

Emanuel Stelzer

Shakespeare Among Italian Criminologists
and Psychiatrists, 1870s-1920s



Skenè Texts • 4

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SKENÈ Theatre and Drama Studies

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Introduction

1. A Forgotten Form of Shakespeare Criticism

In 1871, German scholar Karl Elze contributed to the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* a review of “Sull’amore e la pazzia di Amleto” [“On Hamlet’s Love and Madness”], an essay written by Francesco Forlani, an Italo-Dalmatian jurist and professor of law at the University of Innsbruck (see text no. 1 in this volume). Elze criticised Forlani’s ignorance of existing scholarship, but remarked: “Die Theilnahme für Shakespeare scheint nämlich in dem neuen Italien in einem sehr erfreulichen Aufschwunge begriffen zu sein” (364-5, “In the new-born Italy, an involvement with Shakespeare seems to have found indeed a most welcome impetus”).¹ Political unification had just been achieved with the capture of Rome (laying aside the question of the *terre irredente*,² where Forlani was from), and, according to Elze, political stability had created better conditions for Italian Shakespeare criticism. Elze emphasised that this phenomenon was an “involvement”, literally a “partaking”, not a serious “Studium” (“study”), “denn dem Character des Volkes entsprechend nimmt sie keineswegs eine wissenschaftliche oder gelehrte Form an” (365, “because, in keeping with the character of that people, their involvement cannot take a scientific or learned form”). Elze exemplified his claim by praising instead the success of the Shakespearean *grandi attori*, Ernesto Rossi (1827-1896) and Tommaso Salvini (1829-1915). Little did Elze know that a few years later Italian Shakespeare criticism would swerve towards a form and method which exalted positivism, and embraced and promoted the doctrines of the newly-created criminal anthropological school of Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), Raffaele Garofalo (1851-1934), and Enrico Ferri (1856-1929).

¹ All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

² The ‘unredeemed lands’: Trentino, South Tyrol, Trieste, Istria, and parts of Dalmatia, which were annexed to Italy with the Treaties of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1919) and Rapallo (1920).

Until then, Shakespeare had reached Italian mainstream culture through translation (often mediated via French), and through theatrical productions of mainly three plays: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* (Locatelli 2004, 147).³ On the other hand, Italy had found a different, but very successful formula for its reception of Shakespeare: opera (see Vittorini 2000 and Melchiori 2006). But as far as criticism is concerned, nothing of great significance had been written, apart from a few exceptions, which had grown out of the context of the *querelle des anciens et modernes*, the struggle between Romanticism and Neoclassicism (see, for example, Giuseppe Baretti's famous *Discours*, 1777; the debate kick-started by Madame de Staël's *De l'esprit des traductions*, 1816; Alessandro Manzoni's *Lettre à monsieur Chauvet*, 1820). After the impetus of the first half of the nineteenth century, the reputation of Shakespeare, boosted by the spate of translations (by Giulio Carcano, Carlo Rusconi, Andrea Maffei, etc.) and opera adaptations, had established itself and placidly settled into the increasingly stereotyped portrayal of the Bard as the Romantic, modern genius, who gives voice to the human passions.

A new impulse came from a trend which had started in England and was finding much favour in France and Germany. Bardolatry had instituted Shakespeare as the universal genius at one with Nature, who was able to know and reveal the most intimate aspects of the human condition. Works such as Sir John Charles Bucknill's *The Psychology of Shakespeare* (1859), *The Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare* (1860), and *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare* (1867) portrayed Shakespeare as the ultimate physician and psychologist (see Salkeld 1993, 11-20). This interpretation went hand in hand with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century's tendency to delve into the psychology of Shakespeare's characters (think of S. T. Coleridge and William Hazlitt in England, or August Wilhelm Schlegel in Germany).

The first book-length study here was Bucknill's *The Psychology of Shakespeare* (1859), previously serialized in the *Journal of Mental Science* during 1858-59. By October 1859, Canadian alienist A. O. Kellogg started to publish his nine-part series of articles on "Wil-

³ On Shakespeare's reception in eighteenth-century Italy, see Crinò 1950 and Nigri 2019; on Shakespeare in Italian Romanticism, see Locatelli 1999 and 2017.

liam Shakespeare as a Physiologist and Psychologist” in the *American Journal of Insanity* . . . In 1863, John Conolly published a two-hundred-odd-page *Study of Hamlet*; in 1864, G. Ross “Shakespeare: The Mad Characters in his Works”; in 1868-69, the renowned French alienist A. Brierre de Boismont, a two-part study of the playwright’s “connaissance en aliénation mentale” in the *Annales médico-psychologiques*. By now, psychiatric criticism of Shakespeare had developed into a well-established genre with dozens of followers all over Europe and especially in Germany. (Faas 1988, 113)

Meanwhile, in the US, as Benjamin Reiss argues (2005, 769), Shakespeare’s prestige was being co-opted to validate the nascent science of psychiatry:

In the first three decades of American psychiatry, no figure was cited as an authority on insanity and mental functioning more frequently than William Shakespeare. In the pages of the *American Journal of Insanity (AJI)* – the official organ of the nascent profession – no fewer than thirteen lengthy articles of Shakespeare criticism were published from 1844–1864, and in other psychiatric writings his name was regularly invoked in matters concerning diagnosis, nosology, and treatment. “There is scarcely a form of mental disorder”, wrote Amariah Brigham (superintendent of the New York State Lunatic Asylum and the first editor of *AJI*) in the lead article of the journal’s first issue, that Shakespeare “has not alluded to, and pointed out the causes and method of treatment”.

According to these professionals, the human nature that Shakespeare understood so well was governed by universal rules, and the force behind these rules was generally regarded as mechanistic and secular. Besides, “grabbing the mantle of the timeless genius helped to mask the novelty” of the new powers of psychiatrists, who became “experts with unprecedented powers to define and enforce standards of correct behavior from institutional perches” (770). The use of Shakespeare as a psychiatric authority ensured legitimacy to the discipline, and constituted “part of a grandiose attempt to regulate culture itself within – and even outside – the walls of the asylum” (771), as Foucault and other scholars have amply discussed (see Foucault 1961, and Still and Velody 1992). These volumes and articles were not only shared and talked about among specialists: this new way of considering Shake-

spere was presented in public talks and influenced theatrical productions too. Looking at Shakespeare's characters from the point of view of positivism became a not unusual practice, and the relation between these cultural representations and psychiatric theory operated on "a two-way transaction" (1985, 80), as Showalter has brilliantly observed in her study on the relation between representations of Ophelia and the definition of hysteria.⁴

In Italy, the latest approach to Shakespeare seeped through mainly because of the prestige and ground-breaking discoveries of the French psychiatrists (and, to a lesser degree, of the Germans): the intellectuals were fascinated by the discoveries in the field, and 'monomania', 'neurosis', and 'psychosis' became household terms. And since the scientists beyond the Alps had started to apply these new theories to Shakespeare, this approach started being replicated, but was soon developed in a new and parallel form, in connection with the birth of positivist criminology.

As Gian Marco Vidor observes (2019, 35): "In the second half of the nineteenth century, in several European countries, legal and medical scholars switched the focus of the criminological debate from the crime to the criminal, from what had been a purely philosophical and juridical entity to a social and physiological being". If the classical school of criminology (Cesare Beccaria *in primis*) had looked at delinquents as people committing actions against the law, i.e. deciding wilfully to commit crime, scientists such as Cesare Lombroso and jurists such as Raffaele Garofalo now believed that criminals constituted a part of the population marked by atavism: they had brutish, less civilised, less evolved traits which must lead them to commit crimes.

⁴The anecdote is often related of actress Ellen Terry (1847-1928) when she was visiting mental hospitals to gather data on how to play Ophelia: she was convinced that "all Ophelias before (and after) me . . . went to the madhouse to study wits astray" (Terry 1908, 154). In fact, Carol Thomas Neely has demystified the myth of Elizabethans and Jacobeans visiting Bedlam for entertainment: we simply have no proof about it (2004, 199ff.). It was only in the Restoration era and with the Enlightenment that such visits took place. Terry famously goes on: "I was disheartened at first. There was no beauty, no nature, no pity in most of the lunatics. Strange as it may sound, they were too theatrical to teach me anything" (*ibid.*). Life was perceived to imitate art: while Ophelia was diagnosed with several mental illnesses, though generally with the blanket condition of hysteria, women in asylums were often categorised as Ophelia types.

These traits were visible in the shape of their skull, in their posture, in their constitution, and could be measured, catalogued, and recognised by scholars known as criminal anthropologists (their basis was evidently phrenology, a recent discipline which systematised centuries of physiognomic observations). Lombroso's was a very heterogeneous school, rife with internal opposition, sometimes drawn to the most rigorous social Darwinism, other times (especially in the later phase) to spiritism. Nowadays Lombroso is mostly associated with positing the notion of the 'born criminal', of a criminal's biological determinism. It was Ferri who coined the expression 'born criminal', but "mitigated the absolutism of Lombroso's theory of atavistic criminality by introducing other categories of less deterministically inclined perpetrators and by attempting to systematize Lombroso's typology" (Olson 2013, 286). Although biological determinism was understood as only one element in the aetiology of crime, it was believed by most such scholars to be a key factor of 'criminogenesis', i.e. the fostering of crime, first, potentially, in one's psyche, and then in act. It was an approach that was informed by social Darwinism, which, more or less directly, contributed to the horrors of Nazi-Fascism (see Hawkins 1997).

There developed what can be termed as criminological literary criticism. In these studies, fictional and dramatic characters became 'cases' and 'types'. They could be interpreted in three distinct, but mutually non-exclusive, ways. Firstly, they could be portrayed as highly-individualised people, whose medical history must be reconstructed from textual traces in order to be properly classified and diagnosed with the correct, and possibly criminogenic, disease. Secondly, they could be interpreted as universals, on the basis that Nature's laws are invariant. Thirdly, as creatures grown out of the mind of an author, their personality and conduct could be used to pathologise the authors themselves. These three ways of looking at characters and *dramatis personae* were soon employed in essays, articles, and volumes on Shakespeare. Each interpreter would tend to either objectivise or subjectivise Shakespeare's characters: Hamlet could be seen as living with a unique anomaly, which made him one of a kind, or he could be represented as the embodiment of a particular pathology (i.e. he did not 'have' a pathology, he 'was' that pathology) – a pathology which would make it impossible for that Shakespearean character not to commit crime.

Quotations from Shakespeare's works appear very frequently in

the publications of the Lombrosians, sometimes as mere embellishment, other times to provide evidence. Moreover, jurists, psychiatrists, directors of asylums, and medical doctors from all over the newly-unified peninsula published on Shakespeare in specialist journals such as the *Archivio di antropologia criminale*, *Il manicomio*, *Lo sperimentale* and the *Rivista di psicologia applicata*, but also in literary magazines, such as the *Gazzetta letteraria* and *Fanfulla*. They were very often republished elsewhere and discussed in public lectures. Philosophers and literary authors were keenly interested in the doctrines of the School and actively produced Shakespeare criticism from the perspective of criminal anthropology. Shakespeare's characters were referred to in documents produced in courthouses, prisons, hospitals, and asylums: therefore, such uses of Shakespeare had an impact on people's lives, and especially on those of the marginalised. Finally, the Lombrosian way of looking at Shakespeare also had an impact on the performance of the plays, in particular, in the case of prominent actor Ermete Zacconi (1857-1948; see text no. 15 in this volume).

This chapter in the history of Shakespeare's reception in Italy has been forgotten, and the only scholarly article which directly deals with the Lombrosians' Shakespeare criticism is Jeanne Gaakeer's 2005 article, which however focuses on the way Lombroso's and Ferri's works influenced Dutch criminologists. The aim of this volume is twofold. Firstly, it aims at familiarising readers with the main texts of this type of criticism, since, as of now, there are no monographs or scholarly articles explicitly about this topic. Texts of this kind are often preserved (or relegated) in not easily accessible archives and yet unindexed collections. Secondly, it wishes to provide conceptual and contextual keys to interpreting this phenomenon. Reading these texts is very often an uncomfortable experience, as they are rife with ableism and prejudice of many sorts, but it is important to do it: one may simply ridicule this critical approach, but it should not be forgotten that people could be sent to jail or to the psychiatric hospital because they were pronounced latter-day Lady Macbeths or 'just like Iago'.

2. Preliminary Remarks: Shakespeare, Crime, and Mental Illness

The scholarship which looked at Shakespeare's characters as psychiatric cases and aimed at pathologising the playwright himself – which classified Richard III as a teratological born criminal, and Iago as a delinquent physiologically incapable of repentance – can be deeply disturbing. In the name of science and rationality, much of this criticism developed and perpetuated racist, sexist, ableist, and otherwise intolerant conceptions. At its centre, there is not the action of crime, but the criminal as an ontological entity; besides, fictional characters are diagnosed with a specific pathology in the belief that they can be understood primarily, if not exclusively, through that illness. “What criminal anthropologists did, to borrow words from Judith Butler, was to ‘endow ontology’ and ‘materialize’ bodies” (Rafter 2006, 177). The Lombrosians “exemplified the dialectical combination of power and knowledge (*pouvoir/savoir*) so brilliantly exposed by Michel Foucault” (Gibson 2013, 31; see also Gibson 2002) – one example will suffice: it was Lombroso who coined the expression “scientific police” (see Bianchi *et al.* 1908, 221). Inevitably, Lombroso's methods are unsettling. Gina, his daughter, remembers that he went “every morning to *his prison . . . his prison* always had the power to restore excitement and joy to his life” (Lombroso 1915, 247-8, qtd and translated by Gibson 2013, 32, emphasis in the original). Besides, he disliked being away from the asylum, having to teach at university, because he missed “the Lunatic Asylum with its living material and patients renewed every day” (qtd and translated by Villa 2013, 9).

As Maurizio Ascari and Gilberta Golinelli argue, crime can be considered

as an inclusive category that is discursively mediated and fashioned, alerting us to the dynamic status of texts as being produced at the interface of social energies and discursive practices, power structures and strictures, forms of imaginative transgression and containment. (2021, 20)

Most of the authors of the texts collected in this volume did not consider crime as a social construct, and they can certainly be held complicit in the discursive mediations they reflected and imposed: many

of them wielded authority as experts in their respective fields, which positioned them in a privileged place to determine what is correct and what is wrong, what is healthy and what is pathologic. Of course, “Lombroso’s theory, as with much criminological theory, was a product of a specific historical, political and social context: Italy’s unification into a nation state” (Canning and Tombs 2021, n.n.). People had to answer what it meant to be an Italian in this young, precarious state, in the heyday of imperialism, when questions of identity and otherness could be explosive.

Moreover, as Nicole Hahn Rafter observes, the ontological dimension articulated by the Lombrosians must be taken into account in connection with the epistemological aspect:

Lombroso and Ellis [i.e. Havelock Ellis, who wrote *The Criminal* in 1890] created a new set of visual codes for criminality, illegality, and illegitimacy. These codes were easily intelligible to those familiar with Darwin’s work and degeneration theory, and they pointed toward policy conclusions that fit well with then-current social philosophies such as Social Darwinism and eugenics. The codes were easily intelligible because they meshed with broader cultural themes and assumptions. In a period when the concepts of “good inheritance” and “bad inheritance” were really surrogates for “middle class” and “lower class”, for example, the images of criminal anthropology made it clear that criminality and bad heredity were lower-class attributes. The images literally incorporated Lombroso’s key insight, that Darwin’s theory applies to criminal behavior as well as to the evolution of species . . . Lombrosian imagery also incorporated folk notions, such as the ideas that crooked is less good than straight, dark is inferior to white . . . The images fit perfectly with then-current hierarchies of gender, race, sexuality, social class, and physical ability. (2006, 177)

Given such epistemological premises, and the ontological construction of the criminal, the questions to be asked are three. Why did Italian criminologists and psychiatrists interest themselves in what they called ‘Shakespeare’s criminals’? How did this approach change the way a Shakespearean play was appreciated? Which Shakespeare did they know and use?

The third question will be answered in section 4. Let us examine the first two, but the following proviso may be needed.

Criminal anthropologists looked for (criminogenic) pathologies in Shakespeare's own psyche (see section 4) and in his characters. The relationship between mental illness and Shakespeare must remain problematic due to the delicateness of such issues. It is important to notice "continuities and discontinuities" (Neely 2004, 213) between our attitudes towards mental illness and those of the early modern period. Important work has been done in looking at "[r]epresentations of non-normativity in the Renaissance . . . as viable mechanisms for recreating, interpreting, and understanding a historically remote cultural imagination of disability" (Hobgood and Wood 2013, 7; see also Equestri 2019). As Duncan Salkeld observes, one needs to be very careful: both nineteenth-century and more recent interpretations of mental illness in Shakespeare have the tendency "not only [to] switch from lived experience to fictional constructs of that experience without acknowledging epistemological and textual differences, but they also assume that early modern language about madness can be more precisely explained by twentieth-century psychological categories" (15). But why did the criminologists use Shakespeare?

At the end of the nineteenth century in Italy, Shakespeare was slowly becoming, to a certain extent, "an unimpeachable source of cultural capital" (Hopkins 2016, 8). Being 'the supreme English tragedian', he did not lend himself easily as a national icon (although attempts were made)⁵ – but since so many of his plays are set in Italy, and (to a much lesser degree) because many of his sources are Italian, he could come close to it. When the image of him as the Romantic genius who speaks the language of the heart and passions was coupled with his growing reputation as physician and psychologist, Shakespeare became even more interesting for the Italian middle class. And his tragedies, with their murders, blindings, suicides, and mental illnesses, could not escape the criminal anthropologists' scrutiny: Shakespeare has been called "the most consistent and deliberate artist of criminal behavior

⁵ See for example Angelo De Gubernatis' comment on Carcano's translations: "Ma era giusto che, diventando concittadino italiano, il genio di Shakespeare. . . si togliesse una veste meno barbara della sua originale. . . ritornando il genio a fiorire in Italia, si fece pure alquanto più musicale" (1882, 345, "But it was right that, when Shakespeare's genius became our fellow Italian citizen . . . he appeared in a less barbaric garment than in the original. . . now that his genius flourished again in Italy, he also became much more musical").

before the age of Arthur Conan Doyle” (Wilson 2014, 98), who “dramatized issues of criminology long before there was an academic field called ‘criminology’” (Wilson 2019, 457).⁶

Lisa Hopkins’ study on the uses of Shakespeare in crime fiction also sheds some light on why Shakespeare could be felt relevant for criminologists:

arguably the most basic use to which Shakespeare is put in detective fiction . . . is to assist with an enquiry into who the detective is, who the criminal is, and what empowers the one to track down and punish the other . . . *Macbeth* is particularly useful for discussions of whether unpleasant appearance reflects criminal character – whether it is, in short, possible to find the mind’s construction in the face – which had been a matter of debate in criminologically minded texts since Lombroso. (2016, 13)

The power of a Shakespearean tragedy cannot be reduced to a linear crime-and-punishment process. On the other hand, without venturing into the problem of the circulation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* among the Elizabethans, one can safely say that the Aristotelian doctrine of what constitutes a tragedy was known (if still, and as it will ever be, pondered upon and discussed) to the Italian intellectuals of the late nineteenth century. Now, according to Aristotle, the unforeseen, sudden reversal (*peripateia*) of the hero’s condition from fortune to misfortune is tragic when it “is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgement [*hamartia*]” (1920, 50). Only then will tragedy elicit those feelings of pity and fear (*eleos kai phobos*) which produce *catharsis*.⁷ If a Shakespearean character is interpreted as having perpetrated a crime because of the environment in which s/he has lived, and/or because of his or her own biological makeup, in either case, one can hardly call it a *hamartia*, an error of judgement. Nevertheless, Francesco Forlani (who also collaborated with Lombroso in 1896, in the book *Il caso Amerling*) maintains that the reader and spectator of *Hamlet* will feel pity (but not fear!)⁸ only if the Prince of Denmark really suffers

⁶ For new and stimulating ways of conceptualising criminology and Shakespeare, see Wilson 2014 and Time 1999.

⁷ On the complexities around the concept of catharsis, see Ugolini 2016, 3-22 and *passim*.

from madness – if Hamlet simulates his madness, then he is not a true tragic figure:

L'Amleto, quale io lo sento è all'incontro un'apparizione tanto più simpatica, quanto più sfortunata . . . egli non sa resistere ai sentimenti dolorosi che lo inondano, ma si curva sotto il loro peso, e miseramente impazzisce, sebbene conservi le apparenze dell'umana ragione.

L'Amleto così inteso e interpretato non desta più ribrezzo, ma un senso di pietà profonda, d'immensa compassione, e le parole che pronuncia Orazio sul cadavere di questo principe infelice, e che emanano tanto profumo poetico, trovano un'eco simpatica anche nel cuore del pubblico e del critico . . .

L'Amleto resta sempre ancora un'opera enigmatica, rassomigliante, come dice Schlegel, a quelle equazioni irrazionali, che non si possono mai sciogliere, e in cui rimane continuamente una frazione di una grandezza sconosciuta. Se non che, interpretata nel modo preindicato, essa segnala, come ho detto esordendo, il presentimento di un genio, che, con un volo sovrano, intravede le scoperte della scienza avvenire . . . [1]a scienza ventura, che è la regina degli intelletti. (1871, 92-3)

[Hamlet, as I perceive him, is, upon meeting him, an apparition who is as much sympathetic as he is wretched . . . he cannot resist the sorrows that overwhelm him, but bends under their weight, and goes piteously mad, all the while preserving the appearance of a rational human being.

This Hamlet – the way I understand and interpret him – does not repel us with disgust, but arouses in us a sense of profound pity, of boundless compassion: the words pronounced by Horatio on the corpse of this wretched prince – these words, which emanate such poetic fragrance, find a sympathetic echo also in the heart of the spectator and the critic . . .

Hamlet still remains an enigmatic work; according to Schlegel, it is like one of those irrational equations which cannot be solved, but which always bear the mark of an unknown greatness. However, when it is interpreted in this way, *Hamlet* beckons, as I wrote at the beginning of this text, the premonition of a genius, who, in a

⁸ One could argue that, for the Positivists, fear was felt of secondary importance because of their faith in scientific progress – when in fact, fears of miscegenation, of degeneration, of the rise of the proletariat, etc. were very active.

sublime flight, glimpses the discoveries of the science of the future
 . . . the science to come, the queen of all intellects.]

Thus, for Forlani and the criminal anthropologists in general, the pathologisation of Shakespeare's characters, and the classification of his criminals according to the correct type, helps to restore the tragic nature of the genius' original vision, which had presaged the triumphs of modern science.

3. The Lombrosians' Reading Regimes and Shakespeare

When one reads statements praising Shakespeare written by Italian intellectuals in the second half of the nineteenth century, one wonders if some of them are anything but lip service. How familiar were they really with the plays? If it is true that translations kept being produced, from a theatrical point of view, the staging of Shakespeare was a complicated affair. Apart from successes such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, some plays, especially some of the comedies and histories, simply remained unperformed. Cultural and literary historians tend to focus their attention on the big cities (especially Rome, Milan, and Naples), but many psychiatrists and criminologists hailed from and resided in provincial towns. It is safer to state that Shakespeare remained, by large, an author to be read (as a poet and a philosopher instead of as a dramatist), a classic.⁹

A classic that was embraced by the exponents of the criminal anthropological school. Lombroso's school was interested in, and encompassed, many disciplines and several branches of medicine, law, and of the arts. Lombroso himself founded and was active in cultural societies such as the *Società di letture* and the *Società di cultura* in Verona, his hometown, and he published articles in the major literary magazines of his time, like the *Gazzetta letteraria*, *Il Fanfulla*, and *La Lettura*. One understands how his ideas could travel fast, as they were discussed not only in universities, but also in literary salons and social clubs. However, it is important to realise that "[t]o say that Cesare Lombroso was interested in studying works of literature and music in addition

⁹ On why it is better to say that Shakespeare was fashioned as a 'classic' rather than as a 'myth', see Bigliuzzi 2020, 277-82.

to his anthropological-criminological pursuits is to make a distinction between these two fields of inquiry that Lombroso himself would have scarcely recognized” (Hiller 2013, 226).

Lombroso contributed to the exploration of a world that the arts of the time, from Verism to the Scapigliatura movement, were discovering, in the wake of the French naturalists and, later, the *décadentistes* – a reality often overlooked by Catholic reactionaries. The Lombrosians could thus tap into the tastes of a vast constituency, nor should it be forgotten that one of the reasons for Lombroso’s popularity was due to his appearances as an expert in some of the most notorious local and national trials, which were relived and celebrated in the news for weeks on end (Villa 2013, 12). Besides, the Scapigliatura author Carlo Dossi, a count from Lombardy, prompted women to read Lombroso’s *Uomo di genio* (1882): “aggiungiamo che è una lettura anche dilettevolissima – e ciò per le gentili signore, avidi di romanzo criminale e di cronaca ergastolina” (1909-1927, 4.299, “let me add that it is also a most delightful read, and for the ladies, especially, who are avid readers of criminal novels and prison-life news”). Lombroso’s works were published by the most important publishing houses: Utet, Hoepli, Zanichelli, Bocca, and so on. Lombroso was also aware that “the cultural industry requires a constant and quick production” (Rondini 2001, 18). Tédor de Wyzewa, a Polish-born, French intellectual may have exaggerated when, in 1897, he wrote the following judgment, but this overstatement testifies to the Lombrosians’ notoriety: “Sur vingt livres italiens qui paraissent à present, dix au moins sont manifestement inspirés des doctrines lombrosistes” (698, “Of twenty Italian books published these days, at least ten are evidently inspired by the Lombrosian doctrines”).

Lombroso’s use of literature has been very well described by Andrea Rondini, from a semiotic perspective:

L’approccio di Lombroso ai testi letterari . . . risente di una concezione della letteratura come veicolo immediato e trasparente di informazioni e dati ‘scientifici’; da essa si può risalire alla conoscenza della personalità di un autore. . . Unificante è comunque una pratica di lettura nella quale le opere letterarie sono considerate come documento per esibire e confermare una patologia già compiuta e operante allo stadio corporeo e mentale. L’opera non possiede alcuna autonomia di significato, nessun valore estetico aggiunto, è destituita di ogni polisemia . . . È anzi possibile definire la pratica di

lettura di Lombroso un 'uso' dei testi, piuttosto che una loro interpretazione, sorretto da un' *intentio lectoris* che sorpassa sia l' *intentio auctoris* sia l' *intentio operis*. (2001, 53)

[Lombroso's approach to literary texts . . . is influenced by a conception of literature as an immediate and transparent vehicle of information and 'scientific' data; one can recover from it the knowledge of an author's personality. . . On the other hand, a unifying trait is a reading practice, in which literary works are considered as a document to exhibit and confirm a pathology which has already developed and is operative on a physical and mental level. The literary work does not possess any autonomy of meaning, any added aesthetic value; it is deprived of any polysemy. . . In fact, it is possible to define Lombroso's reading practice as a 'use' of texts, rather than an interpretation – a use that is supported by an *intentio lectoris* which surpasses the *intentio auctoris* as well as the *intentio operis*.]

Lombroso was keenly interested in what constitutes a genius, and believed that there were biological, organic reasons for the emergence of geniuses. The major difficulty for Lombroso and his followers with Shakespeare was the paucity of biographical information we have about the Bard. Much could be gleaned concerning Tasso, Byron, and Leopardi, but criminal anthropologists had to use their imagination to investigate Shakespeare's psyche. The usual solution was to equate the author with the characters of his works. It must be stressed that this practice was wholly unoriginal: it was a characteristic trait of all the literary criticism of the period (and one, which, *mutatis mutandis*, would mark also many specimens of psychoanalytic criticism in the twentieth century). What distinguished the literary criticism of the criminal anthropologists was their unwavering, systematic employment of this approach, and some of them were moved by a genuine humanitarian concern. For example, Scipio Sighele (1868-1913), a sociologist who pioneered the study of crowd psychology (texts no. 9a and 9b in this volume), was adamant about the need for literature and drama to address the social crises of his age, and praised Shakespeare for having divined the criminal pathologies afflicting humanity:

La crisi morale e la crisi economica che attraversiamo non potevano non avere il loro contraccolpo nella letteratura. Un soffio caldo di

altruismo attraversa la coscienza contemporanea: ciò che interessa ed occupa oggi la mente di tutti è – da una parte – quell’esercito di miserabili che hanno finora sofferto tacendo e il cui silenzio noi abbiamo ricompensato con una noncuranza spensierata e sdegnosa, e – dall’altra parte – quell’esercito di delinquenti che noi disprezziamo senza studiarli e ai quali credemmo sufficiente rimedio le illusorie pene del carcere. . .

Poteva l’arte rimanere estranea a questa preoccupazione generale? . . . Gli artisti d’un tempo intuivano, per fortunato dono di natura, le manifestazioni di quella qualunque malattia dello spirito che essi volevano rappresentare: gli artisti d’oggi non hanno bisogno d’intuire: essi sanno. Shakespeare scriveva quando la psichiatria e l’antropologia criminale non erano ancora nate. Zola, per sua confessione, ha letto le opere di Lombroso, e nessuno dei veri e grandi romanzieri dei nostri giorni può ignorare le conquiste fatte negli ultimi cinquant’anni dalla psichiatria e dalla psicologia sperimentale. (1906, 10; 13)

[The moral and economic crises which we are experiencing were bound to have a repercussion as regards literature. A warm breath of selflessness is blowing through the conscience of the current age: these days, what interests and occupies everybody’s mind is, on the one hand, that host of wretched people who, so far, have suffered in silence, a noiselessness which we have rewarded with a blithe and haughty carelessness – on the other hand, that army of delinquents whom we condemn without studying them, and for whom we have believed that a jail’s illusory punishment was a sufficient remedy . . .

Could art remain a stranger to this general preoccupation? . . . The artists of time past could intuit, by a felicitous gift of nature, the manifestations of that particular disease of the spirit they wanted to portray. Today’s artists do not need to intuit: they know. Shakespeare wrote when psychiatry and criminal anthropology had not yet been born. Zola, by his own confession, has read Lombroso’s works, and not one of the true and great novelists of our times can ignore the conquests which in the last fifty years have been reached by psychiatry and experimental psychology.]

One should note that, among Lombroso’s followers, there were people who had qualms about the use of literature as a criminological or psychiatric document of the author’s psyche: for instance, Luigi Ronconi, in his study of Torquato Tasso’s madness, said that he was aware

that “le opere degli autori non possono dare che un’idea inesatta delle reali loro condizioni psichiche” (1896, 24; “authors’ works can provide but an inexact idea of their actual psychic conditions”). But the Lombrosian doctrine of the genius and of the usefulness of literature for their field had become an almost unescapable paradigm. Lombroso “initiated a debate in Europe on the value of literature for law” (Gaakeer 2005, 251) The Lombrosian paradigm was scorned by many, especially abroad, in France and the UK.

Lombroso was delighted that his ideas circulated, although he reacted very angrily when they met opposition. Thus, it is surprising that he agreed to publish in issue 16 of his journal, the *Archivio*, the translation of a very hostile article written by Charles Whibley, editor of *Blackwood’s Magazine* and *Faber*, originally published in the *New Review* (1895). Full of irony, Whibley called Lombroso “the god of cheap science” (425), and stated that he and Max Nordau (1849-1923), the author of the famous *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892), were “obviously incapable of reading or of understanding any higher form of literary expression than statistics. If literature be a branch of social science, then Lombroso may be a greater than Shakespeare” (429).

A corollary of the Lombrosians’ undifferentiation between Shakespeare and the dramatis personae of his plays (and the lyrical I of the Sonnets) is that these critics were commonly uninterested in Shakespeare’s sources: Shakespeare is generally seen as a creator who taps into the human heart to forge living characters – not a reader of Italian novellas or the adapter of previous narratives.

Apropos of narratives, another common feature of this approach is the ‘narrativisation’ of his plays. A criminal anthropologist would try to reconstruct the childhood and upbringing of a character, with the aim of understanding the social environment in which he or she *used to* live, and scrutinise any reference to their physical appearance. Attention would not be on the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic situation, but would be drawn to the imagined past of these characters. Occasionally, the criminal anthropologist would use the past tense to describe what the spectator has seen in a previous scene, strengthening the sense that we are dealing with an actual person. See, for instance, how Nicolò d’Alfonso (1853-1933, a professor of philosophy and criminal anthropologist, albeit a fiercely anti-Lombrosian one; see texts no. 11.a-c) writes about Ophelia’s funeral:

In tal modo i funerali di Ofelia furono mesti, come mesta ed infelice fu la sua vita. Si fece tanto rumore per la sua morte e così contrastata fu la sua sepoltura. Pure non si può dire che essi siano stati inonorati e non accompagnati d'affetto e da pianto. Fu certo un alto onore la presenza del re e della regina in quei funerali. (1915, 231)

[Thus, Ophelia's funeral was sorrowful, as sorrowful and unhappy as her life had been. There were many rumours about her death, and thus her burial found opposition. Still, one cannot say that her death and burial were not honoured or unattended by affection and tears. The presence of the king and of the queen at those funeral rites must have been a great honour].

Again, this approach was not untypical for the period – the difference here is that such 'narrativisations' were done in the name of positivism.

Lombroso's interest in Shakespeare is easily documented: his first psychiatric¹⁰ publication, "Sulla pazzia del Cardano" ["On Cardano's Madness"], an article published in the *Gazzetta medica italiana: Lombardia* in 1855, when he was still a student, bears the epigraph: "Alla pazzia dei grandi presta / grande attenzione" (341), which is a quotation from Claudius' words in *Hamlet* 3.1.191 "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go", in apparently Lombroso's own translation¹¹ – which could be seen as a programmatic motto. However, Lombroso shied away from analysing Shakespeare, probably, as mentioned, because of the dearth of biographic information about him. Lombroso hardly ever mentions him separately, but generally in a group of other geniuses. He made only some general considerations (see texts 5a-c in this volume). Shakespeare could be seen as the perfect product of the British civilisation, of a nation that had grown strong through hybridity – the British are "il popolo più evoluto d'Europa . . . sorto per la mistione di Celti, Germani e Latini" (1894, 204, "Europe's most evolved people . . . born from the mixture of Celts, Germans, and Latins"). Shakespeare as a genius did not need an education (Lombroso thus follows the Romantic view of

¹⁰ He had already published on historical and entomological topics: "Schizozo di un quadro storico dell'antica agricoltura d'Italia" (1852); "Saggio sulla storia della Repubblica Romana" (1852); "Di un fenomeno fisiologico comune ad alcuni imenotteri" (1853).

¹¹ It is neither Leoni's, nor Rusconi's, nor Carcano's.

Shakespeare as a genius directly inspired by Nature); and, as a man, Shakespeare had that “potenza creatrice” (“creative power”) which is deficient in women: “Sebbene non manchino nomi di donne illustri. . . è evidente che siamo lontani dalla grandezza dei genii maschili, di Shakespeare, di Balzac, di Aristotile, di Newton, di Michelangelo” (1893, 160, “Although we do not lack names of illustrious women . . . it is evident that we are far from the greatness of the male geniuses, of Shakespeare, Balzac, Aristotle, Newton, Michelangelo”). Biographical paucity did not stop others (see, in particular, texts 6a. and 8).

Shakespeare was *one* of the authors studied by the criminal anthropologists: one among others such as Dante, Alfieri, Manzoni, Leopardi, Zola, Ibsen, and Dostoevsky. But the sheer number of quotations from Shakespeare in the journals Lombroso founded and directed, and, especially, of articles and essays on Shakespeare inspired by his work make the criminal anthropologists’ output evidently one of the most significant strands of Shakespeare criticism produced in Italy at least until the 1920s.

Ferri’s tripartition in *I delinquenti nell’arte* of Macbeth as the type of the born criminal, Hamlet as the insane criminal, and Othello as the criminal of passion was generally accepted, but there were exceptions. Benedetto Croce raised his voice against this strand of criticism (see text no. 14 in this volume), as did Piero Gobetti (text no. 15) and author and poet Giovanni Papini:

Infatti cosa vuol provare in fin dei conti il suo libro sui *Delinquenti nell’arte*? Nientemeno che questo: che gli artisti del passato avevano già dipinto o scolpito o descritto colla più ‘positiva’ precisione il tipo del delinquente che più tardi la scuola ‘positiva’ doveva illustrare, tormentare, classificare. V’immaginate Dante, Shakespeare, Schiller che hanno il coraggio di precorrere Cesare Lombroso ed Enrico Ferri? (1917, 200)

[Indeed, what does Ferri ultimately want to demonstrate in his book on *The Criminals in Art*? Nothing less than this: that the artists of the past had already depicted or sculpted, with the most ‘positive’ precision, the type of criminal, which the ‘positive’ school would later illustrate, torment, and classify. Can you imagine Dante, Shakespeare, Schiller to have the courage to anticipate Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri?]

Let us look now at two examples of why and how a criminal anthropologist would quote Shakespeare.

Sometimes, citing Shakespeare was a way to show one's culture, and embellish one's words. Here, Paola Lombroso Carrara (1872-1954), Cesare's daughter, in a psychological study on the ways outward, physical signs can reveal an individual's character, discusses how happiness can alter the way we look, and quotes *Julius Caesar* 1.2.193-6:

Tutto il corpo profitta di questa disposizione, perché la circolazione si attiva ed alimenta riccamente gli organi e i tessuti. È una verità banale che le persone sane sono contente (si dovrebbe dire che le persone contente sono sane!) ed è con ragione che il tiranno sospettoso di Shakespeare, Giulio Cesare, vuol esser attorniato da gente grassa, perché la gente grassa è per lo più soddisfatta e quindi poco pericolosa: "Che io abbia sempre intorno a me uomini grassi e colla faccia brillante, delle persone che dormon la notte. Quel Cassio ha un viso pallido e scarno, pensa troppo; tali uomini son pericolosi" (Atto 1, scena II). (1902, 21-2)

[The whole body profits from this disposition, because the circulation is activated and nourishes the organs and the tissues richly. It is a banal truth that healthy people are happy (one should say that happy people are healthy!), and Shakespeare's suspicious tyrant,¹² Julius Caesar, is right in his desire to be surrounded by fat people, because most fat people are satisfied, and hence not very dangerous: "Let me have men about me that are fat, / Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights. / Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look. / He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous". (Act 1, scene II)]

It is quite probable that Paola Lombroso Carrara translated those lines herself.¹³ They elevate what she claims is a "banal truth", and add a socio-political dimension to it.

In comparison with the other two co-founders of the Positivist Criminological School, Baron Raffaele Garofalo seems to have been

¹² On how Caesarism was articulated in early twentieth-century Italy, see Avezzù 2020.

¹³ She was also a translator, which became useful for her activities in directing children's literature book series. For instance, she translated Stevenson's *Treasure Island* in 1925.

less interested in literature and in the arts. However, he refers to Shakespeare a couple of times in his major work *La Criminologia. Studio sul delitto, sulle sue cause e sui mezzi di repressione* [*Criminology. A Study on Crime, Its Causes and the Means to Repress It*] (2nd edition, 1891), and it is clear that, by doing so, he wants to harness Shakespeare's status to substantiate an enterprise about which he cared passionately: defending the necessity of the death penalty, which, in 1889,¹⁴ had stopped being in force (and would be reintroduced by Mussolini in 1926). Garofalo uses Hamlet's madness to discuss whether we should feel compassion towards a type of born criminals:

E può così giustificarsi la *pena di morte*, la quale sembrerebbe atto di barbarie se i delinquenti fossero considerati come esseri che soffrono, e che pertanto avrebbero diritto alla nostra compassione, anzi alla nostra simpatia, perché il delitto non sarebbe allora che un accidente della loro infermità, non già l'effetto del loro carattere o del loro temperamento. Come dice Shakespeare, l'alienazione era "il nemico del povero Amleto..., un nemico che offendeva lui quanto quelli che per lui aveano sofferto". Viceversa, l'anomalia congenita del carattere è la particolare fisionomia morale di un dato individuo; essa ne è elemento inseparabile; il difetto organico è la nota distintiva dell'individuo; tolgasi questo elemento e l'individuo sarà disgregato, l'*io* scomparirà. (108)

[Therefore, the *death penalty* can be justified, because such punishment would be a barbaric act, should the delinquents be deemed creatures in pain, who suffer, and who would thus have the right to our compassion, nay, our sympathy, because crime, in that case, would be only an accident of their infirmity, not the effect of their character or temperament. As Shakespeare states, alienation was "poor Hamlet's enemy... an enemy who offended him as much as those who had suffered because of him".¹⁵ Vice versa, the congenital anomaly of an individual's character constitutes their particular moral physiognomy: it is an inseparable element; the organic de-

¹⁴ The death penalty had been abolished *de facto* in 1877 – however, it remained in force in the military penal code and in the colonies.

¹⁵ Garofalo starts to quote *Hamlet* 5.2.185 verbatim, but then paraphrases the rest: "Who does it then? His madness. If't be so, / Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged" (183-4). See the same passage as used by Fulci, in the preface to text no. 4 in this volume.

fect is the individual's distinctive note; if the individual is deprived of this element, the individual will disintegrate, the *I* will vanish.]

In another quite disturbing passage, he quotes *Romeo and Juliet* 3.1.196:

Non si colpisce la sventura, si tenta far sì che quella già inevitabile non sia fonte di nuove sventure. La medesima fa isolare gli appestati ne' lazaretti, uccidere [sic] i cani idrofobi, sterminare gl'insetti nocivi. Il sentimento umano di simpatia interviene per salvare la vita di quegli uomini la cui morte non sia necessaria, cioè a dire quelli che non hanno perduto ogni diritto alla simpatia per una mostruosità che li renda perpetuamente disadatti alla convivenza. Costoro invece dovranno essere considerati come nemici di quella società a cui nessun legame li congiunge, perché può ben dirsi con Shakespeare: "*Mercy but murders pardoning those that kill*". (337-8)

[One does not assail mischance: one tries to prevent an already inevitable mischance from producing further calamities. It is the same principle that lies behind the isolation of the infected in the lazarettos, the killing of rabid dogs, the extermination of harmful vermin. The humane disposition to sympathy intervenes to save the life of those men whose death is not necessary, that is to say, of those men who have not lost every right to sympathy due to a monstrosity, which has made them eternally unfit to live with others. On the contrary, these individuals must be considered enemies of that society to which no bond can tie them, because, to quote Shakespeare: "Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill".]

Garofalo uses the words pronounced by the Prince just after he has sentenced Romeo's banishment for killing Tybalt (if Romeo returns to Verona, he will be executed). These words have been read in the light of Machiavelli's thought (see Hosley 1954, 146), but, in the dramatic context, one should consider the Prince's personal grief and anger. Garofalo takes these words and uses them as a *sententia* written by Shakespeare *qua* timeless genius (and hence, of universal authority) to declare that clemency towards some criminals is useless, because they are in fact monsters, and the State should have them killed to save more lives.

Finally, the question of race must be addressed. Shaul Bassi brilliantly observes that one can speak of a "*repression fallacy*" which has "constituted the chief 'country disposition' of Italy": "an approach that

presupposes a culturally homogenous and abstract space in which literature and theater exist blissfully untouched by base things like racism or colonialism”, exemplified, in our case, in the fact that “[s]cientists, in the climate of positivist criminology, diagnosed Othello’s uxoricide as a ‘crime consumed by an epileptic’, fully indifferent to his ethnicity” (2016, 28; quoting Luigi Lugiato, see text no. 16). Othello was presented as the universal type of the criminal of passion. It is true that Ferri’s and Sighele’s portrayals of the relationship between Othello, Iago, and Desdemona, seem to ‘repress’ direct references to race: Ferri (no. 7) calls him ‘neutrally’ “the Moor” (55, 56), remembers Tommaso Salvini playing him (55, on whose blackface/brownface, see Bassi and Scego 2020), and says that another critic, Arturo Graf, not him, thinks that Othello becomes jealous because he was “in condizioni sfavorevoli, lui moro e militaresco, di fronte alla moglie, fiore gentile e delicato della veneta laguna” (57, “by unfavourable conditions – he is a Moor and a soldier, while his wife is a gentle and delicate flower of the Venetian lagoon”). But if one looks at the primitivistic language used by Ludovico Fulci to describe Othello (text no. 4) or Nicolò d’Alfonso’s perpetuation of the noble savage myth (text no. 11a), one understands that racism was pervasive – and consider that the anti-Lombrosian d’Alfonso took part in the First Universal Races Congress, held in London from 26 to 29 June 1911, advocating the identity of the human race.

4. Which Shakespeare?

Only Giuseppe Ziino in his landmark monograph *Shakespeare e la scienza moderna* (1897, text no. 8) and, to a lesser extent, Enrico Morselli, in a paper read at a conference to celebrate the Tercentenary of Shakespeare’s death¹⁶ (which was reviewed in *Illustrazione popolare*, see text no. 13), dealt with virtually all of Shakespeare’s plays, and in detail. Most of the authors, whose works are excerpted in this volume, concentrated on the tragedies: Shakespeare is called a “tragico” or “trageda” much more frequently than a “dramatist”. This fact can be explained when one considers that:

¹⁶ See Bigliazzi 2020 on the fraught ideological implications of these celebrations in the middle of the First World War.

In the Italian *Ottocento* Shakespeare's significance was generally measured and established by referring to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*. These plays were studied, quoted, and performed much more frequently than any one of the *Comedies* . . . One of the reasons for the widespread preference of tragedy over comedy is to be found in the cult of 'the great actor', who favoured tragic roles for their impact and seriousness, and in the public's prevalent appreciation of melodrama, both in the sense of a sentimental and sensational type of narrative and in the more 'technical' sense of 'bel canto' and opera. Moreover, the dominant cultural perspective tended to focus on the dramatic hero as the mouthpiece of its author, its *alter ego* almost, while, at the same time, turning the protagonist into an object of identification for the spectator. (Locatelli 2004, 147)

Besides, and self-evidently enough, tragedies focused on the themes in which criminologists were most interested. But even Shakespeare's fools did not capture the psychiatrists' attention: Luigi Lugiato (see preface to text no. 16) sees the fool in *King Lear* as a simple "giullare" (161, "jester") and as a loyal servant, who provides a simple form of comic relief, like the *zanni* in commedia dell'arte, although Lugiato admits that he is a "splendida figurina psicologica" (ibid., "a brilliant psychological figurine"). Ziino, on his part, places the fools and the clowns on the same level, and describes them as "una varietà di frenastenici abortiti, in quanto che risultano da un misto curioso di imbecillità e di furberia, di semplicità di spirito e d'arguzia" (188, "a variety of aborted phrenaesthetic¹⁷ individuals, the result of a curious mixture of imbecility and cunning, simple-mindedness and wit"). For him, the Fool in *Lear* is a very likeable character, one who is a "compagnone allegro ma affezionato" (191-2, "merry, but loving boon companion") – nothing more.

English quotations are hardly ever used: the use of Italian translations does not mean that all these authors did not understand English, but indicates, much more probably, that they were aware that most of their readers were no Anglophones. The translations that are quoted most frequently are Carcano's verse translation, and Rusconi's in prose. However, some of these authors, e.g. d'Alfonso, often include their own translations.

¹⁷ Andrea Verga (1811-1895), a physician based in Lombardy, coined the term 'frenastenico' to mean a person suffering from any form of psychic deficit.

Opera remained an influential paradigm, especially as far as *Othello* is concerned. Sometimes, this ‘cultural interference’ is explicit. For example, Lugiatto quotes excerpts from Boito’s libretto of Verdi’s opera (196, 197, 223), and, referring to Iago’s aria *Credo in un dio crudel* (2.2.), explains:

Per questo ben a ragione il *Boito*, nel preparare il suo ben noto libretto, ha messo in bocca a Jago una specie di monologo, che è un vero osanna innalzato alla propria perversità. Versi splendidi ed efficacissimi, che sembrano riassumere in poche righe tutto un concetto, che si trova diluito nelle varie pagine dell’opera Shakespeariana. (223)

[Boito was right when, preparing his famous libretto, he put in Iago’s mouth a kind of monologue, which is a true cry of ‘hosanna’ to his own perverse wickedness. Those lyrics are amazing and quite effective, since they seem to sum up, in few lines, a whole concept which is diluted here and there in Shakespeare’s play.]

Other times, the interference is more subtle. In a passage of *I delitti nell’arte* (text no. 7), Enrico Ferri discusses how criminal anthropology has shown that criminals of passion commit suicide as a reaction of their moral sense, when the latter realises what they have done. Ferri refers to Tommaso Salvini’s staging of the last scene in *Othello*:

Questo dato preciso e certo della psicologia criminale è ciò che Shakespeare ha lucidamente veduto e che, fra gli interpreti suoi, Tommaso Salvini ha vivamente sentito nella espressione meravigliosa di plastica e di voce dell’“Otello fu!” – quando il Moro sopra se stesso compie, presso l’amata ed uccisa Desdemona, l’ultimo atto di giustizia, punitrice e liberatrice ad un tempo. (1896, 55)

[This precise and exact datum of criminal psychology is what Shakespeare had lucidly foreseen, and what, among his interpreters, Tommaso Salvini has vividly articulated in his marvellous expression – both physical and vocal – of “That’s he that was Othello!”, when the Moor performs on himself, next to his beloved Desdemona, whom he has killed, the final act of justice, both a punishment and a liberation.]

Shakespeare’s “That’s he that was Othello” (5.2.290) is less memorable a line than those synthetic four syllables: “Otello fu” – and the phrase

had been used by Boito in his libretto. In the opera, Verdi leaves a pause after it, during which the singer playing Othello goes towards the bed in silence, to contemplate Desdemona one last time. The “Otello fu” of the opera is generally sung like a subdued reflection, each syllable being on the same, low note, after crying “O gloria!” on a much higher note. “Otello fu” had been impressed onto the aural memory of many Italians. Now, we know that Salvini (who played Othello decades before the première of Verdi’s opera in 1887) used Carcano’s translation (Giovanelli 2003, 240), and Carcano does not render those words as a synthetic, emphatic exclamation, since here the translation is quite close to Shakespeare: “Io son colui / Che Otello fu” (1852, 248). We seem to have two alternatives: either Salvini changed Carcano’s syntax, eliminating “Io son colui / Che”, or Ferri was mixing the opera with Salvini’s interpretation. However, the truth lies somewhere in between. In a script which purports to be the tragedy as “Rappresentata dal Signor Tommaso Salvini e dalla sua compagnia” (“Staged by Mr Tommaso Salvini and his company”), and that was edited and published by Salvini himself in 1877, one can read those lines as follows. Shakespeare’s text is heavily altered; here, Cassio asks him: “Signor, qual vi riveggio?” (160, lit. “Sir, how am I seeing you again?”, i.e. “Sir, in what state do I find you?”). To which Othello replies: “Io son colui. – Che Otello fu! ... la man mi date, il vostro – Perdono (*pausa*)” (“That’s he. – That was Othello!¹⁸ ... give me your hand, your – Pardon [*pause*]”).¹⁹ It seems that Salvini’s suicidal Othello was more melodramatic than the one in Verdi’s opera; at the same time, we know that Verdi and Boito were great admirers of Salvini (see Conati and Medici 1994, 114).

The previous example can serve as a good reminder that the Shake-

¹⁸ Depending on the emphasis, these words can also mean something like: “What an Othello he was!”.

