

5 The Factory as Cultural Center

New Disciplines, New Magazines

The field of Italian industrial culture was extremely varied during the economic boom, but it was characterized above all by the activity of cultural magazines, the interdisciplinary quality of the so-called 'human sciences' and the rise of factory literature.

Some magazines were directly linked to public or private companies, like *Pirelli* and *Civiltà delle macchine* (Machine Civilization). *Pirelli* was published from 1948 to 1972, with the aim of uniting the culture of science and technology to the culture of the humanities. Articles on industrial production and technology were published alongside articles on topics ranging from art to architecture, sociology to economics, town planning to literature. The magazine counted among its collaborators Giulio Carlo Argan, Dino Buzzati, Italo Calvino, Gillo Dorfles, Umberto Eco, Eugenio Montale and Elio Vittorini. *Civiltà delle macchine* was directed from 1953 to 1958 by the poet Leonardo Sinisgalli. One of Sinisgalli's closest collaborators was Giuseppe Eugenio Luraghi, the Finmeccanica manager whose company – along with the magazine – would later join the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (Institute for Industrial Reconstruction, IRI). In a 1965 interview with Ferdinando Camon, Sinisgalli recounted the birth of *Civiltà delle macchine* in legendary terms:

L'inverno del 1953, a Roma in un ufficio di Piazza del Popolo, quando io misi a fuoco il progetto di *Civiltà delle macchine*, [...] la cultura dell'Occidente era rimasta incredibilmente arretrata e scettica nei confronti della tecnica, dell'ingegneria. Voglio dire che erano sfuggite alla cultura le scoperte di Archimede e di Leonardo, di Cardano e di Galilei, di Newton e di Einstein. Io volevo sfondare le porte dei laboratori, delle specole, delle celle. Mi ero convinto che c'è una simbiosi tra intelletto e istinto, tra

ragione e passione, tra reale e immaginario. Ch'era urgente tentare una commistione, un innesto, anche a costo di sacrificare la purezza.

(In the winter of 1953, in an office in Rome's Piazza del Popolo, when I started focusing on the *Civiltà delle macchine* project, [...] Western culture was still incredibly backward and skeptical with regards to technology and engineering. I mean, even the discoveries of Archimedes and Leonardo had escaped the attention of culture; even those of Cardano and Galilei, Newton and Einstein. I wanted to break down the doors of the laboratories, observatories and cells. I was convinced of a symbiosis between the intellect and the instincts, between reason and passion, between the real and the imaginary. I was convinced of the need to urgently attempt a mixture or a graft, even if it meant sacrificing purity.)¹

One of the most original results of the encounter between humanists and industrial culture was the acceptance, in a context still strongly influenced by Benedetto Croce's idealism, of sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis: disciplines that would become the specialties of Luciano Anceschi's neo-avantgarde journal *Il Verri*. On the one hand, the Fordist imperatives of human resource organization acted in instrumental ways on sociology and psychology, but on the other hand, a series of tensions and experiments around psychoanalysis enabled critical research to coexist, for about a decade, with goals that were strictly production-driven. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the center of psychoanalysis on the Italian peninsula was Trieste (technically part of the Austrian Empire), but by the mid-twentieth century it had shifted to the Olivetti company. Already before the end of the Second World War, the enlightened industrialist Adriano Olivetti was convinced that the fall of Fascism would facilitate the introduction of psychoanalysis' most dynamic currents. Olivetti laid the foundations for a publishing house – the *Nuove Edizioni Ivrea* (New Editions Ivrea), which became the *Edizioni di Comunità* (Community Editions) – and acquired the rights to publish some works, like Carl Jung's *Psychological Types*. Olivetti also hired Cesare Musatti, one of the first Italian psychologists, to set up a 'Centro di psicologia del lavoro' (Center of Industrial Psychology).² The writings of Paolo Volponi and Ottiero

1 Cited in Camon, F. 1965. *Il mestiere del poeta*. Milan: Lerici. 96.

2 Musatti, C et al. 1980. *Psicologi in fabbrica. La psicologia del lavoro negli stabilimenti Olivetti*. Turin: Einaudi. XV–XVII.

Ottieri, both Olivetti employees, presented such a high concentration of psychic themes that their works have been indexed under the heading “*folia*” (madness).³ Moreover, Volponi invented poetic-narrative forms with which to work through the trauma of displacement and the processes of personality dissolution integral to sociocultural transformations. In their consistency, Volponi’s writings presented themselves as both realist and visionary, while the distress of the characters was always represented in relation to collective contradictions.

