect. There are dreams to bring to life!’. On the contrary the Common People, looking for those responsible for their unhappy condition (a good action), end up accusing and fighting each other (a bad action). Such a fight takes place twice, in Scenes Eight and Fifteen. In these scenes, supported by an orchestral tutti, they shout at each other epithets such as ‘selfish, fool, arrogant, idiot, cow, pig, dump, moron, stupid, retard, animal!’ . It is within such bivalence that the metaphorical representation takes place: these characters epitomise a society in which distinguishing the good from the bad is impossible. Everyone could indeed appear either right or wrong, and everyone embodies the origin and cause of his/her own troubles. Finding someone responsible, then, becomes a utopia.

At the same time the Common People also personify another matter: guilt. This is expressed in both their lyrics and actions. They continuously repeat these lines: ‘Where is he?’, ‘Look over here, look over there!’ , ‘We’ll find him! We’ll get him!’ . They essentially constantly seek someone ‘to blame’, the ‘guilty'66 person. However, despite their efforts, they do not find anyone, nor is it ever revealed who this person is. This is because there simply is no guilty person able to embody all the responsibilities of a disastrous condition. All the characters, as said earlier, are the origin and cause of their own troubles, exactly as the real socio-political condition demonstrates. The Common People somehow represent McLendon and Weinberg’s ‘blaming culture’,67 a culture where individuals need someone to blame but the web of responsibilities is so intricate that truth rarely, possibly never, surfaces. It can be argued that in Berio’s opera La vera storia this subject is brought up, even if the composer never touched upon it. In the description of the setting of this opera Italo

66 Simone Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). It is possible to find these lines throughout Scenes Three, Five, Eight and Nine.

Calvino (the librettist) writes ‘among the crowd snake some martinets looking for a guilty person’.\textsuperscript{68} Though, while Berio and Calvino’s martinets eventually find someone, in \textit{It makes no difference} there is no hint whatsoever about who this person could possibly be.

Hence, the Common People represent not only the incapacity, but also the impotence of finding someone to blame. Their condition is unchanging and perpetual. Similarly to Nono’s \textit{Chor der Bauern} and Petrassi’s off-stage female choir, the Common People Brechtianly represent the masses and the people’s voice of conscience. However, differently from \textit{Intolleranza 1960} and \textit{Morte dell’aria}, in \textit{It makes no difference} the Common People exemplify a disillusioned and confused mass unable to assign guilts and responsibilities. They are not a population able to indicate an ethical path or narrate a final moral. Nono and Brecht’s image of the ‘man [that] helps his fellow man’\textsuperscript{69} does not exist in \textit{It makes no difference}, which instead leads to a sort of implicit self-condemnation. The Common People are not exactly a population, but a mass: they are composed of manifold autonomous individuals (an element epitomised in Scene Fifteen’s vocal counterpoint). They do not represent the masses’ conscience in the eyes of the audience. They instead recall the idea of man in the sense of Aristotle’s ‘social animal’\textsuperscript{70}. If Berio attempts to eliminate any psychological profile in ‘Lei’, \textit{Passaggio}’s protagonist (an opera that will be discussed in Chapter Two), \textit{It makes no difference} aims to annul the identity of the mass itself - an operation that anyhow, as in \textit{Passaggio}, intends to provide a socio-political representation. The Common People do not own the characteristic of uniqueness, of being different from each other, of Paul Ricoeur’s \textit{ipséité}\textsuperscript{71}. In fact, the individuals of the choir are not ‘the smallest unit to which it is


\textsuperscript{70} In his political-philosophical work \textit{Politics}, Aristotle wrote that ‘it follows that the state belongs to the class of objects which exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal.’ [Aristotle, \textit{The Politics}, rev. ed. 1981, trans. T. A. Sinclaire (London: Penguin Books, 1981), 59] Aristotle’s term ‘political’ has to be understood in the sense of \textit{Politikon zoon} (political animal), animal whose nature is to live in and as part of a \textit{polis} (state).

\textsuperscript{71} With the term \textit{ipséité} French philosopher Paul Ricoeur indicated the concept of ‘own identity’, of what makes a person unique and absolutely distinct from another. This is discussed in: Paul Ricoeur, \textit{Soi-même Comme un Autre} (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990). The concept of \textit{ipséité} is also presented by scholar Jean-François Gignac in: Jean-François Gignac, \textit{Ipséité narrative et identité morale dans la philosophie de Paul Ricoeur} (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 2009).
still possible to confer the quality of «humanity»:'72 they objectify the mass’ indivisibility as ‘social herd’.73 They somehow resemble Zygmunt Bauman’s ‘liquid society’.74 The Common People, differently from the choruses in other Italian operas, represent individuality in its etymological meaning of *individuus*, that in Latin stands for indivisible, word composed by *in* and *dividuus*, meaning not-separable (exactly as *atom*, from the Greek ἄ-τοµος meaning not-divisible). Because of this characterisation of *It makes no difference*’s chorus, I found necessary to invent my own text, which consists of a few words such as ‘Where is he? Where is he?’ and occurs alongside the appropriated text I used across the opera. Thus, when the Common People mechanically sing the lines ‘Where is he?’, their mass-unity - the herd - tends to objectify a social state of perpetual questioning about the origins of the guilt. This is a state that remains unceasing and unchanged, indeed because of their incapacity of providing an answer: a state recalling Marco Travaglio’s *Anestesia totale* (Total anaesthesia), a journalistic-theatrical show that ‘traces the portrait of an apocalyptic scenery, of a country left without memory or courage’,75 as indeed in total anaesthesia.

1.2.4 Metaphorical relationship between the micro- and the macro-structure

A further metaphorical element is provided by the Narrator. This is a mezzo-soprano whose principal action consists of speaking. Although her function is predominantly connected to narrativic principles (discussed in Chapter Two), she also embodies a representation. The text she reads - an elaboration of a short fable by Italo Calvino - is at first sight completely unrelated to all


73 The term herd society, also know as herd behavior or mob mentality, is used in philosophy, psychology and sociology. It describes how people are influenced by their peers to adopt certain behaviors (and follow trends) which lets them take actions (and think thoughts) without asking themselves the reasons why they do so. Philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Søren Kierkegaard were among the first to discuss such a human phenomenon, which they referred to as ‘the crowd’ and ‘herd morality’. Further research from a psychological point of view was undertaken by Sigmund Freud in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: Liveright, 1959) in which he referred to this phenomenon as ‘crowd psychology’. In the field of sociology George Simmel referred to it as the impulse to sociability in man. Recent writing on this matter include:


other characters’ events. It narrates a paradoxical story about someone who mistakes his lover for another woman and eventually discovers that he is himself someone else. The figure of the Narrator acts as a metaphor for the external, unengaged observer. She goes through her story several times, but never manages to understand its sense. The Narrator, in fact, appears to be lost within the contradictions and paradoxes of her story. She seems not to comprehend the intrinsic logic of personalities’ exchange - which in turn is a metaphor for the other characters’ bivalent good-bad/right-wrong profiles. In this sense it is the Narrator who metaphorically represents the audience’s conscience (not that of the chorus): she does not find a logical path through the stable-instability governing the entire work.

Moreover, she (and her text) also represents the entire opera: she personifies the contradictory and perpetual trend taking place throughout the other scenes. The Narrator therefore embodies a double-representation: she is the interpretative key for both the whole work and the socio-political representation. Her scenes somehow enclose the miniature version of the whole work and consequently establish a link between the macro- and the micro-structure, at both a metaphorical and narrativic level. They are the detail, generating and reflecting the overall dramaturgy. It is as if Osso, Mastrosso, Carcagosso and the Common People are the large-scale representation of Ferruccio, Michele, Teresa and Bianchina (the characters featured in the Narrator’s story), exactly as these latter are the small-scale representation of the mafiosos and the chorus. Hence, the Narrator’s story generates a theatre-in-the-theatre: not in the a-temporal and referential manner of Bussotti’s La Passion selon Sade (discussed in Chapter Two), but in a kaleidoscopic sense. The Narrator’s story and its characters function as the loose, coloured objects of a kaleidoscope: these, through reflections, create the patterns that compose the whole macro-structure of It makes no difference.

In addition to the issues related to metaphorical representation, Italian post-WWII avant-garde opera (and It makes no difference) was significantly characterised by a dramaturgical rethinking of the structure and role of the narrative. This aspect will be discussed in the following chapter.

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76 One may think of an analogy between this story and Oliver Sacks’ The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, on which composer Michael Nyman based his eponymous one-act chamber opera. However, there is no explicit link between the two.
CHAPTER TWO: how can dramaturgy be non-linear?

2.1 The dismantling of narrativity’s linearity: reasons and outcomes

In order to provide a comprehensive and precise overview of post-WWII avant-garde Italian opera it is indispensable to discuss the matter of narrative. The inclusion of explicit socio-political themes and ideologies was not the only aspect of experimental theatre that influenced Italian opera. Narrative, in fact, was the theatrical parameter that underwent the most significant transformations. This occurred in structural terms, resulting in a rethinking of both story-telling and dramaturgical vision. These transformations generated a number of works that fragmented the traditional unity of narrative and developed operas based on concepts of non-linearity. At the same time, as we will see, such evolution became cross-disciplinary and permeated not only opera, but also literature.

However, as with socio-political representations, non-linearity was inspired by prose theatre, particularly by the works of Beckett and Brecht. I shall therefore continue by discussing certain aspects of prose theatre and their relationship with post-WWII Italian Opera. Subsequently, I shall analyse a number of specific Italian cases.

2.1.1 The rejection of Aristotelian norms

A crucial shift of theatrical values occurred during the so-called expressionist period. This involved the introduction of dramaturgical novelties within the theatrical and operatic craft. With authors such as Karl Sternheim (1878-1942), Ernst Toller (1893-1939) and Ferdinand Bruckner (1891-1958), the expressionist theatre reworked, and to a certain extend abolished, the fundamental concepts of classical theatre. Such concepts placed the dramaturgical unities of time, place and action as essential cornerstones. The anti-romantic outcome epitomised by Beckett’s ‘existentialist theatre’ and Brecht’s ‘epic theatre’ is indeed the ideal of estrangement from these three norms. As scholar Salvatore Guielmino explains, the term epic has to be understood in an Aristotelian sense: ‘the term synthesises the characteristics that a narration of events (ἔπος, epos) has, narration that is not subject to those laws of the unities of time, place and action, which are instead essential, within
the classical aesthetics, for the drama, and for the theatre work’. Further novelties expressionist theatre introduced, following Guielmino’s schematisation, can be summarised as follows:

1. A conscious refusal of an underlying characteristic of bourgeois and traditional theatre [...], that is to say the psychological development of characters within the course of the represented action. Expressionists, partly because convinced of the destruction of personal individuality conducted by modern society, and partly [...] because of the pronounced mystical and metahistorical element, bring on stage characters lacking any individual psychological connotation, lacking name, that is to say individual personalities: we thus have the Father, the Young, the Banker.

2. Breaking a rule of naturalistic likelihood, expressionists proceed in their theatrical works by «stations», by scenes unlinked one to the other, or by multiple scenes (on the stage the audience simultaneously sees two or more scenes). Also these proceedings contribute to eliminating any traditional exigency of psychological development and portrayal of characters and events.

The first of these two points underlines the crucial relationship between expressionist theatre and archetypical figures. Archetypes are a ‘primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious’. As scholar Richard M. Rychman explains they ‘are themes that have existed in all cultures throughout history’. In theatrical practice, according to theatre practitioner Michael Chekhov, the archetype ‘is something which embraces all things of the kind’. In his Lessons for the professional actor, Chekhov maintains that the actor’s physicality has to be constructed on the archetype of the object or idea the actor has to represent, and therefore, in his vision, ‘the archetype leads to the gesture’. In its effort to create characters lacking individual connotations, expressionist theatre captures the archetypes, a

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2 Ibid., 233 / I
4 Richard M. Rychman, Theories of personality, 9th ed. (Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), 82.
6 Ibid., 114.
7 These archetypes, in a pragmatic sense, can be identified in Guielmino’s figures of ‘the Father, the Young, the Banker’. An example of expressionist theatre that represents such de-personalised characters is Ernst Toller’s Hoppla, Wir Leben! (Hoppla, we’re alive!). This play features numerous characters including indeed The Banker, The Son of the Banker, The Student and The Elector, among others.
and uses them as emblems of what Carl Gustav Jung \(^8\) defined as the ‘collective unconscious’.\(^9\)
Thus, expressionist theatre abstracts the psychological features from the characters and lets these
features represent collective ideas. In this way expressionist plays are ‘about collective and personal
armageddon’.\(^10\) The second of Guielmino’s points, on the other hand, highlights the expressionistic
form of *Stationendramen* (Station-drama).\(^11\) Such a form, that substituted scenes with stations, is
exemplified in Berio’s *Passaggio*, a work that we will discuss in Paragraph 2.1.2.

Alongside such novelties, Brecht also sympathised with the dispute with bourgeois values,\(^12\)
yet he detached himself from the ‘religious sublimation the revolutionary spirit of expressionism
frequently came to, which thus ended up getting lost in apocalyptic prophesying, [...] in yearning
for a «good» humanity’.\(^13\) From such assents and discords with the expressionist movement, Brecht
generated his own peculiar vision of art, which he incorporated in his theatre, poetry and writings.
Guielmino summaries Brecht’s conception of art as follows:

Brecht conceives an art in anti-romantic, anti-lyrical terms, he elaborates a new idea of art
as total and active fruition of history: not as lyrical contemplation of things, neither as
subtle withdrawal from one’s own *private* subjectivity, but on human and moral choices,
on verification of traditional values, a protest against the in-crisis structures of the
bourgeois world, and a design of a new presence of poetry within society.\(^14\)

Such a vision of art found rich soil among Italian postwar opera writers, and was particularly
influential for avant-garde composers. This conception, which ‘makes of the spectator an observer’

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\(^8\) Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychotherapist and psychiatrist, and the founder of analytical psychology. Among his influential theories, Jung developed the concepts of archetypes and collective unconscious.

\(^9\) Collective unconscious is a term used by Carl Gustav Jung in his analytical psychology studies. With this term Jung indicated the existence of an unconscious, collective mind which, as he theorised, belong to the whole humanity and all life forms with nervous systems.


\(^11\) Expressionist theatre plays are often referred to as *Stationendramen*, translating from German as Station-dramas. These were inspired by and were modelled on the episodic presentation of Jesus’ *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross). Swedish playwright and novelist August Strindberg pioneered the *Stationendramen* form in his trilogy *Till Damaskus* (The Road to Damascus, 1898-1904).

\(^12\) Brecht presented a number of works related to the problems of the society surrounding the author about a decade earlier than his mature works. I refer to early-1920s works such as *Trommeln in der Nacht* (Drums in the night, 1922) and *Im Dickicht der Städte* (In the jungle of cities, 1923).

\(^13\) Guielmino, *Guida al Novecento*, 235 / I.

\(^14\) Ibid., 236 / I
and ‘stimulates his activity’,\textsuperscript{15} became crucial for future generations. However, Italian opera composers did not embrace it in its entirety, instead each one selected certain aspects and developed them within their own individual artistic language. The aspects they primarily focused on are the aforementioned two: the first relies on socio-political and anti-bourgeois (para-communist) engagement, and the second concerns the alteration, and ultimately destruction, of the classical sense of narrative. While Luigi Nono principally sympathised with the first aspect,\textsuperscript{16} Luciano Berio focused on the elaboration and development of the second. Berio, in fact, conceptualised in his stage works the subversion of the norms of time, place and action.

\textbf{2.1.2 The rejection of linear-narrative and the case of Berio’s \textit{Passaggio}}

Excluding \textit{Allez Hop} (1959) and the vocal and mimic compositional experiments prior to it, Berio never presented a music-theatre work with a linear-narrative. This feature was certainly influenced by a number of authors, particularly in the field of literature. Berio was fascinated by the literary element of the ‘non-finished’,\textsuperscript{17} an element inextricably connected with the matter of non-linearity. In his essays \textit{Un ricordo al futuro} he claims ‘the great literary works\textsuperscript{18} open-ended as far as an amazing number of questions and layers of meaning are concerned, [because they] suspend or

\textsuperscript{15} These two quotes are taken from Brecht’s diagram of the differences between the \textit{dramatic} and \textit{epic} forms. See: Bertold Brecht, \textit{Scritti Teatrali}, trans. Emilio Castellani, Roberto Fertonani and Renata Mertens (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2001), 30.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Intolleranza} 1960, as discussed in the Chapter One, is an evident example of this.

\textsuperscript{17} Berio discusses the concept of the ‘non-finished’ in literature in his collection of essays \textit{Un ricordo al futuro: Lezioni Americane} (Remembering the Future). These essays also demonstrate the composer’s interest and appreciation for his colleague and writer Umberto Eco’s \textit{Opera Apera}, a book that discusses and analyses the concepts of non-linearity and openness in literature and art.

\textsuperscript{18} The great literary works Berio refers to include Proust, Joyce, Musil, Faulkner and Beckett’s writings.
develop various [and mutually woven] narrative tempos’.¹⁹ For Berio - as for Brecht’s epic/didactic theatre - the sense of non-linearity was crucial to generate, in the spectator’s mind, consciousness of the subjects and ideas presented within dramaturgies. The composer believed that ‘listeners, performers and even composers must be able to pass through a sort of alchemic transformation in which the recognition and awareness of the conceptual connections - that is to say the fruits of their relationships with the Texts - are spontaneously transformed in a living being’.²⁰ Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1918-1922) and Beckett’s *The unnamable* (1953), among others, featured such recognition and awareness, and this was the aspect Berio admired the most.²¹

His stage works never abandoned their essential element of provocation, and were enriched and complemented by other theatrical works. Among these are Samuel Beckett’s works, which revealed to Berio the unfolding dramaturgical possibilities theatre could offer. From *Waiting for Godot* (1953)²² onward the canons of linear narrative receded and ‘in the plays of Beckett, the composer [Berio] could observe how a narrative could be unfolded, turned upon itself, creating repetitions, memories and presentiments which could not easily be contained within the confines of traditional dramatic conception’.²³ With *Passaggio* (1963), written in collaboration with poet

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¹⁹ Luciano Berio, *Remembering the Future* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 89. The words in brackets ‘and mutually woven’ are taken from the original Italian version *Un ricordo al futuro* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2006), which I have self-translated. In the English version *Remembering the Future* these words have been elaborated as follows: ‘suspend or develop various narrative tempos (themselves open-ended and interwoven one with another)’ [Remembering the Future, 89]. Although this quote (and all essays of *Remembering the Future*) is part of Berio’s Harvard Charles Eliot Norton lectures, which were delivered in English, the composer had originally written the text partly in Italian and partly in English. In addition, the process of writing and revising was accompanied by several collaborators, including David Osmond-Smith, Luciana Galliano and Anthony Oldcorn. This is indicated in the Preface of the English version *Remembering the Future*, in which musicologist Talia Pecker Berio (the composer’s second wife) writes: ‘the final revision of the Norton Lectures was constantly delayed, yet work on them was never entirely abandoned. Periodically, between a composition and another, Berio would go back to them, introducing minor changes, pointing out passages in need or revision, taking notes for further developments. This “work in progress” [...] involved both the Italian and English texts. As a result there were often multiple versions of each lecture, none of which, at the moment of the author’s death, could be declared as “definite”; nor it possible to establish the chronological order of the variants.’ [Talia Pecker Berio, ‘Preface’ in: Luciano Berio, *Remembering the Future* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2006), VIII.]

²⁰ Ibid., 8

²¹ In his essays and interviews, Berio extensively discussed Joyce and Beckett’s work. In his writings, the composer demonstrated his admiration for these authors and discussed how their works were a source of inspiration for him. Examples can be found in:
  * Luciano Berio, *Un Ricordo al Futuro*, 8, 33, 68, 72, 94.

²² *Waiting for Godot*’s was premiered on the 5th of January 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone, Paris. However, the original French text was composed between the 9th of October 1948 and the 29th of January 1949.

²³ Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 55.
Edoardo Sanguineti and premiered at Milan’s Piccola Scala, Berio demonstrated the legacy of such ideas.

Let us consider the principal theatrical features of *Passaggio*. Firstly the composer does not call this work *opera*, but *messa in scena*, translating as both *put on scene* or *Staged Mass*. As Raymond Fearn points out, ‘the dual meaning of the subtitle, interpretable in both a theatrical and a religious sense, emphasises the fact that narrative has here to be replaced by ritual as the dramatic focus of the piece’. This work features one female singer on stage, who, following the principles of *de*-personalisation, does not have a name and is simply referred as *Lei* (She). Her action is based upon simple movements that consist of slowly crossing the stage in order to reach five pre-decided ‘stations’ (Example 4). It is interesting to notice how Berio himself uses the word *stazione* (station), as if he were consciously embracing this expressionist term.

Each station is characterized by vocal expressions of contrasting kinds. A narrative is only vaguely hinted at. In the text she conveys and alludes to arrest, interrogation, abuse and final release. *Lei*, however, is not the only voice in the piece: there are two Choruses, A and B. Chorus A is positioned in the orchestral pit, where the audience cannot see it. Its dramaturgical role consists of commenting upon the narrativic images evoked by the soloist on stage. Chorus B, on the contrary, is composed of five speaking-groups distributed among the audience. Its role provides the vital provocation of the piece: it consists of instructions to hear comments made by the public about the work and repeat them loudly during the performance as the work progresses, and ‘needless to say the result was uproar in the theatre’.

The way Sanguineti set the text is also of great importance. He designed ‘*Lei*’ and both Choruses’ lyrics in a way that they superimpose each other, so that all three seem to comment on or describe the others. Moreover all lyrics only allude to and describe different sensations approximately. The outcome could be described as a multi-narrative, as it outlines various facets of the same account, a sort of tridimensional-narrative.

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24 Milan’s Piccola Scala was a small theatre annexed to La Scala, subsequently demolished in 2000.


26 Such stations are outlined in *Passaggio*’s ‘diagram of stage-movements’ (Example 4), a drawing placed at the beginning of the score.

27 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 94.
Passaggio certainly is not the benchmark of narrative rethinking in opera, but it is the starting point of a journey that Berio and other composers, such as Maderna and Bussotti, traveled in order to explore the possibilities the stage can offer in a modern world. It is through this journey,

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made of dream-sequence and memory-theatre, that ‘the composer was able to place on stage a complex and often bewildering array of dramatic actions and narratives through which the active listener must somehow find a path, an opera aperta in which the listener’s perception of the work were to be guided rather than determined by the composer’. The expression opera aperta (open work) is not poetic license, but an artistic principle and an inescapable property of the art-work. This was theorised by the writer Umberto Eco, a close colleague of Berio from the 1950s. Eco describes the term ‘open’ with these words:

The work is “open” in the same sense that a debate is “open”. A solution is seen as desirable and is actually anticipated, but it must come from the collective enterprise of the audience. In this case the “openness” is converted into an instrument of revolutionary pedagogics.

If with Beckett we face a definite shift from a theatre-of-characters to a theatre-of-ideas, with Berio we find the ideological application of Beckett’s principles within the operatic context. In so doing Berio also contributed to generating the provocative genre of anti-opera, which the composer himself theorised. Such an operatic evolution twisted the cardinal elements on which opera was erected - a genre that, unlike theatre, is only a few centuries old and cannot find its epic Aristotelian grip.

2.1.3 Spatio-temporal dilation

In avant-garde works such as Passaggio and Intolleranza 1960 the manipulation of the narrative process acts from a necessary and ideological need. It was only through an abrupt rupture with the dramaturgical Aristotelian norms that the medium of opera could enhance these representational possibilities. These had to shift from a theatre-of-characters/action to a theatre-of-

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29 Dream-sequence and memory-theatre were essential and recurring elements of Berio’s imagery, from Tre modi per sopportare la vita (Three ways of making life bearable, 1952-1955) to Un re in ascolto (A listening king, 1981-1983). This thesis discusses these features in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

30 Fearn, Italian Opera since 1945, 90.

31 The concept of opera aperta, as mentioned in the Introduction, maintains that a ‘work of art [constitutes] an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations’. (Eco, The Open Work, 4)


33 The term ‘epic’, as quoted from Guielmino in Footnote 1 of Chapter 2, has to be intended in an Aristotelian sense, not antithetically: ‘the term synthesises the characteristics that a narration of events (ἔπος, epos) has, narration that is not subject to those laws of the unities of time, place and action, which are instead essential, within the classical aesthetics, for the drama, and for the theatre work’. [Salvatore Guielmino, Guida al Novecento, 237 / 1.]
ideas/narration, so as to evoke a dimensionality of introspection detached from the parameters of
time, place and action. Such dimensionality had to be addressed toward an a-temporal and a-spatial
representation able to generate a theatre-of-thought. In other words, the dimensionality of the Now
(the Zeit) - the on-stage representational moment - assumed a characteristic of dilation: the on-stage
presence was not chronologically framable neither in a period of time nor within a succession of
actions. Events then become independent from any cause-effect principle: they are neither the cause
for the happening of a narrativic occurrence, nor the effect resulting from a prior event. In so doing,
actions acquire a mere quality of evoking phenomenon, of metaphorico-representational audio-
visual image. This, in turn, mirrors an internal thought, internal to the audience’s mind. An example
of such metaphorical evocation occurs in Intolleranza 1960’s Coro Finale, when the Chor der
Bauern sings ‘You, who shall emerge from the flood / In which we are sinking, / Think’. 34 Another
occurs at the very end of Passaggio, when Lei screams to the audience ‘via! uscite! andate via!
tutti!’ 35 (‘out! leave! get out! everybody!’). It is in that ‘You’, in that ‘we are sinking’, in the usage
of the imperative tense ‘via!’ , ‘uscite!’, ‘think’, that the temporal and spatial action is uprooted from
any form of dramaturgical contextualisation and elevated to mere thought, to mere mental stimulus
addressed to the audience’s intellect. In this sense the action, although composed of visual, musical
and gestural inputs, abandons the spatio-temporal dimension. It replaces the spectator’s sensible
perception with intellectual activity: it gives life to internal thought rather than external perception.

Curiously enough such an a-temporal and a-spatial dilation can be found even earlier than
Intolleranza 1960 and Passaggio. It can already be grasped in Puccini’s masterpieces, which
undoubtedly are works of a very different aesthetic. In Puccini’s operas the spatio-temporal dilation
acts in favour of a reality that goes beyond the continuity of the action. In his most cathartic
passages he stretched the narrativic linearity and gave space to a-temporal actions that produce
nothing else than mere thought. 36 Musicologist Lorenzo Bianconi, referring to Puccini’s Manon
Lescaut (1892), highlights this point:

If on one side Puccini breaks the narrative continuity, on the other he moderates Verdian
metrical stereotypes into fluctuating melodic profiles, [...] and he aims to dissolve the

canzone.php?lang=en&id=4683 (accessed on 16 April 2012). For further reference see Note 48 in Chapter One.
35 Berio and Sanguinetti, Passaggio (libretto), 16.
36 However, such a thought has to be intended within its verismo frame, unlike those of Nono, Berio and the authors we
are discussing in this thesis.
standardised forms of singing in propulsive musical prose, when these are not justifiable as scene or ambient music: in other words, he aims to catch reality naturalistically as an ongoing process.\textsuperscript{37}

Thus, post-WWII Italian composers anticipated the possibility for a new operatic theatre that could also be erected upon the spatio-temporal manipulation presaged by Puccini.

\textbf{2.1.4 Triple-narrative: \textit{Opera}}

One of the most intriguing and advanced examples of narrative manipulation is Berio’s \textit{Opera} (1969-1977). This work presents three layers of constantly interweaving narrative, which are disconnected from each other in both chronological and narrativic terms. They essentially are three separate stories juxtaposed with each other and sharing the common theme of Death. The first layer presents the libretto of Monteverdi’s \textit{Orfeo} (1607) by Alessandro Striggio; the second is constructed upon a documentary on the subject of the sinking of the Titanic; and the third is built on Terminal,\textsuperscript{38} a spoken play regarding the treatment of the terminally ill. These three narratives travel separately across the whole work and eventually meet at the end, when the audience is brought face-to-face with the reality of Death.\textsuperscript{39} It is interesting to notice how in this final passage, where the narratives converge, Berio forcefully emphases the sensation of \textit{a}-temporality and \textit{a}-spatiality: hidden voices from the orchestral pit sing an \textit{Agnus Dei}, while on stage a mezzo-soprano grabs one of the killed children’s dolls and sings a Sicilian lullaby saying the words ‘\textit{E vò}’ (‘And I go’). These seem to recall another place and time, maybe the ones that reside in the spectator’s imagination.

\textit{Opera}’s triple-narrative can arguably be considered the first substantial multi-narrative opera. Although being united by a common theme (in this specific case that of Death), it presents neither one narrative nor do its juxtaposed numbers provide any sense of linearity. It could be argued that Death functions as the narrative of the drama, which anyhow rejects any narration-of-actions in


\textsuperscript{38}Terminal was a production by Jo Chaikin’s \textit{Open Theatre}. It was presented in New York shortly before Berio’s initial sketches of \textit{Opera}.

\textsuperscript{39}In this moment two panic-stricken children are hunted down in a glare of searchlights and killed.
favour of a narration-of-ideas. The multi-narrative structure, therefore, becomes a tool able to
disintegrate Aristotelian linearity and invites the spectators to find the thread that lies at the basis of
the stations, although such thread does not provide a spatio-chronological linearity but a conceptual
one. The title Opera itself, as Berio explains, must be interpreted as the plural noun of the Latin
word opus (work).

The organisation of Opera’s structure appears deliberately casual, and such dramaturgical
randomness seems to be also reflected in the musical structure, which moves from one style to
another and makes use of specific musical allusions - an aspect that also expresses the arbitrary
choice of the composer. These allusions are of two kinds: in some scenes Berio quotes specific
works, as for instance his own Tempi Concertanti (1958-1959) in the scenes titled Concerto I and II,
and Igor Stravinsky’s Feux d’artifice (1908) in Scena; in other cases he revisits certain musical
materials belonging to Opera itself, as for instance in Air, Memoria and Concerto. These latter, in
fact, come back during the course of the work, recalling those principles of variation Berio adopted
in his many Sequenze. Such a mechanism of references creates a double perspective: on one hand,
the historical references (Orfeo’s libretto, Stravinsky’s Feux d’artifice, etc.) demonstrate the wish to
encapsulate an ideology related to ‘the poetic metaphor of change and of journeying’ (already
expressed in Striggio’s words ‘Behold a traveller, behold a traveller / for whom, only a short time
ago, / sighs were food and tears were drink’). This ideology fully accords with the composer’s
postmodernist vision, which reaches its apex in the same years as Sinfonia (1968-1969). On the
other hand, the Sequenz-istic revisiting of musical and verbal material internal to the work
highlights a theme dear to Berio, that of memory. This, together with the theme of Death, is the
element that connects Opera’s juxtaposed narratives. It creates a path of análēpsis and prolepsis
able to unify the various events of the multi-narrative. This aspect is exemplified in the three scenes
called Memoria (Memory) - a self-explanatory title - and in the initial Air, where a soprano sings
Striggio’s words ‘Do you / Do you remember? / Remember’. Hence, Opera’s multi-narrative is not

40 Consequently the word Opera means works (more than one opus).

41 Fearn, Italian Opera since 1945, 122.

42 These verses, originally from Monteverdi’s Orfeo and written by Alessandro Striggio, are used by Berio in Air, Opera’s initial scene.

43 The Analēpsis, from Greek, is a figure of speech belonging to literary and cinematographic narration. It indicates the
rewind of the chronological order of the plot, or those narrated events that place before their natural chronological
position. It is often referred to as ‘flashback’. The prolepsis, also a narrative figure of speech, consists of evoking an
event that follows the moment of the story in which it appears. The prolepsis is the opposite of a flashback and it is
referred to as a ‘flash-forward’.
a mere tool of rebellion against Aristotelian linearity, but also is a dramaturgical structure guided by mnemonic and referential principles, which, in a postmodern manner, creates a ‘kaleidoscope of references and of pastiche, from the popular to the cultivated, from the banal to the abstruse’.

2.1.5 Theatre-of-references: La Passion selon Sade

Another opera based upon the principle of references, allusions and mnemonic implications is Sylvano Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* (1966), in which the vocal narration is almost entirely assigned to a mezzo-soprano. The piece is unequivocally avant-garde and its drama is ‘inextricably rooted in its relationship with the historical past’. The references to the past are interspersed across all aspects of the work, from the text to the on-stage objects, from the characters to the score. *La Passion selon Sade* develops this referential system on principally three levels: firstly, the text is based on a Sonnet by French poet Louise Labé (c.1520-1566); secondly, in the stage-action, Bussotti bases his direction on the writings of the Marquis de Sade; and thirdly, on a personal level, the work presents frequent autobiographical reference to the composer himself. At the same time, the stage is filled with objects referencing operas of the past. This feature, as Example 5 shows, is set out in a detailed stage plan, which indicates that ‘the furniture and the scenic elements must be taken from standard operatic repertoire’.

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44 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 123.

45 *La Passion selon Sade*’s subtitle is a very long yet highly picturesque description. The original subtitle is in French and reads as follows: *Mystère de chambre avec Tableaux vivants, précédé de Solo, avec un couple Rara et suivi d’un autre Phrase a trois* (Chamber mystery with living Tableaux, preceded by a Solo, with a Rara couple and followed by another trio Phrase).


46 The voice and characteristics of the mezzo-soprano was originally inspired by singer Cathy Berberian, who first interpreted the work.


48 The Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), whose actual name was Donatien Alphonse François, was a French aristocrat, philosopher, writer and revolutionary politician. He also was well known for his libertine sexuality, a feature that inspired *La Passion selon Sade* and that Bussotti embedded in many of his works.

49 The original instruction that Bussotti wrote on the Scene’s diagram (at the bottom of Example 5) reads as follows: ‘il mobilio e gli elementi scenici dovranno appartenere al repertorio d’Opera’.
These objects include the divan from *La Traviata*, the whips from *Turandot*, the bed from *Otello*, the kneeling-stool from *Don Carlos*, etc. The name of the protagonist *Justine-Juliette* is taken from the Marquis de Sade’s first works *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu* and *Juliette, ou les prospérités du vice*. Furthermore *La Passion* is explicitly inspired by ‘the themes of sadomasochism, […] [which] are camouflaged within the fervid chamber echo of Bach’s passions’.\(^{51}\) From an instrumental point of view the ensemble ‘draws inspiration from the voice of the oboe, the oboe d’amore, the flutes and then the horn and the violoncello; it uses the organ and the harmonium, but the specific timbre of a theatricality of the present occurs with a pair of grand pianos and the use of abundant percussion’.\(^{52}\)

\(^{50}\) Bussotti, *La Passion Selon Sade* (score) (Milano: G. Ricordi & C. s.p.a., 1966).


Original Italian quote by Bussotti: _I temi del sodomasochismo, [...] si assommano sotto le mentite speglie di un’eco cameratistica infervorata dalle passioni bachiane._


Original Italian quote by Bussotti: _L’organico strumentale si rifà alle voci dell’oboe, dell’oboe d’amore, dei flauti e poi del corno e del violoncello; utilizza organo e armonium, ma è con un paio di pianoforti a gran coda e con l’uso di abbondanti percussioni, che si realizza il timbro specifico di una teatralità del presente._
In this opera Bussotti expresses theatricality through an inseparable relationship between visual elements in the score, the actions of both singers and musicians, and all the audio-visual references. This work is a remarkable achievement of a multi-, or perhaps trans-disciplinary synthesis between musical, theatrical and visual languages. The score, as Example 1 (and partly Example 5) demonstrates, embodies an indissoluble amalgam of text, music and action, from which the narration emerges as allusions that create a theatre-of-gestures. It is within the proxemic element, of both singers and musicians (including the conductor), that the narrative takes place: everybody acts, at the same time, as musicians and actors. However the narrative is not the outcome of a chronological or logical series of events, but the fruit of a constant interpretation of the score’s dense symbolism. As scholar Andrea Lanza explains, the drama is brought to light ‘through a kaleidoscope of cultural seductions and highly cultivated idiosyncrasies, continuously stimulated by a capricious sensuality that sparks up within the voluble game of intellectual symbolism, of precious perversions and of finest erotic symbolisms’. It is the gesture that determines the operatic poetry and lyricism, whilst providing through a succession of unrelated events the story-of-the-historical-past: a contemplative exposition of the cultivated past. However, Bussotti’s relationship with the past is not to be read in postmodernist terms, as in Berio’s Opera. It instead has to be intended as ‘the musical transposition of a literary process’. As Andrea Lanza maintains, Bussotti’s score recalls ‘those long sentences dear to Marcel Proust, which disentangle themselves across entire pages without continuous progress, in subtle and changeable articulations’. La Passion selon Sade somehow reminisces that literary process contained in Proust’s La recherche du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time, 1909-1922), in which the writer spends ‘thirty pages to describe how [he] toss and turns in bed before falling asleep’. In his work Proust, like Bussotti in La Passion, dilates chronological-time so as to highlight and expand experiential-time. Similarly to Opera, Bussotti makes great use of anâlépsis and prolepsis, which constantly shift the sense of the present moment and travel across the whole historical past. La Passion selon Sade, to make a

53 According to Romanian theoretical physicist Basarab Nicolescu, the term ‘transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all disciplines. Its goal is the understanding of the present world, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge.’ [Basarab Nicolescu, ‘Methodology of transdisciplinarity - Levels of reality, logic of the included middle and complexity’ Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science 1/1 (2010), 22.]


55 Ibid., 159

56 Ibid., 159

further analogy, adopts the same process Gérard de Nerval employed in *Sylvie* (1853), a novel in which ‘at every moment [the reader is obliged] to go back [...] to check where he is, if it is the present or a return to the past’. In *La Passion*, as well as other Bussotti’s works, the performing gesture is the key aspect generating the drama: it ‘appears as a spontaneous excrecence of the sound, an extrinsication [objectification] over the auditive level of implications embedded in the compositional act’. Such process puts into effect ‘that liquefaction of the form in the content that has been constitutive of the new theatrical poetics of those years’.

Although *La Passion selon Sade* is not based on a narrative linearity, we cannot simply define it as a multi- or non-linear-narrative (as on the contrary we can for *Opera* and *Intolleranza 1960*). It is neither based on a number of superimposed or interwoven narratives, nor does it develop a succession of actions distinguishable as present or past events. It instead epitomises an ‘amorphous paste’, a ‘continuum’ - as Umberto Eco likes to say - of análēpsis and prolepsis that fully relies on our historical background, in which past and present appear as one. It is within its system of references and allusions that a narrative materialises as a unicum and shows itself to the audience, whose only narrativic handhold takes shape within an a-temporal past. Therefore, with *La Passion* we do not have a mere theatre-of-ideas, as for Berio and Nono, but a theatre-of-references. All theatrical parameters merge into a representational experience that Raymond Fearn calls ‘total theatre’.

Total theatre, thus, but also theatre in the theatre: from the antique operatic furniture to the projection of slides related to the ongoing spectacle and to the role-exchange between the audience and the “actors” - the audience can go on the scene, the “actors” enjoy the performance; from the open-curtain interval to the Pirandellian characters, like

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60 Lanza, ‘Il Secondo Novecento’, 158.

61 Ibid., 158


the “renowned Direttore d’orchestra” and the Maestro di Cappella, who first of all “act” themselves.  

2.1.6 Anti-opera and meta-opera

It has been hinted at earlier that Berio wished to create the genre of anti-opera, and his stage works, particularly Opera and Un re in ascolto, are examples of this. By subverting classical narrative principles, Berio aimed to provide an anti-opera statement, establishing a theatre that could reject, in aesthetic terms, the works of the past. Similarly, it is possible to say that also La Passion selon Sade, Intolleranza 1960, Satyricon, Atomtod, Passaggio, and so on, are also works that provide anti-opera statements. They all subvert the traditional canons. However these works did not result in a destruction of the genre, as the term anti-opera would seem to suggest. The avant-gardistic approach these composers undertook did not seek to literally destroy the genre of opera. If they were not interested in the validity of this genre they could have simply not written it, as for instance Boulez did. Their productions, on the contrary, tended to regenerate the medium of opera and intended to make an operatic-comment about opera itself: it is as if they wrote operas about Opera. In fact, post-WWII Italian composers did not literally produce anti-operas, they rather composed what Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi call meta-operas, meaning operas-about-Opera. Is Berio’s Passaggio not a statement about the unexplored dimensionalities of the genre of opera? Is Opera not the demonstration that operatic narratives can be unfolded and superimposed? Is La Passion selon Sade not the proof that an opera’s narrative can contain in itself all the narratives of the operas of the past? These questions are rhetorical. What matters here is the fact that Italian post-

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65 Composer Pierre Boulez, coherently with his formalist vision of music, maintained the idea that music does not generate meaning, nor drama of any kind. Therefore, following his own ideological values, he rejects opera as a musical genre that could pay justice to the art form of music itself. Formalism, and the other twentieth century hedonistic schools of thought, repudiated opera and any kind of stage music. Boulez himself said in his 1967 Der Spiegel interview that ‘the most elegant solution would be to explode the opera houses’ (Pierre Boulez, ‘SPRENGT DIE OPERNHÄUSER IN DIE LUFT!’, Der Spiegel, 25 September 1967, Der Spiegel 40/1967): they were just totally incompatible with his formalistic vision of music.

66 Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi describe with the term meta-opera those operas about opera, saying that ‘in effect [they are] a whole subgenre self-reflexive of contemporary opera’ (Salzman and Desi, The New Music Theatre, 9).
WWII opera has at its heart the need for commentary about opera itself,\(^67\) without denigrating or abandoning it. The person who, on the contrary, composed a proper *anti-opera* is the American composer John Cage (1912-1992), a non-Italian who has always rejected the validity of opera *in toto*. It is well known how Cage, ‘when asked what operas he had heard in his youth, he [Cage] answered, «the only one I heard was Aida...that’s Verdi, isn’t it?»’.\(^68\) Cage’s *Europeras*\(^69\) (1987-1991), are indeed intended as *anti-operas*. As scholar Herbert Lindenberger explains, Cage ‘takes the whole history and scope of an art form - European opera - and shows how ridiculous it is and says goodbye to it, like putting a period at the end of the sentence’.\(^70\) It is hard to imagine that a similar attempt could have come from Italian composers, despite their avant-gardistic styles. Their background was too pregnant with European opera to ‘says goodbye to it’.\(^71\) They did not intend this. Their productions, in fact, demonstrate a desire for regeneration of the genre, which had to unavoidably begin from exploring the unforeseen possibilities of opera itself. We can thus say that they wrote *meta-operas*, not *anti-operas*.

2.1.7 Non-linear-narrative in Italian post-WWII literature: *Le città invisibili* and *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*

The above considerations prove that non-linear-narrative does not solely regard a revolutionary approach as one aiming to subvert the canons of classical theatre. It also exemplifies a powerful tool reflecting on ‘what opera is’ and ‘what story-telling is’. And it is important to point out that the matter of narrative and story-telling has been explored by composers as much as writers. Italo Calvino (1923-1985) is certainly the author that has most painstakingly contributed to this field. It is crucial to mention him in this discussion as he has also been an important

\(^{67}\) Such operatic comments, for historical and aesthetic reasons, have regarded not only the genre of opera, but also the opera house, as an institution and as a structure. Italian post-WWII composers were concerned with the opera house as both a bureaucratic mechanism and a performance space. Their concerns were addressed toward the visual and auditory limits of the opera house, which confined the musico-theatrical elements to specific locations, so as to prevent their theatrical exploitation and trans-disciplinarity.


\(^{69}\) *Europeras*, commissioned by the Frankfurt Staatsoper is a series of five operas which apply the technique of indeterminacy to plot, stage directions, lighting, costuming, props and sets, as well as to the music, juxtaposing traditional operatic episodes drawn from fragments of the 18th and 19th century repertoire and intermittently drowned out by a taped Opera Mix.

\(^{70}\) Lindenberger, *Opera in History*, 241.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 241
collaborator for Berio, for whom he wrote the librettos of *La vera storia* (1977-1981) and *Un re in ascolto*. In his novels *Le città invisibili* (Invisible cities, 1972) and *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* (If on a winter’s night a traveler, 1979) he arguably reached his richest narrative manipulations, sophisticated yet apparently simple structures that share numerous similarities with the narrative structures of Italian post-WWII operas. As film director and writer Pier Paolo Pasolini comments, Calvino’s narratives hold a ‘completely visionary relativism, confronted with infinitely different possibilities’.  

*Le città invisibili* is composed of essentially two narrativic objects: on one side, it narrates a series of travel reports Marco Polo makes to the Tartars’ emperor Kublai Khan; on the other, it presents descriptions of a number of cities. These latter are not ‘recognisable cities; they are all invented; [...] [and each of them] should offer food for thought on each city or for the city in general’. The narrative structure is composed by a constant alternation of Marco Polo and Kublai Khan’s conversation and the descriptions of the fictional cities. Between each Polo-Khan’s conversation, the cities are presented in groups of five or ten. Moreover, on a plot-level, each city’s description is completely unrelated to that of the other cities and to the chapters dedicated to the protagonists. This narrative structure is evidently not linear, but multi-narrative. Each city is implicitly interwoven with the others and with Polo-Khan’s dialogues. At the same time, the logic of the cities’ exposition is *a*-chronological, whilst Marco Polo and Kublai Khan’s chapters are positioned in chronological order. The succession of the events, thus, becomes irrelevant: it is rather that, through our individual interpretation, we find a narrativic path. Moreover, *Le città invisibili* does not have a beginning or an end. As Calvino himself says ‘this is a book made as a prism, and it has conclusions a bit everywhere, written along all its corners’. In this sense the chapters of *Le città invisibili* could almost be shuffled, exactly as Marc Saporta’s novel *Composition N.1*, which ‘invites the reader to shuffle the pages as a deck of cards’.

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72 In addition to *La vera storia* and *Un re in ascolto*, Calvino also wrote texts for other *azioni musicali* including Berio’s *Allez-hop*, Sergio Liberovici’s *La panchina* and *Lo spaventapasseri e il poeta*, Bruno Gillet’s *Arie per l’opera buffa* for *Il visconte dimezzato*, and lyrics for songs by Sergio Liberovici, Fiorenzo Carpi, Piero Santi and Mario Peragallo.


