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INTRODUCTION**

1. FOREWORD

The issue of migrations, owing to its strong cultural relevance, offers a preferential outline of the post-dramatic, performative and social polyvalence of contemporary theatricality and transversally reveals a widespread, albeit frequently not concerted, engagement to act at local level in pursuit of an inclusive society.

Playing Inclusion. The Performing Arts in the Time of Migrations: Thinking, Creating and Acting Inclusion is a collection of essays written by teatrologists, sociologists, psychologists, artists, performers, social theatre experts and facilitators, who describe and analyse with their different points of view and methodologies some experiences where performative arts and practices enact reflexive, creative and active processes aimed at taking care of the complex migratory phenomenon.

What is at stake is not so much an assessment of which approach or methodology is more successful, but an evaluation of the impact that a chorality of artistic, cultural and social processes achieves thanks to its plural nature, which works in different ways for and with the individual and collective subjects. We are calling upon a twofold emancipation: on the one side, we should leave behind any boundary between disciplines and within them; on the other side, we should “challenge the opposition between viewing and acting”, because these experiences demonstrate to us that the categorisations that distinguish and set “saying, seeing and doing” one against the other, “belong to the structure of domination and subjection”¹.

In this sense, we have adopted an intercultural² research approach in its widest sense, with a clear purpose to enhance the value of the diversity of perspectives, the plurality of subjects and methodologies, the complexity of actions and projects, the sheer heterogeneity of processes and products. We want to value them in order to be able to perceive the ways in which interactions among these different approaches can create a network of complex, local and participated, artistic and performative answers. It is apparent, first and foremost, that we are not facing an organised system, nor a

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¹ J. Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, translated by G. Elliott, London-New York: Verso 2009, 13.

² C. Giménez, “Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e interculturalidad”, in *Aprendiendo a ser iguales. Manual de Educación Intercultural*, edited by L. Die, Valencia: CeiMigra, 2012: 49-65 and R. Zapata-Barrero, “Interculturalism in the Post-Multicultural Debate: A Defence”, *Comparative Migration Studies*, 5, 14 (2017): 1-23.

stable network, but we are dealing with a situation which is not yet recognised, neither by outside operators nor by the cultural agents themselves, who often find it problematic to endorse each other overcoming their differences and peculiarities. However, we find that these experiences, taken as a whole, go a long way to supplement the public institutional measures as well as the interventions of the services aimed at the promotion of processes of diffused governance, where the subjects take on a direct responsibility for the inclusion processes.

2. THE STRUCTURAL DIMENSION OF MIGRATIONS

Migrations are not a novelty³, and the fact that they are one of the determinants of the social, economic and cultural development of human history is widely accepted⁴. It is true, however, that during the last three decades Europe has undergone a clear increase of migration flows, with a resulting 7.6% of European inhabitants being “migrant citizens”⁵ and 61 out of the total of 258 million migrants currently on the move in the world being of European origin⁶.

“To leave one’s place of origin in order to settle, even if only temporarily, somewhere else”⁷ is a simple definition of the verb “to migrate”, a verb whose intransitivity seems to point to the complexity of being a migrant. Let’s take, for example, the current migratory situation in Italy, where there are several different migratory flows: Italians migrating abroad, those returning from abroad, foreign nationals residing in Italy, Italian citizens of foreign origin, second and third generation immigrants, and finally, Italians and foreigners moving within the national borders. There are currently in Italy more than five million residents of foreign origin (5,144,440 according to Istat as of January 1, 2018⁸), slightly more than the Italians resident abroad (4,973,942 were registered in the official AIRE Register of Italians Resident Abroad as of January 1, 2017 according to the *Rapporto Italiani nel mondo 2017* prepared by the Fondazione Migrantes⁹ using Istat figures)¹⁰. To these figures, one should add the refugees, asylum seekers,

³ T.J. Hatton, J.G. Williamson, *Global Migration and the World Economy. Two Centuries of Policy and Performance*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006 and P. Corti, *Storia delle migrazioni internazionali*, Bari: Laterza, 2011.

⁴ J. Lucassen *et al.*, *Migration History in World History. Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Boston: BRILL, 2010.

⁵ As of January 1, 2017 according to Eurostat there were 39 million migrant people in Europe, of which 17 million from EU countries and 22 million from non-EU countries. EUROSTAT, *Chiffres clés sur l’Europe. Statistiques illustrées*. Édition 2018, Unione Europea, 2018, 15. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9376693/KS-EI-18-101-FR-N.pdf/29b27e18-c1b3-45b2-bc40-ae96ea6b80d1>. Accessed February 5, 2019.

⁶ United Nations, *Migration*. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/migration/index.html>. Accessed February 2, 2019.

⁷ *Migrare*, Vocabolario Online Treccani. <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/migrare/>. Accessed April 2, 2019

⁸ *Immigrati.Stat. Dati e indicatori su immigrati e nuovi cittadini*. Accessed February 2, 2019. <http://stra-dati.istat.it/#>.

⁹ D. Licata, ed., *Rapporto italiani nel mondo 2017. Sintesi*, Fondazione Migrantes, Todi, Tau Editrice, 4. http://banchedati.chiesacattolica.it/pls/cci_new_v3/v3_s2ew_consultazione.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=92237. Accessed April 2, 2019.

¹⁰ As of January 1, 2018 the situation in Italy was the following: “The migration balance, positive by 184,000 people, shows a sizeable increase over the previous year figure of +144,000. Immigrations are up by 12% at 337,000, while emigrations are down by 2.6% at 153,000. [...] Only 40,000 of the outward migrations out of the total of 153,000 concern foreign citizens (-5% over 2016), while the remaining 112,000 concern

irregular migrants and Italians resident abroad only temporarily, although the figures for these groups vary widely according to different sources. This is a complex scenario that has emerged after a change in the 1980s and 1990s, when the earlier trend of outbound-only (e)migration was replaced by two-way migrations¹¹. The society of the time was deeply affected, forced to “face up to the phenomenon [in every aspect] from the school system to the labour market, to the provision of health services, justice and culture”¹², having to come to terms with a diversified and complex migratory process which produced an unexpected demographic development¹³. Because of its multifaceted reality Italy is a “migratory crossroad”¹⁴ characterised by such complexities that any category used by the public administration to define the status of migrant people appears not adequate and soon obsolete, as life conditions change, regulations evolve and people move from one category to another seamlessly¹⁵. These processes are so structural that we could perhaps consider them in the wider scenario of the *mobility turn*, that is to say of the mobility and changeability not only of people but of thoughts, ideas, images, cultural artefacts and many more things, that is typical of contemporary society and has considerable implications on the social and political systems¹⁶.

