

Memory of the future **A semi-serious exploration of science fiction's nightmares**

Memoria del futuro

Un'esplorazione tra il serio e il faceto degli incubi della fantascienza

Salvo Pitruzzella

Because there was something so powerful in those covers: horror mingling with enchantment, often conjuring up a hearth-rending ambiguity. O loathed, o much-loved monsters, how dear you were to me! And you, freaky perplexed tiny creatures, slimy lemurs, mellow ectoplasms, disintegrated beings, vampiresque lumps of energy, and you crystals, and you jellies, and you mantis philosophers, and you peduncled pods, how plausible were you, how perfect! How well you knew how to be melancholic!

(Michele Mari)

Since modern science replaced the certainties of ancient theology with systematic doubt, human imagination has been pushed to venture through the gates of an unknown universe. More recently, science fiction has channeled our longing for infinity into a flowering of possible worlds, which can be in turn dramatic, grotesque, dystopic, prophetic, disturbing or consolatory. Many of us have experienced, while letting ourselves be captured by SF novels, a thrill of wonder and displacement, the comfortable discomfort of dwelling for a while in some of these weird worlds.

In retrospect, the early SF literature may look outdated and naïve. We live in times when it seems that some of its worst prophecies have been led to the extreme. Trying to forge the *Homo Deus*, the human hubris has made our whole balance brittle and constantly on the verge of collapse, while the foulest monsters we face do not come anymore from outer space, but rather from the good ol' *Homo homini lupus*.

However, we still have the power to play it out. In this workshop, I will invite you to play with some images from old SF books. We will unleash our imagination, giving ourselves permission to plunge into future nightmarish scenarios, engaging with space monsters and dreadful planets – or maybe with pandemics and global warming – well protected by our playfulness and irony.

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Perché c'era questo di intenso nelle copertine di Urania, che l'orrore vi si alternava all'incanto, e spesso vi si combinava in un'ambiguità che mi struggeva. Odiati mostri, mostri adorati, quanto mi siete stati vicini! E voi, bizzarre creaturine perplesse, lemùridi lisci, suadenti ectoplasmi, esseri disgregati, vambireschi grumi di energia, e voi cristalli, e voi gelatine, e voi filosofe mantidi, e voi peduncolati baccelli, quanto eravate plausibili, quanto eravate perfetti! Quanto sapevate essere malinconici!

(Michele Mari)

Da quando la scienza moderna ha rimpiazzato le certezze dell'antica teologia con il dubbio sistematico, l'immaginazione umana è stata spinta ad avventurarsi le soglie di un universo sconosciuto. La fantascienza ha incanalato questa voglia di infinito in una fioritura di mondi possibili, di volta in volta drammatica, grottesca, distopica, profetica, perturbante o consolatoria. Molti di noi hanno provato nel lasciarsi catturare, dalla lettura della fantascienza, il brivido dello spiazzamento e della meraviglia, quella piacevole inquietudine del dimorare temporaneamente in uno di questi mondi.

Col senno di poi, la fantascienza delle origini sembra ingenua e superata. Le sue peggiori profezie sono state superate nel tempo in cui viviamo. Cercando di forgiare l'*Homo Deus*, la

hubris umana minaccia l'equilibrio del mondo, mentre i mostri più spaventosi non sono quelli dello spazio profondo, ma quelli generati dal buon vecchio *Homo homini lupus*. Questo workshop è un invito a giocare con le immagini dei vecchi libri di fantascienza. Libereremo la nostra immaginazione, concedendoci il permesso di tuffarci in scenari da incubo, affrontando mostri spaziali e pianeti fatali – o, se vogliamo, pandemie e catastrofi climatiche – protetti dalla cornice del gioco e dell'ironia.

Biography

Salvo Pitruzzella is a pioneer of dramatherapy in Italy. Starting from a background as an actor, playwright and puppeteer, he has been working as a dramatherapist for over twenty-five years in different fields, mainly mental health, education and long-life learning, and social care.

Dramatherapy course leader at the "Centro ArtiTerapie", Lecco, Italy. Professor of Arts Education at the Fine Arts Academy of Palermo, Italy. International Member of the BADTh (British Association of Dramatherapists), and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Dramatherapy Journal*. Honorary Member of the SPID (Società Professionale Italiana di Drammaterapia). Member of Executive Board of the EFD (European Federation of Dramatherapy). Italian Representative at ECArTE (European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education). External examiner of the MA Drama and Movement Therapy at the Royal School of Speech and Drama, London, UK.

He has widely published on dramatherapy, educational theatre, and creativity theories.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Publications:

Pitruzzella, S. (forthcoming). The Dramatic Self Hypothesis. Human nature from a dramatherapist's perspective. In: Lòpez Cao M., Hougham R., Scoble S. *Imagining Windmills: trust, truth and the unknown in the arts therapies*, Plymouth University Press, Plymouth.

Pitruzzella, S. (forthcoming). Drama, youth, and change. The Dramatic Self Hypothesis as a tool to understand personality disorders in adolescence. In: Hermann U., Hills de Zarate M.,

Pitruzzella S. (eds.) *The Arts Therapies and the mental health in children and young people*, Routledge, London & New York

Pitruzzella, S. (forthcoming). Creativity and power in Sicilian spirit: the stories of Giufà, the wise and the fool. In: Jennings S., Holmwood C., Jacksties S. (eds.) *International Handbook of Storytelling and Therapeutic Texts*. Routledge, London & New York.

Pitruzzella, S. (Forthcoming) Brecht in Sicily: crossing borders. A dialogue between theatre and dramatherapy. In: Abraham N. & Prenkti, T. *The Applied Theatre Reader. Second Edition*, Routledge, London & New York.

Presentations:

Milano, Italy, September 20-21, Università Cattolica, International Conference 'Per-formare il sociale', *Processi di creatività nella drammaterapia*, (paper)

2019: Dramatherapy masterclass, with Susana Pendzik: *The art and madness of living in dramatic reality: Don Quijote as a source of reflection in dramatherapy*.

Long paper: *The Dramatic Self Hypothesis. A paradigm of human identity according to dramatherapy*. 15th European Arts Therapies Conference 'Imagining Windmills'. Alcalà de Henares, Spain, September.

2019: Keynote opening event, with Bruce Howard Bayley, Mary Smail and others: Trauma and resilience: *Planting the alder*.

Paper: Trauma and complexity: The Dramatic Self Hypothesis. Annual Conference of the British Association of Dramatherapists. Chester, UK, September.