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Tesi di Laurea

Violence in *The Events* by David Greig. Theatre as an act of resistance.

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Introduction

Thinking about violence matters because of its ubiquity, because of the terror and pain it causes, because it is, in its actual forms in the world, bad. (...) it has effects that include pain and death, trauma, fear and escalations of further violence. The process of conceptualizing violence requires both theoretical abstraction and empathetic imagination. Violence is basic and ordinary (for many people it is, in different ways and context, normal) and yet profoundly unpleasant to think about, all at once. Theatre permits and enables us to contemplate violence. A piece of theatre is a collaborative act of imagination in which theatre-makers and their audience can explore possibilities and fantasies as well as reconsidering known realities. In the theatre, we can play different imaginary versions of the world, and so theatre provides space, structure and contexts for the contemplation of actual and potential violence. Theatre plays cause with effects and with sophisticated analyses of concepts and events. Since fictional framing and the relative safety of the non-real enable theatre-makers to push their ideas to the extremes of cultural imagination, it is inevitable that theatre will be concerned with violence¹.

David Greig and his political theatre – The Rough Theatre

Appointed as the next Artistic Director of Lyceum Royal Theatre of Edinburgh for the season 2015-2016, David Greig is one of the most prolific writers of British theatre. He can count several relations with the most important British theatres and companies, including the National Theatre of Scotland, the Traverse, Young Vic and Suspect Culture that he co-founded in the 1990s with Gram Eatough². His relation with Suspect Culture, for instance, brought to life plays such as *Airport*, *Mainstream*, *Candide*, *Lament* and *800M*. Although Greig's production is so extended and multi-coloured that it might be hard to define a specific and unique central idea so far, he has demonstrated to be always into contemporary life. As a careful observer of contemporary society, he reflects his and people's doubts, uncertainties regarding identity and relations in his plays.

¹ Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 6.

² Wright, I., "Working in Partnership" in Svich, C. (eds.), *Trans-Global Readings: Crossing Theatrical Boundaries*. Manchester, U.K. ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2004, pp. 157–161, p. 157.

For instance, during his past cooperation with Suspect Culture that lasted from about 1995 to 2004, many plays revolved around the concepts of home, place, and space. Coupled with his interest for these topics, Greig has always shown a special predilection for the theme of identity, personal and communitarian, strictly connected to the topic of globalization and multiculturalism. Plays such as *Europe*, *The Architect*, *The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union*, *San Diego* and *Pyrenees* well explain and depict the complexity of the identity of Europe and its citizens. Also the relation between West and East has fascinated Greig and allowed him to collaborate with theatres in the Middle East and brought him to write plays such as *Not About Pomegranates*, *Ramallah*, *Damascus* and *Miniskirt of Kabul*. Although the majority of his plays are set outside Scotland, his bond with his family's homeland seems still strong and artistically fruitful. His direct relation with Scotland started late, when in the nineties, after leaving Nigeria to attend a course of English and Drama in Bristol,³ he definitely decided to move to Scotland in order to become a playwright.⁴ Since then, he has been artistically and politically involved in Scottish life, he was involved in the campaign for the independence of Scotland in 2015. His love for the region is displayed explicitly in some of his plays, like *Caledonia Dreaming*, *Victoria*, *Outlying Islands*, *Midsummer (A Play with Songs)* and *Dunsinane*. Furthermore, Greig's production has been targeted towards not only an adult audience, but also to a younger public of children. Lastly, Greig has been distinguishing himself also for his translations and adaptations, such as the recent play, premiered in 2013, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Greig has demonstrated to be a versatile writer, interested in his contemporaneity and able to widen the horizons of his art, by not only writing plays for theatres, but also realizing adaptations,

³ Wallace, C., *The Theatre of David Greig*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013, p. 10.

⁴ Blott, C., "David Greig." *British Council*. 2011. viewed 8 Nov. 2014. <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/david-greig>.

translations and screenplays. Furthermore, he has tried to explain the origin of his theatre and of his ideas. He, himself, talks about a ‘political theatre’:

(...) and I will finally make a very tentative proposal for a new model of political theatre which might offer the possibility of resistance in the new conditions of power in the early twenty-first century⁵.

As Greig writes in *State of Play*, his political theatre observes the world and poses questions to society⁶. He is “certainly a political writer⁷.” He forces his readers and spectators to consider and think over the issues he is showing on the stage. What he shows on the stage is not always pleasant – spectators can see the darkness in human relations society. Greig wants to take his audience to the darkness of uncertain identities and violence – two conditions that are very familiar to the contemporary spectators. In other words, violence is an element that often returns in Greig’s plays. According to Mark Ravenhill, political plays are all those plays that talk about violence as a response and a form of exorcising the negative feelings caused by a constant exposure to violence⁸. Ravenhill has been one of the leading figures of the In-Yer-Face theatre and, as such has been using violence in general, both physical and verbal on stage in order to shock and make scandals. He reports the violence of real life by showing other violence on the stage. Similarly, Greig depicts violence, but with a different aim. He digs into violence in order to show that an alternative to it is possible. Greig’s thirst for finding an answer to violence and proposing a different point of view on multiculturalism has brought him to work in countries and war zones from where many immigrants come. In 2001, he went to the Middle East to run some workshops about playwriting. It was on that occasion that Greig was much closer to war and

⁵ Greig, D., “Rough Theatre” in D’Monte, R. and Saunders, G. (eds.), *Cool Britannia?: British Political Drama in the 1990s*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 208-221, p. 211.

⁶ Greig, D. “David Greig” in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*. London: Faber & Faber, 1999, pp. 66-70, p.66.

⁷ Reinelt, J. “David Greig” in Middeke, M., Schnierer, P. P. and Sierz, A. (eds.), *The Methuen drama guide to contemporary British playwrights / edited and with an introduction by Martin Middeke, Peter Paul Schnierer and Aleks Sierz*. London: Methuen Drama, 2011, pp. 203-222, p. 216.

⁸ Ravenhill, M. “You Can’t Ban Violence from Theatre.” *the Guardian*. 28 Apr. 2008. viewed 28 Apr. 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/apr/28/youcantbanviolencefromthe>.

violence and could experience the importance of theatre, mostly in a context like that. He was invited to see a show at Beit Jala, a small village near Bethlehem, surrounded by checkpoints, snipers, and the Israeli army. It was in that situation that Greig understood the power of theatre. Whenever people gather in a theatre, theatre is an act of resistance against violence⁹. After that experience, his life as a playwright changed and he wrote a ‘manifesto’ to his political theatre, that he entitled “Rough Theatre”. Greig was probably inspired by the definition of Rough Theatre of Peter Brook. “It is always the popular theatre that saves the day. Through the ages it has taken many forms, and there is only one factor that they all have in common – a roughness. (...) the theatre that’s not in a theatre (...)”¹⁰.” David Greig has given a ‘definition’ of his rough theatre as it follows:

Poetic rather than prosaic.
Irrational and intuitive.
It would be childish and infantile.
It would be transcendent and it would be about transcendence.
It would take place in rough spaces.
It would take over space and demand that they become theatre.
I think it would be cheap.
It would be written fast, rehearsed fast and performed fast.
It would contain music and song. It would be enchanting.
I think it would be written for children.
I think it would be performed by amateurs and students.
I think it would be non-fiction as well as fiction.
It would be unfinished...¹¹.