The migratory experience is not only an objective situation but also a condition charged with connotations, that is to say, of subjective significances that in different historical moments have been attributed to the phenomenon. In the last few years, migrations have acquired an increasingly negative connotation, partly thanks to the contribution of some mass media communication and its political exploitation¹⁷. The personifications of the migrant-victim and of the migrant-criminal are two of the connotative extremes that, even more than data, studies and researches, inform personal imaginations at local and global level¹⁸ and manage to affect considerably the political agendas in many countries. As xenophobia, nationalisms, and racial extremisms are gaining ground, the migrant persona is forced to face not only the real logistic problems and the need to redefine their own personal and social identity, but also real and media mechanisms of victimisation, exclusion, discrimination.

In this scenario, in order to question the resources of the theatre and of the performance, it is useful to introduce some thoughts about the individual and collective subjects and about how they are redefining and are being redefined in relation with the new experiences of citizenship, of participation, of identity made actual by the structural dimension of migrations.

Italians going abroad, slightly down by -1.8%”. ISTAT, *Indicatori demografici*. Accessed February 2, 2019. <http://www4.istat.it/it/archivio/208951>.

¹¹ M. Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Roma: Carocci, 2018.

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁴ E. Pugliese, *Quelli che se ne vanno. La nuova emigrazione italiana*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018.

¹⁵ L. Zanfrini, *Introduzione alla sociologia delle migrazioni*, Bari: Laterza, 2016, 17-21.

¹⁶ M. Augé, *Per un'antropologia della mobilità*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2010; T. Cresswell, “Towards a Politics of Mobility”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 1 (2010): 17-31. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tim_Cresswell/publication/248881905_Towards_a_Politics_of_Mobility/links/0a85e53287bf6b605600000/Towards-a-Politics-of-Mobility.pdf. Accessed April 2, 2019.

¹⁷ P. Musarò, P. Parmiggiani, *Media e migrazioni. Etica, estetica e politica del discorso umanitario*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2014. For an in depth bibliography and documentation on this subject see the project *Migrations | Mediations. Arts and Communication as Resources for Intercultural Dialogue* of the Università Cattolica di Milano, <https://www.migrations-mediations.com/>.

¹⁸ Colucci, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia*, 192-198.

3. OBSERVATIONS ON INTEGRATION MODELS

The structure and rules of the modern state often reveal their inadequacies to tackle the increased complexity of the human being condition and the globalisation which is led by the two trends of “techno-economic standardisation” and “cultural-identity diaspora”¹⁹. Temporality and spatiality, lived in a diverging way, render the encounter between different cultures and ways of life explosive and favour indirect expressions of power as opposed to the traditional ones of the political representation. The “economic, religious and cultural powers take therefore the lead, with their prerogatives and their privileges²⁰”, with the risk that, being badly managed, not oriented to the collective good and difficult to identify, could end up menacing seriously the democratic structure of society. Given this complexity, according to Sayad, reflecting on immigration essentially means questioning the state and its foundations, its internal mechanisms, structures and operations; additionally, questioning the state through immigration, means, ultimately, to denaturalise what is considered natural, to re-historicise the state, or what in the state appears to have been struck with historical amnesia, that is, to recall the social and historical conditions of its genesis²¹.

In particular, it is precisely the different processes of cultural integration tried by the different European states that have shown many inadequacies and the need for a serious reconsideration of the relationship between State and individual, because integration is a dynamic and complex process²² which requires individuals to reorganise completely their life and collectivities to redefine themselves radically²³. It comprises two related actions: social interaction, with a bottom-up effect, and the top-down effect of the political actions adopted as explicit strategies to govern the problem. Integration is influenced by several factors, is realised in different environments, reaches different stages of development and takes different forms of interaction between individuals and collectivities. Additionally, it has a predominantly local character, micro- and meso-structural²⁴. In order to understand this process, bearing in mind that our analysis here can only be limited, it serves our purpose to recall some of the models of integration adopted by different European states, which have strongly influenced the life of individuals and communities, originating “strategic and operative actions of all the institutional structures involved in the management of immigrants”²⁵.

Two predominant trends can be clearly identified: the assimilationist, otherwise defined of the identity universalism, and the multicultural one, or of the antiuniversalist differentialism²⁶. Assimilationism proposes the cancellation of any socio-cultural trait of the migrant person to favour their assimilation to the people of the receiving country. The second one, on the other hand, is based on the idea that integration is achieved

¹⁹ G. Marramao, *Dopo il Leviatano. Individuo e comunità*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2013, 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

²¹ A. Sayad, “Immigration et ‘pensée d’État’”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 129, Septembre (1999): 5-14 (6).

²² V. Cesareo, “Quale integrazione?”, in *Indici di integrazione. Un’indagine empirica sulla realtà migratoria italiana*, edited by V. Cesareo, G.C. Blangiardo, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009: 11-28.

²³ M. Tognetti Bordogna, ed., *Arrivare non basta. Complessità e fatica della migrazione*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007.

²⁴ M. Ambrosini, *Migrazioni*, Milano: Egea, 2017.

²⁵ G. Rossi, “Quali modelli di integrazione possibile per una società interculturale?”, in *Generare luoghi di integrazione. Modelli di buone pratiche in Italia e all’estero*, edited by D. Bramanti, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011: 15-35 (15).

²⁶ Marramao, *Dopo il Leviatano*, 17.

through the tolerance of differences in private and the acknowledgement of pluralities in the public domain, with a consequent relativisation of the latter²⁷. These two trends are reflected in different models of integration. The assimilationist model, adopted in France for instance, awards citizenship on the basis of the rights of the single individual and not of their being part of a community or of a culture of origin, which is not acknowledged²⁸. The national state deals only with individuals and sees social groups standing in the way of integration and of the redefinition of the individual citizen through a true homologation of rights and duties. This model has shown its limits. Precisely because it does not incorporate in the public domain the cultural specificities of the group of origin, it has produced effects of de-socialisation and discrimination in everyday life, causing social disadvantage and conflictuality.

The multicultural model, on the other hand, is based on the acknowledgement of the rights of the individual but also of the groups and communities to which they belong, with their cultural and legal peculiarities. The model, based on plurilingualism and multiculturalism, applied in its inclusive version in the United Kingdom and with some variations in the Netherlands and in Sweden, makes integration conditional only on democratic laws and universal human rights²⁹. As time goes by, however, this model shows its limits as it produces a juxtaposition of different cultures with a strong drift towards isolationisms, which hinders true integration and feeds cultural intolerance, segregation and poor community cohesion.

Both France and the United Kingdom make the acquisition of citizenship dependent on the *jus soli*, a legal principle open, by its own nature, to the possibility of new citizenships. But how do assimilationism and multiculturalism work in countries where the principle of *jus sanguinis* is applied?

In Germany, for example, multiculturalism takes a functionalist turn, thanks to the principle of differential exclusion³⁰ or of institutionalised precarity³¹, according to which migrants, who are mostly workers, are allowed to express their cultural identity of origin simply because they are considered temporary guests whose permanent settlement is discouraged. This belief has led Germany to consider useless any investment directed towards real integration processes³². This assumption has been disproved by facts as many migrant workers have chosen to remain permanently and this has pushed Germany to relax its citizenship laws but at the same time, as a policy of indiscriminate reception was beginning to cause xenophobic reactions, to work out bilateral agreements with the countries of origin and the European Union in order to control inbound migration flows³³.