75 Ibid., X

Similarly, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* develops a multi-narrative. It presents ten different stories, all clearly unrelated. More precisely, they are ten beginnings of stories, all of which are interrupted as soon as they start to take shape. At the same time, these ten stories alternate with the story of a reader, who, as Calvino imposes, is the actual reader, ‘you’.77 ‘the Reader is the protagonist, who begins reading a book ten times; however, due to circumstances, he does not manage to finish it’.78 Although the Reader’s story is exposed in chronological order, the ten different beginnings constantly interrupt it, so that the narrative linearity is fragmented and the whole novel operates through a multi-narrativic logic.79 However, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*’s structure does not intend to provide narrativic confusion, as it may superficially suggest. It shows at its heart a clear and noble theme: each story is the product of other stories, and all books’ narratives are starting points that unavoidably lead to many, possibly infinite narratives. These would all depend on the reader’s point of view, who, eventually, is the person self-composing his own narrative. Calvino maintains this point as follows: ‘I tried to give evidence of the fact that every book arises in the presence of other books, in relation and comparison to other books’.80 It can be argued that such a reader-book relationship is connected with the concept of opera aperta, which asserts that any art work is open to the reader’s interpretation. This perspective reveals that the crucial aspect of Calvino’s interrupted and juxtaposed stories manifests within the void that exists between them, in the words that are not-said. It is in those missing words that a narrative is created: a narrative that becomes inescapably personal to each reader. It is in such a void that ‘the lazy mechanism’81 of a book - as Umberto Eco calls it - resides: a mechanism ‘that lives on the surplus of sense introduced into it by the receiver’.82 Eco clarifies this point as follows: ‘the text is

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77 The actual reader, ‘you’, is referred to throughout the whole *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*. All chapters dedicated to the Reader’s story are, in fact, narrated in the second person, ‘you’.

78 This quote is paraphrased by the author from: Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Oscar Opere di Italo Calvino, 1994), back-cover page. Original text in Italian: *Protagonista è il lettore, che per dieci volte comincia a leggere un libro che per vicissitudini estranee alla sua volontà non riesce a finire.*

79 Such multi-narrativic logic is arguably exemplified in chapter VIII, which presents a series of apparently unrelated pages from Silas Flannery’s diary, one of the characters.

80 Calvino, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*, back-cover page.


82 Ibid., 52
thus woven of white spaces, of interstices to be filled, and the person who created it predicted that they were going to be filled and left them blank’. 83

Hence, the interrupted narratives in Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore combine to compose a structure that self-develops toward a possibly infinite narrative: each story leads to another story, which in turn leads to another story, which in turn leads to another story, and so on. The narrative structure of this book can be summarised, as Calvino writes in the preface, through the system of binary alternatives used by Plato in his Sophist (360 B.C.). This system implies that every time an alternative is excluded the other, in turn, divides into two alternatives. By following such a system every interrupted story, then, unavoidably leads to two further stories, one of which is excluded and the other continues its endless ramification.

The diagram in Example 6 shows Plato’s system of binary alternatives applied to Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore. Each novel leads to bifurcations, until reaching the last path showing that ‘the world continues’. 84 Such an open structure achieves a teatro polidittico (polydctic theatre), 85 a theatre of specular images alluded to in the chapter ‘In una rete di linee che s’intersecano’: 86

My intent is to rebuild the museum put together by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, author of the Ars magna lucis et umbrae (1646) and inventor of the «polydctic theatre» in which about sixty small mirrors plastering the inside of a big box transform a branch into a forest, a tin soldier into an army, a little book into a library. 87

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83 Ibid., 52
84 See the bottom right corner of Example 6’s Diagram of binary alternatives.
85 This singular term does not exist in dictionaries and can be defined as a neologism. It etymologically comes from the Greek words poly (many) and dikticos (to show, to demonstrate, to reveal). The expression ‘poly-dctic theatre’ can therefore be translated as ‘theatre that shows multiple things’, or ‘theatre able to reveal multiples facets of one (the same) thing’.
86 ‘In una rete di linee che s’intersecano’ (In a web of intersecting lines) is a chapter of Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore, placed between the seventh and the eighth chapter.
87 Calvino, Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore, 161.
Example 6: Diagram of binary alternatives from Italo Calvino’s *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*’s

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2.1.8 Polydectic-theatre and theatre-of-the-imagination: *La vera storia* and *Un re in ascolto*

Calvino’s works demonstrate the widespread interest, during the 1970s and 80s, in the use of multi-narrative at a cross-disciplinary level,\(^{89}\) and such an interest is reflected in Berio’s later operas *La vera storia* and *Un re in ascolto*. *La vera storia* (The true story) differs from the works discussed earlier in its structural organisation. This opera indeed presents multiple narratives, but they are not unrelated: it narrates the same story twice from two different perspectives, so that the fulcrum of the work resides in the relationships between them. The *fabula*\(^ {90}\) is essentially the same, but the points of view determining its sense greatly subverted it. The drama at the basis of the work narrates the execution of a nameless offender by a firing-squad, and subsequently the kidnapping of the city governor’s son. This opera’s double perspective creates a sort of bi-dimensional object, or, as Raymond Fearn says, a ‘reflection which is seen in a kind of distorting-mirror’.\(^ {91}\) The entire opera, therefore, appears as an enormous theme and variation. Berio himself comments on this:

Part I is an opera, Part II is not. Parts I and II show the same thing in different ways, as if two ballad-singers were suggesting different versions of the same narrative structure. One could think of one of the two Parts as a ‘varied ritornello’ - even as a parody - of the other. In Part I, made up of closed numbers, scenic action predominates; in Part II musical action predominates. In Part I there are protagonists, in Part II only their echo remains. Part I is real and concrete, Part II is dreamt.\(^ {92}\)

*La vera storia*’s double-perspective seems to state that every story, depending on points of view, unavoidably implies another story - almost like Calvino’s idea that ‘every book arises in the presence of other books’.\(^ {93}\) As Berio wrote ‘we wanted to suggest that behind a «true story» there

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89 Other examples of this practice include Dario Fo’s *Mistero Buffo* (Comical Mystery, 1969), Primo Levi’s *Il Sistema Periodico* (The Periodic Table, 1975), Stefano Benni’s *Il Bar Sotto il Mare* (The Café Under the Sea, 1987) and Andrea Camilleri’s *Il Birraio di Preston* (The Brewer of Preston, 1995).

90 As mentioned in Chapter One, *fabula* is a term employed in narratology and indicates the chronological order of the narrated events, the story.

91 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 179.

92 Luciano Berio, ‘Opera e no’, programme note in *La vera storia*’s première (Milano: La Scala, 1982), 27.

93 Calvino, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*, back-cover page.
always is another truer one’.\textsuperscript{94} In this opera Berio and Calvino are somehow constrained to present only two perspectives, but the sensation of \textit{teatro polidittico}, transforming ‘a branch into a forest’,\textsuperscript{95} is evident.

Moreover, \textit{La vera storia} offers a further narrativic dimension. This is connected to the character of the \textit{Cantastorie} (storyteller),\textsuperscript{96} who performs six \textit{Ballate}. These do not belong to the narrative unity of either Part, and provide external comments on the progress of events. Such \textit{Ballate} are spread across the whole opera, and although they are interrupted by (and interrupt) the other scenes, they are ordered according to a logical linearity. Each \textit{Ballata} moves the narrative forward by commenting on both the ongoing scenes and the previous \textit{Ballata}. From this point of view, the function of the \textit{Cantastorie} recalls Polo-Khan’s conversations in \textit{Le città invisibili} and the Reader’s story in \textit{Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore}. He acquires the role of glue, of an invisible link underlying the fragmentation of the narrative. And it is in his words that we can find an openness towards untold perspectives, towards those other stories hiding behind a story:

But if we go back up from one origin to another
what can we find?
A landscape that is certainly no better
than that promising us
the ill-omened continuation
of our story.
If however we could manage to fix
anyway a starting point
for our pains
there could well be a point in the future
where direct and indirect consequences will not

\textsuperscript{94} Luciano Berio, \textit{Un ricordo al futuro. Lezioni americane} trans. Simone Spagnolo (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2006), 87. I have translated this quote myself from the original Italian text of \textit{Un ricordo al futuro} as I believe it suggests the concept more effectively and succinctly than the English translation of \textit{Remembering the Future}, which paraphrases the sentence as follows: ‘we also wanted to suggest that a “true story” is always different from the way it appears at first sight and that in back of it there may be another story that is even truer’ [Berio, \textit{Remembering the Future}, 109]. As mentioned in Footnote 19 of Chapter 2, Berio wrote his Harvard Charles Eliot Norton lectures partly in Italian and partly in English, and as a result there were multiple versions of each lecture. For further details see:
- This thesis’ Footnote 19 of Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{95} Calvino, \textit{Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore}, 161.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{La vera storia}’s \textit{Cantastorie} was inspired by the Sicilian story teller and ballad singer of folkloristic tradition.
be felt anymore... 97

The Cantastorie hints at allusions, makes comments about past events and future possibilities, and signals the importance of addressing thoughts to ‘consequences’. He does not talk about the protagonists, nor about their conflicts. La vera storia does not explore any of the protagonists’ profiles. As Berio says ‘there is a general air of indifference with regard to the characters - who are not really characters - but a great deal of attention, on the other hand, is given to the narrative function they explicate’. 98 This aspect exemplifies the refusal of the characters to develop psychologically. These characters, Brechtianly, lose their personality in favour of off-stage (ultra-stage, trans-stage) concepts. 99 And so does the Cantastorie, who, accompanied by folkloristic instruments, ‘speaks directly to the spectator, or more accurately perhaps, speaks on behalf of the spectator, in the manner to which many of Brecht’s dramas have accustomed us’. 100 The absence - the roughness - of the characters’ profiles allows the narrative to shift and show unexpected perspectives: ‘the narrative is treated like an object which changes and in its turn modifies its subject’. 101 It is in this self-transformation and subject-modification that the narrative manifests its poly-dictic properties and all its possible stories. But this process, eventually, leads to an unavoidable question - which Berio asks and answers himself: ‘where does the true story of La vera storia lie? In the first or in the second part? I don’t know. Someone watching and listening might

97 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for La vera storia), trans. Simone Spagnolo, 697.
Original text in Italian:
Ma se risaliamo da un’origine all’altra
che cosa si ritrova?
Un panorama che non è certo meglio
di quello che ci promette
il seguito nefasto
della nostra storia.
Se però riuscissimo a fissare
colunque un punto di partenza
per i nostri mali
ci sarà pure nel futuro un punto
dove conseguenze dirette e indirette non
si facciano più sentire...

98 Berio, Remembering the Future, 110.

99 Such off-stage (ultra-stage, trans-stage) concepts refer to those archetypal ideas discussed in Paragraph 2.1.1. It can be argued that the lack of psychological connotations characterising La vera storia’s protagonists reflects the conceptual idea of representing the elements composing Carl Gustav Jung’s collective unconscious.

100 Fearn, Italian Opera since 1945, 179.

101 Berio, Remembering the Future, 110.
well come up with the hypothesis of a third part, truer than the other two perhaps’.\textsuperscript{102} This Third Part, to make an analogy, is that ‘garden whose terraces look out only on our mind’s lake’.\textsuperscript{103}

Similar allusions impregnate \textit{Un re in ascolto} too. In this work both characters and narrative constantly allude to another story, another theatre. Such allusions are introduced right at the beginning of the work (Example 7), when the principal character Prospero sings the following Aria:

I dreamt a theatre, another theatre, there exists another theatre, other than my theatre, a theatre, not mine, but that I know, I remember, or rather I remember having forgotten, only this, a theatre where an I whom I do not know sings...\textsuperscript{104}

\textbf{Example 7:} Prospero’s opening line from Berio’s \textit{Un re in ascolto} (bars 3-12) \textsuperscript{105}

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
Ho sognato un teatro, un altro teatro, esiste un altro teatro oltre il mio teatro un teatro non mio, che pure io conosco, io ricordo, ossia ricordo d'aver dimenticato, solo questo, un teatro dove un io che non conosco canta...
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 112

\textsuperscript{103} Italo Calvino, \textit{Le città invisibili}, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 2012) p.113. Arguably, this sentence (said by Marco Polo in \textit{Le città invisibili}) is one of the most remarkable passages of the novel. Through this line Marco Polo reveals to emperor Kublai Khan (and to the reader) that there is a world (‘our mind’s lake’) that exists alongside the real, experienceable world.

\textsuperscript{104} Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for \textit{Un re in ascolto: Arie di Prospero}), trans. Simone Spagnolo, 750. Original text in Italian:
\begin{verbatim}
Ho sognato un teatro, un altro teatro, esiste un altro teatro oltre il mio teatro un teatro non mio, che pure io conosco, io ricordo, ossia ricordo d'aver dimenticato, solo questo, un teatro dove un io che non conosco canta...
\end{verbatim}

The other theatre Prospero refers to is the theatre of his dreams, which adds a further point of view to the imaginary perspectives La vera storia had already created. Un re in ascolto develops its multi-narrative upon the bivalent appearance of Prospero, who embodies a double character: he is both a king and an old theatrical impresario. The opera centres upon two main, coexisting stories. On one side Prospero acts the role of a king listening to noises coming in various directions from his castle so as to learn about the loyalty of the people surrounding him, eventually finding out that his wife is unfaithful to him and his authority is in decline. On the other side, Prospero acts as an old theatrical impresario who gradually loses control of events during the theatrical rehearsals of Shakespeare's The Tempest. The two stories fully intersect: the impresario becomes the protagonist of the play which he is unsuccessfully attempting to put on stage, but the stage itself, in turn, transforms into the king’s castle. The multi-narrative is also reflected in the structure of the libretto, which is composed of texts taken from several authors (in the same postmodernist manner Berio adopted for Opera). This created a juxtaposition that stretched the narrative’s temporality far beyond Prospero’s chronological events. As the composer says, ‘past, present and future continuously fuse within the scene, the text and the music’. The narrative is therefore not only multiple, but also, and most importantly, a-temporal, perhaps omni-temporal. In this work the three Aristotelian unities are totally annulled and the fabula transforms into Eco’s continuum. Such narrative fragmentation and a-temporality compelled Berio himself to refuse to define his work as an opera. In fact, to the question ‘is this an opera?’, the composer comments ‘I don’t think so. There is no previous history, there is neither a network of actions nor a story consisting of events and feelings expressed by persons who by singing come to terms with moral conflicts’.

The name Prospero deliberately comes from Shakespeare's The Tempest.

Prospero’s Arias come from Calvino’s original texts; the three scenes titled Audizioni are derived from Wystan Auden’s The Sea and that Mirror; various texts from Friedrich Hidebrand von Einsiedel and Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter’s Die Geisterinsel (The spirit island) are used for the Concertati scenes; and, in Duetto II, the character of Regista quotes from Berio and Calvino’s conversations about the work.

Berio never defined his stage work as Operas, but as Azioni musicali (Musical actions), as he wanted to stress upon the fact that, as he says, ‘music is the real director’ (Berio, Un re in ascolto, CD).

However, the most significant aspect of *Un re in ascolto* resides in the nature of its theatre, which leads the concept of *teatro polidittico* to further implications: it opens to those perspectives directly related to the dream and the imagination. It shows that Prospero’s other theatre lives within dreams (‘I dreamt a theatre, another theatre’) and memories (‘I remember, or rather I remember having forgotten, only this, a theatre’). The *teatro polidittico* extends toward a *teatro del sogno* (theatre-of-the-dream), and a *teatro dell’immaginazione* (theatre-of-the-imagination). Such an opening of perspectives recalls the father of phenomenology Edmund Husserl’s ‘kingdom of the possibilities of consciousness’ (das Reich der Bewusstseins-möglichkeiten), a kingdom made of all the intangible things, our fantasies, imaginations and dreams. And, to a certain extent, it also recalls philosopher David Kellogg Lewis’s theory of the possible worlds. It is in Prospero’s words that such intangible fantasies manifest: ‘my kingdom is not a visible and tangible land’, ‘my kingdom is a mobile impalpable expanse, it is the bridge, it is the river, it is the bridge-river of music that flies’. *Un re in ascolto*’s multi-narrative gives life to Eco’s ‘white spaces’ needing to ‘be filled’: it transforms the ongoing action into a path open to innumerable, possible stories. The *teatro dell’immaginazione*, thus, becomes the *teatro delle possibilità* (theatre-of-possibilities).

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112 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for *Un re in ascolto: Arie di Prospero*), 750

113 Ibid., 750

114 The ‘kingdom of the possibilities of consciousness’ (das Reich der Bewusstseins-möglichkeiten) is a concept discussed in Edmund Husserl’s *Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge, 1901); this writing is part of *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Teil* (Logical Investigations. Vol. 2). The concept indicates the portion of our knowledge composed by both our mental representations of the real experienceable world and everything else that is possible in our minds (imaginations, fantasies, dreams, etc.). For further reference see: Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations. Vol 2* (International Library of Philosophy), ed. Dermot Moran, trans. J. N. Findlay (London & New York: Routledge, 2001).

115 David Kellogg Lewis is an American philosopher who presented in his work, *On the plurality of worlds* (1986), the thesis that the world we are part of is but one of a plurality of worlds. His theory maintains that all the “worlds of the if” that could have been, could be and will be able to be, exists somewhere for real.

116 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for *Un re in ascolto: Arie di Prospero*), 760. These words are sung by Prospero in *Aria IV* (fig.44). The original Italian lines respectively read as follows: ‘Il mio regno non è un territorio che si vede e si tocca’ and ‘Il mio regno è una distesa mobile impalpabile, è il ponte, è il fiume, è il ponte-fiume di musica che vola’.

2.2 It makes no difference and the non-linear-narrative

I will now discuss It makes no difference in relation to non-linear narrative. I will initially provide an outline of my opera’s structure and content, and will then highlight similarities and differences with the aforementioned Italian operas.

2.2.1 It makes no difference’s multi-narrative outline

It makes no difference’s multi-narrative principally develops on two levels: on a text level, the libretto presents a number of juxtaposed extracts taken from various passages of literature; and on the music level, the composition is sectioned into musical scenes (as a number opera) within which the musical material is not determined by the succession of events, but is built on the characters’ dramaturgical roles. As mentioned in Chapter One, It makes no difference does not present a narrativic evolution, nor a directionality of events leading to possible conclusions (there is no cause-effect mechanism between the events). Similarly, the musical material is not developed so as to lead to and imply a linearity (and/or directionality) and conclusion. As Example 8 shows, it presents a number of fixed musical universes which alternate depending on the protagonists’ entries on stage. Such universes are defined by a number of musical parameters (melodies, chords, scales, rhythms, instrumentation, etc.), which are assigned to characters and return every time they appear. However, this is not exact repetition, but an elaboration of fixed musical parameters.

The literary extracts composing the libretto are taken from a variety of books by different authors and short excerpts taken from several contemporary newspapers and magazines. The libretto also includes a number of lines written by myself, which have the function of providing a fluent juxtaposition of the literary extracts and enhance the characters’ profiles.

118 The Common People (the choir) is here considered as one character. Although being composed by several individuals, it stands for a stereotype, a unified entity.

119 The libretto’s literary extracts include (in alphabetic order): Massimo Cacciari’s Hamletica (2009); Italo Calvino’s fable Invece era un’altra (It was another woman instead, 1943-1944) and Il castello dei destini incrociati (The castle of crossed destinies, 1973); Tommaso Cerno’s Inferno: La Commedia del Potere (Hell: the Power’s Comedy, 2013); Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s White Nights (1848); Umberto Eco’s Il Nome della Rosa (The Name of the Rose, 1980); Dario Fo’s Un Clown vi Seppellirà (A Clown will Bury You, 2013); Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774); Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol’s Dead Souls (1842); James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake (1939); Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis (1915) and The Trial (1914-1915); and several newspapers and magazines. A full list of newspaper quotes can be found in the attached ‘Libretto with References’. All texts, originally written in different languages, have been translated into English.
Example 8: Structure of *It makes no difference*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Vocal Force</th>
<th>Musical Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 1 - Fable: not understood</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 2 - Osso and Mastrosso: spiritual poverty and criminality</td>
<td>Osso and Mastrosso</td>
<td>duo</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 3 - Who is to blame? 1</td>
<td>Common People</td>
<td>choir</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream</td>
<td>Carcagnosso</td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 5 - Who is to blame? 2</td>
<td>Common People</td>
<td>choir</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 6 - Fable: still not understood</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 7 - Osso and Mastrosso: belonging and model of virtue</td>
<td>Osso and Mastrosso</td>
<td>duo</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 8 - Who is to blame? 3</td>
<td>Common People</td>
<td>choir</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 9 - Carcagnosso: self-moral</td>
<td>Carcagnosso</td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>D (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 10 - Fable: now it is clear!</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>solo</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale</td>
<td>The Jokers</td>
<td>trio + instr.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 12 - Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience</td>
<td>Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso</td>
<td>trio + instr.</td>
<td>B+D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 13 - The Jokers: a finite number of elements multiplies by billions of billions</td>
<td>The Jokers</td>
<td>trio + instr.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 14 - Who is to blame? 4</td>
<td>Common People</td>
<td>choir</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 15 - Everyone against everyone</td>
<td>Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso, Carcagnosso and Common People</td>
<td>tutti (counter-point)</td>
<td>A+B+C+D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 16 - The Jokers: the world has to be read upside down</td>
<td>The Jokers</td>
<td>trio</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCENE 17 - Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>tutti (choral)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of these extracts are originally dialogues, but they are all extrapolated from passages of prose that do not establish theatrical conversations of any sort. In *It makes no difference* the theatricality is developed either by monologues (the character speaks/sings to himself or the audience), or the combined passages of literature generate conversations made of unrelated quotations (the characters do not ask or reply to each other, they just speak to each other). At the same time, the literary extracts are totally decontextualised from their original sources. None of
them refer to the books they are taken from. They therefore function as new texts belonging to a new work. From this perspective such a literary juxtaposition differs from other poly-source librettos (as for instance Opera or La Passion selon Sade) in that it does not provide either a postmodernist vision, or references to the historical past. Instead, it uses other authors’ words to construct a multi-narrative with no precise time and space. Differently from Berio and Bussotti’s operas, It makes no difference does not allude to the past in order to merge different historical times within one dramatic representation. It instead creates a sort of omni-temporal-present, a semper-praesens (always-present): all events, although chronologically non-said and non-given, constantly act as a representation of the Now (the Zeit) - the current Italian socio-political condition. However, the chosen literary extracts are carefully selected: they all touch on the topics It makes no difference puts forward.120

2.2.2 From stations to snapshots

I am not referring to It makes no difference’s scenes as ‘stations’.121 This is because the term station can be interpreted in two ways, one agreeing with my opera’s conception of scene, and the other not. If the term station is intended in its Latin meaning of stationem (meaning static, non-moving), it can be used to describe the concept of stable-instability discussed in Chapter One. If, on the contrary, it is intended as a place of arrival and departure, then it goes against what happens in my opera. Therefore, I prefer to adopt the conventional term scene. This however does not have to be understood as the classical framework enclosing the Aristotelian norms, but rather in its etymological meaning of scaena (Latin) and skênê (Greek), signifying a covered place for actors, stage, pro-scênium. It makes no difference’s scenes aim to be snapshots, unmoving images depicting a static condition, suggesting a contemporary reportage.

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120 For example Calvino’s works explore the matter of story-telling, Gogol that of unjust bureaucracy, Dostoyevsky the theme of dream, Cacciari the concept of openness, etc.

121 The concept of station is discussed in Paragraph 2.1.1 The rejection of Aristotelian norms.
2.2.3 Repetitions as forward-motion

A specific narrativic functionality is assigned to the Narrator. Her role consists of reading the same identical text three times, but each time she presents a different relationship between herself and the story she reads. The first time, at the beginning of the opera, she is confused about it; the second time she is frustrated by not understanding it; and the third time she appears confident as she finally comprehends its sense. Therefore, the Narrator’s function is that of implicitly suggesting to the audience a key to interpret the other scenes and their undisclosed relationships. Her words ‘we always happen to mistake each other’, for instance, function as the explanation of the others’ behaviour.

Her shifts of mood, thus, move the narrative forward. She is the only character that resembles some sort of evolution (from not-understanding to understanding). While all other characters are inescapably locked within their stable-instability lives, she goes forward and resolves her doubts. She functions, therefore, as the on-stage representation of the audience’s mind, which travels her journey with her seeking comprehension. One could make an analogy between her role and Calvino’s Reader in Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore. However, while Calvino’s Reader travels forward through diverse and progressive events, the Narrator is constrained to go three times through the same story. Her progression does not reside either in the fabula or in the Syuzhet; her forward-motion is only intellectual. It is solely through her repetitions that the spectator’s thought can be active and evolve. She has the same function as Berio’s Cantastorie, but while the latter sings about what happened by referring to it, the Narrator bases her relationship with the rest of the opera on allusions and metonymies.

One may argue that also the other characters repeat the same texts. Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso do repeat a few lines, though these are their ‘slogans’ (‘How shiny! How sparkly!’ and ‘Boom...it’s going to explode, Baam...a big explosion’). These are phrases that mark their profiles and connect their respective scenes. The texts that are relevant about them rely on all the other words they say/sing. The Common People also repeat the same words (‘Where is he? Where is he?’), but they are inescapably locked within those words, they cannot say anything else. The only thing Common People do is irrationally search for someone to blame. They do not apply any logic or rationality to their actions. On the contrary, the Narrator’s repetitions are indeed logical: she does not repeat herself because it is the only thing she is able do, but because she wants to logically and rationally comprehend it. Her repetitions are intentional repetitions; the others’ repetitions are identical pictures superimposed in time.

**Syuzhet** is a Russian term that translates as *plot of a narrative or subject*. It originated in Russian Formalism and is employed in the study of narratology. This term refers to the manner in which the facts/events of a story (the fabula) are put in order by the narrator, who often alters the chronological order of the fabula and/or introduces events that do not have a cause-effect relationship with each others, as for instance free digressions or descriptions.
She implicitly creates a prologue and an epilogue that coincide in literary terms, but generate different meanings although the text is the same. She also creates a narrativic entity that could be called media-logue - a logos taking place in the middle of the work (Scene Six) - which draws from the pro-logue and drives toward the epi-logue. Thus, the Narrator functions like glue - as in Calvino’s Polo-Khan conversations and Berio’s Cantastorie - but, simultaneously, she is also glued to her own text. It is only through her returns and repetitions that the overall fragmentation of the narrative structure is kept together. In this sense her repetitions do not appear as mere repetitions, but as doors opening further perspectives. This recalls Jorge Luis Borges’s analysis of Robert Frost’s lines ‘And miles to go before I sleep / And miles to go before I sleep’, in which he comments: ‘the same lines are repeated word for word, twice over, yet the sense is different’. Indeed, the Narrator’s repetitions are not identical: their return, unavoidably, demands re-interpretation in the light of the other events. Her line ‘it makes no difference’ is probably the most explicit phrase in the whole opera: when the Narrator repeats it for the third time all the good-bad/right-wrong ambiguities of all the other characters are revealed: they are neither good, bad, right, nor wrong. They simultaneously embody all these adjectives and none of them. Any possible evaluation would simply ‘make no difference’.

2.2.4 The absence of the set and the sharing of the toy-balls

A further element contributing to the fulfilment of It makes no difference’s multi-narrative relies in the absence of any scenic set. All the events of the opera are not set anywhere, nor are they framed within a time - neither historical nor chronological. From a spatial point of view, It makes no difference’s scenic contextualisation can be seen in two ways: all scenes appear to share the same space (as if the characters happen to pass by the same place) or take place in various locations (each character generates his own imaginary set). There is no scenic element suggesting whether the scenes happen in the same place, one after the other, or in different locations. The notion of space is deliberately left to the spectators’ imagination. So is the notion of time: there is no logical or chronological succession of events, and every scene could be the anâlêpis and/or prolepsis of

124 Robert Frost, ‘The death that is the cold night’ in Stopping by woods on a snowy evening, Stanza 4, lines 15-16.
126 For a definition of anâlêpis and prolepsis see Note 43 in Chapter Two.
the others. This mechanism recalls Valentino Bucchi’s opera *Una Notte in Paradiso* (A Night in Heaven, 1959-1960), in which ‘actors’ voices and comments by the chorus anticipate the action, carry it back in time, slow it down, whirl it around, so that the dimension of time is always cancelled out’. However, while Bucchi’s opera is stably anchored to one story, *It makes no difference*’s time-displacement occurs across several narratives. My opera does not feature any referential system that internally connects its events (as Berio’s *Opera* or *La vera storia*) and there are no historical references recalling a historical contextualisation (as in Bussotti’s operas). *It makes no difference* is entirely founded on the notions of a-temporality and a-spatiality. To some extent, events, characters and their perpetual yearning recall John Wyclif’s *omni*-temporal being, an always-existing entity with no time and place.

However, the absence of spatio-temporal elements is partly compensated for by the use of toy-balls. These are the only props that join the different scenes and characters. Their role is unique as it connects the various events through a semiotic principle. It should appear evident that toy-balls have nothing to do with the topics so far discussed. They, in fact, are never used or referred to as toy-balls during the course of the opera. They act as decontextualised objects representing other things - either material objects or ideas. The toy-balls exemplify the semiotization of objects, a principle maintaining that any visible object has the inherent property of being simultaneously signifier and signified. As scholar Keir Elam explains ‘the very fact of their [of those objects manifesting the principle of semiotization] appearance on stage suppresses the practical function of phenomena in favour of a symbolic or signifying role, allowing them to participate in dramatic representation’. Thus, the toy-balls are a further metaphorical element: depending on usage and ostention they become symbols creating imaginary relationships across the scenes. They acquire

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128 John Wyclif (c. 1330-1384) was an English Scholastic philosopher, theologian, reformer and university teacher at Oxford. His concept of ‘being’ is discussed in his *Continuatio Logicae* (Continuation of Logic, dated about 1360-63 according to Thomson) and *De Materia et Forma* (On Matter and Form, dated 1370 and early 1372 according to Thomson).

129 For instance, the toy-balls epitomise thoughts and individuals when the Narrator holds and shows them to the audience, or weapons when the Common People throw them at each other, or a symbol of frustration when the Narrator lets them fall on the floor in Scene Six.


131 The word ‘ostention’ comes from the Latin *ostendere*, meaning to show. It was used by semiotician Umberto Eco to refer to moments in oral communication when, instead of using words, people substitute actions. E.g. In response to a child’s question ‘what’s a pebble?’, instead of replying with a gloss (‘it’s a small stone worn into a shape by water’) one seize the nearest example on the beach or ground and demonstrates it to the child.
an implicit narrativic function in that they generate a unity of narration across the work and a constant stream of ostentational narration. All characters, through the presence of toy-balls, become a community (although they appear unaware of each other), and all scenes become part of the same fabula (although the syuzhet does not have a linearity). The toy-balls, as the Narrator’s allusions, compose that undetermined omni-temporality along which the disconnected events take place.

Such theatrical matters regarding set and toy-balls demonstrates how much investigation can, and has to be made in terms of collaboration between myself as a composer, the director, actors, and possibly the designer. Such a potential for further investigation can provide some practical and artistic questions for the composer, implying the alteration or modification of the score in order to incorporate within the composition the theatrical object of the toy-balls in a more appropriate manner and depending on the production.

2.2.5 Now and here: teatro polidittico inverso

The absence of a set and the presence of the toy-balls create a teatro dell’immaginazione in which the audience is stimulated to intellectually and autonomously participate. Their imagination, however, is not asked to establish a chronological order, but a logical one. From this point of view my opera shows a direct legacy with Berio’s Opera and Un re in ascolto, but its implications are different. Berio’s application of imagination leads to the intangibility of dreams (‘I dreamt a theatre’), whereas It makes no difference guides the spectators’ imagination to the present, socio-political reality (‘It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other’). Indeed through the imagination It makes no difference’s a-temporality and a-spatiality create a spatio-temporal restriction that actualises in a representation of the now and the here. The process that happens is the exact opposite to the manifested one: the represented a-temporality reduces to the now (to the present time), and the a-spatiality restricts to the here (to today’s Italy). If the events of Un re in

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132 With the expression ostentational narration (which I coined for this discussion), I intend to describe a narration made by acts of ostentions. The toy-balls (signifiers), shown to the audience, generate meanings (signifieds) which in turn determine and enrich the narration.

133 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for Un re in ascolto: Arie di Prospero), 750.

134 Simone Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). This line is said by the Narrator in Scenes One, Six and Seven, and also by all three mafioso in the Finale, Scene Seventeen.
ascollto, La Passion selon Sade, etc., lead to a chronological and multi-dimensional openness,\textsuperscript{135} It makes no difference interrupts such expansion and makes its events channel in a precise time and territory. The poly-dictic process,\textsuperscript{136} thus, occurs in an inverted manner: the ‘box plastered with small mirrors’ decomposes little by little as the opera progresses, until leaving only the ‘little book’ that composed the ‘library’.\textsuperscript{137} And it is as if that ‘little book’, through a logical and inversely proportional process, is to be found exactly in the book from which the Narrator reads her story. Hence, if I could grant myself a licence, I would like to define It makes no difference as a teatro polidittico inverso (inverted polydictic theatre).

Through such imagination It makes no difference exemplifies Berio’s idea of music-theatre:

Music theatre is not always explicit and it does not necessarily produce action but, rather, thought. In practice it tends to be self-referential. When its experience expands beyond the boards of the stage, this does not occur by means of an illusory psychological extension of the stage space, but by means of our processes of thought.\textsuperscript{138} It makes no difference’s narration indeed manifests through a mental process and generates active thought rather than passive representation. However an unexpected paradox occurs: the intrinsic process of It makes no difference’s inverted-polydictic-theatre, by re-elaborating the events’ non-linearity, brings the Aristotelian norms back: time, space and action are born again in the mind, which will be able, at an individual level (of each individual spectator), to generate consequences. In It makes no difference, time, place and action do not belong to the dramatic representation, but merely to thought. Hence, the Aristotelian unities, through the inverted-polydictic-theatre, live as mental (internal) consequences, not as theatrical (external) parameters. Somehow, the saying tempūs regit actum\textsuperscript{139} (time rules action) transforms into actūs regit tempus (action rules time): the

\textsuperscript{135} The term openness has to be understood in terms of spatio-temporal dilation, as discussed in Paragraph 2.1.3.

\textsuperscript{136} As discussed in paragraphs 2.1.8 (Polydictic-theatre and theatre-of-the-imagination: La vera storia and Un re in ascolto) the term poly-dictic indicates a process through which from a fixed (limited) number of elements the viewer (spectator, reader, contemplator, etc.) is able to spatio-temporally enlarge his/her perception. To describe such a process I quoted a passage from Calvino’s Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore, which recalls Athanasius Kircher’s polydictic theatre. This, consisting of a box plastered with about sixty mirrors, was able to multiply, through reflections (like a kaleidoscope), a small object and turn it into a multitude of objects (a ‘little book’ into a ‘library’).

\textsuperscript{137} Calvino, Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore, 161.

\textsuperscript{138} Berio, Remembering the Future, 120.

\textsuperscript{139} The saying tempūs regit actum is a Latin idiomatic expression. It is still used nowadays in jurisprudence in relation to retrospective principles, and it usually translates as ‘time rules action’. I have chosen to adopt this saying, in the context of this essay, to highlight the relationship between It makes no difference and the Aristotelian norms of time and place. This idiomatic expression, and the inverted usage I made of it (actūs regit tempus), describes the cause-effect relationship between the two theatrical parameters of time and action (in the sense of represented, on-stage action).
timeless and placeless events determine the spatio-temporal borders of the when and the where, not the opposite.
CHAPTER THREE: Openness to a plurality of interpretations

3.1 The concept of openness: origins, developments and influences

This third and final chapter is dedicated to the concept of openness. This term indicates the property that all art works have in being open to manifold interpretations. Such a concept is discussed by the writer Umberto Eco in *Opera Aperta* (The Open Work, 1962). In this work he maintained that any ‘work of art is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity’. The openness is an implicit, innate characteristic that ‘tends to encourage the interpreter towards acts of conscious freedom, to place him as the active centre of a web of boundless relations’.

In this chapter I shall argue that such a concept is a crucial and common feature among experimental Italian post-WWII operas. However, the matter of openness transcends operatic and musico-theatrical genres. It is rooted and developed within a number of fields, including philosophy, semiology and literature, among others. My discussion, thus, will both provide a cross-disciplinary investigation into the concept of openness and discuss how it influenced Italian avant-garde opera. In doing so, I will limit my discussion to those disciplines, works and authors (Italian and non-Italian) who have demonstrated a direct influence on Italian opera. At the same time my argument implicitly criticises those other scholarly works that do not put forward the matter of openness as a central feature of this particular genre.

3.1.1 *Opera Aperta* and its influence

In *Opera Aperta* Eco maintains that all art works are open entities that come to life only through a process of cooperation between the spectator (reader, listener, etc.) and the art work.

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I have translated this quote myself from the original Italian text of *Opera Aperta* as I believe it suggests Eco’s concept more relevantly, within the context of this thesis, than the English translation of *The Open Work*, which translates the sentence as follows: ‘[openness] tends to encourage “acts of freedom” on the part of the performer and place him at the focal point of a network of limitless interrelations.’ (*The Open Work*, 4).
itself.\(^3\) Therefore the meaning of an art work is unavoidably manifold, as it depends on each individual’s perception. *Opera Aperta* has been very influential for the development of post-WWII Italian opera, particularly for the works of Berio. *Opera*,\(^4\) in fact, was the outcome of a rappresentazione that he had previously planned in collaboration with Eco himself and writer Furio Colombo. Such interest in the manifold interpretations that an art work can generate was widely spread across avant-garde composers (and also writers and theatre practitioners).\(^5\) The relationship between the stories they narrated and the audience’s intellectual activity demonstrates the composers’ curiosity for the open possibilities of narrative. Such openness of interpretations is certainly exemplified by the usage of non-linear narrative, which, together with the various systems of allusions and references, stimulates the spectators to create their own narratives.

Luciano Berio focuses particular attention on openness. In his ‘Dialogo fra te e me’ (Dialogue between you and me)\(^6\) the composer simulates an interview between himself and an imaginary interviewer (you, the reader). In this writing Berio discusses his opera *Un re in ascolto* and tries to reveal what its story is about, providing different synopsises and meanings for his work.\(^7\) This text reveals that Berio’s intention was not only to create a narrative that could contain several stories, but also, and most importantly, a work that could be open to manifold interpretations. His theatre-of-imagination and -dream indeed aim to stimulate the spectators’ interpretations. However such active (mental) participation by the audience does not have to be intended in Brechtian terms, as it is not addressing ideological or political matters. Its ultimate purpose resides in the mere openness to imagination, or perhaps in openness for its own sake.

\(^3\) This thesis is also discussed in Umberto Eco’s *Lector in Fabula*. However this work predominately focuses on literary text, not on art works in general as *Opera Aperta* does. For further reference see: Umberto Eco, *Lector in Fabula: La Cooperazione Interpretativa nei Testi Narrativi*. 11th ed. (Milano: Bompiani, 2010).

\(^4\) The first drafts of Berio’s *Opera* indicate that it was originally titled *Opera Aperta*, as Umberto Eco’s book.

\(^5\) All the works discussed in the previous Chapters, including both operas and novels, are an example of this.

\(^6\) ‘Dialogo fra te e me’ can be found in:
- Luciano Berio, booklet from *Un re in ascolto*, CD prod. Wulf Weinmann (CD, Col legno, LC 7989, 1984);

\(^7\) At the beginning of ‘Dialogo fra te e me’ (Dialogue between you and me) Berio says that his opera *Un re in ascolto* narrates ‘the events of a king listening to the building up of accidents around him and impotently witnessing the gradual fall of his kingdom and power’. Subsequently he affirms that his opera is about ‘a theatre director who is alone in his office while on the stage nearby a new musical show is being rehearsed. There are many difficulties and there is some confusion. The director dreams another theatre. He feels faint and in the delirium he is overtaken by memories. He dies, alone, on an empty stage’. Then he describes it in a further different way: ‘the theme of *Un re in ascolto* is the rehearsal of a show. A powerful theatre man, Prospero, is in trouble. The new show is a remake of Shakespeare’s *The tempest*, but there are not enough means to produce it and there is not an agreement with the very ambitious director’. These quotes are taken from: Luciano Berio, on CD booklet from *Un re in ascolto*, prod. Wulf Weinmann (CD, Col legno, LC 7989, 1984).
To highlight the relationship between Italian contemporary opera and the matter of openness I took *Un re in ascolto* as my example, but the other aforementioned works equally exemplify this feature. Does *La Passion selon Sade* not open the roads of imagination toward manifold interpretations of the intellectual past? Does *La vera storia* not implicitly demand imagining further stories beyond the narrated ones? Such a process of openness somehow recalls the principle of insufficient reason, which states that ‘if there is no reason to believe that the possible Statuses of Nature have different probabilities of happening, they are equiprobable’.\(^8\) Similarly, the multi-narratives of the discussed operas lead to ‘equiprobable’ perspectives. This is to say that all interpretations are equally valid, and a narrative cannot have one ‘true story’.\(^9\)

Thus, it can be argued that Italian post-WWII operas transcend the on-stage representations, and, in so doing, tell us that each narration does not end within the representational framework (the on-stage occurrences), but continues in each spectator’s mind through individual imagination and interpretation. Openness, hence, is a constant and underlying theme that implicitly acts behind the scenes.

**3.1.2 The philosophical legacy**

Eco’s idea of *opera aperta*\(^10\) is not a new concept that originated with the author’s innovative thought. It is the outcome of his analysis of the avant-garde artistic trends that arose during the first half of the twentieth century.\(^11\) The idea that art works are open to a plurality of interpretations finds its roots in the relationship between reality and representation, a matter that goes back to pre-platonic philosophers. Such a relationship establishes that the *phenomena* we experience in the sensible reality become subjective (mental) representations within the act of perception. These representations, in turn, are the fruit of our individual interpretations and

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\(^9\) I quote the title of Berio’s *La vera storia*, which translates as ‘The true story’.

\(^10\) It is worth pointing out that Umberto Eco’s term *opera* does not refer to the *opera lirica* or Opera as a music genre. This word has to be understood in its Italian meaning of work, or Latin of *opus*. Thus, Eco’s *opera* indicates all art works.

\(^11\) Eco was fascinated by the structure of a number of musical compositions based on indeterminate or interchangeable forms. Examples include Stockhausen’s *Klavierstück*, Berio’s *Sequenza per flauto* and Pousseur’s *Scambi*. These works offer the performer the freedom to decide how to interpret the details or the structure itself of the piece.
influence the meaning of the things we experience in life. It is possible to find this issue as early as Plato’s12 ‘Allegory of the cave’,13 where the philosopher writes that:

We must reject the conception of education professed by those who say that they can put into the mind knowledge that was not there before - rather as if they could put sight into blind eyes. 14

This point is also discussed in DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach’s *Theories of Mass Communication*, in the chapter dedicated to the individual differences theory:15

[Individuals’] patterns of behaviour are modified in uncounted ways because of what they learn from their society and culture. Thus to understand people is to understand that each is psychologically distinct. No two people have identical learning experience. Therefore, no two wind up having the same inner patterns of learned modes of adaptation to the world around them. 16

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12 The relationship between reality and representation was discussed even before Plato. It is possible to find documentation of this in the words of pre-socratic sophist Gorgias from Lentini (Sicily, about 484-380 BC), arguably the first nihilist. In his *On nature or the non-existent* he states: ‘1) nothing exists; 2) even if something exists, nothing can be known about it; 3) even if something can be known about it, knowledge can’t be communicated to others; and 4) even if it can be communicated, it cannot be understood.’ [Nicola Abbagnano, *Storia della filosofia. 1: Il Pensiero Greco e Cristiano: dai Presocratici alla Scuola di Chartres*, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Roma: Gruppo Editoriale L’Espresso, 2006), 97]. *On nature or the non-existent* is a philosophical writing which was lost; however two long fragments have been preserved in philosopher Sextus Empiricus’s *Against the Professors* and *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, written by an anonymous author.

Gorgias’ theses aimed at demonstrating that the being is one, unchanging and timeless, and that it does not exist at all. He wrote: ‘how can anyone communicate the idea of color by means of words since the ear does not hear colors but only sounds?’ [Gorgias, in: Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson. trans. R.G. Bury. (London: Harvard University Press, 1949)]. With these words the pre-socratic sophist intended to demonstrate how reality is not communicable and therefore cannot be thought. Thoughts, according to Gorgias’ reasoning, do no exist, otherwise all the implausible and absurd things men are able to think would actually exist. This line of argument also leads to the idea that being is not knowable: if it is true that what is thought does not exist, then it is also true that what exists is not thought. As thoughts (and consequently the being) do not exist, they are not able to be communicated; we express ourselves through the word, but the word is not the being: by communicating through words, we do not communicate the being.

‘Gorgias’ conclusion is opposed to that of Protagoras’ doctrine. For Protagora everything is true, for Gorgias everything is false. Though, in practical terms, the significance of both theses is only one: the negation of the objectivity of thought’ (Abbagnano, *Storia della filosofia. 1*, 98).

13 ‘The Allegory of the Cave’ (also known as the ‘Analogy of the Cave’ or the ‘Parable of the Cave’) is an allegory presented by Plato in his *The Republic*. In this work, written as a dialogue between Socrates and Plato's brother Glaucon, the philosopher illustrates ‘our nature in its education and wish of education’ (The Allegory of the Cave, line 514a).


15 DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach approach this subject from a modern point of view, in that they take into account the modern sciences that study human knowledge. Such sciences comprise those fields of research that investigate the human mind and its relationship with the world. They are: psychology, the discipline involving scientific study of mental functions and behaviours; sociology, the study of human society and its origins, development, organisations and institutions; anthropology, the so called science-of-humanity, originating from the study of humanities, natural and social sciences, and investigating cross-cultural comparison and cultural relativism; and finally linguistics, the scientific study of human language, the principal (most developed) idiom at the basis of our communication. These four disciplines originally derive from the relationship between mind and knowledge and have evolved from the clashes, approaches and debates between philosophy and natural-science.

This passage highlights that human understanding is the product of society and culture. Understanding, thus, is the result of the experiential environment in which each one of us is immersed, or, as philosopher Martin Heidegger would have said, the world in which ‘we are thrown’. The reality-representation binomial reveals a dual existence of reality, which manifests under the guise of being and knowledge: being is that that immanently exists and knowledge is the mental representation of it. Such difference is essentially what semiotician Ferdinand Saussure’s defined as signified and signifier.

The being-knowledge duality not only provides an openness of perspectives with regards to the matter of interpretation, it also implies the impossibility of defining the meaning of sensible phenomena. These latter, in fact, are not objective entities and do not have univocal meanings that are possible to define a priori as essential and primary qualities of the phenomena themselves. They are perceivable and comprehensible only at a subjective a posteriori level. This reasoning reveals that the world’s things lack meaning and any phenomenon unavoidably epitomises an infinity of meanings and/or no-meaning at all. Arguably, Friedrich W. Nietzsche is the philosopher who brought this matter to its most extreme thinking. He wrote:

Thus, what is reality? A moving army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, [...] that, after a long usage, appear to people steady, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we forgot are illusions.