Greig produces a theatre that aims to resist to the “management of the imagination by power”¹². Specifically, his theatre aims to liberate from the constrictions imposed on art and imagination by society and media¹³. In his attempt to propose an alternative theatre, which sounds also independent from the contemporary laws of artistic expression, Greig may be enlisted in the so-

⁹ Greig, D., “Rough Theatre”, cit., p. 210.

¹⁰ Brook, P., *The Empty Space*. London: Penguin, 1988, p. 73.

¹¹ Greig, “Rough Theatre”, cit., p. 220.

¹² Ivi, p. 214.

¹³ Ibid.

called British New Writing. This genre that started in the 1950s with *Look Back in Anger* and *Waiting for Godot*, new writing has included all those British plays that can be considered “contemporary in their language, (...) in their subject matter and (...) in their attitude to theatre form”¹⁴. New writing characterises text-based theatre and, subsequently, the playwright plays the main role¹⁵. David Greig belongs to the third generation of British new writing that has started in the 2000s and has become a variegated genre, where both individual and collective stories can be narrated, and where political issues and personal experimentation can be brought on stage¹⁶. Coupled with expression of collective fears and sense of society, the interest in modern subjectivity and the imagination of human individuality are basis for British new writing¹⁷.

The Events

After more than ten years since his experience in Palestine, he wrote *The Events* in 2013, a play about the aftermath of a shooting attack against a multicultural community. It narrates the story of Claire, a female priest who has survived a terroristic attack against her choir. The play is a literal and artistic discourse on violence and its consequences in a multicultural community. It is not a description of the violent event, but a reflexion on its effects on the priest and the community. Throughout the play, Claire tries to find an answer to the terrible violence that has run over the choir. She wants to understand the reasons behind the act of the Boy, the perpetrator of the shooting. In her desperate attempt to understand him, she talks with many other characters who have or had a direct connection with him. However, the violence has been so cruel and unbearable that Claire seems obsessed and persecuted by the Boy’s image and she sees his face in each one of her interlocutors. In the confused perspective of her narrations and interactions that

¹⁴ Middeke, M., Schnierer, P. P. and Sierz, A. (eds.), *The Methuen drama guide to contemporary British playwrights / edited and with an introduction by Martin Middeke, Peter Paul Schnierer and Aleks Sierz*. London: Methuen Drama, 2011, pp. 203-222, p. ix.

¹⁵ Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation British Theatre Today*. London: Methuen Drama, 2011, p. 50.

¹⁶ Reinelt, J. “David Greig”, cit., p. xiv.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. xv.

do not allow the spectator to discern the fictional reality from her thoughts and imagination, the play is a turmoil made of violence, desire to understand, respect for the others and their dignity and value as human beings. Human life is, actually, what prevails at the end of the story, and a new Choir comes to Claire again. Subsequently, she will find again her role and maybe her soul, in the community.

David Greig's play, which has been inspired by an episode of real violence, the Norwegian terroristic attack on 22nd July 2011, depicts violence in order to give an explanation to evil feelings and behaviours. *The Events* deeply investigates violence. Violence is the factor that generates all the events that happen in the play and the factor that drives Greig to write the play. However, the play seems to have two souls – a violent nature whose aggressiveness threatens to destroy everyone and everything, and a resistance nature that struggles to contrast the violence. Indeed, it also proposes an alternative to violence. *The Events* proposes a different point of view about established social and cultural notions and perceptions about multiculturalism. Furthermore, *The Events* not only describes the violence that racism can inflame in multicultural societies, but also proposes an alternative to violence, a new vision for the future. By depicting and representing violence, Greig challenges its dominance in the society and the world. Through words, scenes and theatre, society can find a new path of communication against violence.

By the time he was my age Jesus had founded a world religion.
By the time he was my age Bob Geldof had saved Africa.
By the time he was my age Gavrilo Princip had fired the shot that started World War One.
If I'm going to make a mark on the world I have to do it now.
The Only means I have are art or violence¹⁸.

¹⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*. London: Faber & Faber, 2013, p.17.

Art can represent the alternative to real world and realities that have been established and colonized by systems of thoughts and cultural stereotypes¹⁹. Art can speak against the dominant point of view of the mass and become utopia against a pre-established order and situation²⁰. Like art in general, the real world is the source of inspiration for *The Events*. On the other hand, art is independent from reality, in the sense that it proposes something different that exists outside the real world²¹. In observing and describing society, David Greig has tried to talk about multiculturalism as a positive value by depicting interactions between human beings as occasions for people and societies to improve and develop²². *The Events* proposes imagination. Greig imagines a multicultural community that, although devastated by an act of violence, survives.

My thesis will be a discussion of *The Events* by David Greig in order to establish a conversation about violence and the power of theatre, to contrast it and to propose an alternative perspective in a multicultural context. The thesis will be structured in two different parts – translation of the English original play into Italian and analysis of the original play. In the process of translation, the original story has not been ‘domesticated’ or adapted to Italian culture by changing the original settings, names and cultural references. This translation is a “reader-oriented translation, a ‘scholarly translation’ (FL), where the translator positions herself (...) as a *fidus interpres*, reproducing philological exactness rather than adhering to indigenous theatrical and dramaturgical conventions”²³. The main goal of the translation is to make a service and widen the community of readers and spectators of *The Events*. The second part will analyse the original play. The two souls in *The Events* will be object of study in this section. In particular, this part of

¹⁹ Adorno qtd in Rebellato, D., “‘And I Will Reach Out My Hand With A Kind of Infinite Slowness And Say The Perfect Thing’: The Utopian Theatre of Suspect Culture.” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 13.1 (2003): 61–80, p. 10.

²⁰ Rebellato, D., “And I Will Reach Out”, cit, p.11.

²¹ Adorno qtd in Rebellato, D., “And I Will Reach Out”, cit., p. 22.

²² Cramer, S. “The Traverse, 1985-97: Arnott, Clifford, Hannan, Harrower, Greig and Greenhorn” in Brown, I. (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama*. Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 165-175, p. 175.

