

Colloquium

COMPOSITE IDENTITIES

Percorsi tra cinema, teatro, letteratura,
musica, scienze sociali e politiche

A cura di Anna Maria Chierici e Fulvio Orsitto

ISSN 2281-9290
ISBN 978-88-5513-120-9

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LED Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto

Via Cervignano 4 - 20137 Milano
Catalogo: www.lededizioni.com

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In copertina:

Marsha Steinberg, *Open Space* (olio su tela, cm 225 × 170), 1975.

Videoimpaginazione: Paola Mignanego

Stampa: Litogi

Desideriamo ringraziare tutti i partecipanti alla conferenza internazionale *Composite Identities* da noi organizzata nel 2020, ed esprimere la nostra gratitudine nei confronti di Vanessa Meyers e dell'Office of Global Services della Georgetown University per aver sostenuto quel progetto e la realizzazione di questa pubblicazione. Un ringraziamento speciale va inoltre alla pittrice Marsha Steinberg per averci concesso l'uso del suo dipinto *Open Space* per la copertina del presente volume.

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Challenging Identities: Teatro delle Albe's Civic Engagement

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7359/1209-2023-chia>

In his book *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982) Victor Turner highlights the double meaning of the English word 'acting': «It may be the essence of sincerity [...] or it may be the essence of pretence – when one 'plays a part' in order to conceal or dissimulate. The former is the ideal of Jerzy Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre'; the latter happens every day 'at work'» (Turner 1982, p. 102). According to Eugenio Barba (2002), the Polish theatrical director Grotowski (1933-1999) conceived theatre «as a place of provocation [that] allows us to transcend our stereotyped vision [and], in a state of complete defencelessness unveil, give, discover ourselves» (Barba 2002, p. 257)¹. This perspective is well exemplified by Teatro delle Albe, one of the most interesting research theatre companies in Europe, that was founded in Ravenna in 1983 by the playwright and artistic director Marco Martinelli along with the actors Ermanna Montanari, Luigi Dadina and Marcella Nonni. In the Albe's scripts, performance texts and consistent critical speculation emerge a civic engagement and a deep universalistic standpoint based on the idea that different cultures share a common ground that could be activated and valued through theatre practice. Their work could be ascribed to the the most recent theatrical experimentation that has strived to reactivate the dialectics between individuals and communities by underlying the potentiality of the subject to fully develop their personalities, underscore their difference, and build an identity.

By calling attention to the intersection of performativity, ideology and ethnicity found in staged plays by Teatro delle Albe, in this essay I will explore significant aspects of their production that have been defined as 'the theatre of difference', 'the theatre of the body', or 'popular exploratory theatre'. However, the most recurrent definition is that of «'polititttttical theatre' with seven t's»

¹ Eugenio Barba (1936) is a theatre critic and founder of Odin Theater based in Holstebro, Denmark, and inspired by his experiences as an assistant of Grotowski in Poland.

(Gonzalez 2010, pp. XVII-XIX). To this end, I deem it appropriate to consider two principles of theory. The first comes from Foucault's concept of «technologies of the self», regularized forms of behaviour that usually serve to control the body and the mind but, in some cases, can also enable the individual to engage in positive transformations that can serve as ways of counteracting the coercive ideology of power. The French philosopher refers to this attitude in connection with «a set of practices in the late antiquity», in particular in Greek cities where social and individual life were regulated by the «precept 'to be concerned with oneself' [that does not allude to] 'take care of oneself' but [to] the Delphic principle *gnothi sauton* ('Know yourself')» (Foucault 1988, p. 19). The second regards a limited ability to imagine the nation that, as the Irish political scientist Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) argues in his seminal book *Imagined Communities* (1983), has originated nationalism on the basis of the erroneous assumption of belonging to a community that presupposes equality and horizontal fraternity (Anderson [1983], in Hutchinson, Smith 1994, p. 50)².