17 The expression ‘we are thrown’ is used by Martin Heidegger in his Sein und Zeit (Being and Time, 1927).

18 The terms signifier and signified indicate the two-faced entity of a sign (the representation of an object that implies a connection between itself and its object). The signifier is the audio-visual form that the sign takes, and the signified is the meaning that is conveyed. These two concepts where originally put forward by the Swiss linguist and semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure.

19 A posteriori, in this case, is intended to describe a sort of cause-effect process: a phenomenon does not own an objective entity (a being of its own) and therefore its meaning (what we initially thought was its objective entity) reveals itself to be an occurrence we individually assign after (a posteriori) the phenomenon itself. Such an alleged objective entity is therefore not the cause of what we understand as the meaning (effect) - it does not exist as an immanent property of the phenomenon itself - but it instead is our understanding of the phenomenon that acts as the cause determining its ultimate meaning (effect). Moreover, and most importantly, what we are here calling an objective entity is not objective at all: the fact that we define it through an a posteriori process makes it unavoidably subjective.

Eco’s openness is therefore a synonym of Nothingness.\textsuperscript{21} It is within openness to interpretations and meanings that the void of an ‘unlimited semiosis’\textsuperscript{22} comes to the fore. Such a void, which Eco also calls ‘segreto ermetico’,\textsuperscript{23} composes those ‘white spaces and interstices to be filled’\textsuperscript{24} by each of our minds. As he explains in his essay \textit{Interpretation and over-interpretation} (2004):

Any object, be it earthy or celestial, hides a secret. Each time a secret has been discovered, this will lead to another secret in a progressive movement tending to a final secret. The ultimate secret of the hermetic initiation is that everything is secret. It derives that the hermetic secret must be void.\textsuperscript{25}

3.1.3 Openness and Nothingness: from the \textit{Accademia degli Incogniti} to Corghi’s \textit{Blimunda}

The theatre-of-imagination that post-WWII Italian opera develops is certainly connected to the issue of Nothingness,\textsuperscript{26} and we can trace the origins of such interest back to early Venetian operas. Scholar Mauro Calcagno, in his essay ‘Signifying nothing: on the aesthetics of pure voice in early Venetian opera’ (2003), demonstrates how early Venetian opera composers found inspiration

\textsuperscript{21} I capitalise the word Nothingness in order to indicate it as a being (an entity), intended in philosophical terms. In my argument the word Nothingness does not only indicate its non-technical signification of ‘absence or cessation of life or existence’ and/or of ‘worthlessness or insignificance’ [Oxford dictionaries online, Oxford University Press, \textless \url{http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nothingness}\textgreater{} (accessed 4 July 2013)]. It also, and most importantly, defines the philosophical conception of the state of being nothing, or the property of having nothing. The matter of Nothingness (and of Nothing in general), as an existent or non-existential being, was already discussed by ancient Greek philosophers. According to scholar Cyril Bailey, the atomist Leucippus was the first to maintain that ‘Nothing has a reality attached to it’ [Cyril Bailey, \textit{The Greek Atomists and Epicurus: A Study} (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 75]. In addition, the capitalisation of the word Nothingness also aims to recall the philosophico-artistic theories of the Nothing put forward by the seventeenth-century Venetian \textit{Accademia degli Incogniti} (Academy of the Unknowns), who produced writings such as Marin Dall’Angelo’s \textit{Le Glorie del Niente} (The Glories of Nothing,1635) and Luigi Manzini’s \textit{Il Niente} (The Nothing, 1634). The members of the \textit{Accademia degli Incogniti} theorised the various forms and representations of the Nile, Nihil, Nulla (various Italian and Latin terms meaning Nothing), and listed a number of words and philosophical entities that, according to their theories, function as ‘figures of Nothing’. I will discuss the relationship between the \textit{Accademia degli Incogniti}, the matter of Nothingness and Italian Opera in the following paragraphs (particularly in 3.1.3 Openness and Nothingness: from the \textit{Accademia degli Incogniti} to Corghi’s \textit{Blimunda}).

\textsuperscript{22} The term ‘unlimited semiosis’ (\textit{semiosi illimitata}), coined by Umberto Eco, refers to the way in which the signified is endlessly commutable functioning in its turn as a signifier for a further signified.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Segreto ermetico} literally translates as ‘hermetic secret’. The word ‘hermetic’ has to be understood in its mystical-philosophical meaning derived from \textit{Hermes Trismegistus}’s doctrine, not simply as in its encyclopedic definition of ‘obscure’, ‘inscrutable’ - although the two meanings extensively coincide. For further reference see: Umberto Eco, ‘Sovrainterpretare i testi’ in \textit{Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione}, ed. Stefan Collini (Milano: Bompiani, 2004), 57-80.

\textsuperscript{24} Eco, \textit{Lector in Fabula}, 52.

Original Italian text: \textit{Spazi bianchi e di interstizi da riempire}

\textsuperscript{25} Umberto Eco, \textit{Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione}, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Bompiani, Milano, 2004), 43-44.

\textsuperscript{26} Arguably, the concept of non-linearity and the themes their narratives present partly demonstrate this.
in the doctrines of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, an intellectual circle that theorised the meaning of Nothing through an elaboration of tropes and philosophical writings. In discussing a melisma on the word *la* that the character Seneca executes in Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, Calcagno says that ‘the melisma on “la” is required by the very meaning of Beauty [the word that follows *la*] in the heterodox aesthetic of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*’. And he demonstrates that Beauty is a ‘figure of Nothing’, a word that represents the *Incogniti*’s concept of Nothingness. In addition, he highlights that the *Incogniti* counted among its members numerous librettists, including Giovanfrancesco Busenello, author of *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, and Giacomo Badoaro, the librettist of Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (1639-1640).

Calcagno’s writing, thus, provides evidence that the concept of openness and Nothingness constitutes a thread linking early Italian operas to the post-WWII works this thesis discusses. A recent example of a work featuring the theme of openness is composer Azio Corghi’s *Blimunda* (1990). This work is based on an ‘intermingling of what the composer and author call the “true story” (vera storia) and the “tale” (storia romanzata)’, and ‘includes what Corghi calls a “surreal game”, often presented as dream-sequences’. *Blimunda*’s scenario comprises three distinct spaces which allow the audience’s imagination to explore the possibilities of representation. The composer himself articulates such spaces into three kinds: the acoustic space, the imaginary space and the real space. Each of these spaces represents a typology of narration and serves the purpose of evoking *Blimunda*’s ‘true stories’ and ‘tales’, which indeed generate openness and imaginary narrations. Although this polyvalent work recalls numerous aspects from Berio’s theatrical works, Fearn says

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27 *Accademia degli Incogniti* translates as Academy of the Unknowns, a name that shows how the members of this circle were interested in unknown philosophical matters. As Mauro Calcagno discusses, the *Incogniti* addressed their attentions especially toward the matter of the ‘*Nihil, Nulla*’ (Mauro Calcagno, ‘Signifying nothing: on the aesthetics of pure voice in early Venetian opera’, The journal of musicology 20/4 (2003), 483), Latin and Italian words for Nothing.

28 *La* is the Italian singular female article for *the*.


30 The expression ‘figure of Nothing’ is used throughout Mauro Calcagno’s essay, who writes that ‘around the concept of Nothing the Incogniti built a constellation of related meanings, which we called “figures of Nothing.” These included Voice, Death, and Beauty, but also Time, Dust, Darkness, Dreams, Silence, Sleep, etc.’ (Calcagno ‘Signifying nothing: on the aesthetics of pure voice in early Venetian opera’, 489).

31 The connection between early Venetian opera and the matters of openness and Nothingness could arguably explain Berio’s choice of employing the text of Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* for his *Opera*, although the composer never touched upon this point.

32 Fearn, *Italian Opera since 1945*, 204.
that ‘in Blimunda, Corghi has created an opera in which the various elements work remarkably together, whether of fact and fantasy, of reality and dream, of acoustic, imaginary and real spaces’.  

3.1.3 The semiological legacy

The world of avant-garde Italian opera also had other influences that stimulated interest in the issue of openness. One of these influences came from the proponents of the Prague School’s Structuralism and the Russian Formalists. These contributed theories and research that investigated the relationship between art works and the spectators’ perceptions. On one hand their works analysed in structural (formal) terms the communicative power of theatrical and linguistic signs, and on the other they examined human cognition in relation to perception. Although their scholarship was principally addressed to theatrical and linguistic disciplines, their works indirectly influenced Italian opera, which found great inspiration in both prose theatre and literature.

Some of the principal theories the Prague School put forward are based upon semiological principles. These include the aforementioned semiotization of objects and the property of signs to be representative of classes-of-objects. In addition the Prague School highlighted that it is not necessary for a signified to be represented by its materially related signifier, so that ‘a real object may be substituted on the set by a symbol if this symbol is able to transfer the object’s own signs to

33 Fearn, Italian Opera since 1945, 205.

34 The Prague School Structuralism and the Russian Formalists, particularly focused on theatre and literary works. However, these disciplines, as I am discussing in this thesis, are strongly connected with Italian avant-garde opera. The works discussed in both Chapter One and Two, as for example Brecht and Calvino’s works, demonstrate the link and affinity between Italian avant-garde opera and both literature and prose theatre.

35 The ‘semiotization of objects’ is discussed in Paragraph 2.2.4. Such principle extends to all the other parameters composing the theatrical experience. We therefore have the semiotization of movements, of words, of gestures, of light statuses, etc.

36 The classes-of-objects representative property indicates that a material stage object, for instance a clock, ‘becomes a semiotic unit standing not directly for another (imaginary) clock but for the intermediary signified “clock”, i.e. for the class of objects of which it is a member’ (Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama, 8).

37 For example the material-object clock may be represented by a painted sign, a linguistic sign, a percussion instrument producing a regular ticking sound, or even an actor acting as a clock, with his arms moving like a clock’s hands. This property determines that a material clock, on stage, is not needed to represent a clock.
itself'. Such properties allow theatrical signs to be ‘connotations’. This term indicates that musico-theatrical signs are able to generate what scholar Keir Elam calls secondary-meanings, which are signifieds generated by the specific cultural background spectators have in relation to the contemplated signifiers. The secondary-meanings essentially represent what Russian linguist Petr Bogatyrev defined as ‘signs of signs’.

These semiological issues come together to demonstrate that any material or audible phenomenon comprised within a dramatic representation is able to epitomise or evoke any signified (meaning) whatsoever, be it a material object or a mere thought. A practical example of this is to be found in Shakespeare’s *The two gentlemen of Verona* (1589-1592), in which the clown Launce, engaged in a sort of metadramatic monologue, says:

Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father: no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that cannot be so neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! there 'tis: now, sit, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the

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39 This term had been adopted and discussed by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev in his *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943) and subsequently by Keir Elam in *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (1988). Elam describes the property of connotation as follows: ‘connotation is a parasitic semantic function, therefore, whereby the sign-vehicle of one sign-relationship provides the basis for a secondary-order sign-relationship’ (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 10-11).

40 Keir Elam says that ‘the theatrical sign inevitably acquires secondary-meanings for the audience, relating it to the social, moral and ideological values operative in the community of which performers and spectators are part’ (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 10). Therefore the function of the sign-vehicle becomes a carrier of meanings that goes beyond material objects or tangible things, assigning to a sign ulterior cultural significations. For example the costume of an actor/singer dressed as a knight may happen to signify for certain spectators regality or bravery while for others belligerence or intimidation.

41 The concept of ‘signs of signs’ is an alternative way to indicate the property of connotation. This is an expression used by the Russian linguist and ethnologist Petr Bogatyrev. For further reference see: Petr Bogatyrev, ‘Semiotics in the folk theatre’ in *Semiotics of art. Prague school Contributions*, ed. L. Matejka and J. R. Titunic (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976).

I make a direct use of such a concept in *It makes no difference*. This occurs in Scene 12 - Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience. In this scene, Mastrosso, overtaken by memories, realises that his previous events (and all the previous narrative fragments) are nothing else than ‘signs of signs’. His precise words are ‘signs of signs of signs...’.
dog - Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself. 42

In this passage Launce not only assigns to the material-object shoe the signification of human beings (father, mother), to the staff that of sister, and to himself that of dog, he also implicitly demonstrates how the meaning of a signifier can be interchangeable.

3.1.4 Openness in prose theatre: Pirandello, Fo and Brecht

The difference between the above passage by Shakespeare and modern Italian theatre (and opera) consists in the latter employing the matter of openness as a central theme. While the interchangeability of signs is an intrinsic feature of Launce’s monologue, in twentieth-century works the idea that signs’ meanings are interchangeable becomes an underlying theme. When in ‘Dialogo fra me e te’ Berio describes his opera through various synopses, he precisely articulates the idea that whatever dramatic representation he puts on stage would unavoidably act as a ‘sign of [another] sign’. 43 The referential furniture and audience-actors interchangeability in La Passion selon Sade place at the centre of the drama the very property of characters’ ‘role-exchange’. 44

In Italian prose-theatre we can find earlier examples of this in Luigi Pirandello’s works. In his comedy Così è (se vi pare) [It is so (if you think so), 1917] - a title that explicitly puts forward the theme of reality-versus-perception - Pirandello represents a hilarious situation in which the

42 This passage from Shakespeare’s The Two Gentlemen of Verona is referenced in Keir Elam’s The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama, in which the author discusses the concept of interchangeability of signifiers. I quote Shakespeare’s text directly from this source: Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama, 10.


44 Lucioli, Sylvano Bussotti, 48.
characters Laudisi and Signora Sirelli debate about how perspectives determine what is truth and false. Here is a short passage:

LAUDISI: [...] Now, you have touched me, have you not? And you see me? And you are absolutely sure about me, are you not? [...] Though, my dear madam, that does not prevent me from also being really what your husband, my sister, my niece, and Signora Cini take me to be, because they also are absolutely right!
SIGNORA SIRELLI: In other words you are a different person for each of us.
LAUDISI: Of course I'm a different person! And you, madam, pretty as you are, aren't you a different person, too?

45 It might be interesting to read the whole discussion between Così è (se vi pare)'s characters Laudisi and Signora Sirelli. This would better clarify the centrality of the reality-versus-perception theme in Pirandello’s work. Below is the entire passage, quoted from: Luigi Pirandello, ‘Right You Are! (If You Think So)’ in Luigi Pirandello: Three Plays, trans. Arthur Livingston and Edward Storer (New York: Dutton, 1922). Act I, Scene 2.

SIGNORA SIRELLI: [to her husband]. No dear, he's right, he's right. [Then turning to AMALIA.] The real truth, Amalia, is this: for all my husband says he knows, I never manage to keep posted on anything!
SIRELLI: And no wonder! The trouble is, that woman never trusts me! The moment I tell her something she is convinced it is not quite as I say. Then, sooner or later, she claims that it can't be as I say. And at last she is certain it is the exact opposite of what I say!
SIGNORA SIRELLI: Well, you ought to hear all he tells me!
LAUDISI: [laughing aloud]. May I speak, madam? Let me answer your husband. My dear Sirelli, how do you expect your wife to be satisfied with things as you explain them to her, if you, as is natural, represent them as they seem to you?
SIGNORA SIRELLI: And that means - as they cannot possibly be!
LAUDISI: Why no, Signora, now you are wrong. From your husband's point of view things are, I assure you, exactly as he represents them.
SIRELLI: As they are in reality!
SIGNORA SIRELLI: Not at all! You are always wrong.
SIRELLI: No, not a bit of it! It is you who are always wrong. I am always right.
LAUDISI: The fact is that neither of you is wrong. May I explain? I will prove it to you. Now here you are, you, Sirelli, and Signora Sirelli, your wife, there; and here I am. You see me, don't you?
SIRELLI: Well... er... yes.
LAUDISI: Do you see me, or do you not?
SIRELLI: Oh, I'll bite! Of course I see you.
LAUDISI: So you see me! But that's not enough. Come here!
SIRELLI: [smiling, he obeys, but with a puzzled expression on his face as though he fails to understand what LAUDISI is driving at]. Well, here I am!
LAUDISI: Yes! Now take a better look at me ... Touch me! That's it - that's it! Now you are touching me, are you not? And you see me! You're sure you see me?
SIRELLI: Why, I should say ...
LAUDISI: Yes, but the point is, you're sure! Of course you're sure! Now if you please, Signora Sirelli, you come here -- or rather ... no ... [Gallantly:] it is my place to come to you! [He goes over to SIGNORA SIRELLI and kneels chivalrously on one knee.] You see me, do you not, madam? Now that hand of yours ... touch me! A pretty hand, on my word! [He pats her hand.]
SIRELLI: Easy! Easy!
LAUDISI: Never mind your husband, madam! Now, you have touched me, have you not? And you see me? And you are absolutely sure about me, are you not? Well now, madam, I beg of you; do not tell your husband, nor my sister, nor my niece, nor Signora Cini here, what you think of me; because, if you were to do that, they would all tell you that you are completely wrong. But, you see, you are really right; because I am really what you take me to be; though, my dear madam, that does not prevent me from also being really what your husband, my sister, my niece, and Signora Cini take me to be - because they also are absolutely right!
SIGNORA SIRELLI: In other words you are a different person for each of us.
LAUDISI: Of course I'm a different person! And you, madam, pretty as you are, aren't you a different person, too?

Another example of prose theatre that features the theme of openness is to be found in the works of Italian actor, director and playwright Dario Fo. However Fo did not embed such a theme within the plot of his works, but made it a linguistic feature through the use of *grammelot*.\(^{47}\) The nonsense of this onomatopoeic language encapsulates both the concepts of openness to manifold interpretation and the void of meaning. His work *Mistero Buffo* (Comical Mystery, 1969) is an example of this.\(^{48}\) The passage titled the Neapolitan Grammelot of Razzullo presents the following text: \(^{49}\)

Prille, prille! Carabillu scaratillu of this tòo Rizúllo! Gaze how is beautiful and cetrúllo scaracàllo... cock strichíllo love zinno... zinne of love you have! Like apples of Aphrodite. Cucca! Cuciàcca! Of heaven sgnàcca... zinne sciollóse, chicken-like jags, mouth of cherry, kiss me or I died here! \(^{50}\)

It can be argued that the wish to incorporate openness within dramatic representations is also to be found in Brecht’s theatre. He, similarly to Fo, embedded it through a dramatic and linguistic feature. His *Verfremdungseffekt*\(^ {51}\) had the twofold purpose of articulating ‘the tendency for spellbound audiences to identify emotionally with characters on stage [and intending] to counter the

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\(^{47}\) The term *grammelot* indicates a style of language used in satirical theatre. It is a nonsense language with macaronic and onomatopoeic elements, often used in association with mimicry and pantomime. The term hails from the 16th century and it was used in the *Commedia dell’arte* to allow actors to both recall the audiences’ dialects and avoid censorship.

\(^{48}\) *Mistero Buffo* consists of a number of comical and tragicomical sketches comprising fifteen Mysteries and five Grammelot. However, it is interesting to notice that Dario Fo brought the use of *grammelot* outside theatrical environments too and often performed speeches in *grammelot* on occasions other than theatrical performances. Among these, it is worth mentioning his Nobel Lecture *Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes* (Against Jesters Who Defame and Insult) that he presented during his Nobel Prize acceptance speech on 7th December 1997. This lecture-speech was partly performed in *grammelot*, and the following passage is an extract from it:

‘Gurgle ... gurgle ... splash ... they sink ... houses, men, women, two horses, three donkeys ... heehaw ... gurgle. Undaunted, the priest continued to receive the confession of a nun: ’Te absolvi ... animus ... santi ... guurgle ... Aame ... gurgle ... The tower disappeared, the campanile sank with bells and all: Dong ... ding ... dop ... plock ...’ [Dario Fo, *Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes* in ‘NobelPrice.org: the official webside of the Nobel Price’ trans. Paul Claesson <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1997/fo-lecture.html> (accessed 3 July 2013)]

\(^{49}\) It has to be noted that this passage includes both existing Neapolitan words that make sense and meaningless words in *grammelot*. The words translated into English are those that make sense. The others are left in original *grammelot*.


\(^{51}\) *Verfremdungseffekt* translates from German as ‘alienation effect’ (and also as ‘distancing’ or ‘estrangement effect’). It is a performing art concept coined by playwright Bertold Brecht. He first used the term in his essay titled ‘Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting’ (1936). In this essay Brecht described the *Verfremdungseffekt* as ‘playing in such a way that the audience was hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play. Acceptance or rejection of their actions and utterances was meant to take place on a conscious plane, instead of, as hitherto, in the audience's subconscious’ [John Willett ed. and trans., *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, 13th ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 91].
magical associations of stage illusion’. It is such illusion that alienates the spectators from the ongoing representation in order to stimulate their openness of perspective. As scholar Peter Thomson explains ‘the whole purpose of the various Verfremdungseffekt [...] was to force the audience out of the slipstream of the narrative’. Brecht himself, in fact, maintained that ‘showing has to be shown’. We could thus argue that the alienation effect had to lead not only to an active interpretation of the on-stage occurrence, but also to an openness of perception. An example of Verfremdungseffekt can be found in Act Three, Scene Nine, of Brecht’s The Threepenny Opera, where the characters Peachum speaks the following lines:  

Dear audience, we now are coming to  
The point where we must hang him by the neck  
Because it is the Christian thing to do  
Providing that men must pay for what they take.  

But as we want to keep our fingers clean  
And you’re people we can’t risk offending  
We thought we’d better do without this scene  
And substitute instead a different ending.  

Since this is opera, not life, you’ll see  
Justice give way before humanity.  
So now, to stop our story in its course  
Enter the royal official on his horse.  

By explicitly addressing the spectators (‘Dear audience’), Peachum’s words on the distinction between theatrical representation and reality (‘Since this is opera, not life’) - and the contrast between the concepts of legality and morals (‘you’ll see justice give way before humanity’)

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54 ‘Showing has to be shown’ is the title of one of Bertold Brecht’s Five Theatre Poems. It can be found in: John Willett and Ralph Manheim, ed. Bertolt Brecht: Poems 1913-1956, rev.ed. (London: Methuen, 1987), 341.

55 It has to be noted that the Verfremdungseffekt, as explained earlier, is a performing art concept, a distancing performing technique. It occurs through the actors’ performance and the sets’ dramatisation. It is not mere linguistic technique. Therefore the passage from The Threepenny Opera I quote here, is not representative of the practical, performing use of the Verfremdungseffekt. It rather displays a passage within which the Verfremdungseffekt is supported by the use of text.

56 In this scene a sign saying ‘first three-penny finale concerning the insecurity of the human condition’ appears on stage. This detail is specified in the script of The Threepenny Opera: Bertold Brecht, ‘The Threepenny Opera’ in Brecht, Collected Plays: Two ed. John Willet and Ralph Manheim, trans. Eyre Methuen Ltd. (London: Methuen Drama, 1998), 122.

- have the purpose of ‘estranging’\textsuperscript{58} the spectators from the narration, so that their intellectual engagements detach from the on-stage events and open to wider perspectives. However, while in Brecht’s theatre the dramaturgical alienation evokes ideological and political matters, in Italian avant-garde opera the distancing from the on-stage narration served the purpose of opening to mere imagination.\textsuperscript{59} In \textit{Un re in ascolto} Prospero’s allusions to ‘another theatre’\textsuperscript{60} and a ‘not visible and tangible kingdom’\textsuperscript{61} certainly owe their estranging power to Brecht’s \textit{Verfremdungseffekt}. However such allusions are strengthened by a wider openness that neglects ideologico-political ideas and explores the whole spectrum of the ‘kingdom of the possibilities of consciousness’.\textsuperscript{62} A similar reference to imagination can also be found in the aforementioned \textit{Ballata} from \textit{La vera storia}. When the \textit{Cantastorie} asks the audience to ‘fix a starting point for our pains’,\textsuperscript{63} he essentially demands each spectator to imagine a beginning for \textit{la vera storia}. In fact, a starting point is not given within the on-stage narration - there is no \textit{antefatto}\textsuperscript{64} - but is left to the audience’s imagination.

\subsection*{3.1.5 The literary legacy: from the Middle Ages to Joyce}

The matter of openness and Nothingness is also featured within the field of literature. In \textit{Opera aperta} Eco argues that we can observe the use of openness already in the Middle Ages. He says that:

\begin{quote}
In the Middle Ages there grew up a theory of allegory which posited the possibility of reading the Scriptures (and eventually poetry, figurative arts) not just in the literal sense but also in three other sense: the moral, the allegorical, and the anagogical. This theory
\end{quote}

\footnote{58 I quote the term \textit{Verfremdungseffekt} itself, also translated as ‘estrangement effect’.

59 Some exceptions, however, have to be mentioned. These principally comprise those works by Luigi Nono that develop ideological and political themes, as for example \textit{Intolleranza 1960} and \textit{Al Gran Sole Carico d’Amore}. Both these operas are the product of Nono’s political activism.

60 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for \textit{Un re in ascolto: Arie di Prospero}), 750.

61 Ibid., 760


In this work Husserl refers to the concept of the ‘kingdom of the possibilities of consciousness’ also as ‘the universe of the possibilities of the pure experienced of the I’ (Husserl, \textit{Fenomenologia e teoria della conoscenza}, 187).

63 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for \textit{La vera storia}), 697.

64 \textit{Antefatto} (literally translating from the Italian as prior event, prior-fact) is a dramaturgical preformed situation or status typical of classical theatre. It has the function of providing a cue from which the initial events of the drama begin.
is well known from a passage in Dante, but its roots go back to Saint Paul (“videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem”) 65 [.]. A work in this sense is undoubtedly endowed with a measure of “openness”. [...] every sentence and every trope is “open” to a multiplicity of meanings. 66

Subsequently, in the romantic period, the concept of openness found a rich soil in late nineteenth-century symbolism. This idea is expressed by the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, who says that:

To name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem, which comes from the happiness of sensing bit by bit: to suggest ... this is the dream. 67

Mallarmé’s openness resides within the act of suggesting rather than naming. 68 Words, and poetry, for Mallarmé, have to incarnate symbols and metaphors. Such incarnation, however, does not intend to mask the words with a cryptic veil, with a symbolism for its own sake. It instead has the purpose of revealing the words’ very nature, which is that of being a ‘moving army of metaphors’. 69

Modernist examples of open-works that have been influential for contemporary Italian composers include a number of avant-garde fictions written in the early twentieth century. Among these, the works of Franz Kafka and James Joyce are the most prominent examples. Kafka’s The Metamorphosis (1915) 70 is an exemplar of openness in that it does not explain within the course of the story why the protagonist Gregor Samsa finds himself transformed into an insect. This mystery embodies a narrativic void that implicitly demands the reader to imagine a reason, an origin of

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65 This Latin sentence by Saint Paul, according to the King James Version of The Holy Bible, translates as follows: ‘for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face’ [The Holy Bible, King James Version, originally translated in 1611 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), I Corinthians, ch.13, v.12].

66 Eco, The Open Work, 5.

67 M. Stéphane Mallarmé, Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire: conversations avec m. Renan, de Goncourt, Emile Zola... ed. Jules Huret, digitised reprint by University of Michigan (2007) (Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1891), 60. The translation hereby reported is by the author. The original French quote is: ‘Nommer un objet c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer ... voilà le rêve.’

68 This concept and artistic vision was also influential for Claude Debussy, who, in order to symbolise the idea of suggesting rather than naming, wrote the titles to his preludes for piano in brackets, with ellipsis and at the end of the each piece. Some examples are: (...Brouillards), (...Feuilles mortes) and (...Bruyères).

69 Nietzsche, Verità e Menzogna in Senso Extramorale, 131.

70 The Metamorphosis (originally titled in German as Die Verwandlung) narrates the story of Gregor Samsa, a travelling salesman, who wakes up one day to find himself transformed into a monstrous insect.
facts. Similarly, *The Trial* (1914-1915)\textsuperscript{71} is characterised by the absence of an *anteffatto* and subsequent explanation. This generates a fiction-of-imagination which exemplifies openness to the readers’ interpretations and imaginations. Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* (1939 \textsuperscript{72}), on the contrary, is written in an idiosyncratic language, which combines standard English words and neologisms. This work is composed of a dense symbolism that constantly generates manifold references. From this point of view it can be argued that Bussotti’s theatre-of-reference is the plastic musico-theatrical representation of Joyce’s work. At the same time, the linguistic manipulations of *Finnegans Wake* create a language that often appears to be on the borderline of nonsense,\textsuperscript{73} a feature that recalls the matter of Nothingness.\textsuperscript{74}

These aspects of Joyce’s work have been influential for the development of post-WWII Italian opera at a poetic and narrative level. As Berio wrote, ‘Joyce knew that relating to eluded or disguised identities was an important dimension of *Ulysses*, as of every poetic and narrativic conception’.\textsuperscript{75} Such eluded or disguised identities are to be found precisely in those depersonalised identities that Berio’s theatrical works bring to the stage - as for instance *La vera storia*’s protagonists, who, as Berio says, ‘are not real characters’.\textsuperscript{76}

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\textsuperscript{71} The Trial (originally titled in German as *Der Process*) narrates the story of Josef K., a chief financial officer of a bank, who is unexpectedly arrested for an unspecified crime that the author does not explain.

\textsuperscript{72} This year refers to the date of publication. *Finnegans Wake* was written over a period of seventeen years, from 1932. However, the first drafts go back to the 1922, just after the publication of *Ulysses*.

\textsuperscript{73} Luciano Berio makes use of such a feature in his *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* (1958-1959), an electroacoustic composition for voice on tape based on an interpretative reading of *Sirens*, a poem from the eleventh chapter of Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

\textsuperscript{74} It has to be highlighted that Joyce’s use of multilingual neologisms originated from his idea of adopting a language that had to be heard, and not only read. This aspect, which takes into account the sound of language, justifies Joyce’s use of onomatopoeic neologisms. In discussing the linguistic features of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, scholar Giorgio Melchiori writes that ‘the wordplay, the onomatopoeia, the individual verbal deformation, act as a function of the general semiotic texture’, within which, as Melchiori adds, ‘the phonic linguistic element constantly predominates, more than the semantic one’. [Giorgio Melghiori, ‘L’Ulisse’ in *Ulisse: Guida alla Lettura*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori and Giulio de Angelis, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, Classici Moderni, 2000), 55.] Thus, Joyce’s connection with the matter of Nothingness principally resides within the phonetic elements, which are consequently linked to the listening of his language, rather than the reading.

\textsuperscript{75} Berio, *Un Ricordo al Futuro*, 8.

I have translated this quote myself from the original Italian text of *Un ricordo al futuro* as I believe it suggest Berio’s comment on Joyce’s poetics more relevantly, within the context of this thesis, than the English translation of *Remembering the Future*, which translates the sentence as follows: ‘he [Joyce] knew that living with the “half-recognized” and with deceptive identities was an important dimension of *Ulysses* - as it is of any form of poetry’ [*Remembering the Future*, 5].

As mentioned in Footnote 19 of Chapter 2, Berio wrote his Harvard Charles Eliot Norton lectures partly in Italian and partly in English, and as a result there were multiple versions of each lecture. For further details see:
- This thesis’ Footnote 19 of Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 87
Joyce’s neologisms and symbolism are also reflected in the libretto of *La Passion selon Sade* (Example 9).

**Example 9:** Libretto of Sylvano Bussotti’s *La Passion selon Sade* (first page only)  

This libretto, which recalls some Dadaist poems, is fully pervaded by symbolic and referential words and letters. This can be noticed, for instance, in the SADE-BACH cryptogram and in the

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78 An example of a Dadaist poem that Bussotti’s libretto recalls is *Poème simultané* (Simultaneous poem, 1916). This was co-composed by the members of the Zurich Dada movement Richard Huelsenbeck, Hans Arp, Marcel Janko and Tristan Tzara. The example below is an extract taken from: Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 30.
letter ‘O’. The cryptogram encodes a symbolism in that it ‘functions as a Bachian signature, as well as indicating notes to be played’. The letter ‘O’, on the contrary, acts as a threefold reference: it stands for the initial ‘O’ of the first ten lines of Louise Labé’s poem, the initial and concluding letter of the word *organo* (organ, an instrument featured in the opera), and indicates certain percussion playing techniques.

Joyce and Kafka’s literary techniques and languages, although significantly different, make a conspicuous use of symbols and metaphors, which, in turn, generate an openness to manifold perspectives. Symbols and metaphors, in these authors’ works, confirm the indeterminateness of

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80 As mentioned in Chapter 2.1.5, *La Passion selon Sade* is based on a sonnet by French poet Louise Labé (c.1520-1566). This sonnet presents ambivalence towards love and physical desire, and features the letter ‘O’ at the beginning of almost each line. This letter, within this particular poem, translates from French as the exclamative or evocative interjection ‘oh!’. The first four stanzas of the sonnet read as follows:

Ô beaux yeux bruns, ô regards détournés,
Ô chauds soupirs, ô larmes épandues,
Ô noires nuits vainement attendues,
Ô jours laisants vainement retournée !

Ô tristes plaints, ô désirs obstinés,
Ô temps perdu, ô peines dépendues,
Ô milles morts en mille rets tendues,
Ô pires maux contre moi destiné !

Ô ris, ô front, cheveux bras mains et doigts !
Ô luth plaintif, viole, archet et voix !
Tant de flambeaux pour ardre une femelle !

De toi me plains, que tant de feux portant,
En tant d'endroits d'iceux mon cœur tâtant,
N'en ait sur toi volé quelque étincelle.

The idea that Joyce and Kafka’s writings are open-works, and that such a feature is embedded and manifested through their literary techniques, is highlighted by numerous scholars. I here quote scholar Edmund Wilson and philosopher Massimo Cacciari with regards to Joyce, and Umberto Eco with regards to Kafka. Wilson states that ‘his force [of Joyce, with regards to his writing of *Ulysses*], instead of following a line, expands itself in every dimension (including that of Time) about a single point. The world of *Ulysses* is animated by a complex inexhaustible life: we revisit it as we do a city, where we come more and more to recognize faces, to understand personalities, to grasp relations, currents and interests. Joyce has exercised considerable technical ingenuity introducing us to the elements of his story in an order which will enable us to find our bearings’. [Edmund Wilson, *Axel’s Castle. A Study on the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 167].

Cacciari says that ‘the word has to live for itself, make its way through nudges, glow, burn up, or fade to exhaustion. The diverse situations are not to be “put in scene” by the word, but have to be the word itself. This confers to the form that fierce uneasiness that constitutes Joyce’s secret. [...] It is by digging within the etymology of the word, listening to all their resonances in the different idioms, that we find the traces of their origins, preceding every discourse, and, together, maybe, the clues about their end. [...] Joyce has perfectly understood how words are not mere gentle symbols, but have to coincide with what they express’. [Massimo Cacciari, *Hamletica*, trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Adelphi Edizione, 2009), 77-78.]

Umberto Eco, on the other hand, writes that ‘it is easy to think of Kafka’s work as “open”: trial, castle, waiting, passing sentence, sickness, metamorphosis, and torture - none of these narrative situations is to be understood in the immediate literal sense. [...] The various existentialist, theological, clinical, and psychoanalytic interpretations of Kafka’s symbols cannot exhaust all the possibilities of his work. The work remains inexhaustible insofar as it is “open”, because in it an ordered world based on universally acknowledged laws is being replaced by a world based on ambiguity’. [Eco, *The Open Work*, 9].

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words and narratives’ meaning. In this way Kafka and Joyce’s works epitomise the concept of the ‘hermetic secret’, which Eco explains as follows:

The hermetic thinking states that the more our language is ambiguous and multivalent, and makes use of symbols and metaphors, the more it is particularly suitable to name a One in which the coincidence of the opposites take place. But where the coincidence of the opposites triumphs, the principle of identity falls into crisis. The consequence is that the interpretation is indefinite.

3.1.6 Openness and Nothingness in Italian post-WWII literature: Calvino and Eco

In Italian post-WWII literature, examples of works exploring the matters of openness and Nothingness are to be found in Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco’s novels. The two works by Calvino discussed in Chapter Two, Le città invisibili and Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore, are filled with references to both openness and Nothingness. One may argue that these two themes constitute the fundamentals of Calvino’s works. The conversations between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan centre upon imaginary cities that Polo describes without the use of words. He reports to Kublai Khan through gestures, unarticulated words the emperor does not (literally) comprehend and ostented objects. Their communication is made of empty, yet multi-significant words, which change meanings depending on Khan’s perceptions. The whole narration(s) of Le città invisibili focuses on the idea that verbal, gestural and ostentational communication is open to manifold interpretations. This idea is exemplified in the following passage:

The links between one element and another of the story did not always prove to be evident to the emperor; the objects could mean different things: a quiver full of arrows showed now the approach of a war, now the abundance of game, or an armorer’s shop; an hourglass could mean the passing of time or the one that has passed, or the sand, or an hourglass-making workshop.

But what was making each fact or news reported by his unarticulated informant precious to Kublai was the space surrounding them, a void unfilled by words.

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82 As discussed in Note 23 of Chapter Three, the term ‘hermetic secret’ has been coined and adopted by Umberto Eco in: Umberto Eco, ‘Sovrainterpretare i testi’ in Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione, ed. Stefan Collini (Milano: Bompiani, 2004), 57-80.

83 Eco, Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione, 43.

84 Both Calvino and Eco, as already mentioned, were colleagues, collaborators and friends of Italian composers, particularly of Berio. Their influence on operatic production is therefore obvious.

85 Calvino, Le città invisibili, 37.
This passage not only encloses the thematics of openness and Nothingness, but also demonstrates Calvino’s awareness of their being synonyms: in *Le città invisibili* openness and Nothingness co-live and respectively generate each other. While Kublai Khan realises that an hourglass generates a multiplicity of significations, he at the same time understands that it is within that multiplicity that ‘a void unfilled by words’ opens. The openness of significations is reflected in the Nothingness of the void and vice versa.\(^{86}\)

A similar concept is enclosed in the vision of Franciscan friar Guglielmo da Baskerville, one of the principal characters of Eco’s *Il nome della rosa* (The name of the rose, 1980). Guglielmo preached that ‘the beauty of the cosmos is given not only by the unity in the variety, but also by the variety in the unity’.\(^{87}\) However *Il nome della rosa*, differently from *Le città invisibili*, does not centre upon a narration-of-imagination, but it is ‘a novel [...] halfway between a theological and a crime novel’.\(^{88}\) In this work, the themes of openness and Nothingness govern both the overall narration and the details that compose facts and ideas. The title itself *Il nome della rosa* encloses these themes. It recalls the nominalist\(^{89}\) motto placed at the end of the novel, when the Benedictine novice Adso da Melk asserts that things exist inasmuch as they are names. His words are:

> I leave this writing, I do not know whom for, I do not anymore know what about: stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus. \(^{90}\)

The Latin quote tells us that we cannot grasp the essence of the world’s things, because they exist as open-entities that hide behind meaningless names. The idea the names (words) are open-signs that change meaning depending on interpretation is also presented right at the beginning of the novel, when Adso da Melk says ‘I set about to leave on this fleece my testimony [...]’, as if I were to

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\(^{86}\) For Calvino the open property of the world’s things is, however, to be intended in a perspective of idealistic positivism, not of mere indeterminateness. This is to say that his works do not focus on the emptiness of the openness, but on the multiplicity of the void. What matters to him is exploring ‘the space surrounding each fact or news’ (Calvino, *Le città invisibili*, 37), not defending himself from the ‘moving army of metaphors’ (Nietzsche, *Verità e Menzogna in Senso Extramorale*, 131). We find such idealistic positivism in the words that conclude the description of the city called Dorotea: ‘that morning in Dorotea I felt there was no good of life I could not expect. [...] But now I know this is only one of the many paths that opened to myself that morning in Dorotea’ (Calvino, *Le città invisibili*, 9).


\(^{89}\) Nominalism is a philosophical doctrine maintaining that abstract concepts, general terms, or (Platonic) universals have no independent existence but only exist as names.

\(^{90}\) Eco, *Il Nome della Rosa*, 503.
The Latin sentence ‘*stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus*’ translates as ‘the primordial rose [by now] exists [merely] inasmuch as name [through its name], naked names are all that we have’.
leave to posterity signs of signs, so that on them the prayer of deciphering can be exercised’. In *Il nome della rosa*, openness and Nothingness are not only the thread of the entire work, they also have the purpose of questioning the essence of truth. As Adso says, friar Guglielmo was moved ‘by the suspicion [...] that the truth were not that manifesting in the present moment’. Truth, as Eco quotes from Medieval German, is held in the very openness of the Nothing: ‘Gott ist ein lautes Nichts, ihn rührt kein Nun noch Hier’. Thus the truth, the essence of things and the openness of *Il nome della rosa*, unavoidably converge in the Nothing, in that no-place that, at the end of the novel, Adso projects himself into:

I will sink in the divine darkness, in a mute silence and in an ineffable union, and in this sinking every equality and inequality will be lost, and in that abyss my spirit will lose itself [...] I will be in the simple foundation, in the silent desert where one never saw diversity [...]. I will fall in the silent and uninhabited divinity where there is no work [*opus*] nor image.

### 3.1.7 Non-linearity as the fulfilment of openness

The above excursus not only provides an account of the sources that influenced Italian post-WWII opera, it also demonstrates how the ideas of openness and Nothingness find their roots across several disciplines and historical times. The various kinds of theatre that Italian opera experimented with are therefore the result of cross-disciplinary processes, which took inspiration from ancient Greek philosophy and modern literature, from baroque Venetian intellectual circles and twentieth-century theatrical semiology. We can thus argue that Italian experimental opera placed the reality-versus-knowledge debate at the heart of the operatic craft. It epitomised philosophical statements of openness and asserted the unavoidability of spectator-*opus* cooperation. These features, however, are not merely alluded to by the narratives, but are entrenched in the very structure of the dramas. Openness and Nothingness, in fact, are reflected in the use of non-linear

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91 Ibid., 19.
92 Ibid., 22.
93 Ibid., 503. This phrase is in Medieval German and translates as follows: ‘God is a loud Nothing, It is moved neither by the Here nor the Now’.
94 Ibid., 503.
95 I am here referring to all the kinds of multi-narrative theatre discussed above, such as the theatre-of-imagination, theatre-of-dream, theatre-of-reference, polydictic-theatre, and so on.
narrative. It is within such a structure that the openness manifests and finds fulfilment. Non-linearity is not a mere form of perpetual análepsis and prolepsis, but one of the most fulfilling representations of openness itself. It is the mental act of ordering and assembling the narrative fragments that epitomise and initiate the cooperation between spectator and work. Non-linearity has the precise task of demonstrating that we cannot ‘put into the mind knowledge that was not there before’, and that therefore our knowledge already lives in our minds. What we perceive (our interpretations) is the fruit of what we already know - or of what Heidegger called the Dasein. Berio’s Prospero, in the moment of his death, recalls this: ‘the non-memory is a cold and black lake’. What we do not know (the non-memory) is a non-existent place (a cold and black lake). Thus, non-linearity is as a door that opens to new stories, or perhaps new beginnings of stories (like in Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore). As Calvino wrote in the libretto of Berio’s Allez-hop:

 [...] in the Story it is not written what to do when the Story is finished that is the question for which it could also be possible to say that is after the end of each story that a story begins.  

Perhaps, such new stories begin right in the voids that exist between the fragments of non-linear narratives. Hence, the non-linear-narrative, the multi-narrative, the narrative-of-imagination, and so on, are both a philosophical statement regarding the concept of openness and a theatrical contrivance able to epitomise the idea that we all have different perceptions and interpretations.

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96 Plato, ‘The allegory of the cave’, 245.

97 Dasein (Da-sein) literally translates from German as being-there (there-being), which in Martin Heidegger’s philosophy represents the concept of ‘being-in-the-world’. In other words the Dasein expresses the idea that we are inasmuch as we are part of the world; and therefore what we know, our knowledge, (including our memories) is the product of the world we live in, its history and culture. This concept is expressed and discussed in Heidegger’s Sein und Zeit (Being and Time, 1927).

From Heidegger and modern philosophy onward the being assumes a triple definition which, however, languages are not all able to properly define through existing words or terminologies (yet another demonstration that verbal language is unable to describe reality, even to define being). Such a triple quality of the nature of the being can be summarized as follows: (i) being as a noun describing the fact that a phenomenon is, which is to say the fact that is common to all beings, the fact, indeed, of being; (ii) being as another noun defining the Scholastic esse, a verb intended in its substantivic sense that becomes the subject of a is; (iii) being as the verb to be, expressing both the act of being something (a cat is a feline) and also its activity (it is nice to be healthy). The linguistic embarrassment occurs because different languages react in different ways to each of these three definitions: in English, as we have just seen, being covers both definitions (i) and (ii), and to be (iii). Italian and German, on the other hand, have a term for (i), ente and Seiende, but only one term for (ii) and (iii), essere and Sein. French, on the contrary, seems to have only one term, être, although it sometimes uses étant. And finally the Scholastic Latin used ens for (i) and esse for (iii), but has sometimes confused the terms ens and esse for (ii).

98 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for Un re in ascolo: Arie di Prospero), 760.

99 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for Allez-hop), 682.
3.2 *It makes no difference* and the concept of openness

Alongside the socio-political theme(s) presented in Chapter One, *It makes no difference* features the theme of openness. These two themes co-exist and complement each other. The ‘snapshots’¹⁰⁰ that epitomise the socio-political condition, in fact, function as a series of *tableaux vivant*¹⁰¹ stimulating an openness to imagination. Such stimulation is primarily provided by the lack of precise character connotations and the absence of events’ origins and consequences. These lacks, unavoidably, demand an imaginative and interpretative effort from the audience. The absence of the *antefatti*¹⁰² and the non-explanation of the protagonists’ conflicts implicitly encourage the spectators to imagine hypothetical *antefatti* and explanations. Such dramaturgical absences recall Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*, inasmuch as the causes of the protagonists’ vicissitudes are not explained. Similarly, they also recall Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol’s *Dead Souls* (1842),¹⁰³ whose plot points problems out without offering solutions or explanations. At the same time, in *It makes no difference*, the mental (imagining) action obliges the spectators to relate the *representatum*¹⁰⁴ to their own lives and knowledges - to the *Dasein*. In other words, the spectator inwardly assigns contexts to the de-contextualised musico-theatrical events, depending on their own individual experiences. In this way the *representata*¹⁰⁵ become different signifieds for each individual spectator, so as to generate a plurality of significations that function as a symbol of openness. However such openness, similarly to the aforementioned works, relies on an indivisible relationship with a void, a Nothing. In fact, it is the absence (void, Nothing) of origins and consequences that leads to the openness of interpretations: the Nothingness, then, converges into the openness. As a result, *It makes no difference*’s lack of *ante- and post-fatti*¹⁰⁶ creates Eco’s ‘white

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¹⁰⁰ In Paragraph 2.2.2 I define *It makes no difference*’s scenes as snapshots. As discussed, this term provides an adequate description to the vision and function of my opera’s scenes.