¹⁹ Ferri’s memory of “Otello fu” as a separate unit is contradicted also by another script of Salvini’s performance: in the edition published in New York in 1873, one reads: “Io son colui / Che Otello fu! ... La man mi date, il vostro / Perdono” (Salvini 1873, 132). We have a further record of Salvini’s performance of this moment in the play. Edward Tuckerman Mason described virtually every aspect of Salvini’s choices in the performances of *Othello* he saw. In this case, he wrote: “Othello does not look at Cassio. He says ‘That’s he that was’, etc., in a very low tone, and gives his left hand to Cassio, who clasps it” (1890, 104).

speare which the Italian psychiatrists and criminologists knew was the product of a multi-layered and multimodal process of mediation. The Iago and Othello they pathologised and discussed from a legal point of view rarely spoke the words one finds in the 1622 quarto and in the First Folio, and these Shakespearean characters could behave much differently in performance from what one may expect.

A unifying theme, which recurs in these intellectuals' works, and interestingly unifies them is their attack on a vision of Shakespeare as an imperturbable and remote genius. Shakespeare was deemed fascinating exactly because he was not a serene Olympian, an imagery which can be found in the following two passages. The first is by Giuseppe Antonini, director of the psychiatric hospital in Pavia, and author of *I Precursori di Lombroso* [*Lombroso's Precursors*] (1900). He strenuously defended the Lombrosians' interest in Shakespeare and in other authors:

Qui occorre soltanto notare come Lombroso non solo ha dato ordinamento scientifico ed ha iniziata la riforma nel diritto penale e nella criminologia, ma collo studio positivo applicato alla produzione della genialità, abbia aperto nuovi orizzonti alla critica letteraria e umanizzato quegli idoli, che un pregiudizio atavico poneva, perché genî, all'infuori della natura in un olimpo da operetta. (158)

[Suffice it to note here that not only has Lombroso ordered criminal law and criminology scientifically, and started the reformation thereof, but he has also applied positivist research to the production of the genial condition, opening new horizons for literary criticism and humanising those idols which an atavic prejudice had relegated, as geniuses, outside of nature, in an operetta-style Olympus.]

Six years earlier, the Calabrese philosopher Antonio Renda had thus characterised the Bard (text no. 6a in this volume):

Erotomania, scetticismo, tendenze all'ubbrachezza, alla vendetta, alle scene brutali, sospetti di psicopatia sessuale, predilezione per metafore strane e per giuochi di parole; animo sensibilissimo, forse mistico, sono tali indizi che meglio approfonditi e meglio studiati potrebbero aggiungere al gran cumolo di casi sperimentali, un caso nuovo e importante per meglio convalidare l'ipotesi del nostro illustre Lombroso.

Per ora, se non è dimostrata completamente l'anomalia del ca-

rattere di Shakespeare, c'è tanto – lo speriamo – da impedire che dai soliti ipercritici si gridi trionfalmente al sereno, all'olimpico tragico inglese. (1894, 307)

[Erotomania; scepticism; proneness to drunkenness, revenge, and brutal scenes; a fondness for strange metaphors and wordplay; a very sensitive, perhaps mystical, mindset: such clues, once well explored and sufficiently studied, may add to the vast mass of experimental cases – a new and important case to better authenticate the hypothesis of our illustrious Lombroso.

As for now, if the anomaly of Shakespeare's character has not yet been ultimately demonstrated, we have hopefully gathered a sufficient amount of elements to prevent the usual hyper-critics from hailing with triumphal cheers the serene, the Olympian English tragedian.]

Shakespeare's passions could thus be pathologised just like the characters of his plays – that was what fascinated criminal anthropologists: a genius awaiting diagnosis. And such diagnoses employed the newest terminology. For example, in his investigation of Shakespeare's sexuality, Ziino analysed the sonnets to the Fair Youth (text no. 8)²⁰ and suggested that Shakespeare may have been an “urningio” (1897, 16), an *urning*. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs had coined this term to denote a homosexual back in 1864, but the form “urningio” is not recorded in the *Dizionario Battaglia*, nor in any other Italian dictionary – “urningio” is, instead: Ziino's usage would have remained a *hapax*, had it not been repeated in Fausto Squillace's review (text no. 10) and in Angelo Raffaelo Levi's history of English literature (1901, 1.437).

5. Conclusions and Future Directions

After this overview, the reader will not be surprised to find the presence of Ophelia in Italy from the second half of the nineteenth century to the 1920s not just on the stage, in art (e.g. Michele Rapisardi's painting *Testa di Ofelia pazza* [*Head of Mad Ophelia*], 1865), textual adaptations (e.g. Luigi Capuana's short story *Ofelia*, 1893), and silent film (e.g. Mario Caserini's 1908 *Amleto* and Eleuterio Rodolfi's 1917 *Amleto*), but

²⁰ On the first Italian translations of the Sonnets, see Brera 2010.

also as the name of the psychiatric hospital of Potenza, the *Progetto Ophelia* (1905-1920), designed by Ludovico Quaroni and Marcello Piacentini, and in a parliamentary act of 27 March 1903. On that occasion, the question debated in the Senate was how to finance and regulate asylums, and Senator Giovanni Faldella, a lawyer and novelist from Piedmont, felt the need to emphasise the difference between Shakespeare's Ophelia and the harsh reality he (thought he) knew: "Insorge anche dal lato letterario, con la sua ghirlanda inoffensiva, la pazzarella di Shakespeare. Quale abisso tra Ofelia e quei tipi di jene che sono i mentecatti criminali!" (Camera 1903, 1935; "Up rises, from the literary side, Shakespeare's darling mad girl, with her harmless garland. What an abyss between Ophelia and those kinds of hyaenas, the criminal mad!").

With the advent of psychoanalysis, new impetus and new methodologies were given to literary criticism – but one could argue that the Lombrosians had paved the way for them. In Italy, the same people who had used the Lombrosian approach to literary texts began to embrace Freudian notions, although generally with much scepticism: for example, Prof. Enrico Morselli (see texts no. 13 and 16 in this volume).²¹ However, as Michel David claims

Lombroso è rapidamente diventato un freno all'assimilazione di altri indirizzi di ricerca e specialmente della psicanalisi. Con il pretesto che vi sia già stato Lombroso, gli scienziati italiani respinsero Freud dall'antropologia, dalla sessuologia, dalla pedagogia, dalla criminologia, dalla neuropsichiatria. Con lo stesso pretesto, e incoraggiati dall'atteggiamento di questi scienziati, i letterati e i critici respinsero ugualmente Freud. Per i primi, il pretesto si mascherava di amore a Lombroso, per i secondi di odio allo stesso Lombroso. (1990, 23)

²¹ Both Lombroso's and Freud's doctrines were attacked by the Catholic Church and, gradually, by Fascism (questions of race had much to do with this rejection). Some scholars assure us that Lombroso and Freud "had in fact no interest in each other . . . they never met, never wrote to, and never quoted each other in their respective publications" (Guarnieri 2013, 120). This is not true: Lombroso quoted approvingly Freud's discussion of fixed ideas in *Obsessions and Phobias* (1902, 99), whereas Freud, in a letter to Stefan Zweig (19 October 1920), referred to the Italian colleague: "Der Phantast Lombroso verstand noch nicht die Differentialdiagnose zu machen" ("Lombroso, that fantastical, has not understood differential diagnosis yet").

[Lombroso rapidly became a brake to the assimilation of other research perspectives, and especially, psychoanalysis. Under the pretext that Lombroso had already been there, Italian scientists banned Freud from anthropology, sexology, pedagogy, criminology, and neuropsychiatry. Under the same pretext, and with the encouragement of these scientists, literary authors and critics rejected Freud as well. For the former, the pretext disguised itself as love towards Lombroso, for the latter, as hate towards the same Lombroso.]

Silvio Tissi published in 1929 *La psicanalisi, scienza dell'io o del mistero-problema psichico: con saggi di analisi psichica su drammi di Pirandello, Ibsen, Shakespeare, Tolstoi e Shaw* (see text no. 17). All psychoanalytic scholars agree that Tissi was an eclectic charlatan, and his shameful performance at a lecture he held in Trieste prompted the medical association of the city to appoint Edoardo Weiss to disseminate Freud's true teachings. And Weiss, the founder of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society, in the first issue of the *Rivista italiana di psicanalisi* (1932) referred to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in a way which does not seem particularly revolutionary:

Trattandosi poi di gravi delitti, come p. es. di omicidio, la vittima può comparire all'assassino anche in forma allucinatoria, infondendo nella sua anima terrore ed angoscia . . . Pensiamo al brivido di Macbeth che vede lo spettro sanguinante di Banquo, da lui fatto uccidere. Questo motivo del rimorso è, in genere, quanto mai gradito nella rappresentazione drammatica: tanto intimamente è sentito dall'attore e tanto immediato è il suo effetto sul pubblico. (172)

[Then, in the case of serious crimes, like, for example, murder, the victim can also appear before the murderer in hallucinatory form, inspiring terror and anguish in his soul . . . Let us think of Macbeth's shudder, when he sees the blood-stained ghost of Banquo, whom he has had killed. The motif of remorse is generally exceedingly well liked in dramatic representations – so intimately felt by the actor, and so immediate its effect on the audience].

To recapitulate, the uses of Shakespeare by Italian psychiatrists and criminologists have proved a fruitful and yet unscrutinised field of enquiry. Many questions remain.

First and foremost, questions of reception. August Goll's book *Criminal Types in Shakespeare* (1909) has been sometimes seen as a cu-

rious specimen of Shakespeare criticism simply because it was translated into English (Goll was the most influential Danish criminologist, and head of police of Copenhagen; he had published it in 1907 as *Forbrydertyper hos Shakespeare*). Readers may not know immediately that Goll was inspired by the Lombrosians. He does refer to them, although not approvingly:

Lombroso has tried to give an answer . . . But against this generalisation decisive objections have been raised. Lombroso's characteristics may, perhaps, be applied to a small group of strongly-degenerated criminals, closely approaching the feeble-minded and insane; in other cases they are entirely erroneous. In fact, it does not do to take criminals in the mass. Why one man turns criminal, another not, is certainly a problem; but the crimes themselves are, in fact, nothing but a series of actions accounted for by law, carefully decided upon, carried out, as all other human actions, for the sake of ordinary human aims, out of ordinary human motives. Nor are criminals themselves, mentally, aesthetically, and as regards their wills, essentially different from other men: they are human [like] everybody else . . . (1966, 11)

Goll may not have agreed with Lombroso, but his approach grew from an intense engagement with him:

High above all, like a mountain above mole-hills, towers Shakespeare's wonderful genius. His characters fit into all times, belong to the whole of humanity. They fill every one who knows them with an interest such as hardly any other imaginary characters produce. They possess a general validity which raises them above mere fantastic figures, mere scrawls: they are not individual heroes, blackguards, criminals; no, they represent, each in his own way, the good, the evil, the anti-social itself, in man, yet without, therefore, ever diminishing to abstractions, without ever ceasing to be human beings like ourselves. By choosing them we, therefore, get as near as possible to the ideal of seeing the criminal in man and man as criminal; we reach a generalisation through specialisation of which Lombroso's heavy lines give us no conception . . . (24)

Elmer Edgar Stoll, in another much-quoted article, "Criminals in Shakespeare and Science" (1912), does the same: he cites Lombroso and Ferri, occasionally disagreeing with them.

In general, British reactions not to Lombroso (see Davie 2013), but to the Lombrosians' use of literature and drama, must be better evaluated: their feedback ranges from neutral appreciation (according to Edith Sitwell, "Shakespeare saw, with the eyes of the spirit, what Lombroso, Havelock Ellis, and other scientists were to see, centuries after, with the eyes of the body", 1948, 196) to very harsh rejection, like this anonymous review in 1897 issue of *The Shakespearean*:

Shakespeare may have been, as Signor Ferri says, "the great English psychologist" but I will eat my hat if he was such an idiot – I beg pardon, such an "inferior degenerate" – as to write a tragedy [i.e. *Hamlet*], a blend of the deepest thought and the most sublime poetry, about a mere criminal lunatic, who would have been clapped at once into a strait-waistcoat if only the Elizabethans could have had the privilege of studying the works of Professor Lombroso. As for Signor Ferri, he has studied those works, I fancy, more assiduously than Shakespeare's text. (356)

The US reception of the Lombrosian literary approach has not been studied, and one should also go beyond the English-speaking countries – Gaakeer 2005 being as of yet the only exception.²²

In the Italian context, it would be interesting to see how other actors responded to Lombroso's theory besides Zacconi. If, by looking at letters and personal documents, one could find information about the actresses' response, that would also be quite important: many of the Lombrosians had quite sexist and misogynist views. Moreover, an examination of the development (or involution) of criminal anthropology's approach to literature and Shakespeare during Fascism²³ could yield important results. In general, much archival work lies ahead.

A wider gaze on the history of the uses of Shakespeare among criminologists and medical scientists is timely and necessary. One needs to remind researchers of the mistakes of the past, when they ingenuously write that "Shakespeare's *Macbeth* seems to exemplify many issues which are relevant for psychopathology, alongside criminology" (Barbieri 2016, 162), or sentences like the following: "Shakespeare's body consciousness is part of that wider self-consciousness manifested in

²² For an insightful overview of possible future directions in the field of law-and-literature criticism, see Gaakeer 2012.

²³ On Shakespeare and Fascism, see Bigliuzzi 2019 and De Benedictis 2014.

some of his characters”; medical doctors “could learn to be better doctors by studying Shakespeare” (Heaton 2011, 97). Interdisciplinarity is admirable and important, but bardolatry and a disregard for the epistemological autonomy of fiction will not bring many benefits.

A Note on the Texts and Their Translations

The texts have been arranged chronologically, except when extracts are taken from multiple works by the same author. In that case, they have been grouped together, although still in a chronological order. The punctuation and spelling of the original texts have been preserved. The few changes include: a) the omission of extra spaces before punctuation; b) the standardisation of acute and grave accents; c) the number of dots indicating an ellipsis have been reduced to three (except for one case, in Ziino's study, the reason being duly explained in a note). In the translation, italics have been added or deleted to clarify whether the author is referring to a title, or to an eponymous character. All other editorial interventions are signalled by square brackets.

With the exception of Lombroso's and Ferri's works, this is the first time that these texts have been translated into English. The translator has tried to render the floridness of the prose of certain passages, and to find the English equivalent for the often very precise technical jargon used in the original texts. In the translation, readers may occasionally find some syntactical choices or turns of phrases quaint or difficult, but reading the Italian of such texts often elicits the same effect. For consistency's sake, the translator has always used the spelling "Shakespeare" in English, where the Italian may have "Shakespeare", "Shakspeare", and even "Shaspeare". All foreign proper names Italianised in the original (e.g. "Guglielmo" for "William", or "Vittorina" for "Victorine") have been restored. As regards terminology, "freniatria" has been translated as "psychiatry", because, while the *OED* and other dictionaries record the adjective "phreniatric", they do not record the noun from which it derives. Occasionally, the translator has also tentatively used "melancholy" as opposed to "melancholia": e.g. De Zerbi draws a clear difference between the two, but in other cases the distinction is vague. Finally, "delinquent" is normally employed as a synonym of "criminal" (*OED* n., A.1), in keeping with *fin-de-siècle* usage.

All quotations from Shakespeare's plays and poems, unless otherwise noted, refer to Wells and Taylor 2005.

The editor wishes to warn his readers that most of the following texts contain ableist, racist, and sexist passages, and the content may prove otherwise offensive. These passages, and their translation, have not been censored or altered for the sake of historical documentation. In the notes, some of the most problematic instances are contextualised and/or commented upon.

1. From Francesco Forlani. 1871. “Sull’amore e la pazzia d’Amleto” [“On Hamlet’s Love and Madness”]. In *Ore di Ozio* [*Leisure Hours*], 63-93. Innsbruck: Wagner.

Francesco Forlani (? – died c. 1913/14) was a member of the Italian community of Spalato, i.e. Split, in Croatia, then a part of the Habsburg monarchy. He became a distinguished barrister in Trieste and Vienna, as well as full professor of law at the University of Innsbruck. He supported the Dalmatian *irredentisti* Arturo Colautti and Antonio Bajamonti (Pagnini 1994, 99), and was also the director of the political magazine *Nuova Gazzetta di Trieste* (1874-1875). Among his most important publications, one can mention *L’Isterismo nei suoi rapporti colla follia e colla responsabilità* [*Hysteria in Its Relation to Madness and Responsibility*] (Vienna: Manz & Torino/Firenze: Loescher, 1869), *La questione carceraria dal punto di vista umanitario e sociale* [*The Prison Problem From a Social and Humanitarian Point of View*] (Trieste: Appolonio & Caprin, 1874) and the Italian translation and edition of Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *De sodomia ratione sexus punienda. De lege lata et de lege ferenda* (“*Il sessuale contrario dinanzi al foro penale*”, Split: Morpurgo, 1885). Forlani also wrote a preface to Domenico Giuriati and Cesare Lombroso’s *Il caso Amerling* [*The Amerling Case*] (Milano: Treves, 1896).

As one can see from his works and his papers presented at the Minerva Society of Trieste, in his ‘hyphenated life’ as an Austro-Dalmatian-Italian, Forlani engaged with many of the most pressing issues related to criminal law and psychiatry. He also cultivated a keen interest in literature and drama, and especially the works of Shakespeare. Aside from the essay which has been collected here, he also wrote *La lotta per il diritto: Variazioni filosofiche-giuridiche sopra Il Mercante di Venezia e altri drammi di Shakespeare* [*The Struggle for One’s Rights: Philosophical and Juridical Variations on The Merchant of Venice and Other Shakespearean Plays*] (Torino: Loescher, 1874) – in which he attacks Rudolf von Jhering’s defence of Shylock, and discusses the opposition between justice and grace in *Measure for Measure*; *Sul Giulio Cesare di Shakespeare: Lettura tenuta nel Gabinetto di Minerva nel giorno 22 febbrajo 1874* [*On Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar: A Paper Read at the Minerva Society on 22 February 1874*] (Trieste: Mortera, 1874) – in which he urges Italians to study Shakespeare, now that political unity had been achieved; *Hamlet rappresentato da Ernesto Rossi. Appunti critici* [*Hamlet as Played by Ernesto Rossi: Some Critical Notes*] (Trieste: Bello e Pastori, 1874) – in which he praises Rossi’s psychological precision in playing Hamlet; and finally, *Sulla pazzia*

di Lear: Studio psicologico [*On Lear's Madness: A Psychological Study*] (Split: Zannoni, 1880) – in which he elaborates on Carl Stark's *König Lear. Eine psychiatrische Shakespeare-Studie für das gebildete Publikum* (Stuttgart: Lindemann, 1871).

No Italian had written so extensively on Shakespeare before Forlani. His Shakespeare criticism is firmly grounded in the German approach of Goethe, Schlegel, and Gervinus. However, as has been shown, Forlani was familiar with more recent scholarship, and was especially interested in considering Shakespeare as a genius who had predicted many tenets of modern psychology and criminology (see the epigraph to his 1874 essay on Rossi: “Arte e scienza sien uno”, “Let art and science be one”). The psychiatrists he most often quotes are the French masters (Philippe Pinel, Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol, and Brière de Boismont) and James Cowles Prichard (who coined the expressions “moral insanity” and “senile dementia”). In the text, which is excerpted here, Forlani takes issue with earlier critics, for whom Hamlet only simulates his madness. Instead, Forlani argues that he suffers from what the English psychiatrists had recently called “moral insanity”, and that this diagnosis allows us to fully comprehend the tragedy of Hamlet's disordered mind. Forlani also wishes to rehabilitate Ophelia, by showing that she was not a nymphomaniac, as often stated by critics influenced by the Salpêtrists (see Showalter 1985).

Forlani's passion for the Bard was such that he referred to Shakespeare's works in his activities as a lawyer – a practice, which, from the following example, would not appear uncommon, at least in the courthouses of Venice (then under Austria). In Chapter 4 of *L'Isterismo*, he discusses the case of Angela Boscolo, a 36-year-old woman from Sottomarina (a village near Chioggia), who had tried to murder her abusive husband. In June 1864, the provincial court of Venice appointed forensic doctors from the University of Padua to assess her condition, and their judgment was that, whereas she may have been subject to hysteric attacks, on that occasion there was no evidence to prove her *non compos mentis* (see Marzocco 2016, 85-6). Forlani states that the public prosecutor compared her to Macbeth: “quell'omicida, il cui rimorso ci venne con tanta verità dal sommo tragico inglese rappresentato” (1869, 117; “that murderer, whose remorse was portrayed so truthfully by the supreme English tragedian”). Forlani was convinced that Boscolo should not have been sent to jail, but to an asylum – and to prove his point, he writes that she should not have been compared to Macbeth, but to his wife (Boscolo had been seen sleepwalking as well). He quotes from Carcano's translation of the Lady's speech in *Macbeth* 5.1.48-50 (“All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. O, O, O!”), and argues: “È per effetto d'insania che anche la

Boscolo non sa tollerare la vista del sangue” (118, “It is because of her insanity that also Mrs Boscolo could not tolerate the sight of blood”).

From a linguistic point of view, one should note that Forlani usually quotes from Carcano’s translations (who started publishing them in 1839), but often adds footnotes deploring their unfaithfulness to Shakespeare’s original.

Amleto il sognatore, Amleto il visionario, Amleto il ragionatore perpetuo e inoperoso, Amleto l'amante apparentemente tiepido, perché tormentato da uno di quei pensieri atroci, che limano l'energia dell'animo, e ne paralizzano l'attività, e quindi Amleto il maniaco, l'Amleto di Shakespeare, il capo lavoro del grande tragico inglese, ecco l'oggetto della presente breve dissertazione.

La tragedia, di cui imprendo a parlare, è una di quelle produzioni sovrane, che segnalano non solo una sublime creazione poetica, ma nello stesso tempo fanno presentire un progresso scientifico . . . In Shakespeare noi non ammiriamo soltanto il primo bardo dell'Inghilterra, il più grande tragico, e uno dei più grandi poeti del mondo, ma noi ammiriamo in prima linea l'eminente filosofo, il distinto psicologo, che ha saputo gettare uno sguardo profondo nel baratro delle umane passioni, e rivelare, con tatto squisito, il giuoco esterno che le rende perspicue.

A Shakespeare era riservato di abbracciare, con uno slancio elevato del suo ingegno potente, taluna verità psicologica, che la scienza moderna proclama come uno dei suoi trionfi, e di disvelarla alla umanità plaudente.

...

Quasi tutti i critici dell'Amleto sostengono unanimi, che la sua pazzia non fosse altrimenti che simulata, una finzione rivolta ad addormentare la vigilanza dell'uccisore di suo padre, del re di Danimarca . . . Pella opinione comune e dominante, dalla quale io dissento pelle ragioni, che verrò esponendo, sembra militare la circostanza che l'Amleto della leggenda simula di fatto la pazzia. Se non che Shakespeare devia in parecchi punti dal racconto danese . . .

Perché non si può adunque ammettere che, nelle veci del pazzo simulato, Shakespeare abbia voluto presentarci un vero melanconico? Io inclino decisamente per questa opinione, che si attaglia anche, come vedremo, alle proporzioni morali del dramma. Consentito bensì che Amleto esagerasse talfiata alcune apparenze, alcuni contorni della follia, ma il complesso delle apparizioni psichiche, e alcuni sintomi infallibili, constatati dai moderni psichiatri, e sfuggiti ai critici, perché probabilmente poco versati nello studio della psicopatia, inducono in me il convincimento che la mente di Amleto fosse travagliata da infermità.

Ma ascoltiamo Amleto:

È qualche tempo (la cagion la ignoro)
Ch'io già tutta perdei la mia gaiezza;
Gli esercizi lasciai della persona
Da prima usati, onde si grave, inetta

Hamlet the dreamer, Hamlet the visionary, Hamlet the constant and inactive reasoner, Hamlet the seemingly lukewarm lover, since he is tormented by one of those excruciating thoughts, which gnaw at the energy of one's mind and paralyse its activities. And then, Hamlet the maniac, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: the great English tragedian's masterpiece – this is the topic of my short dissertation.

The tragedy, which I now take upon myself to discuss, is one of those paramount objects, which not only signal a sublime poetic creation but also presage the progress of science. . . In Shakespeare, we do not simply admire the chief bard of England, the greatest tragedian, and one of the world's greatest poets, for, in him, we admire, above all, the eminent philosopher and the distinguished psychologist, who has been able to cast a profound look into the chasm of human passions, and reveal, with exquisite tact, the external game-playing which makes them transparent.

It had been reserved to Shakespeare to encompass, with such lofty ardour from his powerful intellect, certain psychological truths, which modern science has been proclaiming as its triumphs. However, Shakespeare had already been able to unveil them before the eyes of applauding humankind.

...
The vast majority of critics claims unanimously that Hamlet's madness was but simulated: a pretence aimed at benumbing the alertness of the king of Denmark, who had murdered his father . . . In favour of the common and prevalent opinion, with which I disagree for the reasons I am about to present, critics point out that, in the source legend,¹ Hamlet feigns his madness. However, Shakespeare deviates in several respects from that Danish tale . . .

Why cannot one admit, then, that, instead of someone simulating madness, Shakespeare wished to present an actual melancholiac? I definitely lean towards this opinion, which also suits the play's moral proportions very well. I do grant that Hamlet may occasionally exaggerate some of his deportments, a few aspects of his folly, but, on the whole, the psychic apparitions, together with a number of indisputable symptoms – as ascertained by modern psychiatrists, but ignored by the critics, who are likely to be unfamiliar with the study of psychopathy – lead me to believe that Hamlet's mind was harrowed by disease.

But let us listen to Hamlet:

I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth,
forgone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily

¹ I.e. the story of Amleth in Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* (thirteenth century), via Belleforest.

Si fe' la tempra mia che questo eccelso
 Della terra edificio altro non parmi
 Che un infecondo promontorio; e questo
 Azzurro padiglion, quest'aër puro,
 Questa del firmamento immensa volta
 E la curva de' cieli maestosa
 D'aure fiammelle seminata, omai
 Altro non emmi più che mucchio immondo
 Di maligni pestiferi vapori.
 E l'uom, qual opra di maestra mano!
 Come sublime in sua ragione, e quanto
 Possente in sua virtù senza confini!
 Come nel mover suo, nella sembrianza
 Eletto ed ammirando! A un angiol pari
 Nell'opra, e pari a un Dio nell'intelletto!
 Del mondo la bellezza ed il modello
 Degli animanti! Eppure, per me, codesta
 Quinta essenza di polvere, ch'è mai?
 L'uomo non mi talenta; e neppur essa
 La donna...

Per tal modo s'inizia appunto quella forma di alienazione mentale che i nosologi addomandano stato di psichica depressione.

In prova di ciò riporterò un brano di Leidesdorf, citato anche nella mia pubblicazione sull'Isterismo.

“Neppure la cosa più lieta può rallegrare il melanconico, le sue ordinarie inclinazioni diventano per esso una fonte di dispiacere e di avversione, i suoi amici, i suoi parenti anche i più cari, gli si rendono odiosi. Questa totale costante trasformazione di tutti i sentimenti produce una ulteriore serie di diffusi perturbamenti che *riformano l'intero ente dell'ammalato*. Nei primordii egli è soventi volte consapevole di questa trasformazione, che in esso si compie, e si affaccenda di celarla più a lungo che sia possibile, oppure *si esprime apertamente che i suoi sentimenti sono mutati, che la sua forza volitiva è paralizzata, che nessuna cosa possiede più la virtù di renderlo felice*”.

with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire – why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god – the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me – no, nor woman neither...²

This is precisely how that form of mental alienation, which nosologists³ call a state of psychic depression, takes root.

I adduce as evidence a passage from Leidesdorf's study,⁴ which I quoted also in my publication on hysteria.

“Melancholiacs cannot be uplifted even by the most gladsome thing; their ordinary inclinations become a source of displeasure and aversion; their friends and closest relatives become odious to him. Such total, constant transformation as far as all their feelings are concerned produces a further series of widespread perturbations, which *reform the whole being of the patient*. At the beginning, he or she is often aware of such inner transformation, which prompts the desire in them to conceal it as long as possible; alternatively, *they openly state that their feelings have changed, that their volitional force has become paralysed, that nothing can possibly make them happy anymore*”.

² 2.2.297-311. Forlani quotes from Carcano's verse translation.

³ An expert of nosology, i.e. “The systematic or scientific classification or investigation of diseases; the branch of medical science which deals with this” (OED, n. “nosology” 2).

⁴ Maximilian Leidesdorf (1818-1889) was professor of psychiatry at the University of Vienna and director of the State Lunatic Asylum. Forlani is referring to his 1865 *Lehrbuch der psychischen Krankheiten* (Erlangen: Enke).

Amleto tiene appunto questo linguaggio nel brano citato.

Il psichiatro tedesco soggiunge: “Questa penosa sensazione prodotta dalla trasformazione della sua personalità gli occasiona angoscia e terrore. La più lieve cagione aumenta il suo malumore, diviene irritabile, e cerca nella solitudine di evitare ogni contatto esterno”.

Gli stessi sintomi vengono additati da Griesinger, da Brierré de Boismont, da Spielmann, da Aubanel, dai due Platner (Camillo ed Ernesto) [,] da Morel, da Berti, da Vigna, e da altri alienisti, e anche dai criminalisti psicologi, fra i quali piacemi citare Pellegrino Rossi, e Mittermayer. Tutti questi scrittori segnalano la trasformazione del carattere, il sensibile cambiamento, che si compie nella sfera dei sentimenti, delle percezioni, delle volizioni, e delle attitudini del soggetto, come il criterio diagnostico più sicuro, come la prova più irresistibile dell’alienazione mentale, e non soli i psichiatri, ma, come ho detto, anche i criminalisti psicologi.

...

[Amleto] stesso si dichiara affetto da melanconia, e dubita del suo stato mentale, prima del celebre monologo del III. atto, prima adunque che si potenziassero i sintomi della sua alienazione . . .

Ma esaminiamo più davvicino la trasformazione, che si compie in Amleto nel mondo dei sentimenti. In prova mi basterà mettere in risalto il cambiamento che in esso subisce l’affezione per Ofelia, questa rosa del maggio, come la chiama Laerte, questa gentile, e quasi eterea apparizione, che io chiamerò sfumatura di donna, perché tiene tanto dell’angelo. Io l’ho sempre concepita così.

Hamlet uses exactly this language in the above-quoted passage.

The German psychiatrist adds: “This painful feeling, produced by the transformation of their personality, produces distress and terror in them. The slightest disturbance increases their moodiness; they become irritable, and seek solitude so as to avoid any external contact”.

The same symptoms have been observed by Griesinger, Brière de Boismont, Spielmann, Aubanel, both Platners (Camillo and Ernst), Morel, Berti, Vigna, and by other alienists as well as psychological criminalists – I need only mention Pellegrino Rossi and Mittermaier.⁵ All these scholars note the alteration in character of such patients, the measurable change in their feelings, perceptions, volitions, and attitudes, as the safest diagnostic criterion and the most powerful evidence of mental alienation. This indication has been given by psychiatrists and psychological criminalists alike, as mentioned earlier.

...

Hamlet himself states that he is affected by “melancholy”,⁶ and questions his mental condition before his famous monologue in Act Three – well before the increase in the symptoms of his alienation. . .

Let us examine the transformation, which takes place in Hamlet’s feelings, more closely. As evidence, suffice it to emphasise how his feelings towards Ophelia change – Ophelia, that “rose of May”,⁷ as Laertes calls her; that gentle, almost ethereal apparition, whom I would like to call a ‘womanly nuance’, since there is so much of the angel in her – this is how I have always perceived her.

⁵ Wilhelm Griesinger (1817-1868), a German psychiatrist and asylum reformer; Brière de Boismont (1797-1881), a French pre-eminent psychiatrist, especially interested in hallucination and somnambulism; Johann Spielmann (1820-1882), a Bohemian psychiatrist and asylum reformer; Honoré Aubanel (1811-1863), a French psychiatrist based in Marseille; Camillo Platner (1795-1877), professor of forensic medicine at the University of Pavia; Ernst Platner (1744-1855), a German anthropologist who also published on legal medicine; Bénédicte Morel (1809-1873), very influential psychiatrist at the Salpêtrière, esp. regarding degeneration theory; Antonio Berti (1816-1879), Italian psychiatrist based in Venice; Cesare Vigna (1819-1892), the director of the asylum for women on the island of San Clemente, Venice; Carl Joseph Anton Mittermaier (1787-1867), a German jurist best known for his opposition to death penalty; Pellegrino Rossi (1787-1848), an important Italian economist and jurist, who had written a treatise of penal law (and who was murdered by a rebel when appointed Papal Minister of the Interior).

⁶ “Out of my weakness and my melancholy” (2.2.603).

⁷ 4.5.158.

“Ofelia non è un ideale angelico, scrive in quella vece Flir, un essere straordinario, ma una bella e buona fanciulla, modellata sulla realtà naturale: un cristallo che il primo urto può spezzare, una fiamma che il primo soffio di vento può spegnere, un fiore che il gelo mattinale può far appassire”.

Secondo questo autore la placida mania di Ofelia sarebbe stata eccitatrice di fantasie erotiche, talché soltanto la pazzia e la morte l'avrebbero sottratta alle lotte della vita terrena . . .

Questo è il giorno di San Valentino:
 Sorgon tutti col primo mattino;
 Del mio bello al balcon volerò;
 Sua fedel Valentina sarò.
 Egli sorge, s'abbiglia, e festante
 La sua porta dischiude all'amante:
 Ma colei che zitella a lui va,
 Se ritorni zitella chi 'l sa.

 Oh! pei santi che sopra ci stanno
 Di' vergogna non hai dell'inganno?
 Quando ei possa, il garzon fa così.
 Tristo lui che l'amore tradi -
 Ma tu allor, dopo avermi sedotta,
 Di sposarmi la fè non hai rotta?
 Oh! serbata t'avrei la mia fè:
 Ma venirne al mio letto perché?

Da queste parole non si può davvero dedurre la conseguenza affatto arbitraria di Flir. Ofelia, sotto la dolorosa impressione della morte del padre, smarrisce la ragione . . . Qual meraviglia se, in mezzo alla rapida corrente d'idee, che solleva il delirio, alcune immagini erotiche passino, colla celerità del lampo, attraverso quell'anima pura e gentile, ove si rifletta in precipuità, che al ricordo della morte del padre, si mesce la rimembranza dell'amante . . .

Perché adunque non interpreteremo la follia di Ofelia come la concepisce il poeta? L'argomentazione di Flir, che vuol spiegare, alcune, fugaci sortite di Ofelia, appoggiandosi alla presunzione di precedenti lotte sensuali, per assidere su questa base oscillante un giudizio così

“Ophelia is not an angelic ideal”, thus writes Flir⁸ about her. “She is not an extraordinary creature, but a fair and good maiden, who is modelled upon nature – a crystal which can break at the slightest touch, a flame which the slightest puff of wind can quench, a flower which a simple morning frost can wilt”.

According to Flir, Ophelia’s placid mania would trigger erotic fantasies within her, and only madness and death could ultimately remove her from the struggles of earthly life:

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine’s day,
 All in the morning betime,
 And I a maid at your window
 To be your Valentine.
 Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
 And dugged the chamber-door;
 Let in the maid, that out a maid
 Never departed more.

 By Gis and by Saint Charity,
 Alack, and fie for shame!
 Young men will do’t if they come to’t;
 By Cock, they are to blame.
 Quoth she “Before you tumbled me,
 You promised me to wed”.
 So would I ’a’ done, by yonder sun,
 An thou hadst not come to my bed.⁹

I do not see how anybody could deduce from these words the claim which Flir makes, which appears to me completely arbitrary. Ophelia suffers as a result of her grief for her father’s death, and loses her reason . . . Small wonder if, amid the rapid stream of ideas brought about by delirium, a few erotic images should pass, lightning-fast, through her pure and gentle soul. The most important element to ponder here is that the memory of her father’s death spills into the remembrance of her lover . . .

Why should we interpret Ophelia’s madness differently from the poet’s conception? Flir’s argumentation, as he tries to explain those few, fleeting, unmeditated words uttered by Ophelia by backing himself up with some alleged sensual struggles in her past (to then reach

⁸ See Alois Flir, *Briefe über Shakespeare’s Hamlet* [*Letters on Shakespeare’s Hamlet*] (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1865).

⁹ Carcano’s translation of 4.5.47-54 and 58-65 is quite free.

rigoroso, rasenta il malvezzo di alcuni criminalisti della vecchia scuola di voler appiccati i delinquenti per crimini commessi in stato di ubriacchezza, giusta la massima “rubasti a mente ubbriaca, devi essere appiccato a mente serena” . . .

Dopo di avere per tal modo rivendicata a Ofelia la sua posizione ideale, proseguo nella dimostrazione della mia tesi. Non v’ha dubbio che Amleto amasse profondamente Ofelia . . .

Dobbiamo per avventura ritenere ch’egli fingesse anche con Ofelia, coll’oggetto della sua immensa affezione, colla compagna della sua giovinezza, colla fanciulla della sua elezione? Sarebbe un far torto alla nobile e generosa indole di Amleto, che trapela persino attraverso le manifestazioni e i travimenti della sua follia . . .

Se non che Flir ignorava probabilmente che gli stessi uomini dell’arte sono spesso indecisi nello stabilire la linea di demarcazione fra la semplice disposizione alla follia, e la vera alienazione mentale, anzi reputati, e soggiungasi severi alienisti (p. es. Casper, e Lazzaretti), sostengono che molte volte è difficile precisare il confine fra la mente sana e la mente inferma. Leidesdorf osserva che un mentecatto, entro una cerchia d’idee, può rassomigliare a un sano di mente, e viceversa. Io stesso ho potuto convincermi dell’esattezza di tale assunto nei vari manicomi che ho visitati (a Vienna, a Venezia, a Milano, e altrove). Se così è, devesi di necessità ammettere che le difficoltà crescono quando si tratta di stabilire il punto in cui cessa la disposizione, e subentra la vera follia. Nel caso nostro, con riguardo al complesso dei fenomeni, si potrebbe ammettere in Amleto una disposizione alla malinconia prima dell’apparizione dello spettro . . .

Io ritengo quindi che l’apparizione dello spettro nel III atto fosse un’allucinazione, e anche in questo riguardo dissento da Flir, e mi unifermo all’avviso di Gervinus, che lo spettro dell’Amleto, come le streghe del Macbetto, non sieno che rappresentazioni fallaci di una fantasia agitata, le quali assumono un aspetto visibile, e in qualche modo corporeo, agli occhi delle persone, che possiedono questa eccitabile forza d’immaginazione.

...

. . . Flir, in mezzo alle tante contraddizioni in cui si è avviluppato, intravede una sola volta la verità, quando cioè chiama Amleto “un pazzo ragionevole”. E qui egli non fa che copiare una frase di Polonio, di questo

such a severe judgment on such a wavering basis), seems close to that fault common among the criminalists of the old school of wishing to hang delinquents, who had committed a crime while drunk, following this maxim: “you stole when your mind was drunk, you will hang now that your mind is clear” . . .

After having in this way vindicated to Ophelia the ideal position she deserves, let me proceed in the demonstration of my thesis. There can be no doubt that Ophelia was deeply loved by Hamlet . . .

Should we actually believe that he was feigning and deceiving Ophelia too – the object of his immense affection, the companion of his youth, the maiden of his own election? This belief would do Hamlet’s noble and generous nature wrong, a nature which can be glimpsed even through the manifestations and aberrations of his madness . . .

However, Flir probably ignored that artists themselves often remain undecided over the line of demarcation between someone’s simple disposition to folly and true mental alienation. Indeed, several distinguished as well as quite rigorous alienists (such as Casper and Lazzaretti)¹⁰ maintain that it is often very difficult to delineate the boundary between a sane and an insane mind. Leidesdorf observes that a mad person, to a certain extent, can appear as a sane person, and vice versa.

On my part, I have been able to convince myself of the exactness of this notion by visiting several asylums (the ones in Vienna, Venice, Milan, and elsewhere). If this is the case, then one should necessarily accept that the difficulties in differentiating the mad from the sane increase when one wishes to establish the moment in which the disposition to madness ends, and madness itself begins. In this case, as regards the whole complex of the phenomena, we may locate in Hamlet a disposition to melancholia before the apparition of the ghost . . .

Therefore, I think that the apparition of the ghost in Act Three was only a hallucination, and, in this point, again, I disagree with Flir, but follow Gervinus,¹¹ according to whom the ghost in *Hamlet*, like the witches in *Macbeth*, is but a false manifestation of a distressed imagination, which takes visible, and somehow, bodily shape before the eyes of those people who possess that excitable imaginative faculty.

. . .
 . . . Flir, amidst all those many contradictions, in which he has entangled himself, glimpses truth for once, that is, when he calls Hamlet “a reasonable madman”. Here, he is but copying an expression uttered by

¹⁰ Johann Ludwig Casper (1796-1864), a pre-eminent German criminologist and forensic scientist; Giuseppe Lazzaretti (1812-1882), professor of forensic medicine at the University of Padua.

¹¹ See his 1849-50 *Shakespeare*, 4 vols. Leipzig: Engelmann.

scemo e scostumato vecchio, sul quale egli fa cadere un giudizio così severo, e che, parlando della pazzia di Amleto, osserva:

Benché sien queste di follia parole,
Pure han giusta sequenza.

Nel testo originale, e nella traduzione tedesca di Schlegel, questa pazzia viene chiamata *metodica*.

Poco stante Polonio esclama:

Oh vedi come pronto,
Come vivace egli risponde? Ed ecco
Una ventura ch'han sovente i pazzi,
E che sì bene non è mai concessa
A chi sana ha la mente.

Per tal modo Shakespeare anticipa di due cento anni la teoria della follia ragionante, ch'egli chiama metodica.

Questo sistema d'interpretazione non è nuovo, e un reputato alienista francese, il citato Brierre de Boismont, lo ha applicato anche al Macbetto, e al re Lear. Duolmi di non aver potuto consultare il lavoro di Boismont.

L'Amleto inteso e concepito in questo modo schiude all'analisi del critico un orizzonte eminentemente morale. In quella vece l'Amleto, che fantastica di continuo, e mai si decide ad agire, l'Amleto che uccide

Polonius, that silly and indecorous old man whom he otherwise judges so sternly. Polonius observes, in his discussion of Hamlet's madness:

Though this be madness, yet 'it is in the right order'.¹²

In the original text, and in Schlegel's German translation, this madness is called "methodical".

Shortly after, Polonius exclaims:

... How pregnant sometimes his replies are! A happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of.¹³

Thus, Shakespeare anticipates by 200 years the theory of the so-called 'reasoning insanity',¹⁴ which he calls 'methodical'.

This interpretative system is not new, and a respected French alienist, Brière de Boismont, whom I have already cited, has applied it to *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, as well. I am sorry not to have been able to read his work.¹⁵

Hamlet, as understood and conceived in this manner, uncovers an eminently moral horizon for the critic's analysis. When seen in this perspective, the Hamlet who keeps fantasising and never determines to act – the Hamlet who kills a feeble and harmless old man in cold

¹² As Forlani explains immediately afterwards, Carcano's translation of "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't" (2.2.207-8) is quite free.

¹³ 2.2.210-13.

¹⁴ In his essay on Rossi as Hamlet (1874, 11), Forlani clarifies that what he means by "follia" or "pazzia ragionante" is the form which "gl'inglesi [chiamano] moral insanity" ("the English call 'moral insanity'"). This phrase was first articulated by James Cowles Prichard in 1833, who had defined it as "madness consisting in a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucination" (qtd, and discussed, in Augstein 1996, 312). Thus, Forlani modifies Prichard's definition, as the English physician excluded hallucination from the patients suffering from such disease.

¹⁵ In 1869, Boismont collected his articles on Shakespeare in a monograph entitled: *Physiologie: Études medico-psychologiques sur les hommes célèbres. Shakespeare, ses connaissances en alienation mentale; Hamlet, sa mélancolie simple, son ennui de la vie, sa folie simulée; Lear, sa folie maniaque.*

freddamente un veglio debole e inerme, e quindi motteggia e ragiona, l'Amleto che tormenta di buon proposito, coll'ironia e col sarcasmo, l'oggetto del suo amore, la candida Ofelia, e la travolge quindi nei vortici vertiginosi della pazzia e del suicidio, l'Amleto insomma, come viene inteso e interpretato da quasi tutti i critici, è un tipo immorale e ributtante, dal quale è forza distogliere con nausea lo sguardo, come lo si distoglie dalla livida figura di Jago, dalle figure sanguinose di Macbetto e di Riccardo III, e dalla apparizione più schifosa di tutte, del giudeo Schyllok.

...
L'Amleto, quale io lo sento è all'incontro un'apparizione tanto più simpatica, quanto più sfortunata. Preoccupato da un generoso pensiero, che s'ispira alla giustizia, e non alla vendetta, come opina Flir, egli non sa resistere ai sentimenti dolorosi che lo inondano, ma si curva sotto il loro peso, e miseramente impazzisce, sebbene conservi le apparenze dell'umana ragione.

L'Amleto così inteso e interpretato non desta più ribrezzo, ma un senso di pietà profonda, d'immensa compassione, e le parole che pronuncia Orazio sul cadavere di questo principe infelice, e che emanano tanto profumo poetico, trovano un'eco simpatica anche nel cuore del pubblico e del critico . . .

L'Amleto resta sempre ancora un'opera enigmatica, rassomigliante, come dice Schlegel, a quelle equazioni irrazionali, che non si possono mai sciogliere, e in cui rimane continuamente una frazione di una grandezza sconosciuta. Se non che, interpretata nel modo preindicated, essa segnala, come ho detto esordendo, il presentimento di un genio, che, con un volo sovrano, intravede le scoperte della scienza avvenire . . . [l]a scienza ventura, che è la regina degli intelletti.

blood, and then mocks him and goes on reasoning – the Hamlet who, with his irony and sarcasm, wilfully torments the object of his love, lily-white Ophelia, and hurls her into the vertiginous whirlwind of madness and suicide – in sum, that Hamlet, as he is understood and interpreted by the vast majority of the critics, is an immoral and revolting fellow, from whom one needs to avert one's gaze, nauseated, as one does before that livid character, Iago, or before the bloody figures of Macbeth and Richard III, and before that most disgusting character of all, Shylock the Jew.¹⁶

...
 Hamlet, as I perceive him, is, upon meeting him, an apparition who is as much sympathetic as he is wretched. He is preoccupied by one generous thought: he seeks justice, not revenge (*pace* Flir). He cannot resist the sorrows that overwhelm him, but bends under their weight, and goes piteously mad, all the while preserving the appearance of a rational human being.

This Hamlet – the way I understand and interpret him – does not repel us with disgust, but arouses in us a sense of profound pity, of boundless compassion: the words pronounced by Horatio on the corpse of this wretched prince – these words, which emanate such poetic fragrance, find a sympathetic echo also in the heart of the spectator and the critic . . .

Hamlet still remains an enigmatic work; according to Schlegel, it is like one of those irrational equations which cannot be solved, but which always bear the mark of an unknown greatness. However, when it is interpreted in this way, *Hamlet* beckons, as I wrote at the beginning of this text, the premonition of a genius, who, in a sublime flight, glimpses the discoveries of the science of the future . . . the science to come, the queen of all intellects.

¹⁶ Forlani's 1874 study of *The Merchant of Venice* does not contain the antisemitism which this reference would seem to evoke.

2. From Rocco De Zerbi. 1880. *Amleto: Studio psicologico, detto nell'istituto di belle arti a Napoli e con aggiunte e correzioni alla società filotecnica di Torino* [*Hamlet: A Psychological Study, from a Conference Held at the Fine Arts Institute of Naples; Later Augmented and Corrected for the Philotechnic Society of Turin*]. Torino: Casanova, 1880. 9-10; 12-13, 15-16; 20; 23; 53-5; 61-2; 75; 76.

Rocco De Zerbi (Reggio Calabria, 1843 – Rome, 1893), a *garibaldino* who fought against both the Bourbon army and the Austrians, combined his military activities with his literary interests. He wrote both in verse and in prose, but his true passion was journalism. In particular, he founded (and directed for twenty years) *Il Piccolo. Giornale di Napoli*, and collaborated with many national newspapers and literary magazines. He was known as a polemicist, and Benedetto Croce nicknamed him an “artista del giornalismo” (“artist of journalism”, Strap-pini 1991). He decided to enter politics, and, from the 1870s through the 1890s, had a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. However, in 1893, he was involved in the so-called ‘*Banca Romana scandal*’ which saw him accused of corruption. He died that year of a heart attack.

De Zerbi interests us because, although psychiatry and criminology were not his fields, he draws on them extensively in his literary criticism. In the excerpt below, he casually (or ‘faux-casually’) reminisces about a conversation he had one evening with Cesare Lombroso on the esplanade of the Capuchins in Turin, and reports Lombroso’s thoughts on *Hamlet* – thus providing valuable information. In a letter he wrote on 15 October 1880 (IT SMAUT Carrara/CL. - De Zerbi, Rocco_01), he addressed Lombroso as his “Onorevole ed illustre amico” (“Honourable and illustrious friend”). Paradoxically on De Zerbi’s part, the two of them agreed on the biological superiority of Northern Italians (see Lombroso 1878, 359). Like Forlani, Lombroso and De Zerbi seem to think that the key to understanding *Hamlet* is to find the correct diagnosis of the disorder, from which the Prince of Denmark appears to suffer. However, De Zerbi ends with a somewhat jocular coda, and urges us to leave the mystery untouched.

De Zerbi is exceptional in that he was familiar with other early modern English dramatists beside Shakespeare: in his study, he draws parallels between *Hamlet* and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* and Ford’s *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*. Unlike other contemporary critics, he looked at Shakespeare as a dramatist, not as a philosopher or a psychologist; he is interested in the performative dimension of *Hamlet*, and comments on the different acting styles of English and Italian actors.

Essere o non essere: qui sta la questione.

La questione è: se nel cervello di Amleto sta il grano di follia che poi germoglia e si fa spiga; o se non v'è.

E la questione si è posta, prima e più imperiosa che ai critici, agli artisti drammatici: e ha fatto vittime innumerate, da Bourbage [sic] a Ernesto Rossi e Tommaso Salvini . . . Phelps, allievo di Kean, – e forse Kean anche lui faceva come il Phelps – sottolinea ogni frase; e cade. Vero è che Amleto s'innamora de' suoi sillogismi, della sua frase, della sua dialettica, e spesso s'ubbrica delle sue proprie parole, e, come dicono i francesi, *il s'écoute*: ma su questo Amleto normale s'intreccia un altro Amleto, un Amleto leone, delirante, furioso, l'Amleto che salta nella fossa di Ofelia . . .

I metodi di recitazione dell'*Amleto* sono due per gli artisti più elevati: l'inglese, e un altro che chiamerò meridionale. Il metodo inglese ritrae Amleto come uomo profondamente melanconico, malato di spleen. Eduardo Schuré, uno degli apostoli di Riccardo Wagner, pare sia senza riserva per questo metodo. Amleto, egli dice, ha la missione di vendicare suo padre; e la trascura non, come crede Goethe, per difetto di energia, ma per supremo disgusto, come s'ei comprendesse la infinita vanità di qualunque azione umana. Ora, se tale può essere un nuovo Amleto non è l'Amleto di Shakespeare. Fermiamoci un istante a studiare questa linea.

Il supremo disgusto d'ogni azione umana, quel che sogliamo chiamare *indifferenza*, è uno stato psicologico, o naturale o acquisito. La sterilità del cuore, come quella del suolo, o è un fatto geologico, congenito, naturale, o è un fatto sopravvenuto storico, di decadenza, che segue all'eccesso di coltivazione, all'eccesso di lavoro.

Come nascono per viziosa conformazione del cranio gl'idioti di mente, nei quali gli elementi anatomici paion portare in sé stessi una

To be or not to be: that is the question.