²³ Perteghella, M., “A Descriptive-Anthropological Model of Theatre Translation” in Coelsch-Foisner, S., and Holger, K. (eds.), *Drama Translation and Theatre Practice*. Frankfurt, 2004, pp. 1-23, p. 12.

the thesis will discuss all the ways violence is presented in the play and all the strategies and techniques Greig has used in order to oppose it. The purpose of the analysis is to study the text by David Greig – its title, its language, its scenes and its characters– in order to prove that the play itself is an act of resistance to violence. Although the analysis will focus mainly on the script by Greig, the chapter about the Choir will explore the role of this ‘special’ character by considering also the production and *mise en place* of the play. In particular, much help in understanding the role and the function of the Choir in the play has come from the choir and stage coordinator of the Norwegian production, Hege Hermansen. The interview with Hege and a discussion of the experimental multilingual performance of the play in 2014 at Young Vic will be included as appendixes. Each one of the sections has its own purpose – discussing a contemporary English piece of literature and art in relation to the issue of multiculturalism and violence, making the play accessible also to an Italian audience. Bearing in mind that “both theatre and translations offer important opportunities for intercultural activity”²⁴ and that “plays acquire new meanings and new frames of reference as they migrate across time and space”²⁵, the main purpose of the thesis is the desire that literature and theatre become valuable sources in contemporary discussions.

²⁴ Johnston, D., “Securing the Performability of the Play in Translation” in Coelsch-Foisner, S., and Holger, K. (eds.), *Drama Translation and Theatre Practice*, cit., pp. 25-38, p. 32.

²⁵ Ibid.

DAVID GREIG

Eventi

Personaggi

Claire

Il Ragazzo

Coro

Maestro accompagnatore

Scenografia

L'opera si svolge in una stanza,
il tipo di posto in cui un coro potrebbe fare le prove.

C'è un dispenser di tè.

Nota per il Coro

Le battute in corsivo sono pronunciate dal coro.

La canzone del coro dovrebbe essere gioiosa e intensa

Ed esprimere un forte senso identitario del coro.

Dovrebbe essere un pezzo forte del loro repertorio e non creata appositamente.

Questa canzone servirà a presentare il coro e a far partire bene la serata.

La canzone preferita del Ragazzo è una scelta della produzione.

EVENTI

‘Questa cosa che appartiene alle tenebre, la riconosco come mia’.

La Tempesta

Il Coro canta la propria canzone.



Il ragazzo si dondola sui piedi.

Claire gli dà il benvenuto.

Claire Ciao.

Entra.

Non essere timido.

Tutti sono i benvenuti qui.

Come ti chiami?

Ok. Va bene.

Non c'è nulla di cui preoccuparsi.

Puoi aiutarmi a tirare fuori le sedie se vuoi.

Parli inglese?

Non preoccuparti.

Questa è una tribù di pazzi.

Bene, perché non cantiamo la canzone del caffè norvegese?

Potete disporvi in due gruppi attorno al pianoforte?

Perché non ti unisci a noi?

Se ti va di cantare, canta.

E se non hai voglia di cantare.

Va bene lo stesso.

Nessuno ha voglia di cantare sempre.

He he.



Il Coro canta la canzone del caffè norvegese.

Claire guida il coro in un botta e risposta e alla fine va a prendere il Ragazzo, che non è nel gruppo.

Hente, brenne, knuse, koke kaffien (x2)

Også henter vi den, også brenner vi den

Hente, brenne, knuse, koke kaffien

En kopp til? Ja takk (x4)²⁶



Il Ragazzo Immagina un ragazzo...

²⁶ Come nel testo originale dell'opera di Greig, la canzone in lingua norvegese non viene tradotta.

Un aborigeno...

Se ne sta in piedi su dei massi sopra il fiume Illawarra proprio quando tre navi dall'Inghilterra si avvicinano risalendo la lunga striscia d'acqua grigia della baia.

...

Enormi vele bianche...

...

Non ha mai visto navi simili. Sembrano quasi navicelle spaziali.

...

E su queste navi ci sono criminali; una categoria umana che il ragazzo non conosce; su queste navi ci sono ufficiali e marinai semplici; altre due categorie che il ragazzo non conosce.

Queste navi trasportano classe sociale, religione, malattia e una miriade di altri modi per classificare gli individui ed esercitare la violenza. Di lì a poco verranno tutti scagliati sulla sua gente.

...

Ma il ragazzo questo ancora non lo sa. Non sa nulla di tutto ciò ancora.

...

Le sole cose che conosce sono la sua terra, la sua tribù e le tribù vicine.

...

E ora queste vele.

...

Se potessi andare indietro nel tempo e parlare a quel ragazzo, cosa gli diresti?

Te ne staresti in piedi su quei massi e indicando le navi diresti: "Uccidili. Uccidili tutti."



Claire Ho ripreso a fumare.

Qualche volta i vecchi alla comunità si sorprendono quando prendo la loro busta di tabacco e dico "Cristo, dico, Cristo, le sigarette non si girano così, si girano così." E ne giro una per loro. Sottile e stretta, con giusto un pizzico di tabacco dentro.

"Così si gira una dannata cicca" dico.

Poi la accendo.

E poi la fumo.

Il Ragazzo Com'eri prima, Claire?

Claire Prima?

Prima ero buona.

Prima noi eravamo felici.

Per noi intendo io e Catriona...

Catriona è la mia compagna.

Lei costruisce iurte.

Era la mia compagna ... è ... non lo so...

E', forse. ... E'.

Vivevamo in una casetta sul mare. Dietro c'era il Den: un antico bosco sulla collina. Raccoglievamo funghi e mirtili, sai, e aglio selvatico.

Tutte cose selvatiche.

Dirigevo un coro.

Al centro sociale, di fianco alla chiesa. Dirigevo un coro che metteva insieme persone bisognose, vecchi, richiedenti asilo, immigrati, giovani madri e così via... Era una ... era l'idea era di ... puoi immaginarlo.

Cantavamo.

Il Ragazzo Prego?

Claire Sì

Il Ragazzo E?

Claire Niente.

Il Ragazzo Date le circostanze... forse...

Claire Credevo che data la situazione, mi sarei meritata una visita di Dio. Credevo che il minimo che potessi aspettarmi fosse una sua apparizione. Non credi?

Quale genere di situazione credi che lui stia aspettando?

Un genocidio?

Il Ragazzo Lui è qui.

Claire Io ti credo.

Molti non lo farebbero.

Il Ragazzo Nulla riguardo alla fede è facile, Claire. Lo sai.

Gli eventi ci mettono alla prova.

Claire Posso farti una confidenza?

Il Ragazzo Certo.

Claire E' qualcosa che non ho mai detto a nessuno. Principalmente perché non sono stata capace di esprimerlo a parole. O meglio, posso dirlo a parole, ma le parole che dovrei usare sono parole che potrebbero suonare strane, se non folli.

Il Ragazzo Che tipo di parole?

Claire Parole spirituali.

Il Ragazzo Che tipo di parole spirituali la gente potrebbe considerare strane o folli in bocca a una persona di chiesa?

Claire Parole come 'anima'.

Il Ragazzo Tu pensi che sarebbe strano o folle se un religioso usasse la parola 'anima'.

Claire Quando ero nascosta nell'aula di musica...

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire E il ragazzo fece irruzione...

E sapevo che sarei morta.

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire In quel momento ho sentito qualcosa.

Una sensazione mai provata prima, come se mi squarciassero, come se qualcosa dentro di me mi venisse strappato improvvisamente... e poi un'assenza devastante.

Non ho mai provato una sensazione così precisa e fisica.