From the very beginning of their activity, the Albe took a distance from «that dark political theatre» of the seventies, which boasted that it could give «easy answers to the horrors of the *polis*» and demanded approval from the audience (Montanari 1998, p. 19). The company members also disliked the intellectual climate characterizing the subsequent decade: «In Italy the eighties were years of collective amnesia, of shelter in stupidity and bank accounts» (Montanari 1998, p. 19). It was precisely this reluctant frame of mind that originated the *polititttttical* thought: «To bear the horror, [...], even if one risks madness; to look at the *polis*, which can no longer be just the village where we live, but is the *polis*-planet, that television takes in our homes every day, where everything is linked» (Montanari 1998, p. 19). We can better understand the implications for the Albe's approach when we consider it in light of Alessandro Carrera's reflections upon the concept of identity: «Se l'ente identico a se stesso pone la propria identità come problema, non può non entrare in conflitto (in differenza) con se stesso, rendendosi in tal modo aperto alla compresenza di identità (o meglio di 'stessità')» (Carrera 2022, p. 29).

The Albe's first conceived *Politttttttical Theatre* when, in July 1987, Martinelli and Montanari, an artistic and married couple, participated in the convention *Theatre and Politics* organized by the theatre critic and essayist Giuseppe Bartolucci (1923-1996) in Narni (Montanari 1998, p. 18). In their definition of 'political', they pointed out that the use of multiple t's was inspired by the Italian word «politico» and its etymology: «'Of several foldings'. [...] imagine if it had seven ts! Even more exalted are the numberless

² Anderson's perspective is related to the 'instrumentalist' approach to nationalism adopted by the British historian Eric Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) to highlight the constructed nature of the modern nation «associated with appropriate and, in general, fairly recent symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as 'national history')» (Hobsbawm [1983], Hutchinson, Smith 1994, p. 76).

foldings of reality. Fervid people are not in need of ideologies, but of strong, complex political thought» (Montanari 1998, p. 18).

According to Martinelli, the Albe are always experimenting with new avenues, careful each time to create a vital rite that the public can take part in³. With closer scrutiny, these ideas are resonant with those included in the manifesto *Discussion Topics for a New Theatre Conference* and debated by theatre directors and critics at a major convention held in Ivrea, close to Turin, in June 1967. As Valentina Valentini (2018) argues, at the basis of these initiatives there was the dissatisfaction with «theater as a public service, which was the welfare-state concept that had led to the postwar establishment of public theaters in major cities throughout the nation. [...] Theater would exist at the center of civil society, in the social present» (Valentini 2018, p. 26). No wonder, then, that twenty years later Martinelli took part to a new convention in Ivrea, organized by the militant critic and artistic director Franco Quadri (1936-2011) who had been one of the main protagonists of the previous cultural event hosted by the same Piedmontese town. Martinelli (2014b) opened his presentation entitled *Per un nuovo teatro* with a striking assertion regarding a scientific finding that the Albe had heard from a geology professor's lecture at the University of Bologna the previous year: «La Romagna è un pezzo di Africa andato alla deriva nella notte dei tempi, una zattera nera che ha veleggiato fin quassù, e si è venuta ad incastrare tra le nebbie europee» (Martinelli 2014b, p. 35).

As Clarissa Clò (2010) points out, «Flabbergasted by this discovery, they decided to embrace the extraordinary political potential of this piece of scientific information» (Clò 2010, p. 29). Indeed, the rest of Martinelli's speech contains a crystal-clear analysis of what he considers the anticipation of a crucial moment:

Siamo tutti marocchini? Sì, siamo tutti marocchini. Il razzismo verso i *vu cumprà* è forse espressione dell'odio verso i padri che ritornano, tornano alla loro terra. Non c'è niente da fare, il nord sta cambiando colore: il processo è irreversibile. Dopo cinque secoli di rapina a mano armata da parte dell'uomo bianco, ha inizio la grande inversione di rotta. Dobbiamo pagare i nostri debiti, altro che 'la mia (la tua la nostra) Africa'! I neri stanno arrivando a frotte, vengono a scoprire 'la loro Europa'. [...] Il nord cambia colore: anche Ravenna, come tutte le città grigie di questa fetta di mondo, impari ad essere saggia e marocchina, come la sua vena più profonda, impari a dialogare con coloro che saranno, domani, i nuovi signori del pianeta. Noi li attendiamo fiduciosi. (Martinelli 2014b, pp. 35-36)

In his accurate reconstruction of Italian colonial ventures Raffaele Furno (2008) traces the use of the expression *vu cumprà* back to the early twentieth century with reference to the Italian emigrants who earned a living as street trader abroad. Later, the same phrase was employed to indicate African

³ See also Klett 2012, pp. 41-42.

migrants in Italy where «autochthonous people attached the *vú cumprá* stereotype to black vendors as a second skin» (Furno 2008, p. 28).

Teatro delle Albe's African cycle was inaugurated in Bagnacavallo by *Rub! Romagna più Africa uguale (commedia nera)* (1988), an interethnic theatre piece that created a notable embarrassment in the audience at the sight of a group of African peddlers wandering in the parterre. Many of them had moved to vacation places on the coast of Romagna near Ravenna since the 1980s. It was then that the Albe began to collaborate with a group of Senegalese immigrants who became part of the existing troupe, the so-called *Albe nere*. As Picarazzi observes (2000), the Albe's *meticcio artistico* is characterized by a multiplicity of perspectives: «[is not defined by] the American term melting pot, [...], but rather [by] the concept of syncretism where the white is white, and black is black, like a kaleidoscope where colors are still individual but form a variegated whole» (Picarazzi 2000, pp. 226-227).

The majority of the new components of Teatro delle Albe were Senegalese actors descending from families of *griots*, traditional storytellers passing on the ancestors' knowledge. The sole exception was the late Mandiaye N' Diaye who started working as an untrained actor with the Teatro delle Albe in 1989. Thanks to the outstanding *vis comica* that N' diaye and another African actor (Mor Awa Niang) showed in the performance of *I ventidue infortuni di Mor Arlecchino* (1993), the Albe rose to fame all over Europe with its production that was staged in the most important avant-garde theatres, included the Danish *Odin Teatret*⁴. Later, N' Diaye turned to playwriting in several languages including Wolof, French, Italian and Romagnolo dialect. According to Claudia Gualtieri (2015), N' Diaye's peculiar experience with languages resulted in a practice of «borderscape, a meaningful field of separation and contamination [...]. Tracing the various paths of his identity, for him, meant unveiling and gathering the threads of past histories, [...], while also crossing temporal borders» (Gualtieri 2015, pp. 239-240). The reconfigured company generated an original theatre blend of dramaturgy and dance, music and dialects, invention and tradition, unique in Italy⁵. Thanks to the new aesthetic language employed in their intense stage production, the implications that the borders of nationalism, racial identity and fixed belonging produce are harshly criticized (Gualtieri 2015, p. 241). What makes the Albe's interethnic accomplishments so unique is the fact that they are strictly connected to the practice of the so-called *teatro polittttttico*. As Martinelli contends in his seminal essay *Ravenna Africana* (1988a), the *polittttttico*'s vitality stems from mixing opposite elements: «La passione per gli esseri viventi non è un dovere, è un vizio. [...]; è l'essenza di ogni religiosità autentica e permette il dialogo tra lontani,

⁴ Martinelli's adaptation of a play by Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) was inspired by African theatre.

⁵ See the Albe's website: <https://www.teatrodellealbe.com/eng/curriculum.php?id=1>.

facendo saltare le mura e i cancelli delle Chiese di tutto il mondo» (Martinelli, Montanari 2014, p. 46).