The right to citizenship follows the *jus sanguinis* rule in Italy, as it is the case in Germany, based on the same approach to consider immigration a temporary and transitory phenomenon. Dissimilarly, however, the Italian migratory scenario had under-

²⁷ Rossi, "Quali modelli di integrazione possibile per una società interculturale?": 21.

²⁸ R. Guolo, "Modelli di integrazione culturale in Europa", in *Le nuove politiche per l'immigrazione. Sfide e opportunità*, Convegno di Asolo (16-17 ottobre 2009): 1-9 (2). https://www.italianieuropei.it/images/iniziativa/schoolfilosofia/materiali2010/IE_Modelli%20Di%20Integrazione%20Culturale%20In%20Europa_Guolo.pdf. Accessed March 7, 2019.

²⁹ Rossi, "Quali modelli di integrazione possibile per una società interculturale?": 24.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Guolo, "Modelli di integrazione culturale in Europa": 4.

³² G. Zincone, ed., *Immigrazione: segnali di integrazione. Sanità, scuola, casa*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, 22.

³³ G. Sale, "L'immigrazione in Europa e i diversi modelli di integrazione", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 4, 3993 (2016): 253-268 (262-263).

gone a true transformation during the 1980s and 1990s, which, however, failed to bring about the definition of a clear model of inclusion policies, while ample space was left to the initiative of local administrations and intermediate bodies, such as religious and secular associations expressed by the civil society, producing the emergence of what is today called “governance”³⁴. Since then, trends in law making have been alternating, following the ebb and flow of migrations and the changes in government attitudes³⁵. On the whole, there has been a gradual, substantial attribution of social rights to resident migrants considered “regular”, associated, however, with their perduring exclusion from political rights and a bland tolerance of their right to maintain their culture of origin³⁶. Exceptional measures of mass regularisation, “sanatorie” in Italian, have been adopted³⁷. Meanwhile, widespread concerns for security have pushed for the adoption of public security measures, and a culture of distrust has flourished, as a reaction to the trade union battles waged by migrant workers in the 1990s, to their fight to obtain the right to housing, religious practice, education and health services³⁸. The Italian model of integration has been defined in turn: implicit³⁹, Mediterranean⁴⁰, a non-model⁴¹, and finally hybrid⁴², as to reflect its intrinsic changeability and fluidity. Some common traits can however be gathered: low level of management of the flows of migrants’ arrivals and settlements, low level of national institutionalisation, paired with freedom of initiative left to local administrations and non-profit organisations, prevalence of precarious work conditions and self-employment, differences in reception practices at local level, ample reliance on mutual aid network based on nationality of origin⁴³.

Because of the disparity of models of integration adopted, the single European states are still far from being able to acquire a real, unified integration policy⁴⁴, it is, however, meaningful, that guidelines have been adopted, proposing a clear overcoming of the wavering between assimilationism and multiculturalism, and the implementation of

³⁴ M. Villa, “L’integrazione nell’era della governance multilivello”, in *Le città globali e la sfida dell’integrazione*, edited by M. Villa, Milano: Ledizioni Ledipublishing, 2018: 13-35 (20).

³⁵ See: Law n. 39 known as Martelli Law 1990; Law n. 40 known as Turco-Napolitano Law 1998; Law n. 189 known as Bossi-Fini Law 2002; Law 94/2009 “Norms on public security” (Security Package); Law 46 and Law 47/2017; Decree-Law n. 113/2018, Implemented by: Law no. 113/2018. For more information, see Department for civil liberties and immigration, *Legislation*. <http://www.libertacivilimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/legislazione>. Accessed March 20, 2019; and Chamber of Deputies, Research Department Legislature XVIII, *Immigrazione*, 19 febbraio 2019. http://www.camera.it/temiap/documentazione/temi/pdf/1105627.pdf?_1538233816316. Accessed March 20, 2019. For an overview, see F. Casella, *La legislazione in materia di immigrazione*, in *Avviso pubblico* 2018. <https://www.avvisopubblico.it/home/home/cosa-facciamo/informare/documenti-tematici/immigrazione/la-legislazione-nazionale-materia-immigrazione/>. Accessed March 20, 2019.

³⁶ As an example, one could look at the trends in education, which is one of the areas which has contributed more to integration in Italy. M. Santagati, “Interculturalism, Education and Society. Education Policies for Immigrant Students in Italy”, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of European Studies*, 8, 2 (2016): 6-20.

³⁷ Colucci, *Storia dell’immigrazione straniera in Italia*, 190-191.

³⁸ D. Della Porta, “Immigrazione e protesta”, *Quaderni di sociologia*, 21 (1999): 14-44; M. Perrotta, “Il lavoro migrante stagionale nelle campagne italiane”, in *L’arte di spostarsi. Rapporto 2014 sulle migrazioni interne in Italia*, edited by M. Colucci, S. Gallo, Roma: Donzelli: 21-38; A. Ciniero, “Crisi economica e lotte autorganizzate. Lavoro, sciopero ed esclusione dei braccianti a Nardò (2011-2015)”, *Sociologia del lavoro*, 140 (2015): 189-203.

³⁹ M. Ambrosini, *Utili invasori*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001.

⁴⁰ E. Pugliese, *L’Italia tra migrazioni internazionali e migrazioni interne*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002.

⁴¹ Guolo, “Modelli di integrazione culturale in Europa”.

⁴² Sale, “L’immigrazione in Europa e i diversi modelli di integrazione”.

⁴³ M. Ferrari, C. Rosso, “Interazioni precarie. Il dilemma dell’integrazione dei migranti nelle politiche sociali locali: il caso di Brescia”, *I quaderni del CIRSDIG*, 26 (2008): 8-9.

⁴⁴ Villa, “L’integrazione nell’era della governance multilivello”: 17.

an intercultural prospective⁴⁵. In addition to this, it helps to remember that the multilevel nature of the integration policies concerns as well, and even more so, the policies decentralised and developed with different degrees of autonomy at local level; and that for this reason, especially in Italy, “local authorities and municipalities in particular are on one hand the main executors of integration policies and on the other hand, a workshop to experiment new opportunities, models and processes to achieve better results”⁴⁶.

In addition of the above analysis, we must mention that one of the obstacles to the processes of integration at European Community level could come from a neo-colonialist position that affects the European migration policies, according to Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics. This is fundamentally a development of Foucault’s definition of biopolitics, which underlines the dynamics of the neoliberal processes of social hierarchisation based on the intrinsic value still attributed to the European colonial past. Necropolitics is the system of power resulting from the cross between sovereignty and race and which implies the instrumental use of the human being and the material destruction of its body⁴⁷. Necropolitics is therefore nowadays a sort of other side of the coin of the technologies of neoliberal governments⁴⁸, so that “civic integration presents itself as a form of ‘internal’ colonial settlement, which rules on people who occupy tangibly the national space but that in some way must be kept ‘at a distance’, separated, if not physically, at least symbolically and juridically”⁴⁹. A similar approach would back up the distinguishing discriminations underlying the new forms of racism permeating the recent history of several European countries.