Ma in quel momento la sentivo e sapevo cos'era.

Il Ragazzo Cos'era?

Claire Era la mia anima che lasciava il corpo.

Il Ragazzo ...

Claire ...

Il Ragazzo Quand'è che la tua anima è ritornata?

Claire Non è tornata.

Il Ragazzo ...

Claire, tu sei ancora un prete.

Hai una comunità.

Prima o poi dovrai ritornare alla realtà.

Non credi?

Claire?

Claire Al funerale di Isaac il canto era 'How Great Thou Art'.

Suonati i primi accordi
Ho aperto la bocca

E

Claire Era Isaac o Jesse?

Isaac?

Non me lo ricordo.



Il Ragazzo saltella.

Il ragazzo Penso che potrei diventare una furia.

I guerrieri vichinghi erano considerati invincibili perché quando combattevano le loro battaglie erano in uno stato alterato o come impazziti. Per entrare in quello stato di furia, il guerriero andava in una caverna nei boschi. Lì digiunava per tre giorni. Entrava in comunicazione con il suo animale guida... di solito un lupo o un orso. Il guerriero imitava i movimenti dell'animale per incarnarne l'essenza. Poi, una volta pronto, spiritualmente e fisicamente, ingeriva estratto di amanita solitamente sciolto nell'urina di una renna maschio. Il guerriero perdeva i sensi. Nel sonno aveva convulsioni, scalcia e vomitava. Poi, finalmente, si risvegliava. Pervaso di un terribile senso di potere e potenza, marciava fuori dalla foresta fino ai piedi della montagna intonando il suo canto furioso, un canto destinato a generare in lui una rabbia assassina.

Come un tuono minaccioso, marciava giù dalla montagna fino al palazzo del nemico proprio nel momento in cui i suoi sudditi erano in festa.

Entrava nel palazzo.

Alzava l'acchetta.

E scatenava la sua furia.

Guarda noi.

Debolezza, paura e pelle danneggiata sono le cose che vedo in me.

Mollezza.

La cosa migliore che potrebbe accadere in questo mondo sarebbe l'avvento di una fiammata improvvisa. Fiamme improvvise che ripuliscono le nostre proprietà e le nostre strade. E che ruggiscano nei nostri negozi e negli uffici, che ci brucino tutti mentre siamo al lavoro.

Alla mia età Gesù aveva fondato una religione.

Alla mia età Bob Geldof aveva salvato l'Africa.

Alla mia età Gavrilo Princip aveva sparato il colpo che fece scoppiare la Prima Guerra Mondiale.

Se voglio lasciare un segno nel mondo, devo farlo ora.

I soli mezzi che ho sono l'arte o la violenza.

E non sono mai stato bravo a disegnare.



Claire urla.

Il Ragazzo Dio mio.

Signora.

Non l'avevo vista.

Cazzo, scusi.

Cazzo!

Claire Non c'è problema, è stata colpa mia.

Ero ... da un'altra parte. Mi dispiace.

Il Ragazzo Dio mio. Deve fare attenzione, tesoro.

Claire Sì.

Sì.

Scusami.



Il Ragazzo Domande ricorrenti!

Il Coro fa delle domande al Ragazzo.

Coro Qual è la tua canzone preferita?

La mia canzone preferita è 'Bonkers' di Dizzee Rascal!

Coro Per essere un guerriero in una tribù, bisogna stare da soli per lunghi periodi. Come gestisci la solitudine?

Coro E' difficile, non c'è dubbio. Ma è nella natura del visionario... in un certo senso... di non avere compagni. Presumo la risposta sia ... che è dura, ma ... uno ci fa l'abitudine.

Coro Hai uno spirito guida?

Il mio spirito guida è una volpe.

Coro Qual è il tuo film preferito?

Il Signore degli Anelli 2.

Coro Cosa fai quando non sei impegnato come guerriero della tribù?

Gioco a *Call of Duty*.

Coro Bevi?

No.

Coro Ti droghi?

No.

Coro Sei vergine?

No.

Coro Sei gay?

No.

Coro Odi gli stranieri?

Mi fa piacere che tu mi abbia fatto questa domanda. Non odio gli stranieri. Odio che vivano qui. C'è differenza.

Coro Credi nell'aldilà?

Solo nel senso che mi aspetto di restare impresso nel circuito neurale delle menti che incontro nella vita ... E ho intenzione di rimanere impresso in molte menti. AHAHAHA!

Seramente però. Credo che le mie idee siano il mio aldilà.

Coro Devi essere sportivo per essere un guerriero tribale? Segui una dieta precisa?

Sì! Seguo la dieta Paleolitica. La trovi nel supplemento Lifestyle del *Sunday Times*. Carne, verdura verde in foglie. Niente legumi! Niente chicchi! Si mangia come mangiavano nell'età della pietra. Sono al terzo giorno. Mi sento bene. Mi sento dannatamente bene in effetti...

Coro Le tue azioni saranno sconvolgenti per tanta gente. Molti ti chiederanno... "Perché uccidi?" Cosa gli risponderai?

Uccido per proteggere la mia tribù.

Claire Veramente?

Il Ragazzo Io uccido per proteggere la mia tribù dalla mollezza.

Claire Mollezza?

Il Ragazzo Una mollezza originata da una solidarietà senza sforzi ... che è un'illusione promossa da élite mancate che sfruttano la manodopera immigrata e la globalizzazione per attaccarsi al potere e alla ricchezza.

Non so neppure perché leggi questa merda, Claire.

Claire 'Il sangue rende la terra fertile'
'Del sangue deve essere versato in difesa della tribù.'

Il Ragazzo Piantala.

Claire Voglio solo leggere un altro po'.

Il Ragazzo Vuoi una tazza di tè?

Claire Sto bene così.

Il Ragazzo Solo tu puoi averlo rovesciato per terra.

Claire Io?

Il Ragazzo Vuoi che asciughi?

Claire Non importa.

Il Ragazzo Non vorrei si macchiasse.

Claire Del sangue deve essere versato in difesa della tribù.

Di chi sta parlando?

Quale tribù?

Pitti?

Angli?

Juti?

Uomini di Neanderthal?

Il Ragazzo Nessuno lo sa.

Claire Lui lo sa.

Il Ragazzo Importa?

Claire Certo che importa.

Il Ragazzo Perché?

Claire Che cazzo, Catriona.

Importa perché non lo capisco.

Come posso odiarlo se non lo capisco?

Scusa.

Il Ragazzo E' probabile che tu ti senta ...

Claire Sto bene, Ok? Sto dannatamente bene. Smettila di darmi fastidio. Smettila di non pulire i casini. Lascia che si macchi, va bene? Smettila e basta.

Il Ragazzo Scusami.

Claire No, scusami tu.

Il Ragazzo Claire.

Mentre tornavo a casa, ho visto un gruppetto di persone.

Giù sul lungomare.

Cantavano e portavano fiori, candele.

Sono rimasta lì per un po'.

L'atmosfera. E' sorprendente.