Influenced by the Albe's dramaturgical poetics, N' Diaye relied on different classical texts such as Aristophanes' *Plutus* on which his play *Leebu Nawet ak Noor* (2006, *The Game of Wealth and Poverty*) is based. N' Diaye's work deals with the economic gap between Africa and western countries. It was staged in Diol Kadd, his native village in Senegal, where the local people performed as actors, and included in the cultural heritage initiatives promoted by N' Diaye. He aimed at creating cultural and economic opportunities and thereby hoped that young people would refrain from migrating to Europe with the dream of pursuing their dream of a better future. It is since too long time that the media coverage keeps proposing a discourse contaminated by well-worn stereotypes. This is the case of the wretches coming from Africa through the Mediterranean on precarious boats provided by unscrupulous people smugglers who are often blamed and called «new slave traders». Furthermore, the migrants often become the most convenient target of the politics of fear in order to cover the responsibilities of the foolish European administration.

In his conference presentation entitled *Parlare insieme o morire insieme. Il dilemma di tutto il pianeta* (2003) the Polish-born philosopher and sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017) observed that nowadays we are all spectators who need to justify ourselves (Bauman 2003, p. 24). He was aware that the lack of the commitment required to turn a viewer in an actor is due to people's distrust towards politicians, as it is always the case in our individualistic society (Bauman 2003, p. 33). In his renowned study *Liquid Times* (2007) Bauman further analyses these emerging existential issues that «are engraved on one side of a coin whose other side shows the misty contours of 'negative globalization'. [This] is a parasitic and predatory process, feeding on the potency sucked out of the bodies of nation-states and their subjects» (Bauman 2007, p. 24).

These issues are central in *Rumore di acque / Noise in the water* (2010, English translation 2014), a moving melologue first produced by Teatro delle Albe at the Ravenna Festival in 2010 under the patronage of Amnesty International⁶. On the basis of interviews, witness accounts and self-descriptions, Martinelli invokes various performance conventions to spectacularize, aesthetically and ideologically, the suffering of African refugees who lost their lives in the attempt to reach Europe. As Teresa Fiore (2018) noted, «The play rewrites Le Albe's own repertory from *I Refrattari* (2003) to *Lo Straniero* (2008), where 'the other' is often embodied in the foreigner as the object of indifference or rejection within a society» (Fiore 2018, p. 529).

⁶ *Rumore di acque* is one of the productions that the Albe staged in the U.S.A. in 2014. For further details see the Albe's past productions in their website (<https://teatrodellealbe.com/eng/teatrografia.php?id=1>). See also the web page reporting the three-days' programme on the Teatro delle Albe offered by Montclair University in February 2014 (<https://www.montclair.edu/inserra-chair/events/2013-14-events/teatro-delle-albe/>).

In the *Note on «Rumore di acque»* introducing the English translation of his play Martinelli (2014a) states:

The first story of the crossing I heard at Mazara, at the San Vito Onlus center, came from a minute, brave Tunisian woman: timid, speaking in broken Italian, she was almost too shy to raise her eyes. I have changed her name to Jasmine and transformed her story while keeping the essentials. It's the first story I heard and the only one, among all those evoked by the general, that's not about drowning or disappearance, about death, but about a life saved. But was she saved? (Martinelli 2014a, p. 40)