¹⁰¹ *Tableaux vivant* is a French term meaning living picture. This term describes a group of actors or models (alive persons, *vivant*, and therefore in opposition to still life) who carefully pose, often in a theatrical manner. The term *Tableaux vivant*, to a certain extent, contributes to define the concept of scenes-as-snapshots discussed in Paragraph 2.2.2.

¹⁰² *Antefatti* is the plural of the Italian term *antefatto*. See Footnote 64 of Chapter 3.

¹⁰³ Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol’s *Dead Souls* centres on the story of Chichikov, a gentleman of middling social class, who buys dead souls that are still accounted for in property registers. *It makes no difference* is partly inspired by this work and I made use of certain passages of Gogol’s novel within my opera’s libretto.

¹⁰⁴ The term *representatum* comes from Latin and translates as ‘the representing’. It is used as a synonym for the term signifier, and/or sign-vehicle. In the context of this passage it refers precisely to the theatrical signifier.

¹⁰⁵ *Representata* is the plural of the Latin term *representatum*.

¹⁰⁶ The term *post-fatti* is a neologism signifying the opposite of *antefatti*. In this case it refers to the consequences or developments of an event, the facts occurring after (*post*) an event.
spaces and interstices to be filled’. Furthermore, the characters’ incapacity to accomplish actions (for example finding ‘someone to blame’) indirectly invites the audience to fulfil such actions at a mental-imaginative level: the spectator, in this way, is the protagonist of the narration(s) in that s/he actively, intellectually imposes explanations, origins and consequences. Such a process, however, merely occurs on a subjective level, that is to say in relation to each spectator’s Dasein.

In addition to such open-relationship between the narration and imagination, It makes no difference features the theme of openness on a number of levels. These principally include a textual level, a musical level and a spatio-visual level. I will discuss such levels in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1 On a textual level: allusions, unexplained words and the Jokers’ lyrics

On a textual level the theme of openness manifests in two ways: through textural allusions and passages that explicitly present the concept of openness. The first point is closely related to the above idea regarding the lack of explanation and context. The textural allusions, in fact, occur every time the characters’ lyrics allude to elements, facts, or questions, requiring explanations that the opera does not provide. Such allusions are transversal, in the sense that they are featured across all scenes. Arguably, the most noticeable example manifests in the Common People’s words. Their lines ‘Where is he?’, ‘Look over here, look over there!’’, ‘We’ll find him!’, etc., imply the necessity of an antefatto that could explain why they look for someone, who this person is, and what would happen if s/he is found. No scene attempts to provide answers to these points. They remain unexplained for the whole work. The context in which these phrases occur, thus, is totally open to the audience’s imagination. Other examples of textural openness are to be found in the mafioso’s lyrics. In Scene Two, for instance, an unexplained dialogue-of-allusions occurs between Osso and Mastrosso. It reads as follows:

Mastrozzo: - Don’t you feel guilty?
Osso: - No!
Mastrozzo: - Neither do I... Don’t you think you are to blame?

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107 Eco, Lector in Fabula, 52.
108 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). These words are said by the Common People in Scenes Three, Five, Eight and Nine. The action of seeking for ‘someone to blame’ is also discussed in Paragraph 1.2.3.
The questions Mastrosso asks are mere allusion. They, in fact, would imply a number of counter-questions such as: ‘guilty’ of what?; ‘blame’ for what?; why do they ask each other whether they feel guilty and blameworthy? The answers are not provided, and it is such lack of explanations that demands the spectators to imagine possible antefatti and contexts. This passage, thus, can be said to be open, in that it leads to imagining causes and consequences for the characters’ vicissitudes. Similarly, in Scene Four, Carcagosso’s words function as allusions to unsaid ante- and post-fatti:

Carcagosso: - Where are my dreams? Where are their dreams? Where are your dreams? There is a virtue to defend, there is a honour to protect. There are dreams to bring to life!  

Some of the counter-questions this passage would imply are: what ‘dreams’ is Carcagosso talking about?; what ‘virtue’ is to be defended?; what ‘honour’ has to be protected?; how do such dreams, virtue and honour relate to the other scenes?; and what consequences do they imply for the following events? Again, these indirect questions are not answered, but left to the imagination. At the same time, this passage also highlights the active (mental) role of the audience. The question ‘where are your dreams?’ is addressed to the spectators, who are implicitly asked to evoke (imagine or invent) their own ‘dreams’. This phrase recalls Brecht’s Verfremdungseffekt, inasmuch as it aims at estranging the spectator from the on-stage narration in order to let him/her identify with the actor’s conflicts: ‘your dreams’ eventually become the spectator’s dreams. The audience’s dreams (virtues and honours) become part of Carcagosso’s vicissitude, and the character’s non-specified dreams turn out to be the dreams of the spectators. These latter, consequently, empathise with the character through a non-articulated common relationship, an unspecified common dream(s).

On the contrary, the texts that explicitly present the concept of openness are to be found in the Jokers’ lyrics. The Jokers appear in the second half of the work, after several narrative

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109 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This passage comes from ‘Scene 2 - Osso and Mastrosso: spiritual poverty and criminality’.

110 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This passage comes from ‘Scene 4 - Carcagosso: sense of dream’.

111 In order to emphasise Carcagosso’s theatrical gesture of asking to the audience the question ‘where are your dreams?’ I have inserted on the score the direction ‘chiedendo esplicitamente al pubblico’ (explicitly asking to the audience). See: Simone Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (full score), bars 359-360.
fragments have been presented. They differ from the others characters in that they do not stand for a social class stereotype, but epitomise the idea of openness itself. Their role is to highlight the open properties of the whole work and generate the awareness that the narrative(s) in *It makes no difference* can be seen from various (even opposite) points of view. Such a concept can be found in Scene Eleven, when the Jokers sing the following line:

> Each tale chases another tale, and while a diner advances his strip another from the furthest extreme advances in the opposite direction.  

‘Each tale’ represents each narrative fragment of the opera, and the ‘diner’ represents the spectators. The whole sentence, thus, functions as a metaphor suggesting that, depending on perspectives (‘strip’ and ‘direction’), every story can be linked to all the others (‘each tale chases another tale’). This passage is taken from Calvino’s *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (The castle of crossed destinies, 1973), in which the writer generated a number of stories by juxtaposing tarot cards. These, depending on combinations and interpretations, gave life to different stories. *It makes no difference*’s narrative fragments recall *Il castello dei destini incrociati*’s tarot cards, in that they both function as a closed, defined number of elements that, in the process of fruition, become open to manifold interpretations. In this way, each spectator’s interpretation of such elements gives life to new stories. This concept is enclosed in Scene Thirteen’s lyrics, when the Jokers appear for the second time and sing another extract from *Il castello dei destini incrociati*. This reads as follows:

> The world does not exist, there is not a whole given all at once: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions.

In *Il castello dei destini incrociati*, the ‘finite number of elements’ this passage refers to represents the tarot cards. These function as a source of infinite (‘billions of billions’) stories, all of which are the result of possible combinations. Similarly, in *It makes no difference*, the ‘finite

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112 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale’.

This sentence may read as ambiguous or unclear; it has, however, to be considered that, as explained later in the Chapter, this line is taken from Calvino’s *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (The castle of crossed destinies, 1973) and therefore has been decontextualised from its original sense. In *Il castello dei destini incrociati* the ‘tales’ are composed of ‘strips’ of tarot cards placed (‘advanced’) by the novel’s characters, who are the ‘diners’ of a castle. Hence, the literal sense of this line has to be found in its original source, *Il castello dei destini incrociati*; in *It makes no difference*, on the contrary, the spectator is encouraged to assign it a metaphorical sense.

113 *Il castello dei destini incrociati* is a work based on the use of ‘tarot cards as a combinatory narrating machine’ [Italo Calvino, *Il castello dei destini incrociati* trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1994), VI].

114 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 13 - The Jokers: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.
number of elements’ represents the narrative fragments. These, depending on the audience’s interpretations, generate ‘billions of billions’ of stories. Such an openness to manifold perspectives recalls Berio’s La vera storia, in that it highlights the idea that ‘behind a «true story» there is another truer one’. However, while La vera storia frames two perspectives of the same story, It makes no difference presents various fragments of unrelated stories and lets the audience assemble them (‘advance strips’). In this way, the Jokers’ lyrics capture Eco’s idea that a ‘complete and closed [work] [constitutes] an open product’: the finite (closed) number of narratives that It makes no difference presents becomes a platform for manifold, possibly infinite open-stories.

Furthermore, the Jokers’ lyrics also provide a philosophical statement. This is enclosed in the words ‘the world does not exist’. This sentence sets forth the concept that what we experience (which in this case is the opera’s narrative fragments) does not objectively exist, but merely manifests through the manifold, infinite interpretations that we (as spectators) assign. The words ‘the world does not exist’, then, acts as the emblem of both openness and Nothingness: they represent the concept of openness because they highlight that phenomena are open to ‘billions of billions’ of interpretations, and they are a symbol of Nothingness in that such infinity of interpretations ascertains that the ‘hermetic secret must be void’.

115 Luciano Berio, Un ricordo al futuro. Lezioni americane trans. Simone Spagnolo (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2006), 87. As in Chapter 2 Footnote 94, I have translated this quote myself from the original Italian text of Un ricordo al futuro as I believe it suggests the concept more effectively and succinctly than the English translation of Remembering the Future, which paraphrases the sentence as follows: ‘we also wanted to suggest that a “true story” is always different from the way it appears at first sight and that in back of it there may be another story that is even truer’ [Berio, Remembering the Future, 109]. As mentioned in Footnote 19 of Chapter 2, Berio wrote his Harvard Charles Eliot Norton lectures partly in Italian and partly in English, and as a result there were multiple versions of each lecture. For further details see:
- This thesis’ Footnote 19 of Chapter 2.

116 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale’.

117 Eco, The Open Work, 4.

118 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 13 - The Jokers: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.

119 Eco, Interpretazione e sovrainterpretazione, 44.
3.2.2 On a musical level: the augmented triad, the G-A-Ab cell and the Jokers’ scenes

On a musical level the theme of openness manifests both in specific harmonic-melodic elements and within the structure of the Jokers’ scenes. I will firstly discuss the harmonic-melodic elements, and subsequently the Jokers’ scenes.

Within *It makes no difference*’s harmonic language, the theme of openness is primarily encapsulated in a chord. This is the augmented triad D-F#-A#. Such a chord functions as a *leitmotiv*, for every time it appears it serves the purpose of evoking the theme of openness, or better an openness to imagination. In fact, this chord is to be found in conjunction with unanswered questions, allusions, or textural passages requiring non-given explanations. It appears when the narrative and lyrics demand to be complemented by the audience’s imagination. The purpose of the augmented triad is to stimulate the spectators to inwardly evoke and imagine the missing *ante-* and *post-fatti*. The use of this triad, similarly to the textural allusions, is transversal and occurs across all scenes.

The choice of using this particular triad to symbolise the concept of openness comes from the nature of the triad itself. This is the only three-note chord that functions specularly, in the sense that any inversion always results as a mirror of the same chord. The intervals composing it (major thirds and minor sixths) remain unvaried when inverted. This chord, somehow, recalls the idea that a ‘finite number of elements’ is open to manifold perspectives: the three notes composing the chord are open to manifold inversions and applications, without the nature of the chord being altered. In addition, the augmented triad differs from the other kinds of triad in that it does not naturally belong to a diatonic scale. Its peculiarity relies in the capability of providing a tension that does not naturally imply one, but theoretically many resolutions. This aspect makes the augmented triad become the musical symbol of ideas, words and allusions open to manifold interpretations. In addition, this chord is decontextualised from any harmonic functionality. Similarly to the words of the libretto, the toy-balls and the narrative fragments, the augmented triad

120 The notes F# and A# are often spelled homophonically (Gb and Bb) depending on the musical context.

121 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (full score). This line can be found in ‘Scene 13 - The Jokers: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.

122 Although the augmented triad could be conceptualised as a triad built on the third degree of a melodic minor scale or a harmonic minor scale, it virtually never occurs in this way. This occurs because any chord on the third degree of these scales is itself rare, usually being a new tonic. The augmented triad also belongs to the hexatonic and other non-diatonic scales. However, because of these scales’ nature, the augmented triad does not have a precise, resolution-leading function.
takes on meaning depending on the context, independently from any structural functionality. This aspect not only creates a thread between *It makes no difference* ’s musico-theatrical parameters, but also emphasises how this opera's parameters generate meaning depending on context rather than structure.

The reason why the augmented triad is assigned to the notes D-F#-A# and leaned on the bass D, is related to the harmonic system governing the whole work. This is based on scales and transpositions that exclude the note D, which, in turn, functions as the fulcrum of the augmented triad and its symbolic role. In my opera there are numerous examples featuring the D-F#-A# triad. I will quote two of them. The first (Example 10) is taken from Scene One, when the Narrator reads the end of her book and the sentence that gives the titles to the opera.

**Example 10:** Fragment from *It makes no difference* SCENE 1 - Fable: not understood. The top line is played by the first clarinet, and the bottom is performed by the Narrator.

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In this passage the Narrator is puzzled by the meaning of the text she reads, as it presents the apparently odd idea that the fact that ‘we always happen to mistake each other’ makes no difference. The augmented triad is here played by the clarinet in the form of two upward arpeggios, which occur just after the words ‘it makes no difference’ are pronounced. This chord provides such words with a musical unresolved statement, which mirrors and enhances the textural allusion. Both upward arpeggios do not lead to a resolution, but are left open to possible harmonic continuations. In this way, the augmented triad allows the musical details to symbolically open toward harmonic possibilities.

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123 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (full score), 1.

124 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 1 - Fable: not understood’.
It can be argued that a similar symbolism was already to be found in Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll (1869-1870). In this work ‘the augmented triad appears in various forms and transpositions, and frequently enough to qualify as the most characteristic dissonant chord-type in the piece’.\footnote{Mark Anson-Cartwright, ‘Chord as Motive: The Augmented-Triad Matrix in Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll’, \textit{Music Analysis} 15/1 (1996), 57. Mark Anson-Cartwright argues that ‘Wagner dramatises, through tonal symbolism, the broadly unfolded motion towards the structural dominant’ (Mark Anson-Cartwright, ‘Chord as Motive: The Augmented-Triad Matrix in Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll’, 70), and his praxis involves the exploitation of the augmented triads’ natural tension.} As scholar Mark Anson-Cartwright argues, in the Siegfried Idyll ‘the manifold significance of the augmented triad […] should remind us that, in Wagner, the most important motive is not necessarily a Leitmotiv in the usual sense’.\footnote{Ibid., 70} In fact, in this work, Wagner makes use of the augmented triad as a musical element able to provide a structural significance that links the fore-, middle- and background.

A further example of augmented triad’s application is to be found in Scene Two of \textit{It makes no difference}. This occurs in connection with the above mentioned dialogue-of-allusions between Osso and Mastroso. In this passage (Example 11) the augmented triad is closely associated to both lines ‘Don’t you feel guilty?’ and ‘Don’t you think you are to blame?’. They, in fact, happen simultaneously.

The augmented triad is played by the strings in bars 100-101 and 104-105. Mastroso, at the same time, sings the pitch D (the fundamental of the D-F#-A# chord). In addition, this passage features the transposition of the D augmented triad to E (last notes of bars 100 and 104). The pitch E, similarly to D, is used as a fulcrum for the augmented triad. The use of these two triads within the same musical phrase further stresses the possibilities for harmonic resolutions, which, consequently, expand the perspectives of harmonic openness. This process, however, operates at a mere symbolic level, in that such perspectives of harmonic openness, exactly as with the lyrics, are and remain allusions across the whole work: as the words are left unexplained, so the possible resolutions of the augmented triads do not actualise.
Example 11: Bars 100-105 from It makes no difference SCENE 2 Osso and Mastrocco: spiritual poverty and criminality.  

Another musical element that symbolises openness is to be found in the three-note cell that opens the opera (Example 12). This cell is predominately featured in the Narrator’s scenes, but often appears during the course of the opera in conjunction with narrative or textural passages that demand to be interpreted or imagined.

Example 12: The three-note cell opening the opera  

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127 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (full score), 17.  
128 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (full score), 1.
These three pitches suggest neither a central, gravitational pitch able to provide a resolution, nor do they provide the shape of a chord.\textsuperscript{129} These three notes, differently from the augmented triad, provide an intervallic range of a major seventh within which different chords are framed. These, for instance, include the chord the Narrator sings in Scene One over the words ‘we always mistake’. This, as shown in Example 13, is performed in the form of an arpeggio.

\textbf{Example 13:} Extract from SCENE 1 - \textit{Fable: not understood} \textsuperscript{130}

This three-note cell functions as a symbol of openness for two reasons. Firstly, it avoids a central pitch able to provide a resolution, and therefore epitomises the concept of manifold possibilities. Secondly, being associated with allusions and unexplained textural passages, it mirrors them in musical terms.

A further example is to be found in Scene Four, when Carcagnosso sings the lyrics discussed above: ‘Where are my dreams? Where are their dreams? Where are your dreams?’ (Example 14).

\textbf{Example 14:} Bars 349-360 from \textit{It makes no difference}, SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{129} This occurs because, by inverting the three notes G-A-Ab in the smallest intervals, they would produce the cluster G-Ab-A.

\textsuperscript{130} Spagnolo, \textit{It makes no difference} (full score), 1.

\textsuperscript{131} Spagnolo, \textit{It makes no difference} (full score), 67-68.
In this passage the G-A-Ab cell is initially performed by the clarinet (bars 349-350), partly doubled by the horn. Then it is sung by Carcagnosso (bars 351-352), who highlights the same harmonic variation that the Narrator used in Scene One (Example 13). Subsequently the clarinet re-elaborates it in the form of a virtuoso arpeggio (bars 353-354). Then it returns to Carcagnosso who slightly varies the succession of the notes (bars 355-356). The intimate relationship between the G-A-Ab cell and Carcagnosso’s words intends to evoke not only literary allusions, but also the audience’s ‘dreams’ and the concept of openness itself.

On a musico-structural level the theme of openness is expressed through the structures of the Jokers’ scenes. In these scenes, the concept of openness provided by the lyrics is mirrored in the indeterminacy and flexibility of the musical form. This can be found in Scenes Eleven and Thirteen; example 15 shows the score of Scene Eleven. In this scene the text and music merge into a graphic score that is able to function independently from the parameters of linearity and directionality. The performers, here, have the freedom to choose for themselves routes that imitate that concept of openness. The interweaving and exchangeable staves and musical material have the purpose of emulating the lyrics that most significantly encapsulate the concept of openness. Such interlaced staves visually represent the idea that ‘each tale chases another tale’, and the possible choices that the performers can make epitomise those ‘finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.

In addition to the Jokers’ scenes, I have experimented with the idea of incorporating the concept of openness in three other musical works titled Told by you, Lines and Le Tavole del Peccato. Although they are based on the same underlying concept of openness presented in It makes no difference, they develop it in alternative ways. As I composed them almost simultaneously Told by you and Lines share some material. Examples 16a and 16b are two pages contained in both works.

132 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases anther tale’.

133 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 13 - The Jokers: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.

134 I also experimented with the idea of incorporating the concept of openness in a literary work titled Multiuniversi (Multiuniverses). This work is a philosophico-fictional short story, which I include in the Appendix. It is originally written in Italian and, at present, there is no English translation.

135 These three works, written between February and July 2013, are included in the Appendix.
Example 15: Score of *It makes no difference*’s SCENE 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale

SCENE 11 - The Jokers

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136 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (full score). This graphic score can be found in ‘Scene 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale’ in *It makes no difference*. 
Example 16a: Solo Violin 1 part from *Told by you and Lines*

Example 16b: Solo Violin 2 part from *Told by you and Lines*
It makes no difference’s Scenes Eleven (Example 15) and Thirteen recall Sylvano Bussotti’s La Passion selen Sade, as both works are strongly based on a graphic and visual impact. However they differ in intention. While the visual elements of La Passion selen Sade serve the purpose of incorporating in a non-separable solution the theatrical and musical action, the Jokers’ scenes intend to graphically (notationally) represent the concept of openness. This latter, in fact, is an implicit aspect of Bussotti’s work, whilst in It makes no difference it represents the underlying concept. At the same time, the Jokers’ scenes recall that idea of openness which Berio based his stage works on. His concepts of theatre-of-imagination, of ‘truer stories behind a true story’, of opera as the plural of opus, of ‘another theatre’, and so on, find a continuation and developed in the concepts It makes no difference puts forward. Hence, it is possible to argue that the Jokers’ scenes bring together Bussotti’s interest for the visual elements and Berio’s idea of openness. At the same time, it can also be argued that It makes no difference’s openness develops Nono’s socio-political engagement too. This occurs in that It makes no difference’s openness finds its practical application through the socio-political snapshots presented across the opera. Thus, It makes no difference not only continues the creative trend of post-WWII Italian opera, but also channels the various features that characterised it.

3.2.3 On a spatio-visual level: the musicians’ physical gestures and the performance space

Within the spatio-visual context the theme of openness arises through two aspects: firstly, some musicians’ physical gestures complement the ambiguity of the narration, and secondly, the performance space extends to the area assigned to the audience, who, implicitly, becomes part of the performance. These features do not occur during the whole work, but only in some scenes that I strategically chose according to the overall dramaturgy. These aspects function as a symbol of openness in that they contribute to presenting the idea that a story can generate manifold perspectives.

An example of the first aspect occurs at the beginning of the opera. In Scene One the Narrator is joined on stage by the first clarinetist. As Example 17 shows, they perform a duet based on an indivisible relationship. The clarinet’s line and the Narrator’s words are interlaced in a score that has no precise sense of pulse or metricality. Their parts consist of a symbiotic duet, which allows them to complement each other in musical and theatrical terms. In order to obtain such a theatrical symbiosis I have collaborated with director Luc Mollinger and Anna Gregory who helped

137 I paraphrase from: Berio, Un ricordo al futuro, 87.
138 Calvino, ‘Testi per musica’ (libretto for Un re in ascolo: Arie di Prospero), 750.
me to construct the visual/acting relationship between the two characters. In Scene One, as in Scenes Six and Eleven, the clarinetist walks away from the orchestra and goes on stage, where he physically acts while playing.

His physical gestures are derived from the musical gestures he performs, and at the same time they function as part of the Narrator’s text and actions. The clarinetist’s on-stage presence is intended to represent the orchestra and the music itself, enhancing the concept that musical gestures contribute to determine the narration. This aspect is particularly relevant in *It makes no difference* if one considers the entire context: as this opera’s libretto and dramaturgy are based upon allusions and events lacking ante- and post-fatti, the signification of events and words are determined, even if only in part, by the musical gestures. These latter, through the on-stage emancipation of the clarinetist, are brought to the fore. In so doing, the acting presence of the musician also epitomises the concept of openness in that s/he highlights the idea that the narration(s) owns multiple perspectives, including that of the musician, that is to say that of the music.

**Example 17:** First half of SCENE 1 - *Fable: not understood*

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139 It is possible to see this duet in the videos of *It makes no difference* that are included in the Appendix. Although these videos present different performances, and partly different scores, they all feature Scene One, in which the Narrator and the clarinetist duet.

140 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (full score), 1.
At the same time, Scene One is also an example of the merging of the public and performance spaces. In the second part of the scene, as Example 18 shows, the Narrator asks the audience ‘who should we blame?’ and throws a toy-ball to a member of the audience, who, if s/he wants, replies something (anything) and throws the toy-ball back to the Narrator. These actions occur several times and establish an active relationship between the audience and performer. As a result the performance space extends to the audience space, and the spectators themselves become performers: they act (by speaking and throwing toy-balls) and condition the succession of events. In this process the concept of openness manifests in the different actions and spoken replies that the spectators provide. Their answers highlight the multiplicity of points of view, and consequently embed the idea of multiple perspectives.

Example 18: Second half of SCENE 1 - Fable: not understood

141 It maybe interesting to notice that in one of the two performances of It makes no difference that I presented at 2012 Tete-at-Tete: The Opera Festival the audience-Narrator relationship extended to those spectators that were not asked to interact (to those that were not thrown the toy-balls). These spectators, in fact, spoke different things with the intention of answering the Narrator’s question ‘who should we blame?’. The process of asking a question, throwing a toy-ball and receiving an answer became, in that occasion, a signal for the audience to interact with the opera. This resulted in a rich exchange of lines between the audience and the performers.

142 Spagnolo, It makes no difference (libretto), 2.
The issue of spatiality was already taken into account by Nono, Berio and Bussotti. For instance, *Passaggio* and *La Passion selon Sade* base part of their dramaturgy on the extension of the performance space toward the audience space.\(^{143}\) The idea of incorporating the audience within the performance space originated from a modern vision of the genre of opera\(^{144}\) that certainly complied with the concept ‘new music theatre’,\(^{145}\) in which, as Salzman and Desi say, ‘the space occupied by the public plays a role as well’.\(^{146}\) Following such a concept, *It makes no difference* explores some interaction possibilities between the performance and audience spaces. My opera, in fact, is not designed to take place in a conventional opera house - the distance between the stage and the public would certainly not allow an easy toy-ball throwing. It is designed to be performed in a one-space location where the audience sits around the performance area. Examples 19a and 19b show one of the potential performance space design.

Such layout highlights the centrality of the role of the audience, who, placed at toy-ball throwing distance from the performers, can easily interact with the performance space. Such interaction also occurs by the end of Scene Fifteen, when two Infiltrators\(^{147}\) exhort the spectators to grab some toy-balls from the containers placed among the seats and throw them to the performers. In so doing the spectators not only perform a physical action that complements the performance, but also lets the audience area become an *unum*\(^{148}\) with the performance space. In this scene the public

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\(^{143}\) *Passaggio*'s Choir B is spread among the audience, and *La Passion selon Sade* allows the spectators on the scene while the actors enjoy the performance.

\(^{144}\) Particularly from the 1950s onward, opera composers tended to renovate the structural layout of the opera houses. They, in fact, rejected the threefold division of the opera house, which, according to the canons of traditional opera, consisted of the singers/actors’ space (the stage), the musicians’ space (the orchestral pit) and the audience space. Their creative trend was influenced by a *Gesamtkunstwerk* vision addressed toward an amalgamation of such spaces. In so doing, stage, musicians and audience could interact with and complement each other, allowing further musico-theatrical possibilities.

\(^{145}\) In their *The New Music Theatre* Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi describe the concept of new music theatre as follows: ‘new music theatre is theatre that is music driven (i.e., definitely liked to musical timing and organization) where, at the very least, music, language, vocalization, and physical movement exist, interact, or stand side by side in some kind of equality but performed by different performers and in a different social ambiance than works normally categorized as operas (performed by opera singers in opera houses) or musicals (performed by theatre singers in “legitimate” theatres)’ (Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theatre*, 5).

In addition Salzman and Desi also discuss the spatial relationship between opera and new music-theatre, highlighting the disparity of creative visions in relation to space. They say that ‘theater, musical or otherwise, is space. In principle this is not a simple unitary space but is split into the performance area (the stage) and the public area (the auditorium). How the space is further divided and how it is used exactly remain in the hands of the designer and the stage director. In this area, we reach a watershed between music theatre and more traditional opera-like productions’ (Salzman and Desi, *The new music theatre*, 105).

\(^{146}\) Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theatre*, 106.

\(^{147}\) The Infiltrators are singers/actors infiltrated among the audience. Their dramaturgical role is to create a direct link between the audience and the representation.

\(^{148}\) *Unum* is a Latin term (neutral declension of * unus*) meaning one, only one, the same one.
is encouraged to throw the toy-balls depending on how they have perceived and interpreted the narration(s). Their throwing reflects the stories they drew from the fruition of the previous narrative fragments. Each toy-ball throwing, in this way, represents each of those stories (individual interpretations) arising from a story (the opera’s multi-narrative), like Calvino’s idea that each ‘book arises in the presence of other books’. This aspect, thus, functions as a further symbol of openness. Although Nono, Bussotti, and particularly Berio, explored the theme of openness through the audience-performers relationship, they did not explicitly encouraged the spectators’ physical action, but only the mental one. *It makes no difference*, on the contrary, brings this element into the dramaturgy and lets it act as a metaphor of the openness itself.

Example 19a: *It makes no difference*’s performance space-design: aerial-view

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149 Calvino, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*, back-cover page.

150 Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). The ‘Performance space-design’ (aerial-view) can be found among the initial direction.
3.2.4 Openness as critical experience of reality

The various symbols of openness embedded within this work function as a statement highlighting the necessary and inescapable cooperation between the work and the audience’s minds. In *It makes no difference* the spectator is not placed, either practically or ideologically, at the centre of the drama. S/he, instead, acts as a co-author, in that s/he is the only one able to define his/her true story and the truth that lies behind the characters’ vicissitudes. The spectator’s role is to take those ‘finite number of elements’\(^\text{152}\) that the real author provides and shape them until they reveal a true story. This process unavoidably turns the spectators into (co-)authors. This idea recalls linguist and philosopher Roland Barthes’ ‘The Death of the Author’,\(^\text{153}\) in which he wrote that:

A text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this

\(^{151}\) Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). The ‘Performance space-design’ (side-view) can be found among the initial direction.

\(^{152}\) Spagnolo, *It makes no difference* (libretto). This line can be found in ‘Scene 13 - The Jokers: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions’.

multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, [...] but the reader: the reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any being lost, all the citations a writing consists of; the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination.  

The non-linear narrative and the openness to manifold perspectives, thus, provide the audience with an implicit freedom of authorship. However, in *It makes no difference*, such authorship establishes a peculiar connection with the socio-political representation. The inverted-polydicytic process and the awareness that each spectator is the co-author of imaginary representations of the here and now join together to symbolise an encouragement toward a contemplation on the current socio-political reality. From this perspective *It makes no difference* aims to stimulate two intellectual threads: one is addressed to the superficial necessity of constructing a story out of undefined narrative fragments, the other, on the contrary, demands that the spectators should mentally, possibly critically reflect on the socio-political reality.

Openness, in this way, is not a mere conceptual theme, but a necessary tool able to generate a critical experience of today’s reality through artistic means. Arguably, it was Berio who first put this point forward, even if his idea, unlike that of *It makes no difference*, was not directed toward socio-political thoughts, but to a critical experience of the world:

Even today, music-theatre, with or without staging, with or without stories, can continue to be a terrace on the world; but only on condition of letting it be an open experience. Utopia? Welcome to utopia then! It is a privilege to defend, [...] particularly when we look for things that do not yet exist as they do not yet have a name.  

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155 Berio, *Un Ricordo al Futuro*, 89.

I have translated this quote myself from the original Italian text of *Un ricordo al futuro* as I believe it suggest Berio’s vision more relevantly and precisely, within the context of this thesis, than the English translation of *Remembering the Future*, which translates the passage as follows: ‘Leaving the experience responsibly open, it is my hope that the musical theatre can continue to be, also today, a terrace overlooking the world. It this a utopia? Then long live utopia! It is a privilege to be protected, especially [...] when we are searching for things that do not yet exist because they do not have a name’ [*Remembering the Future*, 5].

As mentioned in Footnote 19 of Chapter 2, Berio wrote his Harvard Charles Eliot Norton lectures partly in Italian and partly in English, and as a result there were multiple versions of each lecture. For further details see:
- This thesis’ Footnote 19 of Chapter 2.

Original Italian quote:
*Solo a condizione di lasciame aperta l’esperienza il teatro musicale, con o senza palcoscenico, con o senza storie, può continuare ad essere, anche oggi una terrazza sul mondo. Utopia? Ben venga l’utopia! E’ un privilegio da difendere, [...] soprattutto quando cerchiamo cose che non esistono ancora perché non hanno ancora un nome.*
Conclusions

In addition to drawing conclusions, I summarise aspects of originality of both this thesis and *It makes no difference*. Concomitantly, I highlight some points and topics that can lead to further research. This shows how my work, although having fulfilled my initial aims, has opened several paths to further academic and practice based investigation.

With regards to this thesis, the arguments conclude in that my examination reveals the interrelationship, at an interdisciplinary level, between the works I referenced, *It makes no difference* and the three features which I put forward (socio-political representations, non-linearity and openness). My initial aims were to present a contextualisation of post-WWII Italian opera in conceptual and thematic terms, whilst including my opera in the discussion. As a result, this thesis demonstrates both the possibility and necessity of exploring post-WWII Italian opera in thematic terms and in relation to other disciplines. Such a possibility and necessity made this study the initiation of a discussion that places this specific genre along a thematic and cross-disciplinary axis, rather than a chronological or composer-based one. This discussion implicitly criticises those scholars maintaining that contemporary Italian opera lacks unity and uniqueness, as for example Lorenzo Bianconi, who wrote that ‘from the 1930s talking about a specifically Italian Opera does not make much sense, [...] as a unitary entity that could be named “Italian Opera” does not exist anymore’.\(^1\) Consequently, this thesis implicitly suggests further thematic study on the other Italian post-WWII operatic trends that my work did not discuss. These include those creative trends that produced operas focusing on musical experimentation, such as Luca Lombardi’s *Faust, un travestimento* (1991) and the operas of Salvatore Sciarrino, or relying on traditional operatic principles, such as Nino Rota and Vieri Tosatti’s works.

The discussion of *It makes no difference*, on the other hand, confirmed that my opera is a work that both continues a specific Italian creative trend and merges the concepts presented in the works I examined. My considerations about *It makes no difference* demonstrated that it provides a synthesis of the three features this theses discussed, whilst making use of them in innovative ways. The originality of my opera essentially resides in two aspects: one regards the socio-political

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representation, the other the dramaturgical relationship between the non-linearity, the representation of the concept of openness and the spectator.

The originality of the first aspect is provided by the singular representation of today’s Italian socio-political conditions, which are reflected in the dramaturgy and narrative structure. The Now (the Zeit) is depicted through narrative fragments that lack not only any element at all about the conflicts’ origins and consequences, but also socio-political ideologies. This is crucial in that it lets *It makes no difference* be an emblem of the Now, a time in which the Italian composer wishing to represent the current socio-political condition is compelled to represent an era lacking in common socio-political ideologies. Nono’s idea that the composer should participate in an ideological, socio-political fight⁵ is anachronistic nowadays.³ This occurs because today’s Italian composer is constrained within the ideological, socio-political *stallo⁴* that characterises contemporary Italy. Thus, in terms of socio-political representation, *It makes no difference*’s novelty resides in the representation of today’s socio-political crisis through a lack of common ideologies able to identify responsibilities and future implications. In this way my opera functions as a metaphor for the ‘audience democracy’,⁵ which, as sociologist Ilvo Diamanti writes, ‘has overtaken and substituted

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² Luigi Nono, as discussed in Chapter One, was (arguably the most) politically active Italian post-WWII composer. In his essay ‘Musica e Resistenza’ (1963) he wrote that ‘the historic choice of the politically active musician only manifests in [...] the socialist fight’ and that ‘the ideological commitment combines with the commitment of the [artistic, musical] language’. [Luigi Nono ‘Musica e Resistenza’ in *La Nostalgia del Futuro, Scritti scelti 1948-1986*, ed. Angela Ida De Benedectis and Veniero Rizzardi trans. Simone Spagnolo (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2007), 159-160.]

³ I refer to Luigi Nono and his artistico-ideological vision in order to make a comparison between an era in which artists’ socio-political activity was oriented toward certain ideologies and today’s Italian condition, a time characterised by a lack of specific ideologies, or better an ideological confusion.

⁴ As explained in Note 61 of Chapter One, the word *stallo*, meaning stalemate (impasse), is a term often used in today’s Italy to describe the unmovable, blocked state of the country from a social and particularly political point of view.

⁵ The concept of audience democracy is presented and discussed in political analyst and scholar Bernard Manin’s *The Principles of Representative Government*, in which the author explains this concept as follows: ‘the electorate appears, above all, as an audience which responds to the terms that have been presented on the political stage. Hence, this form of representative government is called here ‘audience democracy’. [Bernard Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 223.]
the democracy of the parties, [...] [and implies that] ideology and identity decline, in favour of confidence (in the person).6

The originality related to the non-linearity and the representation of the concept of openness manifest themselves through certain dramaturgical elements and their connection with socio-political matters. Dramaturgically, It makes no difference’s originalities are to be found in the relationship between the micro- and macro-structures (that is to say between the dramaturgy of individual scenes and the whole) and in the use of repetitions as forward-motion. These two aspects, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, prove to be original within a syuzhet that has no fabula7 (as in the case of my opera) as well as within contemporary Italian opera itself. A further dramaturgical novelty is found in the use of toy-balls. Its originality resides not only in the fact that I (the composer) imposed it on the piece,8 but also, and most importantly, in the fact that it provides a narrative unity to the multi-narrative through theatrical and semiological means. Such dramaturgical aspects combine to create what I defined an inverted polydictic theatre,9 which, differently from the operas I discussed, uses a-temporal and a-spatial non-linearity to represent the socio-political Now (Zeit).


To better understand Ilvo Diamanti’s point of view and associate it with It makes no difference socio-political representation I cite the entire passage which I quoted from:

‘Today we witness deep transformations, which involve the principles of the leading model of representative democracy - long since. I refer to the “audience democracy”, as Bernard Manin defined it. [Such a phenomenon, as discussed in Chapter One, is often referred as Berlusconism.] This is a model that has overtaken and substituted the democracy of the parties (of the mass). As it is known, in the “audience democracy” parties tend to personalise, they indeed become machines at the service of individuals. Mainly, of “one” person. Ideology and identity decline, in favour of confidence (in the person)’.

Original Italian quote:

Oggi assistiamo a trasformazioni profonde, che coinvolgono i principi del modello di democrazia rappresentativa dominante - da molti anni. Mi riferisco alla "democrazia del pubblico", come l'ha definita Bernard Manin. Un modello che, ormai da vent'anni, ha superato e sostituito la "democrazia dei partiti" (di massa). Nella "democrazia del pubblico", com'è noto, i partiti tendono a personalizzarsi, anzi, diventano macchine al servizio delle persone. Perlopiù, di "una" persona. L'ideologia e l'identità declinano, a favore della fiducia (nella persona).

7 For a definition of syuzhet see Note 122 of Chapter Two, for that of fabula see Note 60 of Chapter One.

8 The originality of this point resides in the fact that the use of a specific prop, particularly if it is as important to the piece's dramaturgy as the toy-balls are, has been indicated (and imposed) by myself (the composer), whilst, traditionally, it would be a decision of the director or of the authors (composer, librettist) and the theatre practitioners (director, designer, etc.) together. In It makes no difference the use toy-balls is explicitly stated in the instructions that I (the composer only) wrote on the score and libretto. Most importantly, It makes no difference’s toy-balls embody a theatrical devise that interposes both an intellectual communication and a physical action (and partly reaction) between the singers/actors and audience. Thus, in this piece, I partly acted as a director, in that I imposed certain directorial choices on the opera. This point, as highlighted later in the conclusions, can and should lead to further investigations into what the role of the opera composer is and what it can be.

9 The concept of inverted polydictic theatre is discussed in Paragraph 2.2.5 Now and here: teatro polidittico inverso.
From a musical point of view, *It makes no difference*’s originality has to be found in the relationship between the representation of the concept of openness and certain specific musical material. As discussed in the last paragraphs of Chapter Three, Openness is represented by the augmented triad, the G-A-Ab cell and, most importantly, the Jokers’ scenes. These scenes are crucial for the themes of my opera as they combine the concept of openness and my own representation of today’s Italian conditions. The musical representation of infinite possibilities and combinations - as the Jokers’ graphic scores epitomise - functions as both a metaphor for the ideological *stallo* and, simultaneously, a possible escape from it. Such a contradiction is integral part of *It makes no difference*’s dramaturgy and philosophy, in that it reflects the apparently contradictory idea that Openness and Nothingness mirror each other. The originality of the Jokers’ graphic scores, therefore, manifests in their conceptual application: they encourage the spectator to critically reflect on the *stallo* and the lack of common ideologies through the contemplation of Openness itself. In this way Openness, differently from the visions of the authors I discussed, acts as the emblem of the essential effort that today’s Italian citizen must carry out in order to escape from his present condition of stable-instability: Openness acts as the emblem of the person that walks away from weak and confused ideologies in order to pursue a critical experience of the Now that draws from thought and imagination. As Dario Fo says, ‘ideologies are dead. In return, however, a thousand ideas are sprouting’.

Although *It makes no difference* combines a theoretical, contextual and practice-based research, it predominantly fulfils its aims at a conceptual level. My opera necessitates further practice-based investigation in terms of production, even though it has been workshopped and performed several times. This point suggests the possibilities of turning my theoretical work into a live representation able to efficiently and successfully convey my conceptual research to the audience through further practice-based exploration, as well as academic study. This aspect also warrants further practice-based research into the collaboration between myself as a composer and opera and theatre practitioners, such as directors, dramaturges and designers.

Finally, my work puts forward a question regarding the role of the composer. In constructing *It makes no difference*, my work involved engaging in various creative activities other than

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Original Italian quote:
*Le ideologie sono morte. In cambio pero’ stanno spuntando mille idee.*
composing music. These for instance include assembling (and partly writing) the libretto, designing and drawing the graphic scores, and making directorial choices, such as letting the graphic scores be part of the set and imposing the use of specific props (the toy-balls). Engaging in such extra-musical activities was essential to fulfil my conceptual aims and create a piece that could be both multi- and trans-disciplinary.  

This demonstrates that the role of the opera composer has to be cross-disciplinary - an aspect that is not yet fully reflected in music education. This leads to the conclusion that producing new operas demands the composer engage and operate in cross-disciplinary ways. This point can undoubtedly lead to further research - which I shall certainly try to pursue - and possibly to new musico-theatrical genres able to further synthesise and combine various disciplines. It may imply challenges; but, as composer and scholar Paul Barker writes, it could lead to new forms:

> The very act of working with a singer, dancer, or actor presents a composer with [...] challenges. These challenges may inspire fear in the composer [...]. Nonetheless, it was this challenge that originally inspired the Florentine Camerata in the late sixteenth century to create the longest surviving musical form, which still flourishes today: opera.

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11 The Jokers’ scenes provide a clear example of trans-disciplinarity in that they merge within one artistic outcome music, writing, theatre, drawing, design, and possibly philosophy.

Appendix

The appendix consists of three compositions, a short story and two DVDs containing video recordings of four performances of *It makes no difference*.

The compositions are:

- *Told by you*. Open score for three string ensembles, three soloists, narrator and audience narrative participation. (Refer to Paragraph 3.2.2, page 105-06)
- *Lines*. Open score for violinist and narrator. (Refer to Paragraph 3.2.2, page 105-06)
- *Le Tavole del Peccato. Sette Tavole Musicali dal Peccato Originale secondo la Genesi*; for flute, alto saxophone and harp. (Refer to Paragraph 3.2.2, page 105)

The short story is a philosophico-fictional work titled *Multiuniversi*. It is originally written in Italian and, at present, there is no English translation. This work is referenced in Note 135 of Paragraph 3.2.2 (page 105).

The two DVDs contain the following video-recordings:

**DVD 1:** Video-recording of *It makes no difference* at Trinity Laban Postgraduate Opera Scenes. Laban Studio Theatre (London), 10th December 2013.

**DVD 2:** Video-recording of:
- *It makes no difference* at Tête à Tête: the Opera Festival. Riverside Studios (London), 9th and 10th August 2012.
- Miniature version of *It makes no difference* at St George’s Bloomsbury (London), 3rd July 2011.
- *It makes no difference*’s extracts for Narrator and Clarinet at Rough for Opera (Second Movement). Cockpit Theatre (London), 22nd April 2012.

The video-recording of Trinity Laban Postgraduate Opera Scenes’ performance (DVD 1) contains the following scenes from *It makes no difference* (which are listed according to the performance’s order):

SCENE 1 - *Fable: not understood*
SCENE 2 - *Osso and Mastrocco: spiritual poverty and criminality*
SCENE 4 - *Carcagnosso: sense of dream*
SCENE 6 - *Fable: still not understood*
SCENE 11 - *The Jokers: each tale chases another tale*
SCENE 12 - *Osso, Mastrocco and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience*
SCENE 13 - *The Jokers: a finite number of elements multiplies by billions of billions*
SCENE 10 - *Fable: it is now clear!*

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SCENE 15 - *Everyone against everyone*
SCENE 16 - *Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”*

The video-recording of Tête à Tête’s performance (DVD 2) contains the following scenes from *It makes no difference*:

SCENE 1 - *Fable: not understood*
SCENE 2 - *Osso and Mastrosso: spiritual poverty and criminality*
SCENE 3 - *Who is to blame? 1*
SCENE 4 - *Carcagnosso: sense of dream*
SCENE 5 - *Who is to blame? 2*
SCENE 6 - *Fable: still not understood*
SCENE 7 - *Osso and Mastrosso: belonging and model of virtue*
SCENE 8 - *Who is to blame? 3*
SCENE 9 - *Carcagnosso: self-moral*
SCENE 10 - *Fable: it is now clear!*
SCENE 16 - *Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”*
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APPENDIX

The appendix is described above in page cxx.
Told by you

open score for three string ensembles, three soloists, narrator and audience narrative participation
Told by you

open score for three string ensembles, three soloists, narrator and audience narrative participation

Unauthorized photocopying is an infringement of copyright
**Told by you**

*open score for three string ensembles, three soloists, narrator and audience narrative participation*

This composition is the outcome of a collaboration between composer Simone Spagnolo, conductor Nicholas Pendlebury, director Helen Eastman and Trinity Laban String Ensemble. It was part of CoLab, a collaborative workshop organised and based at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and it was held between the 15th and 20th of February 2013.

*Told by you* was premiered at Trinity Laban Conservatoire’s Studio Theatre on the 20th of February 2013.

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**Introduction, instructions and content**

This open score is composed of several musical fragments assigned to three string ensembles (listed below) and three graphic scores to be played by three soloists (as specified below). The parts of each ensemble are scored as trios and quartet: there are no individual parts for the members of the ensembles. Therefore, musician belonging to the same ensemble share the same part. On the other hand, the conductor score comprises the musical material of all three ensemble, but it does not include the soloists’ graphic scores (which he does not need to read during the performance).

The conductor has the task of selecting the musical fragments to be played, the order in which they are played, and eventually the structure of the piece. His choices have to be performed live, in real time, as the piece happens: the conductor’s performance has to be an improvisation. Such an improvisation, however, has to be inspired by the words of the narrator, who has to read one or more stories (sentences, ideas, etc.) provided by audience. These stories have to be gathered from the audience prior to the performance (they can be gathered in any way, for example by interviewing the audience, or making them writing some lines, or reading their tweeter messages, etc.; any modality of gathering the audience’s words can be applied: what is important is that the texts are generated by the spectators). The narrator should read (and possibly act) the stories in real time, without necessarily ordering or arranging them. Hence, the performance is constituted by the narrator reading the audience’s stories while the conductor decides on-the-spot what, how and when musical fragments have to be played (and what superimposition of fragments has to happen). Also, the conductor has to decide when the soloists have to play or not. However, he always has to make his improvisatory choices according to the read texts. Similarly, the soloists have to feel inspired by and play according to the read texts; also, they should use their respective graphic scores as references for musical material. - The soloists may want to discuss and workshop with the narrator the relationship between their instrumental improvisations and the texts. This should help establishing a musical and narrative empathy.

