Literature as Document

Generic Boundaries in 1930s Western Literature

Edited By

Carmen Van den Bergh
Sarah Bonciarelli
Anne Reverseau

BRILL

RODOPI

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

The "Essence of Things" and Their Decomposition: the Use of Montage in Dino Terra's *Metamorfosi*

Achille Castaldo

1   Introduction: on a Ghost Train

> What would have been Expressionist in 1918, boards in the post-war period a ghost train which travels around coolly, dreamily and gruesomely in the ruins, intersections and hollow spaces.[1]

With this image, Ernst Bloch takes his readers on a tour of the wasted landscape of post-war Europe, providing a vision of the *ruins* where the heritage of the present is to be sought. Bloch's reflection focuses on the impossibility of attempting to deal with the reality of his time as a coherent whole. In this context, montage becomes a main concept: whereas "Objectivity"[2] can only reproduce "rigid façades", and thus merely shine a light on the surface, montage is the only tool able to expose "the collapse of bourgeois culture" fully.[3]

Walter Benjamin describes the work of the allegorist as a delving into the fragments of a collapsed totality. If one tries to read the cultural collapse Bloch describes, through the lens of Benjamin, one might discover that the unfolding of this collapse is rooted in the "eternal return" of the process of collapsing itself – a process from which it is impossible to expect the end of it all. Modernity, as it is envisioned in one of Benjamin's essays on Baudelaire,[4] is a specific mode of permanence of the archaic, the very same mode that is inherent to the commodity form: what is *new* already brings the marks of the *withered.* Its essence is not "novelty", but the fact that such novelty first blooms to presence as a form of the *past.* Only in the restless, perpetual renewal of cultural and technological forms (and of commodities) can the social structure of capitalism

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1 Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (1935), Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, 221.
2 The term here clearly refers to *Neue Sachlichkeit.*
3 *Ibid.*, 197.
4 Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire", in *Charles Baudelaire. A Lyric poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, Harry Zohn, ed., London – New York, Verso, 1983, 9–101.

guarantee its own permanence. Weighted by this *original* contradiction, the work of the allegorist shares the same engagement of the avant-gardist (philosopher *and* artist) trying to understand the present time, an agonizing age somehow showing, in the words of Bloch, a "great richness". However, an agony with no outcome is no true agony. No permanent agony is conceivable, which is why the idea of *decadence* – in the nineteenth century and again in the Thirties of the twentieth century – must always be read as a consolatory fairy tale.

Nevertheless, the fairy tale materializes in a collection of objects that seems to come from a past civilization; it confronts the allegorist, though he cannot properly understand it anymore. It is no wonder, then, that montage emerges as the main device used by avant-garde artists to produce a new aesthetic supposedly able to give "present time" a body in art and thought. Yet this "presence" of time has, since the beginning, been a heritage, an already-passed-away present, a contradictory model that comes to us in an allegorical montage. It is in the very moment in which the "living syntagms" of mere existence are cut up in montage that, as Pasolini once said about the making of a movie, "present becomes past".[5] Indeed, this "presence of the past" (modernity) shows that the past that presents itself in the present is conceivable just in *this* presence. In other words, there is no heritage: bourgeois culture is its own collapse. This is why crises are not interruptions in the usual flow of capitalism but its normal way of functioning.

And yet, the *past* thus reconstructed in an artificial and uncanny order – by means of allegory – can impact the *present* in a new way. This new construction allows for an inexhaustible tension that cannot be assimilated into the fictitious frame by which the leading social forces still pursue the idea of organic unity (which in the Thirties also meant the totalitarian state), and by which they try to instil the illusion that their supremacy has no alternative. Therefore, one should not ignore the gratuitous, propulsive *violence* inherent in such a "reconstruction". Only a sort of exorcism can relegate to the past *as past*, the ghost that is haunting the present moment – and this seems to be the progressive, militant force Bloch and Benjamin see in it.