Starting with *Memoriale* (The My Troubles Began, 1962), Volponi used his own factory experience to build a reserve of images and psychoanalytic situations. When Olivetti hired Ottieri and Volponi (the first in 1953 as human resources manager, the second in 1956 as director of social services) the company was enjoying a period of intense expansion that allowed for the presence, alongside technicians and engineers, of intellectuals like psychologists, poets, architects and sociologists. Every minute, the company’s ten factories – in Ivrea (Piedmont), Agliè (Piedmont), Turin (Piedmont), Massa (Tuscany), Pozzuoli (Campania), Barcelona, Glasgow, Buenos Aires, São Paulo and Johannesburg – produced six typewriters or calculators, and in 1957 it became the first in Italy to adopt a forty-five hour workweek. Nevertheless, there were problems: with the introduction of new electromechanical typewriters, Olivetti abandoned the individual piecework system and adopted the collective piecework system, a move that workerist critics like Raniero Panzieri judged paternalistic and a sign of the rising neo-capitalist “*corte feudale*” (feudal court).⁴ These tensions were reflected in the circumstances leading to Volponi’s hiring: in February 1956, Olivetti fired the psychoanalyst, Auschwitz survivor and director of social services Luciana Nissim, together with her husband, the head of internal relations Franco Momigliano. Further tensions were reflected in marketing contexts, where the neo-Marxist poet and essayist Franco Fortini

3 Santato, G. 1988. “*Follia e utopia nella narrativa di Volponi.*” *Studi Novecenteschi*, vol. 25, no. 55. 29–66.

4 Cited in Zinato, E. 2018. “*Ciclostilati in proprio. La critica dei ‘Quaderni piacentini.’*” *Sistema periodico. Il secolo interminabile delle riviste*. Edited by Francesco Bortolotto et al. Bologna: Pendragon. 173–174.

had the job of naming the most famous Olivetti machines: *Lexicon*, *Lettera 33* and *Divisumma*, among others.

After Adriano Olivetti's death in 1960, factory psychology (and, to a lesser extent, sociology and marketing) was exposed to the suspicions of 'scientific reason.' Olivetti engineers saw psychologists as mere instruments for the selection and adaptation of employees, in line with the dictates of scientific management, whose mathematical criteria were gaining ground. As a result, Olivetti psychoanalysts who worked in medicine and factory sociology were faced with a difficult choice: adopt the rationalizing ideology of industrial psychology or leave the company.⁵ In a similar way, those writers and poets who had discovered at Olivetti a hospitable 'court' with an encouraging patron found it arduous to carry the utopian alliance of industry and literature beyond the 1960s.

Factory Culture and the Culture Industry

Scholars have usually approached this period of Italian literary production with an eye toward two moments: Vittorini's discussion of industry and literature in issue number four of *Il Menabò di letteratura* (1961) and the writings of Olivetti intellectuals. But what is of equal importance is that in these same years, Italian society was developing a feature already known to advanced capitalist countries: a culture industry. Thanks to his experience at Olivetti, Fortini mercilessly predicted this development in his celebrated 1960 essay "Verifica dei poteri":

I luoghi dell'opinione e del gusto letterario sono stati sorpresi nel giro di pochi anni dall'insorgere ed estendersi di forme per noi nuove di industria della cultura che hanno mutato aspetto e funzione ai tradizionali organi di mediazione fra scrittori e pubblico, come l'editoria, le librerie, i giornali, le riviste, i gruppi politici e d'opinione. Alla motorizzazione la società letteraria ha resistito anche meno dei nostri storici centri urbani.

5 Novara, F. 1980. "Organizzazione del lavoro: gli equivoci della ragione scientifica." in Musatti et al. *Psicologi in fabbrica*. 405.

(In just a few years, the role of opinion and literary taste has been surprised by the rise and spread of culture industries that are for us new. These industries have changed the appearance and function of the traditional organs of mediation between writers and the public, like publishing houses, bookstores, journals, magazines, political and opinion groups. Literary society has resisted motorization even less than our historic urban centers have.)⁶

Fortini's essays were polemically designed to demystify the idealistic illusions of *Il Menabò*. He wrote against a certain neopositivist ideology that foresaw a process of permanent cultural updating necessary to raise traditional humanism to the level of new technologies imposed by the industrial world. Nevertheless, in the opening proclamation to issue number six of *Il Menabò* (1963), Vittorini showed a precocious awareness of the cultural consequences of industrialization. In fact, Vittorini impatiently liquidated what he called the "solfa" (same old story)⁷ about industry and literature that was quickly becoming an intellectual fad:

Quello che [la questione industria e letteratura] nascondeva era molto semplicemente solo di essere il modo più aggiornato di tornare a porre il problema 'letteratura e realtà' [...]. Per intanto possiamo contentarci di riconstatare che la materia della letteratura come disciplina è almeno di stabilire 'nessi.' Cioè verificare che ci sono [i nessi]. Accorgersene. E istituirli letterariamente. Non ha nessun compito proprio, la letteratura, appena si ripeta che il suo compito sia di rappresentare il mondo; quasi che non ne faccia anche parte, del mondo; quasi cioè ch'essa sia parte solo dell'altro, il cosiddetto altro del vecchio linguaggio diviso tra 'catene' e 'spirito,' 'materia' e 'sospiro ardente,' 'valle di lagrime' e 'paso doble,' 'soldato morto' e 'bandiera,' 'peccato' e 'redenzione,' 'carne' e 'caro ideal,' 'elettrrodomestici' e 'missa est,' 'esistere' ed 'essere,' 'Coca' e 'Cola,' eccetera, eccetera.

([The question of industry and literature] was very simply hiding the fact that it was only the most updated way of retuning to pose the problem of 'literature and reality' [...]. For now, we can be satisfied with verifying that the goal of literature as a discipline is at a minimum to establish 'nexuses.' That is, to verify that [nexuses] exist. To notice them. And to institute them in a literary way. Literature has no job, as

6 Fortini, F. 1969. "Verifica dei poteri." *Verifica dei poteri. Scritti di critica e di istituzioni letterarie*. Milan: Il Saggiatore. 41.

7 Vittorini, E. 2008. "Premessa al Menabò 6." *Letteratura arte società. Articoli e interventi 1938-1965*. Edited by Raffaella Redondi. Turin: Einaudi. 1031.

soon as we say that the job of literature is to represent the world; almost as if it were not already part of the world; that is, almost as if it were only part of the other, the so-called other from an old language divided between ‘chain’ and ‘spirit,’ ‘material’ and ‘ardent breath,’ ‘valleys of tears’ and ‘*pasodoble*,’ ‘dead soldier’ and ‘flag,’ ‘sin’ and ‘redemption,’ ‘flesh’ and ‘beloved ideals,’ ‘household appliances’ and ‘*missa est*,’ ‘Coca’ and ‘Cola,’ etcetera, etcetera.)⁸

Vittorini’s unscrupulous and anti-idealistic reasoning uses irony to unmask a long cultural heritage of dualisms. This results in a drive to overstep disciplinary boundaries and contaminate the most distant semantic fields, from consumer culture (“household appliances” and “Coca Cola”) to patriotism (“flag” and “dead soldier”), from philosophy (“material” and “spirit”) to the popular imagination (“ardent breath”). If even the most important promoter of the debate around Italian industrial literature in the 1960s was aware of the developing contamination of humanistic culture with the omnipresent hegemony of neo-capitalist forms of life, then any consideration of a literary genre devoted to representing industrial conditions during the economic boom must examine two interconnected and conflicting aspects. On the one hand is a more plainly literary aspect, regarding the forms with which the novel represented factory labor. On the other hand is a more sociological aspect, regarding the relations of force in the field of intellectual labor, including the labor of writers. Here, it is useful to reference Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts:

One could ask whether the division into two markets characteristic of the fields of cultural production since the middle of the nineteenth century, with on one side the narrow field of producers for producers, and on the other side the field of mass production and ‘industrial literature,’ is not now threatening to disappear, since the logic of commercial production tends more and more to assert itself over avant-garde production (notably, in the case of literature, through the constraints of the book market).⁹

8 Vittorini, E. 2008. “Premessa al Menabò 6.” *Letteratura arte società. Articoli e interventi 1938–1965*. Edited by Raffaella Redondi. 1031.

9 Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Translated by Susan Emanuel. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996. 345.