The question is, whether or not the seed of madness lies, germinates, and comes into ear inside Hamlet's brain.

And the question arose for the actors earlier and more imperiously than for the critics. Many artists have fallen victim to it, from Burbage to Ernesto Rossi and Tommaso Salvini . . . Phelps,¹ Kean's pupil (and maybe he was following Kean also in this regard), emphasises each and every sentence, and thereby falls. It is true that Hamlet falls in love with his own syllogisms, turns of phrase, and dialectics – he gets intoxicated by his own words, *il s'écoute*, to use the French expression. However, that version of himself gets enmeshed with another Hamlet: a leonine, delirious, raging Hamlet, the Hamlet who leaps into Ophelia's grave . . .

Among the superior artists, there are two ways of performing Hamlet: the English way and what I call the Southern way. The former sees Hamlet as a profoundly melancholiac, splenetic man. Édouard Schuré,² one of Richard Wagner's apostles, seems to have no qualms whatsoever about it. He claims that Hamlet has as his mission the revenge of his father's murder – he neglects it not because he lacks the energy, as Goethe thinks, but out of a supreme disgust, as if he had comprehended the infinite vanity of all human action. Now, this may be a new-found Hamlet, but it is not Shakespeare's Hamlet. Let us dwell on this argument for a while.

A supreme disgust towards all human action – which we call *indifference* – is a psychological condition, which is either natural or acquired. The heart's sterility, just like that of the soil, is either a geological, innate, natural fact, or a fact that has historically come to occur, which signals decay, and follows an excess of cultivation or overwork.

Consider how mental idiots are born by a diseased conformation of the skull: they seem to bear, impressed upon them, in those anatomical

¹ Richard Burbage (c. 1567-1619) was the star of Shakespeare's company, who played Hamlet, among other leading roles; Samuel Phelps (1804-1878) was not Edmund Kean's pupil (perhaps De Zerbi meant William Charles Macready, another eminent actor, under whose management Phelps started his career; more probably, he may have meant 'pupil' in the general sense of heir). Ernesto Rossi (1827-1896) and Tommaso Salvini (1829-1915), together with Adelaide Ristori, were part of the so-called triad of 'grandi attori' who wowed the European and American theatrical panorama.

² Édouard Schuré (1841-1929), French literary critic and philosopher. De Zerbi is responding to a chapter called "La Renaissance et Shakespeare" collected in a volume about the historical development of poetry and music (Schuré 1875, 131-54), hence the reference to Wagner.

legge ed una forma direttrice della loro stupida evoluzione, così nascono gl'indifferenti, gl'idioti di cuore, i quali debbono parimente a certe qualità speciali del loro organismo e a certe proporzioni degli elementi di esso, e il più delle volte alla legge di eredità, il carattere morale che li accompagnerà indubbiamente per tutta la vita.

L'idiotismo della mente e l'idiotismo del cuore hanno molti punti di contatto. L'idiota di mente è incapace d'una lunga attenzione volontaria; e l'idiota di cuore è incapace d'una passione tenace; – l'idiota di mente astrae e generalizza poco; e l'idiota di cuore guarda la poesia che s'agita sotto i suoi occhi come un sordo può guardare un'orchestra che suoni una sinfonia; – l'idiota di mente ha quasi sempre molto o troppo sviluppato il senso; e l'idiota di cuore, benché sordo ad una certa sensibilità termica della mente, al calore del mondo morale, ha quasi sempre molto sviluppata una certa sensibilità muscolare . . .

Or non è certo questa la fisionomia di Amleto.

Il disgusto suo che apparisce così largo e profondo allo Schuré [sic], l'indifferenza sua è dunque acquisita? è il veleno iniettato nell'anima dal disinganno? . . .

. . . a me basta rammentare la tragedia di Shakespeare per concludere che l'Amleto di essa non è l'Amleto sentimentale e malato di *spleen*, di *weltschmerz*, sognato da Schuré e ritratto dagli artisti drammatici inglesi. Amleto infatti s'affretta a voler vedere lo spettro del padre (sc. 4^a), è commosso da questa visione fino al delirio (sc. 6^a), s'interessa dell'arte drammatica (sc. 7^a), lavora costantemente per avere la prova morale dell'assassinio; e, quando la ha (sc. 9^a), ne è commosso sino alla mania furiosa; Amleto fa ammazzare Rovencranz [sic] e Guildenstern per salvare la sua vita; Amleto salta come leone nella fossa di Ofelia. Egli è dunque melanconico, ma non disgustato, non sordo, non spleenotico; la sua melanconia si esprime con colori vivacissimi, si esprime a grande orchestra; è una melanconia molto nervosa e punto linfatica. L'*Amleto* dello Schuré non esiste dunque in Shakespeare; non esiste in Shakespeare l'Amleto inglese che oggi soglion fare.

...

Il grande pregio della rappresentazione dell'*Amleto* fatta dal Rossi era questo: che traspariva in essa come l'uomo, il quale passa mezza la vita a simular la follia, si assimili fatalmente qualcosa della parte ch'ei recita.

Eccoci ora nel cuore dell'argomento.

elements, the law and steering form of their unintelligent evolution. In the same way, the indifferent are born: the heart's idiots, who owe their moral character, which will unfailingly mark them for their entire life, to certain special qualities of their organism and to a number of proportions in its elements, as well as, most frequently, to the law of heredity.

The idiocy of the mind and the idiocy of the heart have many points in common. The idiot of the mind does not have a long attention span; the idiot of the heart is not able to feel a long-lasting passion – the idiot of the mind seldom abstracts and generalises; the idiot of the heart looks at the poetry that dances and flickers before his or her eyes but as a deaf person can look at an orchestra playing a symphony – nearly always, the idiot of the mind has well- or overdeveloped senses; nearly always, the idiot of the heart, although unable to perceive a certain thermic sensitivity of his or her mind, i.e. the warmth of the moral world, has a well-developed muscular sensitivity . . .

You will agree that this is not Hamlet's physiognomy.

Is his disgust or indifference, which seems so vast and profound to Schuré, something acquired? Is it the poison which disillusionment has injected into his soul? . . .

. . . let me but recall Shakespeare's tragedy to conclude that Shakespeare's Hamlet is not the sentimental, splenetic, *Weltschmerz*-affected Hamlet as dreamed up by Schuré and as played by the English actors.

As a matter of fact, Hamlet rushes to see his father's ghost (Scene 4), is moved into delirium by that vision (Scene 6), is interested in theatre (Scene 7), constantly operates to find moral evidence of the murder, and, upon finding it (Scene 9), he is so moved that he becomes ragingly manic. Hamlet has Rosencrantz and Guildenstern killed to save his own life; Hamlet leaps, lion-like, into Ophelia's grave. He is "melancholy", but not disgusted, not deaf, not splenetic: his melancholy expresses itself in the brightest colours and like a grand orchestra; his is a very nervous melancholy, not lymphatic³ at all. Schuré's Hamlet has no place in Shakespeare; the English Hamlet who has been shown in modern theatres has nothing to do with Shakespeare.

. . .

The remarkable, positive aspect of Rossi's Hamlet was this: it made evident to the spectator how a man, who spends half his life simulating madness, tends to assimilate and subsume something of that play-acting.

Here is the core of the question.

³ "Of persons and their temperaments: Having the characteristics (flabby muscles, pale skin, sluggishness of vital and mental action) formerly supposed to result from an excess of lymph in the system" (*OED*, "lymphatic", adj. 3).

Il Marc e il Lucas parlano del contagio della follia (1); ma non fanno motto d'un altro fenomeno ch'è pur vero e che mi pare sfuggito all'attenzione degli alienisti, il contagio di ciò che noi stessi simuliamo.

La causa del contagio delle monomanie, sia ragionanti, sia istintive, è nell'istinto d'imitazione che è connaturale all'uomo . . .

Io comprendo, signore e signori, che quando un uomo è agitato da tali dolori, quali sono l'uccisione del padre, l'infamia della madre, l'apparizione dello spettro paterno, ed il continuo pericolo della propria vita, grandi ondate di follia debbono battere sul suo cervello. Ma lo strano in Amleto è questo che, mentre la sovraccitazione grandissima centuplica la forza del sentimento, questa forza non partorisce azione, come naturalmente dovrebbe ma ideazione, sillogismi . . .

Abbiamo dunque innanzi a noi uno stato patologico, una infermità cerebrale, un'insania di spirito.

Se io debbo dirvi chiaro il mio pensiero, consentitemi ch'io vi dica che Amleto è affetto di una nuova forma di monomania omicida. Monomania omicida, però che tutti i suoi pensieri in qualunque occasione mettono capo all'idea dell'omicidio; – ma monomania con forma nuova, però che è determinata verso un solo individuo e non ha corrispondente consenso nell'energia. Vero è che il Marc parla di una follia transitoria che si avvicina molto ai fenomeni di delirio di Amleto, e che il Pinel e l'Esquirol parlano di manie, con e senza delirio, le quali non portano alcuna lesione all'intelligenza, e che vanno tutte classificate alla melancolia, cioè a quella specie di follia caratterizzata da un delirio fisso esclusivo; ma in nessuno è descritto il caso di Amleto, la cui monomania omicida, scaturendo dal sentimento, rimane puramente intellettuale, senza che l'azione corrisponda all'impulso dell'ideazione e dell'affetto: pletora d'intelligenza e paralisi dell'azione.

. . .

Riassumiamo.

Amleto portava nel suo carattere la predestinazione alla follia: era

Marc and Lucas⁴ talk about madness being contagious (1), but never mention another phenomenon which is as true, and which seems, as far as I know, to have eluded the alienists' attention: the contagion of what we ourselves simulate in our lives.

The reason why monomanias are contagious, the cause, whether they are rational or instinctual, lies in the instinct of imitation which is innate in human beings . . .

Ladies and gentlemen, I understand that, when a man is moved by such sorrow and pain, i.e. his father's murder, his mother's infamy, the apparition of his father's ghost, and an enduring danger to his own life, big waves of madness must crash against his brain. Nonetheless, there is something rather strange about Hamlet, because, while the huge overstimulation multiplies by hundreds the strength of one's feeling, such strength does not generate action in him, as ordinarily should happen, but ideas and syllogisms . . .

We have before ourselves, then, a pathological condition, a disease of the mind, an insanity of the spirit.

If I have to clarify my thoughts, let me state that Hamlet suffers from a new kind of homicidal monomania. It is a homicidal monomania, because all his thoughts always tend to the idea of murder – but it is a new form of monomania, because it is directed towards one single person, and yet does not agree with Hamlet's energy. Now, it is true that Marc discusses a transitory form of madness which seems very close to Hamlet's delirious moments; it is true that Pinel and Esquirol⁵ write about manias (accompanied by delirium, or not), which do not damage the intelligence in any way, and which can all be classified as forms of melancholia, that is that type of madness which is characterised by a fixed and exclusive delirium – but no one has described the case of Hamlet as such. His homicidal monomania, although triggered by emotion, remains purely intellectual, since action never comes to match his compulsion to ideation and feeling: one witnesses a plethora of intelligence with a paralysis of action.

...

Let us recapitulate.

Hamlet's character was predestinated to madness. He was a melan-

⁴ Prosper Lucas (1808-1885), a French specialist in the study of heredity, who influenced Darwin, among others, and Charles Chrétien Henri Marc (1771-1840), who remained, for a long time, the greatest authority on monomanias.

⁵ Philippe Pinel (1800-1866), an eclectic intellectual and asylum reformer, and Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol (1772- 1840), a very important psychiatrist, Pinel's pupil.

uomo di carattere melanconico, lipomaniaco, predisposto ad una nevrosi mentale. Il Lombroso mi diceva una sera, sulla spianata dei Cappuccini, che Amleto nel suo stato normale era in quel terreno neutro che sta fra la pazzia e la ragione, che sta fra la follia e la sanità, la consistenza, la solidità dello spirito: nella *zona intermedia*; in quella zona intermedia appunto, i cui individui sono dal Maudsley descritti come arguti e pronti a fare bisticci e sottigliezze ingegnose che difficilmente altri saprebbe pensare.

Egli aveva naturalmente quell'eretismo nervoso, illustrato dal Cantani, che in certi determinati casi si risolve in eccessiva eccitabilità dei centri psichici, e che, data l'eccitazione esterna, talvolta si manifesta con fenomeni di esaltamento e tal'altra con fenomeni di depressione dell'attività psichica.

Apparsogli lo spettro, questa eccitazione seguì, e l'eretismo nervoso divenne morboso.

...

Io v'ho squartato, così, decomposto, notomizzato Amleto. Siete contenti? Ve l'ho rimpicciolito sino a farlo parere un bel caso patologico e null'altro.

Or bene, scordate quel che v'ho detto, lasciate che tutto al più se ne rammenti l'attore drammatico affinché sappia intrecciare con la follia mal simulata la perenne insania ed i rami di mania transitoria. Voi scordatevene; non precisate . . .

Amleto è il *forse* . . .

(1) Le monomanie, sia ragionanti, sia istintive, possono propagarsi per imitazione. Ma è più facile la propagazione delle prime che delle altre. L'esempio può sviluppare la monomania omicida ed espanderla". MARC, *De la Folie*, ch. xv, *De la monomanie transmise par imitation*. – La stessa tesi è sostenuta da LUCAS, *Sur l'imitation contagieuse*, Paris, 1833 . . .

choly man, suffering from lypemania,⁶ predisposed to mental neurosis. One evening, in the esplanade of the Capuchins, Lombroso told me that Hamlet, in his normal condition, found himself in the neutral territory between madness and reason, between insanity and the health, consistency, and soundness of his spirit. This *intermediate region* is exactly where the individuals described by Maudsley⁷ are: people who are smart, and ready to devise conflicts and subtle plots, which other people could hardly come up with.

He naturally suffered from that form of nervous erethism,⁸ which has been illustrated by Cantani,⁹ which, under certain circumstances, can ultimately lead to an excessive excitability of the psychic centres, and which, under external excitement, can occasionally manifest itself through episodes of depression as far as the psychic activity is concerned.

When the ghost appeared before him, he felt such excitement that his nervous erethism became morbid.

...

Here I am, having dismembered, dissected, and anatomised Hamlet before your eyes. Are you happy? For you, I have shrunk him into a nice pathological case, and nothing else.

Now, take care to forget everything I have said. May actors be the only people to remember it, so that they can interweave ill-simulated madness to both ever-lasting and transitory forms of insanity. But O readers, please, forget it, do not qualify it . . .

Hamlet embodies the *perchance* . . .

(1) “Monomanias, both rational and instinctual, can propagate themselves by imitation. But the propagation of the former is easier than of the latter. Example can develop and expand homicidal monomania in someone else”. MARC, *De la Folie*, ch. xv, *De la monomanie transmise par imitation*. – The same thesis is supported here: LUCAS, *Sur l’imitation contagieuse*, Paris, 1833 . . .

⁶ “A form of insanity characterized by extreme mournfulness” (*OED*, n., “lypomania”), from Greek *λύπη* (grief) – the name of this pathology seems to have been coined by Esquirol.

⁷ Henry Maudsley (1835-1918), a leading English psychiatrist, who referred to this “intermediate region” in several publications, but most famously in his 1886 study *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*.

⁸ “Excitement of an organ or tissue in an unusual degree; also transferred morbid over-activity of the mental powers or passions” (*OED*, “erethism”, n.).

⁹ Arnaldo Cantani (1837-1893), an Italo-Bohemian physician now best remembered for his studies on diabetes.

3. Giuseppe Verdi. 1881. Letter to Domenico Morelli (24 September). In Benois 2019, 98.

This letter written by the great composer may seem out of place, here: Verdi was neither a psychiatrist nor a criminologist. However, this text is relevant insofar as it shows that Lombrosianism was not developed *in vacuo*: physiognomy had existed for centuries, whereas new anthropometric methods were now being developed on the basis of social Darwinism. It has been said that “the Italian operatic stage witnessed a shift in dramatic sensibility that undoubtedly reflects the new epistemological mindset of criminal anthropology” (Hiller 2013, 243). However, one should be very careful with overgeneralisations: people changed their attitude towards these methods over time, and an interest in Lombrosian ideas did not equal approval. For instance, it has been claimed that Arrigo Boito, who provided Verdi with the libretto of the opera, was close to the Lombrosians, when, in fact, in a letter he wrote to the musicologist Camille Bellaigue on 4 March 1904, Boito uses words of contempt towards Lombroso, as follows: “cet imbecille de M.^r Lombroso dont la théorie est bonne pour nos ancêtres les orangs-outangs, que dis-je? Pas même pour eux” (Bosio 2010, 2.791; “that imbecile, Mr Lombroso, whose theory is valid for those ancestors of us, the orangutans – nay, not even for them”).

Verdi’s *Otello* had a long gestation and premiered on 5 February 1887 at La Scala. Among the initial preparations, he had asked the Neapolitan painter Domenico Morelli (1823-1901) for some pictures, which should help him better visualise the dynamics between Iago and Othello. What he was “implicitly asking the artist was a reversal of the whole phrenological theory” (Gentile 2017): ‘his’ Iago should not have the traits of the degenerate or of the born criminal – Iago should basically look like a perfect gentleman.

S. Agata, 24 Settembre 1881

Car. Morelli,

Voi che ne dite?... Son le ultime parole dell'ultima tua lettera... Io dico che se mi chiamassi Domenico Morelli, e volessi fare una scena d'*Otello*, e precisamente quella ove *Otello* sviene, io non mi logorerei affatto il cervello sull'indicazione di scena: "*Innanzi alla Fortezza*". Nel libretto che Boito ha fatto per me quella scena succede nell'*interno*, ed io ne sono contentissimo. *Interno* od *esterno* non monta. Su questo poi non bisogna essere troppo scrupolosi, perché ai tempi di Shaspeare la *mise en scene* si conosceva... come Dio voleva! — Che Jago sia vestito di nero, come è nera la sua anima, niente di meglio; ma non capisco perché vestiresti Otello alla veneziana! So benissimo che questo generale al servizio della Serenissima sotto il nome di Otello non era altro che un Giacomo Moro veneziano. Ma dal momento che il Sig. Guglielmo ha voluto un *Moro*, ci pensi lui, il Sig. Guglielmo. Otello vestito da turco non andrà bene; ma perché non andrebbe bene vestito da etiope senza il solito turbante? Per il tipo di figura di Jago, la cosa è più seria. Tu vorresti una figura piccola, di membra (tu dici) poco sviluppate, e, se ho ben inteso, una di quelle figure furbe, maligne, dirò così, *a punta*. Se tu lo senti così, fallo così. Ma se io fossi attore ed avessi a rappresentare Jago, io vorrei avere una figura piuttosto magra e lunga, labbra sottili[,] occhi piccoli vicino al naso come le scimmie, la fronte alta che scappa indietro, e la testa sviluppata di dietro: il fare distratto, *nonchalant*, indifferente a tutto, incredulo, frizzante, dicendo il bene ed il male con leggerezza come avendo l'aria di pensare a tutt'altro di quel che dice; così che, se qualcuno avesse a rimproverarlo: "*Tu dici un'infamia!*", egli potesse rispondere: "*Davvero?... Non credevo..., non ne parliamo più!*." Una figura come questa può ingannar tutti, e fino ad un certo punto anche sua moglie. Una figura piccola, maligna, mette tutti in sospetto e non inganna nessuno! *Amen*. — Ridi, che rido anch'io di questa lunga chiacchierata!.. Ma piccolo o grande che sia il Jago, e Otello turco o veneziano, fallo come vuoi; andrà sempre bene. Soltanto non pensarci troppo. Giù, giù, giù... presto...

Ti saluto anche per mia moglie e credimi Aff.

Sant'Agata,²⁴ 24 September 1881

My dearest Morelli,

“What do you say about it?” These are the last words at the end of your latest letter... What I say is that if my name were Domenico Morelli, and I wanted to portray a scene of *Othello*, and precisely the one in which Othello faints, surely I wouldn't rack my brains over that stage direction, “*Before the citadel*”. In the libretto which Boito has prepared for me, that scene is set *indoors*, and I'm very happy with it. *Indoors* or *outdoors* – that's not relevant. Also, one shouldn't be too scrupulous about such things, because in Shakespeare's time the *mise-en-scène* was an unknown concept: as God provides! — Let Iago be dressed in black, as black as his soul, nothing to dispute there – but I don't understand why you would dress Othello in the Venetian style! I know very well that this general in the service of the Serenissima, under the name of Othello, was but a Giacomo Moro²⁵ from Venice. But since Mr William wanted a Moor, well then, let Mr William deal with it. An Othello dressed like a Turk won't do; what about having him dressed like an Ethiop, without the usual turban? As for the type of figure suitable for Iago, that's a serious issue. You say you'd rather like one with a small build; with, you say, underdeveloped limbs, and, if I understand correctly, one of those sly, malign figures – let me put it this way, a *pointed* fellow. If this feels right to you, paint him like that. But if I were an actor who were to play Iago, I'd prefer a rather lean and tall figure, with thin lips and small eyes close to the nose just like apes, with a high forehead sneaking to the back, and a head much developed backwards: his attitude would be absent-minded, *nonchalant*, indifferent about everything, doubtful, ebullient; one who says what's good and what's bad with a lightness that would express that he's always thinking about something rather than what he is saying – so that, should one rebuke him: “This is a slander!”, he could reply: “Is it?... I wasn't thinking... Let's not talk about it anymore...” Such a fellow could deceive anyone, even, to a certain extent, his own wife. Instead, a small, malign figure makes everyone suspicious and can't deceive anyone. *Amen*. — Do laugh now, I'm laughing about this long chat of ours, too! But whether your Iago turns out big or small, and your Othello a Turk or a Venetian, paint him as you please; it'll be fine. Just don't overthink it. Get down, down, down to it... quick!

Best regards also on behalf of my wife, and believe me most affectionately yours, ...

²⁴ The name of Verdi's villa in Villanova sull'Arda, near Piacenza.

²⁵ “Moro” was indeed a common Venetian surname, and Verdi plays with the notion that the “capitano Moro” of Shakespeare's source, a novella by Giraldo Cinzio, was not a Moor.

4. From Ludovico Fulci, 1891. “Amleto” and “Otello”. In *L'evoluzione nel diritto penale: la forza irresistibile* [*The Evolution of Penal Law: The Irresistible Force*], 2nd ed., 254-61; 262-5. Messina: Carmelo de Stefano.

The Messinese Ludovico Fulci (1849-1934) came from a prominent family. He was a lawyer, who taught penal law at the University of Messina, and who entered, first local, and then national, politics: from 1882 to 1913, he was a Deputy, and then from 1919 was a Senator until his death. There were rumours that he was poisoned by the Fascists, just like his cousin, Luigi Fulci (who had been Minister of the Post Service during the second Facta cabinet, the last before Mussolini's government; see Saija 2019). Fulci was an anticlerical Freemason, and was remembered for his humanitarian commitment during the 1887 cholera epidemic.

L'evoluzione del diritto penale: La forza irresistibile is his best-known publication (1st edition: 1881), and was praised by Lombroso (see Camponeschi 1998). By “irresistible force”, Fulci means anything that obfuscates not the human will, but its freedom, and this force has two branches: pathology and passion. He considered this notion from a juridical point of view, i.e. to evaluate someone's responsibility in a crime he or she has perpetrated. The book contains two chapters dedicated to two dramatic works, namely *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Fulci sees Hamlet as someone who has to struggle with the pathological branch of the “irresistible force”, whereas Othello is confronted, through Iago's cunning, with passion, and the social Darwinian ‘law of heredity’ is not on his side.

On page 229, he refers to Hamlet's madness when discussing persecutory delusions: “Si commette il male con la coscienza di commetterlo, ma non si è liberi nel volerlo . . . il motivo è irresistibile: la responsabilità vien meno: non è Amleto l'offensore, è la sua follia. Voi volete trattare il folle come un uomo sensato” (“One commits evil with the awareness of committing it, but without being free in wanting it . . . motive is irresistible, responsibility fails: the murderer is not Hamlet, his madness is. You want to treat the madman as if he were a sensible man”). Fulci quoted this sentence in a study (1884, 43) he carried out on the case of Giuseppe Costa, a Messinese medical doctor who, on 2 March 1882, killed his wife, Carmela Russo. According to Fulci, this man suffered from persecutory delusions: he thought his wife had cheated on him and saw enemies everywhere. Fulci remarks: “Se Costa avesse offeso questa famiglia noi con una frase di Amleto risponderemmo: non fu Costa l'offensore fu la sua follia” (191; “If Costa offended his own

family, we could reply, like Hamlet: ‘the offender was not Costa, his madness was’”). Fulci is probably thinking of *Hamlet* 5.2.180-5:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged.
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

...
 Ma quest'uomo, questo Amleto che è dubbio ed amore; che è l'umanità, è anche un carattere individuale. Che cosa è Amleto? È pazzo o savio?

È un savio che simula la pazzia?

È un mattoide, un uomo che oscilla tra la pazzia e la saviezza, un infelice che si trova nella zona intermedia tra l'insania e la sanità di mente, per dirla con Maudsley? Così disse il Prof. Lombroso al sig. De Zerbi . . .

La tesi di De Zerbi è indovinata . . . Amleto si mostra anche travagliato dalla mania transitoria in tre riscontri: dopo la visione dello spettro, dopo la rappresentazione nella quale acquista la certezza dell'assassino di cui fu vittima il padre, dopo aver veduto Ofelia nella fossa.

Noi non troviamo cotesta mania transitoria in Amleto. In quei tre rincontri non c'è una mania; ma uno scatto di dolore, diremmo quasi, logico; c'è uno scatto di passione che si sarebbe veduto nelle stesse condizioni anche in un uomo normale. È una reazione ad un forte dolore: non altro. Lo scatto di dolore è esorbitante perché Amleto è travagliato da una nevrosi, perché in lui c'è un travaso d'idee e di affetti; ma tutto ciò che è impeto non è in quei rincontri mania; ma passione.

Ma c'è una follia in Amleto? e quale è? C'è una follia; ma il fatto frenopatico, non consiste in una paralisi di volontà, in uno squilibrio di facoltà psichiche; e meglio questi stati patologici sono fenomeni della malattia non la malattia. De Zerbi à voluto darci una forma frenopatica nuova, non osservata dai psichiatri; ma no! ... quella forma non è che rivelazione d'una insania studiata dagli alienisti, la *lipemania*. Amleto era un malinconico: egli vedea la vita attraverso foschi colori, attraverso un vaso di Pandora. La malinconia comincia dopo l'apparizione dello spettro. Egli era prima un mattoide . . . Il delirio lo spinge alla mania omicida; il dubbio paralizza la volontà. Donde una contraddizione che lo tormenta . . . Amleto è un folle parziale che simula una follia che non ha . . .

Amleto lipemaniaco sillogizza, medita, simula... il che implica ri-

...
 But this man, this Hamlet, who is all doubt and love, who is humanity, also possesses an individual character. What is Hamlet's character? Is he mad or sane?

Is he a sane man who simulates madness?

Is he a *mattoide*,¹ oscillating between madness and sanity, a wretch inhabiting the intermediate region between insanity and soundness of mind, to use Maudsley's terms? This was Prof. Lombroso's opinion, as he expressed it to Mr De Zerbi² . . .

De Zerbi's thesis seems exactly right . . . To De Zerbi, Hamlet appears to be tormented by a form of transitory mania in three moments: after seeing his father's ghost; after the play [i.e. *The Mousetrap*], when he becomes convinced of his father's murder; after seeing Ophelia in her grave.

We cannot detect said transitory mania in Hamlet. In those three moments, there is no mania, but only what we may call a 'logical' surge of pain; it is a surge of passion any normal human being would have felt, under those circumstances. It is a reaction to a painful sorrow – nothing else. Hamlet's surge of pain exceeds the norm because he is tormented by a neurosis, because an outpouring of ideas and emotions occurs in him. Still, the impetuous surge that overwhelms him in those moments is not mania, but passion.

Is there madness in Hamlet? And which form does it take? There is a form of madness in him, but the phrenopathic³ fact does not consist in a paralysis of the will, in an unbalance of psychic faculties – that is to say, these pathological conditions are phenomena of the disease, not the disease itself. De Zerbi decided to coin a new phrenopathic form for it, which had escaped the psychiatrists' attention until then, but no, I beg to differ! That form is but the revelation of an insanity which has been studied by the alienists: *lypomania*. Hamlet was a melancholic: he saw life through murky-coloured spectacles, through Pandora's box. The inception of melancholia happens after the apparition of the ghost. Before that, Hamlet was a *mattoide* . . . Delirium drives him to homicidal mania; doubt paralyses his will. Hence arises a contradiction, which comes to haunt him . . . Hamlet is a partial madman, who simulates a madness from which he does not suffer . . .

As a *lypemaniac*, Hamlet syllogises, meditates, simulates... all of

¹ The Italian term *mattoide* was often used by Lombroso to indicate what he called "semi-insane people" (1891, 3.209). "A person displaying erratic, eccentric, or somewhat paranoid behaviour" (*OED*, "mattoide", n. A).

² See text no. 2 in this volume.

³ Relating to phrenopathy, i.e. mental illness.

flessione, premeditazione. Il folle parziale adunque qualche volta riflette, pondera: verità evidente, la quale, prima che alla scienza, si rivelò al genio di Shakespeare! ...

Il genio di Shakespeare nell'*Otello* rivelò una contraddizione, che presenta la specie umana, il furbo colle sue infami sottigliezze; l'ingegno elevato e l'animo generoso, Otello e Jago.

La furberia è simulazione di ingegno, non vera intelligenza, è spesso difetto, non pregio. L'ingegno non frenato da impeti generosi, non ostacolato della coscienza morale trova facilmente ripieghi, inganni, male arti. La potenza della furberia non è forza di ingegno è difetto di coscienza morale.

Ed il furbo volgare accoppa il genio generoso . . . L'insidia dell'uomo volgare si serve della simulazione, della bontà: l'animo espansivo crede alla bontà simulata: il generoso crede tutti onesti, e la furberia dell'uomo volgare vince il genio, che ha financo la potenza della divinazione. Jago inganna Otello.

Otello è valoroso genio della strategica, egli non è un etiope; ma uno di quei mori discendenti da quegli arabi, che furono maestri e duci nelle arti della pace e della guerra. Vero è che Rodrigo parlando di Otello lo chiama *labbruto*; vale a dire negro, etiope; ma è da considerare che quando parla Rodrigo parla il rivale di Otello, laonde in quella parola c'è una ingiuria, non una verità. Otello per la legge dell'eredità è un eletto ingegno, perché discendente degli arabi, sente profondamente l'impressione delle passioni, perché porta nelle sue vene quella selvaggia natura che l'incrocio delle razze ha potuto affievolire non addirittura distruggere. Egli ama fino all'entusiasmo Desdemona, e pur credendosi disonorato e tradito, pur giurando che i suoi pensieri non rifluiranno

which implies reflection and premeditation. Thus, the partial mad are able to reflect and ponder: an evident truth, which, before the advent of modern science, was revealed to Shakespeare's genius!...

In *Othello*, Shakespeare's genius unveiled a contradiction which characterises the human species: the cunning person with his slanderous subtleties against a superior intellect and a generous soul – Othello and Iago.

Cunning is simulation of intellect, not true intelligence; it is often a defect, not something positive. An intellect which is not confined by generous impetuositics can easily find stratagems, tricks, and corrupt artistry. The power of cunning is not strength of intellect, but a deficiency of moral conscience.

And the vulgar person of cunning slays the generous genius . . . Deception, in the vulgar person, employs simulation of goodness: an expansive soul believes in such simulated goodness, because the generous will believe all honesty, and thus the cunning of the vulgar man will quell the genius, although the latter may have divining faculties on its side. Iago can deceive Othello.

Othello is a valorous genius as far as strategics is concerned. He is not an Ethiop,⁴ but one of the Moors who descend from the Arabs, masters and leaders both in warfare and in peacetime. It is true that Roderigo refers to him as "thick-lips",⁵ i.e. a Negro,⁶ an Ethiop, but one should consider that Roderigo is, in that situation, Othello's rival, and thus that word is an insult, and not true. The law of heredity endows Othello with a superior intellect, because, as a descendant of the Arabs, he is profoundly susceptible to passion, while, as the product of an interbreeding of races, a savage⁷ nature still courses through his veins: such interbreeding may have dwindled, but not vanquished it. His love for Desdemona tends to enthusiasm, and he still loves her, when he believes she has dishonoured and betrayed him. He swears that his thoughts "Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love, / Till that a

⁴ A term used also in the early modern period to generically mean anyone from Sub-Saharan Africa, with racist overtones, because believed to be uglier and less 'civilised' than the Arabs.

⁵ 1.1.66.

⁶ The Italian word, besides meaning simply 'black' in the period, could also be used derogatorily as the n-word.

⁷ The Italian adjective may simply mean "wild", but Fulci often uses animalistic and racist terms towards Othello.

mai verso l'umile amore, finché ingoiati non siano da una piena e larga vendetta; si ferma ebbro di vendetta nanzi quel seno più bianco della neve, e soccorrevole al tatto come l'alabastro dei monumenti. Ebbro di vendetta, egli ama ancora, bacia la sua vittima ché prima di strappare la sua vittima vuole fiutarla ancora. Vuol vendicarsi; ma vuole amare ancora. "Un altro bacio, un altro... Rimani così dopo morte, ed io ti ucciderò e ti amerò sempre..." È un amore potente, che sopravvive al tradimento, al disonore, e che fatale si impone financo nel momento della vendetta. Questo amore selvaggio è gelosia potente . . .

È uccisa Desdemona, è uccisa l'innocente, la casta sposa, l'ha ucciso [sic] Otello; ma Otello non è reo, è uomo il quale non ha che troppo amato. Il reo è Jago il furbo calunniatore. Il genio di Shakespeare assolve Otello; condanna Jago. La coscienza dell'umanità conferma il verdetto di Shakespeare. Perché? L'infelice Otello fu vinto dalla forza irresistibile di una passione. E la passione è potente, pel carattere dell'uomo: il moro è presentato come mente gagliarda ed animo impetuoso: è potente perché Otello per *eredità* sente con violenza le passioni. La passione può diventare forza affatto irresistibile quando il carattere individuale e l'eredità la sollecitano e l'accentuano: ecco una verità intraveduta dal genio di Shakespeare.

Il *putativo* ai fini delle dirimenti e delle scuse che si basano sopra un fatto psichico ha l'efficacia del *reale*. Otello non è stato tradito. Desdemona infelice era angelo di bellezza e di candore. Ma che fa ciò? Otello merita non disprezzo, ma compassione . . . Il colpevole è l'*errore* – e chi è causa di esso, l'infame Jago contro cui la coscienza morale si ribella . . . "Oh! egli esclama compreso d'ira selvaggia, se sei un demonio non potrò ucciderti!!".

capable and wide revenge / Swallow them up”,⁸ yet, when intoxicated by revenge, he stops on seeing that “whiter skin of hers than snow, / And smooth as monumental alabaster”. Again, intoxicated by revenge, he still loves her, and kisses his victim, and still wants to “smell” her before “plucking” her. He wants to take revenge, but he still loves her. “One more, one more. / Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee / And love thee after..”⁹ It is a powerful love, which has survived betrayal, dishonour, and its fatality imposes itself even at the moment of revenge. This savage love corresponds to a powerful jealousy . . .

Desdemona is dead, she so blameless is dead, his chaste wife – Othello has murdered her. But Othello is not guilty, he is a man “that loved not wisely but too well”.¹⁰ Iago, that cunning slanderer, is guilty. Shakespeare’s genius absolves Othello and condemns Iago. All human consciences confirm Shakespeare’s verdict. Why? The wretched Othello was vanquished by the irresistible force of passion. And passion is so powerful in relation to Othello’s character. The Moor is presented as having a mighty mind and an impetuous soul, but the passion that overcomes him is so powerful because, by the *law of heredity*, passions work violently inside him. Passion can become an absolutely irresistible force, when an individual character and heredity urge and strengthen it.

What has been *supposed* has the same effectiveness of the *real* when considering diriment questions and excuses vis à vis a psychic fact. Desdemona, that angel of beauty and candour, was not unfaithful to Othello. What about that? Othello deserves compassion, not scorn . . . *Error* is to blame, and the cause of error: the infamous Iago, against whom any moral conscience rebels itself . . . “O”, exclaims Othello, filled with savage wrath, “If that thou beest a devil I cannot kill thee!”¹¹

⁸ 5.2.460-3. Fulci does not signal he is quoting Shakespeare.

⁹ This and the previous quotations refer to 5.2.4-19.

¹⁰ 5.2.353

¹¹ 5.2.294.

5. Extracts from Cesare Lombroso's works:

5a. From Cesare Lombroso. 1894. *L'Uomo di genio* [*The Man of Genius*], 6th ed. Torino: Bocca. xxv; 29; 140; 141-2; 214; 556; 704; 707.

5b. From —. 1899. “Il delinquente e il pazzo nel dramma e nel romanzo moderno” [“The Delinquent and the Madman in Modern Drama and in the Modern Novel”]. *Nuova Antologia* 79: 655-81.

5c. —. 1907. “Otello epilettico” [“Othello the Epileptic”]. Review of Federico Garlanda's *Studi shakespeareiani*. *Archivio di psichiatria* 28: 621.

Cesare Lombroso (Verona, 1835 – Turin, 1909), the founder of the Italian School of Positivist Criminology, requires no introduction. Born into a very observant Jewish family, he taught psychiatry at the University of Pavia (1862), and then directed the psychiatric hospital of Pesaro (1871). In Turin, he became professor of forensic medicine and public health (1876), psychiatry (1896), and, eventually, criminal anthropology (1905). His research on cretinism and pellagra was deeply influential for Italian health legislation, but he reached notoriety in the field of criminal anthropology, especially through his books *L'Uomo delinquente* [*The Criminal Man*] (1876) and *La donna criminale* [*The Criminal Woman*] (1895), which were very often republished and modified with each new edition. He had a materialistic conception of the human being (although he was keenly interested in the paranormal), and tried to scientifically explain criminals' moral degeneracy by looking at their physical anomalies. His studies on the genius also became extremely famous.

The first text (5a) consists of excerpts from *L'Uomo di genio* [*The Man of Genius*], which was first published in 1888 (although an early version had already been published four times with the title *Genio e Follia* [*Genius and Madness*]). It was an extremely successful text, which circulated in Italy and abroad; each new edition shows alterations and additions. For Lombroso, Shakespeare's genius is indisputable, but one infers how frustrated he must have felt in wanting to substantiate his notions of the morbid genius, when faced with the dearth of biographical information about the English playwright. It should also be noticed that Shakespeare is always grouped among other geniuses: he is hardly ever discussed separately. Lombroso perpetuates the Romantic idea of Shakespeare as the unlearned genius inspired directly by Nature – but couches it in the language of positivism. He then proceeds to discuss

Shakespeare's (alleged) psychological profile and anatomical features.

In 5b, Lombroso discusses the themes of madness and crime as featured in the works of naturalistic school, but praises the Greeks, Dante, and, above all, Shakespeare, for presaging the discoveries of criminal anthropology. He seems especially interested in the Macbeths, but sketches some reflections on other Shakespearean characters, mainly following Ziino (see text 8).

In the third text (5c), he extols Federico Garlanda's insight into Othello's pathological profile: epilepsy is key to understanding Shakespeare's tragedy, and the English genius but confirms Lombrosian thoughts on the criminals of passion.

5a.

“... È arduo e difficile il definire l'uomo di genio, scrive Richet (1). Nessuno saprebbe stabilire un limite assoluto, una distanza formale tra l'uomo di genio e l'uomo di talento, tra l'uomo di talento e l'uomo mediocre. Ma ciò si ripete in ogni classificazione. Non rinnoviamo, dunque il vecchio sofisma dei Greci che pretendevano non esservi uomini calvi, giacché non si può calcolare il numero esatto dei capelli, la cui mancanza costituisce la calvizie. Dunque non cerchiamo il limite, e consideriamo gli uomini il cui genio è incontestato come Pascal, Dante, Shakspeare, Newton, Victor Hugo, Goëthe, Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaello, Napoleone. Ora ciò che, a mio giudizio, caratterizza questi grandi uomini è la loro differenziazione dall'ambiente che li circonda. Essi vedono meglio e soprattutto in altro modo della comune degli uomini. Questo carattere dell'originalità è indispensabile al genio. È cosa tanto evidente da parer quasi il dirlo un'ingenuità!

...

È, siccome passato il momento dell'estro, l'uomo di genio torna un uomo comune o peggio, così l'ineguaglianza, o, con un vocabolo più moderno, la doppia, spesso contraria, personalità, è uno dei caratteri del genio. I migliori nostri poeti, come ben disse D'Israeli (*Curiosités littéraires*, 1869), Shakspeare e Dryden, ci dettarono anche i versi più brutti . . .

...

A questi fatti numerosi quei critici, che non afferrano mai i confini del vero, troppo alti o troppo lontani, che non avendo genio si stancano presto al lavoro, obbiettano che tutti i fenomeni patologici del genio, come iperestesia, mancino, impulsività, insensibilità affettiva, epilessia, ecc., sono fenomeni di esaurimento, di stanchezza.

Ma non pensano essi che i genii appunto sono macchine pensatrici portate ad una potenza ben maggiore della comune (e molti infatti

5a.

“... It is arduous and hard to define the man of genius”, Richet¹ writes (1). Nobody is able to establish an absolute boundary, a formal distance to distinguish the man of genius from the man of talent, and the man of talent from the mediocre man. This applies to any attempt at classification: let us not repeat, then, that old sophism of the Greeks, according to which there exist no bald men, because one cannot calculate the exact number of hairs growing on one’s head, the lack of which constitutes baldness. Therefore, let us not look for such a boundary, but let us examine the men whose genius is undisputed, such as Pascal, Dante, Shakespeare, Newton, Victor Hugo, Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Napoleon. Now, in my opinion, what characterises these great men is their differentiation from their environment. They can see better than, and especially, differently from the rest of humanity. Such originality is indispensable to the genius. This is something so self-evident that even the act of saying it practically verges on naivety!

...

And since the man of genius reverts to being an ordinary man, or worse, when the moment of inspiration fades, it follows that one of his defining characteristics is his unevenness, or, to use a more modern phrase, a double, often contrary, personality. As D’Israeli well put it (*Curiosités littéraires*, 1869), our greatest poets, Shakespeare and Dryden, are also those who have produced the worst lines² . . .

...

Those critics, who can never grasp the edges of truth, which are always too high or too far for them, object against the numerous characteristics of the genius I have listed, because they think that all the pathological phenomena related to the genius (such as hyperaesthesia,³ left-handedness, impulsivity, affective insensitivity, epilepsy, etc.), indicate exhaustion, and tiredness. It is they who get tired very soon, since they cannot understand genius lacking it.

What they neglect to consider is that the genius is in fact a thinking machine, geared to a greater power than ordinary people – many

¹ Charles Robert Richet (1850-1935) a French physiologist who, in 1913, was awarded the Nobel prize in medicine, had written a preface to the French translation of Lombroso’s *Uomo di genio*. Richet and Lombroso became friends, and among other things, took part in *séances* together.

² Isaac D’Israeli’s original: “Shakespeare and Dryden are at once the greatest and the least of our poets”.

³ “Excessive and morbid sensitiveness of the nerves or nerve-centres” (*OED*, n. “hyperaesthesia”, a).

hanno cervelli enormi, come Cuvier, Byron, Schiller), e che quindi resistono assai più degli altri alla fatica mentale, e lavorano con una strana facilità come il baco per creare la seta.

...

La loro speciale epilessia e l'indole nevrotica sono così poco l'effetto dell'esaurimento, che entrano nel contenuto dell'opera più geniale, e le danno spesso l'impronta speciale.

Basta per ciò studiare con l'animo imparziale le migliori opere di Dostojewski, di Ibsen e molte di quelle di Shakspeare, ed in quadri del Wiertz . . .

E ben pochi di questi fenomeni si manifestano in quegli eruditi, che, all'inverso dei genii, lavorano molto materialmente col pensiero, benché diano prodotti assai inferiori.

Io non ho mai notato nel Magliabecchi, nel Cavedoni, negli epigrafai, negli archeologi e nei naturalisti sistematici, immersi dalla mattina alla sera nella polvere delle biblioteche e dei musei, quelle grandi nevrosi trovate nei genii, mentre molti di questi, come Shakspeare, Burns, Byron, hanno dato i loro grandi prodotti senza avere quasi studiato, e quindi senza aver avuto occasione di stancarsi troppo.

...

i grandi uomini ammogliati non furono felici nelle nozze: Shakspeare, Dante, Marzolo, etc.

...

Gli occhi celesti pretendonsi una caratteristica degli uomini superiori. Tali Socrate, Locke, Shakspeare, Bacone, Milton, Goëthe, Fran-

geniuses have indeed a huge brain, e.g. Cuvier,⁴ Byron, and Schiller. They can resist much longer than others as far as mental fatigue is concerned, and their work is characterised by a strange easiness, which reminds me of the way the silkworm produces his thread.

...

Their special epilepsy and their neurotic nature produce so little exhaustion that they end up infiltrating into the content of a genius' best work, which often bears their special imprint.

Thus, one should simply study the best works by Dostoevsky, Ibsen, and most of Shakespeare's works, and Wiertz's⁵ paintings impartially . . .

Very few of these phenomena manifest themselves in the bookish scholar, whose being is antithetical to that of the genius. Such a scholar works quite weightily with his thoughts, but his productions turn out to be inferior to the genius' ones.

I have never found great neuroses in Magliabecchi or Cavedoni,⁶ or among the petty epigraph-writers, the archaeologists, the systematic naturalists, who work from morning to evening amid the dust of a library or a museum – such neuroses belong to geniuses, while many geniuses, such as Shakespeare, Burns, and Byron have produced their great creations without hardly any studies, thus, without having had the chance to get too tired.

...

When great men get a wife, their marriage is not a happy one: consider Shakespeare, Dante, Marzolo,⁷ etc.

...

Some believe that light blue eyes are a characteristic of superior men: Socrates, Locke, Shakespeare,⁸ Bacon, Milton, Goethe, Frank-

⁴ Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), the founding father of paleontology.

⁵ Antoine Wiertz (1806-1865), a Belgian painter, famous for his portraits and known for macabre fantasies.

⁶ Antonio Magliabecchi (1633-1714), a Florentine bibliophile, whose library, together with the Grand Duke's, formed the core of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence; Celestino Cavedoni (1795-1865), a passionate numismatist and archeologist from Modena.

⁷ Paolo Marzolo (1811-1868), a physician, who introduced Lombroso to the study of anthropology and linguistics. We know from Gina Lombroso (1915, 74) that he adored his wife, but she cheated on him with one of his colleagues.

⁸ The colour of Shakespeare's eyes in the Chandos portrait is unclear; most describe it as grey.

klin, Napoleone I, Bismarck, Gladstone, Renan, Buchner, Huxley, ecc.

...
Psicopatia sessuale. – Winckelmann dall’epistolario appare un psicopatico sessuale, anzi urningo . . . e così pare fossero Cellini, Soddoma, Mureto, Platen, di cui, come di Michelangelo . . ., si leggono versi amorosi a maschi, e forse Shakspeare.

(1) Dall’*Homme de génie*, di C. Lombroso. Préface par M. Richet. – Paris, Alcan, 1889.

5b.

[...a]i nostri tempi la psicologia è penetrata per tutti i pori. Vi è già una psicologia dei sensi, dei sentimenti, della volontà (Ribot), la psicologia della folla (Sighele), dei pazzi, dei criminali (Lombroso, Ferri); si tenta fin la psicologia delle cellule o, almeno, degli infusori (Binet).

Perciò, come la statistica a mano a mano si applica alla storia, alla politica, alla religione, così la psicologia ha finito di penetrare nel romanzo e nel dramma, e prendersi la parte del leone. E lungi dall’essere respinti dal pubblico, come un tempo Euripide e, fino a un certo punto, Shakespeare, gli autori che ne usano ed abusano, guadagnano nell’ammirazione del pubblico, e noi siamo fieri di vedere Zola prendere dal nostro uomo delinquente il suo Jaques, per farne una statua immortale,

lin, Napoleon I, Bismarck, Gladstone, Renan, Buchner, Huxley, etc., they all had them.

...
Sexual Psychopathy. – In his letters, Winckelmann appears as a sexual psychopath, specifically, an urning⁹ . . . Cellini, Sodoma, Muret, Platen,¹⁰ were probably the same. One can read their amorous poems, as also those written by Michelangelo . . . addressed to males; this may also be Shakespeare's case.

(1) From *L'homme de génie*, by C. Lombroso. Préface par M. Richet. – Paris, Alcan, 1889.

5b

. . . Nowadays psychology has penetrated through all pores. We have already witnessed the development of a psychology which studies the senses, the feelings, the will (Ribot),¹¹ of crowd psychology (Sighele), of the psychology of the mad and the criminals (Lombroso, Ferri); attempts have even been made in the psychology of cells, or at least, of the infusoria (Binet).¹²

Thus, as statistics has gradually been applied to history, politics, and religion, so psychology has ended up penetrating into the novel and drama, occupying the lion's share thereof. The authors who make use of it, or who abuse it, far from being rejected by the public, as once Euripides and, to a certain extent, Shakespeare, have been gaining their admiration. We are proud to see that Zola has drawn on our notion of the criminal man for his Jacques,¹³ and monumentalised him

⁹ See the excerpt from Ziino and relative note (text 8).

¹⁰ Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), Renaissance artist accused of sodomy; Il Sodoma, nickname of Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (1477-1549), Renaissance painter; Marc-Antoine Muret (1526-1585), Renaissance philologist imprisoned for sodomy; August von Platen-Hallermünde (1796-1835), German poet and dramatist outed by Heinrich Heine.

¹¹ Théodule-Armand Ribot (1839-1916), one of the founders of French psychopathology.

¹² Alfred Binet (1857-1911), from Nice, was one of Charcot's pupils. In 1888, he published *La vie psychique des micro-organismes* (infusoria are "A class of Protozoa, comprising ciliated, tentaculate, and flagellate animalcula, essentially unicellular, free-swimming, or sedentary; so called because found in infusions of decaying animal or vegetable matter", *OED*, n.).

¹³ The protagonist of *La Bête Humaine* (1890).

e Dostojewski dipingere i criminali-nati nella *Casa dei morti* e il criminaloide nel *Delitto e pena* . . .

Parrà forse sulle prime una contraddizione a quanto esponemmo finora, il fatto che anche nell'antichità, a grandi intervalli, si osservarono drammaturghi, poeti, romanzieri, come Shakespeare, Dante, Euripide, che, trascinati dall'istinto osservatore e creatore non si fermarono agli eventi, ma studiarono anche i caratteri e si accorsero subito della potenza drammatica di quelli pazzeschi e criminali e li tesoreggiarono nell'opera loro.

. . .

Niceforo dimostrò come Dante, nell'*Inferno*, scolpiva nei suoi dannati i caratteri che dà la mia scuola al reo-nato.

Meglio ancora Shakespeare (1), quando, per esempio, divinava la maggiore intensità del crimine nella donna in confronto all'uomo e la maggior virilità della criminaloide. Lady Macbeth è più crudele del marito; non basta, essa ha molti dei caratteri degli uomini: "Dal tuo fianco non escano altro che uomini, ché la tua tempra indomita mal s'addice a femina". E lady Macbeth così fredda nel delitto, così abile premeditatrice, è isterica e sonnambula, e negli accessi riproduce atti e parole del triste delitto, mostrando che l'autore sapeva che negli isterici come nelle sonnambule si ripetono spesso gli atti e le emozioni che determinarono lo scoppio della malattia.