In conclusion, we are witnessing a complex scenario of policies and interpretations, confined between the opposite drifts towards assimilationism and multiculturalism, with the associated emergency or security measures. These models are expression of an inadequate identity paradigm, which belies our lingering inability to acknowledge the structural nature of migrations. Plurality, as a matter of fact, is not only an intercultural phenomenon, according to Marramao, but also intracultural, not only intersubjective but also intrasubjective, it is not only something that happens among different identities but also internally to the symbolic constitution of each identity: and this applies to the individual as much as to the collective subject⁵⁰.

4. FROM THE CONSTITUTIVE OTHERNESS TO THE EXPULSION OF THE OTHER

The central role of the experience of the other for the constitution of human beings, who would otherwise be incapable to constitute themselves in solitude, always lacking and therefore always in quest, anancastic subjects of metaphysical desire, has long been the object of philosophical debate. In addition, the confirmation of the biological matrix of

⁴⁵ Council Of The European Union, *IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION – Council Conclusions*, 19 November 2004. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf#zoom=100. Accessed March 20, 2019.

⁴⁶ Villa, “L’integrazione nell’era della governance multilivello”: 19.

⁴⁷ A. Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, *Public Culture*, 15, 1 (2003): 11-40 (11).

⁴⁸ M. Mellino, “Governare la crisi dei rifugiati. L’emergere in Europa di una nuova ‘economia politica morale’ di gestione delle migrazioni”, in *I confini dell’inclusione. La civic integration tra selezione e disciplinamento dei corpi migranti*, edited by V. Carbone, E. Gargiulo, M. Russo Spena, Roma: DOC(K)S, 2018: 21-48.

⁴⁹ V. Carbone, E. Gargiulo, M. Russo Spena, “Introduzione”, in *I confini dell’inclusione. La civic integration tra selezione e disciplinamento dei corpi migranti*: 15-20 (16).

⁵⁰ Marramao, *Dopo il Leviatano*, 18.

the fundamental interaction between self and other, thanks to the discovery of the mirror neurons, provides an empirical confirmation that intersubjectivity is indeed founded on intercorporeality – the “mutual resonance of intentionally meaningful sensory-motor behaviours”⁵¹. Research demonstrated that the observation of others’ actions produces in the human brain a motor description enabling the observer to give meaning to the information received from observation and to recognise it⁵². It is a bodily knowledge which results in an automatic form of embodied simulation, happening at a pre-linguistic and pre-rational stage⁵³. The bodily nature of the human mind, the bodily mind, proves the impossibility of having mental contents without physical experiences⁵⁴. It proves, moreover, the fact that the human mind begins as a “shared mind”, a “we-centric” space furnished with mirror neurons which is an exclusive of the human race since the earliest stages of life and is crucial for the creation of social bonds. This ontological opening of the human being to the other human being is determined by the fact that the other is a constitutive part of the inner self, is given like one’s self. The self and the other are intimately intertwined because of their intercorporeal link and mimesis is one of the main expressions of this constitutive openness to others⁵⁵.

The importance of this founding interdependence has been confirmed by several voices from a wide range of disciplines; however, it has not yet reached the point of becoming the foundation stone of peaceful coexistence. Its very supporters have tried to respond to the problems generated by the relationship between the individual and the others, starting from the most intimate need for intra-subjective integration.

Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognising him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. A symptom that precisely turns “we” into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible. The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities⁵⁶.

Thus Kristeva introduced in 1988 the issue of inclusion in its deepest form, the ability to admit that the experience of estrangement is a constitutive part of the subject and that the possibility of coexistence relies on the ability to live with others and live as others. With this notion Kristeva was applying Freud’s universal notion of unconscious, intended as the biological and symbolic, non-pathological otherness which substantiates the subject, but that can, however, feed projectively the difficulty of living with others. It is the reappearance of the displaced, of the constitutive otherness, which can cause unease, to the point of being a disturbing foreignness. This foreignness is an aesthetic and

⁵¹ V. Gallese, “Corpo non mente. Le neuroscienze cognitive e la genesi di soggettività ed intersoggettività”, *Educazione sentimentale*, 20 (2013): 8-24 (12).

⁵² P.F. Ferrari, S. Rozzi, “Neuroni specchio, azione e relazione. Il cervello che agisce come fondamento della mente sociale”, *Rivista sperimentale di freniatria: la rivista dei servizi di salute mentale*, 136, 1 (2012): 13-38 (24-26).

⁵³ V. Gallese, “Dai neuroni specchio alla consonanza intenzionale. Meccanismi neurofisiologici dell’intersoggettività”, *Rivista di Psicoanalisi*, LIII, 1 (2007): 197-208; V. Gallese, “Le due facce della mimesi. La Teoria Mimetica di Girard, la simulazione incarnata e l’identificazione sociale”, *Psicobiettivo*, 2 (2009): 77-100.

⁵⁴ A. Glenberg, V. Gallese, “Action-Based Language: A Theory of Language Acquisition, Comprehension, and Production”, *Cortex*, 48, July-August (2012): 905-922.

⁵⁵ Gallese, “Le due facce della mimesi”, 94.

⁵⁶ J. Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, translated by L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, 1.

psychological experience that transforms the symbolic procedures to the point that imagination and signs prevail over reality, and can engender deep anguish⁵⁷. After Freud, the subject appears as a continuous experience of construction and de-construction of the other, of otherness. We have:

to discover our disturbing otherness, for that indeed is what bursts in to confront that ‘demon’, that threat, that apprehension generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, solid ‘us.’ By recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners⁵⁸.

Unfortunately, Kristeva’s thought, originally meant to drive towards the discovery of the other as the constitutive process of the self, got tangled in the many contradictory attempts of the subject to articulate new, open and plural identities⁵⁹, ending up with the disappearance of the otherness in a blinding mediatic light where everything is undistinguishable. Thus remarked, somehow bitterly, Baudrillard⁶⁰ at the same time as Kristeva, and this seems to have become even more the case as years have gone by, culminating with a true “expulsion of the other”⁶¹. Globalisation, ipercommunication, interchangeability/interdependence (which makes everything comparable and countable), movement of capitals and neoliberalism are the matrix of violence of the same that permeates our contemporaneity and annihilates the negativity of the other, of the incomparable, primary sources of a stable self⁶². It is, according to Han, a pervasive dynamic in which the subject falls progressively inside itself. The libidinal energies are invested mainly in the self who narcissistically shies away from the dialectic of otherness and of the Eros, sole possibility for the human being to acquire self-esteem, gratification, and the feeling of love, forgiveness and recognition⁶³. The domains of freedom, self-realisation and optimisation of the self turn out to be seductively instrumental to the self-exploitation and subjugation of the subject.