The three ensembles are structured as follows:

| Ensemble 1 | 2 violins and 1 violoncello |
| Ensemble 2 | 1 violin, 1 viola and 1 violoncello |
| Ensemble 3 | 2 violins, 1 viola and 1 violoncello |

The soloists are 2 violins and 1 violoncello. Each of them has to act as the soloist of an ensemble: they do not have to lead the ensembles, but be physically placed in their proximity (in front, behind or within them: anywhere the conductor likes). The soloists-ensembles allocation is as follows:

| Ensemble 1 | → | 1 violin |
| Ensemble 2 | → | 1 violoncello |
| Ensemble 3 | → | 1 violin |

The position of the ensembles is also a decision of the conductor, who should consider the nature of both the performance and venue (e.g. they can be placed next to each other or spread within the venue).

Each ensemble is given three pitched fragments - respectively numbered 1, 2 and 3 (numbers in circles) - and three extended technique effects - marked 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3. These effects (which were generated by the musicians themselves during the composition/collaboration process) intend to represent the feelings indicated on their left. I (the composer) notated these effects as accurate as I could. However, as they are executed through extended techniques, it is important that the conductor agrees with the players an optimal way to perform them. - The emotions marked as *wild* and *fear* present two extended technique fragments: these have to be distributed between players and executed simultaneously.

Once the performers begin to play any fragment (the pitched ones or extended technique effects), this has to be endlessly repeated until the conductor indicates to stop.

The marks *x2* and *x3* above fragments 1 and 2 indicate the number of repetitions for each bar.

Differently, the graphic scores are open to the soloists’ interpretations: the aleatoric musical material has to be played as such, whilst the precisely indicated pitches must not be altered.

All pitched fragments distributed between ensembles and soloists are in a major tonality and all twelve tonalities are included among the fragments: each ensemble respectively plays three tonalities (a total of nine) and the other three are distributed within the soloists’ scores. As fragments superimpose, such a harmonic organisation generates a polytonal harmony that constantly modulates as fragments are introduced or interrupted. This aspect is relevant for the conductor, who, as pointed out below in Notes for the conductor, has to make sure all tonalities are heard.

In order to communicate with the musicians, the conductor can use the following gestures:

- to indicate who has to play, point at the ensemble or soloist;
- to indicate to stop playing, make a cut-off or fade-out hand-sign;
-to indicate which fragment has to be played, look at the ensemble and number the desired fragment with the fingers;

These gestures simply are suggestions: the conductor is free to use any gesture he likes and, if necessary, he can invent new gestures (he may even use signalling disks). What is important is that he communicates through gestures, not spoken words.

The score and parts do not indicate any tempo or dynamics: these musical parameters have to be chosen by the conductor and should be an extemporary response to the narrator’s words/acting. Therefore, the conductor also has to set some gestures to communicate to the players the desired tempos and dynamics.

Although the pitched fragments are very similar to each other and can easily be superimposed in tempo, they do not have to be performed at the same tempo nor their down-beats have to coincide: the conductor can choose to play them at any different tempo and starting at any moment.

There is no set duration for this composition: it can last how long the conductor, narrator and performers want.

Notes for the conductor

1. The conductor has to make sure that the piece travels through all twelve tonalities: he has to perform all pitched fragments at least once and let each soloist play through their respective tonalities at least once.
2. As the extended techniques represent emotions, the conductor has to make use of them according to the moods expressed by the narrator or texts - this can be done diagnostically or non.

Notes for the soloists

1. The soloists should consider all graphical aspects of their parts very freely, letting the curves, lines, arrows, and so on, inspire them: they should, for instance, interpret the lines’ rises and falls as dynamics marks, or the curves as levels of intensity, or the arrows as paths towards other musical materials, or the distance between elements as tempo indications, and so on. All musical informations that are not given on the graphic scores should be inspired by those elements that are not conventionally musical.
2. The pitched musical material in the graphic scores, as explained above, is representative of three tonalities, and soloists must carefully perform it as such. The non-pitched material comes from the ensembles’ extended techniques, and soloists should execute it (as much as possible) in the manner ensembles do.

Notes for the narrator

1. The narrator has to clearly state, at the beginning of his/her narration, that the story(ies) s/he is going to read are drawn from the audience. His/her opening sentence can for instance be “This story was told me today by a member of the audience” or “One of you has told me this story”. The stories can be anonymous, or the narrator can mention the name(s) of the audience member(s) who told them.
2. The narrator is free to move and/or act as s/he likes: s/he can perform in a specific place or walk within musicians and audience. However, it is important that his words clearly reach the conductor and musicians, as they have to affect the performers’ improvisatory choices.
3. The narrator can read the texts from anywhere s/he likes: they can be written on paper, or read from a screen, or memorised prior to the performance, etc.

Notes for gathering stories

As explained, there can be one or many stories, and these have to be gathered from the audience prior to the performance. Here is a description of how we gathered them for the premier performance and how we guided the audience to give us the kind of stories we wanted to have. These are not instructions for gathering stories, but an example of how the mechanism could be organised:

We decided to have two stories, of about five lines each, and many short sentences, of about one line. The two stories were gathered by the narrator in the foyer, before the performance. To gather the shorter sentences, we placed on each audience seat three pieces of papers, respectively saying: 1) name... age... I hope that... ; 2) name... age... I fear that... ; 3) my secret is... The audience had to fill the empty spaces and then hand the three papers to the narrator, who eventually read them during the performance. As the messages were naturally divided into themes (hopes, fears and secrets), we used such themes, together with the other two stories, to arrange a narrative structure for the performance: each theme generated a musical and dramatic section.
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Lines
open score for violinist and narrator

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Lines

open score for violinist and narrator
Lines

open score for violinist and narrator

Introduction:

This composition features a graphic score and a philosophico-novelistic text. It can be performed in any location, including outdoor. The piece’s duration is flexible, in that the performers can present the musical and literary material at any speed they like. As this work involves some theatrical instructions, it would be convenient that a director joins the rehearsal process, however this is not necessary.

Instructions:

The graphic score has to be printed/photocopied on a very large paper sheet, ideally A0 size (1189 x 841 mm) or more. It has to be attached on the background wall of the performance space, in a way that it can be clearly watched by the audience. If there is no wall, or the performance takes place outdoor, the graphic score has to be hanged or showed somehow.

The narrator and violinist sit on two chairs, back to back: the narrator faces the audience and the violinist the graphic score.

They begin together: the narrator reads the following text (titled Lines) and the violinist plays the graphic score. At the beginning the violinist stays seated, but it has to be clear that he seeks for notes to play on the graphic score. As the narrator gets to the second or third paragraph of Lines, the violinist slowly stands up and goes in front of the graphic score. Once there he has to engage in physical movements that reflect the graphic scores: his body and performing gestures have to sinuously follow and get inspired by the graphic elements of the scores. And so is the music: the melodic and rhythmic contours have to imitate the visual material.

The violinist should never play to the audience, but to himself, as if he were a tangible, theatrical extension of the graphic score. On the contrary, the narrator should never stand up. He has to ignore the violinist and the score. The narrator has to read Lines’s text as if it were a mixture of his own diary and a story he just found, by chance. They both ignore each other’s presence. It has to seem as if one is the representation of the other: as if the violinist were the musical representation of the narrator, and the narrator the verbal representation of the violinist. They have to act as parallel perspectives of the same life, and their performances have to evolve in symbiosis.

The relationship between text and graphic score should be evident (e.g. lines, circles, curves, segments, maps, etc.), and it is on such a relation that the gestural and theatrical organisation of the performance has to be based. It is therefore necessary to construct a coherent theatricality (possibly with help of a director).

By the beginning of the text’s last paragraph [Sometimes I feel as if in this topographic confusion...] the violinist has to sit back on his chair, still ignoring the narrator. The piece has to end when the narrator reaches his final line [...where am I going?]. In this moment the violinist has to produce his last sound.
It is important that both performers emphasise the last sentence of the text [«but if the roads and destinations are infinite, where am I going?»], not necessarily by means of volume or loudness, but by creating a sense of ‘question that has no answers’.

Notes for the violinist (and director):

The violinist should consider all graphical aspects of the score very freely, letting the curves, lines, arrows, and so on, inspire him: he should, for instance, interpret the lines’ rises and falls as dynamics marks, or the curves as levels of intensity, or the arrows as paths towards other musical materials, or the distance between elements as tempo indications, and so on. All musical details that are not given on the graphic score should be inspired by all those elements that are not conventionally musical.

Similarly, the graphic material should inspire the body movements and all physical gestures. For example, a rising line may suggest to move arms and head upward, or a falling curve to go down on the knees, or dots may indicate to jump, or a flat line to lie on the floor: the violinist should exploit his body language as much as possible. This, of course, has to happen while playing.
Lines
The Narrator’s text

[read as if the text were a mixture of your own diary and a story just found by coincidence]
Sometimes I feel that what matters, the essential, is and must be branching off my thoughts into a multiplicity of streets, secure or unsafe alleys and ways, ultimately leading myself to questions. If this happens one could find himself into a journey rich of choices and optional routes. One would feel projected in a place he never visited, and at the same time already known, but of which none of us had ever travelled its intermediate ways.

[dreamy]
Sometimes I feel as if I were sailing on a boat, in the middle of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Like a sailor that, having lost the mainland on the horizon, finds himself in blue water without compass and, in search of his destination, explores three-hundred-and-sixty degrees of directions. He can arrive at Capri as well as Corsica, or at Nice or Tripoli.
Whatever his unexpected destination will be, he will anyway know, once arrived with his feet in the sand, of the existence of that land. Not because the adventure of walking his feet in that sand had necessarily already happened to him, but because he had read of the existence of that place, or because he had already studied the nautical map of the Mediterranean Sea, or simply because he had heard about it from an adventurous friend.

[as opening the way to a new world]
It doesn’t really matter how that sailor knew of the existence of Nice, Tripoli or of Corsica, and that they were there, somewhere reachable from the Tyrrhenian Sea. What matters is that he is already aware of them because they belong to this world, to the real one. He could have never arrived at a new, imaginary coast. The never-never land, really doesn’t exist. What instead exists, is the never-never way.

[seriously]
Because for that sailor all the points of the real world exist and are somewhere on the map, be it terrestrial or maritime, but in his mind there is no knowledge of all the routes leading from a vertex to the other. Not because they are not listed somewhere, or because there is no map in the world representing them, but because they are infinite. Not all knowable. The idea of a geographical map reporting all the possible ways joining the cities, bays, all villages of the world is a utopia: it wouldn’t be anything else than a paper totally covered by ink segments under which the lands, seas, rivers are not anymore visible.

[as scared of a possible new world]
Sometimes I feel as all the journeys of that sailor, as all the streets leading us from a place to another, being infinite, do not belong to our world, the real one, the finite one. I could walk through or sail many, all get out, but for how fast I could go lifetime won’t be enough to let me travel all. They are infinite. And anyway one knows, the only concept of infinite is unreachable: whoever tries to think it becomes mad.

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1 Texts written in square brackets are indications and instructions. It must not be read!
But sometimes I feel destinations are not always pleasant. And even if they were, one would get bored after a while. And therefore without hesitation one would launch himself into the discovery on a new beaten track or airline route.

Sometimes I feel as a pilgrim, arrived at Santiago through one of the many ways. And after having prayed, set again off wishful of the next spiritual destination. That pilgrim knows he will arrive at Lourdes, he knows the destination, but the sense of that journey is still to discover. Maybe, because he has not realised that there isn’t only one journey. And every time he will find himself in front of a crossroad he will realise that there isn’t a right way, they both are. What will make him choose the one to enter will be the wish to lengthen or fast his stride, pass through a certain village or avoid a channel full of mosquitos, stop at a bakery or run as fast as possible to the destination.

Any direction that pilgrim will takes will only be one of the infinite possible. Ways spread like thick spider webs where filaments, although reaching corners and junction with other filaments, compose an endless route made not only of stops, but mainly journeys. The wish of entering a new way, of walking with tiredness or energy, will become the ultimate purpose of the devoted man. And once arrived at Lourdes he will want to set his backpack again, toward Fatima, and from there again, to somewhere else.

And sometimes I feel that along his way that pilgrim will happen to bump into that sailor, which in turn will discover himself to be a traveler, stuck along one of the filaments of the same web. He would also come to realise his most true need is that of discovering one by one the infinite journeys leading himself from a corner to another.

But if one day he got bored or for some remote reason he couldn’t sail anymore, he would know he can keep travelling, by car or plain, by climbing a mountain or catapulting in the space with an aerospace missile, by walking barefoot in the country or in the saddle of a camel through the desert. His journey wouldn’t anymore be called sailing, but anything it became it would anyway be a traveling, which will be as such for the pure purpose of discovering the infinite connections between two points, which in turn will simply transform into stages of a continuous, tireless yearning.

They say all roads lead to Rome, but it not Rome that at the end matters: who gets there will anyway want to get back travelling, go back in the network towards the new crossroad, and, who knows, maybe end up in Rome again, but through another road, and then leave, again.

Sometimes I feel as if in this simple vision of roads and stages the ghost of the infinite projects over. The infinite that so much persecutes us and that so much is what we are at the end looking for. If, thus, there isn’t one way, or a somewhat countable number, then we really are travelling the infinite.
Sometimes I feel as if that sailor and that pilgrim are inextricably wrapped in this infinity of routes. As if they are in the grip of Knossos’ labyrinth, where every corner is a stage, and every line a road. And having become aware that their destiny is that of migrate from a corner to another, they have stopped planning objectives and fixing precise destinations.

On their respective topographical maps they hoop with the lead the next villages, peaks, cities and promontories to reach, and once there they re-examine their maps to place new circles. Each circle is linked to another by a series of possible routes, showing not only some of the infinite possible ones, but also signalling what vantages and disadvantages those traced ways can reveal.

So day by day they circle new destinations, stretch out new lines, and their map becomes more and more dense of geometries. At times, arrived at a little village, the travellers discover that there exist a little square the map didn’t show and a panoramic viewpoint facing southwest, toward the sunset. So in the circle enclosing the village two new circles come to life, because also the secret square and the panoramic viewpoint become new destinations. And unavoidably the new discoveries force the adventurous travellers to recalculate new possible routes, adding further lines of lead to the map. But the more the options, the circles and journeys reveal to exist, the more the sailor and pilgrim lose conscience of the destinations themselves: the number of circles vertiginously increases, they blur with each other, some are close, some far, some big one enclose a multitude of small ones, others are intersected, other ones are small and have even smaller ones inside them. And so for the streets: now they intertwine among themselves, the long are snipped all over by the short ones, the curved touch the angular ones, some cut the entire map and others minutely link all the little circles almost illogically distributed. Some circles are connected by waved lines, others by zigzag segments, at time the pencil traces contiguous and identical lines to the irregular route of the rivers, showing how to walk along them, other times they form spiral drawings superimposed on hills, indicating the easiest centripetal route to the top.

Sometimes I feel as if in this topographic confusion the travellers stop at a bar, for a fresh and sweet drink, and while unwrapping their map, ready to draw a new circle and a bunch of lines connecting it to the previous circle, they freeze up. Disoriented they look up from their map, the pencil falls down breaking the sharp tip, simultaneously their eyebrows curve down and the eyes’ orbits dilate showing the shining pupil, and they agape ask themselves:

«but if the roads and destinations are infinite, where am I going?»
Multiuniversi
Simone Spagnolo
Multiuniversi

I. La mappa della terra
   II. I sensi
   III. Le emozioni
   IV. La fantasia
   V. Imaginor ergo sum
I.

La mappa della terra

D'altronde non ci si può permettere un inizio ruggente, né uno che instauri un'atmosfera di sospetto, a voler trascinare l'interlocutore nelle maglie della trama, e nemmeno uno che disorienti, che appaia disimpegnato, o che ponga da subito domande. Ci sarebbe inevitabile da chiedersi se poi a quelle domande si riesca a rispondere, se non nella fabula fittizia almeno nella vita vera. Proprio come L'innominabile, che da subito, come se fosse in confidenza con tutti coloro ai quali pretende, o perlomeno aspira a rivogersi, spara delle domande: where now? who now? when now? Dove, chi, e come, e ora. Ci si aspetterebbe delle spiegazioni. Non tanto riguardo alle risposte, quanto alle domande. Forse sarebbe più affascinante iniziare con l'augurio di leggerezza di Italo, che da subito ci proietta nel tanto irreale quanto tangibile incontro tra Kublai Kan e Marco Polo. Ma bisognerebbe comunque bedare, almeno che si ci comparse di una mappa fisica, che appiattisse, isolasse o individuasse due estremi dal punto di vista del lettore. A questo proposito, non si può che inviare un ray di luce attraverso una lacrima di profonda espressione. In tal caso è stato Marc a fare da croupier, mentre il lettore è stato lasciato al buio, al centro di una nebbia di incertezza.

Ma come mai, in un'incredibile assenza di chiarezza, si può parlare di una mappa, se non solo in un senso figurato? La mappa è un immagine appiattita di un territorio fisico, che ne suggerisce un significato che non deve essere estratto con facilità. In tal modo, la mappa diventa una sorta di mistero, che incanta il lettore a scoprire i segreti nascosti in un mondo fisico che tiene immerso in una nebbia di incertezza. La mappa è un'immagine al contempo appiattita e tesa, che suggerisce un mondo che non è mai completamente compiuto, ma che si espande alla ricerca di chi lo esplora.

Eppure tutti questi inizi solo leciti. Forse, in realtà, gli inizi sono irrilevanti. Forse ciò che conta non è il cosiddetto corpo, ma il corpo con le mani, che è sempre al contempo scolpito e modellato da un'immaginazione prefigurata.
Il navigatore, senza bussola in mare aperto e alla ricerca della meta, esplora trecentosessanta gradi di direzione. Può approdare a Capri così come in Corsica, oppure a Nizza o a Tripoli. Quale che sia l'inaspettata destinazione, conoscerà comunque, una volta giunto coi piedi nella sabbia, dell'esistenza di quella terra. Ma non perché gli era necessariamente già capitata l'avventura di ficcare i propri piedi in quella sabbia, bensì perché ne aveva già sentito parlare da un qualche amico avventuriero. Non importa tanto come il navigatore fosse già a conoscenza che Nizza, Tripoli o la Corsica esistano, e che esse siano lì, da qualche parte raggiungibili dal Mar Tirreno. Ciò che importa è che egli ne era già a conoscenza perché appartengono a questo mondo, a quello reale. Non sarebbe mai potuto giungere a una nuova costa immaginaria. L'isola che non c'è, davvero non c'è. Ciò che invece c'è, è la strada che non c'è. Perché per quel navigatore, che aveva sempre per punti dei terrestri o marittimi, sempre luoghi che esistono, non aveva mai contato un bivio, non aveva mai sentito dire che non c'era una strada. L'idea di una mappa geografica che riporti tutte le strade possibili che uniscono le città, gli paesini, le baie, i borghi, tutti del mondo, è un'utopia: non sarebbe altro che un foglio di carta totalmente privo di elementi visibili. I percorsi di quel navigatore, come tutti gli altri, non appartengono al nostro mondo, quello conosciuto, e per quanto si possa renderci conto che lo si è visto per un certo borgo, o per aver attraversato una certa distanza, non c'è una mappa che possa rappresentare una strada o un percorso possibili. Quasi sempre, quando si parte da un luogo, man mano che si fanno strada, si trovano sempre nuovi bivio e percorsi possibili. Non si parte da uno spoglio all'altro, ma facendo strada per fare strada. E lungo il suo viaggio, il quale si trova sempre di fronte a una infinità di strade, il navigatore, che ha sempre avuto come obiettivo di raggiungere un determinato punto, si trova sempre di fronte a un nuovo tragitto. E se non si tuffa in mare aperto o in un reticolato infinito, non si troverà mai di fronte a un tragitto che non c'è.
viaggiare, in auto o in aereo, scalando una montagna o catapultandosi nello spazio con un missile aerospaziale, camminando a piedi scalzi tra le campagne o in sella a un cammello attraverso il deserto.

Il suo itinerario non si chiamerebbe più navigare, ma qualsiasi cosa diventasse sarebbe comunque un viaggiare, al puro scopo di scoprire le infinite connessioni tra due punti, che a loro volta si trasformerebbero in tappe di un continuo, inesauribile percorrere. Chi ci arriva vorrà comunque tornare in viaggio, rimettendosi nel reticolo alla volta di un nuovo bivio, e chissà, magari ricapitare a Roma, ma attraverso un'altra via, per poi ricominciare l'impresa.

Sembra quasi che su questa semplice e intrigante visione del corpo, delle strade, dei tronchi e delle tappe si proietti il fantasma dell'infinito, che tanto ci ha perseguitato e tanto è ciò che alla fine cerchiamo di svelare. Se dunque di strade non ce ne fosse una, un po' o un qualche numero calcolabile, allora davvero ci si troverebbe a percorrere l'infinito. Il quale però non ha direzione, né durata, altrimenti non ci sarebbe un limite; una definizione. Inoltre chi lo scopriva d'avrebbe a che fare con una certa infinità, per definizione stessa non ha grandezza. Ma se non ha o non gli si può assegnare un nome, è proprio quello che è racchiuso nelle domande senza risposta de L'innominabile?

Dunque il navigatore e il pellegrinante, ormai entrambi diventati viaggiatori, sono inesorabilmente avvolti da questa infinità di percorsi. Certo, possono essere lunghi o corti, ma la direzione, la durata o quantunque cosa ne sia, non si può attribuire a una certa infinità. Ma che lo si chiamasse albero, coi suoi rami e radici, mare aperto senza bussola, o ragnatela di fili e spigoli, in ogni caso non si può assegnare un limite alla sua grandezza, se non quella che è racchiusa in quelle domande senza risposta.

Così di giorno e di notte, di strade e di tappe, si dispiegano nuove carte, nuove dimensioni, nuove strade, nuovi percorsi, nuove tappe. Ma tante più si avventurano, tante più si manifestano le opposte, le distruzioni delle mie stesse, il numero dei cerchi aumenta vertiginosamente, e tante più si chiedono di viaggiare più sconvolgenti.

Forse è proprio per ciò che si titola così. Dunque il navigatore e il pellegrinante, ora entrambi diventati viaggiatori, sono inesorabilmente avvolti da questa infinità di percorsi. Certo, possono essere lunghi o corti, ma la direzione, la durata o quantunque cosa ne sia, non si può attribuire a una certa infinità. Ma che lo si chiamasse albero, coi suoi rami e radici, mare aperto senza bussola, o ragnatela di fili e spigoli, in ogni caso non si può assegnare un limite alla sua grandezza, se non quella che è racchiusa in quelle domande senza risposta de L'innominabile?
D’un tratto, come dal nulla, provano un’estraniante sensazione che li tramuta in un granello impercettibile lungo un infinito asse temporale senza capo né coda dove esiste solo un omnitemporale presente contenente al suo interno passato e futuro, come l’essere di Wyclif. La mappa improvvisamente non ha più alcun significato, se non un disegnaccio frutto della loro immaginazione, una composizione astratta, quasi freudiana. Una goccia gelida di sudore scivola veloce e senza controllo dall’alta tempia alla mandibola, come li sfiorasse indolore lungo il profilo una stalattite in caduta libera. In pochi attimi la loro mente attraversa tutte le strade battute, i sentieri, le vallate, le cittadine, le spiagge, le piazze, i boschi, le locande. Tutti i luoghi già raggiunti appaiono insulsi, le tappe già affrontate senza senso, i tragitti percorsi nient’altro che fatica senza scopo. Si sentono trasalire per un attimo, mentre un brivido all’altezza delle vertebre cervicali fa accasciar loro la spina dorsale che da ritta si va ad appoggiare lentamente allo schienale della sedia.

In pochi secondi, sbiancati come amanti traditi, si sentono derubati della loro ragion d’essere, quella di viaggiare. Neanche un sottomarino che li proietti su un fondale oceanico inesplorato o una navicella spaziale che in un batter d’occhio li scaraventi sulla luna li rincuorerebbe. 

II. 1 sensi

In fondo la domanda imbarazzante è quella che si poneva Leibniz: perché c’è qualcosa piuttosto che niente? Se esistono tutti questi cerchi linee curve perché alla fine ci si accorge della presenza, ma soprattutto incombenza, del nulla? Se si possono vedere panorami tuffarsi in discesa scalare roccie correr per vicoli in discesa mangiare torte ai lamponi andare al teatro dell’opera saltare con le scarpe sporche sul letto calciare un pallone oltre la linea del campo fare una scazzottata con uno sconosciuto, perché poi le possibilità il tempo lo spazio non sono a dimensione di tutto ciò, e si finisce con l’aver a che fare con l’infinito? O perlomeno con quella paradossale situazione per la quale ciò che appare infinito si rivela al contempo esser nulla. L’esperienza del mondo, come c’insegnava già Gorgia e Platone, si manifesta nella nostra mente. Ciò che è intorno a noi, il mondo esterno, quello che esperiamo, esiste in se e per se, ma non è come lo intendiamo noi. O meglio, non è come lo intende ognuno di noi. E ci sarebbe da chiedersi: chi è questo ‘noi’? Ci sono fin troppi ‘noi’ a questo mondo, e se ce ne fossero di meno si starebbe sicuramente più tranquilli, o perlomeno si vivrebbe più pacificamente, con meno conflitti. Ma se così fosse non sarebbe il ‘nostro’ mondo, ma il ‘mio’ mondo, il ‘tuo’ mondo, il mondo ‘di Tizio’, quello ‘di Sempronio’, e così via. E quindi i cerchi e le linee che ognuno costruisce rispecchiano la propria esperienza delle mappe, o almeno delle tappe e dei sentieri individualmente percorsi in passato, in tempi andati. Ma così facendo ci rendiamo conto che anche lo stesso cerchio e la stessa linea assumono ruoli e significati diversi per ciascuno. I cerchi del navigatore non saranno sicuramente gli stessi che il pellegrinante ha disegnato, così come le linee di quest’ultimo non saranno le stesse del primo. E se uno dei due, per collegare Samarcanda a Il Cairo, avesse tracciato una lunga retta per simboleggiare un passo svelto e regolare che giunga a destinazione nel minor tempo possibile, e poi avesse scambiato la propria mappa con l’altro, possiamo esser sicuri
anche di tempo e spazio. In un certo senso le musichere adottate e le tecniche della dimensione infinita ci mostrano proprio questo, che ogni fisico si estende nel tempo e nello spazio, ed è interconnesso con ogni altro fisico, in modo che ogni particella di materia è connessa con ogni altra. E la "dimensione infinita" è proprio la connessione tra tutti gli eventi, tra tutti i momenti della storia. Ma il problema è che non si può mai stabilire con certezza che cosa avverrà nel futuro, se non considerando tutti gli eventi contemporanei congiuntamente. E questo implica che le leggi fisiche non sono mai completamente determinate, ma sono sempre soggette a una certa incertezza. E questo significa che non si può mai predire con certezza quale sarà il risultato di un evento futore, se non considerando tutti gli eventi contemporanei congiuntamente.

In fondo, non è affatto facile pensare che un così vasto mondo come il nostro possa avere un senso. Ma c'è un altro argomento, che è quello della "dimensione infinita". C'è una teoria che sostiene che il nostro mondo è infinito, che non ha una fine o un inizio. E questa teoria è molto importante, perché suggerisce che non c'è una fine alla storia, ma che ogni evento è connesso con ogni altro evento, e che ogni evento è parte di un processo infinito. E questo implica che non si può mai stabilire con certezza che cosa avverrà nel futuro, se non considerando tutti gli eventi contemporanei congiuntamente. E questo implica che le leggi fisiche non sono mai completamente determinate, ma sono sempre soggette a una certa incertezza. E questo significa che non si può mai predire con certezza quale sarà il risultato di un evento futore, se non considerando tutti gli eventi contemporanei congiuntamente.

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abbiamo costruito la macchina del mondo che ci illudiamo di
congiungere, non che davvero ci unisse tutti, ma siamo, per fortuna, animali sociali capaci di assegnare e distinguere i concetti di
maggioranza e minoranza, non certo quelli di giusto e sbagliato.
Diciamoci la verità: nessuno bada alla giustizia e alla verità dal punto
di vista della minoranza. Essa è ingannata, abbandonata alla propria
miseria, succube dei retori più carismatici. E forse l'andazzo della
storia sarebbe stato più interessante, magari anche più 'giusto', se la
giustizia fosse stata composta da retori piuttosto che di retori piuttosto
che di giusti. Tuttavia, la giustizia è un concetto che ha una sua
caratteristica, e che non può essere sempre applicata. Ogni giudice
che si impegna per la giustizia deve fare un lavoro difficile e spesso
impossibile. La giustizia è una cosa molto complicata, ma è
importante che ogni giudice la pratica con serietà e onestà.

Intanto i conflitti interiori si manifestano in due
modi, alternandosi: a) le probabilità, che è l'idea dell'inferno altrui, è
non una possibilità, ma una realtà che si manifesta in modo
continuo. Introducono la paura e il terrore, che sono
conseguenza di una mente che è instabile e inadatta alla realtà. E
b) una infinità di possibilità, che è l'idea dell'inferno proprio, è
una possibilità che si manifesta in modo continuo. Introducono la
paura e il terrore, che sono conseguenza di una mente che è
instabile e inadatta alla realtà.
Ed ecco che si aggrappano a un passamano che accompagna i gradoni di un passetto che calciano una lattina accartocciata, abbandonata li sul ciglio del marciapiede che si seggono su una panchina, strisciando prima il palmo delle mani lungo il bordo anteriore e poi allargando le braccia all’indietro, adagiandole sullo schienale che si passano le mani fra i capelli controllando che ci siano che si separano ai citofono senza rispondere che premono il pulsante di un semaforo senza attraversare che aprono la porta di una panetteria per poi richiuderla, senza entrare Ogni oggetto che vedono è messo alla prova del tatto, e l'afferrare, allisciare dà loro conferma che il qualcosa c'è, e che esso si manifesta per mezzo di molteplici consistenze dalle superfici multiformi. Nessun gesto è involontario, bensì mirato a confutare che la realtà esiste: tutte le cose visibili e tangibili vanno asserite nella loro esistenza corporea. Ogni materiale indossano i pali della luce in esso si manifesta anche attraverso gli odori, non esistono nella mia realtà, si trovano faccia a faccia col silenzio della natura, persi in un meraviglioso e improvvisamente inquietante panorama. L'estensione dello spazio percepibile dalla mente che va oltre il perimetro del visibile grida un silenzio stridulo. La voglia d’urlare di felicità è all’ennesima potenza. Ma lì, dopo un’intensa scarica di euforia, dove nessuno può interrompere la distensione dell’animo, si trovano faccia a faccia col silenzio della natura, appartenenti a questo mondo, per poi catapultarsi da un fioraio con la speranza che l’olezzo di stili petali pistilli possa ancora riempire i polmoni, e di lì diritti senza paura col naso dentro il tubo di scappamento d’un bulldozer che li affumica come camini. Inebriati e intossicati provano una felicità infantile: il mondo davvero si manifesta anche attraverso gli odori, non è un’illusione della mente. Ciò che non si vede e non si tocca c’è, e le narici ormai scombussolate ne sono la prova. Su di corsa in cima alla cresta di una collinetta, a vedere toccare sniffare persino gli odori più impensabili, dove la natura sprigiona i suoi profumi più intensi e nessuno può interrompere la distensione dell’animo. Il mondo davvero si manifesta anche attraverso gli odori, non è un’illusione della mente. Ciò che non si vede e non si tocca di poco rispetto alla verità, ma lì, dopo un’intensa scarica di euforia, dove nessuno può disturbare l’apoteosi della fiducia nella realtà, si trovano faccia a faccia col silenzio della natura, persi in un meraviglioso e improvvisamente inquietante panorama. L’estensione dello spazio percepibile dalla mente che va oltre il perimetro del visibile grida un silenzio stridulo. Il mondo davvero si manifesta anche attraverso gli odori, non è un’illusione della mente. Ciò che non si vede e non si tocca c’è, e le narici ormai scombussolate ne sono la prova. 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di mimetizzarsi tra una mandria di mucche munite di campanacci d'acciaio. E poi giù, ancora più a valle, a limite di un guardrail per sentire lo sfrecciare delle macchine in corsa con le orecchie piantate dove un martello pneumatico rimbalza fuori da un asilo tra scolaresche di mocciosi che strillano dentro uno stadio nelle urla dei tifosi. Il mondo invisibile dei suoni e dei rumori s'interconnette con quello tangibile del concreto. Il rombare dei motorini si riflette nel puzzo dello smog, dimostrando che l'ascolto e l'olfatto condividono la stessa realtà. L'insieme dei sensi torna a riallacciarsi, restituendo tridimensionalità ai fenomeni del mondo che riacquista forma suono odore. Aggiungono una raspa, euforicamente la sfregano contro un pezzo atorno di cilegno, il rumore del ferro che affonda, il profumo della falegnameria, che affianca le orecchie al naso, e l'occhio suona, riempiendo la stanza reale. Le sensazioni uniscono i sensi, risvegliando il desiderio d'armonia, pervadendo il nulla. Esiste solo il qualcosa. Il distacco metafisico rapidamente s'affievolisce e l'asse spazio-temporale senza cardini si dissolve. Il vecchio velo di Maya, come un sipario, torna a calare davanti ai loro occhi.


ha portato il navigatore e il pellegrinante al centro della superficie del mondo: nei luoghi più fitti di popolazione, dove i decibel al limite della sopportabilità regnano sovrani, e gli oggetti strabordanti da ogni angolo testimoniano unicamente consumismo e materialità al di fuori di qualsiasi logica sentimentale. Hanno desiderato tutte le cose, tutte le melodie, tutte le sostanze, superfici, consistenze, tutti gli strombazzi, granchi, tutti gli olezzi, sdrangh, fischietti, le sostanze, superfici, granchi, sdrangh, fischietti.

Hanno esperito tutto il sensibile: la realtà a trecenotosessanta gradi. Ed è qui che i conti non tornano.

I due girano e rigirano su sé stessi. Lanciano sguardi qua e là. Sniffano nel vuoto. Drizzano le orecchie come sonar. Le mani fremono, pronte per esser sguinzagliate alla volta del palpore qualsiasi cosa. Ma capiscono che non è attraverso i sensi corporei che possono rintracciare il tassello mancante, quella porzione di vuoto che la scansione delle paure ha rilevato, come un sismografo.

Hanno esposti bene che l’uomo si sente tale non solamente perché è invitato dalla quotidianità a far uso dei sensi, bensì perché quest’unione di sensi lo conduce a accorgersi che da qualche parte l’invisibile velo di Maya lo separa dall’essere onnipresente, dalla sostanza di cui esso è generato e che al tempo stesso contribuisce a formare. I ragionamenti si avvivippano su sé stessi. Il navigatore ripercorre con lo sguardo tutti i cerchi che aveva disegnato, alla ricerca dell’intuizione rivelatrice. Il pellegrinante invece si aiuta con le dita, facendole strisciare lungo le linee, mentre lancia occhiate affilate agli spazi vuoti, come nuovamente cercando la soluzione nel nulla.

Il pezzetto perso del puzzle della realtà si avvicina sempre più: arriva dal di dentro. Il ribollire delle mani rallenta fino a fermarsi l’incubo dell’infinito li schiaccia come sotto un grattacelo del quale non si riesce a intravedere l’ultimo piano.

L’unico modo per sfuggire è affidarsi alla pianta del fagiolo magico, ma queste fantasticerie non le vendono nel mondo dei sensi, e Giacomo non c’è. La soluzione emerge allora chiara. Il rebus è risolto. E biasicata dal terrore l’esclamazione giunge spontanea: “ci mancano le emozioni… devo trovarle!”.
Le emozioni

In effetti è là che inciampa l'uomo, sul paradosso che la realtà non è composta da meri elementi sensibili. Il tram tram della vita non si dissolve e complementa nell'interazione che l'essere umano ha con i fenomeni che lo circondano, siano essi materiali, sonori o olfattivi. L'esistenza non si soddisfa con una catena di atti sensoriali che alternano una tastata a un'annusata, un'ascolto a una palpeggiata, una fiutata a una sbirciata. È la dimensione invisibile, intangibile, inconfutabile, che rassicura e al contempo disorienta l'uomo quando pensa di essere una macchina perfettamente funzionante. È ciò che non c'è, quel limbo parallelo dell'animo, che conduce l'uomo a dire «si, sono un uomo!». È la fascia eterea e inspiegabile delle emozioni che grida all'animale dentro di noi di guardare più in là, dove il perimetro del mondo che c'è volge lo sguardo agli infiniti campi del mondo che non c'è. Ma il tranello della realtà è sempre in agguato, ci trascina instancabilmente verso i sensi, rinnegando l'indimostrabile. Diceva bene Churchill quando ironizzava sull'uomo che inciampa nella verità, ma che nella maggior parte dei casi si rialza e continua la sua strada. Quando si è a corto di emozioni, quando la quotidianità è piatta, e si è avvolti dalla patina appiccicosa della realtà che imperitura ripetentesi e si fa di tutto per saltare il più in alto possibile, il mondo che c'è si fa di tutto per far nascere il più possibile, quando la materia corporea ci posa difficoltà a superare le forze della natura e del nostro gravitazione. Mentre ci riservano l'impulso più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più possibile, ci fanno il più poss...
La Via Lattea si sposerebbe con la Grande Nube di Magellano. La terra apparterrebbe a un nuovo sistema solare. Anche le emozioni sono della realtà e dell'uomo. Ma il pellegrinante e il navigatore non riescono a raccapezzarsi rapidamente, perché non trovano la prova della loro esistenza. Le emozioni non si toccano con le mani, né si ascoltano o odorano. L'espressione "ho afferrato un'emozione" appartiene solo alla retorica delle metonimie. Che se un brivido o una speranza risiedano nel ventre dell'animo, dello spirito o della mente, questo non ci è dato sapere. Ciò che però possiamo sperare di afferrare è il mondo che non c'è, quel mondo che i viaggiatori si erano illusi di poter rinnegare con un tuffo nella realtà più vera. Solo attraverso una fantasmagorica ricongiunzione possiamo tendere la mano alle emozioni, scoprire in quale porzione di mondo esse vivano, e chissà, magari anche riuscire a controllarle.

Dalla terra, i tentativi che sperano di raggiungere quell'alchimia di cui sono fatte le emozioni sono infiniti. Mandrie di uomini, tonnellate di menti, si spremano giorno per giorno alla ricerca degli ingredienti segreti, sognando di poter compilare prima o poi il ricettario delle trepidazioni, delle commozioni, delle suggestioni. Poeti incascatrono versi, attori si fingono tipi e rappresentazioni oratorie gridano discorsi, generali bombardano popoli, economi si colorano i muni con nero e verde, architetti progettano grattacieli di vetro, ingegneri mettono in moto le macchine, ma guadagnano nulla. La donna che sperava di afferrare l'emozione è sempre più lontana. Ma non è solo la donna a errare. Il mondo intero è un labirinto di soggetti misteriosi che non si capiscono, e non si comprendono. La paura, il desiderio, la vanità, il disprezzo, il amore, il rancore, il compassione, tutto questo è un mistero che ci avvolge come una nebbia. E l'emozione? L'emozione è un'ombra che si muove tra le ombre, come un fantasma che si fa avanti per poi scomparire di nuovo. Ma la domanda che porta il qualcosa e il niente a sfidarsi è sempre pronta a tormentarci. Il vuoto dell'impercettibile che risiede nell'interno e la consistenza della materia che pervade l'esterno, si contendono l'animo. E di questa sfida che il navigatore non s'accontenta né che il nulla esista né che le due forze opposte possano essere complementari, e intenso, intenso, corrono verso la speranza di poter afferrare con mano un'emozione. I cerchi e le linee sono magicamente tatuati ad un cerchio, il navigatore e l'allontanamento, riprendono a palleggiare.
Stranito si avvicina a un tale seduto a cavallo del riverbero delle onde, totalmente immerso nel piacere di un ghiacciolo. La spensieratezza di quell'uomo, gli occhi in direzione del sole, il petto alto, la freschezza del candelotto di ghiaccio: lui tutto esprime un'immensa felicità di vivere.

"Cerco la serenità," gli dice alle spalle il navigatore, "mi dia un po' di ghiacciolo e del suo sorriso."

L'uomo sussulta e urla: "ma è matto? Mi lasci stare!"

Il navigatore se ne va. Su quella spiaggia la serenità non l'ha nemmeno sfiorato.

Dall'altro lato del mondo il pellegrinante cambia strategia e, contrariamente alle sue regole morali, va alla ricerca della voluttuosità. Crede che un tale stato d'animo possa risvegliare il suo senso del reale, dell'appartenenza al mondo che c'è, delle emozioni esterne. Paseggia nei vicoli del quartiere rosso e sbircia tra le finestre illuminate dall'interno. Qua e là donnacce di varie taglie fanno cenni col capo: "Cerchi aiuto caro?" dice una.

"Si, beh" risponde timidamente, "cerco un'emozione.

"Questa ancora non l'avevo sentita!" ride lei.

Dall'altro lato del vicolo si aggiunge un'altra donna con voce raucamente sensuale: "Che emozione cerchi bello? Una svelta o per tutta la sera?"

"Cerco un'emozione che mi faccia credere che un mondo vero c'è, e che basti solo quello."

La risposta si estende lungo tutto il visoletto: "Di là, verità, hai bevuto qualcosa di più. Cercherà la prima donna."

"No, proprio no. Risponde che non sono sicuro a quale mondo appartengano le emozioni, e che il timore che esse risiedano in un mondo che non c'è risulti sufficiente a colmare il vuoto di fede che ora il mondo che c'è gli impone."

Le fantasie spaziano e talora consolano. Oppure immagina che le emozioni siano sparse nelle cose inanimate della realtà, in tali pezzi nel traffico di corrente, negli spilli, negli spazi, negli spazi, negli spazi.

L'atmosfera è incomprensibile al pellegrinante: donne dai capelli arruffati, con trucioli sbavati e gonne stropicciate lo circondano e deridono; non sa spiegarsi, né sente di poter essere compreso. Le battute grottesche e l'odore di sudicio lo estraniano. Ma soprattutto il pensiero che quelle donnacce avessero strisciato e mescolato il proprio sudore a quello di altri uomini lo disgusta. Capisce che qui non ci può essere alcuna emozione. L'idea che in quel vicolo vi possa esserci qualcosa di materiale lo confina alla spessore delle onde, totalmente immerso nel piacere di un ghiacciolo. La freschezza del candelotto di ghiaccio: lui tutto esprime un'immensa felicità di vivere.

Il navigatore se ne va. Se quella spiaggia mai ha avuto la serenità non l'ha nemmeno sfiorato.

La mente insegue i propri appigli emotivi solo al di fuori. Si rifiuta di credere che le emozioni vivano in un mondo interiore, sconosciuto alla realtà visibile e con la quale non condividono alcun elemento di materialità. L'idea che gli dei pagani siano nascosti da qualche parte del mondo, che il navigatore fantastica che essi risiedano agli angoli più remoti del mondo: chi in una grotta, chi su di un'isola mai scoperta, chi sulla vetta dell'Olimpo, chi sul fondo oceanico, chi al polo Sud, chi nel deserto del Gobi.

Le fantasie spaziano e talora consolano.
oceani
vulcani
nuvole.
Oppure
si chiede se invece esse siano segretamente assorbite nelle
raffigurazione artistiche, nelle opere d’arte,
nei Tiziano,
nei Picasso
Van Gogh
Giorgione
Warhol
nelle mescolanze postmoderne
sculture di bronzo
David di Michelangelo
Allambra
cappella Sistina
templi Maya
piramidi egizie.
O ancora
nell’arte dei suoni
sinfonie
sarabande
ritornelli
nelle improvvisazioni
orchestre
nelle esecuzioni aleatorie.
Ogni fenomeno, sia esso prodotto dall’uomo, dalla natura
o da un dio ignoto, diventa possibile rappresentazione
e nascondiglio di emozioni, incarnate attraverso
manifestazioni riconducibili ai sensi umani.
Il navigatore viaggia con la mente, mentre
continua a percorrere le strade della città. Non cessa di sperare che le
emozioni appartengano al mondo che c’è, nonostante le ricerche fatte
si siano rivelate inconcludenti. Decide dunque di rivolgersi
all’emozione più alta, quella che egli crede appartenere per
eccellenza all’uomo. Quella che ha accompagnato la stona, che ha
nascere e urlare di gelosia, quella che, se non esistesse, il vivere non
avrebbe alcun senso: l’amore.
Ma il navigatore è confuso, non sa come si possa scovare
l’amore. Inventa tattiche, pianifica mosse, crea possibili strategie. Ma non
trova coerenza. Prepara discorsi, disegna bozze, impianta strutture e
geometrie. Ma gioca con l’assurdo. S’accartoccia nei propri pensieri. Si
perde nei labirinti mentali. Sobbalza, s’affligge, trasale, s’angoscia, poi
s’eccita per nulla.

Respira nello smarrimento.

Baraonda dei pensieri.

Raggiunge il caos cosmico dell’animo.
E lì,
all’apoteosi febbre dello spirito,
corre verso la prima donna d’aspetto gentile
che gli cade sotto gli occhi
e grida fuori di sé:
“Amami! O almeno lascia che io t’ami!”

La donna strilla, di botto. Poi scappa.
La fantasia

Bisogna gettare la spugna. La realtà dell'uomo si compone di due mondi, quello che c'è e quello che non c'è. Che le emozioni non appartengano al mondo fisico è chiaro, ma che le emozioni non si manifestino nel mondo fisico è difficile da accettare. Le emozioni scappano dal mondo che ci circonda e si nascondono in luoghi misteriosi, dove nessuno le può trovare. Esse non sono lì fuori, all'esterno; ma frutto di esperienze, del tempo, delle coincidenze, tutte personali, che giungono inaspettate o previste e che si accumulano fino ad esplodere in scosse, in brividi, in turbamenti. E quest'incrociarsi di accadimenti non si trasforma in una materialità visibile da una collettività, né può essere condivisa da più individui contemporaneamente, con la stessa intensità, secondo gli stessi principi e stimuli. Le emozioni arrivano dal profondo della mente, e si dissolvono lì, nell'intangibilità e misteriosità dell'animo. Quando l'individuo ha bisogno di credere e creare, di pensare e sentire, esiste il mondo delle emozioni, che si riflette attraverso le emozioni. Questo mondo è un vuoto, ma è anche una realtà, come il mondo fisico. Le emozioni sono come un filo che lega il mondo fisico al mondo delle emozioni, e viceversa. Le emozioni sono come un ponte che collega il mondo fisico all'infinito.

infinita: il lago senza temporalità né dimensionalità, con tutte le sue terrazze dalle quali l’uomo ininterrottamente non fa che affacciarsi.