Yet the mutual relation between *inorganic montage* and *organic unity* is strongly ambivalent. The former is supposed to have the strength to disrupt the latter, but in the end the organic illusion depends on the very fragmentation of what will become, in Guy Debord's words, "spectacle" at its fullest: the medial hypertrophy of images and sounds. The endless collage is, after all, not only

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5   Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Osservazioni su Piano Sequenza", in *Empirismo Eretico* (1972), Milano, Garzanti, 2012, 240.

a form of avant-garde political art but also the normal functioning of "social communication" in the twentieth century. Indeed, a similar mode of communication will determine the unfolding of the Society of Spectacle through the second half of the century, profiting from the element of intoxication[6] that Bloch considered the "dark side" of every montage practice. An analysis of the coexistence of assembled fragments and narrative unity becomes central to understanding not only the literary production of the decade before World War II, but also the evolution of mass culture in later decades. This essay, therefore, will reflect upon the insertion of fragments of newspaper articles inside a novel, *Metamorfosi*,[7] published in 1933 by Dino Terra. The presence of "real world" documents within a fictional work (which itself is largely based on the montage of narrative sequences) was one of the main literary avant-garde devices used in that time to grapple with what was perceived to be a historical reality on the brink of dissolving. As we will see, and as Bloch had anticipated, such practice bears the traces of both an illusion of authentic engagement with reality and of a deeper understanding of the chaotic and irrational element from which fascism was able to profit. *Metamorfosi* proves to be, in this perspective, particularly meaningful: indeed, it is the result of a long development of literary experimentation by an author who, by the second half of the twenties, had carefully reflected on the work of some of the main European modernist writers, especially André Gide, Aldous Huxley, and Alfred Döblin.

2   Unsolvable Elements

Dino Terra, whose real name was Armando Simonetti, was born in Rome in 1903. At the end of the Twenties he took part in a leftist avant-garde movement called Imaginism (*Immaginismo*),[8] which identified montage as the backbone of its artistic conception, inspired by a syncretic approach to expressionism, surrealism, and constructivism. Before writing *Metamorfosi*, Terra published several literary works in which he attempted to apply avant-garde tools (the first being, obviously, montage), primarily inspired by Gide's novels. He was

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6 Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, 197.
7 Dino Terra, *Metamorfosi*, Milano, Ceschina, 1933.
8 The first (and only) issue of the movement's official journal, *La Ruota Dentata* was published in February 1927. For financial reasons, a second issue was never published. For a critical history of this ephemeral avant-garde (which was related neither to Pound's *imagism* nor to the eponymous Russian movement) see Umberto Carpi, *Bolscevico Immaginista*, Napoli, Liguori, 1981.

particularly influenced by *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (1925)*,* whose narrative point of view he tried to replicate in his novel *Ioni* (1929), by the expedient of a demon narrator, with a point of view alternating between the inside and the outside of the main character.[9]

Despite his experimental commitment and his former political engagement (that we will see in a moment), in his works of the late Twenties, Terra uses a retrograde approach, clearly inspired by a latent aestheticism, to confront what he sees as a form of oppressive inauthenticity inherent in mass society. What he sees as a sort of abstract *ill of living* seems to be generated by an obscurantist morality, and sexual liberation appears to be the only path to freedom. His stories – always set in upper-class environments, completely separate from any material dimension of life – end up being trivial conflicts between vitalistic impulses and ethical duties.

Indeed, Terra makes a conscious move to ignore the socio-political context, which is a highly relevant point when confronted with the importance of his former political commitment. In the early Twenties, he was affiliated with the leftist association *Clarté*, led by André Barbousse (with whom he had a direct epistolary exchange in 1921–1922),[10] and by the mid-Twenties he had contact with Antonio Gramsci and the PCd'I.[11] His decision to quit politics and give himself completely to literature was probably due to the necessity of escaping the increasing repression led by the fascist regime since 1926. This situation clarifies how engagement in avant-garde art was, in this context, a sort of compensation for the impossibility of carrying on political activities for leftist intellectuals under the regime. In fact, such was the case also for Umberto Barbaro and Vinicio Paladini, co-founders of Imaginism and leading figures of the Roman underground scene of the Twenties. For these intellectuals, art was a way to preserve "political energy" that could not find other means of expression. At the same time, however, art became a *false consciousness*, a self-absolution for failing to meet the challenge of politics, as it had become increasingly dangerous. Indeed, this avant-garde experience proved to be a way to keep radical forces disciplined, rather than a strategy to lead them toward significant ends.

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9   In this regard, see Paolo Buchignani, "Dino Terra scrittore "Immaginista" tra le avanguardie nella Roma del Ventennio", *Lingua e letteratura*, 26, (primavera 1996), 44–45.