Macbeth, il marito, va soggetto a quell'epilessia psichica (di carattere allucinatorio) che io tentai di provare, fra le risa degli accademici, essere l'equivalente del crimine.

Amleto ha la follia del dubbio, allucinazioni, simula, essendo pazzo, una pazzia, ma è permaloso, furbo, subodora quanto si muterà a suo danno e provvede, è omicida per paura, cinico, è pure, spesso ancora, savio, buono, amoroso, salvo che l'amore svapora dinanzi all'idea fissa.

In Ofelia l'amore mancato, il contatto con un pazzo o finto pazzo, la morte del padre quasi sotto i suoi occhi provocano una specie di quella demenza acuta che ora si chiama confusione mentale con vaghe idee di

for all eternity; we are proud to see how Dostoevsky has portrayed his born criminals in *The House of the Dead*, or the criminaloid¹⁴ in *Crime and Punishment* . . .

At first sight it will appear to contradict what we have been illustrating so far that also in antiquity, and spanning over large intervals, there were dramatists, poets, novelists, such as Shakespeare, Dante, Euripides, who, driven by an observer's and a creator's instinct, did not limit their gaze to the events, but studied characters as well, thereby immediately realising the dramatic potential of the mad and of the criminals – and treated them in their works.

...

Niceforo has demonstrated that in the *Inferno*, Dante's chisel has carved, into his damned ones, the characteristics which my school has attributed to the born criminal.

Even better, Shakespeare intuited, among other things, that there is a greater intensity of crime within a woman than within a man, and understood the criminaloid woman's greater virility. Not only is Lady Macbeth crueller than her husband, but she also has many characteristics typical of a man. "Bring forth men-children only, / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males".¹⁵ And Lady Macbeth, who is so cold when steeped in her crime, such a skilled pre-meditator – she becomes hysteric, and sleepwalks; in such moments, she reproduces the actions and the words of the dire crime they have committed. All this shows that Shakespeare knew that both hysterics and sleepwalkers often repeat those acts and feelings which had determined the inception of the disease.

Macbeth, her husband, suffers from psychic epilepsy of a hallucinatory nature; when I tried to prove it to be the equivalent of crime, I elicited roaring laughter from the academics.

Hamlet is affected by doubting mania;¹⁶ he hallucinates, and simulates madness while being mad. He is also touchy and smart, and can get wind of what will change and come to harm him – he reacts accordingly, and kills out of fear; he is cynical, but also, and more frequently, wise, good, loving, except that his love dissolves before his obsession.

In Ophelia, a love gone missing, the contact with a madman or a simulated madman, her father dying almost before her eyes – all these elements cause a species of acute dementia, which is sometimes

¹⁴ "A person with an inclination towards crime; an occasional rather than habitual criminal." (*OED*, n.).

¹⁵ 1.7.72-4.

¹⁶ I.e. what the French called "la folie du doute": pathological doubting about all affairs of life.

persecuzione, vaghi ricordi dell'amore tradito e del padre, espressioni slegate e confuse che finiscono con un suicidio automatico.

Nel Re Lear tu trovi la follia senile, la pazzia simulata, la pazzia morale, ecc.

Ma ciò conferma le nostre conclusioni.

Anche nell'uso e abuso dei pazzi e dei rei il genio ha prevenuto la nostra epoca, appunto perché pel genio è cancellato il tempo, perché il genio previene di secoli e secoli l'opera futura. Ma, notisi, che appunto perché in tutti questi casi il genio precedeva troppo i suoi coetanei, ne veniva perseguitato e deriso, primo, e più di tutti, Euripide, fatto segno persino alle farse di Aristofane; e solo ai nostri giorni si comprende nella sua profondità, il lato psichiatrico di Dante e di Shakespeare, creduto finora semplice ricerca di effetti scenici volgari.

(1) Vedasi il bel libro di ZIINO: *Studi su G. Shakespeare*. Palermo, 1898; IRELAND, *La follia nel teatro di Shakespeare*, 1880; NICEFORO, *I criminali e degenerati dell'Inferno dantesco*. Torino, Bocca, 1887.

known as mental confusion accompanied by indistinct delusions of persecution, together with vague memories of her love's betrayal, of her father, and loose and confused expressions. Everything leads to an automatic suicide.

In King Lear, you can find senile dementia, simulated madness, moral madness, and so on.

However, all this but confirms our conclusions.

Thus, in the use and abuse of the mad and the criminals, the genius has anticipated our age, precisely because the genius undoes time, and anticipates by entire centuries the work to come. Conversely, in all those cases, one should note that, because the genius was before his time, his contemporaries persecuted and mocked him – Euripides more than all the others had to suffer this, when he even became the laughingstock in Aristophanes' farces; only in our age has a psychiatric dimension been understood in all its depth in Dante and Shakespeare, while, until now, this component of Shakespeare's works had been considered but as a mere pursuit after some vulgar scenic effects.

(1) See ZIINO's valuable book, *Studi su G. Shakespeare*. Palermo, 1898; IRELAND, *Madness in Shakespeare's Plays*, 1880;¹⁷ NICEFORO, *I criminali e degenerati dell'Inferno dantesco*. Torino, Bocca, 1887.

¹⁷ Untraced.

5c.

Garlanda fa un'analisi psicologica ed estetica del meraviglioso dramma di Otello, tratto ad un subitaneo delitto per passione dalle raffinate arti di un criminale nato che vuol vendicarsi di torti veri od immaginari. Quello che ci interessa è la osservazione che Shakespeare aggiunge l'epilessia come agente passionale di Otello, presagendo quei rapporti che io ho fissato nell'*Uomo delinquente*.

Quando Otello riceve il massimo colpo della rivelazione di Jago, cade in accesso epilettico, dopo il quale si risveglia con violenza di parole feroci ed oscenamente volgari, che rappresentano un altro accesso psichico, e l'accesso rende così rapidi gli effetti della insinuazione criminosa di Jago, che Jago stesso è sorpreso. Ora è importante nella nota di Garlanda il sapere che Shakespeare calca tutto il suo dramma sopra una novella di Giraldi, che fa parte del volume *Ecatommiti*, nov. VII: nella qual novella non vi è traccia di epilessia, che egli vi introdusse dunque per una profonda conoscenza dei rapporti fra il delitto passionale e l'epilessia.

Noi lodiamo in ciò tanto più il Garlanda in quanto che i filosofi e gli esteti non solo non conoscono questi rapporti, ma li disprezzano e non capiscono l'importanza che essi hanno nella comprensione dei capolavori tanto della poesia quanto della pittura.

5c.

Garlanda carries out a psychological and aesthetic analysis of the extraordinary drama into which Othello is drawn: Othello is driven to a precipitous crime of passion by the refined cunning of a born criminal, who wants to wreak revenge upon him, on the grounds of some actual or imagined wrongs which he has suffered. What interests us especially is Garlanda's observation that Shakespeare added epilepsy as Othello's passionate agent, thus presaging those relationships I have established in *The Criminal Man*.

When Othello receives the heaviest blow – Iago's revelation [of his wife's adultery] – he has an epileptic seizure, from which, Othello regains consciousness, but utters awful and obscenely vulgar words. They are the symptoms of a second seizure, this time psychic: this episode accelerates the effects of Iago's criminal insinuation so much that Iago himself is caught by surprise. Now, Garlanda's text profits from the realisation that no trace of such epilepsy can be found in the play's main source, as Shakespeare based his whole play on a novella by Giraldi (see *Ecatommiti*, novella no. 7). It follows that Shakespeare introduced this change because he was deeply aware of the relationships between crimes of passion and epilepsy.

We thus write in praise of Garlanda, even more because, generally speaking, philosophers and scholars of aesthetics know nothing of such relationships, neither do they understand their importance for the understanding of masterpieces in the fields of poetry and painting alike.

6. From Antonio Renda's works.

6a. Antonio Renda. 1894. "Le anomalie di Shakspeare" ["Shakespeare's Anomalies"]. *Gazzetta Letteraria*. 30 June: 306-7.

6b. From — 1904. *Il destino delle dinastie: L'eredità morbosa nella storia*. [*The Dynasties' Destiny: Morbid Heredity in History*]. Torino: Bocca: 85; 89; 90; 96; 126-8; 137; 139; 143; 153; 156.

Several letters between Antonio Renda and Lombroso are preserved at the Cesare Lombroso Museum in Turin. Renda (Radicena, near Reggio Calabria, 1875 – Rome, 1959) taught history of philosophy at the University of Palermo, and most of his publications have indeed a philosophical approach. However, his interest in psychology and criminology made him a loyal disciple of the Lombrosians, and he looked at literary works from that perspective, with a focus on Torquato Tasso and Shakespeare.

He privileged Rusconi's prose translation of Shakespeare, and from Rusconi's introduction he learned what he knew about Shakespeare's biography. He deemed this information sufficient to attempt a pathologisation of Shakespeare's psyche (6a), because he mixed such 'direct' data with the symptoms that he thought to detect in Shakespeare's works.

He is also the author of a quite curious monograph (6b): Renda studies what he sees as biological degeneration in the branches of several dynasties, and when it comes to the Plantagenets, he mixes the chronicles with Shakespeare's history plays. He occasionally manages to differentiate between the two, but not always, see for example what he writes about Richard III, whom he regards as a teratological criminal: his severe disabilities due to the degeneration of his ancestors, together with the environment in which he lived, could not but lead him to commit those crimes. Renda avowedly admitted Ziino's influence.

6a.

A Cesare Lombroso

Le scarse notizie che si hanno intorno alla vita del gran tragico inglese, tanto che, non è molto, era permesso alla critica di dubitare della autenticità dei suoi drammi, e l'oggettività delle sue opere ne hanno forse ritardata l'analisi psichiatrica.

Pure non tanto poco di lui sappiamo, né è tale l'oggettività d'un [sic] opera d'arte, da impedire che la critica vi si spinga fino addentro, e ricerchi qualche scintilla dell'animo dello scrittore, e ne ricostruisca in qualche modo il carattere. Sia difatti qual si voglia la forma artistica d'un'opera, essa presenta sempre l'impronta del genio che l'ha plasmata: poiché è provato altro non essere l'arte, che una manifestazione individuale della natura, passata attraverso l'animo dell'artista. Onde a buon diritto concludeva Max-Nordau nel suo *Entartung*, che nelle opere di arte in nessun caso si può parlare di realtà precisa e fedele. Ebbene, dalle notizie della vita di Shakspeare, che traggo da uno scritto del Rusconi, e dall'esame dei suoi drammi mi pare che si possano raccogliere dati se non del tutto decisivi, tali almeno da permettere di stabilire l'anormalità del suo carattere. Forse non basteranno a coloro che nelle analisi pazienti della scienza vedono vagheggiamenti di insensati, e il risultato scandalizzerà quei medesimi, che prima si dilettevano delle amabili *distrazioni* degli uomini illustri, ed ora che il Lombroso li classifica e dà loro il giusto valore, gridano all'esagerazione: essi ora, recalcitranti alla ipotesi, piegheranno poi il collo alla legge.



L'impressione più notevole e più spiccata, che la lettura o la rappresentazione dei drammi di Shakspeare lasciano nell'animo, è una fantasmagoria dolce e terribile insieme, di cui le figure più brillanti sono le streghe e gli spiriti – quasi elementi indispensabili del teatro Shakespeariano. Il terrore dell'ombra d'Amleto oscura la compassione dei casi di Ofelia; lo spirito di Banquo, i rimorsi di Macbeth, la sarabanda

6a .

To Cesare Lombroso

The scant news we have concerning the life of the great English tragedian (so scant indeed that it has not been long since scholarship was allowed to cast doubt over the authorship¹ of his plays) along with the objectivity of his works may account for the delay in psychiatric analysis.

Still, neither do we know so little of him, nor is the objectivity of a work of art so absolute as to prevent criticism from venturing to look within it for some sparks of its author's mind, whose character can thereby be reconstructed. Whatever the artistic form of a work, it always features the imprint of the genius which has moulded it: art has been proved to be nothing else but an individual manifestation of nature transmitted through the mind of the artist. Therefore, Max Nordau was more than justified, in his *Entartung*,² to conclude that to talk of precise and faithful reality will never do when dealing with works of art. Now, I think that, through the information about Shakespeare's life which I have garnered from a text by Rusconi, and by the examination of his plays, it is possible to gather a data set which perhaps may not be wholly decisive, but may yet be sufficient to demonstrate the abnormality of Shakespeare's character. Maybe they will be considered lacking by those who regard patient scientific analysis as the rantings of deranged people, and the outcome will scandalise those same readers who were previously fond of following the delectable *distractions* of famous men, but now that Lombroso classifies and correctly evaluates those distractions, they have started to vociferously denounce these findings as exaggeration. These people who are now recalcitrant to the hypothesis will bend their neck before the law.



The most noteworthy and pronounced impression left in our mind when reading or watching Shakespeare's plays is a sweet as well as awe-inspiring phantasmagoria, the most vivid characters of which are the witches and the spirits – these are almost indispensable elements of Shakespearean drama. The terror inspired by the shade of old Hamlet obscures our compassion towards Ophelia's misadventures; Banquo's spirit, Macbeth's pang of remorse, the saraband of the witches deprive

¹ See Squillace's review of Ziino (text no. 10).

² In his best-known work, *Entartung (Degeneration, 1892)*, the Jewish intellectual and Zionist leader Max Nordau from Hungary advocated that the aestheticist, symbolist, and the naturalistic movements were expression of a degeneration caused by neurosis and immorality.

delle Streghe fanno impallidire le dolci figure di Giulietta e di Romeo. Shakspeare se sa dipingere con mano maestra i dolci idillii dell'amore riesce senza dubbio più grande nelle scene terribili, in cui si scatenano le passioni più violente e i più bestiali furori. La pazzia del re Lear, gli impeti di Otello e di Coriolano, gli orrori di Jago e di Glocester non possono avere pittore più abile e fedele. La rabbia e i furori della vendetta non hanno un interprete più grande di lui: ce ne descrive tutte le gradazioni dal principio allo scoppio finale. Inaudite crudeltà ricorrono qualche volta nei suoi drammi. Ricordo l'accecamento di Glocester nel re Lear, (Atto iii, seno[sic] 7^a), atto barbaro da molti rimproverato; e l'ira di Cleopatra che strappa i capelli al Messaggero, recante la notizia del matrimonio di Antonio (Atto II, scena 5^a). La predilezione per gli spiriti, anche a ritenere falsa l'opinione di coloro, che credono aver Shakspeare nella febbre della creazione realmente veduto l'ombra di Amleto, mostra se non altro che nel cervello di quel grande un mondo si aggirava, lontano dalla realtà, e popolato di quelle fantasime che egli ci riproduce con tinte verissime. Eppure alcuni studi del prof. D'Alfonso sulle ombre di Amleto e di Banquo – nei quali ci dimostra che le apparizioni son messe in iscena tra condizioni psicologiche atte a produrre tale fenomeno – mostrano indirettamente che quella ipotesi non è poi così tanto strana. A noi però basta semplicemente che questo provi un'inclinazione al misticismo ed una squisitissima sensibilità.

La musica doveva produrre una grande impressione in lui, se ci è lecito argomentarlo indirettamente dall'uso che ne fa nei suoi drammi, e dagli effetti che ad essa attribuisce. A calmare il pazzo furore di Re Lear il medico non sa trovare altro di meglio che una dolce melodia, al qual suono i sensi dell'infelice vecchio si calmano. (Vedi Atto IV, scena 7^a). Nella tempesta [sic] la musica malinconica di Ariele addormenta i naufraghi, infonde loro un lungo e benefico sopore che quasi li inebetisce, e li trascina attraverso i boschi, le paludi, i sentieri della isola; apparecchia l'animo di Ferdinando ad aprirsi all'amore. (Atto I, scen. 2^a – II, I – III, 2 – V, i, ecc. ecc.). Al suono di un'aria malinconica s'assopisse [sic] Caterina, moglie di Enrico VIII, ed ha una dolce visione (IV, 2^a); una melodia mesta e misteriosa si fa sentire sotterra il giorno prima della battaglia tra Cesare e Antonio (IV, 3^a). In breve ricorre frequente nei drammi il caso che una musica calmi un'eccitazione nervosa e produca l'assopimento.

Ma importanti per il psichiatra sono le descrizioni fatte da Shakspeare qua e là, di stati, di nevrosi e di eccessi probabilmente epilettici. Cesare, quando il popolo gli offre la corona, cade in un deliquio così descritto:

the sweet figures of Juliet and Romeo of their colour. If Shakespeare's master hand knows how to portray sweet amorous idylls, it can be indubitably greater when dealing with terrible scenes, when the most violent passions and the wildest furies are unleashed. King Lear's madness, Othello's and Coriolanus' impetuosities, Iago's and Gloucester's horrors cannot have a more skilful and faithful painter. Wrath and vindictive frenzy do not have a greater interpreter than him: he describes all their gradations from the start to the final explosion. Unheard-of cruelties occasionally recur in his plays. I am reminded of the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear* 3.7, the act of a barbarian which has often been decried; of the ire of Cleopatra, who tears out the hair of the messenger who has brought her news of Antony's wedding (2.5). Even if one does not believe the opinion according to which Shakespeare, in the feverish act of creation, actually saw Hamlet's ghost, this predilection for spirits shows at least that the brain of that great man was haunted by a world far away from reality, inhabited by those ghostly illusions that Shakespeare can reproduce with the truest colours. Yet, a number of studies carried out by Prof. d'Alfonso³ on Hamlet's and Banquo's ghosts – demonstrating that such apparitions are staged only when the psychological conditions permit the production of such a phenomenon – reveal indirectly that the hypothesis is in fact not so strange. We have just enough elements to note that this proves Shakespeare's proclivity for mysticism and his most exquisite sensitivity.

One could argue that music must have made a strong impression on him, on the indirect basis of its use and effects in the plays. The physician can find nothing better to soothe King Lear's mad fury than a sweet melody, the sound of which calms the senses of that miserable old man (see 4.7). In *The Tempest*, Ariel's melancholic music makes the survivors of the shipwreck fall asleep, instilling in them a long and benign drowsiness that almost stupefies them and draws them to the woods, moors, and paths of the island; the music also prepares Ferdinand's soul to open up to love (1.2; 2.1; 3.2; 5.1, etc.). On hearing a melancholic tune, Catherine, the wife of Henry VIII, falls asleep and has a sweet vision (4.2); a rueful and mysterious melody is perceived from underground on the eve of the battle between Caesar and Antony (4.3). To sum up, it often happens in his plays that a piece of music can pacify a nervous excitement and produce slumber.

On the other hand, the scattered descriptions provided by Shakespeare of states of neurosis and (probably epileptic) excesses are important for the psychiatrist. When the Roman people offer Caesar the crown, he is overwhelmed by a swoon which is described as follows:

³ See text no. 11 in this volume.

... Alla terza la concertata scena si rinnova: e ad ognuna di queste ripulse scoppiava la voce del popolo, ebbro di gioia, che delle mani applaudiva, e tripudiando esalava tal fetido sudore, che Cesare ne svenne... Oh! che di' tu? Cesare svenne? – Cadde nella piazza colla spuma alla bocca e senza favella. – Questo non ti sorprenda. Cesare va soggetto a un male che gli toglie i sensi. – (Atto I, scen. 2^a).

Pare che non ci debba essere dubbio a classificare questo svenimento come un eccesso epilettico: ora una sì eccessiva nervosità da cagionare un deliquio per l'odore emanato dalla moltitudine concepita da Shakespeare come un caso naturalissimo, è una circostanza da lasciarci sfuggire?

Otello, dopo l'opera diabolica di Jago, va anche soggetto ad eccessi affatto simili a questi: non sono svenimenti semplici, che potrebbero essere cagionati da una forte commozione, ma veri deliqui epilettici.

il nostro signore cadde fuori dei sensi: e da ieri in qua è il secondo accesso a cui va soggetto. – Spruziamogli le tempie... – No, fermatevi; bisogna che questo letargico sopore abbia il suo corso; o lo vedreste colla bocca spumante passare ai più violenti accessi della frenesia... – (Atto IV, scen. 1^a).

Anche Macbeth cade parecchie volte in deliquio (III, 4^a – IV, 1^a) e Cleopatra sviene di voluttà in mezzo la piazza. Coriolano è pure soggetto ad ereditari impeti di collera che un nonnulla può provocare.

Correr lo vedevo dietro una farfalla dorata; e presa che l'ebbe la ripose in libertà; poi la riprese e rilasciolla; e la riprese ancora; finché dopo mille giri per avventura cadendo, entrò in furore, digrignò i denti, e lacerò quel misero insetto. Ah! vi dico ch'era ben tremendo quel suo furore! – Uno dei modi di suo padre. (Atto I, scena 3^a).

Nell'Enrico VIII [sic], lord Buckingham, alla lettura della sentenza del Parlamento sviene e si copre di sudore. Il medico che osserva il sonnambulismo di lady Macbeth, tanto mirabilmente descritto, dice: “Fenomeno sì strano mi ha confusa la mente e intenebrati gli occhi: e colla facoltà del pensare sento mancarmi quella della parola” (Atto v, scena 1^a)[.] Al re Lear una volta si fa dire: “O come lo sdegno mi si aggrava sul

And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by. And still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted, and clapped their chapped hands and threw up their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar; for he swooned and fell down at it . . . But soft, I pray you. What, did Caesar swoon? — He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless. — 'Tis very like: he hath the falling sickness. — (1.2).

It seems there cannot be any doubt that this swoon must be classified as an epileptic seizure. Now, is such an incident to be neglected when Shakespeare conceives as a most natural case a nervousness so excessive that the inhaling of the smell of the throng provokes a fainting fit?

Othello, after undergoing Iago's diabolical work, is also subjected to very similar fits: his are not simple faintings, which may be caused by intense agitation; they are actual epileptic seizures.

[IAGO] My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.

This is his second fit. He had one yesterday.

[CASSIO] Rub him about the temples.

[IAGO] No, forbear.

The lethargy must have his quiet course.

If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by

Breaks out to savage madness.

(4.1)

Macbeth faints several times, as well (3.4 – 4.1), and Cleopatra swoons with pleasure in the middle of the square. Coriolanus is also subjected to hereditary paroxysms of anger which can be triggered by a trifle:

I saw him run after a gilded butterfly, and when he caught it he let it go again, and after it again, and over and over he comes, and up again, caught it again. Or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it! O, I warrant, how he mam-mocked it! — One on's father's moods.

(1.3)

In *Henry VIII*, Lord Buckingham, on reading the Parliament's verdict, faints, covered in sweat. The physician who witnesses Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking (which is described so wonderfully) says: "My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight" (5.1). These are the words put in King Lear's mouth: "O, how this mother swells up toward my

cuore! *Histerica passio*. Bile dolorosa, torna nella tura regione.” Amleto accenna a mali che si possono ereditare dalla nascita, con tristezza:

... Perché portano l'impronta d'un vizio unico contratto fin dal loro nascere, o impresso come segno accidentale della fortuna, malgrado tutte le loro virtù fossero così belle, come è la grazia del cielo, così estese quanto un uomo può possederle, vanno soggetti alla censura pubblica per quell'unica e sciagurata imperfezione.

Non so per qual ragione mi par di sentire lo stesso poeta, che in un sonetto alla sua bella, così si lamenta: “Il mio nome è coperto d'ignominia. Abbiate pietà di me, e pregate il cielo che io sia rigenerato, mentre, come paziente volontario, berrò un antidoto di Eyszell contro la mia infezione... Non posso sempre confessarti ogni cosa, per paura che la mia colpa deplorata ti faccia arrossire. Tu non puoi onorarmi d'un favore pubblico, senza togliere altrettanto onore al tuo nome”.

Ad un altro fatto voglio accennare prima di passare alla vita dello scrittore: cioè al linguaggio meraviglioso, da lui a bella posta trovato pei suoi eroi. Giustamente lo Zumbini osservò una efficacissima armonia tra l'azione e la parola nei drammi di Shakspeare. Ad ogni passione, ad ogni stato d'animo – dalla flemma di Falstaff ai furori di Lear e di Otello – egli sa trovare l'espressione più splendida ed adatta. Ha la parola dolce di Desdemona insieme al linguaggio nervoso e infuocato di Otello: le frasi gentili e melate di Romeo, come gli scongiuri terribili delle streghe. Ma questa stessa meravigliosa virtù trascende qualche volta in metafore strane e sconcie espressioni. I sospiri di Romeo au-

heart! / *Hysterica passio*, down, thou climbing sorrow; / Thy element's below!"⁴ Hamlet sadly hints at diseases which can be inherited from birth:

... that these men,
 Carrying, I say the stamp of one defect,
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,
 His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault.⁵

It seems to me – I do not know for what reason – I can hear the same poet, who in a sonnet thus complains to his fair mistress:

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
 ...
 Pity me then and wish I were renewed,
 Whilst like a willing patient I will drink
 Potions of eisel⁶ 'gainst my strong infection;
 ...
 I may not evermore acknowledge thee
 Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,
 Nor thou with public kindness honour me
 Unless thou take that honour from thy name.⁷

I would like to mention a further fact, before turning to the author's life, namely, the wondrous language which he has knowingly found for his heroes. Zumbini⁸ rightly observed a most effective harmony between the action and the words in Shakespeare's plays. He can find the most splendid and fitting expression for each and every passion and mood, from Falstaff's phlegm to Lear's and Othello's fury. He is endowed with Desdemona's sweet voice as well as Othello's nervous and fiery language; Romeo's gentle and honey-sweet verses as well as the witches' terrible curses. But this same wonderful virtue sometimes morphs into the use of strange metaphors and indecent expressions.

⁴ 2.2.225-7.

⁵ 1.4.30-6.

⁶ "Eisel(l)" comes from Latin *acetillum*, i.e. acetum (vinegar); Rusconi did not know this etymology, and thus invented a non-existent medicine: the "antidote of Eysell".

⁷ In fact, Renda is merging lines from two sonnets: 111 and 36.

⁸ Bonaventura Zumbini (1836-1916), a literary critic from Cosenza

mentano i vapori dell'aria; Giulietta è paragonata al mare per le sue lagrime, ai venti pei suoi sospiri, ad una nave che sarebbe il suo corpo; paragone che finisce più stranamente così: "I tuoi sospiri commisti coi pianti affonderanno ben tosto il tuo corpo (*la nave*) sbattuto dalle tempeste, se non viene una subbita calma a ristorarlo" (III, 5). Romeo parla così degli occhi della sua fanciulla: "Oh! sì, se quelle luci fossero nel cielo, gli uccelli ingannati dal loro chiarore, canterebbero per tutta la notte, credendo salutare l'aurora". E queste in una sola tragedia! In mezzo poi allo splendore del discorso, qua e là, come erbe selvatiche in una vaga aiuola, vi sono scurrilità, che offendono il gusto, e volgarissimi giuochi di parole. Non stimo opportuno riportarli: ma si confronti Giulietta e Romeo, II, 1^a – II, 4^a; Otello, I, 1^a; Amleto, III, 2^a; Re Lear, II, 4^a, e così via. In conclusione mi pare che l'esame accurato delle opere di Shakspeare darebbe ampia materia al psichiatra per ricostruire il carattere d'uno dei più grandi genii dell'umanità.



Nella vita del gran tragico inglese – che dovette certamente essere ricca di avventure e di passioni, di cui a noi giunse appena l'eco – troviamo quelle anomalie che le sue opere lasciano sospettare.

Gli amori di Shakspeare sono innumerevoli, se dobbiamo credere ai centocinquantotto sonetti erotici lasciati. La vecchiezza stessa non riuscì a calmare i suoi bollori amorosi, anzi in tarda età incita la donna amata a non mostrarsi ritrosa essendo i suoi "lampi d'un fuoco che si spegne sotto le ceneri della gioventù, come sopra un letto di morte". Alcuni dei suoi sonetti si sospetta che siano indirizzati a Lord Southampton, suo amico, "trasformato simbolicamente in donna amata", nota ingenuamente il Rusconi: e come prova di questo misticismo nei sentimenti osserva ancora: "Amleto parla di Jorick come di una donna quando i beccamorti ne scoprono la testa – Oimè povero Jorick! l'ho

Romeo's sighs "Ad[d] to clouds more clouds";⁹ Juliet is compared to the sea because of her weeping eyes, the winds because of her sighs, a ship which should mean her body; this last simile ends quite oddly:

... The barque thy body is,
 ...
 Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them,
 Without a sudden calm will overset
 Thy tempest-tossèd body.
 (3.5)

Romeo refers to the eyes of his beloved maiden like this: "her eye in heaven / Would through the airy region stream so bright / That birds would sing and think it were not night". And all this in one single tragedy! Amid the splendour of such speeches, here and there, like wild weeds in a dainty flowerbed, there lurk bawdy expressions, offending our taste, and vulgar puns. I do not consider it suitable to quote them, but see *Romeo and Juliet* 2.1 – 2.4; *Othello* 1.1; *Hamlet* 3.2; *King Lear* 2.4, and so on. In conclusion, it seems that a careful examination of Shakespeare's works would offer rich material to the psychiatrist who would aim to reconstruct the character of one of the greatest geniuses of humankind.



In the great English tragedian's life – which must have been rich in adventure and passion, the mere echo of which could reach us – we find those anomalies which his works cause us to suspect.

Shakespeare's love interests were innumerable, should we believe those 158 erotic sonnets he bequeathed to us. Old age itself did not manage to cool his amorous flames: in fact, in his later years, he thus invites his mistress not to be coy, when "In me thou seest the glowing of such fire / That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, / As the death-bed whereon it must expire".¹⁰ One suspects that some of his sonnets were addressed to Lord Southampton, a friend of his, who is "symbolically transformed into the poet's beloved mistress" – thus Rusconi notes,¹¹ naively enough. And as evidence of this mysticism in Shakespeare's feelings he also observes: "Hamlet speaks of Yorick as if he had been a woman, when the gravediggers uncover his head – 'Alas, poor Yorick. I

⁹ 1.1.130

¹⁰ From Sonnet 73: 9-11.

¹¹ See Rusconi 1838, 1.ix.

conosciuto, Orazio; un buffone compagnevole e dotato di una squisita immaginazione... Qui stavano attaccate quelle labbra che ho baciato non so quante volte – E si noti che ai tempi di Shakspeare l'uso di baciare gli uomini sulla guancia era affatto sconosciuto, onde Amleto dice allora di Jorick, ciò che Margherita di Scozia diceva di Alano Chartier”.

Dedito alle bevande alcoliche, sfidò, ancor giovanetto, i bevitori di Bedford a chi tracannasse più fiaschi di birra: forse provò frequentemente quelle ebbrezze, che così bene ha descritte nei suoi drammi. Quando gli capita il destro, non se lo lascia sfuggire per fare gli elogi del vino.

A diciassette anni sposò Anna, figlia di un contadino, e la lasciò, correndo dietro ai liberi amori, dopo aver da lei avuto numerosa prole, di cui mai, in nessun scritto fa parola. Anzi vi è di più: affetti familiari raramente ne descrive, e non tanto bene quanto altri lati del cuore umano. In questo caso la sua arte sembra venir meno.

Prima di dedicarsi alle scene faceva l'arte paterna del macellaio; e, si voglia per un'estrema sensibilità, si voglia per la stranezza del carattere, sul corpo delle sue innocenti vittime pronunziava calde ed eloquenti concioni. Offeso da sir Tommaso Lucy, si vendica dapprima affiggendo una ballata satirica alla porta del nemico, e molto tempo dopo facendolo oggetto dei frizzi di sir Giovanni Falstaff, sotto le vesti di Shallow. (V. *Allegre comari di Windsor*).

A cinquanta anni, dopo che la sua fama e i suoi meriti gli avevano procurato i favori del pubblico, abbandona repentinamente, e *senza ragioni*, il teatro. Forse fu causa di ciò il disgusto di sé stesso e degli altri, quel disprezzo per la gloria che sono in lui notissimi. Pare che si senta perseguitato dagli uomini per un'anomalia o una colpa che spesso si rimprovera, come risulta del sonetto citato. Certo uno spietato scetticismo non gli fece credere allo amore, alla gloria, alla virtù; e nel suo animo si dovettero spesso agitare quei dubbi che ha incarnati in una stupenda sua creatura, Amleto.

Morto, ci lascia come nota finale un testamento, che se attesta la povertà in cui visse, mostra pure un metodo di condotta un poco strano; in esso dichiara proprietà della moglie “il secondo dei suoi letti dopo il migliore”, e a due suoi colleghi fa dono di trentadue scellini per comprarsi un anello.

Mi piace in ultimo accennare che Shakespeare si dà molte volte l'epiteto di *lame*, voce inglese che alcuni, forse per analogia con Byron

knew him, Horatio – a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy . . . Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft'. Please note that, in Shakespeare's time, it was not at all unusual for men to kiss on the cheek; hence Hamlet speaks of Yorick in the same way Margaret of Scotland did of Alain Chartier".¹²

Shakespeare had a penchant for alcohol, and, when still a youth, challenged the drinkers of Bidford to see who could swill down more flasks of beer. Perhaps he often experienced that drunkenness, which is described so well in his plays. Any time the occasion rises, he slips in a praise of wine.

When he was seventeen, he married Anne, as a farmer's daughter, and then left her, pursuing wanton love after she had given him numerous offspring to which he never refers in any of his works. In fact, family affections are rarely described by him, and never as well as the other aspects of the human heart. In this case, his art seems to be at a loss.

Before devoting himself to the stage, he worked in his father's trade, a butcher, and whether because of his extreme sensitivity, or the oddness of his character, he burst into heated and eloquent orations over his harmless victims. When Sir Thomas Lucy offended him, he took his revenge by hanging a satirical ballad on his enemy's door, and then, after many years, he made him the object of Sir John Falstaff's witty mockeries as Shallow (see *The Merry Wives of Windsor*).

In his fifties, after fame and his merits had earned him the favour of the public, he abandoned the theatre out of the blue, without any foreseeable reason. Maybe the causes of such a change were his self-contempt and his disdain towards others and towards fame – this attitude of his was very well known. He seemed to feel persecuted by men on account of an anomaly or a fault with which he often blames himself, as seen in the above-quoted sonnet. Indubitably, a merciless scepticism did not allow him to believe in love, glory, or virtue; his mind must have been agitated by those doubts which he embodied in that wonderful creature of his, Hamlet.

After his death, he left us a final testament, which records the poverty of his life, but also shows a slightly weird behavioural method: in this writing, he left to his wife "the second-best bed", while he gave 32 shillings to two of his colleagues to buy themselves a ring.

Finally, I would like to mention that Shakespeare often refers to himself using the epithet 'lame',¹³ an English word which some people,

¹² Legend has it that the Queen Margaret of Scotland kissed the poet Alain Chartier (1395-1430), to repay him of his verses.

¹³ Perhaps, Renda is thinking of Sonnet 37, l. 3: "So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite".

e Walter Scott, vollero tradurre *zoppo*, mentre ha il significato più largo di difettoso ed imperfetto. Mostra falsa l'ipotesi che egli fosse zoppo, il fatto di non trovar di ciò menzione nei libelli scritti contro lui e l'impossibilità di stare sulle scene in tal modo storpiato. Qual sarà stata dunque questa imperfezione? È quella medesima, che egli stesso si rimprovera nel sonetto citato, che lo faceva – dice lui – abietto agli uomini? In questo caso quale influenza non avrà avuto sul suo carattere!

In breve, dalla sua vita direttamente e indirettamente dalle sue opere risultano tali dati, che non possono certamente far testimonianza di un carattere sano e tutto d'un pezzo.

Erotomania, scetticismo, tendenze all'ubriachezza, alla vendetta, alle scene brutali, sospetti di psicopatia sessuale, predilezione per metafore strane e per giuochi di parole; animo sensibilissimo, forse mistico, sono tali indizi che meglio approfonditi e meglio studiati potrebbero aggiungere al gran cumolo di casi sperimentali, un caso nuovo e importante per meglio convalidare l'ipotesi del nostro illustre Lombroso.

Per ora, se non è dimostrata completamente l'anomalia del carattere di Shakespeare, c'è tanto – lo speriamo – da impedire che dai soliti ipercritici si gridi trionfalmente al sereno, all'olimpico tragico inglese.

Catanzaro, 26 aprile 1894.

ANTONIO RENDA.

6b.

L'arte, che ferma, trasformandolo in un palpito gagliardo, il flusso mutevole della vita, e rende in immagini vive le figure dei grandi, è stata qualche volta eco del mondo tragico e miserando nel quale si dibattono, ora con l'impeto di ribelli ora con la stanca resistenza delle vittime predestinate, i colpiti dalla legge ereditaria? . . .

Studiare poi dell'arte la dipintura di singole individualità non solo per trovarvi la rappresentazione intuitiva e fedele dei caratteri psichici oggi illustrati dalla scienza . . . ma per porre quelli tra essi che sono uno degli anelli d'una catena di forme morbose ereditarie in relazione con lo studio della famiglia a cui appartengono, è certo trarre un nuovo e benefico vantaggio: e l'arte può darlo.

perhaps as an analogy with Byron and Walter Scott, have translated as *zoppo* (limping), whereas the meaning of 'lame' also has the meanings of defective and imperfect. It is evident that the hypothesis that he limped is false because there is no mention of this in any of the pamphlets written against him, and because it would have been impossible for him to tread the stage if he had been such a cripple. Thus, what could this imperfection of his have been? Is it the same which he decries against himself in the above-quoted sonnet, the "brand" that – in his words – made him an abject? If so, what great influence would it have made on his character!

To sum up, we have gathered such data, directly from his life and indirectly from his works, that it is not at all possible to regard his character as healthy and wholesome.

Erotomania; scepticism; proneness to drunkenness, revenge, and brutal scenes; a fondness for strange metaphors and wordplay; a very sensitive, perhaps mystical, mindset: such clues, once well explored and sufficiently studied, may add to the vast mass of experimental cases a new and important case to better authenticate the hypothesis of our illustrious Lombroso.

As for now, if the anomaly of Shakespeare's character has not yet been ultimately demonstrated, we have hopefully gathered a sufficient number of elements to prevent the usual hyper-critics from hailing with triumphal cheers the serene, the Olympian English tragedian.

Catanzaro, 26 April 1894.

ANTONIO RENDA.

6b

Art, that can stop the changeable course of life and transform it into one mighty, surging desire, can also portray lively pictures of the great. However, has it ever re-echoed the tragic and piteous world in which the victims of hereditary law thrash about, sometimes as fierce rebels, other times as weary casualties, struggling to withstand predestination? . . .

One has found a definitely original and profitable approach to art: the examination of how it portrays individuality in terms of an intuitive and faithful representation of those psychic characters, which modern science has been illustrating . . . Furthermore, it sets them in relation to the family to which they belong, as links in the chain of hereditary morbid forms.

Il dramma soprattutto, tratto dalla natura sua a rappresentare vicende famose, à gran numero di personaggi storici, e può aiutare parzialmente la scienza nello studio delle dinastie . . .

Bisogna ricordare un'acuta distinzione fatta dall'Alimena, esponendo i rapporti tra l'arte e la scienza moderna: egli fa giustamente notare che l'opera artistica à il valore d'un documento solo quando abbia avuto di mira la diretta osservazione della realtà, poiché se, al contrario, l'artista avesse avuto di mira la dimostrazione di un principio scientifico, allora essa sarebbe effetto d'un dilettantismo vano. Nell'interesse della scienza si può citare lo Shakespeare, che scriveva quando la psicologia criminale non esisteva, non lo Zola che creò, ad esempio, il tipo della BESTIA UMANA quando già era sorta la scuola antropologica, e per conseguenza sotto l'influenza delle idee riflesse intorno al delinquente . . .

. . . l'arte non può dare per i fenomeni ereditari quel contributo di documenti che dà alla psicologia e alla psicopatologia descrittiva . . . I drammi che rappresentano famiglie, storiche o no, ànno un valore per noi solo in quanto possono contribuire alla scienza offrendo le *conclusioni* del processo ereditario, i caratteri individuali che da questo risultano . . .

Lo Shakespeare, che nel RE GIOVANNI si allontana dalla verità storica, lo dipinge a tratti vivissimi debole, vanitoso, diffidente, insensibile moralmente . . . Giovanni à paura del suo delitto. La debolezza dello spirito criminale capace di concepire il delitto, ma atterrito nel dare al pensiero la concretezza dell'umano discorso, è dipinta con una evidenza insuperabile: è una delle più belle pagine dello Shakespeare. L'idea criminale è lì, fissa, incoercibile . . . Tutta la dipintura shakespeariana è quasi lo svolgimento di questo motivo fondamentale: re Giovanni non prova rimorsi per reazione della sua coscienza morale, ma per i pericoli che il suo delitto può suscitare . . . Come tutti gli imbecilli egli è un debole soprattutto, e questa debolezza lo Shakespeare ritrae nella millanteria, nella diffidenza, nei timori, nelle parole di Giovanni . . .

Drama, above all, inherently aims at representing famous stories, and, by having actors play several historical characters, can be of partial aid to science in its study of dynasties . . .

As far as the relation between art and modern science is concerned, one should bear in mind a distinction insightfully drawn by Alimena.¹⁴ He rightly remarks that a work of art possesses a documentary value only when its purpose has been the direct observation of reality; instead, when the artist has wanted to demonstrate a scientific principle, then the deriving effect is merely amateurish. Thus, Shakespeare can be of scientific interest because he wrote his works when criminal psychology had not been born yet; on the contrary, a scientist should not cite Zola, who, for instance, created the type of the HUMAN BEAST after the anthropological school was founded – he was clearly under the influence of the criminological ideas on the criminal . . .

. . . art cannot provide the study of hereditary phenomena with that documentary material which it can instead give to psychology and descriptive psychopathology . . . Dramas representing families (whether historical or nor) can be relevant for our purposes only on the possibility of an effective contribution to science, which occurs if they present the *conclusions* of the hereditary process: the individual characters which derive from such process . . .

In *KING JOHN*, Shakespeare distances himself from historical truth, and depicts that monarch most lively as a weak, vain, diffident, morally insensitive man . . . John is afraid of the crime. Shakespeare portrays with unsurpassable artistry the weakness of his criminal spirit in conceiving the crime, but his dread of materially articulating it in human discourse. This is one of Shakespeare's best scenes. King John's criminal idea is there, fixed, irrepressible . . . It is as if Shakespeare's entire interest in this portrayal were bounded in the execution of the main theme, which is as follows: the King feels such compunction not out of the reaction of his moral conscience, but because of the dangers which his crime risks to cause . . . As all imbeciles, he is primarily a weak man, and Shakespeare signals his weakness by John's expressions of boastfulness, diffidence, and fear . . .

¹⁴ Bernardino Alimena (1861-1915), also from Calabria, like Renda, was an important jurist who was also interested in literary matters. For example, he published a proslution he had held at the University of Cagliari on 25 February 1899 entitled *Il delitto nell'arte*, in he which he discussed crime in literary works, and mentioned Ziino's work on Shakespeare.

Lo Shakespeare trascinato probabilmente dal grande interesse estetico, con il quale rappresenta Riccardo II, fa perdonare al suo eroe i vizi, i delitti, le debolezze . . . Le scene I^a e 5^a dell'atto IV ricordano, come ben nota lo Ziino i discorsi dei frenastenici . . .

L'impetuosità [del futuro Enrico V], la generosità commista a durezza ("allorché viene irritato il suo cuore è di marmo", dice il padre con efficace espressione), la sua prodigalità, l'indifferenza ai pericoli, l'ambizione, ànno nella dipintura dello Shakespeare il loro posto, sebbene così attenuato da perder quel carattere loro proprio, che rivela al clinico l'eredità del temperamento epilettico paterno . . .

RICCARDO III, ultimo figlio di Riccardo York, ultimo re della famiglia Plantageneto, chiude il ciclo delle sventure organiche dei suoi ascendenti con la più profonda degenerazione fisica e psichica. Egli è una figura tipica di folle morale. Piccolo, gobbo, deforme, con una paralisi al braccio che lo rendeva "disseccato, dice lo Shakespeare, come un ramo isterilito" senza principi, senza coscienza, furbo, ipocrita, dissimulatore, crudele, secondo le espressioni di T. Moro, è il simbolo sciagurato della fine d'una razza degenerata. Come se la natura abbia voluto con un'eccezione alle sue leggi completare la mostruosità, egli nacque prematuramente e con i denti, e dopo una vita caratteristicamente criminale morì da eroe sul campo di battaglia. Lo Shakespeare . . . rappresenta Riccardo, con intuizione profonda, in tutta la sua bruttezza morale, analizzandone l'animo sino alle più impercettibili sfumature . . .

Una bella analisi della rappresentazione shakespeariana fa lo Ziino; Riccardo è un delinquente teratologico, con completa idiozia morale, svegliata intelligenza, potere di suggestione . . .

Probably driven by the great aesthetic interest he feels towards Richard II as a figure, Shakespeare wants us to forgive his vices, wrongdoings, and weaknesses . . . As Ziino rightly points out, the language of 4.1 and 4.5 is reminiscent of that which is used by people affected by phrenasthenia¹⁵ . . .

Prince Hal's impetuosity, generosity coupled with harshness (as his father powerfully says, "Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he is flint"),¹⁶ prodigality, disdain for danger, and ambition – they all find the proper place in Shakespeare's portrayal, but their role is so diminished that their true nature becomes distorted, since a clinical eye can detect in them the fact that the prince has inherited his father's epileptic temperament . . .

RICHARD III, the youngest son of Richard of York, and the last Plantagenet king, closes the cycle of organic misfortunes of his ancestors by developing an exceptionally profound physical and psychic degeneration. He bears the typical character of the moral madman. He is small, hunchbacked, misshapen, with arm paralysis – indeed, his arm looked, as Shakespeare puts it, "like a blasted sapling withered up".¹⁷ Without any principle or conscience, he is sly, a hypocrite, a dissembler, a cruel man – this is how Thomas More¹⁸ describes him. He is the wretched symbol of the end of a degenerate stock. As if Nature had wanted to introduce an exception to her laws and complete Richard's monstrosity, he was born prematurely and already teathed. After a characteristically criminal life, he died a hero on the battlefield . . . With an act of profound intuition, Shakespeare decides to represent Richard's moral ugliness in all its details, and analyses his psyche unto the slightest shade . . .

Ziino carries out an insightful analysis of this Shakespearean character: Richard is a teratological¹⁹ criminal, characterised by moral idiocy, watchful intelligence, and suggestive power . . .

¹⁵ By "frenasthenia", Italian psychiatrists meant a deficiency in the mental development of a person, due to constitutional causes.

¹⁶ *2 Henry IV* 4.3.33. (In the translation, "flint" is turned into "marble")

¹⁷ 3.4.69.

¹⁸ Renda does not know or care to evaluate how neutral More's chronicle was (in fact, it was a vehicle of Tudor propaganda).

¹⁹ Teratology is the study of abnormal formations in animals and plants; the Lombrosians applied it to the study of disabled people with severe malformations, thinking that such disability was the result of degeneration and could lead to crime.

7. From Enrico Ferri. 1896. *I delinquenti nell'arte* [*Criminals in Art*]. Genova: Libreria Editrice Ligure: 17-18; 19; 39; 42-5; 47-58.

Ferri (1856-1929) was one of the founders, alongside Garofalo and Lombroso, of the Positive Criminological School. He coined the expression “born criminal”, and, possibly, even the phrase “classical school” to refer to Beccaria’s work in eighteenth-century Italy (and that of his main successor, Francesco Carrara). He promoted the School in multiple ways, from founding journals and magazines, to advocating their methods first as a barrister, and then in Parliament (where he had a seat, as a Deputy and then as a Senator, from 1886 to the year of his death). At the end of his life, he looked at Mussolini as the only person who could promote positivism in Italy. They had directed the same newspaper, *L’Avanti*.

Ferri’s literary interests far surpassed Garofalo’s and Lombroso’s. His *I delinquenti nell'arte* became a landmark for decades, the go-to study on how to apply the doctrines of the anthropological school of criminology to literature. Ferri did not focus only on Shakespeare – he dealt with the Decadentists, the Naturalists, and the Russian novelists. But his section on Shakespeare’s tragedies achieved fame: his classification of Othello as the criminal of passion, Hamlet as the insane criminal, and Macbeth as the born criminal, became almost an axiom in Italy and abroad. It was unnecessary to quote him directly, because this tripartition was felt to be extremely convincing. Unlike other authors, whose excerpts have been collected in this volume, Ferri concentrated his attention on only three of Shakespeare’s plays (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*), and meticulously surveyed them, comparing plot points with news reports, and showing how each reaction and each utterance of Shakespeare’s characters fit into the criminologists’ tenets about the biological and environmental factors behind any crime.

Il tipo criminale – a cui diedi nel 1881 il nome di delinquente nato – tale cioè per una condizione ereditaria di anomalia patologica e degenerativa, (nevrosi criminale) che non si limita ad una inferiorità biologica, come l'idiozia, la follia, il suicidio, ecc., ma sotto la pressione dello stesso ambiente aggiunge una potenza aggressiva antisociale – è la figura che, sebbene oscuramente intravveduta dall'intuizione popolare, era rimasta finora inosservata o è tutt'ora per l'influenza dello spiritualismo altrettanto tradizionale quanto superficiale, accanitamente negata, dacché l'antropologia criminale ne rilevava la dolorosa figura organica e psichica . . . È naturale e prevedibile quindi, che questo tipo di delinquente nato – perché soltanto ora dalla scienza posto in piena luce – non si riscontri di frequente nelle creazioni artistiche: appena il genio di Shakespeare, come vedremo or ora, nella figurazione dei suoi personaggi o quello di Dostoïevsky nella sua osservazione, purtroppo personale, dei forzati in Siberia o il talento di Eugenio Sue nell'osservazione dei bassi fondi parigini, hanno potuto, prima di Cesare Lombroso, delineare il tipo psicologico del delinquente nato; che però, dopo la creazione dell'antropologia criminale, è già entrato nell'arte contemporanea, specialmente per l'iniziativa di Emilio Zola.

...

Ma sotto questo riguardo la *Divina Commedia* può interessare i criminalisti della scuola classica, che si occuparono dei delitti più che dei delinquenti ed ebbero grande preoccupazione di costruire sistematicamente una scala di castighi simmetrica alla scala delle colpe, così come i gironi e le bolge dantesche . . . Per i criminalisti, invece, della scuola positiva o antropologica, che più del delitto si occupano del delinquente una miniera ben più ricca di osservazioni psicologiche – lasciati da parte i microbi del mondo criminale e i delinquenti politici – si trova piuttosto nelle tragedie e nei drammi, che più spesso viva e completa presentano e scolpiscono qualche figura di uomo delinquente.

...

Sicché fin da questi primi e splendidi albori dell'arte occidentale noi vediamo delinearci le tre figure più caratteristiche del delinquente nato o per tendenza congenita e fatale – del delinquente pazzo e dell'omicida per impeto di passione, questi completando la propria figura psicologica col rimorso e col suicidio, assai meno frequenti negli altri tipi criminali.

Ma la descrizione psicologica più geniale ed ancora insuperata di questi tre tipi di uomo delinquente, è data dai drammi Shakespeariani di Macbeth – delinquente nato; Amleto – delinquente pazzo; Otello – delinquente per passione.