Perché non riusciremmo a capacitarcì che l’infinito è in realtà racchiuso in quel nulla nascosto dentro di noi. Ed ecco che l’inconcepibilità dell’infinito ritorna inevitabilmente a confrontarsi e identificarsi col nulla:

l’infinito è il nulla, tanto quanto il nulla è l’infinito.

Entrambi si fondono nell’unicità dell’ens, in una singolarità che li racchiude. Si sintetizzano nell’it assestato degli inglesi, si coniugano e unificano nell’asse a-temporale che non c’è, sul quale si proiettavano e dal quale tentavano di scappare il navigatore e il pellegrinante.

L’equazione che riusciamo a risolvere è rivelatrice, e ci condensa sempre più vicino alle meccaniche e alle oreficerie del mondo che non c’è. Scopriamo che esso è dentro di noi, in qualche punto ancora segreto del nostro corpo, forse tra i dischi vertebrali, o alla bocca dell’ombelico, o nel midollo spinale, o nel baricentro degli organi vitali: sappiamo che è nell’uomo, in quell’alito di spirito che governa l’animo.

Tali conclusioni, in un primo momento, lasciano una striscia amara, e il navigatore e il pellegrinante provano la delusione più aspra di tutte: il niente e l’infinito sono la stessa cosa, ed entrambi, fusi in una sintesi immateriale, si nascondono dentro di loro. Ogni tentativo di scrutare l’infinito si tradurrebbe in un approdo nel nulla, e qualsiasi sforzo intento a plasmare il nulla si tramuterrebbe in un afferrabile infinito. Ma queste dialettiche dell’animo giungono presto a valorizzare altri tragitti e altre cause. Nel giro di frazioni d’istanti l’intero mondo della materialità esplode, si annienta: lascia il posto a uno spazio che urla di esser riempito.

La mente come d’improvviso abbandona la realtà del mondo che non c’è, e per catapultarsi in quella del mondo che non c’è:

i confini dello stato dei mortali aprono i cancelli al regno degli immortali;

degli animali senza razza né forma,
delle mitologie che non hanno mai visitato la terra.

Il navigatore e il pellegrinante materializzano corpi materializzano forme
materializzano paesaggi materializzano esseri che
materializzano esseri che
non hanno mai vissuto il mondo che c’è. L’universo delle fantasie si apre spontaneo. Il cosmo delle emozioni pensieri
pensieri
immaginazioni si concretizza
immaginazioni si concretizza
nello spazio chimerico. Essi ne restano incantati.

Brividi di allucinazioni li trafiscono.

Come un passo nel vuoto delle fantastiche terreni.

Un’immensità dove la vita non è altro che il sogno e il sogno non fa altro che manovrare marionette multiformi a cavallo del limite con la vita.


Ma tutto sfugge di mano, nulla ha consistenza, e i baci volano nel vuoto: è qui che una volta per tutte comprendono il potere della fantasia. Ci sono dentro, nel mondo che non c’è, in quel mondo che rinnegavano e non credevano possibile. In quel mondo dove tutto c’è e tutto non c’è. Dove i confini del possibile non esistono e i limiti sono solo un’illusione.

Asteroidi cavalcati da ominidi selvaggi sfrecciano nell’atmosfera

unicorns celesti scorrazzano su acque verdiblu

angeli senza ali saltano con trampoli molleggiati di nuvola in nuvola

visioni multicolori corrono nello spazio

miraggi d’oasi

con odalische turchesi

appaiono e scompaiono

chimere cingono il capo di leonesse con foglie d’alloro e petali di ibisco.
cerberi si sposano con meduse
bizzarrie
di tutti i generi
cavalcano i sentieri
utopie su utopie si contendono lo spazio.
E così sfliano dalle tasche le mappe topografiche tappezzate
di cerchi e linee: il planisfero e le geometrie sono scomparse. Solo
costellazioni amorve svincolate le une dalle altre ricoprono la cartina,
e più la dispieghano, più si accorgono che altre pieghe si aggiungono e
si aprono, estendendo il foglio a orizzonti infiniti.
Dimensioni su dimensioni si aggiungono
universi su universi spuntano dal nulla
e si moltiplicano esponenzialmente.
La parabola dell’impercettibile s’allunga
e l’iperbole dei sensi prende forma, senza fine.
Il navigatore spalanca gli occhi, sorride di gioia, e la felicità
si tramuta rapidamente in una risata d’euforia che vorrebbe essere
ascoltata da tutte le bestie dalla sua immaginazione. Il pellegrinante
invece getta la mappa: comprende che non riuscirà mai ad aprirla
tutta. Si lancia in salti di felicità che pian piano diventano sempre più
alti, rompendo qualsiasi principio fisico e gravitazionale. I balzi
raggiungono limiti impensabili e vi di lì diventano un volare alto e
libero che si divincola in planate
innalzate
ascese
strapiombi
curve a spirali

Entrambi capiscono che le emozioni esistono e che sciocamente le
hanno cercate nel mondo sbagliato. I pensieri si mescolano e trovano
soddisfazione.
Le menti s’innalzano al di sopra delle nuvole e poi
si tuffano nel mare della pace dei sensi.
È proprio così: ciò che non c’è in effetti esiste, ed anch’esso
appartiene alla realtà. Ma queste fantasie, è ora chiaro, abitano in un
altro mondo: quello che non c’è. La realtà, dunque, si conferma
composta da entrambi i mondi: quello che c’è e quello che non c’è.
Due mondi che conver-
gono nella realtà, che a sua volta
si manifesta come la sintesi suprema del
finito e dell’infinito, del tangibile e dell’intangibile,
del sensibile e dei sentimenti.
L’ippogrifo esiste anche se non l’abbiamo mai visto né toccato. Esso
è frutto della nostra fantasia, dello spirito invisibile nascosto nel
nostro ventre; esso è l’unione del cavallo, del grifo, delle ali, e di
proprietà fisiche care al mondo materiale, che, però, svincolate dalla
forza gravitazionale per mezzo del potere del pensiero, volano verso
il mondo che non c’è, dove la nostra fantasia le rielabora e le
trasforma in una bestia mai esistita.
Cappuccetto rosso c’è, e anche il lupo
cattivo che parla c’è: essi sono la sintesi e il concentrato delle nostre
percezioni, dei nostri desideri, delle nostre paure, delle nostre
fantasie creative.
Cappuccetto e il lupo e la nonna e il cacciatore giocano e si
rincorrono senza tempo e senza luogo nel mondo che non c’è. Sono
eterni e al contempo senza vita.
Gli alieni esistono: se non davvero su di un
qualche pianeta dell’universo che con un missle spaziale possiamo
raggiungere, almeno nel mondo che non c’è della nostra fantasia.
Anche Marc c’è:
eiste come croupier e come giocatore.
Anche L’innominabile c’è: è da qualche
parte a vagare nella galassia dell’immaginazione.
Anche il velo di Maya
c’è, e anche la caverna di Platone.
C’è tutto, proprio tutto:
anche Dio,
anche l’essere sconosciuto che ci unisce tutti,
anche l’essenza metafisica che governa il
tempo e le leggi della natura.
Ora il pellegrinante e il navigatore sanno che, quando
avranno bisogno di afferrare la realtà, dovranno rivolgersi al mondo
che c’è, e quando invece vorranno spaziare tra le emozioni e i
miraggi della fantasia, così come tra i sogni e i ricordi, dovranno attingere al mondo che non c’è.

L’uomo siede sempre a cavallo del muretto che divide i due mondi: alle volte balza di qua, altre volte di là.

Altre volte ancora attinge da entrambi i lati inventando nuovi mostri e nuove storie, ma spesso si confonde: non sa se cammina i sentieri del mondo che c’è, o se volge verso il tappeto volante nel cielo del mondo che non c’è.

V. Imaginor ergo sum

Sono abbandonati a braccia aperte sul bagnasciuga, per metà sulla riva della terra sensibile e per metà nel mare della fantasia: il navigatore e il pellegrinante ora giocano a toccare le conchiglie nella sabbia ora a fluttuare nell’impossibile. L’esplorare i desideri e sfidare le paure li ha condotti verso la vera essenza della realtà, che ora appare limpida: come una medaglia che volge nel mondo che c’è, illuminando i limiti dei cerchi e delle linee con fulmini e incertezze. Ma questa volta ha la fronte alta, nessuna domanda lo turbò; non ci sono stalattiti pronte a cadere, né strade senza meta. Va prima al bancone, ordina una spremuta con molto ghiaccio e una cannuccia lunga: vuole che duri tanto. Vuole contemplare quel momento di pienezza il più a lungo possibile, finché il ghiaccio non si sciolga, lento. Poi chiede di accomodarsi fuori, ai tavolini della terrazza.

“Certo, vada pure. Non so se c’è un posto libero.” Gli dicono.

L’unico tavolo disponibile è piccolo, per due, accanto alla ringhiera che affaccia giù: sul lago. Vi siede e, libero da qualsiasi cruccio, fissa lo sguardo all’orizzonte, verso il punto più lontano, dove gli assi della prospettiva si uniscono rivelando l’origine dell’irraggiungibile.

“Mi perdoni, posso sedermi al tavolo con lei?” dice una voce alla sua spalle, “sembra sia l’unico posto libero qui in terrazza.” È il navigatore: anch’egli è stato proiettato al bar che ospitava i suoi timori.

“Il loro sguardo non si incrociano, né si voltano per vedersi in viso. Sono entrambi assorti nello scrutare il punto di fuga dell’orizzonte: i gomiti larghi sui braccioli, il fondoschiena in avanti sul bordo della sedia, il dorso curvo e rilassato sullo schienale. “Ho visto che ha uno zaino bello pieno. È in viaggio?” chiede il pellegrinante. “Si. Sono di passaggio. Andrò via stasera.”
“Giro a mulinello!”
“Salto e mi tuffo!”
“Sono su Giove!”
“Un’isola che galleggia!”
“Volo a spirale!”
“Mi moltiplico!”

“Urlo!”
“Grido!”

“Fantastico!”
“Voglio delirare!”

“Schizzo nel vuoto!”
“Sparisco nel nulla!”
“Corro l’infinito!”
“Esplode nel sogno!”
Gli occhi si riaprono lentamente: "che bel viaggio che ho appena fatto!" dice a bocca aperta il navigatore, "sono andato laggiù, vedeva? Ho toccato l'orizzonte, e sono tornato."

"Questo lago sul quale affacciamo è proprio infinito," sussurra l'altro, con gli angoli delle labbra all'insù. "Non riuscirò mai a nuotarlo tutto, fino alla fine. Non penso ci sia, una fine."

Il cielo resta identico, non ha intenzione di mutare. Sembra che da qui, su questa terrazza, il tempo non passi e il giorno non scorra. Così l'orizzonte: continua a esserci un vuoto immutabile, incorrottile. Una fetta di lago senza costa, che continua a protendersi a largo, verso l'infinito.

"Mi dica," chiede il pellegrinante, "non crede anche lei che tutto ciò che è possibile, in realtà esiste? Voglio dire, che tutte le cose possibili non sono altro che enti, faccende davvero reali... insomma, che le possibilità esistano anche loro, nonostante non possiamo toccarle."

"Se le odalische con le quali ho appena ballato esistono davvero, anzi lei che non crede anche lei che tutte le cose possibili non sono altro che enti, faccende vere, davvero reali?"

"Sì," risponde l'altro. "Perché tutte le possibilità esistano, anche loro, nonostante non possiamo toccarle."

"Ma di cosa si tratta?"

"Si tratta di possibilità, di realtà pura. Ma la faccenda è che non possiamo toccarle, non possiamo toccare enti, non possiamo toccare realtà. Ma la faccenda è che non possiamo toccare enti, non possiamo toccare realtà."

"Ma non penso ci sia, una fine. Non penso ci sia, una fine."

"Che è possibile è, ed io stesso sono possibile, intendo. "Sì, volete dire, intendo l'immaginazione di me stesso e lei anche."

"Potrebbe anche darsi," risponde l'altro. "Ma se questo fosse vero, io non sarei altro che un'immaginazione della mia mente."

"Ciò che è possibile è, intendo. "Sì, volete dire, intendo l'immaginazione di me stesso e lei anche."

"Non capisco cosa intendiate."

"Non capisco cosa intendiate."
“Voglio dire che io sono, che esisto, non tanto perché sono capace di pensare, bensì perché so immaginare. O meglio, so immaginarmi. Se tutto ciò che è possibile, la fantasia i sogni i ricordi i mostri le fasi di questo lago esistono, perché io sono capace di immaginarli, allora io stesso esisto, perché sono un’immaginazione di me stesso: quando sono lì, a bagno nel lago, e mi vedo qui sulla terrazza a parlare con lei, non sono altro che il prodotto della mia immaginazione. Dunque, se non fossi capace di immaginarmi, non potrei esistere: io stesso trovo conferma della mia esistenza e del mondo delle possibilità della mia mente, per il semplice motivo che posso immaginarmi. Se non fossi in grado d’immaginare me stesso non esisterei.”

“Capisco. Allora anche questa terrazza non è altro che un’immaginazione; e, in realtà, siamo costantemente a bagno nel lago.”

“Si. Non siamo altro che il prodotto del nostro immaginare: noi e la terrazza e il resto che ci circonda.”

La desolata terrazza al centro dell’immenso lago, quella solitaria visione che aveva appena sconfortato il navigatore, si tramuta nuovamente: il pavimento, il davanzale e il navigatore stesso che da lì vi si affacciava, sprofondano nel lago e ne diventano parte. Non resta alcun punto di avvistamento. Niente separa il lago dall’esterno. Non c’è più nulla oltre lo specchio d’acqua e il suo moto centripeto.

Improvvisamente il lago sembra moltiplicarsi e il pellegrinante riprende: “Però, questo lago non può essere il solo calderone che contiene l’universo della nostra mente e tutte le immaginazioni di noi stessi. Se io immagino lei così come la vedo, qui, su questa terrazza, e al contempo, nello stesso attimo, lei si immagina di per sé in un altro modo, come fa questo lago a contenere due immagini diverse della stessa persona?”

“Qui si sbaglia,” l’ammonisce il navigatore, “il lago non ha due me e due lei! L’ha detto lei stesso poco fa’... i laghi sono due: uno mio e uno suo.”

“E quanti laghi ci sono allora?”
“Come ha detto poc’anzi: un’infinità!”

“E quindi io non sono solo l’immagine che ho di me,” si dice da sé, sottovoce, il pellegrinante, “ma la molteplicità delle immagini che in tutti gli altri laghi ci sono di me.”
“Proprio così: siamo il prodotto di infinite immaginazioni. Ci sono tanti lei e tanti me, tanti quanti sono i laghi. E forse ci sono tanti me e tanti lei persino in ognuno di questi laghi.”
Il pellegrinante fa un lungo respiro, poi sorride e dice:
“l’unica cosa che davvero esiste in questa realtà, almeno così sembra, è un universo infinito di soli laghi!”

“Si, pare di si.” Mormora l’altro.

“O forse, ogni lago, è un universo a sé: chissà. Come se abitassimo dei multiuniversi.”


“Ora vado però; riprendo il viaggio.”

“Si, pare di sì.” Mormora l’altro.

“Buona fortuna, allora. Magari ci si rivede domani su questa terrazza, per un altro viaggio: chissà.”
“Si, magari,” saluta con un cenno il navigatore, 

un’altra terrazza,

“o forse su di 

ognuno a molo nel suo lago.”
It makes no difference

Operatic Spectacle
It makes no difference

Operatic Spectacle
It makes no difference

Operatic Spectacle

Music & Concept: Simone Spagnolo
Libretto: Texts from writings and speeches by (in alphabetic order) Massimo Cacciari, Italo Calvino, Tommaso Cerno, Fyodor Mikhaylovich Dostoyevsky, Umberto Eco, Dario Fo, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol, Beppe Grillo, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Simone Spagnolo, Marco Travaglio, and several newspapers and magazines.
All texts adapted, assembled and translated by Simone Spagnolo.

NOTE: Below I provide two copies of the Libretto: in the first it is possible to find the complete Libretto on its own; in the second I list, in the form of coloured footnotes, all the sources from which the various quotations the Libretto is made of come from. This should provide a detailed insight about It makes no difference to anyone interested in its construction and logic of referentiality.

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CHARACTERS
Narrator . . . . . . . . . . . Mezzo-soprano
Osso . . . . . . . . . . . . Tenor
Mastrosso . . . . . . . . . Bass
Carcagnosso . . . . . . . Baritone
Three Jokers . . . . . . . 3 Countertenors (or female singers)
Common Persons . . . . . Choir SATB (at least 8 singers, 2 for each voice type)
Five Infiltrators . . . . . Any voice (they are actors/singers who join the choir when indicated)

INSTRUMENTATION
Flute (doubling on Piccolo)
2 Bb Clarinet (2nd doubling on Bb Bass Clarinet)
Bb Bass Clarinet
Baritone Saxophone (doubling on Bass Saxophone)
Bassoon
F Horn
Bb Trumpet
Trombone
Tuba
1 Percussionist > Small perc: wood block, cow bell, glockenspiel, wooden whip, viberslap, triangle, ratchet, mouth siren, mechanical metronome.
Large perc: bass drum, suspended cymbal, tam tam (or cymbal), snare drum, 3 toms (high, medium and low), two bongos (high and low).

Violin Solo
Viola Solo
Cello Solo
Contrabass Solo

SCENOGRAPHIC PROPERTY
Many many Toy-balls (of plastic, or something soft that would not hurt. Their size should be about 10cm in diameter).
Some Containers for the Toy-balls (as many as needed for the production)
A Knife (not sharpened)
A Gun (not real)
A Box full of objects and tools (or similar) needed to build a bomb (or similar mass-destruction weapon)
Newspapers (ideally one per Common Person)
A Megaphone
A Police Complaints Desk
A hard copy of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s The Sorrows of Young Werther
Three Small Basins containing some water placed on Three Small Tables

DURATION
Approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes

Simone Spagnolo | www.simonespagnolo.com
PERFORMANCE SPACE-DESIGN

This is a possible, approximate performance space-design. It can be modified depending on location and production. However, it is necessary that the spectators are placed around the singers/actors’ performance space and at a toy-ball throwing distance from the performers.

AERIAL VIEW

SIDE VIEW
Short Synopsis

Il filosofo sedeva sul prato. Disse: “I segni formano una lingua, ma non quella che credi di conoscere”. Capii che dovevo liberarmi dalle immagini che fin qui m’avevano annunciato le cose che cercavo: solo allora sarei riuscito a intendere il linguaggio di Ipazia.

The philosopher was seated on the lawn. He said: “Signs form a language, but not the one you think you know”. I realized I had to free myself from the images which in the past had announced to me the things I sought: only then would I succeed in understanding the language of Hypatia.

Italo Calvino, Le città invisibili (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1993) p.46

A Narrator, a book, toy-balls, Jokers, common people and infiltrators: It makes no difference is an operatic work developing upon concepts of non-linearity, multi-narrative and plurality of interpretations, ultimately playing with dramaturgical and mnemonic implications. The libretto is composed by extracts from Calvino, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Goethe, and newspapers, among others.

This work aims to metaphorically represent contemporary socio-political conditions, and at the same time it explores a non-linear narrative structure built upon allusions and references. It makes no difference also develops Umberto Eco’s concept of opera aperta (open work) and presents a dramaturgical language made of non-said words. These have the purpose of letting the audience play with their own individual interpretations and showing how ‘the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination’ (Roland Barthes). Furthermore, at a conceptual level, It makes no difference’s narrative presents a philosophical idea regarding the matter of existence. The multi-narrative of this opera puts forward the idea that ‘the world does not exist, there is not a whole given all at once: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions.’ (Calvino)

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Long Synopsis

Non sempre le connessioni tra un elemento e l’altro del racconto risultavano evidenti all’imperatore; gli oggetti potevano voler dire cose diverse: un turcasso pieno di frecce indicava ora l’approcciamarsi d’una guerra, ora l’abbondanza di cacciazione, oppure la bottega d’un armaiolo; una clessidra poteva significare il tempo che passa o che è passato, oppure la sabbia, o un’officina in cui si fabbricano clessidre.

Ma ciò che rendeva prezioso a Kublai ogni fatto o notizia riferito dal suo inarticolato informatore era lo spazio che restava loro intorno, un vuoto non riempito di parole. Le descrizioni di città visitate da Marco Polo avevano questa doté: che ci si poteva girare in mezzo col pensiero, perdersi, fermarsi a prendere il fresco, o scappar via di corsa.

The connections between one element of the story and another were not always obvious to the emperor; the objects could have various meanings: a quiver filled with with arrows could indicate the approach of war, or an abundance of game, or else an armorer’ s shop; an hourglass could mean time passing or time past, or sand, or a place where hourglasses are made.

But what enhanced for Kublai every event or piece of news reported by his inarticulated informer was the space that remained around it, a void not filled with words. The descriptions of cities Marco Polo visited had this virtue: you could wander through them in thought, become lost, stop and enjoy the cool air, or run off.

Italo Calvino, Le città’ invisibili (Invisible cities) (Oscar Mondadori, Milano, 1993) p.37

When people ask me what It makes no difference is about I like to answer in different ways, depending on my interlocutor. It makes no difference is a multi-narrative work that can be seen and interpreted from multiple points of view, and depending on these one or more meanings and stories can be deduced. Some of the answers I give are: this work is based on the concept of non-liner narrative and presents a number of extracts from different authors; or this is an opera about a woman trying to explore her own identity; or it is a work aiming to metaphorically represent the contemporary socio-political condition; or it is about some bad people doing good things and good people doing bad things, eventually losing the sense of what is good and bad; or it is an opera portraying three mafia characters during the process of preparing an attack; or it is about a group of confused and worried civilians looking for someone to blame; or it is a musico-theatrical work that does not present any narrative, but instead non-evolving actions independent from time and place; or it is a piece exploring the manifold meanings and interpretations a story can have; and so on.

Although these descriptions of the piece seem to be unrelated to each other, they are all truthful interpretations. The spectators are presented with fragments of apparently unrelated and independent narratives, which alternate and come back during the piece. This creates a number of allusions that stimulate the audience’s imagination to connect the separate dramatic events, exactly like Calvino’s works and Berio’s operas. Consequently, this work builds upon manifold narratives, all of which, ultimately, exist in each individual spectator’s mind. This latter aspect intends to reflect and develop Umberto Eco’s concept of opera aperta (open work), which maintains that ‘a work of art, complete and closed in its perfection of perfectly calibrated organism, is also open, it has the possibility to be interpreted in thousands of different ways without the risk that its irreproducible uniqueness is altered’ (Umberto Eco). At the same time, such an openness to interpretations has the purpose of letting the audience play with their own individual understanding of the operatic narration: it shows how ‘the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination’ (Roland Barthes).

Finally, at a conceptual level, It makes no difference presents a philosophical concept regarding the matter of existence. This opera’s multi-narrative puts forward the idea that ‘the world does not exist, there is not a whole given all at once: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions.’ (Calvino)

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LIBRETTO

PART I

SCENE 1 - *Fable: not understood*

All the Infiltrators sit among the audience, at a reasonable distance from each other. Only Infiltrators 1 and 2 sit closer to the performance space. They are all dressed in ordinary clothes: the audience must not know or understand that there are infiltrators among them.

Among the audience there are several containers filled with toy-balls (of plastic, or something soft that would not hurt; their size should be about 10cm in diameter). These are placed at an easy reachable distance for the audience.

The Narrator and the first clarinettist enter the stage. They have to perform as a duet: the clarinettist has to appear not only as a musician, but as the ‘musical alter ego’ of the Narrator; the two have to perform in symbiosis and the clarinettist’s musical gestures have to be reflected in his/her physical gestures so as to infer further meaning to the Narrator’s words and acting.

The Narrator holds a book (from which she will read the following story) and a bag full of toy-balls. She, with relaxed, casual and easy going manners, reads the following story. This has to look as if she reads it for the first time and as if she does not entirely understand its meaning:

Narrator: What was annoying me was thinking that she was coming with me just as she could have gone with someone else, for example with Ferruccio. While we were on the grass I told her.

- Listen, do you come with me because it is me or as you come with me you could go with someone else, for example with Ferruccio?

And she replied: - I come with you because it is you.

And I told her: - Promise me, Teresa.

And she said: - Teresa?

- Yes, sure - I said.

Instead: - But I am Bianchina – she said.

It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa.

And Teresa? - I asked. - I don’t know - she said. - I think I saw her going with someone else, for example with Ferruccio.

I was annoyed. Then I thought about it.

- Ferruccio? - I asked. - Yes, sure - she said.

Then I remembered: - But I am Ferruccio.

It was true. I was Ferruccio, not Michele.

- We always mistake - she said.

- It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

- Yes - she said - *with some emphasis* it makes no difference.

And we stayed on the grass until night.

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1 This work is conceived as a one-act piece and should not be divided allowing an interval in the middle. However, if a break point is needed, the director should refer to the indicated Parts I and II.
The Narrator extracts a toy-ball from her bag and briefly contemplates it. This action has to reflect her incomprehension of the story: she looks for an explanation within an external object, which she has to handle not as what it is (as a toy-ball), but as an idea. The toy-ball has to be seen as a concept, as an interchangeable idea. No reference to games or playing has to be made. It has to be clear for the audience that the toy-ball is an object able to carry (any) other meaning (and so it has to be treated in all the following scenes: the toy-balls are signifiers standing for various, unrelated signifieds). Then the Narrator says to the audience:

**Narrator:** - Who should we blame?

As soon as the narrator says this, she gently throws the ball to Infiltrator 1 looking at him/her as if she is expecting an answer. Infiltrator 1 catches the ball: he/she has to look confused, then stares at the audience as waiting for help, and eventually says:

**Infiltrator 1:** - I don’t…I don’t know.

Infiltrator 1 throws the ball back to the Narrator, who repeats with more insistence:

**Narrator:** - Who should we blame?

She throws the ball to Infiltrator 2 who catches the ball. He/she, with more confidence than Infiltrator 1, looks at the audience, places his attention on any particular member of the audience and says:

**Infiltrator 2:** - Well…it may be him/her [pointing at the audience member]. I am not entirely sure…

Infiltrator 2 throws the ball back to the Narrator. She then reads again the end of her story, this time with more seriousness, as if the passage hides an important message that to be grasped and understood:

**Narrator:** … - We always mistake - she said.
- It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.
- Yes - she said - it makes no difference.
And we stayed on the grass until night.

The Narrator again throws the toy-ball to Infiltrator 1, and repeats:

- Who should we blame?

Infiltrator 1 is now more confident, looks at one of the exit doors of the performance space and says:

**Infiltrator 1:** - Yes…I think I saw him... He passed by. He must have gone in that direction. [pointing at one of the doors]
Infiltrator 1 then throws the ball back to the Narrator. The Narrator says for the last time, loudly and passionately:

    Narrator: - Has anyone seen who we should blame?

She then throws the ball to a member of the audience (anyone). It has to be clear that the Narrator wants to establish a physical/dramatic relationship with that member of the audience and the audience in general.

Everybody waits that the audience member says something, anything. Everybody has to let him/her talk and throw the toy-ball back the Narrator. This action has to be repeated several time and every time the Narrator should ask the same question (who we should blame?). Any answer of the audience has to be welcomed, and the audience themselves have feel they can say anything. However such an exchange does not have to last too long, but enough to let the audience understand that they are part of the performance.

Once such a process is established, while the audience’s answers are still taking place, Infiltrator 2 interrupts and says with vehemence:

    Infiltrator 2: - I think we should go and check where he is. [looks at the doors Infiltrator 1 pointed at before] I think we should go to find…and block him! [looks at Infiltrator 1]

    Infiltrator 1: - Yes, you are right. Let us go!

Infiltrators 1 and 2 stand up and with enthusiasm walk out through the door they both pointed at. The Narrator quickly follows them, and the clarinettist joins the orchestra.

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SCENE 2 - Osso and Mastrosso: spiritual poverty and criminality

The orchestra begins to play. Osso and Mastrosso walk in from another door holding and contemplating respectively a knife and a gun. Their clothes have to identify them as mafioso characters. They both have some heavy dark-coloured make up on their faces, which providing them with nasty somatic types (e.g. scars). Their physicality and body gestures have to be Totò- or Benigni-like 2.

Osso enters first and sings:

    Osso: - [Looking at and caressing his knife] How shiny… How sparkly…

Then Mastrosso, calling Osso, follows. Their repeatedly calling each other’s names has to recall the manners of the ‘commedia napoletana’.

    Mastrosso: - [Sung. Looking at and caressing his gun] Osso!

2 Sources of inspirations can be found in movies such as Totò’s L’imperatore di Capri and Totò Diabolicus, and Roberto Benigni’s comedies Johnny Stecchino and Il piccolo diavolo.
Osso: - [Sung. Looking at and caressing his knife] Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - What?!

[Mastrosso: - Nothing...]
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - What?!

[Mastrosso: - Don’t you feel guilty?
Osso: - No!
Mastrosso: - Neither do I... Don’t you think you are to blame?
Osso: - No!
Mastrosso: - Bravo!]

Together: - [Caressing their weapons] How shiny... How sparkly...
Mastrosso: - Look out, Osso, study, don’t play the fool, don’t idle away, and mostly strive to please your teachers and superiors. You can do badly in your studies and have no talent, but if you will be able to please you superior you will make your way and overcome everyone. Leave aside your mates, who cannot teach you anything good; if you really have to, go round with the rich ones, who in case of need will be useful. Never offer anything, don’t pay drinks to anyone, make instead the others offer you, and mostly spend sparingly: this is the main thing. Your mate, your friend leads you by the nose, and in the need he is the first to betray you, money never betrays you, anything you would need. [with emphasis] With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere!

[Osso, as a duet, sings ‘yes’ and noises of approval during Mastrosso’s speech]

Together: - [lifting their weapons] With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere!
Osso: - [jokey] And with my shiny knife!
Together: - [laugh] Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!... [They both walk out from the door they came in from] How shiny... How sparkly...
SCENE 3 - Who is to blame? 1

As Osso and Mastrosso walk out Common Persons (choir) led by Infiltrator 1 and 2 burst in from the other door, from where they left before. They are very agitated and invade the whole performance space (even the audience space). They all hold one or two toy-balls: this time the toy-balls have to look and be treated as weapons, and the Common Persons, during the entire scene, have to throw them around the performance space. It is important that the ball-throwing is adequate to the venue, and the audience has not to be made the target of the throwing. Leaving the performance and audience space full of toy-balls is good.

Common Persons: - [Sung, with energy and nervousness] Where is he? Where is he? Look over there! Look over here!

Spare voices shout: Creep! ... Freak! ... Scumbag! ... Monster!

Common Persons: Where is he? Where is he? He may have come here! [pointing at a door] He may have gone there! [pointing at the other door] He may have gone there! [same pointing...] He may have come here!

[to an audience member] Have you seen him? [to another audience member] Did he come here? Has anyone seen him?

Oh! Where is he? Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door] No! Let’s search over here! [pointing at the other door] Let’s search over there! [same pointing...] No! Let’s search over here!

They burst out from the door where Osso left, while echoing the words ‘Where is he?’

SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream

Carcagnosso slowly comes in from another door holding a box full of objects and tools (or similar) which he would need to build a bomb (or similar mass-destruction weapon). Similarly to Osso and Mastrosso, he has to wear mafioso-like clothes and have heavy dark-coloured make up on his face. He acts with creepy and dodgy manners. While reaching the centre of the performance space he murmurs the following words, them sings:

Carcagnosso: - [Murmuring] Boom...it’s going to explode...Baam...a big explosion... ...Pffft...with lots of dust...Arrgh...they’re going to cry!
- [Sung. Pulling out the content of his box and showing it to the audience]
  The dreamer delves in vain between his old dreams, as between the ashes, searching from a little spark. For rising again what before was so dear, what was blazing the blood, what was ripping the tears from the eyes.

[pause, music only...
Carcagnosso pulls more objects/weapons out of his box.
Among these there is a book, The Sorrows of Young Werther. He sceptically browse the content of the book, wonders a bit around, then reads the following passage from the book:]

- I do not shudder to seize the cold and horrendous goblet, from which I shall drink the delirium of death!
  Your hand presents it to me, and I do not tremble.
  This is how all the wishes and hopes of my existence are fulfilled!

[Carcagnosso stops the reading, and annoyed throws the book away, on the floor; and kicks it. Then says:]

- “The Sorrows of Young Werther”...bah! I forgot I still had such crap in my box!

[Then goes back to the box and his original engagements, and sings:]

Where are my dreams? Where are their dreams?
[looking at the audience] Where are your dreams?
There is a virtue to defend, there is a honour to protect. There are dreams to bring to life!

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SCENE 5 - Who is to blame? 2

While ending his sentence Carcagnosso hears from a distance noises of shouting people about to arrive. They are the Common Persons from off stage. Carcagnosso quickly puts his stuff back into the box and runs away from the door he came in. The Common Persons then enter. They are very agitated like before and all have a toy-ball in their hands: during this scene the Common Persons have to throw some toy-balls around, again without making the audience the target of the throwing. Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.

One Common Persons: [From off stage, before entering]
[Almost shout]
- Let’s get the freak! He may have gone there!

Carcagnosso runs away. Common Persons burst in.

All Common Persons: [Singing while bursting in]
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there!
Look over here!

Spare voices shout: Creep! ... Freak! ... Scumbag! ... Monster!

All Women of Common Persons:
[Singing]
- Where is he? Where is he?
He may have come here! [pointing at a door]
He may have gone there! [pointing at the other door]
He may have gone there! [same pointing ...]
He may have come here!

Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door]
No! Let’s search over here! [pointing at the other door]
Let’s search over there! [same pointing...]
No! Let’s search over here!

All Men of Common Persons:
[Sung. Go among the audience, take some Toy-balls placed in the containers and distribute few of them to the audience.]

- [Ostending 3 the toy-balls] These are our weapons!
These are our weapons!
We’ll find him! We’ll get him!
We’ll find him! We’ll get him!

All Women of Common Persons:
[Singing]
Have you seen him? Did he come here?
Have you seen him? Did he come here?

[to Infiltrator 3!] Have you seen him? Have you seen him?

[Pause. All Common Persons stare at Infiltrator 3, who sits among the audience.]

Infiltrator 3: [Spoken, confused]
- Well ... yes ... I think ... I think he went in that way ...
[pointing at a door]

[Pause. All Common Persons stare at the door Infiltrator 3 indicated.]

All Common Persons and Infiltrator 3:

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3 The word ‘ostend’ (and ‘ostention’) comes from the Latin ostendere, meaning to show. It was used by semiotician Umberto Eco to refer to moments in oral communication when, instead of using words, people substitute actions. E.g. In response to a child’s question ‘what’s a pebble?’, instead of replying with a gloss (‘it’s a small stone worn into a shape by water’) one seize the nearest example on the beach or ground and demonstrates it to the child.
- Where is he? Where is he?
Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door]
We’ll find him! We’ll get him!

All Common Persons and Infiltrator 3, who joins them, burst out from the door Infiltrator 3 indicated.

SCENE 6 - Fable: still not understood

Common Persons left. There is no one on the stage.
The Narrator walks in from another door holding several toy-balls (and/or a bag containing them). Her overall action, during this scene, is to read and walk across the stage with an increasingly stressed and frustrated attitude. She reads the following (a portion of the previous text) as if she is still trying to understand its meaning and looking for its secret message. However, her attempts, during this scene, are unsuccessful and by the end of the scene she is totally frustrated, almost desperate, for not managing to understand the sense of her story.
While reading she throws away all her toy-balls: these, like in Scene One, have to handled as if they were ideas, attempts, she throws away; the toy-balls have to be thrown in acts of liberation. This time she must leave the balls to the audience and not take them back (leaving them on the performance space is good).
Similarly to Scene One she is joined on stage by the clarinettist, who has to perform physical gestures reflecting both the musical gestures and the Narrator’s mood.

Narrator: ……
And she replied: - I come with you because it is you.
[Throws some toy-balls]
And I told her: - Promise me, Teresa.
[Throws some toy-balls]
And she said: - Teresa?
[Throws some toy-balls]
- Yes, sure - I said.
[Throws some toy-balls]
Instead: - But I am Bianchina - she said.
[Throws some toy-balls]
It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa.
[Throws some toy-balls]

The Narrator, almost desperate, leaves from the opposite door she came in from.
SCENE 7 - Osso and Mastrozzo: belonging and model of virtue

Osso walk in from another door while singing:

Osso: - [Caressing his knife] How shiny… How sparkly…
     I’m so glad I’ll do it, I’m so glad I’ll do it...

Then Mastrozzo enters, disturbing Osso’s singing:

Mastrozzo: - [To Osso, with upset manners] You have been ruined by idleness!
     And from idleness you must escape.
     How can we live in the world without a sense of belonging (that supports us)?

Osso: - [To Mastrozzo] The model of virtue did not have the role of protagonist.
     We can also say why. Because it finally is time to treat the poor model of
     virtue to some rest. Because the expression “model of virtue” bounces
     from mouth to mouth [with emphasis] with no sense!

Mastrozzo: - [To the audience] Because appealing to the model of virtue is hypocritical!

Together: - [To the audience] Because no-one has respect for the model of virtue!

Together: - Well, it’s time to look for someone to blame!

Mastrozzo: - For a creep!
Osso: - For a freak!
Mastrozzo: - For a crook!
Osso: - For a weirdo!
Mastrozzo: - For a scumbag!
Osso: - For a monster!

Osso and Mastrozzo leave through the door they came in from while cheerily singing:

Together: How can we live in the world without a sense of belonging (that supports us)?
     For a creep! for a freak! for a crook! for a weirdo! for a scumbag! for a monster!

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SCENE 8 - Who is to blame? 3

Once Osso and Mastrozzo have left, Common Persons enter the performance space. Again, they are
very agitated and all carry a few toy-balls. They initially look for someone to blame as earlier, but
eventually end up arguing and insulting each other. During this scene the Common Persons have to
throw some toy-balls to each other. The target of the throwing, again, must not be the audience.
Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.
(The following sung lyrics and dialogues happen simultaneously)

All Common Persons: [Singing while entering]
     Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
Where is he? Where is he?
He may gone there! He may have come here!
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!

[Divided into two groups]
He must have gone there! No, he must have gone there!
Look over there! No, you look over here!

2 Sopranos:  
[Spoken, arguing]
1. I told you to look over there.
2. I don’t want to look over there.
1. You’re silly and selfish, don’t you understand he may have gone there?
2. I don’t think he went there, he must have gone that way, you fool!
1. How dare you call me fool?!
2. You just called me silly and selfish!
1. That was because you didn’t look over there...
2. And I called you fool because I think he must have gone that way...
1. We will never find who is to blame if you insult us!
2. I didn’t insult you! If we haven’t found him yet it’s because of your manners!
1. What do you mean my manners?!
2. What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to
do, but you don’t know anything! Yours is simply arrogance!
1. Oh! I have never been treated in this way, you are a cow!
2. Well, if I am a cow, then you are a pig!
1. Don’t you understand that we will never find who is to blame if you keep
insulting!
2. If you don’t want to be insulted, watch out what you’re saying!
1. What do you mean what I’m saying?!
2. What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to
do, but you don’t know anything! You are an arrogant idiot!
1. You’re a cow with no brain! I will find him first!
2. No, I will find him first, you selfish pig!

[throw the toy-balls to each other; and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]
1 and 2. Silly, selfish, fool, arrogant, idiot!

All other Common Persons slowly join the arguments adding their insults.

2 Tenors:  
[Spoken, arguing]
1. If you keep obstructing my way I won’t be able to find him!
2. I am not obstructing your way, I am leading the group, idiot!
1. We don’t need you leading the group, you’re simply useless on this task, dump!
2. You are really exaggerating now! I have as much right as you to find who
is to blame, and I’m going to do it with or without your permission!
1. I don’t care if you want to look for who’s to blame, just don’t do it here.
2. I am not taking orders from a rude moron like you!
1. What a dump! We’ll never find him with your slow and childish attitude!
2. We’ll never find him with your rude and arrogant manners!
1. Don’t you understand we don’t need you leading the group! You’re a dump!
2. Without me you won’t be able to find anything, idiot!

[throw the toy-balls to each other, and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]
1 and 2. Idiot, dump, rude, moron, childish, arrogant!

2 Altos:  

[Spoken, arguing]
1. What are you doing? You should look over there?
2. Mind your business! I look wherever I want.
1. Hey, who do you think you are? I am showing you the right way...
2. I decide myself what the right way is, without my skills you won’t find anything!
1. I don’t need your skills! I will find who is to blame on my own, I will catch him with my hand!
2. You better stay away, stupid idiot, I will find him first!
1. No, you will not, you retarded animal! You have no reason to find him first, shame on you!
2. Oh yes, I have as many as you! You filthy idiot.

[throw the toy-balls to each other, and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]
1 and 2. Stupid, idiot, retarded, animal, filthy!

All Common Persons throw the toy-balls to and insult each other until the end of the scene:

- Selfish, fool, arrogant, idiot, cow, pig, dump, rude, moron, stupid, retarded, animal!

Then they all leave.

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SCENE 9 - Carcagnosso: self-moral

Carcagnosso slowly comes in, like before, with his box full of objects and tools. He still acts with creepy and dodgy manners. He reaches the centre of the performance space he sings:

Carcagnosso:  - [Pulling out and showing to the audience the content of his box]
Boom...it’s going to explode... Baam...a big explosion... Pff...with lots of dust... Arrgh...they’re going to cry!

[To the audience] Someone, maybe, wishes to complete his definition of myself. That I were not an ideal person, full of virtues, is evident. So what? Would I be to blame? Why to blame, I say... Why are you so severe with your neighbour?
People to blame do not exist anymore between us…yes and no, maybe two or three, and even those already begin talking about virtue. Wise is he who doesn’t loathe anyone, but peering with a penetrating eye can discover his deep reasons.

[as a fairy tale’s moral] For mankind, everything transforms very fast: you don’t have time to toss and turn that a disgusting warm has already grown inside you!

Suddenly Infiltrators 1, 2 and 3 burst in (announced by Infiltrator 3 off-stage exclamation). They loudly sings the following and Carcagnosso looks confused and scared.

Infiltrator 3: - [from off-stage while bursting in] I think I saw him running in that way! Let’s get that freak!
Infiltrators 1 and 2: - [while bursting in] Where is he? Where is he?
Let’e get that scumbag! Let’s get that monster!

All 3 Infiltrators: [pointing at different places/exits]
Look over there!
No! Let’s search over here!
Look over there!
No! Let’s search over there!

[to an audience member] – Have you seen him?
[to another audience member] – Did he come here?

All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] Have you seem him?
Carcagnosso: Who? [confused and scared]
All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] That creep we should blame!
Carcagnosso: Who?
All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] That monster we must blame!
[pause]
Carcagnosso: [pandering to the Infiltrators] Yes…I think he went that way…
[pointing at the door opposite from where the Infiltrators came in]

All 3 Infiltrators follow Carcagnosso’s suggestion and rapidly go off-stage. Carcagnosso, after having put his stuff back into his box, also walks out, but from another door. While leaving he happily sings:

Carcagnosso: Boom...it’s going to explode...Baam...a big explosion...
...Pfff...with lots of dust...Arrgh...they’re going to cry!
SCENE 10 -  *Fable: it is now clear!*

The Narrator enters the stage with an expression of success. She looks like someone who has finally found a solution to her concerns.

The clarinettist, again, joins her on stage and performs physical gestures that enhance the meaning of the Narrator’s lines and acting.

The Narrator, with confident and serious manners, reads to the audience the same story. However, this time she has to perform as if she wants to explain its real meaning and secret message. There are many toy-balls left on the performance space’s floor from the previous scenes: the Narrator has to interact with them through gestures of ostention. She has to handle them as if they were thoughts, people and ideas: the toy-balls have to be referred to as the characters of the story she reads (Ferruccio, Teresa, etc.) and the ostention of different toy-balls has to show their interchangeability. At the same time, through her interaction with the toy-balls, the Narrator has to implicitly evoke the other characters of the opera, who, like Ferruccio, Teresa, etc. can be exchanged.

Narrator: What was annoying me was thinking that she was coming with me just as she could have gone with someone else, for example with Ferruccio. While we were on the grass I told her.

- Listen, do you come with me because it is me or as you come with me you could go with someone else, for example with Ferruccio?

And she replied: - I come with you because it is you.

And I told her: - Promise me, Teresa.

And she said: - Teresa?

- Yes, sure - I said.

Instead: - But I am Bianchina – she said.

It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa.

And Teresa? - I asked. - I don’t know - she said. - I think I saw her going with someone else, for example with Ferruccio.

I was annoyed. Then I thought about it.

- Ferruccio? - I asked. - Yes, sure - she said.

Then I remembered: - But I am Ferruccio.

It was true. I was Ferruccio, not Michele.

- We always mistake - she said.

- It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

- Yes - she said - *with some emphasis* it makes no difference.

And we stayed on the grass until night.

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End of PART I
PART II

SCENE 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale

The score of this scene consists of a graphic score that equally embodies the music, the lyrics and the theatricality of the scene. Such a graphic score is designed to visually and musico-theatrically represent the Jokers’ lyrics: each musical fragment, connected to other musical fragments, visually represents the words ‘each tale chases another tale’. Therefore, it is vital that the director (and designer, scenographer and other visual collaborators) makes the score part of the performance space. It can for instance be projected, or it can be an enormous paper covering the whole floor on which the singers and musicians perform. The Jokers and the musicians involved in this scene have to perform in such a way to physically imitate the score: if for example the score is printed on a paper covering the entire floor, the performers could walk on it and perform the musical-textural fragments on which they walk onto. Any directorial idea is welcome, as long as the score is treated as an integral visual element of the drama, not simply as the performers’ score. The Three Jokers, once in the performance space, sing the following and move according to the graphic score. The musicians, like the clarinettist in the Narrator’s scenes, have to leave the orchestra and join the singers/actors, and their musical gestures have to be reflected in their physical gestures.

Three Jokers: - [Sung] Each tale chases another tale, and while a diner advances his strip another from the furthest extreme advances in the opposite direction. Each tale chases another tale, each tale chases ... [repeat ad lib.]

After having performed the graphic score, the Jokers leave the stage and the musicians go back to the orchestra. 