10   Umberto Carpi, *Bolscevico Immaginista*, 66–72.

11   According to Paolo Buchignani – who cites an autobiographical work of the author (partly unpublished) – Terra, who had known Bombacci since 1921–22, met Gramsci two times in 1926. See Paolo Buchignani, "La rivoluzione di Simonetti-Terra: dal giacobinismo all' "Immaginismo", in *La figura e le opere di Dino Terra nel panorama letterario ed artistico del'900*, ed. Daniela Marcheschi., Venezia, Marsilio, 2009, 112–129.

Not by chance, Imaginism was dead and forgotten after a few years, as the impossibility of changing the culture of totalitarian mass society by means of art – without a real undertaking of political risk – became evident.[12]

It is only in the novel *Metamorfosi*, in 1933, that Terra seems to find the necessary maturity to face the issues always inherent in his literary production. His main reference is again Gide, together with the Aldous Huxley of *Point Counter Point*, who had also tried to follow the path opened by *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and its meta-commentary *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs*. In *Metamorfosi,* the mobile point of view of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is avoided, and the narrator's voice is closer to that used by Huxley. However, the two main motives of the story stem from Gide's novel. The first one is a "spiritual filiation" foreign to the principle of authority inherent in the father-son relationship (Édouard and Olivier) – what Gilles Deleuze would have called an "unnatural alliance".[13] The second one is the violence underlying all human relationships, perceived as a direct expression of the chaos of nature. It is actually through the mutual opposition of these two ideas that the formal structures of the novel are generated.

It is significant that Terra's novel begins with a description of the creatures dwelling in the sea abyss, which, as noted by François Bouchard, directly refers to the tale told by Vincent to Robert and Lilian in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.[14] However, Terra does not focus on the ghostly light emitted by the creatures, stressing instead the violence that animates forms of life even in the remotest areas of the world.[15] This focus recalls the sort of primordial violence that comes to light in Gide's novel in the rawest way, through the account of the shipwreck given by Lilian. As a young girl, she experienced the terrible condition of being on a lifeboat with the favoured few, while sailors used their knives to cut the fingers off the wretched people, abandoned in the water and trying to board the boat to escape death. In *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, furthermore, the idea of a human relationship alien to the principle of authority allows for a narration in which the author himself renounces his own dictatorial dominion, letting the

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12   Cf. what Charles Baudelaire wrote about this risk: "Les litterateurs d'avantgarde. Ces habitudes de métaphores militaires dénotent des esprits non pas militants, mais faits pour la discipline, c'est-à-dire pour la conformité, des esprits nés domestiques". Cited in Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, eds Giorgio Agamben, Barbara Chitussi, Clemens-Carl Härle, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2012, 580.

13   Cf. Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby: or, the Formula", in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, eds Daniel W. Smith, Michael A. Greco, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 78.

14   Cf. François Bouchard, "L'acqua oscura delle grotte": il realismo sperimentale di Dino Terra", in *La figura e le opera di Dino Terra*, 43–46.

15   *Ibid.*

characters live their own existence in a narrative universe free from any central authority. Huxley follows the same route in building his "novel of ideas", whose primary source was, as Gide points out, the narrative of Dostoevsky. In the same way, Terra weaves his novel by threading together several independent narrative lines, in which the characters are not dominated by an overwhelming auctorial will, which would inevitably wither their vitality.

The story, finally free of the aestheticism of his former works, focuses on the relationship between Titus Sapiro, a cosmopolitan Jewish intellectual living in Switzerland, trapped in a dimension of paralyzing and mournful scepticism, and Mario, a young Italian communist on the run through Europe. The author lets the possibility of an elective brotherhood between them grow, an "alliance" (again, in the words of Deleuze) in which the teacher-pupil relation might be free from paternal authoritarianism, reaching a form of "love" that, unlike sentimental relationships previously described by Terra, does not end in fierce opposition, in self-destructing struggle or void banality.[16]

It is important to note that *Metamorfosi* is the first work of a trilogy, the final book having been published in 1946.[17] Throughout the three novels, the only narrative thread returning with regularity (aside from the principal thread of Sapiro), usually placed at the end of every chapter, is that of a shabby petty-bourgeois, Guido, an employee whose insipid days are narrated by short sketches. In the first novel (but not in the following two instalments), many of these sketches end with the insertion of newspaper articles, introduced by sentences such as "That evening, Guido read in the newspaper that…".[18] One deals here, clearly, with "petty-bourgeois printed matter, scandalmongering, stories

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16   The emergence of the homosexual motive, here for the first and last time in Terra, clearly attests to the strength of Gide's model.