If we want to get a full critical understanding of the field, then we must contrast those magazines directly connected to factory culture, like *Civiltà delle macchine*, with more peripheral publications like *Quaderni piacentini* (1962–1984). Under the direction of Piergiorgio Bellocchio and Grazia Cherchi, *Quaderni piacentini*'s many articles on culture, art, factory life and social conflicts served to illuminate and contradict each other in turn, according to a method of cultural investigation and power critique derived from the Frankfurt School and, in Italy, from the writings of Fortini. *Quaderni piacentini* also traversed the student-worker protests of 1968, becoming a veritable laboratory of politics and culture by mixing different disciplinary approaches and offering diverse ways of interpreting them politically. This is clear from the magazine's rubric 'Libri da leggere, libri da non leggere' (Books to Read, Books to Not Read), which recommended the novels of Beppe Fenoglio, Luigi Meneghello, Lucio Mastronardi and Paolo Volponi, but warned against those of Giovanni Arpino, Giorgio Bassani, Carlo Cassola, Dacia Maraini, Mario Soldati, Edoardo Sanguineti, Nanni Balestrini and Antonio Arbasino. Bellocchio used *Quaderni piacentini* to attack the Viareggio Prize jurors Pier Paolo Pasolini and Alberto Moravia, calling them "servi" (servants) of the culture industry. Roberto Roversi also labelled the writers of the Gruppo 63 (Group of 63) "funamboli leggiadri" (graceful tightrope walkers) who "giungono sorridendo sul palco dei vincitori" (arrive smiling on the winners' podium).¹⁰ The neo-avantgarde had opposed the traditional Italian literary establishment with a managerial dynamism. But the young intellectuals of the *Quaderni piacentini* met the neo-avantgarde with a powerful critique of ideology and with an idea of literature as an instrument of freedom. This was very different from the neo-avantgarde's technical and linguistic understanding of literature, which implied a renewal of poetic forms absorbed by industrial (and profit) production.

10 Cited in Zinato, E. 2018. "Ciclostilati in proprio. La critica dei 'Quaderni piacentini.'" *Sistema periodico. Il secolo interminabile delle riviste*. Edited by Francesco Bortolotto et al. 173–174.

The Factory Novel

From a strict literary history perspective, the term ‘Italian factory novel’ refers to a group of narrative texts that took as their object of study the world of industrial production, from Ottieri’s *Tempi stretti* (Tight Times, 1957) to Primo Levi’s *La chiave a stella* (The Wrench, 1978) and Volponi’s *Le mosche del capitale* (The Flies of Capital, published in 1989 but begun during the second half of the 1970s).

The Italian factory novel drew its formal features from documentary autobiography, naturalism and modernist experimentalism. All three of these traditions were concerns of Vittorini’s, whose Einaudi book series *I Gettoni* published one industrial novel (Ottieri’s *Tempi stretti*) and a collection of factory short stories (Luigi Davi’s *Gymkhana-Cross*, 1957). Vittorini carried this commitment forward with the journal *Il Menabò di letteratura*, which he founded together with Calvino in 1959. *Il Menabò* published authors close to the journal *Officina* (Workshop), like Francesco Leonetti, Volponi and Roversi, but it also looked with favor upon some neo-avantgarde writers like Elio Pagliarani.¹¹ In 1961, Vittorini opened the debate on the relationship between literature and industry with a surprising move: he distanced himself from the same authors he had published. Vittorini lambasted the traditional literary opposition between content and form: in his opinion, the Italian industrial novel had so far failed to move beyond the models of realism and naturalism presented by Charles Dickens and Émile Zola. Instead, it simply narrated the “novità” (novelty) of the industrial world with the outdated language of tradition.¹² For Vittorini, the translation of industrial reality into literature was not a question of objectively describing the themes and settings of the factory; it was a question of inventing new literary forms that could communicate

11 Zinato, E. 2009. “L’esperienza del *Menabò*.” *Il demone dell’anticipazione. Cultura, letteratura, editoria in Elio Vittorini*. Edited by Edoardo Esposito. Milan: Il Saggiatore. 163–176.

12 Vittorini, E. 2008. “Industria e letteratura.” *Letteratura arte società. Articoli e interventi 1938–1965*. Edited by Raffaella Redondi. 956.

the “catena di effetti che il mondo delle fabbriche mette in moto” (the chain of effects that the factory world sets in motion).¹³ As he wrote:

I prodotti della cosiddetta ‘école du regard,’ il cui contenuto sembra ignorare che esistano delle fabbriche, dei tecnici e degli operai, sono in effetti molto più a livello industriale, per il nuovo rapporto con la realtà che si configura nel loro linguaggio, di tutta la letteratura cosiddetta d’industria che prende le fabbriche per argomento.