L'emozione.

L'amore.

Amore vero.

Claire Verso chi?

Il Ragazzo Non lo so esattamente.

Verso di te.

Il Ragazzo Vieni sul lungomare con me.

Stai in mezzo alla gente.

Vieni.

Claire Non è amore.

Il Ragazzo Claire.

Claire Non è amore.

E' sentimentalismo.

Se fosse amore,

sarebbe per lui.

○

Il Ragazzo ascolta 'Bonkers' di Dizzee Rascal.

○

Il Ragazzo Hai rubato un Twix.

Claire Non l'ho rubato.

Il Ragazzo Sei uscita senza pagare.

Claire Non c'era nessuno lì.

Il Ragazzo C'era una cassa automatica.

Claire Esatto. Una macchina.

Una gigantesca scatola elettronica.

Cosa dovevo farci?

Il Ragazzo C'era un'assistente.

Claire Sì.

Il Ragazzo Avresti potuto chiedere aiuto.

Claire L'ho fatto.

'Che devo fare con questo?' Ho detto. 'Dove devo mettere i soldi? Voglio solo un Twix.'

'Le serve aiuto?' mi ha chiesto.

‘Guardami’ le ho detto. ‘Cosa sono? Un animale? Un pezzo di carne su un banco di metallo? Una mucca? Sono una mucca? E’ questo che sono? Una mucca che si incammina lentamente verso il mattatoio? Che muggisce mentre si avvicina alla sua stessa eliminazione?’

‘Sì’ le ho detto ‘Mi serve una mano, cazzo.’

Il Ragazzo E’ un modo abbastanza brusco di chiedere aiuto. Non credi, Claire?

Claire Dici? Non credo.

Il Ragazzo Maltrattare le persone è una cosa brutta.

Claire Non l’ho spinta.

Il Ragazzo Sei uscita senza pagare.

Claire Perché dovrei salutare qualcuno che non ha neanche voglia di esistere?

Il Ragazzo Quello che voglio veramente sapere, Claire, è ...

Claire Sei uno psicologo, vero?

Quello che io voglio davvero sapere è, è matto?

Il Ragazzo Chi?

Claire Il ragazzo.

Il Ragazzo Cambierebbe qualcosa?

Claire Certo.

Il Ragazzo Perché?

Claire Perché se fosse pazzo, allora non sarebbe colpa sua.

Giusto?

Il Ragazzo Di chi sarebbe la colpa allora?

Claire Della natura.

Come il cancro.

Il cancro può venire a chiunque.

Il Ragazzo E se invece è sano?

Claire Allora deve essere cattivo.

Il Ragazzo Noi probabilmente preferiremmo dire ‘affetto da deficit di empatia’.

Claire Cosa vuol dire?

Il Ragazzo Quando qualcuno dimostra mancanza di empatia, possiamo chiaramente affermare che c’è una deviazione dal normale comportamento umano. Se mi dici che una persona ha deliberatamente progettato di infliggere sofferenza a un gran numero di persone. Posso dire con sicurezza che il comportamento di quella persona denota assenza di empatia.

Claire Quando ero nella stanza di musica.
Nascosta assieme alla signora Singh.
Abbiamo sentito dei passi.
La signora Singh era così spaventata che ha urlato.
Lui ha aperto la porta con un calcio e ci ha trovate.
E allora ha detto...

Ho un proiettile solo.
Voi siete due...
A chi volete che spari?
...
A chi volete che spari?

Il ragazzo Crudele.

Claire Non c'era mancanza di empatia quando ci ha fatto quella domanda.
Quando ci ha fatto quella domanda, sapeva benissimo cosa stavamo provando.

Il Ragazzo Dovremmo intervistarlo, per capirlo correttamente.

Per conoscere la sua storia familiare.
Altrimenti, quello che abbiamo sono solo ipotesi.

Claire E' pazzo o cattivo?

Nel frattempo,

Abbiamo sul serio bisogno di pensare a te, Claire.

Claire Sto bene.

Il Ragazzo Mi chiedo solo se sei arrabbiata, Claire.

Claire Non sono arrabbiata.

Il Ragazzo Sei sicura?

Claire

...

Ho preso quel cazzo di Twix, giusto?

Il Ragazzo Perché sei tu la persona che è qui, Claire.

Come possiamo capire cosa ti è successo?

Claire Non voglio capire cosa mi è successo.

Lo so cosa è successo a me.

Voglio capire cosa è successo a lui.

Il coro canta 'Bonkers' di Dizzee Rascal

Claire Il padre.

Il Ragazzo Ho solo pensato che potesse essere gay.

Claire Gay?

Il Ragazzo Come dire, non gay nel senso di gay...

Solo terribilmente spaventato dalla sua attrazione omosessuale.

La palestra, l'ossessione per i militari, l'adorazione dell'uomo scultoreo. Tutti quei suoi discorsi sull'astinenza sessuale.

La mascolinità in crisi.

...

Pensavo che fosse ridicolo.

E gliel'ho detto.

Claire Gliel' hai detto?

Il Ragazzo A cena.

Circa un anno fa. Credo fosse il suo compleanno.

Andammo da qualche parte.

Indossava una tuta mimetica. Francamente pensai sembrasse ridicolo, ma mangiammo. Pagai. Parlammo.

Io dissi: "Dovresti trovarti un ragazzo."

Claire Come la prese?

Il Ragazzo Non me lo ricordo.

Claire Dicesti a tuo figlio di trovarsi un fidanzato e non ricordi cosa rispose?

Il Ragazzo Bevevo al tempo. Non mi ricordo tante cose. Molti dei miei ricordi di quel periodo esistono grazie a ciò che i giornali hanno riesumato.

E' difficile per me. Puoi immaginarlo.

Claire Non quanto lo è per me.

Il Ragazzo Presumo tu abbia ragione.

Però ... Sai ... tu in certo qual modo sei una vittima ... quindi le persone sono gentili con te.

Invece con me sono davvero orribili.

Claire Sanno chi sei?

Il Ragazzo Tutti.

Claire Perché non ti trasferisci altrove?

Il Ragazzo E' mio figlio.

Rimanere mi sembra il minimo che posso fare.

Claire Sei andato a casa sua?

Il Ragazzo Non da quel giorno.

Claire Non da quel giorno?

Il Ragazzo Neppure prima.

Claire Non sei mai andato a trovarlo?

Il Ragazzo Viveva lì con sua madre.

Claire Io ci sono andata.

Il Ragazzo Com'è?

Claire Non è molto bella.

E' al lato di alcuni palazzoni in un vicolo cieco.

Vetri rotti, mare in fondo della strada.

C'erano delle tavole in legno alle finestre.

Su una delle tavole qualcuno ci aveva scritto sopra

'MERDA'

Lettere rosse alte 50 centimetri.

'Merda'

Credi fosse riferito a lui?

O a sua madre?

O a te?

Il Ragazzo Forse non era riferito proprio a nessuno?

Senti... voglio aiutarti, Claire.