The grotesque character of the general wearing dark sunglasses and a blue military uniform adorned with medals was inspired by the Libyan Colonel Qaddafi. However, «that demonic, sarcastic little accountant, that impotent spectator of tv news, that guy: that's us. That's me. The face that finally turns toward me, half-human half-animal, and looks straight into my eyes: that's my face» (Martinelli 2014a, p. 40). In considering *Noise in the Waters*, one should keep in mind that the performance of a dramatic monologue has the function to evoke the sense of sacrifice from which theatre originated since the birth of Greek tragedy. This aspect clearly emerges in the general's haunting account of the African refugees who lost their life in the attempt of reaching Italian shores. The general was hired by the Secretary of the Inferno to perform the dirty task of updating the list of the migrant deaths: «It is easier to accept than reject / Is it easier to accept than reject? / That's not true / [...] / Does it seem so little to you / Mister Secretary sir? / Does it seem so little to you / This mountain of dead / That rises immaculate to the sky / Does it seem so little?» (Martinelli 2014a, pp. 35-36). The first in the general's list is a young boy called Yusuf, whom the General calls «the little braggart». Yusuf left the region of Western Sahara with other people: «What can you expect from this people / They understand nothing / Black skin / And you talk to them about democracy / Ridiculous / They're still up in the trees / Still eating each other maybe» (Martinelli 2014a, p. 17). Instead of heading to Spain, «Dinghy fills with water / Everyone drowns / Even the braggart / All over // (silence)» (Martinelli 2014a, p. 19). Another tragic destiny is Sakinah's: the girl was first abused by traffickers and policemen together with other young Nigerian prostitutes. At the end, «Instead of perfume / In white men's beds / Between satin sheets / Now they lay / On the bottom / Fish eaten / Of their bones are coral made / Those are pearls that were their eyes // (silence)» (Martinelli 2014a, p. 29).

In *Noise in the Waters* Martinelli employs «a dense language, filled with simultaneously magical and sarcastic expressions» (Fiore 2018, p. 529). An element of reflection emerges from the dramatic text. We would say that the irrationality of its content somehow awakens our rationality. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that theatre allows spectators to immerse themselves in an absolute experience that makes them acquire a new awareness. As

Maria Dolores Pesce (2010) observes, Martinelli does not adopt a narrative approach, but prefers to rely on a character that is «la reificazione nel contesto drammaturgico di un sentimento, di un' angoscia o di una rabbia intima [...]». Non una drammaturgia a 'tesi', si potrebbe anche dire, ma un accompagnarci alla risposta che è dentro di noi».

The rambling speech of the devilish bureaucrat contains many pauses that could be considered «silenzi corsari». With this expression alluding to Pasolini's poetics, Martinelli conveys the idea that «è necessario per sopravvivere saper praticare il silenzio, una forma attiva, personale, meditata, di silenzio; [...] in modo da riuscire a sentire la tua voce, prima di tutto, e poi anche quella degli altri. Se sentirai le voci in mezzo al Gran Rumore (mica quelle dei santi: almeno quella del vicino per cominciare), allora forse sarai sulla strada giusta, e potrai cominciare a muoverti [...] e solo allora il tuo sarà diventato un vero silenzio corsaro» (Martinelli 1994, p. 3). The acting is brilliant with Alessandro Renda in the role of the general, a solitary demon gnashing in the dark on a volcanic island in the Strait of Sicily between North Africa and Italy. He is accompanied by Mancuso Brothers that, as Martinelli observes, «enriched this oratorio for the sacrificed with their voices, as powerful as ancient satyrs who seem to cry out the pain of humanity from the depth of an abyss» (Martinelli 2014a, p. 41). Their songs evoke ancient melodic sounds intertwining Sicilian music with the one from other Mediterranean shores. According to Gianni Manzella (2010), Mancuso Brothers' role is «corale ma inteso come alle origini del tragico, come generatore della parola. È anche grazie a loro se il lavoro non scivola mai nei toni consolatori del teatro che si dice 'civile'» (Manzella 2010).

Postcolonial studies have strongly criticized the ideas of nation and euro-centrism and proposed new interpretations of the intertwining between history and the present time. In the book *The Postcolonial Condition* (2006), Sandro Mezzadra and Federico Rahola argue: «Once we admit that new borders and new *dispositive* still operate in order to implement differences, we also recognize that yet those apparatuses are continuously defeated by the direct agency of women and men who simply overcome them. [...] the language of the universal (that is, the language of equality), which each day must be reinvented as a common property, also presents itself as a hybrid and mixed one. Beyond every rhetoric, such a language forms the only basis for the articulation of a possible politics of the multitude» (Mezzadra, Rahola 2006, p. 9).