The neoliberal technology of power does not prohibit, protect or repress; instead, it prospects, permits and projects. Consumption is not held in check, but maximized. No production of scarcity occurs; instead, surplus is generated – indeed, a superabundance of positivity. Everyone is encouraged to communicate and consume. [...] Needs are not repressed, but stimulated. Confession obtained by force has been replaced by voluntary disclosure. Smartphones have been substituted for torture chambers⁶⁴.

During the last few centuries, we have been through several different “technologies of power” – from sovereign power, to disciplinary power, to bio-power – arriving at the psycho-power of today which, thanks to the prognoses formulated through the analysis of big-data, anticipates the actions of the subjects and instead of antagonising them

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 183-192.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁵⁹ A. Touraine, *Libertà, uguaglianza, diversità. Si può vivere insieme?*, Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1997, 64-101.

⁶⁰ J. Baudrillard, *L’altro visto da sé*, Genova: Costa & Nolan 1997 (ed. or. 1987).

⁶¹ B.-C. Han, *The Expulsion of the Other: Society, Perception and Communication Today*, translated by W. Hoban, Cambridge, UK, Medford MA USA: Polity Press, 2018. Kindle edition.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶³ B.-C. Han, *The Agony of Eros*, Cambridge: Untimely Meditations MIT Press, 2017.

⁶⁴ B.-C. Han, *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power*, translated by E. Butler, New York: Verso Futures, 2017. Ebook, 70-71.

or disciplining them, seduces them through communication, inducing them to become a panopticon of themselves, self-controllers and primary contributors to the power itself⁶⁵. It is therefore a subject that is unwittingly a *sub-iectum*, more and more unable to integrate the constitutive otherness and to experience it, both within himself and in the world surrounding him, carrier of an identity closed to plurality and seeking the identity, the sameness. It ends up extricating himself from the processes of empathic identification which are today necessary to the creation of reciprocal recognition and plural belongings, emphasizing conversely the elements that differentiate and distinguish each individual identity, at the risk of becoming a source of violence⁶⁶. The expulsion of the otherness makes conflicts necessarily non-generative, as a truly generative conflict would require subjects capable of mutual recognition and willingness to listen to each other in order to establish a dialogue conducive to constructive mediations⁶⁷. Following this train of thought one step further, we understand some additional disastrous developments: either the retreat, implosion, latency and self-destructiveness of the subject, or the deployment of violence, especially of the mimetic type, which maximises the processes of assimilation with the consequent need to find scapegoats, victims and enemies over whom to pour destructive energies⁶⁸.

Indeed, many of the conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity. The art of constructing hatred takes the form of invoking the magical power of some allegedly predominant identity that drowns other affiliations, and in a conveniently bellicose form can also overpower any human sympathy or natural kindness that we may normally have. The result can be homespun elemental violence, or globally artful violence and terrorism⁶⁹.

5. PERFORMING ARTS AND PRACTICES DEALING WITH SOCIAL INCLUSION IN MIGRATORY PROCESSES: FOCUS ON SOCIAL THEATRE

A critical, transversal reading of some of the experiences analysed in this issue sheds some light on the resources and functions produced by the performative arts and practices which, intentionally and with specific methodologies, try to facilitate processes of social inclusion of the people who have to face the complexities of the migratory processes.

One characteristic that stands out immediately is the emergence of the group as the quintessential performative subject. It is quite often made of people who are not art professionals, and it is led either by internal leaders, chosen among its participants, or by external trainers, such as professional theatre facilitators, artists or educators.

These groups attempt to create virtuous circles where, according to both participants and facilitators, performative practice and social-emotional dimension feed each other mutually, and the groups becomes facilitating ground, which protects and supports, which characterises the identity change, which allows an experience of reciprocal care to take place, which in turn engages and propels the individual, especially if marginalised or excluded, to rethink themselves in the social relationships. But the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁶ A. Sen, *Identity and Violence, the Illusion of Destiny*, London: Penguin Books ebook, 2015.

⁶⁷ P. Consorti, A. Valdambri, *Gestire i conflitti interculturali ed interreligiosi: approcci a confronto*, Pisa: University Press, 2013.

⁶⁸ R. Girard, *Il capro espiatorio*, Milano: Adelphi, 1999.

⁶⁹ Sen, *Identity and Violence, the Illusion of Destiny*, 15-16.

group constitutes itself as social subject of the mediation with the local society as well⁷⁰, which in turn is gradually engaged by the group in the performative process through the bonds of the socio-cultural network. Thus it is during the performative events that the collectivity, stimulated by the group workings, appears to rediscover echoes of communitarian and choral dramaturgy.

The groups may differ by origin: there are spontaneous performative groups, for example those formed by Latin-American youngsters who gather in public open spaces in Milan to practice hip-hop, traditional dance and parkour (urban sports). There are some groups created by the administrative procedures for handling migrants, such as the reception structures (the SPRAR, Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, and the CAS, Extraordinary Reception Centres), the schools, and the Prefectures. Some groups are generated by professional artistic projects, and finally, other groups are born out of the civic society, mostly as expression of Italian or foreign community cultural associations. One particular case of groupality is presented by the inter-professional teams set up to support these activities and which experiment with innovative forms of collaboration among different sectors and services of the social and cultural sphere.

These groupal experiences are typically part of much wider networks than customary artistic groups. They involve many different public and private players coming from the arts and culture sectors but also from education, migrants communities, administration, politics and civic society, different branches of local services and policies, stimulated to cooperate. Innovative networks are thus generated and operate through multi-sector and multi-dimensional projects where the performative practices are only one of the many components at play.

A second trait these performative processes have in common is the fact that they include all the arts considered performative, such as dance, music, theatre and singing, but also performative practices such as play, feasts, rites, ceremonies and sport. It is a wide and varied performative spectrum open to the diversified magnitudes, as defined by Schechner⁷¹.

Among these performative processes we can identify some trends and prevailing functions. In particular, adopting Wieviorka's specification, we can distinguish between cultural reproduction processes and cultural production processes⁷². The first ones are based on traditional forms of which they emphasise the value of individual cultural identity, showing a desire to share it and divulge it with a multicultural and transcultural attitude. They produce a double intention: on the one hand, they sustain and promote an identity, on the other hand they want to communicate it, and in so doing they recognize the value of the gaze of the other as the key of the self-recognition. The way these experiences have been realised makes us think that they might be an occurrence of the process of exchange of gifts and of reciprocities, which is at the foundation of the social bond⁷³. There are then the cultural production processes, born out of the encounter among different cultures and the resulting co-creations, where exchange, invention, cross-fertilisation, and cultural transactions alter the original identities and open themselves to creative innovation. In these processes it can often happen that counter-narrative dramaturgies are created, expression of interesting and innovative imaginaries.