The type of criminal, for whom I coined the expression 'born criminal' back in 1881, and who is such because of a hereditary condition (a pathological and degenerative anomaly known as 'criminal neurosis'), and whose constitution is not confined to a given biological inferiority (such as idiocy, madness, suicide, etc.), but, under the pressure of his or her very environment, also presents an aggressive antisocial potential – such a type is a figure who until now has remained unobserved, and only glimpsed at, as in a glass darkly, by popular intuition. Conversely, since criminal anthropology has exposed this sorrowful organic and psychic figure, it has been relentlessly denied by the influence of that spiritualism which is as traditional as it is superficial . . . Therefore, since science has only recently brought to light, this 'born criminal' type, it is but natural and predictable that it cannot often be spotted in artistic creations. Only Shakespeare's genius, in the portrayal of his characters, or Dostoevsky's, in his – first-hand, alas – observation of the convicts in Siberia, or Eugène Sue's, in his contemplation of the Parisian slums, could delineate the psychological type of the born criminal before Lombroso. On the other hand, after the creation of criminal anthropology, this type has already entered contemporary art, especially on the initiative of Émile Zola.

...

But in this perspective, *The Divine Comedy* could be of interest to the criminalists of the classical school, who used to deal with crime rather than the criminals, and who were greatly occupied in the systematic construction of a scale of punishments which had to be symmetrical with the scale of someone's faults, in imitation of Dante's *gironi* and *bolge* . . . Instead, the criminalists of the positive or anthropological school – who choose to deal more with the criminals than the committed crime, and who justly lay aside the microbes of the criminal world and the political delinquents – find a much richer mine of psychological observations in tragedy and drama, which more frequently present the living and fully-fledged figure of a criminal.

...

Thus, ever since those earliest and dazzling lights of Western art [i.e. classical drama], we can see the articulation of three of the most characteristic types: the born criminal either by congenital or fatal tendency; the insane criminal; the murderer of passion – and we note that the latter completes his or her psychological profile with remorse and suicide, which are much rarer in the other criminal types.

But the most ingenious psychological description of these three types of criminal, being as yet unsurpassed, is featured in Shakespeare's plays: Macbeth as the born criminal; Hamlet as the insane criminal; Othello as the criminal of passion.

L'opera artistica di Shakespeare è tale miniera di inesauribile fecondità, che non solo i critici d'arte, ma i giuristi e gli economisti già ne rilevarono e dati e documenti di vivo interesse storico (¹).

L'osservazione psicologica però è il filone più ricco di così ricca miniera e come l'umorismo ha in Jhon [sic] Falstaff un tipo, che il critico danese Georg Brandes dice superiore ad ogni altro e nel *Mercante di Venezia* il prototipo della cupidigia usuraia, di cui Shakespeare, al dire dello stesso critico, conosceva per propria esperienza tutte le emozioni; così la psicologia criminale ha nei tipi ormai leggendari degli omicidi Shakespeariani, tre documenti umani, nei quali l'eccellenza dell'arte non è inferiore alla esattezza dell'osservazione positiva, quale può esigere il più rigoroso scienziato.

Macbeth – che fu realmente un personaggio storico, condottiero scozzese che nel 1040 assassinato il re Duncano s'impossessò del trono, rimanendo alla sua volta ucciso nel 1057 dal figlio della sua vittima – è il tipo completo del delinquente nato, ramo doloroso e mostruoso che sorge dal

tronco patologico della nevrosi epilettica e criminale.

E Macbeth nella tragedia di Shakespeare, è veramente epilettico e fin dalla nascita e nella forma meno appariscente che chiamasi epilessia psichica o larvata; perché, senza le terribili convulsioni muscolari, che tutti ricordano quando si parla di epilessia, si limita ad una incoscienza temporanea, spesso inavvertita, che è l'equivalente psichico della convulsione muscolare.

Non vi movete,
Egredi amici; il signor mio si trova
Spesso così *dalla sua giovinezza*.

Un solo momento
Dura l'accesso; e in men che nol pensate
Tornerà quel di pria.

Così dice Lady Macbeth ai convitati sorpresi dallo strano contegno dell'ospite regale.

E come i tragici greci simboleggiavano la tendenza innata dell'eroe interprete del volere colla sentenza del fato o l'oracolo degli Dei; così Shakespeare, coll'apparizione e la predizione delle streghe a Macbeth, riproduceva quel modo simbolico di esprimere una disposizione intima

Shakespeare's artistic work is such a mine of inexhaustible abundance, that not only art critics, but also jurists and economists have already detected in it data and documents of lively historical interest (!).

However, psychological observation is the richest lode of such a rich mine, and as, according to a Danish critic, Georg Brandes, there cannot be a superior type of humour to John Falstaff's, so, in *The Merchant of Venice*, one finds the prototype of a usurer's greed, of which Shakespeare, still according to Brandes, knew all the emotional aspects from experience. Thus, criminal psychology has detected the three criminal types in the by now legendary Shakespearean murderers, who are truly human documents, in which the excellence of art is not inferior to that exactness of positive observation which may be expected by the most rigorous scientists.

Macbeth – who was an actual, historical figure, a Scottish leader who, in 1040, after murdering King Duncan, seized the throne, and in turn was later killed by his victim's son, in 1057 – is the full-fledged type of the born criminal, a grievous and monstrous branch which grows out from the pathological trunk of epileptic and criminal neurosis.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, Macbeth is indeed an epileptic, and from his birth. He is affected by the least apparent form of this disease, which is known as larvate¹ or psychic epilepsy, because it does not present the awful muscular convulsions, with which everybody associates this disease, and is characterised more subtly as a temporary, often unperceived, obliviousness – the psychic equivalent of the muscular convulsion.

Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth . . .

The fit is momentary. Upon a thought
 He will again be well.²

These are Lady Macbeth's words to her guests, who are amazed by the strange demeanour of their royal host.

And as the Greek tragedians used to symbolise the hero's innate tendency of being the interpreter of the will as a verdict of Fate or the gods' oracle, so Shakespeare, with the witches' apparition and their prophecies to Macbeth, reproduced, in that symbolic manner, the ex-

¹ From Latin *larvatus*, masked ("Covered as by a mask", *The New Sydenham Society's Lexicon of Medicine and the Allied Sciences*, 1881).

² 3.4.52-5 (Ferri's emphasis).

e connaturale del delinquente, di cui la vita avventurosa è la realizzazione assai più istintiva che cosciente.

Ma in questa tragedia, c'è un'altra intuizione psicologica, che discostandosi dalle regole abituali della psicologia comune, più difficilmente viene notata dagli osservatori superficiali, che nell'animo del delinquente proiettano sempre le idee e i sentimenti che essi suppongono nella loro coscienza quando si trovassero in simili circostanze.

Soltanto il genio dell'artista o la paziente, ostinata, molteplice osservazione dello scienziato arrivano invece a rilevare che nell'animo del delinquente nato – per quanto in apparenza simile all'uomo normale, perché non travagliata da una forma evidente e clamorosa di pazzia – si hanno invece attitudini ed atteggiamenti psicologici, diversi dalle manifestazioni consuete nell'uomo normale.

Appena ucciso re Duncano, Macbeth irrompe, col ferro insanguinato, sulla scena e dice alla sua donna tutto l'animo suo prima e dopo del misfatto.

Tommaso Salvini – pur così grande indimenticabile interprete delle creazioni Shakespeariane – nelle sue *Interpretazioni e ragionamenti su talune opere e personaggi di Shakespeare*, pubblicate in un giornale letterario di alcuni anni fa (*Fanfulla della Domenica*, 1883) giudicava quella scena potente, come *non naturale*, “perché contraria alla prima cura che ogni uomo si dà di occultare il proprio delitto”.

Certo, proiettando nella psiche dell'omicida la nostra avvedutezza ed il nostro equilibrio mentale, col relativo orrore del delitto, ognuno di noi può credere, che primo pensiero del delinquente sia di occultare l'opera sua: studiando invece i criminali, come sono nella realtà viva, bisogna convenire ch'essi sono ben diversi da noi, in questo come in tanti altri lati della loro compagine organica e morale.

Le imprudenti manifestazioni del proprio delitto – massime nei delitti di sangue – sono uno dei dati più certi della psicologia criminale, per quanto meno verosimili secondo la psicologia comune dell'uomo normale . . . gli annali giudiziari sono ricchi di esempi, che attestano il verismo della scena shakespeariana.

...

pression of a delinquent's inner and inherent disposition, for whom an adventurous life represents a much more instinctual rather than conscious fulfilment.

On the other hand, in this tragedy, there lies another psychological intuition, which, since it departs from the habitual rules of common psychology, can be detected with much more difficulty by those superficial observers who are always projecting into a criminal mind the ideas and feelings they themselves would presuppose to have under similar circumstances.

Instead, only an artist's genius, or a scientist's patient, dogged, and manifold observation, succeed in identifying in the mind of a born criminal – despite it being so deceptively similar to that of a normal human being, because it is not tormented by a self-evident and unmistakably blatant form of insanity – psychological attitudes and sets of behaviours which are different from a normal person's habitual manifestations.

As soon as King Duncan is killed, in bursts Macbeth, with his bloodstained weapon, and the spectators hear him express to his wife his whole state of mind, before and after the crime.

Now, Tommaso Salvini – despite being such a great and unforgettable interpreter of Shakespeare's creations – in his "Interpretations and Reasonings On Some of Shakespeare's Works and Characters" (published in a literary magazine a few years ago, the *Fanfulla della Domenica*, 1883), judges such a powerful scene as *unnatural*, "because it runs contrary to the first concern any such man would have: concealing his own crime".

Surely, should we project into the murderer's psyche our clear-sightedness and mental balance, with the adjoining horror towards crime, then any of us would believe that the criminal's first thought would be to conceal the deed: however, if we study the criminals as they are in fact, then we must agree that they are quite different from us, in this and in many other aspects of their organic and moral build and constitution.

A criminal's imprudent manifestations of the perpetrated crime – especially in the case of bloody deeds – are one of the most certain data of criminal psychology, even though this seems contrary to the common beliefs regarding a normal man's psychology . . . Judicial records contain a vast number of examples attesting to the adherence to truth³ of the Shakespearean scene.

. . .

³ Ferri uses the word "verismo", which, according to the *Dizionario Battaglia*, had just started being used in those years as a synonym of realism, besides as a label for the well-known literary, musical, and artistic movement.

Finalmente, dai fatti che io raccolsi studiando *L'omicidio nell'antropologia criminale* ⁽²⁾ ricorderò che nel novembre 1852, a Parigi, Schombert uccise a colpi di martello la moglie, poi le segò la gola, e stropicciatesi le mani sanguinanti sui propri abiti scendeva, così, tranquillamente nella strada ⁽³⁾.

Date forma shakespeariana a quest'ultimo fatto e voi avrete la scena del Macbeth, riproduzione fedele di una realtà vera per quanto inverosimile – giacché, sia detto fra parentesi, nessun criterio io conosco più fallace e menzognero della verosimiglianza, che è quasi sempre contraria e lontana al vero . . . Come per certi tramonti nuvolosi, flagellati dai colori più strambi del sole morente, il pittore che li riproducesse fedelmente urterebbe contro l'impressione di inverosimiglianza; così della scena di Macbeth, pur così vera, fu mossa simile accusa, mentre è del genio appunto intravedere dall'alto ciò che il senso comune, superficiale e distratto, non vede e perciò giudica non verosimile; poiché diceva giustamente Rousseau “occorre molta sagacia per osservare quello che ne circonda ogni giorno”.

...

È per finire col Macbeth, accennerò un'altra intuizione psicologica di Shakespeare, che riceve ora dagli studi dell'antropologia criminale la più positiva conferma.

Voglio dire la impassibilità più fredda e più crudele in Lady Macbeth, che non nel suo fiero marito.

È infatti un altro dato dell'antropologia criminale che le donne commettono meno delitti degli uomini, ma quando li commettono – eccettuati i casi della passione irrompente – sono più crudeli e, più ostinate nella recidiva, si ravvedono meno dei più feroci delinquenti maschili.

Giacché la maggiore delicatezza sentimentale della donna in confronto dell'uomo, è un'altra affermazione verosimile, ma non vera, della psicologia comune.

Lombroso e Sergi, infatti hanno sperimentalmente dimostrato che la sensibilità è minore nella donna che nell'uomo – come, del resto, ancora e sempre contro la verosimiglianza secondo gli studi dell'Ot-

Lastly, I recall, among the facts I collected when preparing my study, *Homicide in Criminal Anthropology* ⁽²⁾, that in November 1852, in Paris, Schombert hammered his wife to death, after which, he sawed through her throat, and, after rubbing his blood-soaked hands onto his clothes, left his house, as if nothing had happened ⁽³⁾.

Just apply a Shakespearean form to this last incident, and you will have that scene in *Macbeth*, which is thus a faithful reproduction of truth, however not verisimilar – incidentally, I do not know of any criterium as misleading and false as verisimilitude, which, in fact, is nearly always contrary to and far from truth . . . If a painter managed to faithfully reproduce one of those cloudy sunsets, which are lashed by the dying sun into the weirdest colours, he would vehemently incur the accusation of having discarded verisimilitude. In the same way, that scene in *Macbeth*, no matter how true, has been indicted for falsehood, whereas it is typical of genius to glimpse, from up high, what common sense, marred by superficiality and distraction, cannot see and thus charges with improbability – Rousseau was right when he stated: “Much insight is wanted for the correct observation of what is daily before one’s eyes”.

...

To conclude this discussion of *Macbeth*, I wish to mention another psychological intuition which can be found in Shakespeare, an intuition which has now received the most positive confirmation by the studies of criminal anthropology.

I mean Lady Macbeth’s colder and crueller impassibility in comparison with her fierce husband’s.

Criminal anthropology has factually confirmed that women perpetrate fewer crimes than men, but when they do – not counting incidents marked by overwhelming passion – they are indeed crueller and more persistent in case of a relapse; furthermore, they less frequently repent than the most brutal male delinquents.

Therefore, the contention that a woman has greater sentimental delicacy than a man is another verisimilar statement suggested by common psychology, it is untrue.

As a matter of fact, Lombroso and Sergi⁴ have experimentally demonstrated that there is less sensitivity in a woman than in a man; this discovery nicely complements Ottolenghi’s research,⁵ which has

⁴ Giuseppe Sergi (1841-1936) founded the Roman Anthropological Society and Rome’s first laboratory of experimental psychology.

⁵ Salvatore Ottolenghi (1861-1934), Lombroso’s assistant in Turin, was an important physician, very active as relates police forensics: he founded the *Rivista di polizia scientifica* as well as the *Scuola superiore di polizia scientifica*.

tolenghi, nel fanciullo è minore la sensibilità che nell'adulto. Ed io ho darvinisticamente spiegato, che ciò si doveva nella donna, alla grande, miracolosa funzione della maternità, che per mantenere la vita della specie, sottrae tanta forza alla donna creatrice, e la condanna ad un grado minore di evoluzione biologica che nella fisionomia, nella voce, nella forza muscolare come nella psicologia la pone tra il fanciullo e l'adulto . . .

Così nel potente dramma di Shakespeare *Lady Macbeth* si rivela più freddamente inumana dell'uomo, che pur era un tipo eccellente di omicida nato e solo da ultimo essa finisce nella melanconia allucinatoria, che fa così artistico contrasto colla sua precedente ostinata suggestione del regicidio al marito, titubante non per scrupoli di coscienza morale, ma per le fredde preoccupazioni egoistiche di sicura riuscita nella conquista criminale un trono.

Più facile rimane il riscontro degli altri due tipi di omicidi shakespeariani – *Amleto* e *Otello* – coi dati della psicologia criminale, per quanto anche nell'esame artistico di essi siansi troppe volte usati i criteri, in questo caso non sufficienti e incompleti, della psicologia comune.

Così, mentre l'*Amleto* è evidentemente per chiunque conosce i dati più elementari della psicologia criminale, un tipo di delinquente pazzo, c'è chi va fantasticando, come il De Zerbi in un suo saggio psicologico, che *Amleto* sia diventato pazzo fingendo di esserlo oppure c'è chi, guidato soltanto dai preconcetti del vieto spiritualismo, pensa che *Amleto* non sia pazzo, e si industria di spiegarne l'attività squilibrata colla preminenza di "alcune qualità dello spirito sopra le altre" e collo "stato di anemia" per concludere che se *Amleto* finisce, dopo tante titubanze, ad uccidere il re – assassino del padre suo – ciò è determinato, e non soltanto occasionato dal sentire che questo re omicida gli aveva preparato l'arma avvelenata in mano di *Laerte* e il veleno nel vino per bere al suo primo successo nel duello collo stesso *Laerte*: "sicché il re viene ucciso non per le profonde macchinazioni e le severe escogitazioni di *Amleto*, che forse per questa via non sarebbe stato mai ucciso; ma per la potenza di eventi estranei al volere di lui" (4).

Amleto invece è un tipo genialmente delineato, di delinquente pazzo, in una di quelle forme lucide o ragionanti, che sono lontane, cer-

proved that there is less sensitivity in a child than in an adult – again, the outcome of such studies runs contrary to the assumptions of verisimilitude. As far as I am concerned, I have Darwinically explained that the former fact is due to the great, miraculous function of motherhood, because motherhood deprives women, who enjoy creative power, of such strength in order to preserve the species, and dooms them to a lower degree in terms of biological evolution – so that in their appearance, their voice, and their muscular power, just as in their psychological makeup, they are placed in a position between that of a child and that of an adult . . .

Thus, in Shakespeare's powerful play, *Lady Macbeth* is revealed as having a much colder and more inhumane character than her husband, although he does represent the ultimate type of the born murderer. Only at the end, she becomes affected by hallucinatory melancholia, which contrasts so artistically with her former relentlessness in suggesting that her husband should kill the king. When he hesitates, it is not from any scruples of moral conscience, but from the cold, selfish concern over the success of their criminal design to seize the throne.

The comparison and the act of framing within the data of criminal psychology of the two other types of Shakespearean murderers – Hamlet and Othello – presents far fewer problems, although also in their artistic investigation critics have too often used the insufficient and incomplete criteria of common psychology.

Thus, while Hamlet is evidently a type of insane criminal – as anyone who possesses even the most basic rudiments of criminal psychology can see – there are some critics (for example De Zerbi, in a psychological essay of his)⁶ who very fancifully imagine that Hamlet went mad through pretending to be mad. Other critics, merely guided by the preconceptions of the most obsolete spiritualism, claim that Hamlet is not mad at all: they strive to explain his insane actions by appealing to “certain qualities of the spirit over others” and to his “anaemic condition”, in order to conclude that, if Hamlet ends up by killing, after so many hesitations, the king (who had murdered his father), this is *determined*, not just occasioned, by Hamlet's hearing that this homicidal king had placed the poisoned weapon in Laertes' hand and ministered the poisoned wine after his first successful duelling round with the same Laertes. “[T]hus, the king is murdered not because of Hamlet's profound machinations and cogitations, but because of the powerful interference of events unrelated to his will” (4).

On the contrary, Hamlet is an insane criminal, whose type, splendidly drawn by Shakespeare's genius, corresponds to one of those lucid

⁶ See text no. 2 in this volume.

to, all'osservazione comune – che pretenderebbe di vedere sempre nel pazzo il delirante furioso o incoerente – ma che non sfuggiva però allo sguardo d'aquila del grande psicologo inglese.

Infatti il quadro dei sintomi psico-patologici in Amleto non potrebbe essere più caratteristico, cominciando dalla *allucinazione* – quando vede e ode lo spettro del padre – la quale è appunto carattere decisivo di alienazione mentale.

E la stessa *simulazione della pazzia*, che i profani alla psichiatria, interpretano come un capriccio o un espediente qualunque, risponde meravigliosamente alla constatazione scientifica della realtà vivente, perché è acquisito oramai che la simulazione della pazzia è più che frequente nei pazzi, mentre il senso comune corre al facile e sbagliato giudizio, che, dunque, se finge non è pazzo . . . E la pazzia di Amleto appartiene precisamente a quelle forme della follia lucida, che permettono, di quando in quando, la coscienza della propria pazzia . . .

Forma di alienazione che come avviene per solito in quelli che la scuola psichiatrica francese del Magnan chiama “degenerati superiori” – per distinguerli dagli idioti e imbecilli “degenerati inferiori” – si innesta con un'altra forma di delirio, che in Amleto è un principio di follia del dubbio ossia una specie di debolezza paralitica della volontà (*abulia*) che per neurastenia e psicastenia non ha una sufficiente impulsività per tradurre l'idea in azione. A questa abulia patologica dev'essere attribuite le sue ostinate esitazioni nel compiere la vendetta del padre insieme pure alla ripugnanza istintiva per l'omicidio, che io ho dimostrato sopravvivere anche nei pazzi a senso morale integro, come carattere organico, ereditario della loro tempranza psicologica . . .

Per quanto però a forma lucida o ragionante, la pazzia di Amleto non è meno reale; e per quanto l'uccisione del re sia ispirata, come spesso avviene nei pazzi ⁽³⁾, ad un motivo non ignobile – la vendetta del padre assassinato – non è meno essa stessa, l'indice e l'effetto di una personalità ammalata, di un delinquente pazzo – come dimostra,

or reasoning forms, which of course elude common observers (who always expect the mad to manifest themselves as delirious, raging, and incoherent people). Instead, such a form could not escape the great English psychologist's eagle eye.

Hamlet's clinical picture, as far as his psycho-pathological symptoms are concerned, could not indeed be more typical. Firstly, his *hallucinations* – when he sees and hears the ghost of his father: hallucinations are a defining characteristic of mental alienation.

Even his *simulation of madness* (which is interpreted by laymen, unpractised in psychiatry, as a colourful whim or a simple expedient) corresponds marvellously to the scientific ascertainment of reality, because it has by now been proved that the simulation of madness is more than frequent among the mad, whereas common sense jumps to the facile and wrong opinion that if he pretends to be mad, then he is not mad . . . Hamlet's madness belongs precisely to those forms of lucid folly which allow a sporadic realisation of one's own madness . . .

Such a form of alienation which, as usually happens in those 'superior degenerates' – to use the terminology employed by Magnan's French psychiatric school⁷ to distinguish them from the 'inferior degenerates' (idiots and imbeciles) – grafts itself into another form of delirium. This form in Hamlet consists in the germ of a doubting mania, namely, a kind of paralytic weakness of the will (*abulia*), which, due to neurasthenia and psychasthenia,⁸ does not possess a sufficient impulsivity of its own to translate the idea into action. It is to this pathological *abulia* that one should attribute Hamlet's obstinate hesitations in avenging his father as well as his aversion to homicide. I have demonstrated that the latter can also persist also in those mad people who are endowed with an intact moral sense, as an organic and hereditary character of their psychological temperament . . .

Even if its form is lucid, reasonable, Hamlet's madness is no less real. It does not matter if the king's murder is motivated by a not ignoble cause – this often happens among the mad (°) – in this case, the revenge of his father's death. Nonetheless, this very madness is the index and effect of a diseased personality, of an insane criminal – as he shows

⁷ Valentin Magnan (1835-1916) was a leading psychiatrist, especially interested in degeneration theories and the study of alcoholism.

⁸ Neurasthenia was understood as a "disorder characterized by feelings of fatigue and lassitude, with vague physical symptoms such as headache, muscle pain, and subjective sensory disturbances, originally attributed to weakness or exhaustion of the nerves and later considered a form of neurotic disorder" (*OED*, n.), whereas psychasthenia can be understood as neurosis, especially of a phobic or obsessive type.

per la sua stranezza e indipendenza da quello scopo di vendetta paterna anche l'omicidio gratuito ed assurdo, ma pazzescamente impulsivo del vecchio Polonio, solo perché stava dietro la portiera ad origliare, senza sorprendere alcun suo segreto importante.

Altrettanto fedele non tanto al vero, più facilmente ma più incompletamente avvertito dallo sguardo comune, quanto alla realtà umana, intimamente scrutata nei suoi meati più profondi dall'occhio sicuro e veggente dell'artista psicologo, è il tipo di Otello – omicida per passione.

Certo, da Macbeth ad Amleto a Otello vi è come una progressione di minore lontananza dalla esperienza comune; sicché, mentre pochi rilevano nell'avventuriero scozzese i lineamenti del delinquente nato, molti più vedono nel principe danese una mente squilibrata; e tutti poi, ricordando Otello, ne fanno come il tipo, proverbiale oramai, del delinquente per passione.

Tuttavia questa spontanea impressione non raggiunge la sua precisione antropologica, se non quando ai dati consueti della psicologia comune si aggiungano quelli più speciali e caratteristici della vera e propria psicologia criminale.

Giacché Otello – per quanto meno anormale di Macbeth e di Amleto – è pur sempre un omicida e come tale straripa dalle dighe della psicologia ordinaria per entrare nel campo della psicologia morbosa, come da ultimo conferma il suo suicidio, che Shakespeare, con profonda intuizione, non ammette né in Macbeth né in Amleto, sapendo che la immediata reazione suicida all'accesso omicida è un sintoma specifico nel delinquente per passione . . .

Nel delinquente per passione . . . il suicidio, consumato o tentato, non è che la reazione immediata del senso morale, transitoriamente soffocato dall'uragano psicologico della passione, ma che riprende imperioso tutto il suo dominio, subito dopo la scarica nervosa dell'eccesso criminoso e spinge quindi al suicidio per lo spasmo del rimorso fulmineo.

Questo dato preciso e certo della psicologia criminale è ciò che Shakespeare ha lucidamente veduto e che, fra gli interpreti suoi, Tommaso Salvini ha vivamente sentito nella espressione meravigliosa di plastica e di voce dell'"Otello fu!" – quando il Moro sopra se stesso compie, presso l'amata ed uccisa Desdemona, l'ultimo atto di giustizia, punitrice e liberatrice ad un tempo chiamando sé stesso "un uomo in amar poco saggio e troppo ardente" . . .

Ma oltre questo lato prezioso della fisionomia psicologica di Otello, un altro ve n'ha nel dramma Shakespeariano, che precorre, ancora una

by his gratuitous, absurd, and yet madly impulsive killing of old Polonius, simply because he was standing behind the arras, without having heard any important secret. This murder should be noted because of its strangeness and independence from the purpose of Hamlet's revenge.

More easily but more incompletely perceived by common sense – equally faithful not so much to truth, as to human reality, which, in its innermost recesses, is intimately observed by the confident and prophetic eye of the psychologist-artist: this is Othello's type, the murderer of passion.

Certainly, when one turns from Macbeth and Hamlet to Othello, one perceives a lesser distancing from common experience. That is why although few interpreters are able to recognise in the Scottish adventurer the lineaments of the born criminal, many more can detect a deranged mind in the Danish prince, and, lastly, everybody looks at Othello as the by now proverbial type of the criminal of passion.

However, such a spontaneous impression does not attain anthropological precision, unless one adds to the usual data of common psychology those that belong to criminal psychology, which is more specialistic and more connected to reality.

Othello – despite being less abnormal than Macbeth and Hamlet – is a murderer, and as such, he overruns the dams of ordinary psychology and enters the domain of morbid psychology. This fact is ultimately confirmed by his suicide, which Shakespeare, by profound intuition, does not admit either in Macbeth or in Hamlet: he knew that the immediate suicidal reaction to the homicidal fit is a specific symptom in criminals of passion . . .

In a criminal of passion, . . . suicide, whether completed or attempted, is but the immediate reaction of the moral sense, which has temporarily been suffocated by the psychological hurricane of passion, but regains its ascendancy with a vengeance, immediately after the nervous discharge provoked by the criminal seizure: the lightning-fast spasm of remorse drives the person to suicide.

This precise and exact datum of criminal psychology is what Shakespeare had lucidly foreseen, and what, among his interpreters, Tommaso Salvini has vividly articulated in his marvellous expression – both physical and vocal – of “That's he that was Othello”,⁹ when the Moor performs on himself, next to his beloved Desdemona, whom he has killed, the final act of justice, both a punishment and a liberation: he calls himself “one that loved not wisely but too well”¹⁰ . . .

Besides this exquisite side of Othello's psychological physiognomy, there is another one in Shakespeare's play, which, again, thanks to a

⁹ 5.2.290, but see Introduction, section 4.

¹⁰ 5.2.353.

volta coll'intuizione del genio, la positiva constatazione della scienza antropologica.

Voglio dire la suggestione perversa di Jago, che negli artifici serpentinei, per inoculare goccia a goccia il veleno della gelosia nelle vene vulcaniche del Moro, riproduce mirabilmente tutto il meccanismo psicologico della suggestione, quale fu constatato dapprima dagli studi sull'ipnotismo – che permette come una dissezione anatomica e sperimentale dell'animo umano – e fu esteso e confermato di poi anche nei fenomeni normali della psicologia comune.

Suggestione – cioè imposizione di un'idea propria nel cervello altrui, che la fa sua e l'esegue – la quale nel campo criminoso, ha appunto una forma caratteristica – messa in luce dall'antropologia criminale italiana colla eccellente monografia di Scipio Sighele sulla “coppia criminale” . . .

Arturo Graf, pur così geniale conoscitore del cuore umano, in un saggio psicologico sulla *gelosia di Otello* (*Nuova antologia*, 1892), si sforzava infatti di spiegarne le tragiche vicende col sussidio della sola psicologia comune: ma per quanto affilato dal suo ingegno, questo bisturi non bastava alla dissezione anatomica di quel tipo antropologico, che solo il bisturi della psicologia criminale avrebbe potuto e può efficacemente e completamente analizzare.

In sostanza, il Graf sostiene che Otello non è di natura sua geloso; ma è trascinato ai furori di quella passione tormentatrice, anzitutto perché in condizioni sfavorevoli, lui moro e militaresco, di fronte alla moglie, fiore gentile e delicato della veneta laguna; e perché poi, essendo egli un eroe, e quindi di natura morale semplice, anziché di indole critica o scettica, per una parte crede ciecamente agli artifici grossolani di Jago e per l'altra si lascia, come tutte le tempre eroiche, trascinare facilmente agli estremi . . .

Come si vede però, questa spiegazione di psicologia normale non dà una ragione sufficiente dell'uccisione di Desdemona, per quanto sia sillogisticamente esatta, anche nell'accenno al bagliore di pietà, che per un attimo illumina senza trattenerlo, l'animo di Otello, per le membra bellissime della donna adorata, poco prima di spegnerla. È questa della superficiale psicologia *descrittiva*, ma non è della profonda psicologia

genius' intuition, anticipates the positive ascertainment of anthropological science.

I mean Iago's perverse insinuation, employed amid his snakelike schemes, to inoculate drop by drop the poison of jealousy into the volcanic veins of the Moor. This behaviour wonderfully reproduces the entire psychological mechanism of suggestion,¹¹ which was first investigated in certain studies on hypnotism (which seems to allow a form of anatomical and experimental dissection of the human mind), and was then tested and confirmed also in relation to a number of normal phenomena typical of common psychology.

By 'suggestion' we mean the imposition of an idea of our own into somebody else's brain, which appropriates it, and puts that idea into action. In a criminal context, suggestion has a peculiar form, first brought to light by the Italian criminal anthropology in Scipio Sighele's outstanding monograph, *The Criminal Couple* . . .

In a psychological essay on Othello's jealousy (*Nuova Antologia*, 1892), Arturo Graf,¹² whose genius knows the human heart so well, strives to make sense of the tragic plot, being aided only by common psychology. No matter how well sharpened by his intellect, Graf's scalpel was not sufficient to anatomically dissect that anthropological type: only the scalpel of criminal psychology would and could analyse it efficiently and thoroughly.

Basically, Graf argues that Othello is not a jealous man by nature: he is driven to the frenzies of that harrowing passion, firstly, by unfavourable conditions – he is a Moor and a soldier, while his wife is a gentle and delicate flower of the Venetian lagoon – and, secondly, because he is a hero, and thus has a simple moral compass. His nature is neither critical nor sceptical: so, on the one hand, he believes Iago's crass stratagems; on the other, he allows himself to be easily driven to extremities, like all those who have a heroic temperament . . .

As can be seen, this explanation by normal psychology does not provide sufficient reason for the murder of Desdemona, although it is syllogistically exact also in the hint of the glow of pity for a moment flashing into Othello's mind, without holding him, for the beautiful limbs of his adored woman just before extinguishing her. Graf's is a superficial *descriptive* psychology: it is not profound *genetic* psychology

¹¹ A technical term, as Ferri explains. "The insinuation of a belief or impulse into the mind of a subject by words, gestures, or the like; the impulse or idea thus suggested" (*OED*, "suggestion", n., 2c).

¹² Arturo Graf (1848-1913), one of Italy's foremost literary critics of that time. Nowadays, he is still remembered for his study on Italian Anglomania in the eighteenth century.

genetica . . . la psicologia criminale constata che il suicidio improvviso e finale è di una importanza, come direbbe un clinico, veramente patognomica, è un sintoma che caratterizza, per sé solo, il tipo antropologico di Otello e sta a documento così del meraviglioso genio psicologico di Shakespeare come delle verità umane faticosamente distillate nel laboratorio scientifico.

Alleanza simpatica e feconda dell'arte colla scienza, per una miglio

(¹) KOHLER, *Shakespeare von dem Forum des Jurisprudens* [sic], Stuttgart 1882. — Come pure, i recenti studi critici di Georg Brandes nella *Zukunft* di Berlino (giugno e agosto 1895) e nella *Revue des Revues* di Parigi, 15 juin et 15 août 1895.

(²) *Repertorio di cause celebri*, I, 906.

(³) *Rivista carceraria*, Roma, Bollettino, XII, 92.

(⁴) D'ALFONSO *La personalità di Amleto* nella *Rivista Italiana di Filosofia*, gennaio 1895.

(⁵) FERRI, *L'omicidio nell'antropologia criminale*, Torino 1895 — La psicopatologia dell'omicidio, pag. 588.

. . . Criminal psychology ascertains that a sudden, and fatal suicide has an importance which a clinical doctor would call truly pathognomonic: it is a symptom which defines, on its own, Othello's anthropological type and attests both to Shakespeare's marvellous psychological genius, and to the human truths which can be distilled with great effort in a scientific laboratory.

A sympathetic and fecund alliance between art and science, for a better and a more complete understanding of life . . .

(¹) KOHLER, *Shakespeare vor dem Forum der Jurisprudenz*, Stuttgart 1882. — See also the recent critical studies published by Georg Brandes in *Die Zukunft*, Berlin (June and August 1895) and in the *Revue des Revues* of Paris, 15 juin et 15 août 1895.

(²) *Repertorio di cause celebri*, I, 906.

(³) *Rivista carceraria*, Roma, Bollettino, XII, 92.

(⁴) D'ALFONSO, *La personalità di Amleto* in *Rivista Italiana di Filosofia*, January 1895.

(⁵) FERRI, *L'omicidio nell'antropologia criminale*, Torino 1895 — La psicopatologia dell'omicidio, p. 588.

8. From Giuseppe Ziino. 1897. *Shakespeare e la scienza moderna: Studio medico-psicologico e giuridico* [*Shakespeare and Modern Science: A Medico-Psychological and Juridical Study*]. Palermo: Alberto Reber: 5; 13-14; 15-16; 122-5.

Giuseppe Ziino (1841-1915) was professor of forensic medicine at the University of Messina (of which he also became *rettore*), and, in 1897, founded, alongside Lombroso and others, the Italian Association of Forensic Medicine, which is still in existence (SIMLA: Società Italiana di Medicina Legale e delle Assicurazioni). It seems that the relationship between Lombroso and Ziino was fraught: they esteemed each other, but Ziino refused to adhere blindly to Lombroso's doctrines. In his monograph on Shakespeare, he states that he refuses to bow before the "Gran Lama del supposto nuovo regno dottrinale" ("the Dalai Lama of this allegedly new doctrinal realm", 82). On the other hand, Ziino's book was positively reviewed (with some critiques) by Fausto Squillace in the *Archivio di Psichiatria* (see text no. 10), the journal founded and directed by Lombroso himself (together with Garofalo and Ferri).

Ziino's book was very influential, and was quoted and referred to both in Italy and abroad. It was even glowingly discussed in a history of English literature (Levi 1901, 2.105-7). It is of course not possible to insert long quotations in this volume, but Squillace's review gives a very good idea of its content. However, one of the three excerpts collected below, dealing with Shakespeare's sexuality, is very significant. It was also published separately with the title "Fu W. Shakespeare un psicopata sessuale?" ["Was W. Shakespeare a Sexual Psychopath?"] first in the 1896 *Archivio delle Psicopatie Sessuali*, Pasquale Penta's short-lived, but extremely interesting journal (aimed at helping the conditions of those who suffered from what were called 'sexual anomalies'), and then as a pamphlet (Roma: Capaccini, 1897). Contributors to Penta's journal included such important scholars as Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis. Ziino analyses the content of the Sonnets and uses the sexologists' newly-developed terminology to understand Shakespeare's attraction to the Fair Youth.

Ziino then classifies Shakespeare's characters of virtually all the plays along the lines of the Positivist Criminological School (see text no. 10). Ziino often uses his own translations, and it is clear he had a vast knowledge of Shakespeare's works. While the first excerpt discusses the aims of the monograph, the third excerpt is a good example of his method. In his analysis of Richard III, Ziino effectively blames the Shakespearean character for having born prematurely, causing

pain to his mother. It would be an almost ludicrous passage, were it not for the author urging any forensic doctor to take these elements into account when assessing a criminal subject.

. . . A differenza di quanto è accaduto in America, in Germania ed in Inghilterra, dove filosofi medici e giuristi hanno illustrato la mente di G. Shakespeare, attingendo dalle opere di lui larga messe di concetti per metterne in luce o la vastità del sapere, o la non comune potenza di intuizione nel campo delle scienze; in Francia e in Italia ci si è limitati a riguardare esclusivamente nel drammaturgo inglese il merito della rigenerazione letteraria ed artistica. Qui, come altrove, poi manca un lavoro d'insieme diretto a ravvisare il teatro di quel Grande dal profilo scientifico, e peculiarmente dal punto di veduta della Filosofia naturale e giuridica, dell'Antropologia criminale, e della Frenjatria. Ed è appunto per colmare in parte tale lacuna che io, modesto e spregiudicato ammiratore del poeta, mi sono deciso a trattare dei principii filosofici e giuridici di Shakespeare, e de' delinquenti e folli quali ei meravigliosamente li dipinge, precorrendo col suo intuito geniale, ma positivistico ad un tempo, altissime vedute di scienza odierna.

. . .

. . . Seguendo passo a passo le note biografiche riferentisi al poeta, nessun vestigio troviamo in lui di melancolia, di epilessia, di psichico esaurimento, di tendenze suicide, di delirii primitivi sistematizzati di grandezza o di persecuzione, di allucinamenti morbosi, di impulsi decisamente criminali, di alcoolismo; a meno che con questo ultimo, che è uno stato morboso cronico, non voglia confondersi l'abitudine di ingerire temperatamente delle bevande spiritose, abusandone pur talora eccezionalmente, sino a raggiungere il limite della ubbriachezza acuta accidentale. Fa altresì difetto ogni accenno di ereditarietà patologica o criminale negli ascendenti, ne' collaterali e ne' figli del poeta.

Né basta. Guglielmo Shakespeare era, secondo quanto narrano i suoi più autorevoli e credibili contemporanei, di statura media, non grasso od eccessivamente magro, di corpo simmetrico; grande e bella aveva la testa; larga, alta e non fuggevole la fronte; non era balbuziente; tutt'altro che misoneista, avido anzi del nuovo ei si mostrava; possedeva forte coscienza di sé, ed oltre d'attendere alle produzioni drammatiche, curava, e molto magari, i proprii interessi; lungi dall'essere sterile, ebbe figli e fu nonno. Nel poeta dell'Avon, adunque, indarno si

Unlike what has been happening in America, Germany and England, where philosophers, medical doctors, and jurists have illuminated W. Shakespeare's mind, drawing on his works for the abundance of concepts in them, casting light on either the vastness of his knowledge, or his uncommon power of intuition in the scientific field, in France and Italy one has exclusively looked at the English playwright for the sake of literary and artistic regeneration. Here, like elsewhere, then, one observes the lack of a comprehensive work aiming to examine the theatre of that Great from the perspective of a scientific profile, and especially from the point of view of natural and juridical philosophy, criminal anthropology, and psychiatry. It is exactly in order to partially fill this lack that I, a modest and unprejudiced admirer of the poet, have decided to examine Shakespeare's philosophical and juridical principles, and those criminals and mad people so wonderfully portrayed by him, anticipating with his genial, and at the same time, positivistic intuition, the august views of modern science.

...

... If one follows point by point what is known of the poet's life, there is no evidence in him of melancholia, epilepsy, psychic exhaustion, suicidal tendencies, primary delirium (whether systematised as megalomania or persecutory delusions), morbid hallucinations, clearly-defined criminal impulses, or alcoholism – unless by the latter (which is a chronic morbid condition) one means the habit of ingesting, with moderation, alcoholic drinks, and, by exceptionally overindulging from time to time, reach the limits of an acute, accidental drunkenness. Furthermore, there is no mention of any pathological or criminal heredity in the poet's family, whether among his ancestors, his collaterals, or his descendants.

There is more. According to the most authoritative and trustworthy of his contemporaries, William Shakespeare was of average height, neither fat nor underweight, with symmetrical limbs. His head was big and well-formed with a wide, high, not receding forehead.¹ He did not stutter. He was anything but a misoneist,² since he always showed himself eagerly curious about any novelty. He was very self-aware, and, besides taking care of the staging of his plays, he always kept an eye – a close eye, one would say – on his own interests. Far from being sterile, he had children and grandchildren. Therefore, as far as the poet

¹ The closest we get to such a description occurs in Aubrey's seventeenth-century life of Shakespeare – as digitised by the Bodleian Library for the Folger Library's Shakespeare Documented project: "He was a handsome, well shap't man".

² I.e. a hater of novelties.

cercherebbero le stimmate degenerative, ravvisate forse con soverchia compiacenza in tanti altri grandi uomini.

Pur non essendo Shakespeare un alienato di mente, un genio pazzo od epilettico, un nevastenico, non si può affermare per ciò stesso e con pari sicurezza ch'ei vada esente di *eccentricità passionali*, compatibili però col normale funzionamento di que' centri cerebrali, da cui si sprigionò tanta e così vivida luce di poesia e di arte . . .

A voler' essere rigidamente austeri nel ricostruire la personalità etica di quel Grande, un solo dubbio è lecito accampare, e si è quello che concerne l'indole dei rapporti passionali tra lui e il giovine signore cui vennero dedicati i Sonetti stupendi (meno gli ultimi ventisei, i quali evidentemente a donna si indirizzano).

Henry Hallam scrive al proposito: "Non onostante le frequenti bellezze di questi Sonetti, il piacere di leggerli è grandemente diminuito da *certe circostanze*.... Cosiché è impossibile non desiderare che Shakespeare non li avesse scritti". E pare anche a me che taluni di quei Sonetti accennino ad una episodica inclinazione non del tutto confacente con la scrupolosa decenza; specialmente quelli nei quali si parla dell'amico, come non si direbbe altrimenti né più di una bellissima fanciulla innamorata e di già posseduta. Quei Sonetti, "dolci" per quanto si vogliono, rivelano una certa debolezza omosessuale del poeta, ricordano troppo (soprammodo il novantacinquesimo e il susseguente) i versi dei satirici latini, e le canzonette di Anacreonte ai batilli. Parecchi critici odierni smentiscono la preternaturale relazione del poeta opinando, e forse non del tutto irragionevolmente, che al XVI secolo il linguaggio adoperato tra amici veri e devoti somigliava non poco a quello degli innamorati; e citano in proposito il dotto Languet, M. Montaigne, M. Buonarroto etc. Nondimeno, a costo di essere chiamato assieme ad alcuni altri *studioso superficiale*, non mi rimuovo dal mio concetto; pago

of Avon is concerned, one would look in vain for those degenerative stigmata which have been detected, perhaps with an excessive complacency, in many other great men.

However, although Shakespeare was neither a mentally alienated individual, nor a mad or epileptic genius, nor a neurasthenic, one cannot automatically state, with equal confidence, that he did not possess any *passional eccentricity* – albeit compatible with the normal functioning of those cerebral centres, which cast forth, with such radiance and vividness, so many light beams of poetry and art . . .

If one wishes to be extremely methodic in reconstructing the ethical personality of this Great man, there remains one legitimate doubt about it, namely his nature concerning the passional relationships he had with the young gentleman to whom he dedicated his wonderful Sonnets (apart from the last 26, which are apparently addressed to a woman).

This was Henry Hallam's judgement: "Notwithstanding the frequent beauties of these sonnets, the pleasure of their perusal is greatly diminished by *these circumstances*... and it is impossible not to wish that Shakespeare had never written them".³ I agree with him, because it seems that some of those Sonnets hint at an episodic inclination which does not wholly suit scrupulous decency, especially in those where he speaks of his friend exactly as one would of a beautiful enamoured maiden one has possessed. However "sugared"⁴ one deems them to be, those sonnets reveal a certain homosexual⁵ weakness in the poet, and remind us too much (especially no. 95 and the one that follows it) of the Roman satirists' lines, and of Anacreon's dainty songs he sung to his Bathylluses.⁶ Several modern critics have denied the poet's preternatural relationship with his friend: they maintain, perhaps not entirely unreasonably, that, in the sixteenth century, the language of true, devout friendship was very close to the language used between two lovers. As examples of this, they refer to the learned Languet,⁷ M. Montaigne, M. Buonarroti, etc. Nevertheless, at the cost of being accused of being, like some others, a *superficial scholar*, I stand firm in

³ Ziino adds that ellipsis and italicisation to Henry Hallam's oft-quoted judgment, first included in his 1843 *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, to emphasise the unsaid.

⁴ This was Francis Meres' adjective for them in *Palladis Tamia* (1598).

⁵ The term had just entered the Italian and English languages.

⁶ One of the youths sung by Anacreon was called Bathyllus, and his name has occasionally been used as an antonomasia for the passive *eromenos*.

⁷ The correspondence between Hubert Languet and Sir Philip Sidney has been the object of queer readings.

come sono di leggere il contenuto dei Sonetti nella lettera, e non nello spirito, di cui taluni li credono animati. Se è vero quello che dice Wordsworth che Shakespeare nei Sonetti ci abbia aperto il suo cuore, a me sembra che in fondo a quel cuore nobilissimo, ci sia un impercettibile angolo scuro! Ma tutto ciò non vuol dire che Shakespeare sia stato un *unrrningio* in senso moderno, un *invertito* od un *pervertito* sessuale; mai più: può anche darsi che egli si mostri, per una strana coincidenza, in pieno seicento, incline all'*amor puerorum* nel significato genuino e primigenio della Grecia antica, quando la sensualità non aveva ancora depravato l'amore del fanciullo! Ad ogni modo, che tale suo amore non sia pienamente normale, se ne accorge lo stesso autore, quando lo chiama folle nella chiusa del LVII Sonetto: "L'amor mio è *pazzo* al punto, che nessun male ei scorge nei vostri capricci".

...

Dopo questa rassegna molto sommaria de' caratteri anatomici, funzionali, psichici e morali de' delinquenti della peggiore razza [i.e. i criminali teratologici], sono lieto riconoscere che il genio di Shakespeare intuì sorprendentemente tre verità che formar debbono le fondamenta dell'Antropologia criminale, ove voglia essa seguire indirizzo positivistico. E sono:

- a) Che i caratteri fisici de' delinquenti teratologici debbano coincidere in un certo numero presso lo stesso individuo, perché questo legittimamente si possa annoverare degenerati e mostruosi;
- b) Che i caratteri esteriori debbano riguardarsi in concorrenza con quelli psichici;
- c) Che tra gli elementi soggettivi formanti l'*homo interior*, debbasi accordare la preferenza, nello apprezzamento giuridico, a quelli d'ordine operativo, ed etico, anziché agli intellettuali, potendosi da un delinquente che vincerebbe Aristotele nella disputa, commettere atti delittuosi inauditi, con la massima freddezza e indifferenza morale.

Posti tali fatti-principii, come li addimandano i logici odierni, facciamo applicazione allo studio di *Riccardo III*, il tipo più spiccato, più scienzialmente comprensibile, più vivo che mente umana abbia mai ideato e scolpito di delinquente teratologico. Seguiamo l'ordine dell'Autore, il quale comincia da' caratteri esterni, organologici, estetici. Non fa

my position: I am comforted by reading the content of the Sonnets by the letter, not in the alleged spirit which should animate them, if we listened to a few of those critics. If Wordsworth's notion is true – “with this key / Shakespeare unlocked his heart”⁸ – it seems to me that, deep within his very noble heart, the poet had an imperceptible dark corner! However, all this does not necessarily mean that Shakespeare was an *urning*⁹ in the modern sense, a sexual *invert* or *pervert* – not at all: he may have been, by a strange coincidence, while living in the seventeenth century, prone to that *amor puerorum*,¹⁰ in the genuine and primordial form it had among the Grecians, when sensuality had not depraved child-loving practices yet! Anyway, the poet himself realised that his love was not completely normal, as one understands by reading the end of Sonnet 57, when he calls it “a fool”: “So true a fool is love that in your will, / Though you do anything, he thinks no ill”.

...

After this very brief overview of the anatomical, functional, psychic, and moral characters of the worst kind of delinquents [i.e. the teratological criminals], I am surprised and delighted to have detected that Shakespeare's genius intuited three truths which must constitute the foundation of Criminal Anthropology, granted it follows the positivistic path. These three truths are:

a) A certain amount of physical characters must be found in teratological criminals in order for them to be legitimately classified as degenerate and monstrous.

b) Exterior characters must be taken into account alongside the psychic ones.

c) In the juridical assessment of those subjective elements which constitute the *homo interior*, one should privilege those which pertain to the operative and ethical order over those which are intellectual – a criminal who may defeat Aristotle in a debate can perpetrate unprecedented crimes, in cold blood, and with the greatest moral indifference. Now that we have established these ‘principal facts’, as they are called by modern logicians, let us apply them to our study of Richard III, who is the most blatant, the most scientifically comprehensible type of teratological criminal to have ever been created or lively sculpted by a human mind. Let us follow the Author's order: Shakespeare begins from the exterior, organological,¹¹ aesthetic characters. There is no need to

⁸ From Wordsworth's poem *Scorn Not the Sonnet*.

⁹ A homosexual, in the terminology first introduced by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in 1864.

¹⁰ Love of children/boys.

¹¹ I.e. pertaining to phrenology.

mestieri che si spigolino qua e là note antropologiche di Riccardo; egli stesso ha cura di farne la descrizione, appena si presenta sulla scena . . .

E che fossero reali la nascita precoce, la disarmonia dell'aspetto, la sproporzione tra un membro e l'altro tanto negli arti toracici che negli addominali, si desume in parte dalle cronache: il Poeta non ha fatto che rincarare sul numero e sulla qualità delle anomalie strutturali, onde quel demone era bruttato; ma il fondo del quadro è storico, e vero pur troppo. Insiste il Poeta, ed ha ragione, sulla deformità dell'aspetto, poiché la corrispondenza tra le imperfezioni del fisico, della fisionomia in peculiare guisa, e le qualità difettive e prave dell'animo è stata ammessa fino dalla più remota antichità . . .

Un altro dato biologico importante si rileva dalle parole della Duchessa madre di Riccardo, quando a costui rimprovera di averlo in travaglio atteso lunga pezza tra i dolori e l'agonia: parto *difficile*, adunque, e *precoce*; ecco due caratteri precisi che non sarebbe permesso ad alcun medico-legista di trascurare, se avesse a stendere una relazione peritale su di un soggetto criminoso dello stampo di Gloucester, od a quello affine.

Coefficienti eziologici predisponenti da tenersi in molto conto nel valutare il determinismo degenerativo di Riccardo sono l'*eredità* e l'*ambiente*: egli non è che il prodotto biologico della sua famiglia e della sua epoca, macchiata di mala formazione la prima, deplorabile la seconda per lotte sanguinose interminabili, per delitti e tradimenti d'ogni sorta . . .

glean, here and there, anthropological data about Richard – he himself takes care of describing them, as soon as he appears on stage . . .

