

## Summaries in English of some articles

### *Mimesis and symmetry: the representation of the servant/master relationship in Italian twentieth-century prose narratives*

Emanuele Zinato

This essay offers a reading of the relationship master/servant based on René Girard's and Francesco Orlando's literary theories. It focuses on six Italian novels, authored by Capuana, Svevo, Pirandello, Calvino, Ottieri, and Volponi, and published throughout a century, which can all be referred to one European archetype: Tolstoy's short story *Master and Man* (1895). The relationships among the characters and the master/servant relationship are interpreted through the structure of desire; in this interpretation, literature acts as a symbolic form that, with its multiple meanings, allows for the expression of a social and economic repression. This approach seems to work both for the beginning as well as for the end of last century, when the 'natural' appearance of today's capitalism, voided of any thinkable alternative, erased class identities, whether of masters or of servants.

KEYWORDS: *René Girard, Francesco Orlando, Literary Theory, Thematic Criticism, Psychoanalytic Criticism.*

### *The figure of the entrepreneur in the years of the large Italian industry*

Giuseppe Lupo

This essay surveys the figures of businessmen in some literary works of the twentieth century, from Giovanni Verga's Gesualdo Motta to awkward characters of the industrial novel in its great times, between the end of WWI and the oil crisis of the 1970s.

KEYWORDS: *Industrial Novel, Adriano Olivetti, Ottiero Ottieri, Goffredo Parise, Giancarlo Buzzzi, Giorgio Soavi, Giuseppe Berto.*

### *The Old and the Young masters*

Agnès Morini

This essay focuses on Pirandello's *I vecchi e i giovani*, showing how much the master/servant relationships in the novel (though this latter is set in the context of the social and political crisis of the years 1893-1894) as well as the theme of disenchantment, resonate with today's highly topical issues. In the novel, the traditional class division, for which peasants and workers are opposed to industrial bourgeoisie and noble ranks, is swept away by a different arrangement of masters and servants: new masters are those who, regardless of their origins, handle money and manipulate people's lives and votes, whereas new servants are those who are subjects to them, whether out of necessity or personal conviction – including intellectuals. In fact, those who engage with socialism because they believe it truly represents the new social avant-garde, are as much deceived as the supporters of the old and outdated conservatism: in the end, both masters and servants are deluded and, paradoxically, united by their pessimism about history, because everyone loses his game in the political arena.

KEYWORDS: *Pirandello, Disenchantment, Class Struggle, Young Masters and Servants, Old Masters and Servants, Historical Pessimism.*

*A grotesque trilogy with servants-masters.  
Power and creation in Paola Masino's 'the second sex'*

Beatrice Laghezza

This essay focuses on Paola Masino's representation of the master/servant relationship in her novel *Nascita e morte della massaia* (1941-1942, 1945) and in the short stories *Nozze di sangue* (1947) and *Ora intima* (1994). The Housewife, the servant Caterina and Suor Arcangela are interpreted along the lines of Simone de Beauvoir's reflections on mysticism and women's literary creations that were published in 1949 in the second volume of *The Second Sex*. Indeed, around the same years in which de Beauvoir was working on her book, or possibly even earlier, Masino, by way of her narrative writings, explored the mechanisms of women's artistic creation and addressed issues of power – power relationships in social classes and genders – and mysticism.

KEYWORDS: Paola Masino, Simone de Beauvoir, Servitude and Lordship, Gender Differences, Power, Art, Mysticism.

*Authority and power in Primo Levi*

Walter Geerts

Authority and power are essential topics in Primo Levi's thought. Having been exposed to the violent variant during his prison time in Auschwitz-Monowitz may well have inspired the writer-chemist. Our article elaborates on a few instances of authority in Levi's works. It also suggests a relatively new interpretation of one of *If This is a Man's* central chapters, Levi's reading of Dante's *Inferno*, *Canto xxvi*, dedicated to Ulysses. Self-rule becomes the guiding principle of authority when the camp is liberated and Levi's long journey back to Turin sets off, the account of which can be found in *The Truce*. In the new world to be built, goodwill and genuine talent replace rigid hierarchies of power, the implications of which have proven so harmful. Levi's enduring sympathy for self-ruling, kibbutz-like, communities expresses itself in what is sometimes considered Levi's only real 'novel', *If not now, when?* Totalitarianism almost naturally develops into another focal point of the author's attention. *The Drowned and the Saved* establish a strong analogy between totalitarian authority and the concentration camp, the latter being the detailed foreboding of the former. A gallery of portraits – Golem, Rumkowski, Alfred L. – prefigure different aspects of totalitarian rule, among which, worryingly enough, 'normality'. When Ulysses' damned soul tells Dante about his last expedition along the coast of Africa, he ultimately attributes responsibility for its failure to "someone else's pleasure". Arbitrary authority – authoritarianism – is pinpointed by Levi-Ulysses, in his explanatory reading of the *Canto* to a fellow prisoner, as funded on the *Ancien Régime* royal privilege of 'pleasure'. The article concludes on some points of similarity between Levi's take on totalitarianism and H. Arendt's famous book on the topic.