17   The following installments were *Anima e corpo*, Bompiani, Milano, 1934, and *La pietra di David*, Milano, Garzanti, 1946.

18   An example among many others: "Quella sera Guido, mentre gustava le comodità del suo letto, lesse nel giornale: 'Poco dopo mezzanotte, il proprietario di un piccolo Hotel di Shanton, svegliato da grida di aiuto, accorse verso la camera di uno dei suoi inquilini, certo Alberto Wolf; giunto nel corridoio, il corpo di una donna tutta insanguinata gli sbarrò la via. La polizia, accorsa prontamente, provvide all'immediato trasporto della vittima, signora Cecile Colbert, madre di quattro figli, all'ospedale di San Germano. Nello stesso albergo abitava l'operaia Terbol, la quale era da un anno l'amante del Wolf. Anche la signora Colbert amava il Wolf e, gelosa della sua rivale, spesso rimproverava il Wolf della sua non curanza verso di lei. Questa notte, durante una delle solite scene di gelosia, sopraggiunse la Tarbol …. Poi, non contenta, afferrò il corpo tutto insanguinato e lo trascinò nel corridoio, accanendosi, ancora aspramente sulla disgraziata. Il Wolf ritenne di non intervenire. Lo stato della vittima è assai grave'". Dino Terra, *Metamorfosi*, 177–178.

of accidents",[19] as Walter Benjamin noted regarding the insertion of such materials in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, another point of reference for Terra and the intellectuals close to him in these years. The montage of documents – as if they were random snapshots of reality – refers to an impulse toward the image, toward the photographic insert, which constitutes a constant point of attraction for the artistic praxis of these years.

The present investigation cannot avoid reflecting on the modernist novel's renunciation of the idea of totality: a renunciation that speaks to the necessity of giving up complete dominion over the narrative matter. Documents inserted into narrative are nothing but remnants, scraps of a not-dominated reality appearing in its pure "photographic" nature. As a consequence, these remnants always produce an ambivalent knowledge. On the one hand, they are pointed toward the "real world" with all its fragmentary materials (thus aiming to unmask the conciliatory illusion of organicity). Yet on the other hand, they risk creating an illusion of "absolute reality": the "reality effect"[20] Roland Barthes talked about. Eliminating the *signified*, as Barthes noted, supposing a direct call to the referent, they produce a fetishization of the "real" as "full meaning" (the "intoxication" Bloch was referring to).

As György Lukács once stated, "the Expressionists thought they were conveying the 'essence of things', whereas in fact they revealed their decomposition".[21] In his polemic against Bloch he also stated that "when the surface of life is only experienced immediately, it remains opaque, fragmentary, chaotic and uncomprehended".[22] What Lukács is referring to here is in fact a dialectic between essence and appearance, a "higher intellectual vantage-point" from which to look at the world's surface. Having in mind authors like Thomas Mann and Romain Rolland, Lukács considers the task of "great art" to be the discovery of the totality of society (that is, of capitalism as a system) even in a moment of crisis when "the surface of capitalism appears to 'disintegrate' into a series of elements all driven towards independence". Indeed, he reminds us that "the categories of capitalism are always reflected in the mind of men, directly but back to front".[23] In other words, in moments of crisis, when it is

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19   Walter Benjamin, "The Crisis of the Novel", in *Selected Writings: 1927–1934*, II, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, 301.

20   Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect", in *The Rustle of Language*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1986, 141–148.

21   György Lukács, "Realism in the Balance", in *Aesthetics and Politics*, Fredric Jameson ed., London, Verso, 1980, 41.

22   *Ibid.*, 39.