⁷⁰ A. Bagnasco, *Tracce di comunità. Temi derivati da un concetto ingombrante*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999, 37.

⁷¹ R. Schechner, *Le magnitudini della performance*, Roma: Bulzoni, 1999.

⁷² M. Wieviorka, *L'inquietudine delle differenze*, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2008, 34-37.

⁷³ A. Caillé, *Pour un manifeste du convivialisme*, Lormont: Le Bord de l'eau, 2011.

We would describe these as intercultural processes, according to Giménez⁷⁴, as they satisfy the three requirements of, first, the right to equality independently from cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic origin; of, secondly, the right to recognition and acceptance of differences; and of, thirdly, promoting a positive interaction between people belonging to different cultures. The intercultural approach enhances the value of contact, communication and relationships among people of different origins, building on the common bonds rather than on the discrepancies and considering diversity a resource⁷⁵.

These two approaches are not, in the practices, clearly distinguishable, to the point that often they flow into each other and generate a performative process part productive and part reproductive.

To these two approaches, we must add the narrative and testimonial processes, where it is not only the cultural identity of origin at the centre of the narration, but rather the new identity acquired by the migrants and their migratory experience to become the source of the performative action. In these processes the migratory journey needs to be worked-through to become a true rite of passage, which profoundly transforms the personality of the traveller. The performative act allows this experience to become a common knowledge overcoming the limits of the individual dimension.

It is interesting to note that the performative practices and arts, in their different and integrated ways of realisation – reproductive, productive and narrative-testimonial –, through the methodology of the workshop can promote protected situations where the participants can work on themselves while at the same time they are engaged in the groupal relational dynamics. The experience of the actorial body, regained to the esthetical expressivity and to the interpersonal encounter, connected to the authorial and narrative dimension, allows the subject to experiment the different identity dimensions to explore the possible intra-subjective integrations, open, however, to intersubjective communicative encounter.

“The narrative operation has developed an entirely original concept of dynamic identity which reconciles the same categories that Locke took as contraries: identity and diversity”⁷⁶.

And it is exactly the phase of the performance open to the external public – be it a theatre performance, a festive event, a public action – that can facilitate the recognition of the subject as active part of the community and acquire a voice in the public arena, developing their own cultural and civic agency, both at individual and at group level.

The funding of the experiences under consideration differs from what is customary in the world of art.

It is important to underline that the majority of these performative activities are free of charge in accordance with the fundamental rules of conviviality, based on the dynamic of gift, counter-gift and reciprocity⁷⁷ with mixed situations, where the stringent economic law of the exchange of gifts is infringed in favour of the unpredictable affectivity created by gratuitousness. That is to say, by conviviality itself⁷⁸.

As a whole, we think that the different performative practices are the generative ground of and for those social and cultural intermediate bodies which have always been

⁷⁴ Giménez, “Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e interculturalidad”: 49-65.

⁷⁵ Zapata-Barrero, “Interculturalism in the Post-Multicultural Debate: A Defence”.

⁷⁶ P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, translated by K. Blamey, Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press 1995, 143.

⁷⁷ M. Mauss, *Saggio sul dono: forma e motivo dello scambio nelle società arcaiche*, Torino: Einaudi, 2002.

⁷⁸ F. Fistetti, “Migrazioni e paradigma del dono. Un’ipotesi di lavoro”, *Post-filosofie*, 9 (2017): 13-26.

penalised by the dynamics of the modern state, as it founds its sovereignty exclusively on the relationship between state and individual. These “intermediate bodies, situated between the individual and the State that, put under pressure the paradigm of sovereignty from the theoretical point of view of the politics, and from the practical-operative point of view of the policies”⁷⁹ are extremely important as they explore and experiment with dialectic and co-authorial forms of citizenship which propose at local level real processes of integration whereby the intercultural performative arts and practices fight against the identity closures in order to build common grounds⁸⁰. The intercultural approach of these practices is very important because inter-culturality without denying rights and duties, puts the accent more on a political approach based on interpersonal and direct contacts, which promote the communication and relations among all the citizens, both migrants and non migrants, building on common bonds more than on differences and valuing diversity as an asset. In this way the local intercultural policies forge the community cohesion and animate a public culture enriched by its own internal diversities⁸¹.

Even once these resources have been considered, it is still difficult to give an accurate evaluation of the weight of these performative arts and practices on local policies on migration, and to identify any measure of change of the living conditions of the participants and of their communities.

Moreover, it is, as yet, still impossible to assess if these counter-narrative processes, once set in motion, have created fractures able to re-configure the collective imagination on the theme of migrations, which remains, according Rancière’s reflection, certainly one of the political functions of the aesthetic activity⁸².

We are inclined to believe that this might be due to the weakness of our analysis and interpretation tools, still inadequate to catch and express the full social, aesthetical and political power of these practices, where artistic and social performativity overlap.

6. SPECTATORS THINKING, CREATING AND ACTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Despite the difficulty of evaluating the real impact of theatrical experiences, and of their possible social effects, and given the lack of methodological approaches and the absence of a critical tradition on this field, some recent studies introduce us to an investigation into the ways in which the theatre provokes actors and spectators to think, create and act social inclusion⁸³. We are now considering theatre as mutually autonomous from social theatre but in intense, fertile and effective relation to it. As proven by the essays of this collection, it is right to define clearly the boundaries and differences among theatrical practices, and, more in particular, it is still necessary to supply the “younger” social

⁷⁹ Marramao, *Dopo il Leviatano*, 11.

⁸⁰ C. Balma-Tivola, *Identità in scena. Etnografia del caso Alma Teatro 1993-2003*, Roma: Aracne, 2008, 241-255; L. Gobbi, F. Zanetti, eds., *Teatri re-esistenti. Confronti su teatro e cittadinanza*, Corazzano (Pisa): Titivillus, 2011, 9-38; M. Colombo, L. Cicognani, C. Corridori, G. Innocenti Malini, eds., *IncontrArti. Arti performative e intercultura*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2011.

⁸¹ Zapata Barrero, “Interculturalism in the Post-Multicultural Debate: A Defence”: 16-19.

⁸² Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*.

⁸³ These reflexions are taken in part from R. Carpani, *Italian Migration during XX Century. Italian Narrative Theatre as an Instrument for Shaping Consciences*, paper presented at the International Federation for Theatre Research World Congress (Belgrade, July 9-13, 2018), *Theatre and Migration. Theatre, Nation and Identity: Between Migration and Stasis*. For a synthetic introduction to the theme, see E. Cox, *Theatre & Migration*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

theatre of a sound historical-critical tradition, and of a serious theoretical reflexion⁸⁴; it is, however, even more crucial to study the ways in which the crossroads and contaminations between theatre and social theatre are determined. We will get back to this in the closing paragraphs of this introduction.