KEYWORDS: Primo Levi, Dante, Ulisse, Authority, Power, Totalitarianism, Concentration Camp.

*A 'ministerial' worldview:  
the Facts of a retired captain's life in Augusto Frassinetti's The Ministry's Mysteries*

Diego Stefanelli

*Misteri dei ministeri* is Augusto Frassinetti's most important work and offers a very interesting literary representation of bureaucratic power, particularly in its effects on the employees and the citizens, on their minds and on their vision of the world (as already noticed by Italo Calvino). The paper investigates the complex system of masters and servants depicted by Frassinetti,



focusing on the case of Nicola Colasanti, a soldier at rest, who writes to the authorities, asking them for a recognition of the great merits that he is sure to have. The analysis of Colasanti's style reveals a vision of the world based on the idea of control and order, that he tries to apply in every aspect of his life. Although he believes to control everything, nevertheless he dominates nothing: neither his own body, nor his family, his language, his style. With this character, Frassinetti has created a convincing representation of the ideal subject, of the bureaucratic *Untertan*.

KEYWORDS: *Augusto Frassinetti, Misteri dei Ministeri, Bureaucratic Literature, Literary Representation of Power.*

*Oh, these ghosts! Giancarlo Buzzi's The Senator between Kafka and Pirandello*

Silvia Cavalli

Interpretations of literary works inspired by the world of industry are often shaped by categories of estrangement that were previously applied to Franz Kafka's and Luigi Pirandello's narratives, with the difference that characters who were intellectuals in Kafka's and Pirandello's stories now work in factories. Yet the same categories usually applied to intellectuals or employees can also be applied to employers. This is the case with Giancarlo Buzzi's *Senatore* (1958), where one finds an alienated employer as well as a late captain of industry, who, returning as a ghost, is unable to recognize himself in the factory he had founded. These alienated employers are like ghosts and become allegories of how the highest ranks of industry are empty in themselves and negatively affected by the politics of human relations. In the end, they are like Kafka's mister K. or Pirandello's characters in search of an author who might represent their tragedy.

KEYWORDS: *Giancarlo Buzzi, Industrial Novel, Kafkaesque and Pirandellesque Industry, Alienation.*

*Adriano Olivetti and Paolo Volponi: two heresies seeking unity*

Mauro Candiloro

Paolo Volponi first met Adriano Olivetti in 1950 and saw him for the following ten years, until the latter died in 1960. This encounter marked a turning point in Volponi's life and career. He became a "servomechanism" of Olivetti's dream about a democratisation of the industrial world, and from then on he applied Olivetti's *modus operandi*, based on both analysis and synthesis, to his literary work. Yet in the later works, Volponi became more and more critical of the capitalist (dis)order and of employers, as can be seen in his second to last novel *Le mosche del capitale*, in which the author looks back to his own trajectory and tries, nevertheless, to keep alive the light of Olivetti's heretical thought.

KEYWORDS: *Adriano Olivetti, Olivetti (industry), Decentralized Industrial Democracy, Corporate Planning, FIAT.*

*A ghostly reality: Goffredo Parise's The Boss (1965)*

Stefano Lazzarin

In the twentieth century, literary representations of work in capitalist societies show uncanny time and space coordinates. As a consequence, the traditional places of the literary uncanny, such as Gothic castles or haunted houses, are replaced by big factories and industrial plants as well as by disquieting administrative and directorial offices inhabited by employees and business executives. This essay focuses on Goffredo Parise as one of the most important au-

thors in this respect, and in particular deals with his novel *Il padrone* (1965), where the entire world of the characters is ghostly, in line with Jacques Derrida's later idea of a ghostly dimension of reality.

KEYWORDS: *Goffredo Parise, The Uncanny, Industrial Novel, Anthropological Mutation, Jacques Derrida's "Spectrality"*.

*From the workers' defeat to the immateriality of command:  
the dialectic between servant and master in prose narratives of the years 2000s*

Morena Marsilio

This essays analyses recent literary prose writings in Italy, in which the master/servant relationship is not external, but internalized, and the identity and consciousness of workers without a stable job are themselves unstable. In the first years of the new millennium, the so-called 'return to reality' in Italian literature has implied the return to themes related to work (see the critical essays by Panella, Jansen, Chirumbolo); more specifically, the five authors analysed here (Ermanno Rea, Sebastiano Nata, Massimo Lolli, Giorgio Falco, Andrea Bajani) deal with the "metamorphosis" (André Gorz) from Fordism to post-Fordism, the defeat of industry and workers, and the "disembodied shift" that saw the emergence of middle-ranking managers symbolically linked to the capital (Lordon).

In these writings, the opposition master/servant collapses and leaders who internalize leadership emerge, as is the case with 'hatchet men'.

KEYWORDS: *Post-industrial Novel, Italian Prose Writings of the 2000s, Contemporary Italian Literature, Literature and Work.*