Se c'è qualcuno che vuole capire cosa gli sia capitato, quello sono io. Quindi, se trovi una qualche risposta, fammelo sapere perché, ti dirò una cosa: tutto questo mi ha sconcertato. L'orrore puro, la ricostruzione dei fatti, il nichilismo, da dove questo sia venuto, mi sconvolgono ...

Claire Cosa mi puoi dire di sua madre?

Il Ragazzo Sua madre si uccise quando lui aveva 15 anni.

Claire Il giornalista.

Dimmi di Ibn Khaldun.

Il Ragazzo Oh Dio santo, non di nuovo.

Claire Il ragazzo ha riportato un tuo discorso su Ibn Khaldun.

Il Ragazzo Senti, ho scritto un libro...Un libro umoristico da leggere seduti in bagno ... dove ho espresso una serie di domande validissime in merito alla decadenza della società contemporanea ... con un tono ironicamente filosofeggiante ... ed ora il mio nome è stato infangato ... cioè, tutto questo è un incubo.

Claire (*legge*) 'Il Lamento del Vecchio'

'Ibn Khaldun sapeva due o tre cose sul lamento. Questo filosofo arabo medievale era il prototipo del vecchio brontolone. Secondo la sua teoria, la storia è una battaglia senza fine tra i frivoli dandy di città e i vigorosi sceicchi del deserto. Il vecchio Ibn sosteneva che la ricchezza di una città è la causa della sua stessa decadenza e che inevitabilmente un'orda di barbari arriverà dal deserto urlando in sella ai loro cavalli, per conquistarla. La purificazione attraverso il sangue. La civiltà si auto rinnova. Ma poi, cosa succede? I barbari diventeranno cittadini, ovviamente, si arricchiranno e rammolliranno e presto anche loro udiranno squilli di trombe e tamburi e vedranno fiamme improvvise arrivare dalle dune a purificare la città ancora una volta.'

Le fiamme improvvise.

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire Che lui ha letto nel tuo libro.

Il Ragazzo Se i miei desideri si avverassero, dovrebbero distruggere quelli che fanno i reality show.

Non i cori.

Senti ...

Dipende tutto da che parte stai.

Claire Tu da che parte stai?

Il Ragazzo Io?

Io sono sulle mura della città con i giullari e i teatranti.

Claire E lui dov'è?

Il Ragazzo Lui è lì fuori.

Che vaga tra i maledetti rifiuti della vita moderna alla disperata ricerca di qualcosa a cui aggrapparsi.

Una certezza.

Claire Un padre.

Il Ragazzo Forse.

Claire L'amico.

Tu lo conosci.

Il Ragazzo Non lo *conosco*. Lo *conoscevo*. *Conoscevo*. Ero a scuola con lui, ma non eravamo amici.

Claire Ok.

Il Ragazzo I giornali continuano a dire che ero il suo amico. Non ero amico suo.

Claire Ma lo conoscevi.

Il Ragazzo Lo conoscevo perché eravamo entrambi sfigati.

Durante la ricreazione ci nascondevamo dietro i bagni dell'edificio di scienze per non venire picchiati.

Badavamo l'uno all'altro, tutto qui.

Non eravamo uniti, eravamo solo vicini.

Claire Badavate l'uno all'altro?

Il Ragazzo Sarebbe stato picchiato.

Principalmente noi ... uscivamo, parlavamo.

Claire Di cosa parlavate?

Il Ragazzo Ragazze... esercito... macchine... playstation.

Claire Perché era uno sfigato?

Il Ragazzo Perché era debole.

Claire Debole?

Il Ragazzo Mentalmente... un po' fragile, sai?

Claire Se la prendevano con lui perché era mentalmente fragile?

Il Ragazzo Sì

Claire E' terribile.

Il Ragazzo Sei sorpresa?

Claire Sì?

Il Ragazzo Dovevi essere una figa.

I ragazzi fighi pensano che le persone siano tendenzialmente buone. Ma non è così. Le persone sono tendenzialmente cattive.

Ma se sei tra gli sfigati della scuola, ti fai un'idea molto particolare dell'umanità. Ostile, potremmo definirla.

Claire E' deprimente.

Il Ragazzo Non credo. Credo invece sia alquanto liberatorio.

Bisogna essere all'altezza dei principi in cui si crede.

Sono abbastanza bassi.

Claire Va bene, potreste venire tutti a sedervi?

Cantiamo 'How Great Thou Art'.



Il coro canta 'How Great Thou Art'²⁷.

Coro

*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

Claire Possiamo fermarci qui, riusciamo semplicemente a cantarlo a bocca chiusa?

Il coro canta a bocca chiusa.

*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made...*

Claire Solo le donne.

A bocca chiusa.

*I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

Claire E ora tutti in coro.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*



Claire Il politico.

Voglio parlare della sua ideologia.

²⁷ Inno religioso noto a livello internazionale. Si riporta una traduzione dei versi: "O Gesù mio Signor, quando in un meraviglioso stupore/Guardo il mondo che le tue mani hanno creato/Vedo le stelle, sento i tuoni/Il tuo potere si mostra nell'universo. Allora la mia anima, Dio mio salvatore, innalza un canto a te/Magnifica le tue opere, magnifiche le tue opere."

Il Ragazzo Credi avesse una ideologia?

Claire Tu no?

Il Ragazzo No.

Claire Affermava di avere un'ideologia.

Il Ragazzo Quindi?

Claire La tua ideologia.

Il Ragazzo Lo so, ma noi ci dissociamo.

Claire Lo so, ma ...

Il Ragazzo Senza ombra di dubbio.

Claire Lui era un membro del tuo partito.

Il Ragazzo Chiunque può essere membro del nostro partito.

Claire Fintantoché sei bianco.

Il Ragazzo Alcuni dei nostri membri sono neri.

Claire Non molti.

Il Ragazzo Si è unito al nostro partito quattro mesi prima del fatto. In quel periodo aveva già deciso cosa avrebbe fatto... Non hai letto il blog?

Claire Era molto entusiasta di te nel blog.

Il Ragazzo Se avessi saputo cosa aveva in mente di fare, lo avrei scoraggiato.

Claire Scoraggiato?

Il Ragazzo Fermato.

Ti dispiace?

Il ragazzo controlla il cellulare.

Potrei dover andare a prendere mia figlia all'asilo.

Claire Quanto tempo hai?

Il Ragazzo Ok. Ho ancora qualche minuto.

Il ragazzo controlla il cellulare.

Le azioni del ragazzo ci hanno rovinati.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo E' un pazzo.

Claire Un pazzo che crede nelle stesse cose in cui credi tu.

Il Ragazzo Esatto, quindi per associazione fa apparire anche noi come dei pazzi o degli estremisti.

Claire Ma voi siete estremisti?

Il Ragazzo Non credo.

Io credo che la maggior parte delle persone, sotto sotto, condivida le nostre idee.

Claire Credi che la maggioranza della gente sia razzista?

