

Dialoghi con Leucò by Cesare Pavese

Edited by

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With

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Direction

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Stage Direction

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Soundtrack

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Video

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This show, produced by the Venetian theatre company “Krisis” and first presented in Ravenna on January 18, 2006, is based on a target-oriented selection of dialogues from Cesare Pavese’s *Dialoghi con Leucò* (1947), a text that has a particular linguistic strength, so much so that it is regarded by Gianfranco Contini and others as “a poetic prose, close to *Lavorare stanca*”.

Among the twenty-seven dialogues included in the book, all concerning the Greek myth, this new editing has privileged the ones that are likely to be the most familiar to the audience, because of their immediate reference to the Homeric poems. After Bellerophon, who is mentioned in the *Iliad* as an extraordinary hero of the previous generation, the show introduces the ‘modern’ hero, Odysseus and, next to him, some female characters, who play such an important role both in Homer and in Pavese’s imagery: Calypso, Circe, Ino Leucothea, Helen.

The dialogues that have been selected for the show are presented in the order originally settled by Pavese himself: this choice, however, implies a logic connexion, which reveals a thick net of suggestions and internal references. From the deepest abyss of fragility (the male/mortal, personified by Bellerophon), we get to the top of might and power (the female/immortal, embodied by Artemis/Helen, according to a pattern which often recurs in Pavese’s works, and culminates in the poetic collection *Verrà la morte e avrà e i tuoi occhi*).

During the show, the dialogues are read on stage by the actors, with minimal (or no) production design, which reflects the frugality of the ancient Greek theatre. But the performance of the actors is reinforced by some video clips (shown in back projection): they are a visual representation and a deepening of Pavese’s text, always suspended between ancient and modern, between Greek myth and contemporary world. For instance, the melodramatic face-to-face between Odysseus and Circe (evoked in the dialogue *Le streghe*) is rendered by means of a black and white short, which nods to silent cinema and to the mythological *Kolossal* movies of D’Annunzio’s age, from *La caduta di Troia* to *Cabiria* (Pavese, being a cinephile himself, probably saw such works in his lifetime). On the other hand, the destruction of Troy (the consequence of Helen’s ruinous power) is represented by means of a skilful superposition of fires (the *falò* of the Piemontese country tradition), inside which we can glimpse some pieces of modern sculpture (the wood and pottery *horses* by Ceroli and Palladino).

This multimedia staging of Pavese’s work is completed by an original soundtrack (based on percussions and the amplification of voices, and subject to variations with every single performance), and by a complex set of lighting, which aims at underlining the concrete values of the context (a

basilica, a palace, a theatre, a square, and so on).

The poster, both classic and provocative at the same time, summarizes the purposes of the show, which follows in the footsteps of Pavese in order to inquire into Greek myth, without avoiding its impact on modern (and even post-modern) interpretations.

Eleonora Cavallini