23   *Ibid.*, 32.

particularly evident that the disparate elements of the capitalist system are bound together, humans have the perception of living in a chaotic and fragmented world. The "great realists" are therefore the only artists able to "pierce the surface to discover the underlying essence, i.e. the real factors that relate their experiences to the hidden social forces that produce them".[24]

However, in seeking to assert the unity of the social whole even under the appearance of contemporary disintegration, Lukács seems here to re-enact an old philosophical drama. He himself had constructed it in his early essay on the "romantic philosophy of life",[25] where, of course, the parts were inverted. In that essay, the original sin of the *Frühromantik* of Jena appeared to be the forced disappearance of the *nefas*, the erasure of the evil of the world, of the chaos of nature which confronts every human construction, and which showed its face in the hollow mechanization of the rising capitalist society. This same chaos now constitutes, for Lukács, only a deceptive appearance, one that conceals the substantial totality of the capitalist system.

What Lukács is fighting against, in his polemic against Bloch, is indeed an older insight of his: the *ratio* of capitalist society (totality, substance) does *not* oppose itself to the *unrationalizable* but is rooted in it. This insight of a primary fracture on the surface of reality is now seen as a refusal to historicize the nature of the present conditions of society. But the dialectic between these two positions cannot be easily solved: indeed, to embrace the thought of the totality is to repeat the gesture of the abolition of the *nefas*. Against this gesture, Bloch advocates a *materialist* eradication of any illusion to comprehend fully the complexity of the present historical moment as a whole. After all, if this polemic were traced to its ancient origin, its ambiguity could be unveiled: the *logos* is the labyrinth that keeps the beast (the minotaur) at a distance, but it also comprises the path leading back to it.[26] The will to power inherent in a claim of "full understanding" is the specular image of the unknowable element inside reality. This condition is a matter of not only philosophical comprehension but also political struggle, especially in the first half of the Thirties, as fascist forces were permeating European society. As Bloch argues, "The 'Irratio' must not be ridiculed wholesale here, but occupied: and from a position which has a rather more genuine awareness of 'Irratio' than the Nazis and their big business partners".[27]

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24   *Ibid.*, 36–37.
25   György Lukács, "On the Romantic Philosophy of Life: Novalis", in *Soul and Form* (1910), Cambridge, The Mit Press, 1971.
26   Cf. Giorgio Colli, *La nascita della filosofia*, Milano, Adelphi, 1975, 29.
27   Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of our Times*, 2.

The chaos, the "anarchy of light and dark",[28] is the original obsession of Lukács, returning here as the *enemy* in his polemic against Bloch, expressionism, and modernism in general. Here, we see this chaos expelled to the borders of "social totality", reduced to the delirium of minor artists: "Chaos constitutes the intellectual cornerstone of modernist art".[29]

3 Chaos (Undominated)

A question still remains to be posed: why, in the two novels following *Metamorfosi*, does Terra stop inserting newspaper articles? First of all, it is necessary to mention that the narrative structures are, in these later cases, notably simplified: apart from the short sketches of the life of the petty-bourgeois Guido, the use of montage has almost disappeared.

It is likely that Terra has tried to go in a direction that could be seen, *a posteriori*, as a banalization of Lukács' position, i.e. the production of an organic narrative in which the characters are mere exemplifications of social dynamics and historical interpretations (of the author). While Lukács conceived of the "typical" as a paradoxical knot of particular and universal (again following the romantic antinomies that had been his original obsession), the naïve mediation of universal and particular produces a compact narrative unable to account for either term. Therefore, renouncing those conditions that allowed *Metamorfosi* to depart strongly from his former, more conventional production, Terra sets his following novels up for failure. In the second book of the trilogy, *Anima e Corpo*, the audience is witness to a dull love affair between Titus Sapiro and a traditional *femme fatale*, based on the author's usual screenplay of instinct vs. ascesis, vitalism vs. boredom, and so on, in the social environment most familiar to him: the upper class *milieu*.[30] Particularly emblematic is the final sequence of the novel, as the *femme fatale* ends her adventures in a brutal scene of murder, one not so different from the *faits divers* ironically presented in the trilogy's first novel in the form of newspaper clippings.

Yet only in the third and final book of the trilogy, *La pietra di David*, does the process of repression reach its conclusion. It is now 1946, and Terra can focus again on history and politics, bringing back to the stage the character of

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28   György Lukács, *Soul and Form*, 152.
29   György Lukács, "Realism in the Balance", 44.
30   An evident reference here is *Those Barren Leaves* by Aldous Huxley, but Terra clearly misses the corrosive impulse of this work, resolving it in a conventional moralism flavoured with the usual aestheticism.