In an interview published in the magazine *Sipario* in 2016, Martinelli and Montanari further elaborated the aim behind *Politttttttical Theatre*:

Sappiamo bene che viviamo nell'era del falso e della truffa, dei simulacri, dei confini sempre più incerti, o ormai definitivamente crollati, tra il vero e l'artefatto, tra il reale e il mediatico, lo sappiamo fino alla nausea: proprio per questo pensiamo che la scena sia il luogo in cui si dice, si balbetta la propria verità, e per dirla bisogna essere veritieri, allenarci ad esserlo, tutti i giorni, con pazienza e disciplina. A questo dialogo in un qualche modo sacro, si invita lo spettatore, che allora è qualcosa di più che uno spettatore. È un testimone, è un cittadino

del mondo. Poi, sia chiaro, per articolare in forma d'arte la tua verità puoi usare tutti gli artifici del mondo, come è sempre stato fatto, da Dante a Caravaggio fino a Pasolini e compagnia bella. Questo è il politttttttico. (Martinelli [2016], in Bonci 2016, p. 1)

As Teresa Picarazzi (2000) notes, «the assonance between the word political and polis also indicates that the Albe's self-consciously derives much of its matter from the surrounding polis, with which it is also engaged through outreach cultural programs in the school system» (Picarazzi 2000, p. 225). Allusion is here made to the *non-scuola*, a project consisting in workshops for adolescents from all over the world. This important formative experience, that turned to be a breeding ground for talents, consists in «putting into life» (*mise en vie*) texts of the Tradition which would draw on the pure energy that a specific group of young people releases through this experience⁷. In his polemical essay *Fare gli italiani* (2011) Martinelli asserts the local initiatives of the *non-scuola* have been aimed at «making Italians» by evoking the statement attributed to Massimo D'Azeglio (1798-1866), a patriot of the Risorgimento⁸:

[...] comporre una nazione, stabilire con le guerre con la diplomazia i suoi confini geografici, è solo il primo passo. Poi va creato un popolo. [...] questi italiani che siamo, sono il frutto di tanti passaggi storici: frutto dei primi governi postunitari, del trasformismo, dell'avventura della guerra e del fascismo, della sciagura del secondo conflitto mondiale, della rinascita segnata dalla Resistenza e dalla Costituzione e del mezzo secolo democristiano a seguire, con dentro il '68, luci e ombre, e insieme la mutazione antropologica. [...] ha avuto il suo processo di accelerazione negli anni Ottanta, portata avanti da una coppia di 'mariuoli', ovvero lo 'statista' Craxi nel senso di 'ladro di Stato' [...] e l'imprenditore-corruttore Berlusconi. Il resto è storia recente: [...] suicidio della sinistra che non risolve il conflitto di interessi e regala il nuovo 'regno' a Berlusconi. Tre decenni di televisione-politica, di politica-televisione. Tre decenni di trasformazione profonda: è quella che ha fatto e continua a fare gli italiani, che li forma e li deforma. (Martinelli [2011], in Martinelli, Montanari 2014, pp. 118-119)

⁷ See the Albe's website: <https://www.teatrodellealbe.com/eng/curriculum.php?id=1>. In particular, see the page *Noboaletto* named after the Albe's philosophical approach to the *non-scuola* (<https://www.teatrodellealbe.com/eng/contenuto.php?id=4>). Since 2001 the company has chosen to extend their theatre workshops in high schools to difficult contexts such as an African-American ghetto in Chicago (*Mighty Mighty Ubu*, 2005), Dakar and a small Senegalese village (*Ubu Buur*, 2007), the Neapolitan area of Scampia (*Ubu sotto tiro*, 2008), Mazara del Vallo Sicily (*Cercatori di tracce*, 2010) and San Felice sul Panaro after the earthquake in Emilia (*Viaggio al centro della terra*, 2012; *Corri Pinocchio*, 2014), Caen and Limoges (France), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Mons (Belgium).