SCENE 12 - Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience

Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso, still carrying their respective weapons, slowly walk on the stage toward three separate tables (or similar) placed in separate locations of the performance area. The three characters do not have to interact with each other: they happen to share the same performance area, but have to appear dramaturgically separate in time and place. On each table there is a basin containing some water. Lights and other stage devices have to suggest an atmosphere of personal, inner catharsis. While on their way to their respective tables they simultaneously sing the following passages. Their acting has to be increasingly dramatic until they reach the point in which they throw water on their faces (this point has to recall their personal, inner catharsis). The characters, during the whole scene, have to seem dominated by memories: their lines, melismas and acting have to implicitly be addressed to their memories, and their words have to appear as considerations and conclusions generated from such memories.
Osso:  [Contemplating his knife, and acting with increasing drama]
How shiny… How sparkly… How shiny… How sparkly… [repeat]
Carcagnosso:  [Contemplating his box of weapons, and acting with increasing drama]
Boom…it’s going to explode… Baam…a big explosion… Pfff…with lots of dust… Arrgh … they’re going to cry! [repeat]
Mastrosso:  [Contemplating his gun, and acting with increasing drama]
With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere! [repeat]

Once they reach their respective tables the three characters simultaneously sing/speak with a cathartic attitude:

Mastrosso: The previous world has passed together with the words that were images of it, that betrayed it through images. This is not representable anymore, and the words must express its unrepresentability, until transforming into voices, fragments of voices, sounds more that voices, gestures more that sounds. Naked body of those unnamable things, ripped out from any discourse.

Carcagnosso: If men and women begun to live their dreams, every ghost would become a person which one would begin a story of pursuits with, of pretences, of misunderstandings, of oppressions, and the carousel of fantasies would stop.

Osso: Every description shows the truth and shows that it is itself a depiction, and not the truth. So as the lion and the snake are at the same time figure of the Christ and the demon. It’s that the justice of the interpretation cannot even be fixed by the fathers’ auctoritas, and I burn in the doubt.

Mastrosso: All the imaginable can be dreamt but even the most unexpected dream is a puzzle that hides a wish or a fear. And representations, like dreams, are built of wishes and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, and their rules absurd, and every thing hides another.

Carcagnosso: The unicorns exist in these representations, which if they don’t speak about the real being they speak of the possible being. The unicorn of the representations is like a track. If there is a track there must be something of which it is track. Of course. Not always a track has the same shape of the body that impressed it. Sometimes it reproduces the impression that a body left in our mind, it’s track of an idea. The idea is sign of thing, and the image is sign of the idea. A sign of a sign.

Osso: Listening and seeing means freeing from every intention, it means being ready to grasp a voice that let itself be heard when one least expects it, a voice that one doesn’t know where it comes from, from somewhere beyond the representation, beyond the author: the voice of the non-said, of that that the world hasn’t yet said of itself and hasn’t yet the words to say.

Mastrosso: Words were in principle near God and our task were to repeat day by day, humbly, the solely unmodifiable event of which the true truth can be asserted. But now we see as through a mirror, in a vague way, and the truth, before than face to face, manifests in the error of the world, so that we have to interpret its signs.

Carcagnosso: As stuttering orators, sad humorists, bald hairdressers exist, so honest politicians could well exist.
Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso simultaneously take some water from their respective basin and repeatedly throw it on their own faces letting their make up melt. They must not wash the make up away, but spread it over their faces in order to create monstrous facial expressions. This passage has to be performed somehow slowly and with contemplation.

From here to the end of the scene Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso have to appear fully overtaken by memories, as if they were only now comprehending the meaning of the words they previously said.

[If during the first half of the piece Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso were depicted as grotesque, Totò-like characters, now they have to look dramatic and serious. This scene has to present their bivalent personality, which has to appear ambiguous: they have to appear neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong; the audience must not be able to form an opinion about them.]

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SCENE 13 - The Jokers: a finite number of elements multiplies by billions of billions

The Three Jokers come back to the performance space. They overlap and somehow interrupt the previous scene. They do not interact with Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso, but their presence and lyrics have to appear as a detached comment to the mafiosos’ previous scene.

Similarly to Scene 11, this scene is composed in the form of a graphic score, and equally to Scene 11 the graphic score has to feature as an integral visual element of the drama and action (it can be projected, printed on the floor, etc.).

The musicians involved in this scene have to leave the orchestra and join the Three Jokers on the stage.

Three Jokers: - [Sung] The world does not exist, there is not a whole given all at once: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions, and only a few of these find a shape and a sense and stand out in the middle of this senseless and shapeless dust.

[There is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions] [repeat ad lib.]

After having performed the graphic score, the Jokers leave the stage and the musicians go back to the orchestra. Simultaneously, also Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso leave.

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SCENE 14 - *Who is to blame?* 4

The Common Persons enter the performance space equipped with several newspapers and toy-balls. They are divided into three Groups. Each of the three Groups gathers around an Infiltrator, as listening for news and/or announcements. The scene has to suggest a grotesque yet worry atmosphere.

The lines the Common Persons read are taken from real newspapers: although they refer to real events there must not be any explicit reference to such events. 

(The arrows below provide a rough indication of when the Groups overlap within the score).

**Group 1:**

One member of Group 1:
- [Reading from the newspaper. *With astonishment*] Today the Head of Police publicly declared that the armed forces may have possibly identified the offender.
  The rest of Group 1:
  - [With astonishment] OH!
Same member of Group 1:
- [Reading from the newspaper.] A picture that cannot give anything else than an image of deep instability, of a country searching for a turning point, but with a political class totally incapable of imprinting it.
  The rest of Group 1:
  - [With astonishment] OH!
Same member of Group 1:
- [simile] Er Batman jailed for embezzlement: he unlawfully took one point three million. The judge says that he could escape and block the investigations. Public subsidy were considered as his own wallet.
  The rest of Group 1:
  - [simile] OH!
Same member of Group 1:
- [simile] While the city was quieter last night, after thousands of police offices were sent on to the streets, conspiracy was spreading.
  The rest of Group 1:
  - [simile] OH!
Same member of Group 1:
- The government has already spent three billions. And a substantial part of these money have been wasted. The wasting-scandals of the earth-quake has begun on the day of the solemn funerals. Three-hundred-and-nine were the deaths that the crowd cried, but four-hundred-and-seventy-one were instead the coffins bought with public money. An extra hundred-and-sixty-two bier.
The rest of Group 1:
- OH!

Same member of Group 1:
- Yesterday morning the former region’s head was arrested: he’s accused of embezzlement for illegal appropriation. The provision also mentions his obsession for video-pokers, with which he would have lost hundred-thousand of public money.

The rest of Group 1:
- OH!

One member of Group 1:
- OH!

Group 2:

One member of Group 2:
- [Reading from the newspaper With astonishment] And now they are looking for a pen-drive containing secret documents about the investigation on the State-Mafia negotiation. The judge had stored it in a safe place, ma someone last thursday stole it. It contained the depositions on the dialogue between Cosa Nostra and the institutions. It has disappeared into thin air.

The rest of Group 2: - [With astonishment] OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- [simile] The magistrature is looking into a two billions bribe payed in occasion of the operation that started the crisis of the bank.

The rest of Group 2: - [simile] OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- Moreover there has been a tremendous stress to find someone to blame. That was the ideal character to achieve their theory. Has been described as a horrible monster.

The rest of Group 2: - [simile] OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- [Very seriously] A bomb has been placed in the Court’s parking space. Together with a photo of the magistrate. Then have left undisturbed, as nothing happened, in the most controlled building of the city.

The rest of Group 2: - OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- The five day promised to clean Naples up are ending and the city is submerged under two-thousand tons of garbage.

The rest of Group 2: - OH!

One member of Group 2:
- The president had no hesitation to say: creep! freak! weirdo and monster!

The rest of Group 2: - OH!

Group 3:

One member of Group 3:
- [Very seriously] From the bunga bunga to the spread, from the Pimp to the Professor, from the Olgettine dressed as nurses and Ruby niece of Mubarak to the bankers dressed like technicians. A turnaround that more cannot be.

The rest of Group 3: - OH!

One member of Group 3:
- - Sad burlesque competitions: politics has fun wasting time while everything crumbles.

The rest of Group 3: - OH!

One member of Group 3:
- The electoral results deliver a situation that places the country in a state of deep institutional instability, for this reason we can only be seriously worried.

The rest of Group 3: - OH!

One member of Group 3:
- It’s certified that the weirdo is in circulation, and has been described by witnesses as a creep!

The rest of Group 3: - OH!

Common Persons invade the performance space all over, looking with fervour for someone to blame. They have to demonstrate a certain cruelty.

The three Groups break and all Common Persons are distributed in a conventional SATB layout, as before:

All Infiltrators: - [with fear and anger] It’s time to look for someone to blame!
Common Persons: - [singing, with fear and anger] Where is he? Where is he?
Where is the creep!

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Where is the freak!
Where is the crook!
Where is the weirdo!
Where is the scumbag!
Where is the monster!

Once Common Persons spread all over the performance space, they initially attempt to find someone to blame (like before), and then, eventually, they all leave. Throwing toy-balls and leaving them on the performance space is good. (Leaving bits of newspapers around could be an interesting idea).

SCENE 15 - Everyone against everyone

A police complaints desk (or similar) is brought on stage. It has to look clear that it is a desk to which individuals file their complaints against unknown persons. All Common Persons (including the Infiltrators) go to this desk one by one, or in groups (as indicated below and on the score), to file their complaints and accusations; Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso join them too. There is no one at the desk, and when the characters go to file their complaints they have no interlocutor. It is important that they state their accusations and suspicions as if they do have an interlocutor, although they are left unheard. No irony should be made about the fact there is no police staff; it needs to look as if it is normal praxis that there is nobody at a police complain desk (the director should somehow stress this point).

All the characters performing in this scene must carry (maybe in small bags) numerous toy-balls.

1 Common Person (1 alto): [To the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-My lord, what is the purpose of this vast organisation? It involves arresting innocent people and preparing a senseless case against them. How will it be possible to avoid the most serious corruption? We must find him!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 tenor): [To the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-Mister Officer! I bought two shares and have already lost thirty-five euros. The damage they made is this transition where the party becomes the bank and the bank becomes the party. They’re scumbags! Monsters!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all soprano minus 1):
[To the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-It may not or maybe a no concern. That the fright of his light in tribalbalanced hides aback in the doom.
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]
Osso:  

[Holding his knife. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
- Police! Police! I lost my ‘model of virtue’! A scumbag must have stolen my ‘model of virtue’! It’s time to look for someone to blame!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all tenors minus 1):

[To the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
- Now the situation is the following: we have no job and cannot find one; we have no benefit that could help us. We have no money, and must find the monster!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 bass):  

[Simile all others]
- “But it’s absurd”, I said, “Can I phone him?”. “Sure” the inspector replied, “but I don’t understand what sense it could have”. “What sense?” dismayed and grumpy I shouted out. “But who are you? Do you expect a sense and you do the most senseless things!”  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all altos minus 1): [Simile all others]
- They steal that growing treasure, and not to make their party giant, but to split it as if they were gangs! Oh my politics, you are so dwarf!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Mastrosso:

[Holding his gun. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
- Someone kidnapped my ‘sense of belonging’! It was a crook! I cannot live without a ‘sense of belonging’!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 soprano): [Simile all others]
- Mister Officer! One day, waking up from anxious dreams, I found myself, in my bed, turned into a monstrous vermin! It’s certainly that creep’s fault!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Carcagnosso:

[Holding his bomb/box. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complain desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
- Please help me! Help me! I was about to place my wonderful bomb when a freak came...! Do you understand? I have a virtue to defend, I have dreams to bring to life!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]
Common Persons (all basses minus 1):
- It was so that the crowd was lively, protesting in squares and streets, with whom more than gentleman seemed urchin. Oh soul, that see so bitter things!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

[Silence: pausa rivelatrice]

Suddenly all characters on stage violently begin to accuse each other - “It’s your fault!” -, shouting the following insults. Their accusations are addressed to both themselves and random members of the audience. All characters in the performance space extract their toy-balls from their pockets and bags, and throw them to both each other and the audience members that are being accused. Infiltrators 4 and 5, who are still sitting among the audience, stand up and respond to the accusations by accusing the singers back and insulting them with the indicated words. At the same time Infiltrators 4 and 5 vehemently exhort the audience to grab the toy-balls from the container placed among the audience and throw them to both the singers and the audience themselves. A ‘toy-ball-throwing war’ must start! (All balls that fall on the floor must be taken and thrown back) From this moment onward it needs to appear as if both the characters and the audience are the same entity: the audience have to somehow naturally become part of the narrative, and the narrative, although being a representation, has to reflect a non-theatrical reality, but a phenomenon of real life.

Everybody against everybody, and agains the audience:
- It’s your fault!
- No, it’s your fault!
- Creep!
- Freak!
- Crook!
- Weirdo!
- Scumbag!
- Monster!

The Narrator suddenly enters with a megaphone and her book in the middle of the toy-ball-throwing and reads out loudly the following passage. During her declamation all the characters, who ignore her and keep fighting, fall one by one on the floor, as injured by the toy-balls. Once on the floor they remain laying, as injured or almost dying.

Narrator: - [Reading from the book. As a declamation, with fervour. Act as if you finally discovered on the book a moral that you must communicate to everybody. This reading has to be addressed to both the other characters and the audience: to the other characters your text has to be read as if it is a solution to their own personal conflicts, and to the audience as key to interpret the previous events.]

I know that there is no way, nor threat, nor punishment that could extirpate the injustice: too deep are its roots. Everything will be destined to failure until each one of us will not feel that today he must rebel against injustice. I am addressing those of you who have an idea of what nobleness of thought means. I invite you to fulfil that duty which everywhere waits for mankind. I invite you to better consider this
duty, the responsibility of your earthly mission, because we all imagine it to be weak, and only in part...
Once finished reading the Narrator walks among the others who are lying on the floor, as among dead bodies. She has to act as if her words arrived too late.

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**SCENE 16 - Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”**

While the whole cast motionlessly lays on the floor the Narrator remains on stage and stares at the almost dead bodies with a contemplating attitude. In this moment, the first clarinetist, as for Scene 1 and 10, leaves the orchestra and joins the singers on stage. He/she has to physically interact with the scene while playing. The Three Jokers, meanwhile, return on stage. They also walk between the laying bodies, as if what happened is the confirmation of what they had previously said/sung. The Narrator, however, ignores the presence of the Jokers, as if they were entities that only the audience could see. After a moment of contemplation, the Narrator leaves the megaphone and sings the following lyrics (the Jokers maybe sit between the motionless laying bodies). The following passage comes from her initial story, however this time she must not read it, but sing it as if she read it so many times that she now knows it by memory. Her manner (and those of the other characters that join her) has to be disillusioned and at the same time carefree. This final scene has to appear as if all conflicts, passions, battles, absurdities, troubles, and all previous events, do not really matter. The words ‘staying on the grass till night’ have to appear as synonyms of two elements: as an attitude of negligence with regards to own and other’s conflicts, and as an incapacity to fulfil own actions and wishes (as for instance finding someone to blame, or defending virtues, or understanding the reason and consequences of absurd facts).

(The orchestra is silent for the whole scene, and it has to slowly disappear from the set. This can for instance be done by turning the lights that illuminated the orchestra off).

**Narrator:** - *Sung* We always mistake...

**Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso** stand up from the floor and join the Narrator:

**Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso:**

- *Sung* We always mistake...

   It is true. We always happen to mistake each other.

   But now it is fine.

The Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso look at the clarinetist. The clarinetist, with a disillusioned and carefree smile, says:

**Clarinetist:** - *Spoken* It makes no difference.
The Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso sing:

- And we stayed on the grass till night... and we stayed on the grass till night... [ad libitum]

The rest of the characters - Common Persons, Infiltrators and the Three Jokers - who are still laying on the floor slowly turn their back towards the floor, in a supine position. Then they all join the Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso in their chant:

Everybody:

And we stayed on the grass till night… and we stayed on the grass till night… and we stayed on the grass till night… [ad libitum]

End

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February 2011 - December 2013, London
LIBRETTO with list of References
NOTE: All texts taken from other authors are highlighted in different colours and their respective sources are indicated in the footnotes (the *Ibid.* is used in a conventional way, not in relation to colours). A few passages have been paraphrased rather than cited as originally written; this is indicated in the relevant footnotes. All translations are by myself: however, it should be noted that the translations of a few passages are not literal but have occasionally been slightly paraphrased, or freely translated, depending on *It makes no difference*’s dramaturgy and its overall textural structure. The rest of the text, printed in normal black, is originally written by myself.
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PART I

SCENE 1 - *Fable: not understood*

All the Infiltrators sit among the audience, at a reasonable distance from each other. Only Infiltrators 1 and 2 sit closer to the performance space. They are all dressed in ordinary clothes: the audience must not know or understand that there are infiltrators among them. Among the audience there are several containers filled with toy-balls (of plastic, or something soft that would not hurt; their size should be about 10cm in diameter). These are placed at an easy reachable distance for the audience.

The Narrator and the first clarinettist enter the stage. They have to perform as a duet: the clarinettist has to appear not only as a musician, but as the ‘musical alter ego’ of the Narrator; the two have to perform in symbiosis and the clarinettist’s musical gestures have to be reflected in his/her physical gestures so as to infer further meaning to the Narrator’s words and acting.

The Narrator holds a book (from which she will read the following story) and a bag full of toy-balls. She, with relaxed, casual and easy going manners, reads the following story. This has to look as if she reads it for the first time and as if she does not entirely understand its meaning:

**Narrator:**

What was annoying me was thinking that she was coming with me just as she could have gone with someone else, for example with Ferruccio. While we were on the grass I told her.

- Listen, do you come with me because it is me or as you come with me you could go with someone else, for example with Ferruccio?

And she replied:

- I come with you because it is you.

And I told her:

- Promise me, Teresa.

And she said:

- Teresa?

- Yes, sure - I said.

Instead:

- But I am Bianchina – she said.

It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa.

And Teresa? - I asked.

- I don’t know - she said.

And Teresa going with someone else, for example with Ferruccio.

I was annoyed. Then I thought about it.

- Ferruccio? - I asked.

Then I remembered:

- But I am Ferruccio.

It was true. I was Ferruccio, not Michele.

- We always mistake - she said.
- It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.
- Yes - she said - [with some emphasis] it makes no difference.
And we stayed on the grass until night. ⁴

The Narrator extracts a toy-ball from her bag and briefly contemplates it. This action has to reflect her incomprehension of the story: she looks for an explanation within an external object, which she has to handle not as what it is (as a toy-ball), but as an idea. The toy-ball has to be seen as a concept, as an interchangeable idea. No reference to games or playing has to be made. It has to be clear for the audience that the toy-ball is an object able to carry (any) other meaning (and so it has to be treated in all the following scenes: the toy-balls are signifiers standing for various, unrelated signifieds). Then the Narrator says to the audience:

Narrator: - Who should we blame?

As soon as the narrator says this, she gently throws the ball to Infiltrator 1 looking at him/her as if she is expecting an answer. Infiltrator 1 catches the ball: he/she has to look confused, then stares at the audience as waiting for help, and eventually says:

Infiltrator 1: - I don’t…I don’t know.

Infiltrator 1 throws the ball back to the Narrator, who repeats with more insistence:

Narrator: - Who should we blame?

She throws the ball to Infiltrator 2 who catches the ball. He/she, with more confidence than Infiltrator 1, looks at the audience, places his attention on any particular member of the audience and says:

Infiltrator 2: - Well…it may be him/her [pointing at the audience member]. I am not entirely sure…

Infiltrator 2 throws the ball back to the Narrator. She then reads again the end of her story, this time with more seriousness, as if the passage hides an important message that to be grasped and understood:

Narrator: … - We always mistake - she said.
- It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.
- Yes - she said - it makes no difference.
And we stayed on the grass until night. ⁵

The Narrator again throws the toy-ball to Infiltrator 1, and repeats:

- Who should we blame?

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⁵ Ibid. 772.
Infiltrator 1 is now more confident, looks at one of the exit doors of the performance space and says:

Infiltrator 1:  - Yes…I think I saw him... He passed by. He must have gone in that direction. [pointing at one of the doors]

Infiltrator 1 then throws the ball back to the Narrator. The Narrator says for the last time, loudly and passionately:

Narrator:  - Has anyone seen who we should blame?

She then throws the ball to a member of the audience (anyone). It has to be clear that the Narrator wants to establish a physical/dramatic relationship with that member of the audience and the audience in general. Everybody waits that the audience member says something, anything. Everybody has to let him/her talk and throw the toy-ball back the Narrator. This action has to be repeated several time and every time the Narrator should ask the same question (who we should blame?). Any answer of the audience has to be welcomed, and the audience themselves have feel they can say anything. However such an exchange does not have to last too long, but enough to let the audience understand that they are part of the performance.

Once such a process is established, while the audience’s answers are still taking place, Infiltrator 2 interrupts and says with vehemence:

Infiltrator 2:  - I think we should go and check where he is. [looks at the doors Infiltrator 1 pointed at before] I think we should go to find…and block him! [looks at Infiltrator 1]

Infiltrator 1:  - Yes, you are right. Let us go!

Infiltrators 1 and 2 stand up and with enthusiasm walk out through the door they both pointed at. The Narrator quickly follows them, and the clarinettist joins the orchestra.

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**Attacca**

**SCENE 2 - Osso and Mastrosso: spiritual poverty and criminality**

The orchestra begins to play. Osso and Mastrosso walk in from another door holding and contemplating respectively a knife and a gun. Their clothes have to identify them as mafioso characters. They both have some heavy dark-coloured make up on their faces, which providing them with nasty somatic types (e.g. scars). Their physicality and body gestures have to be Totò- or Benigni-like 6.

Osso enters first and sings:

Osso:  - [Looking at and caressing his knife] How shiny… How sparkly…

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6 Sources of inspirations can be found in movies such as Totò’s *L’imperatore di Capri* and *Totò Diabolicus*, and Roberto Benigni’s comedies *Johnny Stecchino* and *Il piccolo diavolo*. 
Then Mastrosso, calling Osso, follows. Their repeatedly calling each other’s names has to recall the manners of the ‘commedia napoletana’.

Mastrosso: - [Sung. Looking at and caressing his gun] Osso!
Osso: - [Sung. Looking at and caressing his knife] Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - What?!!

[pause]
Mastrosso: - Nothing...

[pause]
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso - Mastrosso?!
Mastrosso: - Osso!
Osso: - What?!

[pause]
Mastrosso: - Don’t you feel guilty?
Osso: - No!
Mastrosso: - Neither do I... Don’t you think you are to blame?
Osso: - No!
Mastrosso: - Bravo!

Together: - [Caressing their weapons] How shiny… How sparkly…

Mastrosso: - Look out, Osso, study, don’t play the fool, don’t idle away, and mostly strive to please your teachers and superiors. You can do badly in your studies and have no talent, but if you will be able to please you superior you will make your way and overcome everyone. Leave aside your mates, who cannot teach you anything good; if you really have to, go round with the rich ones, who in case of need will be useful. Never offer anything, don’t pay drinks to anyone, make instead the others offer you, and mostly spend sparingly: this is the main thing. Your mate, your friend leads you by the nose, and in the need he is the first to betray you, money never betrays you, anything you would need. [with emphasis] With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere! 7

[Osso, as a duet, sings ‘yes’ and noises of approval during Mastrosso’s speech]

Together: - [lifting their weapons] With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere! 8

Osso: - [jokey] And with my shiny knife!

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8 Ibid., 271.
Together:  - [laugh] Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!... [They both walk out from the door they came in from] How shiny… How sparkly…

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SCENE 3 - Who is to blame? 1

As Osso and Mastroso walk out Common Persons (choir) led by Infiltrator 1 and 2 burst in from the other door, from where they left before. They are very agitated and invade the whole performance space (even the audience space). They all hold one or two toy-balls: this time the toy-balls have to look and be treated as weapons, and the Common Persons, during the entire scene, have to throw them around the performance space. It is important that the ball-throwing is adequate to the venue, and the audience has not to be made the target of the throwing. Leaving the performance and audience space full of toy-balls is good.

Common Persons:  - [Sung, with energy and nervousness] Where is he? Where is he? Look over there!
Look over here!

Spare voices shout:  Creep! ... Freak! ... Scumbag! ... Monster! 9

Common Persons:  Where is he? Where is he?
He may have come here! [pointing at a door]
He may have gone there! [pointing at the other door]
He may have gone there! [same pointing…]
He may have come here!

[to an audience member] Have you seen him?
[to another audience member] Did he come here?
Has anyone seen him?

Oh! Where is he?
Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door]
No! Let’s search over here! [pointing at the other door]
Let’s search over there! [same pointing…]
No! Let’s search over here!

They burst out from the door where Osso left, while echoing the words ‘Where is he?’

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9 Unrelated words extrapolated from various tabloids and gossip magazines.
SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream

Carcagnosso slowly comes in from another door holding a box full of objects and tools (or similar) which he would need to build a bomb (or similar mass-destruction weapon). Similarly to Osso and Mastrosso, he has to wear mafioso-like clothes and have heavy dark-coloured make up on his face. He acts with creepy and dodgy manners. While reaching the centre of the performance space he murmurs the following words, them sings:

Carcagnosso: - [Murmuring] Boom...it’s going to explode...Baam...a big explosion... ...Pfff...with lots of dust...Arrgh...they’re going to cry!

- [Sung. Pulling out the content of his box and showing it to the audience]
  The dreamer delves in vain between his old dreams, as between the ashes, searching from a little spark. For rising again what before was so dear, what was blazing the blood, what was ripping the tears from the eyes.  

[pause, music only...]
Carcagnosso pulls more objects/weapons out of his box. Among these there is a book, The Sorrows of Young Werther. He sceptically browse the content of the book, wonders a bit around, then reads the following passage from the book:]

- I do not shudder to seize the cold and horrendous goblet, from which I shall drink the delirium of death!
  Your hand presents it to me, and I do not tremble.
  This is how all the wishes and hopes of my existence are fulfilled!  

[Carcagnosso stops the reading, and annoyed throws the book away, on the floor, and kicks it. Then says:] 

- “The Sorrows of Young Werther”...bah! I forgot I still had such crap in my box!

[Then goes back to the box and his original engagements, and sings:] 

Where are my dreams? Where are their dreams? [looking at the audience] Where are your dreams? There is a virtue to defend, there is an honour to protect. There are dreams to bring to life!

Attacca
SCENE 5 - Who is to blame? 2

While ending his sentence Carcagnosso hears from a distance noises of shouting people about to arrive. They are the Common Persons from off stage. Carcagnosso quickly puts his stuff back into the box and runs away from the door he came in. The Common Persons then enter. They are very agitated like before and all have a toy-ball in their hands: during this scene the Common Persons have to throw some toy-balls around, again without making the audience the target of the throwing. Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.

One Common Persons:  
[From off stage, before entering]  
[Almost shout]  
- Let’s get the freak! ¹³ He may have gone there!

Carcagnosso runs away. Common Persons burst in.

All Common Persons:  
[Singing while bursting in]  
Where is he? Where is he?  
Look over there!  
Look over here!

Spare voices shout:  
Creep! ... Freak! ... Scumbag! ... Monster! ¹⁴

All Women of Common Persons:

[Singing]  
- Where is he? Where is he?  
He may have come here! [pointing at a door]  
He may have gone there! [pointing at the other door]  
He may have gone there! [same pointing...]  
He may have come here!  

Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door]  
No! Let’s search over here! [pointing at the other door]  
Let’s search over there! [same pointing...]  
No! Let’s search over here!

All Men of Common Persons:

[Sung. Go among the audience, take some Toy-balls placed in the containers and distribute few of them to the audience.]

- [Ostending the toy-balls] These are our weapons!
  These are our weapons!  
  We’ll find him! We’ll get him!  
  We’ll find him! We’ll get him!

¹³ Words paraphrased from various tabloids and gossip magazines.  
¹⁴ Unrelated words extrapolated from various tabloids and gossip magazines.
All Women of Common Persons:

[Singing]
Have you seen him? Did he come here?
Have you seen him? Did he come here?

[to Infiltrator 3!] Have you seen him? Have you seen him?

[Pause. All Common Persons stare at Infiltrator 3, who sits among the audience.]

Infiltrator 3: [Spoken, confused]
- Well, yes... I think... I think he went in that way...
[pointing at a door]

[Pause. All Common Persons stare at the door Infiltrator 3 indicated.]

All Common Persons and Infiltrator 3:
- Where is he? Where is he?
Let’s search over there! [pointing at a door]
We’ll find him! We’ll get him!

All Common Persons and Infiltrator 3, who joins them, burst out from the door Infiltrator 3 indicated.

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Attacca

**SCENE 6 - Fable: still not understood**

Common Persons left. There is no one on the stage.
The Narrator walks in from another door holding several toy-balls (and/or a bag containing them).
Her overall action, during this scene, is to read and walk across the stage with an increasingly stressed and frustrated attitude. She reads the following (a portion of the previous text) as if she is still trying to understand its meaning and looking for its secret message. However, her attempts, during this scene, are unsuccessful and by the end of the scene she is totally frustrated, almost desperate, for not managing to understand the sense of her story.
While reading she throws away all her toy-balls: these, like in Scene One, have to handled as if they were ideas, attempts, she throws away; the toy-balls have to be thrown in acts of liberation. This time she must leave the balls to the audience and not take them back (leaving them on the performance space is good).
Similarly to Scene One she is joined on stage by the clarinettist, who has to perform physical gestures reflecting both the musical gestures and the Narrator’s mood.

Narrator: ……
And she replied: - I come with you because it is you.
[Throws some toy-balls]
And I told her: - Promise me, Teresa.
[Throws some toy-balls]
And she said: - Teresa?
[Throws some toy-balls]
- Yes, sure - I said.
[Throws some toy-balls]
Instead: - But I am Bianchina - she said.
[Throws some toy-balls]
It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa.  

The Narrator, almost desperate, leaves from the opposite door she came in from.

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Attacca

SCENE 7 - Osso and Mastrosso: belonging and model of virtue

Osso walk in from another door while singing:

Osso: - [Caressing his knife] How shiny… How sparkly…
I’m so glad I’ll do it, I’m so glad I’ll do it...

Then Mastrosso enters, disturbing Osso’s singing:

Mastrosso: - [To Osso, with upset manners] You have been ruined by idleness!
And from idleness you must escape.
How can we live in the world without a sense of belonging (that supports us)  

Osso: - [To Mastrosso] The model of virtue did not have the role of protagonist.
We can also say why. Because it finally is time to treat the poor model of virtue to some rest. Because the expression “model of virtue” bounces from mouth to mouth [with emphasis] with no sense!

Mastrosso: - [To the audience] Because appealing to the model of virtue is hypocritical!
Together: - [To the audience] Because no-one has respect for the model of virtue!

Together: - Well, it’s time to look for someone to blame!  

Mastrosso: - For a creep! magazines
Osso: - For a freak!
Mastrosso: - For a crook!
Osso: - For a weirdo!
Mastrosso: - For a scumbag!


Osso: - For a monster! 18

Osso and Mastrosso leave through the door they came in from while cheerily singing:

Together: How can we live in the world without a sense of belonging (that supports us)? 19
For a creep! for a freak! for a crook! for a weirdo! for a scumbag! for a monster! 20

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SCENE 8 - Who is to blame? 3

Once Osso and Mastrosso have left, Common Persons enter the performance space. Again, they are very agitated and all carry a few toy-balls. They initially look for someone to blame as earlier, but eventually end up arguing and insulting each other. During this scene the Common Persons have to throw some toy-balls to each other. The target of the throwing, again, must not be the audience. Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.

(The following sung lyrics and dialogues happen simultaneously)

All Common Persons: [Singing while entering]
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
He may gone there! He may have come here!
Where is he? Where is he?
Look over there! Look over here!
[Divided into two groups]
He must have gone there! No, he must have gone there!
Look over there! No, you look over here!

2 Sopranos: [Spoken, arguing]
1. I told you to look over there.
2. I don’t want to look over there.
1. You’re silly and selfish, don’t you understand he may have gone there?
2. I don’t think he went there, he must have gone that way, you fool!
1. How dare you call me fool?!
2. You just called me silly and selfish!
1. That was because you didn’t look over there...
2. And I called you fool because I think he must have gone that way...
1. We will never find who is to blame if you insult us!
2. I didn’t insult you! If we haven’t found him yet it’s because of your manners!
1. What do you mean my manners?!
2. What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to do, but you don’t know anything! Yours is simply arrogance!
1. Oh! I have never been treated in this way, you are a cow!
2. Well, if I am a cow, then you are a pig!
1. Don’t you understand that we will never find who is to blame if you keep insulting!
2. If you don’t want to be insulted, watch out what you’re saying!
1. What do you mean what I’m saying?!
2. What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to do, but you don’t know anything! You are an arrogant idiot!
1. You’re a cow with no brain! I will find him first!
2. Well, if I am a cow, then you are a pig!
1. Don’t you understand that we will never find who is to blame if you keep insulting!
2. If you don’t want to be insulted, watch out what you’re saying!
1. What do you mean what I’m saying?!
2. What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to do, but you don’t know anything! You are an arrogant idiot!
1. You’re a cow with no brain! I will find him first!
2. No, I will find him first, you selfish pig!

[throw the toy-balls to each other; and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]

1 and 2. Silly, selfish, fool, arrogant, idiot! 21

All other Common Persons slowly join the arguments adding their insults.

2 Tenors:  [Spoken, arguing]
1. If you keep obstructing my way I won’t be able to find him!
2. I am not obstructing your way, I am leading the group, idiot!
1. We don’t need you leading the group, you’re simply useless on this task, dump!
2. You are really exaggerating now! I have as much right as you to find who is to blame, and I’m going to do it with or without your permission!
1. I don’t care if you want to look for who’s to blame, just don’t do it here.
2. I am not taking orders from a rude moron like you!
1. What a dump! We’ll never find him with your slow and childish attitude!
2. We’ll never find him with your rude and arrogant manners!
1. Don’t you understand we don’t need you leading the group! You’re a dump!
2. Without me you won’t be able to find anything, idiot!

[throw the toy-balls to each other; and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]

1 and 2. Idiot, dump, rude, moron, childish, arrogant! 22

2 Altos:  [Spoken, arguing]
1. What are you doing? You should look over there?
2. Mind your business! I look wherever I want.
1. Hey, who do you think you are? I am showing you the right way...
2. I decide myself what the right way is, without my skills you won’t find anything!

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21 Unrelated words extrapolated from various tabloids and gossip magazines.

22 Ibid.
1. I don’t need your skills! I will find who is to blame on my own, I will catch him with my hand!
2. You better stay away, stupid idiot, I will find him first!
1. No, you will not, you retarded animal! You have no reason to find him first, shame on you!
2. Oh yes, I have as many as you! You filthy idiot.

[throw the toy-balls to each other, and keep insulting each other until the end of the scene]

1 and 2. Stupid, idiot, retarded, animal, filthy! 23

All Common Persons throw the toy-balls to and insult each other until the end of the scene:

- Selfish, fool, arrogant, idiot, cow, pig, dump, rude, moron, stupid, retarded, animal! 24

Then they all leave.

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**SCENE 9 - Carcagnosso: self-moral**

Carcagnosso slowly comes in, like before, with his box full of objects and tools. He still acts with creepy and dodgy manners. He reaches the centre of the performance space he sings:

Carcagnosso:  - [Pulling out and showing to the audience the content of his box]
Boom...it’s going to explode... Baam...a big explosion... Pfff...with lots of dust... Arrgh...they’re going to cry!

[To the audience] Someone, maybe, wishes to complete his definition of myself. That I were not an ideal person, full of virtues, is evident.
So what? Would I be to blame? Why to blame, I say... Why are you so severe with your neighbour?
People to blame do not exist anymore between us...yes and no, maybe two or three, and even those already begin talking about virtue.
Wise is he who doesn’t loathe anyone, but peering with a penetrating eye can discover his deep reasons.

[as a fairy tale’s moral] For mankind, everything transforms very fast: you don’t have time to toss and turn that a disgusting warm has already grown inside you! 25

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23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

The words “Would I be to blame? Why to blame, I say...” and “People to blame” have been slightly paraphrased.
Suddenly Infiltrators 1, 2 and 3 burst in (announced by Infiltrator 3 off-stage exclamation). They loudly sings the following and Carcagnosso looks confused and scared.

Infiltrator 3: - [from off-stage while bursting in] I think I saw him running in that way! Let’s get that freak!

Infiltrators 1 and 2: - [while bursting in] Where is he? Where is he? Let’e get that scumbag! Let’s get that monster!

All 3 Infiltrators: [pointing at different places/exits] Look over there!
No! Let’s search over here!
Look over there!
No! Let’s search over there!

[to an audience member] – Have you seen him?
[to another audience member] – Did he come here?

All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] Have you seem him?
Carcagnosso: Who? [confused and scared]
All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] That creep we should blame!
Carcagnosso: Who?
All 3 Infiltrators: [to Carcagnosso] That monster we must blame! 26
[pause]
Carcagnosso: [pandering to the Infiltrators] Yes…I think he went that way…
[pointing at the door opposite from where the Infiltrators came in]

All 3 Infiltrators follow Carcagnosso’s suggestion and rapidly go off-stage. Carcagnosso, after having put his stuff back into his box, also walks out, but from another door. While leaving he happily sings:

Carcagnosso: Boom...it’s going to explode...Baam...a big explosion...
...Pfff...with lots of dust...Arrgh...they’re going to cry!

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SCENE 10 - Fable: it is now clear!

The Narrator enters the stage with an expression of success. She looks like someone who has finally found a solution to her concerns.
The clarinettist, again, joins her on stage and performs physical gestures that enhance the meaning of the Narrators’ lines and acting.
The Narrator, with confident and serious manners, reads to the audience the same story. However, this time she has to perform as if she wants to explain its real meaning and secret message. There

26 Words extrapolated and paraphrased from various tabloids and gossip magazines.
are many toy-balls left on the performance space’s floor from the previous scenes: the Narrator has to interact with them through gestures of ostention. She has to handle them as if they were thoughts, people and ideas: the toy-balls have to be referred to as the characters of the story she reads (Ferruccio, Teresa, etc.) and the ostention of different toy-balls has to show their interchangeability. At the same time, through her interaction with the toy-balls, the Narrator has to implicitly evoke the other characters of the opera, who, like Ferruccio, Teresa, etc. can be exchanged.

**Narrator:** What was annoying me was thinking that she was coming with me just as she could have gone with someone else, for example with Ferruccio. While we were on the grass I told her.
- Listen, do you come with me because it is me or as you come with me you could go with someone else, for example with Ferruccio?
And she replied: - I come with you because it is you. And I told her: - Promise me, Teresa. And she said: - Teresa?
- Yes, sure - I said. Instead: - But I am Bianchina – she said. It was true. She was Bianchina, not Teresa. And Teresa? - I asked. - I don’t know - she said. - I think I saw her going with someone else, for example with Ferruccio. I was annoyed. Then I thought about it. - Ferruccio? - I asked. - Yes, sure - she said. Then I remembered: - But I am Ferruccio. It was true. I was Ferruccio, not Michele. - We always mistake - she said. - It is true - I said - we always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine. - Yes - she said - [with some emphasis] it makes no difference.
And we stayed on the grass until night. 27

__________________________________________________ End of PART I
The score of this scene consists of a graphic score that equally embodies the music, the lyrics and the theatricality of the scene. Such a graphic score is designed to visually and musico-theatrically represent the Jokers’ lyrics: each musical fragment, connected to other musical fragments, visually represents the words ‘each tale chases another tale’. Therefore, it is vital that the director (and designer, scenographer and other visual collaborators) makes the score part of the performance space. It can for instance be projected, or it can be an enormous paper covering the whole floor on which the singers and musicians perform. The Jokers and the musicians involved in this scene have to perform in such a way to physically imitate the score: if for example the score is printed on a paper covering the entire floor, the performers could walk on it and perform the musical-textural fragments on which they walk onto. Any directorial idea is welcome, as long as the score is treated as an integral visual element of the drama, not simply as the performers’ score. The Three Jokers, once in the performance space, sing the following and move according to the graphic score. The musicians, like the clarinettist in the Narrator’s scenes, have to leave the orchestra and join the singers/actors, and their musical gestures have to be reflected in their physical gestures.

Three Jokers: - [Sung] Each tale chases another tale, and while a diner advances his strip another from the furthest extreme advances in the opposite direction. Each tale chases another tale, each tale chases... 28 [repeat ad lib.]

After having performed the graphic score, the Jokers leave the stage and the musicians go back to the orchestra.

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SCENE 12 - Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience

Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso, still carrying their respective weapons, slowly walk on the stage toward three separate tables (or similar) placed in separate locations of the performance area. The three characters do not have to interact with each other: they happen to share the same performance area, but have to appear dramaturgically separate in time and place. On each table there is a basin containing some water. Lights and other stage devices have to suggest an atmosphere of personal, inner catharsis. While on their way to their respective tables they simultaneously sing the following passages. Their acting has to be increasingly dramatic until they reach the point in which they throw water on their faces (this point has to recall their personal, inner catharsis).

28 Italo Calvino, Il castello dei destini incrociati (The castle of crossed destinies) trans. by the author (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1994), 41.
The characters, during the whole scene, have to seem dominated by memories: their lines, melismas and acting have to implicitly be addressed to their memories, and their words have to appear as considerations and conclusions generated from such memories.

Osso: [Contemplating his knife, and acting with increasing drama]
How shiny… How sparkly… How shiny… How sparkly… [repeat]

Carcagnosso: [Contemplating his box of weapons, and acting with increasing drama]
Boom… it’s going to explode… Baam… a big explosion… Pff… with lots of dust… Arrgh… they’re going to cry! [repeat]

Mastrosso: [Contemplating his gun, and acting with increasing drama]
With money you can do anything, with money you can get anywhere! 29
[repeat]

Once they reach their respective tables the three characters simultaneously sing/speak with a cathartic attitude:

Mastrosso: The previous world has passed together with the words that were images of it, that betrayed it through images. This is not representable anymore, and the words must express its unrepresentability, until transforming into voices, fragments of voices, sounds more that voices, gestures more that sounds. Naked body of those unnamable things, ripped out from any discourse. 30

Carcagnosso: If men and women begun to live their dreams, every ghost would become a person which one would begin a story of pursuits with, of pretences, of misunderstandings, of oppressions, and the carousel of fantasies would stop. 31

Osso: Every description shows the truth and shows that it is itself a depiction, and not the truth. So as the lion and the snake are at the same time figure of the Christ and the demon. It’s that the justice of the interpretation cannot even be fixed by the fathers’ auctoritas, and I burn in the doubt. 32

Mastrosso: All the imaginable can be dreamt but even the most unexpected dream is a puzzle that hides a wish or a fear. And representations, like dreams, are built of wishes and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, and their rules absurd, and every thing hides another. 33

Carcagnosso: The unicorns exist in these representations, which if they don’t speak about the real being they speak of the possible being. The unicorn of the representations is like a track. If there is a track there must be something of which it is track. Of course. Not always a track has the same shape of the body that impressed it. Sometimes it reproduces the impression that a body left in our mind, it’s track of an idea. The idea is sign of thing, and the image is sign of the idea. A sign of a sign. 34

30 Massimo Cacciari, Hamletica, trans. by the author (Milano: Adelphi Edizione, 2009), 76.
33 Italo Calvino, Le città invisibili trans. by the author (Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 2012), 42.
Osso: Listening and seeing means freeing from every intention, it means being ready to grasp a voice that let itself be heard when one least expects it, a voice that one doesn’t know where it comes from, from somewhere beyond the representation, beyond the author: the voice of the non-said, of that that the world hasn’t yet said of itself and hasn’t yet the words to say.  

Mastrosso: Words were in principle near God and our task were to repeat day by day, humbly, the solely unmodifiable event of which the true truth can be asserted. But now we see as through a mirror, in a vague way, and the truth, before than face to face, manifests in the error of the world, so that we have to interpret its signs.

Carcagnosso: As stuttering orators, sad humorists, bald hairdressers exist, so honest politicians could well exist.

Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso simultaneously take some water from their respective basin and repeatedly throw it on their own faces letting their make up melt. They must not wash the make up away, but spread it over their faces in order to create monstrous facial expressions. This passage has to be performed somehow slowly and with contemplation. From here to the end of the scene Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso have to appear fully overtaken by memories, as if they were only now comprehending the meaning of the words they previously said. [If during the first half of the piece Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso were depicted as grotesque, Totò-like characters, now they have to look dramatic and serious. This scene has to present their bivalent personality, which has to appear ambiguous: they have to appear neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong; the audience must not be able to form an opinion about them.]

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**SCENE 13 - The Jokers: a finite number of elements multiplies by billions of billions**

The Three Jokers come back to the performance space. They overlap and somehow interrupt the previous scene. They do not interact with Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso, but their presence and lyrics have to appear as a detached comment to the mafiosos’ previous scene. Similarly to Scene 11, this scene is composed in the form of a graphic score, and equally to Scene 11 the graphic score has to feature as an integral visual element of the drama and action (it can be projected, printed on the floor, etc.). The musicians involved in this scene have to leave the orchestra and join the Three Jokers on the stage.

Three Jokers: - [Sung] The world does not exist, there is not a whole given all at once: there is a finite number of elements whose combinations multiply by billions of billions, and only a few of these find a shape and a sense and stand out in the middle of this senseless and shapeless dust.

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35 Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* (If on a winter’s night a traveler), trans. by the author (Milano: Oscar Opere di Italo Calvino, 1994), 239.


After having performed the graphic score, the Jokers leave the stage and the musicians go back to the orchestra. Simultaneously, also Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso leave.

SCENE 14 - Who is to blame? 4

The Common Persons enter the performance space equipped with several newspapers and toy-balls. They are divided into three Groups. Each of the three Groups gathers around an Infiltrator, as listening for news and/or announcements. The scene has to suggest a grotesque yet worry atmosphere.

The lines the Common Persons read are taken from real newspapers: although they refer to real events there must not be any explicit reference to such events.

**GROUP 1:**

One member of Group 1:

- [Reading from the newspaper. With astonishment] Today the Head of Police publicly declared that the armed forces may have possibly identified the offender.

The rest of Group 1:

- [With astonishment] OH!

Same member of Group 1:

- [Reading from the newspaper.] A picture that cannot give anything else than an image of deep instability, of a country searching for a turning point, but with a political class totally incapable of imprinting it. 39

The rest of Group 1:

- [With astonishment] OH!

Same member of Group 1:

- [simile] Er Batman jailed for embezzlement: he unlawfully took one point three million. The judge says that he could escape and block the investigations. Public subsidy were considered as his own wallet. 40

The rest of Group 1:

- [simile] OH!

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Same member of Group 1:
- [simile] While the city was quieter last night, after thousands of police offices were sent on to the streets, conspiracy was spreading.

The rest of Group 1:
- [simile] OH!