Il Ragazzo Se per razzista intendiamo credere che le persone si sentirebbero più felici e sicure se vivessero circondate da persone della loro stessa razza, allora sì. Io credo che molte persone siano razziste, tu no?

Claire Mi piace incontrare persone diverse. Mi piace.

Il Ragazzo A te piace l'esotico finché senti di essere in una posizione dominante. Finché la tua tribù ha il controllo. Allora è divertente, è un hobby. Se sentissi di dover lottare per avere una casa, o dell'assistenza o un lavoro ... come succede alla maggior parte delle persone... la vivresti diversamente. Non è facile essere aperti verso l'altro quando la tua tribù si sente debole.

Claire Ti senti debole?

Il Ragazzo Scusami... solo che... Sono in ansia per gli autobus. Non voglio arrivare tardi.

Il ragazzo controlla il cellulare.

Claire Forse dovresti andare.

Il Ragazzo No, non c'è problema. Ho due minuti.

Claire Dimmi perché secondo te va bene essere razzisti.

Il Ragazzo Ascolta, il nostro Paese è in pericolo.

Claire Davvero?

Il Ragazzo Sì.

I nostri valori sono in pericolo, la nostra cultura, le nostre tradizioni.

Questo può non voler dire nulla per te, ma per me vuol dire tutto.

E sono pronto a combattere per questo.

Claire Valori?

Il Ragazzo Bambine uccise perché vanno a scuola, folle che danzano sui tetti delle ambasciate, libri bruciati. Cosa pensi che ti succederebbe se vivessi in Islam, Claire? O in Afghanistan? Cosa credi che facciano alle lesbiche? Come credi che siano trattate le giovani lesbiche nei Paesi islamici?

È la gente come te, che tenta di cancellare le differenze.

Siete voi che non chiamate i neri 'neri' e i bianchi 'bianchi'.

Claire Rosa... beige... olivastri.

Il Ragazzo Mia figlia sa tante parole in polacco quante ne sa in inglese. All'asilo le fanno cantare canzoni polacche. I bambini fanno cibo polacco.

Claire Mi piace il cibo polacco.

Il Ragazzo Senti, quel ragazzo... non voglio neppure chiamarlo per nome... lui... lui non ha nulla a che fare con noi.

E' venuto ad alcuni dei nostri incontri. Penso di averlo visto in discoteca una volta. Stava infastidendo, dando noia a una tipa. Dei ragazzi l'hanno buttato fuori. Questo è tutto. E' tutto. Ma ora... dovresti leggere i messaggi di odio, le minacce di morte... a me, a mia moglie, a mia figlia. Lo odio. Lo disprezzo.

Se governassi io, lui ora sarebbe morto.

Claire Odiavi il mio coro?

Il Ragazzo No.

Claire Lo hai messo in una lista.

Il Ragazzo L'ho messo nella lista degli enti pubblici che fanno propaganda del multiculturalismo.

Claire Gli hai dato risalto nel tuo sito.

Il Ragazzo Insieme a molte altre organizzazioni.

Claire Il mio coro non era un ente statale di propaganda del multiculturalismo.

Era il multiculturalismo.

Il mio coro era Jesse e il signor Aziz e Frank e la signora Singh e Isaac e Sherrie e Corinne e Gisela e Kamal e...

Questo era il mio coro.

Era.

Ora sono rimasta solo io.



Un/a solista canta 'Canto per un bambino immaginario'

Claire Guarda, un bambino

Appena nato.

I capelli bagnati

Due occhi grigio blu.

E un paio di polmoni.

Guarda, un bambino

Caldo e umido...

Muove le mani

Cerca inconsciamente una madre
Un seno da succhiare.
E' un maschio.
Riporto indietro il tempo
Al momento della sua nascita
Sua madre lo tiene in braccio
L'infermiera lo porta fuori per pulirlo
Sono io l'infermiera
Appoggio la mano sul suo viso
La tengo lì fino a che non si rilassa
Shh. Dico. Va tutto bene. Va tutto bene. Va tutto bene.
Lo porto da sua madre.
E da suo padre.
Guarda, un bambino,
Ancora tranquillo
Cullato.
Deve essere nato morto.
Poverino, nato morto.
Era un maschio.



Il Ragazzo Dov'eri?

Claire Sono andata fino al Den.

Le campanule sono sbocciate.

Sembra primavera.

Il Ragazzo Com'è andata con il dottor Palmer?

Claire Interessante.

Il Ragazzo Bene. Vero? E' bene?

Claire Bene.

Il Ragazzo Di cosa avete parlato?

Claire Del ragazzo.

Il Ragazzo Ok...

Claire Non è pazzo, Catriona. Se non nel senso che potrebbe soffrire di un qualcosa che potremmo definire 'sindrome dell'omicidio di massa': una sindrome il cui sintomo principale è la pianificazione e l'esecuzione di un omicidio di massa.

Il Ragazzo Giusto.

Claire Ha interamente soppresso le sue emozioni. E questo prova che lui ha delle emozioni, quindi non è neppure psicopatico ...

Il Ragazzo Perché io pensavo ...

Claire In ogni caso è strano.

Il Ragazzo Che l'idea di vedere il dottor Palmer fosse ...

Claire Strano, ma...

Il Ragazzo Per aiutarti a dormire ...

Claire Non è psicotico. La sua politica non è completamente obsoleta. La sua infanzia è stata difficile, ma non catastrofica. Non ha fatto il servizio militare, quindi qualunque sia il motivo, non è *un* motivo.

Deve esserci un'altra spiegazione.

Qualcosa che va al di là ...

Il Ragazzo Al di là?

Claire Al di là della ragione.

Il Ragazzo Giusto.

Ok.

Il dottor Palmer ha detto qualcosa di te?

Ti ha dato per caso delle pillole, dei calmanti, forse?

Claire Sì, ma le ho buttate.

Il Ragazzo Claire.

Claire E' già abbastanza difficile combattere il male a mente lucida.

Il Ragazzo Il male?

Claire Sì.

Il male è nel mondo, Catriona.

Ce l'ha portato lui.

Se riesco a trovarne il motivo e a eliminare ogni dubbio, allora riuscirò a dormire.

Lo capisci?

Il Ragazzo E se non riuscissi a trovarlo, Claire?

E se le cose brutte succedessero e basta?

E se persino il cercare di capire cosa ti è successo non fosse altro che una forma di masochismo: un gettarti all'infinito contro un muro nella speranza di buttarlo giù. Cosa che non ti riuscirà. E se mai dovessi farcela, ci sarebbe solo un altro muro dietro ...

E se tutto semplicemente accade e basta, cazzo?

Claire Lui è umano.

Se è umano, posso comunicare con lui ...

Il Ragazzo Comunicare?

Claire Sì.

Il Ragazzo Claire, in questo momento tu non riesci a comunicare neppure con me.

E ci sto provando.

Ci sto provando davvero.



Il coro si unisce a Claire in un'improvvisazione.

Claire Questa sera improvviseremo.

Sto indagando le pratiche sciamaniche.

E questa sera, metteremo in scena una cerimonia per far ritornare le nostre anime.