We want now to investigate if and how the artistic theatrical practice, which finds its expression of choice in theatres and festivals, can have some impact in the processes of social inclusion. In order to find this out, we have to recall one of the guiding lines of the theatre of the XX and of the beginning of the XXI centuries, which is the focus on the role and nature of the spectator. Starting from the historical avant-gardes, from Brecht's and Artaud's theories and practices at the beginning of the XX century, the reflexion on the spectator goes on until the recent theories on performative aesthetics, especially by Erika Fischer-Lichte, which underline, in the theatrical experience, the "reciprocal action between actors and spectators, united in an exchange of perceptions and meanings"⁸⁵, that is to say that they conceive the theatre as "a result of the interaction between actors and spectators" who are not only co-present at the meeting of their bodies but also constitute themselves radically as "co-subjects"⁸⁶. The growing awareness of the spectator as an active subject who participates fully to the performance, is a dimension that the theatre of the XX century has therefore put into the limelight and it is against this backdrop that we have to place our reflection on the social impact of the contemporary theatrical experience.

If we consider the theatre with an artistic vocation adopting as an evaluation tool its immediate impact, its ability to modify behaviours and choices, in one word its functionality in respect of social problems, it is clear that its intrinsic limitations must be taken into account. As Miguel Benasayag⁸⁷ very aptly remarked, the dilemma of contemporary men, faced with the domination of technology, is characterised by two extremes, to function or to exist. In the society of performance, at the time of measurable results, striving for success is imperative. The subject is called to a disciplined everyday life, all centred on the future, whose educational steps have a clear utilitarian vocation: any waste of energy, the risk of an exploration of unknown possibilities, the time simply spent and not oriented to the achievement of a result, are frowned upon and censored. Benasayag underlines a further aspect, that is the "removal of the negative": if, in modern societies, the negative aspects were integrated into processes of thoughts and actions, so that they could be eventually eliminated, in the current post-modern society there are varied and complex reactions to negativity, while the "Promethean" promise that "everything was oriented to the realisation of a final goal"⁸⁸ has proven empty. Now that all the utopias have shown their limits, the techno-scientific paradigm has become dominant and has opened the possibility that the future might be determined by the power of machines in

⁸⁴ For an outline of the origins and developments of social theatre see: C. Bernardi, *Il Teatro sociale. L'arte tra disagio e cura*, Roma: Carocci, 2004; for an up-to-date and in-depth history of social theatre see G. Innocenti Malini, *Il teatro della vita. L'esperienza di teatro sociale negli Alzheimer Cafè di Milano*, Doctoral thesis, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, academic year 2015- 2016. <http://hdl.handle.net/10280/18931>. Accessed April 12, 2019.

⁸⁵ T. Gusman, *Introduzione*, in E. Fischer-Lichte, *Estetica del performativo. Una teoria del teatro e dell'arte*, Roma: Carocci, 2014, 13. On performative theatre see also: A. Cascetta, "Introduzione", in "Il teatro verso la performance", edited by A. Cascetta, *Comunicazioni sociali*", 36, 1 (2014): 5-9; and Ead., *Introduction*, in *European Performative Theatre. The Issues, Problems and Techniques of Crucial Masterpieces*, London: Routledge, 2019, forthcoming.

⁸⁶ Fischer-Lichte, *Estetica del performativo*, 57.

⁸⁷ M. Benasayag, *Funzionare o esistere?*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2019.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

a sort of “post-organic society” where intelligent machines have the function to organise our society⁸⁹. If this is a plausible reading of our current situation, the question about the role of theatre cannot be discussed within the narrow confines of its tangible utility⁹⁰. It is worth recalling Jean Cocteau’s provocative and radical question about poetry: “poetry is indispensable – but I would like to know why”⁹¹. Considering that Artaud described the theatre as “poetry in space” and “poetry of the senses”⁹², the fundamental issues concern the possibilities and the ways in which the scene manages to affect the answers of ourselves, individually considered, of our communities, and, indirectly, of our political institutions, to the great contemporary problems.

The political dimension of the theatre, in its widest sense, is a structural, original fact: at the time of the birth of Western theatre in ancient Athens, the theatre was built on the tip of the Acropolis, bordering on the holy spaces, as the theatre was a form of care for the *polis* and for the community which inhabited it.

In which sense can this link between theatre and politics be still relevant today? And, more in detail, in which way can the theatre nowadays give a contribution to tackling the structural issue of migration and so deal with the endless reinvention of communities receiving wave after wave of pushes towards change, nagged by the pressures of globalisation, pulled in all directions by the economic tensions, reshaped in their relational and cognitive dynamics by the pervasive presence of digital tools?

Cometa, following recent studies of literary aesthetics and biopoetics, brought into the limelight the debate on the need for literature and its usefulness, and in a wider sense, for narration. Cometa believes narration to be a skill developed by *Homo sapiens* based on his innate faculties: narration is a universal phenomenon, with a biological function. Telling stories is a “function of the implementation of our survival skills”⁹³ and expresses itself verbally as well as in “figurative, musical and performative forms”, including basically all the arts, therefore the theatre. It is clear that, among all the human activities generated by the narrative power, theatrical practice has been a determining part of the history of human communities, from a quantitative and qualitative point of view: for centuries groups and communities found in the theatre and in feasts one of the most frequent, almost daily, opportunities for social interaction, artistic enjoyment, and practice of symbolic languages, at least until, with the end of the XIX century, new artistic means of entertainment became common. We can therefore consider the need for theatre, in this perspective, consistent with Menninghaus’ map of functions of the arts. Within these functions, among the most relevant for our purposes, are the function of “promoting social cooperation”; of the “empowerment of self perception” and of self-awareness in the interpretation of feelings; of testing “the ethics of evaluation and action”; of exploring possible worlds and of giving the opportunity of developing “alternative thoughts and actions”⁹⁴. If, therefore, according to this vision, entering into contact with performative arts encourages the spectators’ capacity to develop critical thinking, to take decisions, to undertake creative and innovative actions *vis-à-vis* the *status*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁹¹ M. Cometa, *Perché le storie ci aiutano a vivere. La letteratura necessaria*, Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2017, 35.

⁹² A. Artaud, *The Theater and its Double*, translated by M.C. Richards, New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958, 37-38.

⁹³ Cometa, *Perché le storie ci aiutano a vivere*, 37.

⁹⁴ W. Menninghaus, *A cosa serve l'arte? L'estetica dopo Darwin*, Verona: Fiorini, 2014, 255 (in Cometa, *Perché le storie ci aiutano a vivere*, 37-38).

quo, as was to be proved, these functions have a significant political dimension. The theatre, based on a symbolic language that manifests itself in the relationship between actor and spectator, takes shape as the artistic experience in which, with effectiveness and intensity, the sensory, emotional, sentimental, logical-rational processes generated in the spectator can promote actions and decisions in the political and social life of the individual and of the group.