(The products of the so-called ‘école du regard,’ whose content seems to ignore the existence of factories, technicians and workers, are in effect, because of the new relationship with reality configured in their language, on a level much more industrial than all of the so-called industrial literature that takes factories as its argument.)¹⁴

The Italian industrial novel was thus inaugurated in the context of a polarization between old and new, and of the resulting avantgardist and technological idea of a literature that transcends itself *ad infinitum* thanks to a commitment to experimentation. It is not a coincidence that the neo-avantgardist critic Renato Barilli spoke in these same years of breaking the “barriera del naturalismo” (barrier of naturalism), alluding to the breaking of the sound barrier by the newest jet airplanes.¹⁵

Vittorini’s merit consisted in having identified the formal problems of a literary genre that, starting from its name, presented itself as the mere documentation of a specific productive reality. Nevertheless, the opposition between formal and thematic aspects imposed by his analysis glossed over the existence, in twentieth-century Italian literature, of a vast and fertile gray zone between avantgardist innovation and traditional conservation, represented first and foremost by the modernist novel.¹⁶ It is therefore legitimate to ask, in rewriting the history of the Italian industrial novel, what sort of debt this narrative form might owe to authors like Luigi Pirandello, Italo Svevo and Carlo Emilio Gadda. Faced with Vittorini’s provocation, it is also necessary to establish the borders of the genre: not by opposing content to form, but rather by conjugating the two. One could reasonably count as

13 Vittorini, E. 2008. “Industria e letteratura.” 960.

14 Vittorini, E. 2008. “Industria e letteratura.” 959.

15 Barilli, R. 1964. *La barriera del naturalismo. Studi sulla narrativa italiana contemporanea*. Milan: Il Saggiatore.

16 Luperini, R and Tortora, M (eds). 2012. *Sul modernismo italiano*. Naples: Liguori.

industrial novels – in the strict sense – only those narrative texts that refer to settings, characters and situations pertinent to industrial production. But such an approach would exclude, for example, stories of the new intellectual condition, unthinkable without the processes of modernization, yet void of direct references to industrial labor (see Luciano Bianciardi's *La vita agra* (It's a Hard Life, 1962) and Goffredo Parise's *Il Padrone* (The Boss, 1964)). We can thus distinguish between two models: the first concerned with documentary or testimonial forms, styles and narrative structures that includes autobiographical notes, *reportage* and neorealist stories, and the second defined by neo-modernist experimentation, especially with regard to the narrator's voice and point of view. Examples of the first model are Ottieri's *Tempi stretti* and *Donnarumma all'assalto* (The Men at the Gate, 1959), of the second Volponi's *Memoriale*. Novels like Mastronardi's *Il calzolaio di Vigevano* (The Shoemaker from Vigevano, 1962) mix elements of both.

The first Italian industrial novel of the economic miracle was Ottieri's *Tempi stretti*. Published in 1957, the book presents a traditional narrative structure, founded on the naturalistic assumption of impersonal representation and with typical characters. These include the hesitant intellectual who is optimistic about industrial development (Giovanni), the worker who is fired for striking (Aldo), the female laborer fallen victim to the intense factory rhythms (Emma) and the paternalistic boss (Alessandri). *Tempi stretti* is situated at the intersection of autobiographical experience and realist fiction: just like Ottieri (who worked for Olivetti as a human resources manager), the protagonist Giovanni is a technician active in working-class politics but also attracted to the cultural milieu of the capitalist managers. Mastronardi's *Il calzolaio di Vigevano* is, on the contrary, perched between the literary reflection of reality and its deformation. Following the realist tradition, it is one part of a three-part series that also includes *Il maestro di Vigevano* (The Teacher from Vigevano, 1962) and *Il meridionale di Vigevano* (The Southerner from Vigevano, 1964). The book narrates the aspirations of social mobility of a generation of shoemakers who make tremendous sacrifices in an attempt to become wealthy entrepreneurs. After a long life of forbearance, the indebted protagonist Mario Sala is forced to close his small factory and return to work as a common

laborer. But Mastonardi's messy language relentlessly contaminates the free indirect discourse with neurotic and painful caricatures of Lombard dialect, something that associates his writing with that of Gadda. Moreover, the corporeal, grotesque and deforming aspects of the text render an exclusively realistic reading impossible. *Il calzolaio* is marked off from the tradition of naturalism by "la nera, atroce carica distruttrice, quasi la voglia di sporcare tutto, di indurre nausea di tutto: la vita privata, quella pubblica, l'universo borghese e operaio, il linguaggio stesso" (the black, atrocious destructive drive, practically the desire to dirty everything, to inspire a nausea of everything: private and public life, the bourgeois and working-class universe, language itself).¹⁷ Mastronardi's hyperbolic and aggressive language is not the sign of amateurism; it is the twisted and apocalyptic representation of a provincial setting where shoemakers live out their days.¹⁸