Same member of Group 1:
- The government has already spent three billions. And a substantial part of these money have been wasted. The wasting-scandals of the earth-quake has begun on the day of the solemn funerals. Three-hundred-and-nine were the deaths that the crowd cried, but four-hundred-and-seventy-one were instead the coffins bought with public money. An extra hundred-and-sixty-two bier. 41

The rest of Group 1:
- OH! OH! OH!

GROUP 2:

One member of Group 2:
- [[Reading from the newspaper. With astonishment]] And now they are looking for a pen-drive containing secret documents about the investigation on the State-Mafia negotiation. The judge had stored it in a safe place, ma someone last thursday stole it. It contained the depositions on the dialogue between Cosa Nostra and the institutions. It has disappeared into thin air. 43

The rest of Group 2:
- [With astonishment] OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- [simile] The magistrature is looking into a two billions bribe payed in occasion of the operation that started the crisis of the bank. 44

The rest of Group 2:
- [simile] OH!

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Same member of Group 2:
- Moreover there has been a tremendous stress to find someone to blame. That was the ideal character to achieve their theory. Has been described as a horrible monster.

The rest of Group 2:
- [simile] OH!

Same member of Group 2:
- [Very seriously] A bomb has been placed in the Court’s parking space. Together with a photo of the magistrate. Then have left undisturbed, as nothing happened, in the most controlled building of the city. 45

The rest of Group 2:
- OH!

One member of Group 2:
- The five day promised to clean Naples up are ending and the city is submerged under two-thousand tons of garbage. 46

The rest of Group 2:
- OH!

One member of Group 2:
- The president had no hesitation to say: creep! freak! weirdo and monster! 47

The rest of Group 2:
- OH! OH! OH!

GROUP 3:

One member of Group 3:
- [Very seriously] From the bunga bunga to the spread, from the Pimp to the Professor, from the Olgettine dressed as nurses and Ruby niece of Mubarak to the bankers dressed like technicians. A turnaround that more cannot be. 48

The rest of Group 3:
- OH!

One member of Group 3:
- Sad burlesque competitions: politics has fun wasting time while everything crumbles. 49

The rest of Group 3:
- OH!


47 Words extrapolated from various tabloids and gossip magazines.


One member of Group 3:
- The electoral results deliver a situation that places the country in a state of deep institutional instability, for this reason we can only be seriously worried. 50

The rest of Group 3:
- OH!

One member of Group 3:
- It’s certified that the weirdo is in circulation, and has been described by witnesses as a creep!

The rest of Group 3:
- OH! OH! OH!

Common Persons invade the performance space all over, looking with fervour for someone to blame. They have to demonstrate a certain cruelty.

The three Groups break and all Common Persons are distributed in a conventional SATB layout, as before:

**All Infiltrators:** - [with fear and anger] It’s time to look for someone to blame! 51
**Common Persons:** - [singing, with fear and anger] Where is he? Where is he?
Where is the creep!
Where is the freak!
Where is the crook!
Where is the weirdo!
Where is the scumbag!
Where is the monster! 52

Once Common Persons spread all over the performance space, they initially attempt to find someone to blame (like before), and then, eventually, they all leave.
Throwing toy-balls and leaving them on the performance space is good. (Leaving bits of newspapers around could be an interesting idea).

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**Attacca**

**SCENE 15 - Everyone against everyone**

A police complaints desk (or similar) is brought on stage. It has to look clear that it is a desk to which individuals file their complains against unknown persons.

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52 Unrelated words extrapolated and paraphrased from various tabloids and gossip magazines.
All Common Persons (including the Infiltrators) go to this desk one by one, or in groups (as indicated below and on the score), to file their complaints and accusations; Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso join them too.

There is no one at the desk, and when the characters go to file their complaints they have no interlocutor. It is important that they state their accusations and suspicions as if they do have an interlocutor, although they are left unheard. No irony should be made about the fact there is no police staff; it needs to look as if it is normal praxis that there is nobody at a police complaints desk (the director should somehow stress this point).

All the characters performing in this scene must carry (maybe in small bags) numerous toy-balls.

1 Common Person (1 alto): [To the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-My lord, what is the purpose of this vast organisation? It involves arresting innocent people and preparing a senseless case against them. How will it be possible to avoid the most serious corruption? We must find him! 53
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 tenor): [To the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-Mister Officer! I bought two shares and have already lost thirty-five euros. The damage they made is this transition where the party becomes the bank and the bank becomes the party. 54 They’re scumbags! Monsters!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all soprano minus 1):
[To the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-It may not or maybe a no concern. That the fright of his light in tribalbalbutience hides aback in the doom. 55
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Osso: [Holding his knife. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
-Police! Police! I lost my ‘model of virtue’! A scumbag must have stolen my ‘model of virtue’! 56 It’s time to look for someone to blame!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]


54 These lines are by Italian comedian and politician Beppe Grillo and are quoted in the following article: [Unsigned], ‘Grillo: "14 mld, come Parmalat e Craxi"’. Profumo: ”Non abbiamo un ‘buco’ così”’ in *RaiNews.it*, trans. by the author <http://www.rainews24.rai.it/it/news.php?newsid=174187> (accessed 20 August 2013).


Common Persons (all tenors minus 1):

[To the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry]
- Now the situation is the following: we have no job and cannot find one; we have no benefit that could help us. We have no money, \(^{57}\) and must find the monster!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 bass):  \([\text{Simile all others}]\)  
- “But it’s absurd”, I said, “Can I phone him?”. “Sure” the inspector replied, “but I don’t understand what sense it could have”. “What sense?” dismayed and grumpy I shouted out. “But who are you? Do you expect a sense and you do the most senseless things!” \(^{58}\)  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all altos minus 1):  \([\text{Simile all others}]\)  
- They steal that growing treasure, and not to make their party giant, but to split it as if they were gangs! Oh my politics, you are so dwarf! \(^{59}\)  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Mastrosso:  
\([\text{Holding his gun. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry}]\)  
- Someone kidnapped my ‘sense of belonging’! It was a crook! I cannot live without a ‘sense of belonging’! \(^{60}\)  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

1 Common Person (1 soprano):  \([\text{Simile all others}]\)  
- Mister Officer! One day, waking up from anxious dreams, I found myself, in my bed, turned into a monstrous vermin! \(^{61}\) It’s certainly that creep’s fault!  
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Carcagnosso:  
\([\text{Holding his bomb/box. Simile to Common Persons: to the police complaints desk. As an accusation, and with evident worry}]\)

---


- Please help me! Help me! I was about to place my wonderful bomb when a freak came...! Do you understand? I have a virtue to defend, I have dreams to bring to life!
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

Common Persons (all basses minus 1):

-It was so that the crowd was lively, protesting in squares and streets, with whom more than gentleman seemed urchin. Oh soul, that see so bitter things! 62
[Go away from desk, repeating the same words obsessively]

[Silence: pausa rivelatrice]

Suddenly all characters on stage violently begin to accuse each other - “It’s your fault!” -, shouting the following insults. Their accusations are addressed to both themselves and random members of the audience. All characters in the performance space extract their toy-balls from their pockets and bags, and throw them to both each other and the audience members that are being accused.

Infiltrators 4 and 5, who are still sitting among the audience, stand up and respond to the accusations by accusing the singers back and insulting them with the indicated words. At the same time Infiltrators 4 and 5 vehemently exhort the audience to grab the toy-balls from the container placed among the audience and throw them to both the singers and the audience themselves.

A “toy-ball-throwing war” must start! (All balls that fall on the floor must be taken and thrown back)

From this moment onward it needs to appear as if both the characters and the audience are the same entity: the audience have to somehow naturally become part of the narrative, and the narrative, although being a representation, has to reflect a non-theatrical reality, but a phenomenon of real life.

Everybody against everybody, and agains the audience:

- It’s your fault!
- No, it’s your fault!
- Creep!
- Freak!
- Crook!
- Weirdo!
- Scumbag!
- Monster! 63

The Narrator suddenly enters with a megaphone and her book in the middle of the toy-ball-throwing and reads out loudly the following passage. During her declamation all the characters, who ignore her and keep fighting, fall one by one on the floor, as injured by the toy-balls. Once on the floor they remain laying, as injured or almost dying.

Narrator: - [Reading from the book. As a declamation, with fervour. Act as if you finally discovered on the book a moral that you must communicate to everybody. This reading has to be addressed to both the other characters and the audience: to the

---


63 Unrelated words extrapolated from various tabloids and gossip magazines.
other characters your text has to be read as if it is a solution to their own personal conflicts, and to the audience as key to interpret the previous events.]

I know that there is no way, nor threat, nor punishment that could extirpate the injustice: too deep are its roots. 64 Everything will be destined to failure until each one of us will not feel that today he must rebel against injustice. I am addressing those of you who have an idea of what nobleness of thought means. I invite you to fulfil that duty which everywhere waits for mankind. I invite you to better consider this duty, the responsibility of your earthly mission, because we all imagine it to be weak, and only in part... 65

Once finished reading the Narrator walks among the others who are lying on the floor, as among dead bodies. She has to act as if her words arrived too late.

________________________________________________________________________

Attacca

SCENE 16 - Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”

While the whole cast motionlessly lays on the floor the Narrator remains on stage and stares at the almost dead bodies with a contemplating attitude. In this moment, the first clarinetist, as for Scene 1 and 10, leaves the orchestra and joins the singers on stage. He/she has to physically interact with the scene while playing.
The Three Jokers, meanwhile, return on stage. They also walk between the laying bodies, as if what happened is the confirmation of what they had previously said/sung. The Narrator, however, ignores the presence of the Jokers, as if they were entities that only the audience could see.
After a moment of contemplation, the Narrator leaves the megaphone and sings the following lyrics (the Jokers maybe sit between the motionless laying bodies).
The following passage comes from her initial story, however this time she must not read it, but sing it as if she read it so many times that she now knows it by memory.
Her manner (and those of the other characters that join her) has to be disillusioned and at the same time carefree. This final scene has to appear as if all conflicts, passions, battles, absurdities, troubles, and all previous events, do not really matter. The words ‘staying on the grass till night’ have to appear as synonyms of two elements: as an attitude of negligence with regards to own and other’s conflicts, and as an incapacity to fulfil own actions and wishes (as for instance finding someone to blame, or defending virtues, or understanding the reason and consequences of absurd facts).
(The orchestra is silent for the whole scene, and it has to slowly disappear from the set. This can for instance be done by turning the lights that illuminated the orchestra off).

Narrator: - [Sung] We always mistake...


65 Ibid., 424-25.
Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso stand up from the floor and join the Narrator:

Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso:
- [Sung] We always mistake...
  It is true. We always happen to mistake each other.
  But now it is fine.

The Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso look at the clarinetist. The clarinetist, with a disillusioned and carefree smile, says:

Clarinetist:  - [Spoken] It makes no difference.

The Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso sing:

- And we stayed on the grass till night... and we stayed on the grass till night... [ad libitum]

The rest of the characters - Common Persons, Infiltrators and the Three Jokers - who are still laying on the floor slowly turn their back towards the floor, in a supine position. Then they all join the Narrator, Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso in their chant:

Everybody:
And we stayed on the grass till night… and we stayed on the grass till night… and we stayed on the grass till night… [ad libitum]

End

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It Makes No Difference
Simone Spagnolo

SCENE 1 - Fable: not understood

All the infiltrators sit among the audience, at a reasonable distance from each other; only infiltrators 1 and 2 sit closer to the performance space. They are all dressed with ordinary clothes: the audience must not know or understand that there are infiltrators among them. Among the audience there are several containers filled with toy-balls (of plastic, or something soft that would not hurt. Ping-pong-size balls would be good). These are placed at a easy reachable distance for the audience. The music starts and the Narrator enters the stage. With relaxed, casual and easy going manner she reads the following story, as if it is the first time she reads it. It must be clear that the Narrator reads the text without understanding its meaning:

The Narrator starts the Fable. With relaxed, casual and easy going manners she reads the following story, as if it is the first time she reads it. It must be clear that the Narrator reads the text without understanding its meaning.

Narrator

Listen, do you come with me because it is no

I was true. She

Don't Brauchau, nor Ursula,

And Teresa? Truth.

It was true. She

Narrator

3

I don't know...

I think I am her going

She said...

I am her going with someone else.

For example, with Teresa...

For example, with Teresa...

Narrator

Then I remembered...

That was Teresa. It was not...

Vera Teresa, as I believe.

Sung

spoken

We always mistake...

She said...

It is true...

I said.

Narrator

al - ways - mi - stake

al - ways - mi - stake

[Beat]

al... she said...

[with some emphasis]

It makes no difference...

And we lived on

the green and white.

Cl

A tempo

Narrator

Don't Brauchau, nor Ursula,

And Teresa? Truth.

It was true. She

Narrator

Don't Brauchau, nor Ursula,

And Teresa? Truth.

Narrator

Listen, do you come with me because it is no

Narrator

Listen, do you come with me because it is no
The narrator extracts a little toy bell (of plastic, or something soft that would hurt) from her pocket, looks at it as if she has something intriguing in her mind, and says to the audience:

Narrator: Who should we blame?

As soon as the narrator says this, she gently throws the ball to Infirmer 1.

Infirmer 1: - I don't know.

Narrator: Who should we blame?

And throws the ball to Infirmer 2.

Infirmer 1: - Yes, I think it was her. She passed by. The door here goes in that direction. [pointing at one of the doors]

Narrator: Who should we blame?

Infirmer 1 then throws the ball back to the narrator. The narrator then repeats with more strength:

Narrator: Who should we blame?

The narrator looks again at Infirmer 1, expects:

- Who should we blame?

and throws him the ball again.

Infirmer 1: - Yes, I think it was her. She passed by. The door here goes in that direction. [pointing at one of the doors]

Narrator: - I don't know.

Infirmer 1 then throws the ball back to the narrator. The narrator says for the last time, loudly and passionately:

Narrator: Who anyone ever who we should blame?

The Narrator throws the ball to a member of the audience and states at her back, Infirmer 1 and 2 also state at the member of the audience that caught the ball. Everybody watches the audience member say something, anything. While he/she is speaking (or not speaking) Infirmer 2 interrupts and with seriousness says:

Infirmer 2: - I think we should go and look where he is. [looks at the doors Infirmer 1 pointed at before]

I think we should go and... and look here too... [looks at Infirmer 1]

Infirmer 1: - Yes, you are right. Let us go?

Infirmer 1 and 2 stand up and with enthusiasm walk out through the door they both pointed at.

The Narrator quickly follows them.

\[\text{Attacca}\]
SCENE 2 - Osso and Mastroso: spiritual poverty and criminality

Osso and Mastroso walk in from another door holding and contemplating respectively a knife and a gun. They are well dressed, maybe with suit and tie. They both have some heavy dark-coloured make up on their faces (particularly around their eyes) providing them with nasty somatic types, maybe also depicting nasty scars. Osso enters first.

Con energia, buffo
Calmo, premonitore

Fl

Cl

Cl. 2

B. Cl

Bari. Ssn

Bar

Hn

Tpt

Tbn

Tba

Perc

Glockenspiel

Os

Msn

Calmo, premonitore

Vln

Vla

Vc

Ch

Don't you feel guilty?

Nei-ther do I...

You, me to blame?

pizz. / p. pons.

mp dolce

quito wits cymbal

spoken, almost shout

indigant

n

\textit{Nei-ther do I...}

\textit{Don't you think... you are to blame?}
Tempo primo
\( \text{\textipa{\textit{j} = 92}} \)

- Fl
- Cl.
- Cl.
- B. Cl.
- Bari. Sax
- Bar.
- Hn
- Tpt.
- Tbn
- Tba
- Perc
- Chs
- Mas
- Vln.
- Vla
- Vc
- Ch.
A tempo
Calmo, premonitore $\frac{1}{2} \approx 60$ circa

Leave a-side your mates, who can-not teach you any-thing good,
if you really have to, go-round with the

A tempo
Calmo, premonitore $\frac{1}{2} \approx 60$ circa
rich ones, who in case of need will be u - seful.

Ne-ver of-fer a ray thing.

accel.
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- Fascinated by Mastroc's words
- *dolce*

With money you can do anything, with money you can get anything.
SCENE 3 - Who is to blame? 1

As Oso and Mastroono walk out Common Persons (choir) led by Infiltrator 1 and 2 burst in from the other door, from where they left before. They are very agitated and run up and down the performance space and among the audience. THEY ALL HAVE A TOY-BALL IN THEIR HANDS.
"Common Persons burst out from the door where Onigiri left.

Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?

Creep! Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?

Mon - ster! Where is he? Where is he? Scums-bag!
Common Persons burst out from the door where Osoa left. . . . . Common Persons disappear!

Attacca
SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream
Carcagnosso slowly comes in from another door holding a box full of objects and tools (or similar) which he will need to build a bomb (or similar mass-destruction weapon). He is well dressed too, and like Osso and Muntioso he also has heavy dark-coloured make up on his face highlighting nasty somatic types and scars. He acts with creepy and dodgy manners, he mumbles while reaching the centre of the performance space.

Misterioso, come un sogno \( \approx 46 \) circa

Muttering (while slowly entering the stage):
"Boom...it's going to explode... Baaam...a big explosion... Piff... with lots of dust... Argh... they're going to cry!"

SCENE 4 - Carcagnosso: sense of dream
Misterioso, come un sogno \( \approx 46 \) circa
Cancio takes some of the objects out of his box and contemplates them, while showing them to the audience.

Take some of the objects out of the box and contemplate them, while showing them to the audience.

sprechgesang, with ambiguous intentions

Boom... it's going to explode,

Boom... a big explosion,

Pff... with lots of dust,

Come prima
Misterioso, come un sogno
\( \text{\textit{\( a \approx 46 \text{ circa} \)}} \)

Circassians pull more objects/weapons out of his box.
Among these there is a book, 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'.

Tam tam (or cymbal) scrape with heavy triangle brush from inside
triangle (or cymbal) brush on the edge

Pull more objects/weapons out of the box.
Among these there is a book, 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'.
Con andamento ternario (stessa cadenza ritmica $\dot{=} \dot{=}$)  
Quasi come un walzer  
$\dot{=} \sim 46$ circa

He sceptically browse the content of the book, wonders a bit around.

Then reads the following passage from the book:

Take Pecolo

Tam tam (or cymbal)  
Scratch with heavy triangle beater  
from inside

Sceptically browse the content of the book, wonder a bit around,  
then read the following passage from the book:

Con andamento ternario (stessa cadenza ritmica $\dot{=} \dot{=}$)  
Quasi come un walzer  
$\dot{=} \sim 46$ circa

Dolce sempre,  
ignora il ritmo di walzer dei fiati
Spoken, almost acted.
Reading with emphasis from the book, following the ambiguous mood of the music.
A

$\text{Sivolo, quasi come un waltzer}$

Bass Sax

$\text{not too loud}$

Tpt

$\text{quasi mf}$

$\text{not too loud}$

Perc

Can

which I shall drink the delirium of death! Your hand presents it to

Vln

$p$ frivolo, quasi come un waltzer

$\text{moving poco a poco the bow towards the bridge}$

$\text{gloss}$

Vla

$p$ frivolo, quasi come un waltzer

$\text{moving poco a poco the bow towards the bridge}$

Ve

$p$ frivolo, quasi come un waltzer

Ch
Carraquez stops the reading, and annoyed
throws the book away, on the floor, and kicks it.

Our wishes and hopes of my existence are fulfilled!
While ending his sentence Caregrosso hears from a distance noises of shouting people about to arrive. They are the common persons from off stage.

Suddenly stop the sentence, hear from a distance noises of shouting people about to arrive.

make loud noises from backstage stage (eg. door slamming, stomping) and screams of anger (nothing that would hurt the voice)
Circumstances quickly put the stuff back into the box and run away from the door you came in.
In the mean time the Common Persons enter the performance space from the exit they left from before.

---

Enter the performance space from the exit you left from before. Look very agitated like before. You all have a toy-ball in your hands.

---

He must have gone there!
SCENE 5 - Who is to blame? 2

(During this scene Common Persons should throw some toy-balls around, again without making the audience the target of the throwing. Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.)

Molto nervoso  = 90

(Take Flute)
play the x notes on the iron edge of the tomb
Once among the audience, the men of Common Persons take some
fire-balls placed in the containers and distribute few of them - as if
they were weapons - to the audience.

3 tons (high, medium and low pitched)
medium mallet

bells placed in the containers
weapons - to the audience.

These are our wea -pons!

Once among the audience, take some Toy
bells placed in the containers
weapons - to the audience.

These are our wea -pons!
All Common Persons stare at the door Infiltrator 3 indicated
Infiltrator 3 joins them.

Bass Clarinet

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

inf. poco a poco

All Common Persons go toward the door Infiltrator 3 indicated and leave.

Infiltrator 3 sung spoken [go toward the door Infiltrator 3 indicated and leave]

All Common Persons, sung with them depending on your voice type, then go toward the door you indicated and leave with them.

“Blew ... yes ... I think ... I think he went in that way ...”

Spoken, confused. [Pointing at a door]

Ironically

Well...

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!

come prima (repeat molto staccato sempre as fast as possible)

We will find him! We will get him!
Common Persons and Infiltrators 1, 2, and 3 left. There is no one on the stage.
The Narrator slowly walks in from another door holding several toy-balls (or a bag containing them), crosses the stage while reading the following (a portion of the previous text), and leaves from the opposite door. The text still reads confusing to her.
After every sentence she reads, she looks at the audience and throws/hands them one or more toy-balls. This time she must leave the balls to the audience and not take them back (in case some members of the audience throw the balls back to the Narrator she must not grab them, leaving them falling on the performance space).
It needs to look as if she is distributing weapons!

Rubato e Narrato
senza un tempo preciso

Absolutely do not follow the metronome!
Play independently!

Metronome:
turn a mechanical metronome on at $\frac{\text{cm}}{\text{s}} = 60$ and
let it beat for the whole scene

.progressBar

Stop, look confused
at the audience, and
throw them a toy-ball

[Read]
and she said - Teresa?

.progressBar

Yes, surely - I said.

[Read]
Instead - But I am Bistichina - she said.

Stop, look confused
at the audience, and
throw them a toy-ball

Sempre poco cresce: poco a poco

Stop, look confused
at the audience, and
throw them a toy-ball

Poco fluttuif poss.
Malinconico, Danzato
$ \textit{\textbackslash e} = 40 \text{ circa}$

you must escape (piano)
How can we live in the world without a sense of be

malinconico, danzato
$ \textit{\textbackslash e} = 40 \text{ circa}$

malinconico, danzato
Come un Recitativo, senza perdere il senso ritmico

Or

Mas

Be-cause ap- pea-ling to the mo-del of vir-tue is hy-po-criti-cal

[To the audience]

Be-cause no-one has re-spect

Vln

Vla

Vc

Ch
Filosofico, Danzato

b = 40 circa

For a rip! For a freak!

How can we live in the world without a sense of be-

Filosofico, Danzato

b = 40 circa

spoken with enthusiasm

Can we live in the world without a sense of be-

Con ma brillante

con la voce
Osio and Mastrosse slow leave while cheerly singing

"How can we live in the world without a sense of belonging?"

For a crouch!
SCENE 8 - Who is to blame 3

Common Persons enter the performance space. They are very agitated like before and all carry a few toy-balls. They initially look for someone to blame as earlier, but they eventually end up arguing and insulting each other. During this scene Common Persons should throw some toy-balls to each other, again without making the audience the target of the throwing. (Leaving more balls around the performance and audience space is good.)
2 Sopranos argue the following.*
The other Sopranos, if any, sing the Alto's line

S1. You're silly and selfish, don't you understand he may have gone there?

S2. I just called me silly and selfish!

S2. I don't think he went there, he must have gone that way, you fool!

S1. I told you to look over there.

* The following dialogues/arguments do not have to strictly happen between the voice types noted on this score.
If changing the arguing voice types helps the distribution of singing and speaking lines do change it, however make sure that there is at least one Common Person for each singing line.
S1. That was because you didn't look over there...

S2. And I called you fool because I think he must have gone that way...

S1. We will never find who is to blame if you insult us!

A: Where is he? Look over there,

T: Where is he? Where is he? Look over there,

B: Where is he? Where is he? Look over there,

Vln: arco

Vla: arco

Vc: arco

Ch: heavy and shakily gliss.
...how and what to do, but you don’t know anything!

(S2) Yours is simply arrogance!

S1. Oh! I have never been treated in this way. You are a cow!

S2. Well, if I am a cow, then you are a pig!

Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?

Where is he? Where is he?

Where is he? Look o-ver here!

2 Tenors argue the following:

The other Tenors, if any, sing T2. I am not obstructing your way;

I am leading the group, idiot!

Where is he? Where is he?

To T.

Look o-ver here!
S1. Don’t you understand that we will never find who is to blame if you keep insulating?

S2. If you don’t want to be insulted, watch out what you’re saying!

A

Look over there!

Look over here!

T1. We don’t need you leading the group, you’re simply useless on this task, dump!

T2. You are really exaggerating now! I have as much...

B

Look over there!

Look over there!

He

Vln

ff not too loud

Vla

ff not too loud

Vc

mp

Ch

ff not too loud

**Any other voice type who is still singing, instead of arguing must sing the Ilusa’s lines, with relative octave transpositions if necessary.**
S1: What do you mean what I’m saying?!
S2: What do I mean? I mean that you always want to teach us how and what to do, but you don’t know anything!
(S2) You are an arrogant idiot!

A1: Hey, who do you think you are? I am showing you the right way...
A2: I decide myself what the right way is, ...

T1: I don’t care if you want to look for who’s to blame, just don’t do it here.
T2: I am not taking orders from a rude moron like you!

**Any other voice type who is still singing, instead of arguing must sing the Bass’ lines, with relative octave transpositions if necessary.**
S1. You’re a cow with no brain! I will find him first!

S2. No, I will find him first, you selfish pig!

A1. I don’t need your skills! I will find who is to blame on my own.

(A1.) I will catch him with my hand!

...without my skills you won’t find anything!

T1. What a dump! We’ll never find him with your slow and childish attitude!

T2. We’ll never find him with your rude and arrogant manners!

T1. Don’t you understand we don’t need you leading the group? You’re a dump!

As a clear argument, with evident anger
Look over there!

No! He must have gone there!

No, you
Repeat once, with constant volume, no dim.
Loosing the sense of pulse is good.
SCENE 9 - Carcagnosso: self-moral

Carcagnosso slowly comes in, like before, with his box full of objects and tools. He still acts with creepy and dodgy manners.

Misterioso, ma rivelatore – 46 circa

Fr.

Cl.

Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bar. San.

Bass.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Perc.

Car.

SCENE 9 - Carcagnosso: self-moral

Misterioso, ma rivelatore – 46 circa

sul ponte, molto
A tempo
Quasi come un waltz
\( \frac{3}{4} \) = 46 circa

Tan tam (or cymbal)
hit with heavy triangle haster

(a tempo)
sprechgesang

Amph... they're going to or \( r \ r \ r \) oy!
It's going to ex-plode!
a big ex-plosion,

A tempo
Quasi come un waltz
\( \frac{3}{4} \) = 46 circa
Suddenly lucid
Spoken [to the audience]
Someone, maybe wishes to
complete his definition . . .

That I
were not
ide- al
per- son
is
e- vi- dent.
So

A Tempo \( \approx 60 \) circa
A Tempo
Spoken to the audience, as a fairy tale’s moral (very seriously, but not too dramatic)

For man - kind e-very-thing tran-sforms ve-ry fast. you don’t have time to toss and turn that a dia-gon-al warm has al-re-ady grown, in

Suddenly Infiltrators 1, 2 and 3 burst in (announced by Infiltrator 3 off-stage exclamation) and loudly sing the following: Carcognoso looks shocked and confused.

Carcognoso looks shocked and confused.

(Apply octave transposition to the infiltrators’ voice lines if necessary (depending on their voice types), but do not invert the lines.)

Infiltrator 1 only

Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?

Infiltrator 2

Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he?

Impromptu agitato

altaport
(All Infiltrators wonder around the audience first, then walk near C's garbage)

Perc.

[All Infiltrators wonder around the audience first, then walk near C's garbage]

Inf. 1 and 2

Inf. 2

Vln

Vla

Vc

Ch
[Inflator's question another audience member]

Fl
Cl
Cl 2
B. Cl
Bar. Sa
Tab
Hn
Tpt
Tbn
Tba
Perc
Inf. 1 and 2
Vln
Vla
Vc
Ch

[mp ready]

[mp ready]

f

mp

nf

fp

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf

nf
[Infiltrators question Carcagnosso]

[Carcagnosso keeps looking confused. Then, pandering to Infiltrators, says:]

Spoken, pointing at the door opposite from where the Infiltrators came in:

Yes... I think he went that way...

[Carcagnosso keeps looking confused. Then, pandering to Infiltrators, says:]

That mon-stir we must blame!
Spenziarini, quasi come un valzer

\( \textit{p} \) = 46 circa

All 3 infiltrators quickly follow Carcagnosso's suggestion and rapidly go off-stage singing the following loops (The loops do not have to be synchronized with each other! They should happen independently). They have to leave the performance space quickly.

[The conductor should continue the performance only once infiltrators are off-stage.]

Carcagnosso: continue singing like before, as if nothing happened.
Meanwhile pack the objects and slowly leave the performance space.

It's going to ex-

Inf. 1 and

Where is he? Where is he?
sprechgesang, fast, loud and nervous

Inf. 3 repeats speaking: "Let's get that freak!"

Inf. 2

Where is he? Where is he?
sprechgesang, fast, loud and nervous

Spenziarini, quasi come un valzer

\( \textit{p} \) = 46 circa

(Nb buffo

Carcagnosso: continuing singing like before, as if nothing happened.
Meanwhile pack the objects and slowly leave the performance space.)
Carcagnosso leaves the performance space
By this moment Cucapossa must have left the performance space
SCENE 10 - Fable: now it is clear

The Narrator enters the stage with a clear expression of success. She has now the attitude of someone that has finally found a solution to his concerns.
With convinced, serious manners she reads with confidence the same story to the audience as if she is explaining its meaning.

Rubato e Narrato, ma con molto piu' entusiasmo di prima

(sempre un tempo preciso)

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SCENE 10 - Fable: now it is clear

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(sempre un tempo preciso)

...
SCENE 11 - The Jokers: each tale chases another tale

The score of this scene consists of a graphic score that equally embodies the music, the lyrics and the theatricality of the scene. Such a graphic score is designed to visually and musico-theatrically represent the Jokers’ lyrics: each musical fragment, connected to other musical fragments, visually represents the words ‘each tale chases another tale’. Therefore, it is vital that the director (and designer, scenographer and other visual collaborators) makes the score part of the performance space. It can for instance be projected, or it can be an enormous paper covering the whole floor on which the singers and musicians perform.

The Jokers and the musicians involved in this scene have to perform in such a way to physically imitate the score: if for example the score is printed on a paper covering the entire floor, the performers could walk on it and perform the musical-textural fragments on which they walk onto. Any directorial idea is welcome, as long as the score is treated as an integral visual element of the drama, not simply as the performers’ score.

The Three Jokers, once in the performance space, sing the following and move according to the graphic score. The musicians, like the clarinetist in the Narrator’s scenes, have to leave the orchestra and join the singers/actors, and their musical gestures have to be reflected in their physical gestures.
SCENE 12 - Osso, Mastroso and Carcagnosso: the men and their conscience

Osso, Mastroso and Carcagnosso, still carrying their respective weapons, slowly walk on the stage toward three separate tables (or similar) placed in separate locations of the performance area. The three characters do not have to interact with each other: they happen to share the same performance area, but have to appear dramatically separate in time and place. On each table there is a basin containing some water. Lights and other stage devices have to suggest an atmosphere of personal, inner catharsis. While on their way to their respective tables they simultaneously sing the following passages. Their acting has to be increasingly dramatic until they reach the point in which they throw water on their faces (this point has to recall their personal, inner catharsis).

The characters, during the whole scene, have to be seen dominated by memories: their lines, melismas and acting have to implicitly be addressed to their memories, and their words have to appear as considerations and conclusions generated from such memories.

\( \frac{f}{4} \text{ circa } \) Come in conflitto con la propria coscienza. Con un velo di mistero, ma al contempo rivelature di cose ricordate e non dette.
All: how, sparsely, sparsely, sparsely, sparsely!

Chorus: amgh, they're going to cry, 

Cry, cry, cry!

Money, money. The previous world has passed together with the words that were images of it.

Piano: to the audience, very seriously

Violin: arco through, sul ponte

Non sul ponte.

Chorus: quasi f

Quasi f
Poco rit.

Con la voce . . . . . A tempo

(Take Piccolo)

Come se i ricordi tornassero alla realtà

By this moment Osio, Mastrogiu and Castronovo have reached their tablins (or similar).
The lines they say have to serve a double purpose: these words have to sound like personal considerations
derived from own memories, as conclusions drawn from their (unknown) past, present and future events
and from their previous words and statements; at the same time these lines have to appear to the audience as
took needed to interpret the opera itself, or at least what they have so far enjoyed so far of the opera.
Spoken, as sharing own thoughts, with growing drama:

"If men and women begin to live their dreams..."

...Naked body of those unreasonable things, ripped out from any discourse.
Spoken, as sharing own thoughts, with growing drama:

Every description shows the truth, and shows that it is itself a deception, ... and not the truth. So as the lion and the snake ...

... and the carousel of fantasies would stop.

non sol pont.
...are the same time figures of the Christ and the demon ...

...it is the justice of the interpretation cannot even be fixed by the fathers' asceticism ...

...and I burns in the doubt

Come prima, with growing drama!

All the imaginable can be drenched but even the most unexpected dream is a puzzle ...

...that hides a wish or a fear ...

al termine, ad alta costa
Come prima, with growing drama:
The unicorns exist in these representations, which if don’t speak about the real being
... they speak of the possible being...

... And representations, like dreams, are built of wishes and fears...
... even if the thread of their discourse is secret, and their rules absurd...
Cedendo pochissimo A tempo, come un ricordo fugace (Come di ritorno alla realtà)

**Flute**

**Clarinet**

**Clarinet 2**

**Bass Clarinet**

**Bari, Sax**

**Bassoon**

**Horn**

**Trumpet**

**Tuba**

**Tuba**

**Percussion**

**Oboe**

**Caucasian**

**Marimba**

**Vibraphone**

**Vibraphone**

**Vibraphone**

**Chime**

---

Come prima, with growing drama!

Listening and seeing means feeling...

... The unicorn of the representation is like a track...

... If there is a track there must be something...

... Of which it is track...

... Of course. Not always a track has the same shape...

very dramatic, almost shout

... and every thing hides another!
... and have yet the words to say!

Spoken, with a bitter smile, as referring to something of the past

As stout-lying oarsmen, sad hus-triats, bold hair-dressers exist

so honest po-li-ti-cians could well e-

... so that we have to interpret its signs.

Min. (with the mouth flute)
Oso, Mastrosso and Caragnosso simultaneously take some water from their respective basins and repeatedly throw it on their own faces letting their make up melt.

They must not wash the make up away, but spread it over their faces in order to create monstrous facial expressions. This passage has to be performed somehow slowly and with contemplation.

From here to the end of the scene Oso, Mastrosso and Caragnosso have to appear fully overtaken by memories, as if themselves were only now comprehending the meaning of the words the previously said.
SCENE 13 - The Jokers: a finite number of elements multiplies by billions of billions

The Three Jokers come back to the performance space. They overlap and somehow interrupt the previous scene. They do not interact with Osso, Mastrosso and Carcagnosso, but their presence and lyrics have to appear as a detached comment to the mafioso's previous scene. Similarly to Scene 11, this scene is composed in the form of a graphic score, and equally to Scene 11 the graphic score has to feature as an integral visual element of the drama and action (it can be projected, printed on the floor, etc.). The musicians involved in this scene have to leave the orchestra and join the Three Jokers on the stage.
Scene 13 - The Jokers

Instruments: Perform the graphic score below.
Play (1) at the beginning; then, when Joker 1 has finished, to read the text, play (2)

The world does not exist.
There is not a whole given all at once;
There is a finite number of elements
whose combinations multiply by billions of billions,
and only few of these find a shape and a sense
and stand out in the middle
of this senseless and shapeless
dust.

Each tale...

The world does not exist.

A finite number of elements
whose combinations multiply
by billions of billions

Once finished, leave while continuing performing and overtake with the orchestra.

Fine della Scena

Repetita aenum times while the jokers leave and then Attacca.
SCENE 14 - Who is to blame? 4

The Common Persons enter the performance space equipped with several newspapers and toy-balls. They are divided into three groups (A, B and C). Each of the three groups gathers around an Infiltrator, as listening for news and/or announcements. The scene has to suggest a grotesque yet worry atmosphere.

The lines the Common Persons read are taken from real newspapers, although they refer to real events there must not be any explicit reference to such events.

\[ \begin{array}{c}
& \text{FL} & \text{Cl. 1} & \text{Cl. 2} & \text{B. Cl.} & \text{Bass Sax.} & \text{Bus} & \text{Hn} & \text{Tpt} & \text{Tbn} & \text{Tba} & \text{Perc} \\
& \text{Inf. 1} & \text{Inf. 2} & \text{Inf. 3} & \text{Group A} & \text{Group B} & \text{Group C} \\
\end{array} \]

Enter the performance holding and reading a newspaper.
Browse through the pages as looking for something important, and act as if you are reading worrying news.

Follow Infiltrator 1, also holding and reading a newspaper. Act as if you are not sure about the seriousness of the news, which will worry you only when Infiltrator 1 reads them out loud.

\*[Each group has to be composed by mixed voice types (SATB). The distribution of the voice types has to be as homogeneous as possible.
No group has to be made of only one voice type or only male or female voices. Group C must have at least one Soprano.]

\[ \frac{1}{138} \text{Grottesco ma spaventato (alla stessa velocità del tempo primo)} \]
*Apply octave transposition to the Infiltrators and Common Persons' lines depending on their voice types, but do not invert the voicings of the Groups.
un groupetto

worried of what Inf. 1 read

Continue browsing through the pages

As his own wal-lie!

Old! Old! Old! Old! Old!

Enter the performance holding and reading a newspaper.

Follow Il mito 3, also holding and reading a newspaper.

Act as if you are not sure about the correctness of the news, which will worry you only when Il mito 3 reads them out loud.
Funerals. Three-huns-dred-and-one were the deaths that the crowd cried, but four-huns-dred-and-sev-enty-one were the

Ah! Ah!

Oh! Oh!

Mon-sew, mon-sew! Ah! Ah!

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Ah!

Continue browsing through the pages

Continue browsing through the pages

Continue browsing through the pages

Continue browsing through the pages

Arco, sul pont.
Ye-stem-day mor-nins the for-mer re-gion's head was ar-rested: He's ac-cused for em-

A bomb has been placed in the Court's par-king space. To-ge ther with a pho-to of the ma-

The re-sul-tes de-liv-er-a si-za-a

quasi balzato, al tallone

* At least one Soprano has to sing the notes in brackets
Con la voce

$\text{\textbf{\textit{\(J = 90\) Nervosissimo, come Scena 3, \(5 \varepsilon 8\)}}}$

Common Persons invade the performance space all over, looking with revulsion for someone to blame. They have to demonstrate a certain cruelty.

(Please refer to the musical score for detailed instructions and notation.)
Once Common Persons spread all over the performance space, they initially attempt to find someone to blame (like before), and then, eventually, they all leave. Throwing toy-balls and leaving them on the performance space is good. (Leaving bits of newspapers around could be an interesting idea).
SCENE 15 - Everyone against everyone

A police complaint desk (or similar) is brought (or appears) on stage. It has to look clear that it is a desk to which individuals file their complaints against unknown persons. All Common Persons (including the Infiltrators) go to this desk one by one, or in groups (as indicated in the score), to file their complaints and accusations. Oss, Mattrusso and Caracauso join them too. There is no one at the desk, and when the characters go to file their complaints they have no interlocutor. It is important that they state their accusations and suspicions as if they do have an interlocutor, although they are left unheard. No story should be made about the fact there is no police staff; it needs to look as if it is normal praxis that there is nobody at a police complaint desk (the director should somehow stress this point).

All the characters performing in this scene must carry (maybe in small bags) numerous toy-balls.

A tempo, poco più’ svelto, con atmosfere di denuncia e sospetto.

Stesso tempo, ma improvvisamente dolce

\( \text{A tempo, poco più’ svelto, } \)

(Fl., Cl. 1, Cl. 2, B. Cl., Tbn., Tba., Perc., Os., Car., 1 Sopr., All other Sopranos, 1 Alto, All other Altos, 1 Ten., All other Tenors, 1 Bass, All other Basses, Vln., Vla., Vc., Ch.)
to a-void the most serious corrup-tion! We must find him! We must find him!

enter the performance space, armed and suspicious
and pre-pouring a senseless case against them. How will it be possible to avoid the most serious consequence?
Take the Piccolo

It may not, or may be a no concern.

Lord, what is the purpose of this vast organization? It is a wasting of expense and a senseless waste.

I bought two shoes and have at last thirty-five cents. The damage they made is this transition.

Sing con la voce

Sing con la voce

Sing con la voce

Sing con la voce

It may not, or may be a no concern.

Lord, what is the purpose of this vast organization? It is a wasting of expense and a senseless waste.
Flute

Bari. Sop.

Bar.

Hu

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tuba

Perc.

Oh

Can.

Mas.

1 Sopr.

All other Sopranos

cres.

3rd violin in measure

1 Alt.

All other Alti.

1 Ten.

All other Tenors

1 Bass

All other Basses

Vln

Vla

Vc

Ch
FL

Cl.

Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bar. Sax

Bu.

Hu.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Perc.

On.

Csn.

Mas.

I Sopr.

All other Sopranos

I Alt.

All other Altos

I Ten.

All other Tenors

I Bass.

All other Basses

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.
quartet must have stolen. A quartet must have stolen, my world of virtue? It's...

That the flight of his flight
creep, poco a poco

and preparing a senseless case against them.
We must find him!

traditional business

made is this transition

where the party becomes the bank. They are quartet bugs!

and cannot find one

we have no being fits that could help us

what sense it could have? "What sense?"

dismayed and grimly I shou...
enter the performance space, allarmed and suscious

go away from the police desk

most sense - less things


It was a creep! It was a crook! I can not live without a sense, 'sense of be -
I was a boy to place my
wonderful bomb when a
terror came!

One day, waking up from my anxious

Other

pose of this vast

Other

bought two shares and have already

Other

situation is the

Other

"Can I phone him?"

Other

that the crowd

Vln

baritone

Vla

baritone

Vi

baritone

violoncello
Suddenly all characters on stage violently begin to accuse each other, shouting “It’s your fault!” and the indicated insults. Their accusations are addressed to both themselves and random members of the audience. From the following bar (when the orchestra begins to play) all characters in the performance space extract their toy-balls from their pockets and bags, and throw them to both each other and the audience members that are being accused. Inflations 4 and 5, who are still sitting among the audience, stand up and respond to the accusations by accusing the singers back and insulting them with the indicated words. At the same time Inflation 4 and 5 vehemently exhort the audience to grab the toy-balls from the container placed among the audience and throw them to both the singers and the audience themselves. A “toy-ball-throwing war” must start! (All balls that fall on the floor must be taken and thrown back.) From this moment onward it needs to appear as if both the characters and the audience are the same entity: the audience have to somehow naturally become part of the narrative, and the narrative, although being a representation, has to reflect a non-theatrical reality, but a phenomenon of real life.
Stesso Tempo, ma violento.

Nonostante questo momento deva essere eseguito con dinamica forte è necessario che si emetta un volume tale da che la parola della Narratrice, attraverso il megafono, stia adeguatamente acustizzata e comprese.
Repeat several times, continuously, according to the action.

(repetitions have to be enough to let the toy-ball war happening and the audience participate to it)

The Narrator suddenly enters with a megaphone and her book in the middle of the toy-ball-throwing, and reads out loudly the following passage:

During her declaration all the characters, who ignore her and keep fighting, falls one by one on the floor, as injured by the toy-balls. Once on the floor they remain lying, as injured or almost dying.

I know that there is no way,

nor threat, nor punishment
By this point all the characters in the performance space, apart from the Narrator, have to be fallen down on the floor, as injured or almost dying.

With growing drama...
...I am addressing those of you who have an idea
of what nobleness of thought means...

of us will not feel that today  he must rebel against injustice...
...I invite you to fulfil that duty which everywhere waits for mankind.
...I invite you to better consider this duty, the responsibility of your earthly mission,
With a bitter and somehow hopeless attitude because we all imagine it to be weak, and only in part.
SCENE 16 - Finale: “and we stayed on the grass till night”

While the whole cast motionlessly lays on the floor the Narrator remains on stage and stares at the almost dead bodies with a contemplative attitude. In this moment, the first clarinetist, as for Scene 1 and 10, leaves the orchestra and joins the singers on stage. He/she has to physically interact with the scene while playing.

The Three Jokers, meanwhile, return on stage. They also walk between the laying bodies, as if what happened is the confirmation of what they had previously said/sung. The Narrator, however, ignores the presence of the Jokers, as if they were entities that only the audience could see.

After a moment of contemplation, the Narrator leaves the megaphone and sings the following lyrics (the Jokers maybe sit between the motionless laying bodies). The following passage comes from her initial story, however this time she must not read it, but sing it as if she read it so many times that she now knows it by memory. Her manners (and those of the other characters that join her) have to be disillusioned and at the same time caretakers. This final scene has to appear as if all conflicts, passions, battles, absurdities, troubles, and all previous events, do not really matter. The words “staying on the grass till night” has to appear as a synonym of two elements: an attitude of negligence with regards to own and other’s conflicts, and as an incapacity to fulfill own actions and wishes (as for instance finding someone to blame, or defending virtues, or understanding the reason and consequences of absurd facts).

(The orchestra is silent for the whole scene, and it has to slowly disappear from the set. This can for instance be done by turning the lights that illuminated the orchestra off).

Rebato e narrato \( \approx 60 \text{ circa} \)

\[ \text{A tempo} \]

Disincantato e spensierato \( \approx 60 \text{ circa} \)

* Infiltrators 4 and 5 have to join the SATB layout according to their voice type.
Cl.

Nar. always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

Osa. always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

Can. always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

Mas. always happen to mistake each other. But now it is fine.

S

A

T

B

1995

[Spoken, disincantato e spensierato] It makes no difference. 

but now it is fine.

But now it is fine.

But now it is fine.

But now it is fine.

All Common Persons and Infiltrations, who are still lying down, slowly turn their backs towards the floor, in a supine position.

Then they all join the Narrator, Osa, Mautino and Carozzi in their chant.

The Three liters also join them and, as for Infiltrations 4 and 5, they have to join the SATB layers according to their voice type.
Repeate for at least 3 minutes with a constant dimimendo toiente

Fine