One can understand that his premature birth, the disharmonic features of his physical appearance, the disproportion between his limbs (both the thoracic and the abdominal) correspond to truth by reading the historical chronicles. The Poet did but augment the number and quality of Richard's structural anomalies, which tainted that fiend: the substance of this clinical picture is historical, and true, unfortunately. The Poet rightly insists on the deformity of Richard's looks, because the correspondence between physical imperfections or a peculiarly shaped physiognomy and the defective and corrupt qualities of the mind has been accepted from time immemorial . . .

Another relevant biological datum can be found in the words uttered by the Duchess, Richard's mother, when she blames him for making her wait so long when she was in labour with him, leaving her amid pain and agony. Thus, a *difficult* and *premature* birth: here are two precise characteristics which no forensic doctor should be allowed to neglect, when compiling a report of a criminal subject of Gloucester's ilk, or similar.

Heredity and the *environment* are the predisposing aetiological coefficients, which should be taken into great account for the assessment of Richard's degenerative determinism. He is but the biological product of his family and of his age – the former contaminated by malformation, the latter made piteous following those endless bloody struggles, and because of crimes and treasons of all sorts . . .

9. From Scipio Sighele's works.

9a. From Scipio Sighele. 1897. *La coppia criminale. Studio di psicologia morbosa* [*The Criminal Couple. A Study on Morbid Psychology*], 2nd ed. Torino: Bocca: 104; 119-20.

9b.—. 1906. "L'opera di Gabriele D'Annunzio davanti alla psichiatria" ["Gabriele D'Annunzio's works in Relation to Psychiatry"]. In *Letteratura tragica*, 1-94. Milano: Fratelli Treves.

Scipio Sighele (Brescia, 1868 – Florence, 1913) was an important sociologist and psychologist from Nago, in Trentino (then under Austria). He was persecuted and expelled for his *irredentismo* (i.e. his involvement in the political movement which fought for certain territories, such as those around Trento and Trieste, to be annexed to the newly-unified Italy). He then worked in several Italian cities, and also abroad, as a lecturer at the University of Bruxelles. He pioneered the study of collective psychology, and especially his two books *La folla delinquente* (1891) and *L'intelligenza della folla* (1903) were influential, and even quoted, approvingly, by Sigmund Freud.

Another very successful monograph was *La coppia criminale* (first edition: 1892). Here, he devotes a short, but significant passage to the dynamics between Othello and Iago. They form the type of the criminal couple made up of a born criminal (Iago) and an incidental criminal (Othello); the former acts as an *incubus*, in Sighele's terms.

The other excerpt is from an essay, in which Sighele refers to Ferri's tripartition as far as the Othello-Hamlet-Macbeth triad is concerned. Sighele's heartfelt (but problematic) humanitarian ideal transpires in his defence of using literature, even classical and early modern drama, for criminological purposes.

9a.

Per compiere la rassegna delle coppie criminali – che noi abbiamo voluto distinguere a seconda dei legami d'affetto che univano il *succube* all'*incube* – or non ci resta a parlare che della coppia criminale formata da due amici, e sorta, per lo più, nell'ambiente del carcere o in quelle taverne ove si riuniscono insieme ai delinquenti i vagabondi, gli spostati, e gli oziosi, tutti i candidati insomma che attendono di prendere il loro posto nell'esercito del delitto.

Per l'amicizia noi possiamo ripetere, benché in grado diverso, quello che dicemmo per l'amor sessuale e per la parentela; è anch'essa una condizione favorevole allo svolgersi d'una suggestione criminosa, nel caso in cui uno degli amici sia un perverso e l'altro, psicologicamente, un debole.

Shakespeare, il sublime scrutatore dell'anima umana, ci ha dato in Jago e in Otello i tipi classici di questa specie di coppia criminale. Egli ha mostrato con evidenza artistica come un perverso possa inoculare goccia a goccia il veleno d'un'idea criminosa nell'animo d'un uomo buono e trascinar questo al reato.

...

Il delinquente-nato e il delinquente d'abitudine s'associano perché essi, vivendo in un ambiente malsano, trovano fra i loro compagni i facili e spontanei complici d'ogni delitto; il delinquente d'occasione o per passione – invece – che non conoscono ancora il mondo criminale e che, pur commettendo un reato, ne sentono il danno e la vergogna, difficilmente trovano e – soprattutto – raramente cercano dei complici.

Che, se vi sono dei delinquenti occasionali associati – come tutti i *succubes* nelle coppie criminali – essi non rappresentano veramente il tipo estremo del criminale fortuito a cui l'ambiente *impone* quasi il delitto – ma bensì il tipo di un debole a cui l'occasione – questa pietra di paragone della resistenza morale (1) – non fece che offrire il modo di rivelare la loro natura.

E dicasi lo stesso per i delitti passionali commessi da due persone, – di cui noi offrimmo degli esempi nelle coppie di amanti assassini: – in questi casi, se ben si osservi, non è quasi mai una passione nobile che guida la mano omicida, bensì una passione che serve soltanto a dare un profumo di sentimentalità all'egoismo di due colpevoli, o la parvenza di una scusa al temperamento di due degenerati.

Se io rubo veramente per bisogno o ammazzo veramente per pas-

9a.

In order to complete our overview of criminal couples – following our distinction according to the types of emotional bond uniting the *succubus* with the *incubus* – all that remains for us to discuss now is the criminal couple made up of two friends, which rises, in most cases, in jail or in those taverns which are the meeting place, besides of the delinquents, also of the vagabonds, the deviant misfits, the idlers – in sum, all candidates biding their time to take their place within the army of crime.

As regards friendship, we can repeat, in spite of its different degree, what we already said about sexual love and family relations: friendship also constitutes a favourable condition for the development of a criminal suggestion when one of the two friends is a degenerate and the other is a psychologically weak person.

Shakespeare, that sublime observer of the human soul, has presented us in Iago and Othello with the classic types of this species of criminal couple. With artistic efficacy, he has shown us how a degenerate is able to inject the poison of a criminal idea, drop by drop, into the mind of a good man, dragging him towards wrongdoing.

...

The born criminal and the habitual delinquent become partners because they live in an unhealthy environment and here find among their associates the easy and spontaneous accessories to any wrongdoing. On the contrary, the occasional criminal or the criminal of passion, who is not familiar with the criminal world, and who, after indeed perpetrating the crime, feels the harm and shame deriving from it, can hardly find some accomplice, and, more importantly, rarely looks for such a person.

If there are cases of occasional criminals who indeed associate themselves with someone – as happens to all *succubi* in a criminal couple – these individuals do not truly represent the extreme type of accidental criminal upon whom the environment almost *imposes* to perpetrate the crime; they represent instead the type of a weak person unto whom opportunity – that touchstone of moral resistance (1) – did but offer the means to reveal their true nature.

One can say the same of the crimes of passion perpetrated by two people (of which we have already provided a number of examples, in the couples of ‘killer lovers’): in such cases, if one observes the matter well, it is never a noble passion that guides the murderer’s hand, but rather one that only serves to endow the selfishness of two culprits with a scent of sentimentality, or the semblance of an excuse for the temperament of two degenerates.

If I steal out of actual need or I murder for actual passion, then I will

sione, non ho né il tempo né il modo né il desiderio di associare un altro al mio delitto. Dare un complice a Otello o a Jean Valjean, – i tipi classici dei delinquenti fortuiti e simpatici – sarebbe un assurdo psicologico.

Resta quindi incrollabile, per noi, il principio che – il solo fatto d'essere *in due* a commettere un delitto deve costituire sempre – indipendentemente da qualsiasi altra ragione – una circostanza aggravante (2).

(1) FÉRÉ, *Dégénérescence et criminalité*. – Paris, Alcan, 1888.

(2) Sarebbe assurdo se noi, che aborriamo da ogni assolutismo, sostenessimo che non vi debbono, né vi possono essere mai eccezioni a questo principio. Già più indietro, al capitolo II, a proposito di un caso di *coppia infantida* dicevamo che il *succube* (Vittorina Lemaire) meritava l'assoluzione. Si vede da questo che per il *succube* il fatto d'essere in due, se può essere ragione di giustificazione, potrà tanto più valere talvolta come una scusa. – Il principio enunciato nel testo noi lo abbiamo dunque enunciato per la maggioranza dei casi, e crediamo d'averlo sorretto con buoni argomenti.

9b.

Il romanzo naturalista è – come in un altro campo il romanzo socialista – un alleato della scienza moderna. La crisi morale e la crisi economica che attraversiamo non potevano non avere il loro contraccolpo nella letteratura. Un soffio caldo di altruismo attraversa la coscienza contemporanea: ciò che interessa ed occupa oggi la mente di tutti è – da una parte – quell'esercito di miserabili che hanno finora sofferto tacendo e il cui silenzio noi abbiamo ricompensato con una noncuranza spensierata e sdegnosa, e – dall'altra parte – quell'esercito di delinquenti che noi disprezziamo senza studiarli e ai quali credemmo sufficiente rimedio le illusorie pene del carcere. Oggi noi sentiamo – forse sotto l'aculeo della paura – che è tempo di abbandonare quella spensieratezza e questo disprezzo, e cerchiamo di opporre alla miseria e alla criminalità, che aumentano, dighe più forti di quelle sinora costrutte.

have neither time, nor means, nor intention to associate someone else with this crime of mine. Providing an accomplice to Othello or Jean Valjean¹ – the classic types of incidental and sympathetic delinquents – would be a psychological absurdity.

Thus, it is our opinion that the principle remains unshakeable according to which the mere fact of being *two people* perpetrating a crime must always constitute an aggravating factor, irrespective of any other reason (2).

(1) FÉRÉ, *Dégénérescence et criminalité*. – Paris, Alcan, 1888.

(2) It would be absurd for us, who loathe any form of absolutism, to maintain that either there must not be, or cannot be possible exceptions to this principle. Already in the previous pages (chapter II), concerning the case of an infanticidal couple, we wrote that there the *succubus* (Victorine Lemaire) should deserve absolution. One gathers from this example that, for the *succubus*, the fact of being two people committing a crime may be a motive of self-justification, but sometimes will, all the more so, serve as an excuse. – Thus, the principle articulated in the text was meant for the majority of such cases, and we believe to have substantiated it by using good arguments.

9b.

The naturalistic novel is – like, in another field, the socialist novel – an ally of modern science. The moral and economic crises which we are experiencing were bound to have a repercussion as regards literature. A warm breath of selflessness is blowing through the conscience of the current age: these days, what interests and occupies everybody's mind is, on the one hand, that host of wretched people who, so far, have suffered in silence, a noiselessness which we have rewarded with a blithe and haughty carelessness – on the other hand, that army of delinquents whom we condemn without studying them, and for whom we have believed that a jail's illusory punishment was a sufficient remedy. Nowadays, we feel – perhaps because we are being prodded by the sting of fear – that it is time we relinquished that carelessness and that contempt, and we endeavoured instead to erect stronger dams than those which we have so far built against the increasing amount of misery and criminality.

¹ The hero in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

Poteva l'arte rimanere estranea a questa preoccupazione generale? Doveva essa tener fissi gli occhi all'ideale, mentre la realtà triste chiedeva il suo aiuto? Era giusto che si continuasse a descrivere il bello e il bene, mentre l'infelicità e la colpa gettavano alto il loro grido di dolore?

E, d'altro lato, anche quelle scuole letterarie che non hanno preoccupazioni o intenzioni umanitarie, e anzi le sdegnano proclamando i privilegi del *superuomo*, potevano descriver tipi di individui onesti od esaltare virtù, mentre in questo pauroso principio di secolo siamo tutti – o crediamo di essere tutti – più o meno nevrotici o squilibrati o ammalati?

Certi scrittori furono definiti – e non a torto – come “Mitridati dell'arte che si abituanano a nutrirsi di pensieri morbosi”; ma vi si abituan per forza giacché il veleno non esiste in loro soli, ma è diffuso in tutto l'ambiente in cui vivono.

Ecco dunque perché gli artisti sono in gran parte ridotti a far l'ufficio di clinici che studino ed analizzino dei casi patologici: ecco perché la letteratura è diventata ai nostri giorni una specie di psicopatologia.

Senonché io prevedo una facile critica: tutto ciò che voi avete detto – mi si obbietterà – è vero, ma non è una novità dell'epoca nostra. L'arte è sempre stata psicologia, e quindi anche psicopatologia. Vicino ai tipi classici della bellezza e della virtù, lasciatici dalla pittura, dalla scultura e dalla poesia, noi possediamo i tipi classici delle difformità e delle mostruosità fisiche e morali. Per tenerci nel campo letterario, e per non citare che un solo esempio, il genio di Shakespeare non ci ha dato forse in *Otello*, in *Macbeth* e in *Amleto* i tre tipi insuperabili del delinquente per passione, del delinquente nato e del delinquente pazzo? Nulla di nuovo, dunque, sotto il sole – dice la critica: e la critica ha in parte ragione. Nulla di nuovo sotto il sole – siamo d'accordo – ma nulla di nuovo nella sostanza, non già nella forma o, dirò meglio, nel metodo. E il metodo è tutto, nell'arte come nella scienza.

Gli artisti d'un tempo intuivano, per fortunato dono di natura, le manifestazioni di quella qualunque malattia dello spirito che essi volevano rappresentare: gli artisti d'oggi non hanno bisogno d'intuire: essi sanno. Shakespeare scriveva quando la psichiatria e l'antropologia criminale non erano ancora nate. Zola, per sua confessione, ha letto le opere di Lombroso, e nessuno dei veri e grandi romanzieri dei nostri

Could art remain a stranger to this general preoccupation? Did its eyes have to keep staring at the ideal world, when wretched reality was imploring her aid? Was it fair that artists continued their description of what is fair and what is good, while misery and guilt outpoured up to the sky their cry of pain?

And, on the other hand, could even those literary schools which abstain from worrying about humanitarian issues (scorning them, in fact, by proclaiming the *Beyond-Man's* privileges),² describe types of honest individuals or praise virtue, while, in this frightful start of the century, we are all – or believe to be all – more or less neurotic, deranged, or diseased?

A few authors have been defined (and not wrongly) as “Mithridateses of art who get used to feeding on morbid thoughts”³ – but they get used to it by force, since the poison does not exist only within them, but it has spread all over their environment.

This is why then most artists have been reduced to dabbling in clinical practices, studying and analysing pathological cases: this is why these days literature has become a form of psychopathology.

In spite of that, I foresee I may receive an easy criticism; the objection will go like this: “Everything you have said is true, but it is no modern news. Art has always been psychology, and thus also psychopathology. Next to the classical types of beauty and virtue which painting, sculpture, and poesy have donated us, we also have the classical types of any physical and moral deformity and monstrosity. Let us simply remain in the literary realm – suffice it to mention just one instance. Did Shakespeare’s genius not present us in Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet with the unsurpassable types of the criminal of passion, the born criminal, and the insane criminal? Thus, there is nothing new under the sun” – so will say my critics. And they are partly right. Nothing new under the sun – we all agree – but nothing new in its substance, not in its form, or better to say, in its method. And the method is everything, in art and science alike.

The artists of time past could intuit, by a felicitous gift of nature, the manifestations of that particular disease of the spirit they wanted to portray. Today’s artists do not need to intuit: they know. Shakespeare wrote when psychiatry and criminal anthropology had not yet been born. Zola, by his own confession, has read Lombroso’s works, and not one of the true and great novelists of our times can ignore the

² This is how Alexander Tille translated Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* in the first English translation of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1896).

³ Untraced quotation, but the sense is clear: Mithridates IV Eupator (135-63 BCE), king of Pontus, had famously become immune to poison by daily ingesting minuscule amounts of the same.

giorni può ignorare le conquiste fatte negli ultimi cinquant'anni dalla psichiatria e dalla psicologia sperimentale.

Ciò che una volta si faceva per divinazione, incoscientemente, oggi dunque si fa – o almeno si può fare – coscientemente, per coltura sui libri.

Ecco la *novità* che sarebbe vano negare nell'arte, ed ecco perché anche il più oscuro degli studiosi può permettersi di esaminare se i tipi ideali di delinquenti o di degenerati usciti dalla fantasia d'un artista siano veri dinnanzi alla scienza.

conquests which in the last fifty years have been reached by psychiatry and experimental psychology.

What once was achieved through divination, unconsciously, nowadays is done – or, at least, can be done – consciously, by cultivating one's knowledge by reading books.

This is what is news; this is what cannot be denied in art, and this is why even the most obscure scholars have the chance to examine whether the ideal types of delinquents or degenerates sprung out of an artist's imagination can be regarded as true before science.

10. Fausto Squillace. 1898. Review of Ziino's *Shakespeare e la scienza moderna*, *Archivio di psichiatria* 19, 1898: 127-31.

Fausto Squillace (1878-1919) is one of the founding figures of Italian sociology, best remembered today for his book *La Moda* (1912), one of the first studies of fashion from a sociological perspective. He often collaborated with the Lombrosians, and his review of Ziino's monograph is quite revelatory to understand the dynamism of the criminological field.

On Ziino, see text no. 8.

Quantunque, secondo me, la nuova scuola scientifica letteraria non abbia avuto ancora quel completo e largo sviluppo che sarebbe desiderabile, non si può nondimeno non riconoscere la grande utilità scientifica di certe ricerche ed analisi che aggiungono documenti nuovi ed importanti alla storia dell'uomo.

Agli studi del Fardel su Dante, del Vögue sul Dostoyewski, di Arvède Barine su Tommaso de Quincey, del Roncoroni sul Tasso e del Patrizi sul Leopardi, possiamo ora aggiungere, e degnamente, quello del prof. Ziino su Shakspeare, che quantunque avesse avuto da più di un secolo centinaia di interpreti, traduttori e critici in tutte le nazioni, non era ancora stato considerato dal lato antropologico, psichiatrico. — E questo lo Ziino si propone di fare.

Dovendo porre le basi del suo studio l'autore parla della teoria del genio e mentre respinge quella del Lombroso per cui il genio è una nevrosi psichica, ammette il genio sano normale secondo le teorie di Magnan, Legrain, ecc. Esaminando poi con questi criteri il genio di S. in esso non trova caratteristiche di nevrosi ma solo attributi di genialità sana (precocità di sviluppo psichico, impetuosità di carattere, ecc., ecc.).

Secondo me però questi dati non sono niente affatto convincenti. È ancora attuale, perché non insoluta, la questione se S. sia o no veramente esistito e se quei capolavori che vanno sotto quel nome si debbano a Bacone da Verulamio o all'attore di Stratford. Il fatto solo della discussione che per lunghi anni ancora è viva, mostra che si[a] gli uni che gli altri sostenitori delle due opinioni hanno forti ragioni dalla loro parte. D'altronde lo Ziino, dopo essersi affannato a dimostrare che S. non è un nevrastenico, accoglie l'accusa fatta a S. di essere cioè un urningio, un perverso sessuale.

Vorrei tralasciare, come non molto interessante per il caso nostro, la parte in cui l'A. tratta dei principii psicologici di S., ma credo utile rias-

Although, in my view, I think that the new literary-scientific school has not yet had that complete and substantial development one could wish for, still, one cannot but recognise the great scientific usefulness of a number of studies and analyses, which have added new and important documents to human history.

We can now add Prof. Ziino's study on Shakespeare to Fardel's on Dante, Vögué's on Dostoevsky, Arvède Barine's on Thomas de Quincey, Roncoroni's on Tasso, and Patrizi's on Leopardi.¹ It is a worthy addition, and even if Shakespeare has seen hundreds of interpreters, translators, and critics from all nations, for more than a century, no one had so far considered him from the anthropological and psychiatric side. This was Ziino's intent.

When laying the basis for his study, the Author discusses the theory of the genius and, while he rejects Lombroso's – according to which genius is a psychic neurosis, he admits the theory of healthy, normal genius, following Magnan, Legrain,² etc. Then, by examining with these criteria Shakespeare's genius, Ziino does not find in it any features of neurosis, but only those which are the attributes of a healthy genius (precocity of psychic development, a character's impetuosity, and so on and so forth).

In my opinion, however, these data are not at all convincing. The authorship question is still relevant, because unsolved: whether Shakespeare actually existed or not, and whether those masterpieces should be ascribed to Bacon of Verulam³ instead of to the actor from Stratford. The mere fact that the debate is still open and heated, after such long years, signals that both factions have strong reasons on their side. On the other hand, Ziino, after long striving to demonstrate that Shakespeare was not a neurasthenic, accepts the accusation made against Shakespeare of being an urning, a sexual pervert.

I would rather skip over the – to us – fairly irrelevant section in which the Author deals with those psychological principles which he attributes to Shakespeare, but I think that it may be useful to briefly

¹ Maxime Durand-Fardel, *La personne de Dante* (1896); Eugène Melchior de Vögué's chapter on Dostoevsky in *Le roman russe* (1886); Arvède Barine, *Névrosés: De Quincey* (1898); Luigi Roncoroni, *Genio e pazzia in Torquato Tasso* (1896); Mariano Luigi Patrizi, *Saggio psico-antropologico su Giacomo Leopardi e la sua famiglia* (1896).

² Paul Maurice Legrain (1860-1939), French psychiatrist mainly interested in delirium, alcoholism, and heredity theories.

³ The Baconian theory of Shakespeare authorship officially started in 1857, with the publication of Delia Bacon's *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded*.

sumerla brevemente per dare un'idea completa del libro che esamino.

Il concetto che S. mostra intorno al diritto è ispirato agli ideali giuridici e sociologici dell'equità e della funzione moderatrice della grazia; ammette quindi il concetto della bontà *relativa* e non *assoluta* della legge (*Mercante di Venezia*), ciò che è il portato più recente del progresso umano e giuridico. Anche relativamente al delitto, alla pena, S. ha avuto delle idee geniali e moderne, e per dimostrare il suo asserto lo Ziino esamina dal punto di vista antropologico criminale il *Mercante di Venezia* e *Misura per misura*. La pena mira al delinquente più che al reato e deve tutelare la società.

E qui incomincia la parte più interessante e più nuova dell'opera dello Ziino, il quale con molta dottrina e fine analisi esamina i tipi di delinquenti nelle opere di S. Premette però una breve professione di fede. Pur riconoscendo molti meriti alla nuova scuola antropologico-criminale, che un forte contributo ha portato alla scienza moderna, si serve nelle sue ricerche di molti criteri desunti dalla propria esperienza, non seguendo servilmente nessuna scuola.

E comincia col classificare i delinquenti dell'opera di S.

1° Delinquenti fisiologici, capaci di pentimento (Volsy, nell'*Enrico IV* [sic], e Buckingham, nel *Riccardo III*); incapaci di pentimento (Jago, nell'*Otello*, Antonio, nella *Tempesta*, ecc., ecc.);

2° Delinquenti per passione (*Otello*, *Macbeth*);

3° Delinquenti d'occasione (Claudio, Angele [sic], in *Misura per misura*);

4° Delinquenti per disadattamento all'ambiente sociale (Sylock, nel *Mercante di Venezia*; Edmondo, nel *Re Lear*; il bastardo Giovanni [sic], ecc.);

5° Delinquenti brutali, sciocchi, fanfaroni (Colibano [sic], nella *Tempesta*; Falstaff, nelle diverse parti del *Re Enrico*);

6° Delinquenti politici (*Giulio Cesare* ed altri);

7° Delinquenti-nati (*Riccardo III*, ecc.);

Tutti sanno che Enrico Ferri, in una sua recente opera su *I Delinquenti nell'arte*, ha dedicato buona parte del suo studio serio ed acuto ai tipi criminali creati da S. nelle sue opere.

sum it up in order to give the reader a complete idea of the book under examination.

The viewpoint that Shakespeare seems to have concerning the law is inspired by juridical and sociological ideals of equity and the moderating function of grace; hence, he admits the notion of the law's *relative* and *non-absolute* goodness (see *The Merchant of Venice*) – this concept corresponds to the most recent result of the human and juridical progress. Also as regards crime and punishment, Shakespeare is revealed to have had ingenious and modern ideas – Ziino demonstrates this claim by examining from the point of view of criminal anthropology *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*. Punishment must have as its focus the delinquent rather than the crime, and must protect society.

Here begins the most interesting and original part of Ziino's book. He examines, with much learning and analytical fineness, the types of criminals who appear in Shakespeare's works. Ziino starts his discussion with a 'profession of faith': although he acknowledges the many merits of the new anthropological criminal school, which has contributed so vigorously to modern science, he makes use in his research of several criteria which he has gathered from his own experience, not following any school with servile deference.

And he thus starts to classify the delinquents in Shakespeare's works.

1. Physiological delinquents, capable of repentance (Wolsey in *Henry IV*,⁴ and Buckingham in *Richard III*); incapable of repentance (Iago in *Othello*, Antonio in *The Tempest*, etc.);

2. Criminals of passion (*Othello*, *Macbeth*);

3. Occasional criminals (Claudio, and Angelo in *Measure for Measure*);

4. Delinquents owing to maladjustment to their social environment (Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*; Edmund in *King Lear*; John the bastard,⁵ etc.);

5. Brutish, foolish, swaggering delinquents (Caliban in *The Tempest*; Falstaff in the *Henriad*);

6. Political criminals (*Julius Caesar* and others);

7. Born criminals (*Richard III*, etc.);

Everybody knows that Enrico Ferri, in his recent *I delinquenti nell'arte (Criminals in Art)*, has devoted a good part of his serious and perceptive study to the criminal types created by Shakespeare in his works.

⁴ It should read Henry VIII.

⁵ Probably a typo for "The Bastard [i.e. Faulconbridge] in *King John*".

Presentandomisi l'occasione non ho potuto fare a meno di rilevare qualche affinità e qualche contrasto tra i risultati delle indagini del Ferri e dello Ziino. Ambedue convengono nel considerare Amleto come un pazzo simulatore, un allucinato, affetto da follia lucida che di quando in quando gli permette di avere coscienza della propria passione, e da abulia che non gli permette di tradurre l'idea in azione; per ambedue Otello è un delinquente per passione. Ma mentre per Ferri, Macbeth è un tipo di criminale-nato ed affetto da epilessia psichica larvata, per lo Ziino Macbeth è un delinquente per passione, come Otello, spinto alla delinquenza dalla cupidigia ed ambizione sfrenata. Jago per Ferri è un esempio di suggestione perversa, di imposizione di un'idea propria nel cervello altrui, è insomma un criminale vero e proprio; per lo Ziino, Jago è un uomo di intelletto ordinario, non infermo, non deforme, che per gelosia ed ambizione diviene un delinquente basso e volgare. Da ultimo osservo, che, mentre Ferri considera Amleto come un pazzo delinquente, lo Ziino esclude la qualifica di delinquente, perché, secondo S., quelle persone che sono tratte a misfare da interna spinta patologica, da pazzia manifesta, non hanno che una responsabilità morale o politica.

Ma non è il caso di discutere, nei brevissimi limiti di una recensione, sui criteri di una esatta classificazione dei delinquenti. Dirò soltanto che quelli del quadro sinottico sono esaminati partitamente e profondamente dall'autore, il quale mostra a tal proposito, oltre ad una vasta conoscenza dell'opera di S., una acuta analisi psicologica ed un esatto discernimento nell'applicazione dei principii scientifici allo studio dei tipi dei delinquenti. Specialmente a proposito [sic] i delinquenti-nati, prima di esaminare i tipi di Riccardo III, Gonerilla e Regana (*Re Lear*), fa una rapida esposizione critica della dottrina antropologica Lombrosiana sui delinquenti-nati e mostra come l'errore di Lombroso sia quello d'aver concentrato tutto lo studio sull'organismo dei delinquenti, trascurando completamente lo studio dell'influenza sociale dell'ambiente.

Quanto a me pare non un errore ma un fatto che trova la sua spiegazione e che ora più non esiste.

La reazione che sempre eccede e va all'estremo opposto è rappresentata nell'antropologia criminale dalla scuola Lombrosiana, che venuta dopo una scuola che del delitto esaminava solo il fatto e non l'agente, doveva cominciare, per affermarsi, col concentrare tutto lo studio sui delinquenti e non curarsi per allora del delitto già troppo considerato.

Seizing this opportunity, I could not help observing some similarities, but also some differences between the results of Ferri's and Ziino's investigations. Both are in agreement over the categorisation of Hamlet as a simulating madman, who suffers from hallucinations, and is affected by both a lucid madness, which sporadically enables him to become aware of his own passion, and abulia, which does not allow him to translate ideas into actions. Both Ferri and Ziino think that Othello is a criminal of passion, but while, for Ferri, Macbeth is a type of born criminal affected by a psychic epilepsy counterfeiting itself, for Ziino he is a criminal of passion like Othello, and he is driven to wrongdoing by covetousness and unfettered ambition. According to Ferri, Iago is an instance of perverse suggestion, that is, of an imposition of a personal idea into someone else's brain – he is thus a true criminal. According to Ziino, instead, Iago is a man endowed with an ordinary intellect, unimpaired, not deformed: jealousy and ambition transform him into a base and vulgar criminal. Lastly, I observe that, while, for Ferri, Hamlet is an insane criminal, Ziino excludes the possibility that Hamlet should be classified as a delinquent, because Shakespeare thought that those people who have a propensity for wrongdoing, on account of a pathological drive and/or manifest madness, have only a moral or political responsibility.

However, given the very limited scope of a review as a genre, this is not the place to discuss the criteria which one should use for an exact classification of delinquents. I will only say that those that appear in the synoptic table are examined in thorough detail by the Author, who does not only show a vast knowledge of Shakespeare's works, but also the capacity for insightful psychological analysis and a precise understanding of the application of scientific principles to the study of criminal types. In particular, as regards the born criminals – just before examining the types of Richard III, Goneril and Regan (in *King Lear*), Ziino engages in a succinct critical exposition of the Lombrosian anthropological doctrine on the born criminal, and shows that Lombroso's error lies in having concentrated his whole study on the delinquents' organism, thereby completely neglecting the study of the social influence of the environment.

I suggest that this is not an error, but a fact which has its own explanation, and which now no longer exists.

The criminal anthropology of Lombroso's school represents the reaction that was bound to exceed and be extreme in its rebuttal, coming after a school which of crime took into account only the deed, not the agent. In order to establish itself, the Lombrosian school needed to start its course by focussing on the study of the criminals, temporarily not considering crime, which had been over-explored until then.

Però, come la scuola penale classica sotto l'influsso dei tempi nuovi venne a poco a poco a piegarsi sensibilmente verso le nuove teorie, aggiungendo l'esame del delinquente; così la scuola di Lombroso, dopo il primo e naturale impeto della reazione, venne ad integrare le sue teorie coll'altro elemento essenziale della criminalità, cioè il delitto. Ciò si rileva facilmente dalle opere di Ferri e dei seguaci della nuova scuola.

In ultimo l'A. riserba l'analisi pei folli e buffoni nell'opera di S.

Dice l'autore che prima che dalla scienza la pazzia fu intuita e mirabilmente descritta dai poeti. Omero nell'*Iliade* ci dà un esempio di melancolia, Sofocle nell'*Ajace* ci dà un tipo perfetto di alienato epilettico; perfino nella Bibbia troviamo descrizioni accurate della *escandescenza* di Saul, della *licantropia* di Nebucadnesar e della *simulazione* di David. "Fra i poeti, prosatori, filosofi, medici delle età trascorse, dice lo Ziino, non ve n'ha uno che possa per verità di ritratti sintomatologici e per finezza e perspicuità di indagini patogeniche, non che vincere, eguagliare quanto S. ha lasciato nei suoi drammi intorno alla follia". Cita Ippocrate, Asclepiade, Celso, Celio Aureliano, ecc., i quali tutti non intuirono né studiarono in tutti i suoi particolari la pazzia, e da cui perciò S. non avrebbe potuto apprendere ciò che poi ha con ammirabile arte descritto; se ne deve perciò arguire che S. abbia preso tutto il suo materiale scientifico dalla propria osservazione soggettiva e oggettiva.

Cominciando ad esaminare i pazzi, dà il primo posto ad Amleto di cui parla lungamente tracciandone con fine analisi la vita psicologica e il profilo psichiatrico; cogli stessi criteri esamina poi la pazzia di Re Lear e di Enrico di Percy detto Hotspur (*Re Enrico IV*) che secondo l'autore è un tipo perfetto di mattoide.

S. non crede nella *demonolatria* a cui nondimeno prestavano fede intelligenze elette come Cisalpino e Cardano, anzi la mette in canzonatura (*Re Lear*). Anche riguardo alle allucinazioni S. mostra finezza e precisione di intuito, divinando ciò che fu poi confermato dagli scienziati (*Amleto*, *Macbeth*).

Lo Ziino, per rendere più chiare le sue idee, raccoglie in tabella no-

However, as the classical penological school, under the influence of the new age, had to substantially give in, bit by bit, to the new theories, and add the examination of the criminal, so Lombroso's school, after its first and natural momentum in reaction to its predecessor, changed and integrated its theory with the other essential element of criminality, namely, crime. This change can be easily observed in Ferri's works and in those of the followers of the new school.

The Author reserves for last the analysis of the fools and clowns of Shakespeare's works.

Ziino states that madness was intuited and wonderfully described by the poets, who thus preceded science. Homer in the *Iliad* gives us an example of melancholia; Sophocles in his *Ajax* presents us with a perfect type of the alienated epileptic; even in the Bible we can find accurate descriptions of Saul's violent anger, Nebuchadnezzar's lycanthropy, and David's simulation. Ziino writes: "Out of all the poets, prose writers, philosophers, physicians of past ages, no one can equal, let alone surpass, Shakespeare for the truth of his symptomatologic portrayals and for the fineness and transparency of his pathogenic investigations". The Author refers to Hippocrates, Asclepiades, Celsus, Caelius Aurelianus, and others – none of them intuited or studied madness in all its aspects; it follows that Shakespeare could not have possibly learned from them what he has described with such marvellous art, and thus it can be argued that Shakespeare gathered his whole scientific material from his own subjective and objective observations.

Starting his examination of the mad, Ziino grants prime position to Hamlet, about whom he writes at length, insightfully tracing his psychological life and his psychiatric profile. Ziino then applies the same criteria to the examination of King Lear's madness and Henry Percy, nicknamed Hotspur (*Henry IV*), whom, according to the Author, is a perfect type of maddoid.

Shakespeare did not believe in demonolatry,⁶ unlike superior intellects such as Caesalpinus and Cardano;⁷ Shakespeare even goes so far as to openly mock it (in *King Lear*). Also as regards hallucinations, Shakespeare shows subtlety and intuitive precision, guessing as by divination what has later been confirmed by scientists (see *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*).

In order to clarify his ideas, Ziino, has gathered in a nosographical⁸

⁶ Demon-worship.

⁷ Andrea Cesalpino (1519-1603), physician and botanist based in Tuscany; Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), Renaissance physician, mathematician, and magus.

⁸ I.e. related to the description of diseases.

sografica-clinica le forme frenopatiche dei tipi da S. delineati nei suoi quadri psichiatrici. Credo utile il riassumerla, non solo per la chiarezza e la sintesi delle idee, ma anche perché mi risparmia molte parole.

- 1° Amentia acuta (*Ofelia*);
- 2° Tristimania (*Amleto*);
- 3° Misanthropia (*Timone di Atene*);
- 4° Paranoia con delirio di persecuzione (*Macbeth*);
- 5° Follia gelosa (*Otello*);
- 6° Follia religiosa e politica (*Giovanna d'Arco*);
- 7° Demenza agitata (*Re Lear*);
- 8° Eccitazione maniaca (*Lady Macbeth*);
- 9° Debolezza mentale (*Riccardo II*).

S. così sottile e profondo scrutatore della mente umana allo stato sano e patologico non poteva non comprendere nella sua vasta tela freniatria la figura della pazzia simulata, ed anche in ciò si mostra all'altezza del suo genio (*Amleto*, *Edgardo*, nel *Re Lear*). Come pure non poteva lasciar da parte gli imbecilli, gli sciocchi, i buffoni che sono una varietà di frenastenici abortiti. Esempi numerosi di questo genere si trovano nelle opere di S., come *Spied* [sic] e *Launzio* (*I due gentiluomini di Verona*), *Puck* e *Bottom* (*Sogno di una notte d'estate*, ecc., ecc.) e in ultimo il buffone del *Re Lear*, di cui fa un particolare esame.

Con ciò l'autore termina il suo studio in cui ha avuto per scopo, come egli stesso dice, di studiare l'aspetto meno esplorato sinora della genialità di S., cioè quello della potenza divinatoria del poeta in filosofia naturale, in psicologia, in freniatria, in psicologia naturale.

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clinical chart the phrenopathic forms of the types outlined by Shakespeare in his own psychiatric tables. I believe that the reader will find it useful if I sum it up – not just for conciseness and synthesis' sake, but also because it enables me to synthesise.

1. Acute amentia⁹ (Ophelia);
2. Tristimania¹⁰ (Hamlet);
3. Misanthropy (Timon of Athens);
4. Paranoia with delirious delusions of persecution (Macbeth);
5. Jealous folly (Othello);
6. Religious and political folly (Joan of Arc);
7. Agitated dementia (King Lear);
8. Manic excitement (Lady Macbeth);
9. Mental weakness (Richard II).

Such a subtle and profound observer of the human mind (in both its healthy and pathological states) as Shakespeare could not help encompassing, in his vast phreniatric canvas, a character expressing simulated madness, thereby rising to the occasion and worthily portraying it in Hamlet and Edgar in *King Lear*. Similarly, he could not possibly exclude the representation of the imbeciles, the stupid, the clowns, who are a variety of aborted phrenasthenic individuals. There are several specimens of such a kind in Shakespeare's works: think of Speed and Launce (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), Puck and Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and, lastly, the fool in *King Lear*, whom Ziino investigates in depth.

After this section, the Author ends his study, the aim of which has been, as he himself states, that of examining the hitherto least explored aspect of Shakespeare's genius, namely, the poet's divinatory power as far as natural philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, and natural psychology are concerned.

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⁹ "Psychosis in an acute form in which confusion, disorientation, and hallucinations are prominent symptoms" (*OED*, n., 1b).

¹⁰ A form of monomania characterised by profound sadness, a term coined by Benjamin Rush in 1812.

11. From Nicolò d'Alfonso's works.

11a. Nicolò d'Alfonso. 1910. "Otello delinquente" [Othello the Criminal]. *Rivista d'Italia* 1(13): 270-94.

11b. — 1916. "Guglielmo Shakespeare attore ed autore (23 aprile 1916)" [William Shakespeare, actor and dramatist (23 April 1916)]. *Nuova Antologia* 51 (1062): 533-42.

11c. — 1917. "Edmondo il Bastardo nel 'Re Lear'" [Edmund, the Bastard in *King Lear*]. *Il Nuovo Convito*, 11-12: 376-82.

Nicolò d'Alfonso (Santa Severina, near Crotona, 1853 – Rome, 1933) is a figure who has long been forgotten, but there is no doubt that he published on Shakespeare more than any other Italian critic before the second half of the twentieth century – although always on *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*. His descendant, Francesco d'Alfonso, has recently edited his Shakespeare criticism (see d'Alfonso 2016a and 2016b).

Nicolò d'Alfonso had taken two degrees at the University of Naples: medicine and surgery, and philosophy. He became full professor of pedagogy and philosophy in Rome's Istituto superiore femminile (1903-1923), and from 1896, was a lecturer in theoretical philosophy at the Sapienza University of Rome.

D'Alfonso studied and published in the field of criminal psychology, but was a fierce opposer of the Lombrosians (and obtained Ferri's critique, see text no. 7 in this volume). He disagreed on questions of biological determinism, stressing the importance of the social environment, and adhered to Christian spiritualism, instead. Moreover, he developed a theory of the temperaments reformulating the Galenic lore, which can strike us as quite superseded, since he was writing at the beginning of the twentieth century. For him, Hamlet behaves the way he does because he is an anaemic suffering from melancholia; Othello and Macbeth are sanguine types, while Lady Macbeth and Lear are choleric.

An interesting stylistic feature of his writing (see Introduction, section 3) is his use of the past tense when discussing the 'lives' of Shakespeare's characters: whereas in some publications d'Alfonso shows himself interested in the performative dimension, in most, he looks at them as if they were real human beings in need of a diagnosis. This is, for instance, the beginning of his essay on *Lear*:

Dalla sua giovinezza il re Lear andava spesso soggetto a violenti accessi di collera. Questo difetto, che era la nota dominante del suo temperamento e che in un re avrebbe potuto produrre conseguenze gravi per l'andamento del regno, veniva, prima che egli si fosse molto inoltrato negli anni, oscurato dalle altre qualità della sua mente, che erano ammirevoli; tanto che, per circa sessant'anni, poté governare con molta saviezza, dare una certa felicità al suo popolo ed esserne molto amato. (d'Alfonso 1899, 581)

[From his youth, King Lear had often been prone to violent fits of choleric rage. This defect, which was the dominant note of his temperament, and which – he being a king – could have serious consequences for the realm, was obscured by other admirable qualities of his mind, well before growing old. Thus, for about sixty years, he had been able to rule with much wisdom, and grant his people a certain degree of happiness, and his subjects much loved him for it].

While this was not an untypical approach in the nineteenth century, d'Alfonso distinguished himself for narrativising Shakespeare's characters, and framing dramatic situations as psychiatric and psychological cases to be analysed.

In the excerpts that follow, d'Alfonso's method is clearly typified. Of particular note is his view of Regan and Goneril as women who felt an excessive "desire of maternity" (he cannot conceive of female sexuality as something unrelated to motherhood). Moreover, a few words should be spent on his treatment of Othello. D'Alfonso took part in the First Universal Races Congress, held at the University of London from 26 to 29 June 1911. He argued that there is one human race, and attacked the Lombrosians for promoting racism. If one reads his article on Othello, it is clear that he thought Othello had a noble mind and was perverted by Western civilisation. However, d'Alfonso perpetuates the myth of the *noble savage*, and adds that Othello, as a sanguine man, and as a man from Africa, *besides* his upbringing (though not merely because of epilepsy, as many Lombrosians held), was easily corrupted by Iago.

11a.

. . . Ma di là della differenza di razza vi era l'identità della natura umana; ed Otello e Desdemona si trovavano ambedue nelle condizioni volute per accendersi di scambievole amore . . .

. . . è necessario penetrare, per quanto è possibile, nell'anima di Otello che era già una particolare personalità, risultato e delle condizioni del suo organismo e della sua storia, psicologica insieme e pratica, che fu la sua qualsiasi educazione. Ed anzi tutto, essendo egli un negro od un mauritano che avea passato la più gran parte della sua vita in Affrica, dovea, e per la sua origine naturale e per la vita che colà trascorse, risentire gli effetti del clima africano, ciò che dava al suo organismo ed alle sue funzioni un'impronta particolare. Questi effetti erano il grande consumo e la grande produzione di globuli rossi del sangue, che dovea dare una grande esuberanza di energia organica ed una considerevole copia di pigmento nero che, depositandosi in parte nel reticolo sottoepidermoidale, dà il colorito bruno della pelle. A questo stato funzionale organico dovea connettersi una particolare manifestazione delle attività psicologiche. Doveva aversi cioè il temperamento sanguigno; onde a quello stato organico dovea associarsi una vivacità percettiva, conseguenza della sua grande energia organica; per cui egli dovea avere l'impulso interiore a passare rapidamente di percezione in percezione.

. . . il sanguigno, a causa dell'eccessiva energia interna che lo spinge sempre all'attività e all'irrequietezza percettiva e rappresentativa, non ha la calma, l'attitudine e il tempo per percepire logicamente l'oggetto e gli oggetti nella loro profonda realtà; onde egli deve arrestarsi alla superficialità ed al meccanismo logico, sorvolando sempre sulla intima verità dell'oggetto . . .

Essendo Otello di temperamento sanguigno, dovea presentare un'incompiutezza di vita mentale . . .

Come è noto, l'autore di Otello, per la piena e perfetta conoscenza che ha dell'anima e della mente dell'uomo, così allo stato normale come allo stato patologico, così nelle attività morali come in quelle delittuose, non solo ha precorso le dottrine psicologiche moderne più obbiettive e più speculative, ma deve venire in queste considerato come una grande autorità e un maestro. E poiché accanto alla dottrina di quelli che fanno dei delinquenti una specie umana, onde questi son tali per costituzione organica, si vuole ora formulare un'altra dottrina che fa di ogni delitto una manifestazione epilettica, potrebbe a prima vista sembrare che, per il caso della epilessia di Otello, egli abbia precorso

11a.

. . . But besides the difference in their races, the identity of human nature assisted them: Othello and Desdemona were both in the right condition for their mutual love to spark.

. . . we need to penetrate, as deep as possible, into Othello's soul, which had already its peculiar personality, the outcome of the conditions of his organism as well as of his history (psychological and practical), i.e. his upbringing. First of all, being a Negro or a Mauritanian, and someone who had spent most of his life in Africa, he must have been affected by the African climate, both on account of his natural origin and because of the life he had led there. His organism and his functions bore a peculiar imprint because of all this. Among such effects, one could observe the great consumption and production of red blood cells, which could not but endow his organic energy with a great exuberance, and cause an abundance of black pigment, which, when it becomes lodged in the subepidermal reticulum, produces brown skin. A peculiar manifestation of psychological activity must have connected itself to this organically functional condition – namely, a sanguine temperament. That is how his organic condition would be associated with a perceptive liveliness as a consequence of that great organic energy. Within him, he had an impulse to spring from perception to perception.

. . . Because of their excessive internal energy, ever driving them to perceptive and representative activity and restlessness, sanguine individuals, do not have the patience, the attitude and time to perceive – logically – the profound reality of the object(s) around them. Therefore, sanguine individuals must make do with superficiality and logical mechanics: they are forced to only fly over the intimate truth of objects, disregarding it . . .

Because of his sanguine temperament, Othello's mental life must have had something unfinished about it . . .

As is well known, not only has the author of *Othello* – fully and perfectly knowledgeable about the human soul and the human mind (in both its normal and its pathological condition, in both its moral pursuits and its criminal activities) – anticipated the most objective and speculative doctrines of modern psychology, but he must also be considered its master, a great authority in that field.

And since, besides the doctrine which has turned criminals into a human species, observing that they are such because of their organic constitution, a recent attempt has been made to formulate another approach, which sees any crime as an epileptic manifestation, it may seem, at first blush, that Shakespeare anticipated and validates also this recent doctrine, in his portrayal of Othello's epilepsy. However, he

anche questa dottrina e le dia autorità. Ma appunto perché conoscitore di questi fenomeni morbosi, egli non ha avuto tale intendimento.

...
 Vi è . . . una forma speciale d'epilessia che potrebbe dirsi l'epilessia dei grandi uomini o delle grandi occasioni psicologiche, che si produce in organismi d'integra costituzione organica e funzionale. Allorquando esaltata ed intensa è la vita interiore d'un uomo e con grande irrequietezza tende a raggiungere qualche fine difficile, per cui grandemente teme e spera; o vede il pericolo di perdere ciò che gli è più caro, qualunque cosa oda o veda che contribuisca ad accrescere l'interna trepidazione, può produrre un accesso epilettico . . . E questo fu il caso di Otello. Come non può spiegarsi nessuna funzione psicologica ed organica senza l'educazione, che in questo caso è sostenuta tutta dall'abito organico molecolare, deve dirsi lo stesso dei fenomeni morbosi psichici.

...
 Se Otello possedesse quelle virtù psicologiche che sovrabbondano in Amleto; o se questi possedesse ciò che sovrabbonda in Otello, si avrebbe la mente perfetta, ma non due eminenti opere d'arte le quali debbono la loro perfezione ad un'imperfezione della vita mentale e ad una esagerazione di alcuni aspetti di questa . . . Otello, che è una mente irriflessa, è anche una mente fanciullesca e barbara, pure tenendo conto di alcune sue eminenti virtù. Onde Desdemona fu una vittima della barbarie: come Otello fu una vittima della civiltà.

11b.

. . . Fermo nel pensiero di drammatizzare tutti gli aspetti della personalità umana, in una varietà di casi particolari, nel loro vario svolgimento, come non poteva lo Shakespeare fare a meno dall'introdurre sulla scena il delitto che è tanta parte dell'attività umana e della storia, così non poteva escluderne la malattia e la follia. Qui apparisce l'alto concetto che egli si era formato del dramma, dell'arte che si richiedeva nello scriverlo e la conoscenza delle esigenze del pubblico, che bisognava rispettare; giacché nell'opera non si dovea riprodurre un caso puro e semplice di patologia organica o psichica, come non infrequentemente si fa oggi dai drammaturghi i quali trasformano il teatro in una clinica. Essi non considerano quale oppressione esercitino in tal modo sull'anima degli spettatori e quali effetti patologici alcune volte possano produrvi.

had no such intention exactly because he was such a profound expert of these morbid phenomena.

There is . . . a special form of epilepsy, which one could call the epilepsy of great men, or of great psychological occasions. It can be found in organisms which possess an organic and functional constitution. When the inner life of a man is particularly intensified, when he strives towards a particularly hard aim and his fears and hopes become so great, as he is faced with the danger of losing what is dearest to him, that anything he hears or sees can contribute to an increase of his internal trepidation, then this condition can cause the epileptic seizure . . . This was Othello's case. As no psychological and organic function can be explained without one's upbringing – which in this case is wholly upheld by the organic, molecular habitus – the same must be said of morbid psychic phenomena.

If Othello possessed those psychological faculties which overly abound in Hamlet, or if Hamlet possessed what overly abounds in Othello, then the result would be a perfect mind – not two eminent works of art, which owe their perfection to an imperfection of mental life and to an exaggeration of certain aspects of it . . . Othello is an unreflected mind, but also a childish and barbarian mind, despite some of his eminent virtues. Hence, Desdemona was a victim of barbarism as Othello was a victim of civilisation.

11b.

. . . Unmovable in his intention to dramatise all aspects of human personality by portraying in a variety of particular cases, in their varied unfolding, just as Shakespeare could not help introducing crime – that plays such a great part in human activity and history – on the stage, so he could not exclude illness and madness. Here, we can see the high concept that he had formed of drama, of the art that was required to write it and the knowledge of the audience's expectations which were to be met; since the work was not to reproduce a pure and simple case of organic or psychic pathology, as is not infrequently done today by playwrights who turn theatre into a clinic. These modern authors do not realise the amount of oppression they are exerting on their spectators' souls, and which pathological effects may be produced in them.

Invece nel dramma shakespeariano gli aspetti della vita sono temperati in modo da dare all'opera la più grande varietà nell'unità; e questo è più conforme ai bisogni dell'anima umana che si stanca innanzi ad uno spettacolo unilaterale, monotono e prolungato . . .

Circa alle malattie ed alla follia [Shakespeare] comprese però che non potevano, come puramente tali ed in generale, offrire materia al dramma che deve rappresentare la vita, mentre gli stati morbosi rappresentano il decadimento di essa e sono forieri della morte. Così non possono le malattie acute né le croniche intervenire nel dramma; ma è stata, di poi, drammatizzata la tisi nella quale è un contrasto tra la consumazione dell'organismo e la viva intelligenza e affettività del soggetto.

Le malattie nervose, come quelle che paralizzano i movimenti e le attività percettive e menomano le attività mentali, non possono avere un'azione drammatica; ma l'hanno gli accessi epilettici per causa di rapido ed intenso turbamento psichico, come nell'*Otello*; come l'ha il sonnambulismo il quale, rappresentando, per profondi disturbi mentali, la veglia parziale nel sonno, è stato adoperato da Shakespeare nel *Macbeth*, dove ha dato effetti drammatici nuovi ed impressionanti. Del pari il maniaco e il demente dichiarato non possono intervenire nel dramma; ma la follia nel suo primo esordire, quando non è autentica o quello stato medio che è tra la follia e lo stato sano o la follia apparente, sono intervenuti nei drammi shakespeariani, creando posizioni drammatiche nuove e meravigliose.

