take on a subversive strength that exposes elements of reality didactic theatre tends to suppress. For Winter Gozzi's imagination also sheds light on reality outside the theatre, stimulating people to think out of the box.

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Paolo Mantegazza. *"The Physiology of Love" and other writings*. Ed. Nicoletta Pireddu, trans. David Jacobson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Pp. viii, 532. ISBN 978-0-8020-9289-2. \$75.

During the last two decades, Italian scholars have paid increasing attention to Paolo Mantegazza, and to the multiple issues raised by his scientific and literary works: a fairly large number of studies are by now available, covering topics like the author's links with Darwin and Freud, his role as a fore-runner in anthropological studies, his importance in the society and culture of newly unified Italy, even his influence on many great novelists between the XIX and XX centuries (from De Roberto and D'Annunzio to Svevo and Gadda). As yet, this relative domestic revival has been only partially echoed abroad: which is all the more a pity, since the historical meaning of Mantegazza's case is closely tied to problems and trends that regard *fin-de-siècle* Europe as a whole, and only in this light can it be thoroughly understood.

It might be worthwhile, therefore, to encourage a comparative reading of Mantegazza—and at the same time, to make his works more readily available overseas. A noteworthy step forward in both directions is provided by Nicoletta Pireddu's recent studies: not secondarily through her English edition of *Fisiologia dell'amore* [1873], followed by an abundant selection from other writings. While building on a detailed reconstruction of the Italian context, the editor examines the texts from a much broader angle: the strong comparative bent can easily be detected in the dense introduction (3-53), as well as in the precise footnotes and in the very structure of the anthology. To begin with, the various subjects treated by the author are constantly inserted in their original frameworks, often transcending national boundaries: the essay on the *Properties of Coca* [1859] is thus related to the gradual discovery of cocaine in the Old Continent (8-11); the papers on sexual matters are situated in a larger debate involving such figures as Kraft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis, along with the German *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* (17-18); similarly, Mantegazza's fascination with the philosophy of Epicurus—cf. the *Essay in a Physiology of the Beautiful* [1891]—finds its place in the general "rediscovery of Epicureanism in turn-of-the-century Europe" (47). An even thicker tangle of cultural stances underlies the eponymous text, where the attempted *physiological* analysis of love and marriage owes much—as the introduction points out—to the models of Balzac and Brillat-Savarin (14): but we might also add the names of Stendhal (*De l'amour*), Michelet (*L'Amour*, explicitly mentioned in the 1906 preface to *Fisiologia*) and George Sand, this last being suggested by a reticent

tribute in chapter XX ("today the nuptial compact is frequently, according to a great writer, a sworn prostitution," 290, alluding to a passage from *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*: "La vanité et la cupidité font de la plupart des mariages une prostitution jurée").

However, the most telltale signs of Mantegazza's accord with the European *Zeitgeist* don't lie in the single themes on which he practises his "intellectual polygamy" (7): they can rather be found in the general features concerning his methods and his mindset. First of all, a deeply symptomatic value can be assigned to the continuous fluctuation between fits of sentimental irrationalism and scientific ambitions: or, to borrow Musil's keywords, between *soul* (in its stereotyped, Decadent meaning) and a Positivistic take on *precision*. As frequently suggested by the editor, this contradiction is betrayed by many of Mantegazza's stylistic and conceptual refrains: his massive use of the term *Energy* as a physical notion, for example, can hardly be conciliated with his bias towards the Decadent *topos* of Love as a gratuitous dissipation of energy (20; but cf. also Pireddu's remarks in *Antropologi alla corte di bellezza*, Verona: Fiorini, 2002). Extending the same perspective, we can moreover notice how Mantegazza's taxonomic compulsion—his urge to measure and define everything (14)—struggles with the emotional rhetoric of *infinity* displayed in most of his works: in the *Physiology of Love*, the author seems particularly enthralled by the "infinite legions of its forms," its "thousand different languages" (98; after all, "the infinite is the only thing that man never wearies of loving," 172); Cocaine puts man "at the whims of the most unbridled fantasy, the most fertile kaleidoscope" (341); in the two travelogues, the most intriguing feature about Lapland is its indescribable emptiness ("vast deserts," "infinite jaggedness" of the land, "continual muteness," 404-05), while India is praised for its infinite variety ("Music is the only art that can generally express the indefinite, the immensity of sensations that India arouses," 425); in *Epicurus*, the impossibility to capture the essence of the Beautiful "gives us a faint sense of the infinite" (500). *La natura l'è talment granda, talment infinida!*... said another son of the XIX century, the entomologist Carlo Biandronni, in Gadda's *Adalgisa*. Mantegazza shares this sense of wonder: yet, unlike the purely Positivist Carlo (or Nietzsche's *conscientious in spirit*), he can't restrict himself to a wary and meticulous specialism—on the contrary, he often yields to the temptation of pondering the immeasurable.