Mario and avoiding ideological ambiguities and compromises with the fascist regime, which had heavily emerged in the two previous novels. In this work, however, the two deep "streams" which gave *Metamorfosi* its vitality are lost: no trace remains of the delicate balance where the spiritual filiation was rooted, which was at the same time reflected in the relationship between the author and his subject matter. Even the primordial violence, an obscure presence boiling under the surface of things, is absorbed in a conventional ethical *Weltanschauung*, where evil can be fought and overcome by commitment and faith in the final triumph of good.

Every trace of experimentalism fades away, the narration is compact, and the characters are flat and conventional. They are now just "moments" completely resolved in the deceptive totality where good has secretly triumphed since the beginning, and everyone will be consoled in the end. However, the vacuity of this approach remains somehow inscribed in the narrative structure, not only in the formal aspect (montage almost disappears), but also at the level of content. While Guido existed separately from the other narrative threads throughout the trilogy, his destiny ends up impacting the main story in the conclusion of the last novel. At the top of his career as an official in the Special Court in Rome, it is he who will oversee the death sentence of Mario, who returned to Rome in a failed attempt on Mussolini's life. It is exactly the narrow space of Guido – where, in the first novel, the stolid and chaotic surface of reality were observed by way of inserted documents (the newspaper articles) – that will swallow the totality of narration in the end. In this final fading comes to light the irreducible consistency of that *nefas*, which had been too easily erased, according to the young Lukács, by the "romantic philosophy of life".

After the execution of Mario in the last pages of the novel, some characters meet in Lausanne at Titus' house, while in the rest of Europe the Second World War is breaking out. As the world starts to burn, the author shows us an image of tranquillity: a placid evening on a terrace in which some people of "good will" decide to act, each according to her/his own ability (something rather inconsistent indeed), for the victory of the "good". Yet while the author seems to gratify himself at having overcome his former contradictions with such a display of harmony, we cannot avoid seeing in it, under the surface, the chaos (undominated) of the massacre to come. The final image is indeed an unresolved contraposition of harmony and massacre,[31] where the chaotic

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31   "E Titus riprese a parlare, ma la voce era trasformata, più vibrante: impastata da un'emozione più contenuta: 'No, per la guerra non è un ragionamento necessario, ma per Melita sì, per Melita mi sembrava opportuno, per offrirle la più sicura consolazione nella morte dei nostri cari, perché si rendesse conto che la guerra e il dolore stanno nell'ordine delle

element (which at the formal level had been previously embodied in the montage structure and the insertion of journal articles) has been surreptitiously eliminated, rather than exhibited in full light. The "harmony" pervading the end of the novel is therefore of the same nature as the formal coherence and unity of the narrative structure in its refusal to confront the chaos of reality. A narrative easily succeeding to overcome chaos must always be suspected of being a substitution for politics.

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cose, come le malattie, perché potesse avere una ragione sufficiente a interpretare l'ordine di questa vita. Oggi i polacchi cadono falciati sotto l'invasione tedesca, fra poco, forse in questa notte stessa. La guerra divamperà per tutta l'europa. .... E forse anche noi, raccolti ora in questa sacra pace, anche noi tre saremo condannati a perire sotto la sua turpe dannazione: Tanto più è possibile alla forza del male. Ma con tutta la sua forza, con tutta la sua ricchezza di vittorie e di potenza, non potrà mai vincere definitivamente, giammai, appunto per la sua natura capace solo di funzionare negativamente rispetto a ciò che è bene. E l'uomo per quanto vilipeso e sofferente, non perirà mai, mai, come non potrà mai perire ciò che di meglio è nell'uomo: bellezza, coscienza, coraggio, amore, e senso della libertà. "…. Melita stava ora appoggiata al balcone con la schiena e i gomiti, tesa a intendere bene le parole di Titus. Nel favore dell'estate il mistero notturno stemperava la realtà dando corso alle fantasie degli incantesimi. Sulla terrazza, pervasa dal buon odore della campagna ricolma di frutti, essi non eran che tre ombre dense nel gioco delle ombre infinite". Dino Terra, *La pietra di David*, 318–320.

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