È qui a ricordare che alcuni tra i seguaci della così detta scuola criminale positiva la quale fa dei delinquenti una specie umana per anomalie dell'organismo, che sostiene la teoria del delinquente nato e dell'epilessia che fa una cosa sola col delitto, hanno voluto vedere nei delinquenti del teatro shakespeariano una prova della loro teoria. Per far questo hanno dovuto semplificare di molto la costituzione psicologica dei personaggi che hanno delinquito nei drammi di Shakespeare. Così molto facilmente hanno potuto dire che Otello fu delinquente perché epilettico, Riccardo III fu delinquente per costituzione organica anomala, ecc. Se avessero studiato la profonda natura psicologica dei personaggi che in Shakespeare hanno commessi delitti avrebbero appreso a modificare la loro teoria e si sarebbero messi nella vera via per intendere la genesi psicologica del delitto. Avrebbero potuto facilmente vedere che anche Riccardo III, che sembra dare la prova organica più evidente dell'uomo nato per delinquere, è tale per educazione (estrinseca ed intrinseca), essendo nato e cresciuto in un periodo di grandi lotte politiche e di grandi delitti ed appartenente ad una famiglia che rappresentò non una parte secondaria in quel periodo tempestoso.

Instead, in Shakespeare's plays, all aspects of life are well-tempered, so that, in them, the greatest variety can be encapsulated in a unity. This quality better suits the needs of the human soul, which grows tired when faced with a unilateral, monotonous, and overlong show . . .

As regards disease and madness, Shakespeare understood that they could not, as such, and in general, provide drama with appropriate material. Drama must represent life, whereas morbid conditions represent life's decay and are an omen of death. In the same way, neither acute nor chronic forms of disease should be dramatised. Then again, tuberculosis has been thematised in drama, because, in that case, the consumption of an organism and the keen intelligence and affectivity of the subject are set in contrast.

Nervous diseases, such as those which paralyse movement and perceptive activities, and impair mental activities, should not be dramatised, unlike epileptic seizures caused by a rapid and intense psychic distress, as in *Othello*, or somnambulism, which consists in a partial waking state while sleeping, and is caused by profound mental disturbances. The latter was used by Shakespeare in his *Macbeth*, producing new and astonishing dramatic effects. Similarly, the maniac and the avowed dement must not be shown on stage, whereas madness in its early inception, when it is not true madness yet, or that intermediate state between insanity and soundness of mind, or apparent madness, appear in Shakespeare's plays, thereby creating new and marvellous dramatic situations.

Let me remind you that some of the followers of the so-called positive criminal school – those who believe that criminals are a human species due to organic anomalies – those who support the theory of the born criminal and the doctrine that makes epilepsy and crime one and the same – have thought to use the criminals who appear in Shakespeare's plays as evidence for their theories. In order to achieve their aim, they had to greatly simplify the psychological constitution of said characters. Thus, in their interpretation, Othello was a criminal because he was epileptic; Richard III was a criminal due to his anomalous organic constitution, and so on. If they had studied the profound psychological nature of the Shakespearean criminals, they would have learned that they must modify their theories; then they would have been on the right path to understand the psychological genesis of crime. They would have easily seen that even Richard III, the one character who seems to provide the most evident organic proof of the born criminal theory, perpetrates those actions because of his extrinsic and intrinsic upbringing. Indeed, he was born and raised in a period characterised by great political struggles and dire crimes, and he was a member of a family that played no small role in that tumultuous age.

11c.

. . . Non deve sembrare strano che Edmondo si sia macchiato in breve tempo di due delitti di tradimento, l'uno più abominevole dell'altro, contro suo fratello e suo padre. Bisogna distinguere nell'uomo che delinque due aspetti o gradi dell'attività criminosa. Si ha da prima il delinquente che interiormente si è tracciato per lunga meditazione e educazione, un disegno di condotta delittuosa, che è rappresentato da un complesso di cogitazioni e desiderii, che possono rimanere sempre interni, allo stato cioè potenziale. Non si attuano perché mancano le condizioni e gli stimoli esteriori all'esecuzione del delitto o perché il soggetto non ha tanta energia interiore ed ingegno criminoso da tradurli all'esterno . . .

Il secondo aspetto o il secondo grado dell'attività criminale è quello in cui la cogitazione delittuosa interiore si traduce in atto, date certe condizioni esteriori ed interiori che dà il vero delinquente. Il secondo aspetto deve presupporre il primo, come questo allo stato di possibilità non costituisce il vero delitto . . .

Il codice penale non considera come delitto se non il secondo aspetto o il secondo grado, il delitto cioè realizzato, e non tiene conto dei presupposti interiori del delitto, che per esso sono indeterminati e mal sicuri. Ed anche la premeditazione al delitto che esso prende in considerazione, deve essere manifestata con parole od atti esteriori bene accertati. Ma la Chiesa Cattolica, grande scrutatrice dell'anima umana, sia questa nello stato normale o nell'anormale, per mezzo dei suoi teologi e dei suoi filosofi, ha tenuto anche in gran conto l'animo criminale interiore, la possibilità di ogni delitto, che essa si sforza a combattere per mezzo dell'educazione religiosa e morale. Nel *Confiteor* sono dette queste parole: *peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere*. Si vuole perciò il cuore puro e lo spirito retto che impedisca qualunque concezione interiore e l'attuazione del peccato.

In Edmondo, come si è detto, per la sua nascita naturale, si era formato l'animo criminale, cioè il primo grado del delitto, e, per le sue particolari condizioni di vita e di ambiente, egli dovea subire continui ed acuti stimoli; ma il delitto avea in lui un fine determinato, perché potea dargli la successione ed il grado, come le ricchezze paterne. Ciò dovea produrre in lui una certa irrequietezza, onde non lasciava intentata alcuna via, come cercava di cogliere tutte le occasioni, per riuscire . . .

Quale figlio del conte di Gloster, Edmondo veniva . . . messo in rapporto coi duchi di Cornovaglia e di Albania e per conseguenza con

11c.

. . . It must not seem strange that Edmund, in such a short period of time, committed two such foul and equally execrable crimes, by betraying his brother and his father. One should distinguish two aspects or degrees of criminal activity in a person who perpetrates a crime. First, there are the delinquents who have drawn, within themselves, the design of their criminal conduct after long meditation, as a consequence of their upbringing: a complex system of cogitations and wishes, which may still remain as such: inner workings, merely potential. Such cogitations and wishes do not convert themselves into action, because the necessary conditions and external stimuli are lacking. Alternatively, the crime is not perpetrated because the subject does not have the sufficient inner energy and criminal intellect to translate them outwards . . .

The second aspect, or degree, of criminal activity refers to the scenario when the inner, criminal cogitation is put in action, under the auspices of a number of external and internal conditions, which leads to the fulfilment of the crime. The second aspect presupposes the first, since the first aspect does not constitute true crime in its potentiality

. . . The penal code considers as crime only this second aspect or degree, namely, the perpetrated crime. It neglects the interior premises which cause that crime, because they are believed to be undetermined and ill-founded. It does consider malicious aforethought, but even then, the intent must be manifest through words or clearly-defined external acts. However, the Catholic Church, that great observer of the human soul (in both its normal and abnormal condition), with her theologians and philosophers, has laid much stress on the inner criminal mind, the potentiality of any crime, which the Church tries to prevent by a religious and moral education. In the *Confiteor*, one utters: "*peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere*". Thus, a pure heart and an upright spirit are required to prevent any inner conceptions or perpetration of sin.

As already seen, a criminal mind had developed within Edmund because of his being a natural child: the first degree of crime. Owing to the peculiar conditions of his life and environment, he must have suffered endless and acute stimuli, and yet crime to him had one determined aim: it could lead him to inherit his father's title, rank, and wealth. The restlessness, which such conditions must have produced in him, would cause him to try and succeed by all means, and seize all the imaginable opportunities . . .

As the son of the Earl of Gloucester, Edmund was . . . placed in contact with the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany, and hence the Duchesses,

le duchesse Regana e Gonerilla . . . Chi non sente i doveri di figlia facilmente non sentirà i doveri di sposa.

Queste donne criminali hanno d'ordinario acuti gl'impulsi sessuali che le donne bene educate sanno molto dominare e frenare con la loro volontà. Esse sentivano perciò vivo il bisogno di maternità; e l'aver dei bambini avrebbe forse nelle due sorelle mitigata l'asprezza e la violenza delle loro anime, avrebbe soddisfatto le loro più vive esigenze naturali, facendo nascere in loro i sentimenti dolci e gentili che alla loro volta educano ed elevano la madre. Ma quelle due donne, belle e terribili, furono condannate alla sterilità; ed, avendo esse ereditato il temperamento del padre, iracondo e collerico, ma non avendo avuta la bontà di lui, difetti del loro temperamento appariscono nella loro condotta, così normale che criminosa.

Ora le donne in quelle condizioni, con tendenza alla vita criminale e con esuberante vitalità, non sanno per lo più rassegnarsi al loro stato e facilmente, tanto per far vedere integra la loro potenzialità naturale, attribuiscono ai mariti la causa della loro infecondità, spesso umiliandoli, facendoli segno al loro disprezzo per esercitare sopra di essi il loro dominio e la loro libertà. Si comprende così quali lusinghe e quale fascino Edmondo potesse esercitare su quelle due donne, con lo sviluppo armonico ed il vigore delle sue membra, col suo portamento altero, con la fiducia sconfinata nelle sue forze naturali e nel suo ingegno, con le sue vedute sui buoni frutti che dà l'amore libero e spontaneo . . .

Regan and Goneril . . . But the woman who does not nurture her filial duties will hardly fulfil her duties as a wife.

The sexual impulses possessed by these criminal women are usually acute, whereas women who have been brought up well can dominate and bridle them with their willpower. It follows that Regan and Goneril keenly felt the desire of maternity, and if they had had children, the asperity and violence of their souls would perhaps have been mitigated – motherhood would have satisfied those acute natural urges, and aroused, within them, those sweet and kind feelings, which, in their turn, educate and elevate mothers. Yet, those two beautiful and frightful women had been doomed to barrenness. Furthermore, they had inherited their father's temperament, wrathful and choleric, but without his kindness, their temperament was revealed through a number of defects in their (normal as well as criminal) behaviour.

Now, those women who find themselves in such conditions, while tending to criminal life and filled with exuberant liveliness, cannot give up on this fact, and frequently blame their husbands for their sterility – they blame them simply in order to demonstrate the soundness of their own natural potentiality. Such women often humiliate their husbands, making them a laughingstock, so that they can exert domination over them and show their freedom. One can understand how Edmund's flatteries and charm could work on those two women, by having harmoniously developed, brawny limbs, and exhibiting his boldness and boundless confidence in his own natural strength and intellect, with his ideas about the good fruits which free and spontaneous love can yield . . .

12. From Francesco del Greco's works.

12a. From Francesco del Greco. 1914. "Follia nelle donne dello Shakespeare e psicologia femminile" [Madness in Shakespeare's Women and Female Psychology]. *Il Manicomio* 19: 1-16.

12b. From — 1916. "Emozioni' e 'follia' in alcuni eroi di Guglielmo Shakespeare, Saggio." ["Emotions' and 'Madness' in Some of William Shakespeare's Heroes. An Essay]. *Il Manicomio* 31: 203-14.

The psychiatrist Francesco del Greco (1864-1947) was director of the psychiatric asylum of L'Aquila from 1915 to 1938 (after directing those in Como and Nocera Inferiore). He was a staunch Lombrosian, and promoted the doctrines of the Positive school through his many publications). Moreover, he wrote several contributions on Shakespeare: besides the articles excerpted in this volume, he published for instance an essay on *King Lear* (*La follia di re Lear*, 1902), one on *Othello* (*Jago ed Otello: lettura alla Dante Alighieri*, 1907), and a pamphlet on Brutus (*La personalità di Marco Bruto nel Giulio Cesare di G. Shakespeare*, 1912). Many of these publications were first presented as papers in conferences held both in Northern and in Southern Italy.

The first article is especially interesting for its focus on the psychology of Shakespeare's female characters. Del Greco analyses the symptoms he thinks to detect in Ophelia and Lady Macbeth, and states their portrayal does not correspond to actual pathologies, as he expects from an artist. He then generalises on Shakespeare's ideas about women, arguing that Shakespeare understood women as weaker than men; del Greco proceeds in justifying this view from a pseudo-biological point of view, in a typically conservative way. In the second article, his focus is on the portrayal of madness in *Hamlet*, and shows himself intrigued by the anomalous pathology which he thinks affects the Prince of Denmark, an anomaly he as an alienist cannot fully explain.

12a.

. . . GUGLIELMO SHAKESPEARE! Egli è tanto da noi diverso. Come intenderlo? – Sopprimete dal vostro pensiero, dall'anima vostra la folla di luci, di forme e colori, che la riempiono. E cercate: cercate giù nel profondo. Arrestatevi sulla base immota dei vostri affetti, delle fluttuazioni intense di animo, delle passioni, dei pensieri germinali – Questo mondo centrale è il mondo veramente nostro, che caratterizza la personalità di ognuno di noi. Visto al di fuori, dà la linea di ciò che appunto si dice 'carattere'.

Da esso sorgono le ispirazioni del massimo poeta inglese. – I suoi drammi sviluppano o più varî 'caratteri' umani fra la moltitudine delle vicende della vita. Seguono una logica tutta interiore; la logica, lo sviluppo di ogni 'carattere', distintamente, e nei loro urti vicendevoli. Hanno certo disordine apparente, che rispecchia quanto vi è di complesso, di casuale, d'imprevedibile nelle azioni umane.

Lascio da banda gli eroi dello SHAKESPEARE: molti ne discorsero ed altrove ne dissi qualche cosa. Miriamone le donne: vediamone qualcuna, ricercandola dal mio speciale punto di vista – Sono un cultore di Psicopatologia: vò in traccia di morbosità e di lacune psicologiche – Malinconica fatica!



Lo sapete. La prima figura che si para a noi dinnanzi, è la gentile Ofelia nella tragedia 'Amleto' . . . È esatto il quadro della follia di Ofelia?

Fino ad un certo punto. Quella follia si noma: 'demenza precoce'. Giovanette e giovanetti, dalla costituzione mentale gracile, che avanti dimostrano intelligenza viva e bontà; ad un tratto, o a mano a mano, cadono in follia. Piante delicate, che presto intristiscono, in sul fiore degli anni, all'urto dei rivolgimenti della pubertà. – Tale è la pazzia di Ofelia.

Se questa fosse stata simile ad una follia vera; nel linguaggio di Ofelia si sarebbero avute frasi più vuote, ancora più sconnesse. Sotto, occorre un'affettività, non profonda e tormentosa, bensì tenue, senza colore. Le nature, che sentono potentemente (sia pure in maniera lacerante e squisita) non impazziscono a quel modo – Certo, fra i prodromi della demenza precoce, vi sono delusi amori, rapimenti mistici, sogni ambiziosi vani. Ma tutto, fin dall'inizio, *ha la impronta di un'affettività poco resistente*. – L'apatia, così caratteristica della forma psicopatica in discorso, si accenna dagl'inizii: dà al combattuto affetto una nota di superficialità e d'incoerenza – In Ofelia vi è un cumularsi tormentoso di affetti, vi è uno strazio muto; lo strazio di vedersi sospettata, derisa, e

12a.

. . . WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE! He is so different from us. How should we be able to understand him? – Banish from your thoughts and your soul the crowd of lights, shapes, and colours, which fill them. And search, search deep down inside you. Stop when you reach the motionless bedrock of your affects, of those intense fluctuations of your mind, passions, and germinal thoughts. This middle world is the world which is truly yours, which characterises the personality of each and every one of us. If we look at it from the outside, it directs the whole line of what actually defines our ‘character’.

Let me overlook SHAKESPEARE’S male heroes: so much has been written about them, and I myself have contributed to that topic elsewhere. Let us cast our gaze on his women: let us look at some of them from my special perspective: my field is Psychopathology. My job is looking for traces of morbidity and psychological lacunae – such a melancholy endeavour!



You will expect this. The first figure to appear before us is gentle Ophelia in *Hamlet* . . . Is Shakespeare true to reality in his clinical picture of Ophelia’s madness?

Up to a point. That form of madness is called ‘*dementia praecox*’, whereby young women and young men, whose mental constitution is feeble, and who have always shown themselves kind and lively intelligent, either suddenly or gradually, fall mad. They are delicate plants, soon languishing, even before the prime of their life, when puberty violently overhauls them. This is Ophelia’s madness.

If hers were similar to actual madness, then she would express herself with an even more inane and unconnected language. Underneath her outward appearance, she would need not a profound and tormenting affectivity, but a frail, colourless one. Those natures whose fate is to feel with such force (be it heartrendingly or exquisitely) do not go mad in that way. Sure, among the prodromes of *dementia praecox*, one can list disappointed loves, mystic raptures, ambitious dreams never come true. But everything, from the very beginning, *bears the mark of an affectivity which cannot easily endure distress*. From the start, one can observe apathy in them: apathy is very characteristic of that psychopathic form, endowing this struggling affect with a note of superficiality and incoherence. In Ophelia, one can observe a harrowing accumulation of afflictions, a mute agony: she feels the torments of seeing

via via. Una predisposta alla ‘demenza precoce’, davanti a tutto questo, sarebbe stata indifferente – Ed allora? Non è, forse, il caso di Ofelia una psicopatia di minor gravità? Non siamo innanzi ad un episodio di semplice ‘confusione mentale’, che sarebbe guarito? Dopo tutto, fu un tristissimo incidente (non altro) quello che cagionò la morte della fanciulla – Il quadro clinico in esame ne lascia dubbiosi.



Vediamo un'altra eroina che impazzisce: lady Macbeth . . . È verosimile quella scena? Vero il sonnambulismo di lady Macbeth; vero, che in tale stato si ridicono e ripetono detti ed atti lontani, seppelliti nella memoria e nell'animo. Vero, che vi sono alcune donne feroci, istintive, come la moglie di Macbeth, le quali non provano rimorsi. – Esse sono neuropatiche gravi: possono essere isteriche. Il sonnambulismo, non di rado, è una manifestazione della isteria. Però questa è malattia femminile per eccellenza. E le terribili donne, come quella in parola, hanno del femminile e del virile nel tempo stesso. L'isterica criminale avvelena. Per verità, lady Macbeth, se non avvelena, poco vi manca. Non fa ebbri, mettendo droghe nel vino, le guardie di re Duncano? – Piuttosto vi è a dire che il sonnambulismo è un episodio morboso; non una costante infermità, cagione di morte, siccome, pare, avvenga per la nostra eroina.

Badate. Io non fò la critica di SHAKESPEARE alienista alla distanza di parecchi secoli. Una tal cosa sarebbe quanto mai ridicola. Si pensi alle cognizioni di Psichiatria in quel tempo – Io miro ad un segno più elevato – Dico: il poeta non è costretto a seguire la verità obiettiva dei fatti e delle idee in tutte le loro particolarità minute. Il poeta deve salvare le apparenze del vero – Tanto basta – E deve commuovere. Talvolta, per commuovere, il suo genio lo discosta dal vero (1) – Se Ofelia fosse stata, quale per la sua follia avrebbe dovuto essere; sarebbe parsa insignificante. Certo, non bella – Senza il terribile sonnambulismo di lady Macbeth, costei avrebbe destato ribrezzo, orrore, ripulsione.

Una profonda ragione di Arte solleva i personaggi in sulle scene. – Quei poeti moderni, che descrivono i fatti in tutte le loro crudeltà: quegli artisti, che ci riproducono in teatro, con grande fedeltà, morbi e follie; sono imitatori, non poeti od artisti.

Eppure l'occhio dello SHAKESPEARE vede così addentro nella anime umane! – Non è compito mio seguire le innumerevoli figure di donne che egli riproduce nei suoi drammi. Da una parte la donna istintiva,

herself suspected, mocked, and so on. Someone predisposed to *dementia praecox* would remain indifferent, when faced with all this. – If so, may the case of Ophelia indicate a less serious psychopathy? May we be looking at an episode of simple ‘mental confusion’, from which she would have eventually recovered? After all, it was an extremely sad accident, but an accident, that caused the maiden’s death. The clinical picture remains suspiciously unclear.



Let us look at another heroine who goes mad: Lady Macbeth . . . Is the sleepwalking scene verisimilar? Lady Macbeth’s somnambulism strikes us as true. So does the iteration and repetition of words and actions that have been buried deep into the sleepwalker’s memory and soul. So does the fact that there are fierce, instinct-driven women such as Macbeth’s wife, who never feel any remorse. These women suffer from a serious neuropathy, associated with hysteria, which can often manifest itself through somnambulism. The fact is that this disease is the female disease *par excellence*, and the awful women we have been discussing have simultaneously a female and virile component in them. The criminal hysteric is a poisoner. Actually, Lady Macbeth is not far off from being a poisoner: does she not intoxicate King Duncan’s guards, by drugging their possets? – On the other hand, one should note that sleepwalking is generally a morbid episode, not a lasting infirmity which could lead to someone’s death, as it appears happens to our heroine.

Now, I am not criticising SHAKESPEARE the alienist after several centuries. Something like that would be more than ludicrous: just think of the psychiatric notions of his time! No, I aim my discussion at a higher mark. What I mean is that the poet is not forced to follow the objective truth of the facts and ideas in all their minutest details. The poet needs to preserve what looks like the truth – that is enough, and needs to succeed in moving us. Sometimes, in order to move us, the genius departs from truth (1). If Ophelia had been exactly as her madness would cause her to be like, she would have been insignificant, and, surely, not fair. Without her awe-inspiring sleepwalking, Lady Macbeth would have aroused disgust, horror, and repulsion.

Characters are brought on stage because of a profound artistic reason. Those modern poets, who describe facts in all their crudest aspects – such artists, who most faithfully reproduce forms of disease and madness in the theatre, are no poets or actual artists: they are but imitators.

And yet how insightful is SHAKESPEARE’s eye! He looks so deep into human soul! – It is not my task to discuss the countless figures of

feroce, criminale: Lady Macbeth, Regana, Gonevillia [sic]... Dall'altra quella buona, gentile, soave: Ofelia Desdemona, Cordelia, Miranda, Caterina, le due Porzie... O donne, lottanti fra il bene ed il male, come la madre di Amleto, Clessidra [sic], Cleopatra, e via.

...
Lo SHAKESPEARE dà a queste sue eroine una grande fatalità di affetti, originari, primitivi e d'impulsi. *Le fa terribili per ciò; non per la mente ed il volere* – Eppure, se giungono al delitto, non vi reggono alla lunga. Non hanno resistenza e continuità: *non hanno l'energia dell'uomo*...

La donna per lo SHAKESPEARE è da questo lato una fragile creatura. Composta, armoniosa, regge quasi per equilibrio instabile. Se la passione vi caccia dentro la sua punta acuta, la donna si disordina e fiacca.

È vera una tal cosa? Ha ragione il poeta in mezzo a quel suo mondo ipervirile (darei)? – Vi è differenza fra l'anima della donna e quella dell'uomo? Ed in cosa consiste? ...

Avete ragione. Per ciò che vi è d'intimo, di personale, solo la donna può parlare della donna . . . Ma una cosa è *descrivere* e *sentire*; altra cosa è *giudicare* . . . [La donna] non è orientata verso l'esterno. Essa è orientata verso l'intimo suo. Il suo organismo, il cuore, i visceri, la maternità sua sono i grandi risonatori, i grandi rinforzatori degli affetti suoi. L'organismo femminile suo tutto vibra, arpa misteriosa, nei tumulti dell'anima . . . Questo scuotersi di tutto l'organismo, nei visceri profondi; questo scuotersi ne arresta talora il cuore . . . Tutta la psiche della donna è plasmata di emozione . . . Perciò la donna è superiore all'uomo nel Teatro, nelle Arti in cui tali mutamenti si richiedono . . . Il suo organismo *muta, e profondamente, perché coordinato alle funzioni materne*. È la maternità, la santa funzione della maternità, che fa dell'organismo e dell'anima femminile qualche cosa di misterioso e mutevole. – La follia nella donna è la esagerazione di ciò . . . Non ha torto lo SHAKESPEARE, quando dagli affetti profondi e dagli istinti, trae le manifestazioni più intense, più caratteristiche dell'anima femminile . . .

(1) Vedi in proposito le altre Conferenze e Saggi dell'A: *Pazzi e Delinquenti nelle Opere d'Arte, 1898* – *La follia di Re Lear, 1904* – *Jago ed Otello, 1907*. –

women whom he presents in his plays. On the one side, you see the instinctual, fierce, criminal woman: Lady Macbeth, Regan, Goneril... On the other, the good, kind, gentle woman: Desdemona, Cordelia, Miranda, Catherine,¹ the two Portias... Alternatively, women who struggle between good and evil, such as Hamlet's mother, Cressida, Cleopatra, and so on.

...
SHAKESPEARE endows his heroines with a fatal quality of affects, which are original, primitive, impulsive. *That is how he makes them awe-inspiring, not through their mind and will.* – And yet, when they do perpetrate a crime, they cannot endure it long. They have neither resistance nor resilience: *they do not possess man's energy.* . . .

In this respect, for SHAKESPEARE, women are frail creatures. They are composed, harmonious beings, who stand almost by an unstable balance – but when passion punctures them with its sharp sting, then women are thrown into disorder and gradually drain themselves.

Is this true? Is the poet right, at the centre of his hyper-virile world (as I may say)? – Is there a difference between a woman's soul, and a man's? And what would it be? . . .

You're right. Only women can speak about womanhood, as regards anything that is intimate and personal . . . But to *describe* and *feel* is one thing, to *judge* is another. [Women] are not oriented towards the outside. They are oriented towards their intimate inner world. The organism, the heart, the *viscera*, maternity: this is primarily what makes a woman sound and greatly strengthens her affects. A woman's organism is all a vibration: a mysterious harp, reverberating the tumults within her soul . . . Such agitation of her whole organism, even in her deepest inner parts – well, this agitation can sometimes stop her heart . . . A woman's whole psyche is moulded by emotion . . . This is the reason why women are superior to men in drama and in the arts, where such mutable agitations are required . . . Her organism *keeps changing, ever so profoundly, because it is coordinated along her maternal function.* Maternity, the holy function of maternity: this is what renders a woman's organism and soul something mysterious and changeable. – Madness in women is the exaggeration of all this . . . SHAKESPEARE is not wrong, when he draws, from the profoundest affects and instincts, the most intense and characteristic manifestations of the female soul . . .

(1) See the essays and proceedings of other conferences held by the Author: *Pazzi e Delinquenti nelle Opere d'Arte [The Insane and the Criminals in the Works of Art]*, 1898– *La follia di Re Lear [King Lear's Madness]*, 1904 – *Jago ed Otello [Iago and Othello]*, 1907.

¹ Catherine of Aragon, in *Henry VIII*.

12b.

I.

Ofelia, Re Lear ed Amleto – Follie da emozioni.

Scorrendo le pagine di romanzieri e poeti, si veggono, qua e là, rappresentati tipi di eroi e di eroine, cadute in follia, dietro violenta emozione. Talvolta il poco esperto autore credé opportuno suscitare, in fine, una contro-emozione per mettere novellamente in piedi il suo eroe. E così gli donò salute mentale e letizia.

Trovata, discutibile in vero; a meno che non si tratti di idea fissa isterica. La idea fissa isterica può modificarsi in bene, per *suggestione* da casi esterni. Si noti però: essa non dà il quadro, largo, molteplice, intenso di una follia.

Autori, dall'intelletto profondo, che bene conobbero l'anima umana; prepararono la crisi psicopatica nella vittima adagio, adagio, traverso ad un succedersi di eventi sfavorevoli. E nella vittima già lasciarono intravedere un fondo di predisposizione a simili mali.

Valgano, specialmente, i tipi presentati da *Guglielmo Shakespeare*. Sono istruttive molto le follie di Ofelia, di Re Lear, di Amleto istesso.

Ofelia fin dalle prime scene si presenta a noi, come una fragile creatura. La simulata follia di Amleto, i detti crudeli che le rivolge e che tormentano l'amor suo, la subita uccisione del padre, sono tutta una gamma di stimoli affettivi salienti fino all'ultimo intensissimo. E questo ne fiaccò l'animo, già vinto, prostrato.

La pazzia di Ofelia è scolorita, è demenza (dicono gli alienisti), nel senso che vi è in essa una stigmata di decadenza mentale profonda – Vaga la giovanetta per un chiacchierio, scialbo, sconnesso, ed alla fine, inconsapevole, annega.

...

Ma più netto, più significativo è l'avanzare della follia in Re Lear. Fu costui ognora uomo, strano, emotivo, precipitoso nei giudizi e nelle risoluzioni. Commise l'enorme stravaganza di spogliarsi anzi tempo del potere di Re. E davanti alla indifferenza ed alla crudeltà delle figliuole, si agita; si rode in tenace, acre ira inane . . .

Infine Amleto, profondamente anomalo, impazzisce a modo suo. È

12b.

I.

Ophelia, King Lear, and Hamlet – Madness Caused by Emotion.

Flipping through the pages of novelists' and poets' works, you can note, here and there, the portrayal of types of heroes and heroines who go mad due to the violence of an emotion. It sometimes happens that an inexperienced author thought it expedient to introduce a counter-emotion at the end of the story, so the hero can recover and stand up a sane man, granting him soundness of mind and happiness.

This is a truly dubious device, unless we are dealing with a hysterical fixation, which can alter itself and become healthy, by the *suggestion* of external cases. One should observe, however, that hysterical fixations do not make up the wide, manifold, intense picture of madness.

There are authors, endowed with a profound intellect, who got to know the human soul well, and who, little by little, prepared the psychopathic crisis of their victim, through a series of unfortunate events. They were also able to let the victim's predisposition to such diseases peer through.

A special instance of this is presented by the types portrayed by *William Shakespeare*. The forms of madness affecting Ophelia, King Lear, and Hamlet are particularly instructive.

Even from the first scenes, Ophelia presents herself as a fragile creature. Hamlet's simulated madness and his cruel words towards her torment her love, besides her father's sudden murder: these are a whole sequence of highly significant affective stimuli, unto the last, of extreme intensity – which drained her already vanquished and prostrate mind.

Ophelia's madness is discoloured: it is a case of dementia, as the alienists argue. That is to say, it is stigmatised by profound mental decay. The young girl errs – a faint, unconnected murmur – and, at the end, she drowns, unawares.

...

The progress of madness in King Lear is much better defined, and significant. He had always been a strange, emotional man, rash in judgment and resolution. He committed the huge extravagance of stripping himself of his regal power before time. Faced with his daughters' indifference and cruelty, he agitates and consumes himself with relentless, baleful, inane anger . . .

Lastly, Hamlet is profoundly anomalous; he goes mad in his own

un esaltato, oscillante tra follia e sanità. Anch'egli fu percosso da violenta emozione, surta in lui perché vide e ragionò col fantasma del padre.



Si consideri bene adunque. La commozione, l'urto affettivo scuote, disordina menti poco salde, come quelle di Ofelia, di Re Lear, di Amleto. Fatiche, affanni le preparano a ciò. E la follia si colora della natura psicologica di ognuno: demenziale in Ofelia; maniaca, violenta in Re Lear; saltuaria, incerta, stravagante, simulata in Amleto.

E questa è Psichiatria vera. Le follie da emozione importano una certa *predisposizione individuale*, acuita da strapazzi e digiuni, da mutamenti subitanei e spaventevoli di ambiente.

La emozione non afferra ed agita qualsiasi uomo al mondo. È necessario, che la vittima sia, per costituzione, disposta ai tormenti d'animo, che abbia non di rado, un *Carattere ansioso-emotivo*, dicono i francesi. 'Carattere' il quale si definisce appunto ed aggrava per il *rinforzarsi e ripetersi* delle impressioni penose e degli strapazzi fisici maggiori.

L'urto emotivo, dopo cui s'impazzisce, viene alla fine; è il termine estremo di un *lavoro di preparazione interiore*.

Vi sono casi, in cui, più che follia, si hanno *episodii morbosi mentali fugaci*. Ciò si verifica in menti, non vinte del tutto, che hanno certa resistenza. Ovvero si osserva negli *anomali psichici gravi*. In questi ultimi la preparazione è minima; grande o notevole l'urto emotivo. Lo si vede in Amleto, natura fuori norma davvero. La sua follia, in verità, altro non fu, che accentuazione di anomalie, proprie al suo 'Carattere' – Ma di una tal cosa ragioneremo più avanti.

...

II.

Arte e folli da emozione.
Esigenza della creazione estetica.

Dissi altrove (1) che i 'folli', presentati dallo Shakespeare, nonostante avessero segni, contenuto di grande verità: male *corrispondevano* ai casi di follia, sperimentata, reale – Onde l'imbarazzo nel definirli, nel

way. He is a fanatic, who oscillates between madness and sanity. He was also struck by a violent emotion, which had risen in him due to the apparition of his father's ghost and the conversation that took place between the two.



Let us consider such portrayals with care. Emotion and affective impact shake and disrupt feeble minds, such as Ophelia's, King Lear's, and Hamlet's. The preparation of such phenomenon has consisted in enduring labours and troubles, and madness receives a peculiar tinge from each psychological nature: it becomes demential in Ophelia; manically violent in King Lear; desultory, uncertain, extravagant in Hamlet.

This is true Psychiatry. Madness by emotion implies a certain *individual predisposition*, which is then exacerbated by strains, fastings, and sudden and frightful alterations in one's environment.

Such emotion does not seize upon, and agitate, any human being in the world. It is necessary for the victim to be disposed, by constitution, to have their mind tormented: they often possess what the French call an *emotionally anxious character*. Such character is then defined, and intensified, by the *strengthening and repetition* of painful impressions and even greater physical strains.

The emotional impact, after which insanity follows, comes at the end; it is the final conclusion of an *exertion in inner preparation*.

There are cases when, rather than madness, the patient's mind may develop some *fleeting morbid episodes*. These happens in the case of minds that have not been wholly vanquished yet, which still resist. Alternatively, it happens among individuals *suffering from severe psychic anomalies*. In the latter, the preparation is minimal, whereas the emotional impact is strong or particularly remarkable. One can observe this in Hamlet, whose nature is truly abnormal. Actually, his madness was actually nothing else but an exacerbation of anomalies which belonged to his character. However, we will talk about this in a later section.

...

II.

Art and the Mad by Emotion.

The Demands of Aesthetic Creation.

I have said elsewhere (1) that the mad, as portrayed by Shakespeare, *correspond* badly to actual, experimented cases of madness, although they suggest a matter of great truth. This is why it is so problematic to

chiuderli entro il giro di una formula medica, di una diagnosi precisa.

Ed aggiungi: Qualcuno potrebbe a noi ricordare, che lo S. non fu alienista. A quei tempi la Psichiatria moderna non era ancora nata. Certamente. Ma, con questa, aggiungi un'altra e grave ragione.

I tipi umani della poesia, dell'Arte, non possono rispondere alle fredde esigenze della verità, della ricerca scientifica. Il poeta non fa il clinico. È ben altro. Le creature del pensiero estetico, da note concrete, obiettive, vanno per alcunché d'ideale. Hanno una tessitura delicatissima: mentre da un lato sono infisse al suolo, dall'altra tendono al cielo. Sorgono quelle agili forme *in rapporto* ai nostri sentimenti, a tendenze umane profonde.

E dirò, al presente, un'altra ragione.

Nella grandissima maggioranza, i poeti drammatici rendono follie, che non sono *originarie, costituzionali*; bensì rendono *follie da emozione*. E queste si esplicano (ora lo abbiamo visto) con fisionomia proteiforme, incerta.

D'altra parte è necessità del poeta tragico mettere innanzi, a prevalenza, folli da emozione. Fra lo *spettatore* e l'*eroe* vi deve essere qualche *corrispondenza di affetti*. In tali folli si nota; negli altri è *spezzato ogni legame* fra essi ed il mondo umano.

Mi spiego. Le follie originarie, costituzionali, sono *aggravamenti di anomalie*, psicologiche ed organiche, presenti nell'individuo, fin da fanciullo . . . Fatalità organica, sul cui dorso balena la triste insania, ed all'ora sua. In tali emergenze operano ben poco le condizioni sociali e quelle psicologiche esterne.

Ora il 'carattere' di questi predisposti a follia originaria è molto diverso dal 'carattere' dei così detti uomini normali. Domina in esso *un subiettivismo intenso*, che li allontana dagli scambi del vivere comune. Fatto, che si definisce ed aggrava ognora più, con l'inizio, con lo sviluppo degli *accessi di follia* . . .

Il vero folle è un isolato, un reietto dal mondo. Egli lo sente e vuole riafferrarsi alla vita, ai dolori reali del mondo. Se ciò raggiunge, se vince la prova; egli è salvo.

I folli da emozione pare, sieno *qualche cosa di intermedio* fra gli psicopati, originarii, costituzionali, ed i sani di mente. – Essi sono ancora presi nelle reti psicologiche infinite, entro cui si agita, ama, odia, gioi-

define and encapsulate them in terms of a univocal medical formula, a precise diagnosis.

And I added: Some of you may want to remind us that Shakespeare was not an alienist. In his time, modern psychiatry had not been born yet. No doubt about that. But there is a further, more serious reason behind this matter.

The human types of poetry, of Art, cannot respond to the cold demands of truth, of scientific research. A poet is not a clinical physician – quite something else. The creatures of aesthetic thought transcend concrete, objective notes and tend to commune with the ideal sphere. They have a most delicate weft to them: on the one hand, they are planted into the ground, on the other, they aspire to heaven. Those agile forms rise *in relation to* our feelings, to profound human tendencies.

And now, let me express a further reason.

The vast majority of dramatic poets portrays *non-originary* forms of madness as *constitutional*, namely, *forms of madness by emotion*. And the latter, as we have seen, are expressed in a protean, undefinable physiognomy.

On the other hand, a tragic poet must primarily portray the emotional mad, because there must exist a sort of *affective correspondence* between the *spectator* and the *hero*. In the case of madness by emotion, such correspondence binds them: in all other cases, the bond between the mad and the human world is cut off.

Let me explain. The originary, constitutional forms of madness can be defined as *a deterioration of* psychological and organic *anomalies*, which are present in the individual since childhood . . . It is an organic fatality, upon which there will flash wretched insanity – when the time comes. In such cases, social conditions and external psychological ones can play a very limited role.

Now, the character of one of those who are predisposed to originary madness is very different from that of the so-called normal people. It is dominated by *intense subjectivism*, which sets them apart from the intercourse of ordinary life. And this separation becomes more and more marked and significant when the episodes of madness start and develop . . .

These mad individuals live in isolation: they are rejects of the world. They are aware of it, and try to cling on to life, and to the true sorrows of the world. If they manage to pass this test, they are safe.

It seems that those who suffer from madness by emotion find themselves *halfway between* the originary, constitutional psychopaths, and the sane. – They are still entangled in the endless psychological nets

sce e si addolora ogni essere sociale. Dico, sono presi ancora in questa rete; e vi si atteggiano e reagiscono in vario modo . . .

Nei predisposti a follia originaria, questo lavoro di orientamento morale rivela (ho detto) deficienze gravissime, anormalità significative . . . Nei predisposti alle follie da emozione, varie cose si nota, ma d'altra specie. Costoro presentano, strani, esagerati i comuni affetti umani. Condizione, utile molto a quel lavoro di *rinforzamento, d'ingrandimento inconsapevole* del poeta drammatico.



È bene arrestarsi su quest'ultima idea . . .

I folli veri, compiuti, sono inestetici, perché non sono individui sociali: sono *troppo lontani* dalla esperienza media umana. E tale lontananza non è di grado, *bensi di qualità* . . . Nel dramma, nel romanzo, i folli più gravi, se rappresentati debbono avere senso dal tutto, *dalle connessioni con la totalità dell'opera*. Messi da soli ed in prima linea a me non sembrano di pertinenza estetica . . .

III.

Gli emotivo-ansiosi – Di nuovo: Amleto.
Conclusioni per l'ora presente.

Il predisposto a follia da emozione reagisce fra gli uomini, rinforzando i comuni affetti alterandoli nel loro assieme. Egli ha non di rado un 'carattere', indicato dagli alienisti con l'attributo: 'emotivo-ansioso'.

Gli individui, che tendono ad una simile figura psicologico-clinica, hanno continue incertezze nel contegno e nell'azione. La loro intelligenza pratica non è compatta, solida, verso una linea determinata di obiettivi particolari. Nell'intimo loro vi è sensibilità grande. Essi risuonano, come arpe eolie, davanti a qualsiasi, nuova e sfavorevole, emergenza dal mondo che li circonda. – In una con questa ipersensibilità, ivi è, in essi, disposizione allo insorgere, intimo e vario, di motivi intellettuali e di sentimenti diversissimi, talora contrarianti . . . E temono di tutto, vivono

within which all social beings move, love, hate, rejoice and grieve. I repeat: they are still entangled in it, and they behave themselves and react accordingly . . .

As I was saying, among those who are predisposed to ordinary madness, such workings of moral orienting is characterised by some very serious deficiencies and significant abnormalities . . . Instead, among those who are predisposed to madness by emotion, one can observe several things, but of an altogether different kind. Their human affects, which should be common, are strange, exaggerated. This condition is very useful to the intense operations of *strengthening and unintentional enlargement* on the part of the dramatic poet.



It would be a good thing to dwell on this last point . . .

The actual, 'accomplished' mad are unaesthetic, because they are not social individuals: they are *far away* from an average human experience. Their distance is not measured by degrees, but *qualitatively* . . . In drama, and in the novel, those characters, who suffer from a very serious form of madness, must be represented so that their sense can be related and *connected to the whole, the totality of the work*. If they are represented individually and by themselves, they do not appear to me as having aesthetic pertinence . . .

III.

The Emotionally Anxious – Hamlet, Again. Temporary Conclusions.

In social terms, those who are predisposed to emotional madness react by strengthening their common attachments, and yet altering them altogether. This person has generally a character which is defined by the alienists as 'emotionally anxious'.

The individuals, who tend to have such a psychological-clinical profile, are marked by continuous uncertainties as regards their demeanour and actions. Their practical intelligence is not soundly, solidly directed towards a determined line of particular objectives. Deep within, they are very sensitive. They reverberate, like aeolian harps, before any new and/or unfavourable emergence which may affect them from the outside world. – When these hypersensitives are faced with something like this, they may experience the rebellious arousal of very different intellectual motives and feelings of a various, intimate and sometimes contradicting nature . . . These individuals will be afraid of everything

in angosce, in apprensioni: male si orientano nel mondo di fuori. Sono cauti al massimo grado, in perenne attesa di sventure e di nemici.

Poneteli fra condizioni di ambiente avverse . . . Fate sì, che vadano tocchi nelle loro predilezioni, intime, profonde; come negli affetti di famiglia, o nell'orgoglio, o nell'amore. Ed allora quella loro ipersensibilità, fatta tormentosissima, sarà il disgregatore, sottile, tagliente di un 'carattere', male unito, male coordinato. Urge l'ultima occasione, l'urto emotivo intenso; e ne verrà il disordine della follia.



Il 'carattere' di Amleto è di tal genere; ma non vi si chiude. Ché non tutti gli ansioso-emotivi sono, come Amleto, così profondamente anomali . . .

Più volte ho detto, che Amleto è tipo d'uomo anormale. Infatti ha le stigmate solenni di un 'carattere' fuori norma:

- 1) – Volontà fievole, incerta, e *mancato volere direttivo* sulle idee, sui proprii moti d'animo.
- 2) – È profondamente triste, ipocondriaco, *preso e dominato dal tædium vitæ*.
- 3) – *Sospettoso*, freddo d'affetti, nonostante il culto alla memoria del padre . . .

Se fosse stato uomo normale, avrebbe fatto altrimenti . . . avrebbe dovuto con ogni probabilità, mettersi all'opera . . . Non è da uomo che voglia e sul serio – Si badi a ciò, soprattutto: Egli è uomo cautissimo; *eppure non riesce a dominare il contegno suo*. Non vi riesce, quantunque simuli follia – È un fatto significativo, delicato, che dà, alla sua figura, stigmate psicopatica . . . natura oscillante, sbattuta per il corso del vivere comune; eppure dalle idee, ardite e nuove, fra meditazioni, superbe, per quanto slegate, incompiute. Poiché (ho detto altrove) quelle idee salgono dal fondo, da un fondo d'animo, oscuro, misterioso, senza iniziazione alcuna, che sovr'esse preme . . .

(1) Follia nelle donne dello Shakespeare e Psicologia femminile – Conferenza – Estrat. Dalla Rivista di Psichiatria "il Manicomio" Nocera, 1914.

and live amid distress and apprehension: they can orient themselves with difficulty in the outside world. They are extremely cautious, constantly on the lookout for the arrival of misfortune and enemies.

Place them in the conditions of an adverse environment . . . Allow their most intimate and profound predilections to be hurt: for example, their family affections, their pride, or their love. You will then see how exceedingly their hypersensitivity will torment them, and how subtly and sharply it will disrupt their character, which is already so incoherent and ill-coordinated. Now is the time for the ultimate occasion: the intense emotional collision – madness, in all its disorder, will ensue.



Hamlet's character belongs to this type, but is not confined to it, because not all emotionally anxious individuals are as profoundly anomalous as him . . .

I have said more than once that Hamlet represents a type of abnormal man. He bears the solemn stigmata of a character that goes outside the norm:

- 1) – His will is weak and uncertain; he shows no volition in directing his ideas and the movements of his soul.
- 2) – Profound sadness and hypochondria; he is filled with and dominated by *tedium vitae*.
- 3) – A *suspicious* and affectively cold disposition, despite worshipping his father's memory . . .

If he had been a normal man, he would have acted differently . . . He would most probably have wreaked his revenge forcefully . . . His behaviour is not typical of a man who earnestly wants something. Above all, one should note how, despite his extreme caution, *he cannot dominate his demeanour*. He cannot do it, which goes besides his simulation of madness: this is a significant, delicate fact, which stigmatises his character psychopathically . . . His nature oscillates, and crashes against the course of an ordinary life, and yet he is characterised by having those daringly new ideas, those superb, albeit unconnected and unfinished, meditations. As I said elsewhere, this happens because those ideas ascend from the bottom of his soul, obscure, mysterious, with no inhibition whatsoever pressing over them.

(1) "Madness in Shakespeare's Women and Female Psychology", a conference (then published in *Rivista di Psichiatria Il Manicomio*, Nocera, 1914).

13. Anonymous. 1917. "Shakespeare grande patologo" [Shakespeare, the Great Pathologist]. Review of Enrico Morselli, "La psicosi e la neurosi nei drammi di Guglielmo Shakespeare" ["Psychosis and Neurosis in William Shakespeare's Plays"]. *Illustrazione popolare* 53 (special issue: *La guerra dell'Italia e le altre guerre d'Europa nel 1916*): 348.

In 1916, the celebrations of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death were an ideologically fraught event (see Bigliuzzi 2020) because of the First World War. If one flicks through this special issue of the *Illustrazione popolare*, one reads about the situation in the trenches, of the despair and misery afflicting millions of people, but one also finds this review of a conference held by Prof. Enrico Morselli (1852-1929) at the Università popolare of Genoa. Morselli had worked at several psychiatric hospitals in Northern Italy, and had become an authoritative voice also internationally (he took part in the First International Eugenics Congress, held in London in 1912). He collaborated with Lombroso, but often disagreed with him.

Morselli is best remembered today as the author of the two-volume study *La Psicanalisi* (one of the dedicatees was Lombroso). Morselli had many reservations about Freud's doctrines, but was instrumental in making them circulate. From some of the words used in the review, one may conjecture that Morselli had started applying Freudian notions to Shakespeare's plays, but it is safer to state that he was elaborating on Ferri's, and especially, Ziino's work. It must have been a very interesting conference, since he seems to have touched on most of the plays, although the text seems not to have been thoroughly copyedited, as there is an odd mixture of the reviewer's voice and Morselli's.

NEL TRICENTENARIO DI GUGLIELMO SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE GRANDE PATOLOGO.

Il prof. Enrico Morselli parlò a Genova, in una conferenza, del genio di Guglielmo Shakespeare, il grande trageda inglese, del quale ora ricorre il terzo centenario della morte. Ecco un breve sunto della conferenza:

— Si è detto — comincia l'oratore — che non v'è argomento su cui non si possa trovare qualche allusione nell'opera immortale di Guglielmo Shakespeare; ma anche se non si accetta questa immensità enciclopedica del Poeta, rimane indiscussa la sua stupefacente conoscenza della psicologia, tanto normale quanto patologica. Sotto questo riguardo lo Shakespeare fu un osservatore di prima forza; non gli sfuggì nessuno dei grandi movimenti dell'anima umana, nessuno dei caratteri e dei tipi che può presentare l'umana personalità.

Nei suoi drammi si trovano descritte in modo insuperabile come in un trattato delle malattie mentali, tutte le sintomatiche della nevrosi e della psicosi, e quasi tutte le forme principali della pazzia, quali sono vedute adesso dai clinici alienisti. E il più mirabile si è che ai suoi tempi la psico-patologia e la psichiatria, per quanto avuto momenti gloriosi all'epoca dei Greci e dei Romani, sotto l'influsso funesto del pensiero medioevale in gran parte di origine germanica, erano cadute nella superstizione, nell'errore, nel misticismo. Perciò in una storia della Patologia mentale lo Shakespeare dovrebbe figurare come un maestro.

Quello che si sa della sua vita è così confuso ed incerto, che la cultura psicologica dello Shakespeare risulta ancora più meravigliosa. In prova di ciò il Morselli ricorda in succinto la biografia abbastanza oscura del sommo tragico inglese, e descrive in modo pittoresco quali erano le miserande condizioni del Teatro inglese a quei tempi. Eppure, non ostante le traversie della sua esistenza dissipata e nomade; non ostante la assoluta mancanza di tutti quei mezzi che la scena ha poi posseduto, nei drammi del Poeta passano davanti a noi miracolose figure di personaggi appassionati, ossessionati, nevrastenici, psicastenici, epilettici, allucinati, sonnambuli, pazzi morali e criminali nati, deliranti, maniaci, dementi, senili... tutta una turba di figure psicopatiche e nevropatiche, quali non si trovano in nessun altro complesso di Arte.

ON WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *TERCENTENARY*
SHAKESPEARE THE GREAT PATHOLOGIST.

At a conference in Genoa, Prof. Enrico Morselli talked about the genius of William Shakespeare, the great English tragedian, the tercentenary anniversary of whose death has now been celebrated. Here follows a brief summary of the conference:

— It has been said — thus begins the speaker — that there exists no subject to which it is not possible to find an allusion in the immortal works of William Shakespeare. Even if one does not accept this notion of the Poet's encyclopaedic boundlessness, his dazzling knowledge of psychology (normal as well as pathological) remains undisputed. In this regard, Shakespeare was an observer of prime importance; none of the great movements of the human soul could escape him, and neither could any of the characters and types which human identity can present.

In his plays, one can find the unsurpassable description of all the symptomatologies of neurosis and psychosis, and almost all the main forms of madness, as are now observed by clinical alienists — as in a treatise on mental illnesses. This phenomenon is even more wonderful when one considers that, in Shakespeare's time, psychopathology and psychiatry — despite some glorious moments among the ancient Greeks and Romans — had suffered the dire influence of medieval thought, of mainly Germanic origin,¹ which had led them to lapse into superstition, error, and mysticism. Thus, in a book on the history of mental pathology, Shakespeare should be featured as a master.