Petrosino contributes to this perspective with some reflexions on the theme of experience⁹⁵. According to him, experience contains a passive as well as an active component: when a subject experiences something, is run over by a “*novum*” which propels him or her “out of what is already known and opens him or her to a new knowledge”: in his or her answer to this “*novum*” lies an active response. Experience constitutes a trial for the subject because it is an “unexpected” encounter, independent from his or her will. Thus, the experience of perceiving, watching, and participating at the theatre acquires a meaning that goes beyond the knowledge and interiority of the subject, but can be translated into action. This is similar to Jacques Rancière’s concept of the “emancipated spectator”⁹⁶, clearly derived from Brecht’s lesson. While in the word ‘theatre’, etymology refers to the sense of vision, in the word ‘drama’, it is the active content, concerning actors and spectators alike, that becomes apparent. A theatre spectator sets out on a journey of knowledge acquisition in which vision and hearing are not passive but active choices and stimuli for an independent elaboration of the information acquired. According to Rancière, “the spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. He observes, selects, compares, interprets. [...] He composes his own poem with the elements of the poem before him”⁹⁷. The spectator sees more than what is put before his or her eyes by the actors and directors on the scene, as the performance “is not the transmission of the artist’s knowledge or inspiration to the spectator”⁹⁸. The spectator therefore becomes “emancipated” insofar as he or she exercises his or her power of associating or dissociating contents and ideas, taking upon him/herself the responsibility for actions and decisions. Every spectator is the protagonist of the choices that allow him or her to “translate” what is seen into new competencies. Ultimately, the contemporary scene, mixing genres and languages, redefining hierarchies, interweaving different arts, is the place where those who watch are at the same time performers and spectators. As Colombo aptly points out, when talking about the photographic image, albeit in the different disciplinary perspective of his *Imago pietatis*⁹⁹, the practices of vision are already included in the image itself. With an approach similar to the one highlighted above with regard to the relationship between the spectator and the theatrical image, Linfield, cited by Colombo¹⁰⁰, states that two ethical perspectives meet in the photographic image: the ethics of showing, expressed by the photographer or journalist; and the ethics of seeing, which is the responsibility of the reader or spectator. The image is therefore at the centre of a dynamic exchange between two active poles.

Following this train of thought, it is easy to understand how the theatre with an artistic vocation has the potential to impact on social inclusion processes. Despite the lack of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of theatrical audiences, we can form the

⁹⁵ S. Petrosino, *Contro la cultura. La letteratura, per fortuna*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2017; the following citations are 46-47.

⁹⁶ Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁹ F. Colombo, *Imago pietatis. Indagine su fotografia e compassione*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

hypothesis that attendance of professional performances by those who take part in processes of social theatre might be higher than the opposite phenomenon. The spectators of mainstream theatres, of professional actors, of theatre festivals, of the countless productions of the international scene probably only rarely attend the networks and practices of social theatre.

This hypothesis raises the issue of the distinctive fruition of the different theatre propositions. In the case of social theatre, the theatrical action involves predominantly specific groups, open to building different forms of elaboration of shared experiences. The theatre with an artistic vocation, on the contrary, is addressed to wider audiences. Thanks to its tradition, it would have, however, the means to bring the issue of migrations more and more to the core of the live representation. In this manner, the theatre with an artistic vocation can ideally become, along with social theatre, a crucial space where prejudices can be broken down, fake and propagandistic information can be unveiled, a real historical awareness of current affairs as well as of the past can be established, and the rights of migrants and their legal identity can be reflected upon.

7. SOME TRANSVERSAL CONCLUSIONS

From the performances examined in the three sections of this issue, we can gather some transversal conclusions that allow us to appreciate the richness of experiences and the changes that are unfolding.

A first notable fact are the artistic experiences based on cooperation between Western and migrant actors, and the cross between performative traditions that have geo-cultural roots very far from one another but are akin for the scenic techniques they adopt. Examples of this are the storyteller from Senegal, the Griot, and the “fulèr” from Romagna in the work of the Teatro delle Albe. It is precisely the scenic languages, the work on the voice, on traditional songs and on the body that lend themselves, through their powerful communication, to welcome the asylum seekers and refugees in these creative programmes, with their rich and rigorous tradition. From this respect, the Popular Choir of the Open Program of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards shows, through its exemplary work over the last few years, the new perspective of radical openness to the encounter with subjects who are new to the theatrical vocation.

A second relevant experience is the one of groups of performers – such as the Exil Ensemble of the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin – formed by exiled professional artists who identify in the scenic art a passage to escape from the “rhetoric of refugees”. They want to express their artistic identity beyond their refugee or immigrant status, through creations that belong to the rich course of the “reality dramaturgy”¹⁰¹. In a similar way we can consider also a single performer such as Inua Ellams from Nigeria, who performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2017.

A third and last element to have emerged from the essays, is the choices that inform the programmes of the theatres in European cities with big migrant communities, where the new social groups are called upon to constitute a new public. This is the case in Lisbon, where the theatrical narratives of migration that are seemingly more established

¹⁰¹ See, among many others, *Get Real. Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, edited by A. Forsyth, C. Megson, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

reveal their intrinsic weakness. When the scene is dominated by the narration of a crisis, it is at risk of losing the opportunity to become the place where the individuality of the migrants is recognised with the specific subjectivity of each one.

At a time when, thanks to the endless and heavy flow of information, we are constantly in the condition of spectators¹⁰², even when not experiencing the theatre, at a time when digital technology is perceived as necessary and from being a means tends to become an end, building a “digital spell” around the subject¹⁰³, we have an increasing awareness of the pain experienced by others. In our daily lives, as noted by Bauman, and in artistic fruition, as we would like to add, to *see* is not automatically the same as to *know*; quite the opposite, the passive absorption of images can hinder understanding and the acquisition of knowledge. The solution, according to Bauman, is the “political” turn of human behaviour: we, the spectators must therefore become actors, and reaffirm the importance of the political debate and of its “power of inspiring a collective action”¹⁰⁴.

The scenario emerging from this collection of essays, while not exhaustive, is a provisional and open reply of the performative arts to the urgent social changes and political tensions. Its unifying trait lies perhaps specifically in the variety of ways experimented and in the exchanges between the theatre with artistic vocation and social theatre. On the one hand, the contemporary theatre, so performative and post-dramatic, looks up to social theatre and borrows its models, practices, working hypothesis, giving them a twist whose final results warrant a careful critical scrutiny and which requires an appropriate evaluation and historicisation.

For its part, social theatre, after having sought and found its own identity, seems ready for more intense dealings with its professional counterpart, and appears to have acquired a strong sense not only of its social standing but also of its artistic status.

The dialogue is open.

¹⁰² Z. Bauman, *Il secolo degli spettatori. Il dilemma globale della sofferenza umana*, Bologna: Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 2015, 9.

¹⁰³ S. Petrosino, “È tutta scena. Le molte verità dell’era digitale”, in C. Giaccardi, N. Jurgenson, eds., “The Remaking of Truth in the Digital Age”, *Comunicazioni sociali*, 3 (2017): 417.

¹⁰⁴ Bauman, *Il secolo degli spettatori*, 38.