⁸ Massimo D'Azeglio was a celebrated Piedmontese-Italian and statesman who participated to the movement of national revival in the early to mid-eighteenth century; he was also a novelist and a painter (cfr. Duggan 2014, p. 3). D'Azeglio's genuine statement says: «[...] pur troppo s'è fatta l'Italia, ma non si fanno gl'Italiani (D'Azeglio 1867, I, p. 7). According to Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti (2017), his motto «contains within it both the recognition of a weakness of national identity and the wish of the liberal ruling class to develop an ambitious pedagogical project for the construction of a shared national consciousness» (Ferrara degli Uberti 2017, p. vii).

In the last few years Martinelli has taken on filmmaking⁹. In *The Sky over Kybera* (2019), 150 children and adolescents from a vast slum of Nairobi 'bring to life' (*mise en vie*) Dante's *Divine Comedy* in English and Swahili. The young protagonists «brandished the *Comedy* as though it was a weapon, shining and beautiful, shouting out their right to happiness to the whole planet» (Martinelli, Montanari 2019). Martinelli (2020) claims that

they understood immediately that Dante's experience had something to say about their own. They are more familiar with hell than we are. In fact, they suggested their own rings of hell: thieves, assassins, placed those who committed evils against children. (Martinelli [2020], in Leonardi 2020)

Martinelli (2020) conceives theater as a «place of belonging»: «'You and I together' is a subversive act in the eyes of the world today. According to him, theater can touch the heart of every individual because it says, 'I am telling your story.' When we open ourselves to others, we become open to Another» (Martinelli [2020], in Leonardi 2020). As the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) observes (2012), a rich tradition of discourse enables us to understand our experience and expand our self. He deems that poetry, that is narrative and drama as Aristotle conceived it, provides the imagination with 'sample cases' that teach us «to connect the ethical aspect of human behavior with happiness and unhappiness, fortune and misfortune» (Ricoeur 2012, pp. 200 and 190).

As Martinelli (2019) notes, in *Kybera*:

Il rischio più grande lì è la fame, lì è la luce. I bambini sorridono – ma non c'è innocenza, non c'è nostalgia, non c'è purezza. La poesia è alchimia di opposti: la strada e la mistica, la gioia e il pericolo. È un linguaggio universale che mescola insieme tutte le lingue del mondo. Perché a Kibera anche il cielo si sporca le mani, altrimenti non sarebbe così limpido. (Martinelli [2019], in Piccione 2019, p. 2)

In the film emerges Martinelli's poetic and visionary style, interweaving footage from the performance with other images, sequences shot in the slum. However, it is paramount to consider not only the nature of the author's documentary filmmaking, but also the viewer's experience involving the immersion into a perceptual and imaginative space capable to speak to shared experience. According to Arrigoni (2022), «la metafora del viaggio e la possibilità che la *Commedia* si faccia vademecum per il singolo come per la collettività incontrano un mondo altro e non solo un oltremondo» (Arrigoni 2022, p. 2). *The Sky over Kybera* fully represents a founding principle of the Albe's poetics, namely that of the «'teatro di carne' [che] ferisce il cervello di chi guarda esibendo un corpo ferito, che desidera altro e altrove [...] se non traduciamo, sulla scena, tutto l'orrore e la gioia che proviamo nel vivere, se non incarniamo il teatro, non ci rimane che un po' di tecnica» (Martinelli 1988a, p. 38).

⁹ See *Vita agli arresti di Aung San Suu Kyi* (2017); *The Sky over Kibera* (2019); *Er* (2020); *Fedeli d'amore* (2021); *Ulisse XXVI* (2021).