What is known about his life is so confused and uncertain, that Shakespeare's psychological culture emerges as even more wonderful. To prove this consideration, Morselli offered a concise summary of the rather obscure biography of the supreme English tragedian, and, in a quaint manner, described how miserable the conditions of English theatre were in those times. Still, in spite of the misadventures of his dissolute and nomadic existence, and in spite of the absolute lack of all those means with which any stage has later been provided, in the Poet's plays we can see, moving before our eyes, the miraculous figures of characters who are passionate, obsessed, neurasthenic, psychasthenic, epileptic, hallucinated, sleepwalking, affected by moral madness, born criminals, delirious, manic, demented, senile... Such a swarm of psychopathic and neuropathic characters who cannot be found in any other contexture of art.

¹ A not unusual jab against the Germans, in the context of the war.

Il Morselli non si ferma solo sulle celeberrime figure di *Otello* e di *Amleto*; ma ricorda soprattutto quella meno nota di *Re Lear*, insuperata ed insuperabile rappresentazione di una mentalità in più modi colpita dalla degenerazione, dalla pazzia e infine dalla demenza.

Accanto ad esse si pongono le altre figure shakespeariane dell'isterismo criminoso e sonnambolico in *Lady Macbeth*, della mania erotica e suicida in *Ofelia*, della melanconia con idee fisse in Giacomo (della commedia "Come vi piacerà"); della più tetra lipemania in *Timone l'Ateniese*, della pazzia morale con deformità fisica in *Calibano*, della degenerazione con imbecillità e dedizione alla crapula più bassa in *Falstaff*...

La galleria si completa con quella delle passioni spinte sino al grado di morbosità, l'ambizione in *Costanza*; la gelosia in *Otello*; la dissolutezza in *Arrigo VIII*; la vendetta in *Amleto*; l'invidia in *Jago*.

E non mancano i tipi neuropatologici, poiché vediamo l'epilettico in *Otello* e in *Giulio Cesare*. (1) Vediamo il nevrastenico insonne ed angosciato in *Enrico IV*; il bimbo colpito da terrori notturni (nella commedia "Racconto d'inverno"); l'allucinato in piena coscienza per insonnia in *Bruto* (nella tragedia "Giulio Cesare").

Allo Shakespeare non restò ignota la morte per esaurimento in accesso maniaco, e lo si vede nella fine di *Costanza*; non gli sfuggì il rapporto fra la delinquenza e la deviazione antropologica dell'individuo; infine fu scultorio nella descrizione della simulazione della pazzia, come tutti veggono nel misterioso Principe di Danimarca e in *Edgardo* del *Re Lear*, nonché nei buffoni o matti di Corte che egli ebbe occasione di porre fra la moltitudine dei suoi personaggi.

Lo Shakespeare ebbe due grandi meriti rispetto alla neuropsichiatria: il primo è di avere saputo dare queste raffigurazioni indimenticabili dell'anima umana; il secondo è di avere saputo svegliare ai suoi tempi un sentimento di simpatia, intorno a povere creature colpite dalla nevrosi o dal delirio.

In tempi nei quali gli alienati erano confusi coi lebbrosi, coi delinquenti più feroci, e quindi relegati dal consorzio umano, talvolta condotti al rogo come indemoniati, il grande Poeta, che tanto attinse alla cultura italiana del Rinascimento e armonizzò nella sua mente sublime tutte le tendenze ed aspirazioni della Civiltà universale, seppe vedere

Morselli did not limit his focus only to those most renowned characters, Othello and Hamlet; he recalled, above all, a less familiar character, King Lear – an unsurpassed and unsurpassable representation of a mentality afflicted in several ways by degeneration, madness, and lastly, dementia.

Other Shakespearean figures are placed beside these: one remembers Lady Macbeth's criminal and somnambulistic hysteria; Ophelia's erotic and suicidal mania; Jaques' melancholia, characterised by *idées fixes* (in the comedy *As You Like It*); the bleakest lypemania of Timon of Athens; the moral madness associated with physical deformity in Caliban; Falstaff's degeneration together with imbecility and fondness for the basest overindulgence...

This gallery is completed by a set of passions pushed to the degree of morbidity: ambition in Constance,² jealousy in Othello, licentiousness in Henry VIII, revenge in Hamlet, envy in Iago.

The neuropathological types are not missing, either, since one can look at Othello and Julius Caesar (1) for the epileptic; at Henry IV for the insomniac and distressed neurasthenic; at the child who experiences night terrors in the comedy *The Winter's Tale*; at Brutus in the tragedy of *Julius Caesar* for the hallucinant³ who suffers in full awareness because of his insomnia.

Shakespeare learned about death by exhaustion following a manic seizure, as one can see in Constance's end; he realised that there is a relationship between delinquency and an individual's anthropological deviation; lastly, he mastered the chiselling of cases in which madness is simulated, as everyone sees when one looks at the mysterious Prince of Denmark and at Edgar in *King Lear*, but also at the clowns and court fools he was allowed to introduce among the multitude of his characters.

Shakespeare has had two great merits for the field of neuropsychiatry: the first is how he was able to portray such unforgettable figurations of the human soul; the second is that he, in those times, was able to awaken the feeling of sympathy towards those poor creatures who are troubled by neurosis or delirium.

In an age when the alienated were not distinguished from the lepers and from the fiercest delinquents, and were then removed from human intercourse, or sometimes led to the stake as demoniacally possessed, that great Poet, who drew so much on the culture of the Italian Renaissance and harmonised, in his sublime mind, all the tendencies and aspirations of universal civilisation, was able to see much better

² In *King John*.

³ "Someone who experiences hallucinations" (*OED* "hallucinant", n., Aa).

nel fenomeno della pazzia e della nevrosi assai meglio di quel che vedessero i medici suoi contemporanei: affermò infatti che, in ogni caso, l'alterarsi o il pervertirsi della mente è una malattia curabile e guaribile, degna di interessamento e di pietà; e con senso altamente moderno, ossia democratico, la vide e descrisse anche fra i potenti e fra i così detti fortunati.

Perciò l'arte di Guglielmo Shakespeare fu, non solo vera, ma anche moralizzatrice; il suo realismo gli concesse di raggiungere le sommità del pensiero e di contribuire nello stesso tempo allo sviluppo morale dell'Umanità.

Tale la conferenza del dotto psichiatra, professore nell'Università di Genova.

(1) Giulio Cesare della storia era veramente epiletico: e così Napoleone I.

(Nota della Direzione.)

into the phenomenon of madness and neurosis than the physicians who were his contemporaries. He actually maintained that, whatever the circumstance, the alteration or perversion of one's mind is a curable and treatable disease, one that is worthy of interest and pity; with a highly modern – that is, democratic – sense, he saw and described it even among the powerful and the so-called fortunate.

This is why William Shakespeare's art was not only true, but also moralising; his realism granted him the ability to reach the heights of thought and, at the same time, contribute to the moral development of Humanity.

This was the content of the conference held by that learned psychiatrist, who is a professor at the University of Genoa.

- (1) The historical Julius Caesar actually was epileptic, as was Napoleon I.
(Editor's note)

14. From Benedetto Croce. 1919. "Shakespeare e la critica shakespeariana" ["Shakespeare and Shakespeare Criticism"]. *La Critica* 17: 129-222.

Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), one of the most important and authoritative philosophers and literary critics between the nineteenth and the twentieth century, had little patience for the Lombrosians. In this article, he discusses the various strands of Shakespeare criticism in Italy, and reserves some of his sharpest barbs against those who do not seem to understand the difference between a fictional character and a living human being.

Ci sarebbe da riempire un grosso volume per catalogare tutte codeste storture della critica shakespeariana filosofante o moralizzante, se non ci fosse la fondata speranza che, mostrato l'assurdo del principio, ognuno si ritrovi in grado di riconoscerne le derivazioni e le infiltrazioni. Ma un'intera serie di volumi occorrerebbe per catalogare tutti gli assurdi di un'altra forma di critica shakespeariana, la quale, diversamente dalla precedente, è anche oggi in pieno fiore e vigore: la critica oggettivistica. La condizione che la favorisce è l'ancora scarso intendimento o la scarsa dimestichezza e pratica del principio fondamentale: che l'arte, ogni sorta di arte, ogni singola opera d'arte, in tanto ha efficacia in quanto s'irradia da un sentimento che ne determina e modera tutte le parti . . . Dello Shakespeare in particolare si celebrano l'oggettività della rappresentazione e la perfetta 'realtà' dei caratteri, viventi di vita propria e indipendente: cose che possono pur dirsi per modo di dire, ma che non bisogna prendere in senso proprio, scordando che sono metafore; perché, quando si stende la mano su quei caratteri, che sono nient'altro che immagini del sentire del poeta, e si vuole afferrarne il corpo, se non accade proprio un' "esplosione" (come allorché Fausto si gettò sul fantasma di Elena), certo quelle figure, nell'attimo stesso, si sformano, si sbrindellano, dileguano agli sguardi. E, al luogo di esse, sorgono allora le infinite e insolubili questioni intorno al modo d'intenderne o di ristabilirne la saldezza e la coerenza: tormentose fra tutte, quelle che compongono, e di cui ogni giorno s'accresce, la cosiddetta *Hamlet-Litteratur* [sic], la letteratura amletiana. Intorno ai 'personaggi shakespeariani', distaccati dal centro generatore del dramma e trasferiti come persone di carne ed ossa in un preteso campo oggettivo, si accalcano estranei di ogni qualità, storici, psicologi, vagheggiatori di avventure amorose, curiosi delle faccende altrui, poliziotti, criminologi, che ne investigano il carattere, le intenzioni, i pensieri, gli affetti, il temperamento, la vita precedente, le marachelle che commisero, i segreti che nascondono, le relazioni di famiglia e di società, e via discorrendo . . .

. . . l'effetto di consimili discussioni, anche di quelle che sono condotte con miglior senno, non è mai di schiarire o determinare cosa alcuna, ma anzi di abbuiare quello che si mostrava in luce di evidenza e non dava luogo a difficoltà, e di rendere incerto quello che era nettamente determinato; facendo dippiù sorgere il dubbio che lo Shakespeare fosse così mal destro scrittore da non saper rappresentare le proprie

One could fill a large tome should one wish to catalogue all the distortions of such philosophising or moralising Shakespeare criticism. However, a well-founded hope prevents such an enterprise: that, once the absurdity of its principle is revealed, anyone will be able to unmask its derivations and infiltrations. But an entire series of volumes would be needed to catalogue all the absurdities of another strand of Shakespeare criticism, which, unlike the former, has been flourishing to this day and is in full bloom: objectivistic criticism. The conditions furthering it are the still scarce understanding or familiarity and practice of this fundamental principle: art, any sort of art, any single work of art has as much effective power as the quality of feeling with which it is irradiated, a feeling that determines and regulates all its parts . . . As for Shakespeare, these scholars in particular praise the ‘objectivity’ of his representation and the perfect ‘reality’ of his characters, who are believed to be animated by an independent life of their own. One grants that these are things which can be said in a manner of speaking, but not properly in the literal sense, forgetting they are metaphors: once you stretch your hand towards those characters, which are nothing but images generated by the poet’s feeling, and you wish to seize their body, what happens may not be an explosion (just like when Faust threw himself onto the ghost of Helen),¹ but those figures, in that exact instant, lose shape, turn to tatters, and vanish from sight. In their place, there arise endless and unsolvable issues concerning how to comprehend and re-establish their solidity and coherence: the most harrowing of all are those that have made up (and increase every day) the so-called *Hamlet-Literatur* (Hamlet literature). The ‘Shakespearean characters’, detached from the generating fulcrum of drama and transferred thence into people made of flesh and bone living in a purported objective context, find themselves surrounded by a throng of strangers of all sorts: historians, psychologists, wanton romance-seekers, curious busybodies, policemen, criminologists, who want to investigate their personality, intentions, emotions, temperament, past life, childhood shenanigans, hidden secrets, family and social relations, and so on and so forth . . .

. . . the effect of such debates, even those that are conducted with better judgement, is never the clarification or the determination of anything; on the contrary, it darkens what until then had been in the plain daylight of evidence and what had never caused any difficulty in its interpretation; it makes uncertain what had always been clearly defined. Moreover, it gives rise to the suspicion that Shakespeare was so maladroit an author that he did not know how either to represent

¹ In Act 1 of the Second Part of Goethe’s *Faust*.

concezioni né esprimere i propri pensieri. Senonché, quando non ci si lascia impigliare in quei fittizi problemi, dei quali si è indicato il *proton pseudos*, quando li si discaccia con risolutezza dalla mente, e si leggono o rileggono senz'altro i drammi shakespeariani, tutto rimane o ritorna chiaro, tutto ciò che (com'è naturale) doveva esser chiaro nell'opera di poesia, ai fini della poesia . . .

his own conceptions or express his own thoughts. Except that, when one manages to avoid being caught in such fictitious problems (the *proton pseudos*² of which has already been indicated) and one is able to dispel them with firmness out of one's mind, everything remains clear or is clear again, simply by reading and re-reading Shakespeare's plays – everything that (as is natural) had to be clear in that work of poesy, within the aims of poesy.

² I.e. the false premise; the original falsehood.

15. From Piero Gobetti. 1923. “Il dottor Balanzon, docente di antropologia criminale” [“Dr Balanzon, Lecturer of Criminal Anthropology”]. In *La frusta teatrale*, 27-40. Milano: Corbaccio.

In 1923, Piero Gobetti was only 22 years old, but his voice had already established itself as one of the most significant in the Italian journalistic panorama. He had already founded two major newspapers: *Energie Nove* and *Rivoluzione Liberale*. Because of his liberalism and opposition to Fascism, he was assaulted and persecuted; he died in France in 1926.

In this interesting essay, Gobetti critiques the acting style of one of the leading actors of his age, Ermete Zacconi (1857-1948). Zacconi had a keen interest in criminal anthropology, visited Lombroso, and tried to use Lombrosian notions in his acting. For a time, he worked alongside Eleonora Duse, for instance playing in D’Annunzio’s plays, but the differences in their acting styles were remarkable:

Lo stile della Duse era l’opposto di quello del più grande attore italiano dell’epoca, Ermete Zacconi . . . mentre la Duse mirava all’interiorizzazione e ai dettagli espressivi più sottili e delicati, Zacconi invece esteriorizzava completamente i suoi personaggi . . . e ne faceva degli esseri patologicamente sovraeccitati e esageratamente contorti nei movimenti e nelle espressioni facciali, seguendo la teoria lombrosiana delle passioni delittuose eccessive e deformanti. (Re 2002, 133)

[Duse’s style was the opposite of Ermete Zacconi’s, the greatest Italian actor of the age. . . Duse tried to internalise as much as possible, and cared about the subtlest and most delicate details, whereas Zacconi completely exteriorised his characters . . . turning them into pathologically overexcited creatures, exaggerating their movements, contortions, and facial expressions. He was following Lombroso’s theory on criminal passions, with their excessive and deforming effects.]

Gobetti muses on Zacconi’s choices and writes that their age would be remembered as a curious chapter in the reception history of Shakespeare, when the Bard got entangled with ideas of criminal anthropology.

Eppure per Ermete Zacconi io conservo una gratitudine non maligna. È l'ultima battaglia donchisciottesca, l'alloro riportato con prosopopea trionfale, ingenuamente caricata, dalla beata campagna romantica di eroici furori per la verità . . . In verità il "sobrio e semplice" Zacconi dopo pochi esordi di giovanile freschezza (*Tristi amori, Resa a discrezione, Demi-monde, L'amico delle donne*) non ha saputo organizzare le sue mediocri doti di virtuoso, ma ha voluto diventare l'avanguardista di tutte le maniere. Come a ciò lo confortassero le letture di Descuret, Charcot, Lombroso, Ferri, di cui altri gli diè lode, è spiegato dal suo istinto e dalla caratteristica prima dei suoi cimenti che del resto fu incoraggiata artificialmente dalla smania rumorosa di imitare il trionfo che Emanuel aveva trovato rappresentando la morte per "delirium tremens" nell'*Assommoir*.

Quella che Bracco chiama semplicità è angustia meccanica di imitatore, precluso ad ogni finezza, . . . costretto a cercare le sue "trovate" nell'"Antropologia criminale", nei manicomiali e negli ospedali. Banalità che si appaga di un metodo, sino a rinnegare le imprevedute curiosità della critica e che in Tommaso Salvini trovò sin dai primi anni un valido contraddittore.

Incapace di fermarsi alle modeste espressioni di misura e di sincerità del teatro naturalista, troppo esperto per raggiungere la purezza classica attraverso queste esperienze fisiche, Ermete Zacconi si salvò dalle inquietudini e dai problemi che incombevano sulla sua mediocrità con un trucco che gli riuscì per l'ignoranza del pubblico (come l'ibsenismo fisiologico di Bracco). Tuttavia la stanchezza quotidiana domina sul processo di inaridimento delle leggi lombrosiane . . . è estraneo al teatro classico, estraneo a Shakespeare, che ha affrontato solo dopo

In fact, I still feel a non-malicious gratitude towards Ermete Zacconi. It's the last quixotic battle, the laurel achieved with a triumphal hubris naively promoted by the blithely romantic campaign in the name of the heroic frenzies, pursuing truth... Verily, the "sober and simple" Zacconi, after some limited debuts characterised by youthful freshness (*Tristi amori*, *Resa a discrezione*, *Demi-Monde*, *L'Ami des femmes*)¹ was unable to organise his mediocre virtuoso gifts; instead, he has chosen to become the vanguardist of any fashion. His reading of Descuret,² Charcot,³ Lombroso, Ferri, has given him confidence, in ways which have been praised by some, but the explanation for it can be found in his instinct and the overall quality of his endeavours – which, on the other hand, was encouraged artificially by his wildly turbulent eagerness to imitate the triumph received by Emanuel⁴ in *L'Assommoir*, when that actor had played [Coupeau's] death by delirium tremens.

What Bracco⁵ calls simplicity is in fact the mechanic narrowness of an imitator who is essentially barred from any finesse . . . he was forced to come up with gimmicks and look for them in the *Criminal Anthropology*, in the asylums and the hospitals. Such banality feels satisfied with one method, to the extent that it retracts from even the unforeseen curiosities on the critics' part – since the early years, it found a valid gainsayer in Tommaso Salvini.

Unable to stop his career at the modest expressions of restraint and sincerity of naturalistic theatre, and too skilled to reach classical purity through these physical experiences, Ermete Zacconi saved himself from the distress and problems looming over his mediocrity by means of a trick which was successful thanks to his audience's ignorance (like Bracco's physiological Ibsenism). However, a day-by-day enfeeblement has been overcoming the withering process undergone by the Lombrosian laws . . . [Zacconi] is a stranger to classical theatre, a stranger to Shakespeare, whom he has tackled only after Ferri's interpretative

¹ *Tristi amori* [*Sad Loves*] (1887), a bourgeois drama and *Resa a discrezione* [*Discretionary Surrender*] (1886), a comedy, both by Giuseppe Giacosa. The other two are plays by Dumas fils: *Le Demi-Monde* (1855) and *L'Ami des femmes* (1864).

² Jean Baptiste Félix Descuret (1795-1871), a French physician and author, best known for writing *Médecine des passions* (1841) and *Les Merveilles du corps humain* (1856).

³ Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), a leading French neurologist based at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. His studies on hysteria influenced Freud.

⁴ Giovanni Emanuel (1847-1902), an eminent actor in whose company Zacconi had worked.

⁵ Roberto Bracco (1861-1943), a journalist and dramatist.

che le grullerie esegetiche del Ferri ridussero l'*Amleto* e l'*Otello* alla mentalità dei farmacisti.

Veramente un esame minuzioso del suo repertorio sembrerebbe uno scherzo di cattivo genere e un'imprudente sorpresa . . . E gioverà render giustizia al gusto connaturato, infallibile di Ermete Zacconi per gli orizzonti ben delimitati, senza ineguaglianze, placidamente esenti da pericoli e da oscuri propositi. Lealmente pago di monotone dizioni egli ci dirà i suoi lirici sfoghi come si compie un dovere quotidiano; alieno dalle avventure troppo preziose e rare ci verrà abituando ad agevoli confidenze con gli esotici *Otelli*, *Amleti*, *Macbetti* non troppo distanti, per il suo buon senso semplificatore, dai *Kean* e dai *Corradi*. . . .

Ma qui il buon Zacconi potrebbe argutamente interromperci: così non la penso io, e se voi mi chiedete Amleto io vi rispondo chiamando con il nome fortunato l'ultimo trucco della mia scienza. E questa risposta avrebbe il plauso di Enrico Ferri come le complicazioni di Ruggeri troverebbero un apologista in Arturo Graf; né una cronaca teatrale, registrato il compiacimento del pubblico, saprebbe che obiettare. Infatti Ermete Zacconi non si risparmia, Ermete Zacconi strafà. Il povero Shakespeare aveva scritto nella prima scena il colore generale di crepuscolo del dramma per dare una situazione e un'armonia ai personaggi? Deplorabile sottigliezza. Isoliamo Amleto, facciamone un caso patologico, una romantica Cenerentola: così suggerisce la più elementare sapienza degli effetti. . . .

Logicamente e organicamente Macbeth, redento da Shakespeare insieme con la sposa per il suo ardore modernissimo verso l'assoluta attività, verso il delitto come fare, diventa una figura di delinquente comune che si stempera nei flebili versi di G. Carcano invece che nella robusta prosa di A. De Stefani o nella dimessa fedeltà di C. Chiarini. Otello è il geloso per superstizione che cade in deliquio nei momenti

balderdash whittled *Hamlet* and *Othello* down to a pharmacist's frame of mind.

A detailed examination of his repertoire would truly seem a kind of sick joke, an ill-advised surprise . . . And it will be expedient to acknowledge Ermete Zacconi's infallible, inherent taste for well-traced horizons, without any unevenness, peacefully free from risks and dark designs. He feels loyally gratified with his one-note diction, and will always convey his lyrical outbursts in the manner of a daily chore; he's a stranger to excessively sophisticated and rare adventures and will get us used to easy, confidential intimacy with the exotic Othellos, Hamlets and Macbeths, who will appear – by a means of his simplifying common sense – not too different from the Kean and the Corrados⁶ . . .

But here our good Zacconi could piquantly interrupt us, and say: "That's not how I see it, and if you ask for Hamlet, I'll reply by invoking the felicitous name of the latest trick of my science". This answer would be applauded by Enrico Ferri, just like Ruggeri's⁷ complications would find an apologist in Arturo Graf; nor would a theatre journal know how to object, once it has acknowledged the appreciation of the audience. As a matter of fact, Ermete Zacconi never holds back: Ermete Zacconi is always overdoing it. Had poor Shakespeare applied a general twilight colour to the first scene of *Hamlet* so as to situate the action and harmonise the characters? What a deplorable subtlety. Let us isolate Hamlet, instead, and turn him into a pathological case, a romantic Cinderella – this is the choice suggested by the most elementary knowledge of dramatic effects . . .

Logically and organically, Macbeth, redeemed by Shakespeare together with his wife on account of his very modern ardour in the service of absolute activity, towards the notion of crime as pure action, is turned into the figure of a common delinquent, whose voice is diluted in G. Carcano's feeble lines instead of pronouncing A. De Stefani's robust prose⁸ or sticking to the unassuming faithfulness of C. Chiarini.⁹ Othello is the superstitious jealous man who faints at a solemn mo-

⁶ Edmund Kean, i.e. the protagonist of Alexandre Dumas' 1836 play, *Kean, ou Désordre et Génie*. "Corrado" should refer to the hero of Paolo Giacometti's *La morte civile* (1861).

⁷ Ruggero Ruggeri (1871-1953), an actor now especially remembered for playing in Pirandello's plays.

⁸ Alessandro de Stefani (1891-1970), a playwright and author of the translations of some of Shakespeare's plays (e.g. *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*).

⁹ Cino Chiarini (b. 1864) translated many plays by Shakespeare for the Florentine publisher Sansoni.

solenni se non ricorre ai procedimenti muscolari dei rovetiani disonesti . . .

Del resto il problema sta nel mettere al giusto posto gli sforzi di ognuno. Diremo pertanto che al barbaro Shakespeare Zacconi ha appreso i più raffinati problemi di scienza patologica e ha posto i suoi eroi al cimento duro di un confronto con una sapiente collezione di epilettici. E dovendosi trattare di effetti storici e di risultati definitivi, caratterizzeremo l'epoca e l'esperimento ricordando come un capitolo delle vicende incontrate dalla fama di Shakespeare sia venuto a coincidere per piacevole curiosità con la storia dell'antropologia criminale . . .

ment, if he does not resort to the muscular proceedings of Rovetta's crooks¹⁰ . . .

After all, the problem lies in the ability to justly rank everyone's efforts. Thus, we can say that Zacconi learned through Shakespeare, that barbarian, the most refined problems of pathological science, and has been subjecting Shakespeare's heroes to the harsh confrontation with a learned inventory of epileptics. And, since we have to deal with historical effects and final results, we'll define this age and this experiment by recalling how a chapter in the vicissitudes of Shakespeare's reception history came to coincide, pleasantly and curiously enough, with the history of criminal anthropology . . .

¹⁰ Gerolamo Rovetta (1851-1910), a dramatist close to the Verismo movement.

16. From Enrico Morselli. 1926. “Prefazione” [“Preface”]. In Luigi Lugiato, *Pazzi squilibrati e delinquenti nelle opere dei letterati*. Volume primo: *Guglielmo Shakespeare e le sue ‘Masterpieces’ Amleto – Macbeth – Re Lear – Otello* [*The Mad, the Deranged, and Criminals in Literary Works*. Vol. 1: *William Shakespeare and His Masterpieces*, Hamlet – Macbeth – King Lear – Othello], iii-xvi. Bergamo: C. Conti & C. editori.

In his lifetime, Luigi Lugiato (1879-1950) was the director of three psychiatric hospitals: first in Macerata, then, from 1920, in Bergamo, and, finally, in Milan (Mombello), where, in 1945, he was briefly incarcerated by the SS squadrons, being accused of antifascism (Zocchi 2013). He was one of the first to apply shock therapy to his patients, and set up a children’s neuropsychiatry ward in Mombello. He was also the author of a series of volumes exploring the relationship between psychology and the characters in the works of Shakespeare (the first volume), Zola, Manzoni, D’Annunzio, Dante, and the Greek dramatists.

Morselli (on whom, see text no. 13 in this volume) accepted to write a preface to the first volume, where he expounded the relationship between art and psychology. Unlike most Lombrosians who had preceded him, he stresses the difference between fiction and reality, and praises Lugiato for not following the path of the likes of Ziino and Ferri (without making such references explicit).

On the one hand, it is true that Lugiato chose not to pathologise Shakespeare’s characters. When he does, he always adds a disclaimer. For instance, when he diagnoses Ophelia with *amentia* (52), he writes that “è inutile arzigogolare in questi argomenti” (“quibbling in this case is pointless”), because Shakespeare was no psychiatrist; when he states that Othello should not be granted full responsibility, but “semi-responsibility” for his crime, according to the 47th article of the penal code, that would just be “una pazza ipotesi” (221, “a crazy hypothesis”). Yet, when it comes to discussing the Macbeths (79-119), Lugiato uses the same categories the Lombrosians had applied, and argues that they belong to a hybrid type: they are “*criminali per costituzione e per occasione*” (112, “*constitutional as well as incidental criminals*”, Lugiato’s italics).

Chiunque leggerà il libro vi scorgerà una prova evidente dell'interesse che l'Arte ha per chi fa professione di psicologo, ma non vi troverà un'esclusiva e perciò intollerabile applicazione delle nozioni di Psicopatologia teoretica e di Psichiatria clinica all'analisi e alla valutazione delle opere artistiche prese in esame. È degno di lode il disinteresse, per dir così, professionale dell'autore; la coltura medico-psicologica, indubbiamente solida e vasta nel Lugiatò, non lo ha condotto a ripetere l'errore commesso, ad esempio, da Max Nordau molti anni fa sotto il Lombrosismo più intransigente, quando ogni particolare, ogni personalismo in Arte veniva interpretato come rivelazione di abnormità psichica . . .

. . . il genio crea, sì, ed inventa, ma trae i suoi materiali dal fondo comune o istintivo o emotivo o ideativo, così che qualsiasi creazione ha dei precedenti, ha una storia, ha delle radici nella mentalità collettiva. La Psicanalisi lo ha ben dimostrato rinvigorendo la formula della rispondenza tra ontogenesi e filogenesi, mentre la Storia letteraria di ogni epoca e di ogni grado di civiltà già aveva scoperti questi nessi del genio con la psiche etico-sociale. Ed a ragione si dice che allora nel poeta, nell'artista si impersona il 'genio' della sua razza. In riguardo al processo creativo in Arte, la Psicologia moderna assegna sempre più grande importanza alle forze subconscie, istintive . . .

La teoria del 'genio e follia', sebbene edificata da un Moreau de Tours e da un Lombroso con una imponente documentazione, ha fatto il suo tempo. Una vota che si è veduto come il Subcosciente e perfino, nell'edificio della Psicanalisi, l'Inconsciente sia sempre attivo in tutti gli spiriti anche i meno geniali, e vi produca, ad esempio, fenomeni onirici che hanno tante analogie con le creazioni artistiche, la spiegazione dell'estro creativo con elementi psicopatologici ha perduta ogni ragion d'essere . . . Io ho, ai suoi tempi, combattuta la tesi Lombrosiana rilevando che il genio non è una variazione patologica, bensì ne è una progressione, ossia consta o di un più perfetto adattamento all'ambiente storico-psicologico, o di una anticipazione sulle modificazioni evolutive e sulle acquisizioni future della psiche sociale . . .

Non si pretenda mai che l'opera d'Arte corrisponda in pieno alle nozioni scientifiche. Prendiamo un personaggio Shakespeariano, con l'animo turbato dalla passione, ovvero nel tumulto del delirio; parecchi hanno cercato di dimostrare che lo Shakespeare possedeva coltura psi-

Whoever reads this book will find in it sufficient proof of why Art interests psychologists so much, but the reader will not find in it an exclusive, and thus intolerable, application of the notions of theoretical Psychopathology and clinical Psychiatry to the analysis and assessment of those works of art which are its object. The author's professional disinterest, if one may put it like this, is praiseworthy. Lugiatò's medico-psychological knowledge, which is indubitably sound and vast, has not led him to repeat the mistake made, for instance, by Max Nordau, many years ago, under the strictest Lombrosianism, when any peculiar quality, any personalism in Art came to be interpreted as psychic abnormality . . .

. . . the genius creates and invents, sure, but its materials are drawn from the common, instinctual, emotive, or ideational bedrock, so that each new creation has some precedents, a story, roots in collective mentality. Psychoanalysis has well demonstrated this phenomenon by strengthening the formula which shows the correspondence between ontogenesis and phylogenesis; on its part, the Literary History of any age and belonging to any degree in civilisation had already discovered such nexuses between the genius and the ethical-social psyche. One says, with good reason, that the poet and the artist embody the 'genius' of their race. As regards the creative process in Art, Modern Psychology has been attributing more and more significance to instinctive, subconscious forces . . .

The genius-and-madness theory, although articulated by personages such as Moreau de Tours¹ and Lombroso, with an abundance of documentation, has had its day. Once we have seen how the Subconscious, and even the Unconscious (in psychoanalytic terms), are always active within all spirits, even those least endowed with genius, and produce, for instance, oneiric phenomena (having so many analogies with artistic creation), then, the explanation of creative inspiration as due to psychopathological elements loses its constituent reason . . . Back then, I fought against the Lombrosian theory, and argued that genius is not a mere pathological variation, but consists in its progression, i.e. either in a fitter adaptation to the historical psychological environment, or in an anticipation of evolutive alterations and future acquisitions of the social psyche . . .

One should never claim that a work of Art should fully correspond to scientific notions. Let us take a Shakespearean character as an example – a mind distressed by passion, or in the anguish of delirium. Several scholars have tried to demonstrate that Shakespeare had received

¹ Jacques-Joseph Moreau (1804-1884), a French psychiatrist deeply interested in drug-induced delirium and the so-called '*folie raisonnante*'.

chiatrica fino a supporre che egli abbia frequentato l'Asilo di Bedlam per pazzi; ma questa direttiva della critica estetica era, e tanto più oggi sarebbe errata. Il grande poeta non era, né poteva essere un clinico: i suoi tipi dalla psiche anormale non debbono costituire 'casi' di cui la Psichiatria possa giovare nella nosografia e classificazione delle malattie mentali; se tale fosse lo scopo dell'Arte essa fallirebbe e perderebbe ogni influsso sull'anima collettiva. Chi vuole vedere dei dementi, degli allucinati, dei deliranti[,] dei pazzi morali, vada nelle Cliniche, nei Manicomi, nelle Carceri, ed allora capirà in che si differenzino Arte e Scienza; nulla di estetico offrono al nostro spirito un vero maniaco, un melanconico ansioso, un paranoico, un delinquente-nato, appunto perché esse ci presentano la individuazione del guasto che la malattia o la degenerazione producono nella psiche umana. Non si può trasferire in Teatro, in Poesia, nel Romanzo, la sintomatologia esatta delle psicosi: l'Arte ha bisogno di togliere alle sue figurazioni tutto ciò che caratterizza l'individuo per attenersi alle linee sintetiche, a quelle che formano il 'tipo' . . .

a psychiatric education – to the extent that some have suggested that he visited Bedlam, London’s insane asylum. In any case, this intention among the aesthetic critics was wrong, and even more so these days. The great poet was not, nor could be, a clinical physician: his types expressing an abnormal psyche must not constitute ‘cases’ which can be used by Psychiatry for nosographic purposes or the classification of mental diseases. If this were the purpose of Art, Art would founder, and lose any influence over the collective soul. Those who want to see actual demented, hallucinants, delirious patients, and the moral mad, should go to the Clinic, the Asylum, the Jail: there they will understand what differentiates Art from Science. An actual maniac, an anxious melancholiac, a paranoid, a born criminal offer nothing aesthetic for our spirit, precisely because they present the individuation of that malfunction, which a disease or degeneration produce in the human psyche. One cannot transfer the exact symptomatology of psychosis to theatre, poetry, or the novel: Art needs to strip from its figurations anything that characterises the individual, in order to adhere to those synthetic lines, which form the ‘type’ . . .

17. From Silvio Tissi. 1929. *La psicanalisi, scienza dell'io o del mistero-problema psichico: con saggi di analisi psichica su drammi di Pirandello, Ibsen, Shakespeare, Tolstoi e Shaw* [Psychonalysis, the Science of the I, or of the Psychic Problem-Mystery: Essays of Psychic Analysis of Plays by Pirandello, Ibsen, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Shaw]. Milano: Hoepli: 183-90.

The grandiloquent title of this book says something of Silvio Tissi's personality. Tissi (1888-1971) was an eclectic philosopher and intellectual (see Giraldi 1973). Although he was one of the first to introduce Freudian psychoanalysis in Italy, there is general agreement that his grasp of Freud's methods and findings was not elevated. He has been called a "charlatan" (Migliorino 2015, 782), and a lecture of his held in Trieste under the auspices of the Associazione medica triestina was reportedly so bad in its distortions of Freud's works that Edoardo Weiss was invited to make up for it, with five lectures, between February and June 1930. Weiss had resigned from the psychiatric hospital of Trieste after refusing to join the Fascist part and would found the Italian Psychoanalytic Society in 1932. Still, Tissi's book was successful and ran through other three editions: people were eager to learn about psychoanalysis.

The book is dedicated to Sigmund Freud, but, given the premises, the dedicatee would not have been happy to read it. Freud had published on *Hamlet* in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), but Tissi simplifies the Oedipus Complex; some passages seem intentionally obscure. Still, it is a meaningful document of a psychoanalytic reading of the play (before Ernest Jones' landmark *Hamlet and Oedipus*, 1949): it is the first Italian specimen of a new kind of Shakespeare literary criticism, differing from, and yet contiguous to, the criminological and psychiatric readings which had preceded it.

Chi è Amleto *psicanaliticamente*?

Le neurosi esaminate precedentemente, le *attuali* e quelle di *traslazione*, nei loro vari gradi di neurastenia, neurosi d'angoscia, ipocondria, e isterismo di conversione, isterismo di angoscia, parafrenia, sono dovute si è detto, a fissazioni della *libido* in seguito ad avvenimenti accidentali, preistorici e infantili. L'*io* e la *libido*, non armonizzandosi, entravano in conflitto. La *libido* si sottraeva all'*io*, rifugiandosi in qualche *sintomo* neurotico. Compito del medico psicanalista si è l'illustrazione della via percorsa dalla *libido* e la ripresa di possesso di questa da parte dell'*io*.

Freud ha insistito e insiste anche oggi, tenacemente, sull'*Oedipus-Complexus* che regge l'edificio psicanalitico. In Amleto come si rappresenta la tendenza all'incesto? E in quali rapporti sta con la personalità di Amleto? Questo strano personaggio, così potenzialmente vivo, da quale forma di neurosi è caratterizzato? Amleto non sembra riassumere in sé le più varie forme patologiche; e, d'altronde, Amleto non sembra dominarle tutte in uno sforzo superiore di coscienza?

Amleto non è un pazzo, e la tragedia di Shakespeare lo dimostra. Amleto simula, nel suo lucido proposito, la pazzia. È un attore accorto della sua tragedia spirituale. E questa tragedia è appunto una tragedia della pazzia. Amleto possiede una saggezza rappresentativa della pazzia che non è *la pazzia*, in genere, ma *una pazzia*, quella che ad Amleto, alla sua specialissima personalità, conviene. La saggezza e la pazzia non si contrappongono in Amleto, né si giustappongono: v'è in Amleto invece, un *io* potentissimo, sintetico, che domina sé stesso nelle sue due espressioni mobilissime e, spesso, confondibili, di saggezza critica e di pazzia istintiva. Quest'ultima però in Amleto, colorata dagli splendori dell'umorismo, sa discernersi e penetrarsi, nonché indovinarsi e riflettersi.

Quì [sic] è l'originalità del genio di Shakespeare; e non nel solo Amleto. Pazzo, dunque, savio, Amleto? Amleto sa *simulare la sua pazzia*.

Quali origini ha simil pazzia, vedremo. Amleto, per vivere, deve *ri-crearsi*; deve, intendo, costruire un Amleto in grado di dimenticare. Che cosa? Qualcosa che fa veramente impazzire Amleto al solo pensarvi. E che vuole Amleto da questa sua creatura? Vuole qualcosa per cui la sua volontà sia vana. Amleto tende al *suicidio morale* prima che a quello materiale. L'oscillazione di Amleto tra Amleto ed Amleto è tragicomica, come tragicomico è il personaggio shakespeariano.

Who is Hamlet, *psychoanalytically*?

Those neuroses, which we have hitherto examined, can be divided into *actual* neuroses and *transference* neuroses. They can further be characterised by different degrees of neurasthenia, or as anxiety neuroses, hypochondria, conversion hysteria, anxiety hysteria, paraphrenia – as we have seen, they are all due to fixations of the *libido* following accidental, ‘pre-historic’ events, which took place in one’s childhood. When the *ego* and the *libido* do not match in harmony, there is a clash between them, and the *libido* removes itself from the *ego*, taking shelter in what becomes a neurotic *symptom*. A psychoanalyst’s task is to illustrate the route which has been followed by the *libido*, facilitating its reappropriation on the part of the *ego*.

Freud has strenuously insisted, and still does, on the paramount importance of the *Oedipus-Complexus*, which is indeed the groundwork of the whole psychoanalytic building. How is Hamlet’s tendency to incest to be detected? How does it relate to his personality? By which forms of neurosis is Hamlet’s strange character affected, who contains such a potency of life? Does Hamlet not seem to encompass the most various pathological forms? Besides, does he not seem to dominate all of them, by a superior endeavour of conscience?

Hamlet is not mad: Shakespeare’s tragedy itself proves it. He simulates madness, lucidly and wilfully. He is a self-aware player of his own spiritual tragedy. Which tragedy is indeed a tragedy of madness. Hamlet possesses enough knowledge to stage not madness, in general, but *one* particular form of madness – the form which can help his personality, which is one of a kind. In Hamlet, sanity and madness do not oppose each other, because he is characterised by an exceedingly powerful, synthetic ego, which knows how to dominate itself in his two very mobile (and often not mutually unmistakable) expressions: critical soundness and instinctual madness. The latter, on the other hand, can discern, fathom, predict, and reflect itself, and is tinged with the bright colours of Hamlet’s wit.

Herein lies the originality of Shakespeare’s genius, not just in Hamlet. But is Hamlet then sane or mad? He can *simulate his own madness*.

We shall see which are the origins of such madness. In order to live, Hamlet needs to *re-create* himself, which means that he has to construct a Hamlet who can forget. What does he want to forget? Something, the mere thought of which, is actually driving Hamlet mad. And what does Hamlet want from such a creature? He wants something before which his will shall be helpless. Hamlet will pursue *moral suicide* sooner than material suicide. Hamlet’s fluctuation between two different versions of himself is tragicomic, and his is a Shakespearean tragicomic character.

Amleto non pensa: il valore di un pensiero-necessità gli sfugge. Ciò è bene per Amleto: Amleto si vale dei paradossi più stridenti e delle immagini più grottesche per *stordire sé stesso*. Shakespeare fa di Amleto che non pensa, che non vuole, che tende alla distruzione del proprio spirito e della propria sventura, un uomo di genio singolarissimo che *scopre* ovunque leggi e rapporti. Si ammira il pazzo; poi si ammira ancor più il saggio che si affina al fuoco di una pazzia così intensa e così violenta.

Vediamolo da vicino: Amleto vuole “esser cugino del re attuale, non figlio”. Sa di esser *vicino al sole*. Conosce la morte *come una realtà* che egli ha in sé. La morte è, non sembra. Amleto tende a rilevare le proprie lacune: comincia il lavoro di valorizzazione dell’Amleto da contrapporsi all’Amleto. Bisogna *armare* lo spettro della paranoia. Bisogna, soprattutto, far tacere la voce imperiosa dell’*Oedipus-Complexus*. Amleto odia la madre da quando questa ha legato la propria vita allo zio. L’amore di Amleto verso il padre è una *sublimazione della libido*. Il padre è fisso *negli occhi del pensiero* di Amleto. Lo *spettro* paterno è una rappresentazione di artista ispirato: è vivo tutto, con lo scettro e la visiera alzata, e l’armatura sonante. È triste, pallido, e guarda *con sguardi insistenti*, come l’idea fissa di Amleto. Amleto vive per la vendetta; ma la vendetta non è facile; perciò lo spettro è pallido e triste; perciò Amleto tende a rinnegare sé stesso, a creare un *Amleto* pazzo. Vedete come è laborioso l’*Oedipus-Complexus*. Amleto può parlare a uno spettro *ricoperto di acciaio* che ha saputo aprire *le pesanti mascelle di pietra* del sepolcro, per uscire in mezzo ai vivi, a uno spettro che attrae con la forza della sua sventura e che chiama a sé Amleto, il figlio Amleto. Ecco l’anima *immortale* di un vivo che ha in sé la morte, alle prese con l’anima

Hamlet does not think: the virtue of a ‘thinking necessity’ eludes him. And he profits from this phenomenon: Hamlet avails himself of the most strident paradoxes, and the most grotesque imagery, in order to *benumb himself*. Shakespeare creates this Hamlet who does not think, who has no will, who pursues both the destruction of his own spirit and his misfortune, thereby turning him into a unique man of genius, who is able to *unveil* laws and correspondences everywhere. One can admire a mad person, but, then again, one admires more a sane person who refines their sanity by the fire of such an intense and raging madness.

Let us look at him up close: Hamlet finds himself wanting to be “more than kin and less than kind”. He knows he is “too much i’t’h’ sun”.¹ He knows that death is like a reality he bears within himself (“But I have that within which passeth show”),² because death “is”, it “know[s] not ‘seems’”.³ Hamlet tends to detect his own weaknesses, and he sets off to valorise a Hamlet who will stand against the former Hamlet. He needs to *arm* the “spirit in arms”⁴ of paranoia. Most importantly, he needs to hush the imperious voice of the *Oedipus-Complexus*. Hamlet has hated his mother since she has knit her life with his uncle. The love Hamlet feels towards his father is a *sublimation* of his *libido*. His father is always before Hamlet’s “eye’s mind”.⁵ The ghost of his father is generated by an inspired artist: consider the utter liveliness of his representation – for instance, he wields his sceptre, “wears his beaver up”,⁶ and wears his stridently sounding armour. He is sad, pale, and “fixes his eyes most constantly”,⁷ which recalls Hamlet’s fixation. Hamlet lives to wreak his revenge, but revenge is not something easy: that is why the ghost is pale and looks “frown-ingly”⁸ – that is why Hamlet tends to renege on his own self, and creates mad Hamlet. You see how industriously toilsome the *Oedipus-Complexus* can be. Hamlet can speak to a ghost who has been “revisiting” the living “in complete steel”,⁹ after opening the “ponderous and marble jaws”¹⁰ of his sepulchre – a ghost who draws, by the strength of his misfortune, Hamlet, his son Hamlet, unto himself. Here we have the “immortal” soul of a living being who has, within himself, death, and who has to cope

¹ 1.2.65; 67 (Tissi does not seem to be aware of the sun/son pun).

² 1.2.85.

³ 1.2.76.

⁴ 1.2.254.

⁵ 1.2.184.

⁶ 1.2.228

⁷ 1.2.231.

⁸ 1.2.229.

⁹ 1.3.33.

¹⁰ 1.3.31.

immortale di un morto ch'è shakespeareianamente segnato di vita. . .

. . . Amleto si chiede perché egli sia nato “per rimettere le cose a posto”. Timore? No: *voluttà di dominio su sé stesso*. Amleto *sembra* pazzo a Polonio: in realtà Amleto che ha saputo crearsi diverso, dice, dando alla sua creazione il proprio acume beffardo e severo, cose profondissime di umorismo ch'è, se vuoi, la caricatura della saggezza. Dialettico stringente coi vili cortigiani Rosenkranz e Guildenstern, Amleto lancia sprazzi di luce abbagliante sui misteri psichici. Per esempio, Amleto definisce il sogno *un'ombra*. Freud, il grande scopritore della verità dei sogni, ha saputo trovare il *corpo* di questa ombra.

Immersi nella luce del sonno, cogliamo le ombre labili del nostro spirito, nell'intuizione. Noi siamo, per Amleto, *quintessenza di polvere*; o sublimazione di distruzione incessante, si direbbe oggi. Amleto è pazzo quando “spira il vento di nord-nord-ovest”; è savio quanto spira in senso diverso. Il ghiribizzo è scientifico, nonostante l'apparenza: le malattie nervose, sappiamo da quanto si è detto fin qui, son dovute a *cause accidentali* . . . La cerebralità di Amleto conduce alla neurosi, e all'arte: a generare buoni figlioli basta la gagliarda e infallibile intelligenza dell'istinto. Anche qui Amleto è *intuitore di verità*. “Se mai, sposa un pazzo”. Già: il pazzo è primitivo nell'istinto. Questi, poi, come potrebbe simulare una pazzia che ignora di possedere?

Da quanto appare, i paradossi del pazzo Amleto sono lampeggianti divinazioni . . .

Non so che direbbe B. Shaw se sapesse che, per via diversa, anche psicanaliticamente, si può giurare sulla saggezza di Amleto. La cui malattia sta tutta in un eccesso di virtù fantastica che simula sapientemente una *follia*. Qui i *sintomi*, per tornare alla nostra terminologia, sono quasi occulti. Per cui diremo anche che Amleto è un *folle* nell'intimo, senza nasconderci che “intima” in Amleto è pure quella saggezza che in altri casi è superficiale.

Chiediamone conto a Edipo.

with the “immortal” soul of a dead man,¹¹ who is, in turn, in keeping with Shakespeare’s most typical style, tainted with life . . .

. . . Hamlet wonders why he was born “to set it right”.¹² Does he feel fear? No, his is a *rapturous will to dominate himself*. Hamlet *seems* mad to Polonius, when, in fact, he has been able to recreate himself into something else. He deals with this creation of his with a mocking and cool sharpness, and what he utters bears the mark of the profoundest wit (which one could term the caricature of wisdom). He is such a peremptory dialectician when in the company of those base courtiers, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet flares dazzling light onto the mysteries of the psyche. For instance, Hamlet defines dreams as “but a shadow”.¹³ Freud, the great discoverer of the truth of dreams, has been able to find the *body* casting such shadows.

When we are immersed in the luminosity of sleep, we can grasp the fleeting shadows of our spirit, by intuition. We are, as Hamlet says, a “quintessence of dust”¹⁴ – nowadays one would speak of a sublimation of an unstoppable destruction. Hamlet is “but mad north-north-west”:¹⁵ he is sane when the wind blows from another direction. This bizarre fantasy has a scientific basis, despite appearances: we know, from what has already been discussed, that nervous diseases are due to *accidental causes* . . . Hamlet’s cerebral quality leads to neurosis, and to art: if one wants to bear good children, the vigorous and infallible intelligence of instinct is more than enough. Here again, Hamlet *intuits some truths*: “Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool”.¹⁶ Yes: a fool is primitive as far instinct is concerned. Besides, how could a fool simulate a madness he ignores to possess?

One gathers that the paradoxes of mad Hamlet are in fact flashes of divination . . .

I do not know what B. Shaw would say, if he heard that one can swear by Hamlet’s sanity, which has been proved in yet another way: psychoanalytically. Hamlet’s disease merely consists in an excess of imaginative faculty cleverly *simulating folly*. The *symptoms*, to use our terminology, are almost completely hidden. Hamlet may be a fool deep within, but as deep within as his mental soundness, which is superficial in other respects.

Let us ask Oedipus to explain how this works.

¹¹ The reference is to Hamlet’s words to Horatio: “And for my soul, what can it do to that, / Being a thing immortal as itself?” (1.3.47-8).

¹² 1.5.190.

¹³ 2.2.262.

¹⁴ 2.2.310

¹⁵ 2.2.380.

¹⁶ 3.1.140.

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Italians found another way to engage with Shakespeare besides opera. In 1923, Italian intellectual Piero Gobetti wrote that his age would be remembered as a curious chapter in the reception history of Shakespeare, when the Bard got entangled with ideas of criminal anthropology. In fact, the uses of Shakespeare by Lombroso's school are now forgotten. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare began to be portrayed as a genius who anticipated the findings of the Italian Positivist School, or, alternatively, as an authority who could debunk them. Shakespeare's own psyche and the characters of his plays were explored and pathologised. These studies occasionally percolated into the practices of courthouses, prisons, hospitals, and asylums, and had an impact on the performance of Shakespeare's plays. This volume provides an edition of hitherto uncollected primary sources which document these uses of Shakespeare. Each text has a parallel English translation, and is introduced by a preface providing details about the context and its main discursive stances. The volume also features a critical introduction and explanatory notes.

Emanuel Stelzer is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Verona. His interests include the study of early modern paradoxes, the Italian sources of Shakespeare's plays, and the classical reception in early modern England. He is the author of *Portraits in Early Modern English Drama: Visual Culture, Play-Texts, and Performances* (Routledge, 2019) and his Italian translation of John Milton's *Comus* was published in 2020 (ETS). His articles have appeared in *Critical Survey*, *Early Theatre*, *JEGP*, *English Studies*, and *N&Q*. His main interests are early modern literature and drama, textual studies, and theatre history. His work on William Sampson has earned him an MSCA Seal of Excellence and the *Huntington Library Quarterly* Centennial Essay Prize.

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