Indeed, the author's alternatives and antinomies (scientific language *vs* Decadent metaphors, definition *vs* infinity, control *vs* enthusiasm) reflect the basic duplicity of a whole cultural climate. These deep bonds with the contemporary *Stimmung* do not prevent Mantegazza from being ahead of his times in many respects: as underlined by Pireddu, we can't ignore his progressive views on delicate themes such as divorce and prostitution (27), or his ability to anticipate scientific trends that will later be developed in the fields of cultural studies (7) or even semiotics (15); to this effect, a similar meaning might be attached to the way works like *Epicurus* prefigure the current debate on the *embodied mind*, as defined in cognitive studies ("an aesthetic emotion is already a result of various psychic moments, but it spreads in turn to various centres of the brain;" "psychic phenomena [...] are gov-

erned by the same laws of the physical and chemical facts,” 493-94). Even in this case ambiguity is Mantegazza’s trademark, since the most advanced aspects of his ideological and scientific profile are undermined by a rich set of patriarchal or racist stereotypes, and by a clear bent towards the most widespread commonplaces: to be sure, we are dealing with “a Janus-like figure, at once conservative and progressive” (22). Once again, our author personifies an inner conflict typical of his age—the same one that was depicted by Flaubert, in a farcical key, through *Bouvard et Pécuchet*: the ever-growing confusion between knowledge and *idées reçues*, democracy and social blindness, taxonomy and obtuseness.

For better or for worse, to sum up, Mantegazza was a highly representative figure—and this is perhaps the main reason that makes his case particularly worth studying, even outside Italy. In this respect, Pireddu’s *Physiology of Love* now stands out as an essential tool: aside from the massive amount of information offered by the introduction and the footnotes, scholars can take advantage of an exhaustive and updated bibliography (65-70), of an interesting note on Mantegazza’s reception in Italy and abroad (55-60), and—which is even more important—of an accurate and fresh translation (the 1894 American edition of the eponymous text has been brilliantly polished up by David Jacobson, who also provides original renditions of the other selected works). Undoubtedly a remarkable effort, that can be of great use to everyone interested in outlining an overall “picture” not only of “nineteenth-century Italy,” (53) but of the European background as well.

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Elisa Tonani. *Il romanzo in bianco e nero. Ricerche sull’uso degli spazi bianchi e dell’interpunzione nella narrativa italiana dall’Ottocento a oggi.* Firenze: Franco Cesati Editore, 2010. Pp. 318. ISBN 978-88-7667-393-1. €28.

A serious academic study on punctuation and spacing immediately piques a reader’s interest. Elisa Tonani’s study finds its inspiration in the renewed focus on punctuation arising from the unanticipated world wide success of *Eats, Shoots & Leaves. The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynn Truss (2003), which saw its Italian translation in 2005. But even before Truss, Italian scholars had studied the stylistic effects of punctuation (both as the technical *interpunzione* and the more usage-oriented *punteggiatura*) (15). Italian literary history counts many authors who paid close attention to this aspect of their writings. Tonani’s brief historical introduction begins with Leopardi, whose preoccupation with punctuation was voiced in both the *Zibaldone* and the *Epistolario*. Tonani’s own analysis proceeds from her observation, supported in both French and Italian literature, that there are two registers of punctuating: the more casual and the literary. She also considers the page as macro-text where not only do the punctuation marks matter, but also where the spaces dividing headings, paragraphs, headers, footers etc. all have effects on the text and thus inform our reading of it, as Derrida has taught us in *Glas*. She indi-