In *Memoriale*, Volponi veers closer to neo-modernist experimentation with a story told retrospectively by the insane factory worker and farmer Albino Saluggia. Recalling Svevo's delirious conscience of illness and impasse, Volponi builds his text on the practice of introspective self-analysis. Albino lacks the irony and mendacity of Svevo's protagonist Zeno, but his tendency to transform reality and his pathological attachment to his mother are of unmistakably modernist inspiration. The introspective nature of *Memoriale* serves to challenge the mimetic horizon of industrial literature: the genre is confronted by the point of view of an unreliable narrator, and by the insertion in the narrative universe of unfamiliar poetic techniques.

On the whole, the dilemma of 'industrial' writers was to develop narrative forms that could account for the anthropological processes integral to Fordist organization and for the constant oscillation between productive life and the 'free time' of mass consumption. The co-presence in their texts of *topoi* like the descent to the underworld and the factory/

17 Rinaldi, R. 1985. *Il romanzo come deformazione. Autonomia ed eredità gaddiana in Mastronardi, Bianciardi, Testori, Arbasino*. Milan: Mursia. 9.

18 Jacomuzzi, A. 1983. "Il maestro di Vigevano." *Per Mastronardi. Atti del Convegno di studi su Lucio Mastronardi*. Edited by Maria Antonietta Grignani. Florence: La Nuova Italia. 68.

church¹⁹ evidences the ambivalence of undertaking a Fordist organization of time and space across factory departments in the 1950s and 1960s. The environment of industrial labor was simultaneously perceived as infernal and sacred because it implied, in all of its spatial segments, the dialectic between exploitation and emancipation, between the capitalistic coercion and the servile self-awareness typical of modernity. During the 1970s, with the development of post-Fordist working conditions, such a space-time relation began to disintegrate. One could ask: Is Levi's 1978 book *La chiave a stella* an industrial novel, or does it signal instead the crisis of the genre? *La chiave a stella* does not represent factory life: the factory worker Liberto Fausone is a freelancer who travels regularly, thanks to his specific knowledge of the metal structures required by the global labor market. Starting with his name – 'Liberto' for libertine suggests an unwillingness to suffer any sort of restrictions – the protagonist refuses to be confined, obeying only his own creative temperament in a way that would make it impossible to take on Albino Saluggia's job. Fausone signals the triumph of *homo faber* and the gesture of labor: "la fabbrica è scomparsa, e così la segregazione ma anche la dimensione collettiva. [...] Scomparsa dunque l'alienazione, ma anche qualunque idea di conflittualità: Fausone trova il suo riscatto nella professionalità, non nella lotta di classe" (the factory has disappeared, and with it segregation, but also the dimension of the collective. Thus alienation has disappeared, but also any idea of conflict: Fausone finds his redemption in professionalism, not in class struggle).²⁰ The last fruits of the season of Italian industrial literature might be represented by Volponi's 1989 book *Le mosche del capitale*. The novel recovers the genre's main features, but it also transforms and exacerbates them, bitterly liquidating the 'democratic' experience of Olivetti and celebrating the tragedy of working-class defeat. *Le mosche del capitale* thus inserts itself into the neo-modernist tradition

19 Lupo, G. 2013. "Orfeo tra le macchine." *Fabbrica di carta. I libri che raccontano l'Italia industriale*. Edited by Giorgio Bigatti and Giuseppe Lupo. Rome and Bari: Laterza. 16–17.

20 Meneghelli, D. 2010. "Gli operai hanno ancora pochi anni di tempo? Morte e vitalità della fabbrica." *Letteratura e azienda. Rappresentazioni letterarie dell'economia e del lavoro nell'Italia degli anni 2000*. Edited by Silvia Contarini. Special issues of *Narrativa*, no. 31–32. 64.

inaugurated by *Memoriale*.²¹ By juxtaposing the company story of a factory manager (Saraccini) with the industrial story of a worker (Tecraso), *Le mosche del capitale* seems to measure, in hyperrealist forms, the high price paid by the most combative European working class in the transition from the critique of capitalism to a more supine and euphoric acceptance of its rules and compatibility.

Translated by Jim Carter

21 Fioretti, D. 2013. *Carte di fabbrica. La narrativa industriale in Italia (1934–1989)*. Pescara: Edizioni Tracce. 211.