Perché, come voi sapete, noi abbiamo perso le nostre anime.

Non è vero?

Ho preparato un infuso speciale nel dispenser del tè.

C'è un momento in cui la cosa più saggia da fare, è smettere di essere saggi.

Nelle società tradizionali, se si perde l'anima... la si recupera.

E' da pazzi che non lo sappiamo.

E la persona che lo fa è lo sciamano.

Lui è Dave.

Viene da Leith.

Dave ci aiuterà a riportare indietro le nostre anime.

Quindi questo è ciò che faremo. Tutto chiaro?

Per prima cosa formeremo una capanna di sogno. Ora, non abbiamo una vera e propria capanna quindi useremo i nostri corpi per formare un cerchio.

Claire guida il Coro schioccando le dita e cantando a bocca chiusa.

Faremo noi le note.

Una canzone facile ... così. Qual è la prima cosa che ti viene in mente?

Claire chiede a un membro del Coro. Qualsiasi cosa risponda, in ogni caso semplice, lei la canta.

Per esempio 'eh ... ehm non lo so.'

Capito?

'eh ... ehm non lo so'

'eh ... ehm non lo so'

Claire batte le mani o i piedi.

Tutti quanti...continuiamo... noi cantiamo e cantiamo e cantiamo e teniamo il ritmo.

Claire guida il Coro nello spazio, in cerchio. Il ragazzo li segue soffiando dentro un cono spartitraffico arancione come fosse un didgeridoo.

Ora, piena della vostra energia, attraverserò il portale simbolico.

Formate un portale simbolico!

Dai!

Esco dal mondo terreno ed entro in quello del sogno

E in quel sogno vado alla ricerca

Lungo un sentiero nel bosco

Gli scogli e il mare.

C'è un isola.

Nebbia sull'acqua ...

Claire cade a terra.

Silenzio.

Maestro accompagnatore Forse dovremmo tutti fare una pausa e prendere una tazza di tè.

Il coro prende del tè dal dispenser.



Un membro del Coro diventa la signora/il signor Sinclair.

Claire Signora Sinclair?

Devo essere svenuta.

Dove sono tutti?

Sinclair *Se ne sono andati.*

Claire Andati?

Sinclair *A casa.*

Claire Ma dobbiamo ancora lavorare a delle canzoni.

Sinclair *Mi hanno incaricata di parlarle.
Non vogliamo più fare il coro.*

Claire Cosa?

Sinclair *Le cose che ci ha chiesto di fare prima.
Cerimonie sciamaniche.
Canti funebri aborigeni.
Lamenti in gaelico.
Liste di morti.
Urla.
Non sono divertenti.*

Claire No?

Sinclair *Sono deprimenti.*

Claire Sto cercando di aiutare tutti noi a guarire.

Sinclair *Sì.
Ma lei continui pure a farlo.
A noi piaceva cantare canzoni popolari.
E inni.
Non vogliamo continuare a pensare a quello che è successo.
Vogliamo dimenticare.
Forse dimenticare è la cosa migliore da fare.
Ci scusi.
Addio Claire.
Grazie per aver fatto il coro.*



Il ragazzo beve del tè.

Il Ragazzo Questo non è vero tè.

E' piscio di renna.

Oggi, per la prima volta, provo a impazzire.

Beve.

Sto guardando un DVD²⁸ sulle volpi per cercare di studiare le loro movenze. Ho messo una piccola quantità di scorza di amanita nel tè. Nel forum 'Lo Sciamano del Guerriero Vichingo' ho letto che era un buon modo per prendere questa droga. Sono seduto al tavolo della cucina. Dietro di me ho messo un secchio dove posso vomitare. Sto cercando di uscire dal flusso della mia coscienza e annotare i miei pensieri ...

²⁸ Nel testo originale viene indicato l'autore del video documentario, Bill Oddie. Il riferimento al personaggio conosciuto dal pubblico inglese, viene omissso in quanto ritenuto irrilevante per i lettori e il pubblico italiani.

*Antiques Roadshow.*²⁹

Odio.

I profili delle cose.

Ragazze che ridono.

Fumo.

Il ragazzo si addormenta.

Si risveglia senza controllo.

Cammina carponi per la stanza, come fosse una volpe.

Claire Mi piace immaginarlo durante quella notte.

Guerriero alle prime armi,

Orfano al chiaro di luna,

Cammina, canta, pattuglia i bidoni della spazzatura lungo la costa,

In cerca di una tribù da proteggere.

Il Ragazzo urla come una volpe.

Vomita.

Claire Qualche volta vorrei che lo avessimo adottato.

Abbiamo sempre voluto dei bambini.

Io e Catriona, vero, Catriona?

In realtà, questa è la storia più dolce.

Noi amiamo questa storia.

Un giorno stavamo camminando lungo la costa, quando vedemmo quel ragazzino... Quanti anni aveva? Quanti anni pensi che avesse?

Quindici. Mettiamo che avesse quindici anni.

Se ne stava seduto sopra un bidone della spazzatura sulla costa.

Il mento appoggiato alle ginocchia

E aveva un viso adorabile.

Ci fermammo e dicemmo 'Ciao'.

Lui non disse niente ovviamente, ma noi continuammo a chiacchierare con lui e venne fuori che sua mamma si era buttata giù da un ponte e che suo papà era un alcolizzato, e così parlammo con lui, giusto? E dovevamo essere esattamente quello di cui aveva bisogno in quel momento. Perché ci seguì a casa e noi lo invitammo ad entrare.

'Entra' gli abbiamo detto, vero?

²⁹ Programma televisivo britannico assai famoso e trasmesso dalla BBC dal 1979. Estimatori d'arte attraversano il Regno Unito in cerca di antichi pezzi d'arte.

Non preoccuparti, dicemmo. Non mordiamo.

Vuoi andare a guardare gli uccelli?

Vuoi del pane fatto in casa?

Ma sai che non aveva mai mangiato cibo fatto in casa prima di allora?

Ad ogni modo, lo adottammo, e ora lui è a Cambridge.

A studiare legge.

E' all'università di Strathclyde a studiare scienze tecnologiche.

E' al college.

Lavora in un negozio.

Un garage.

E' felice.

E' morto.

Morì.

E' morto.

Claire Stavo pensando che dovrei cercarmi un lavoro.

Il Ragazzo Un lavoro?

Claire Come cappellano... forse.

Il Ragazzo Dove?

Claire Peterhead.

Costa est. Spiagge. Sarebbe fantastico.

Il Ragazzo Che tipo di cappellano?

Claire Carcerario.

Il Ragazzo Da qualche parte?

Tipo dove?

Claire Peterhead.

Il Ragazzo Il carcere di Peterhead?

Claire Si chiama così?

Il Ragazzo Non riesci a dormire, Claire.

Non riesci a mangiare.

Cosa vuoi andare a fare in un carcere di massima sicurezza?

Claire E' importante fare chiarezza sulle cose, Catriona.

Il Ragazzo In prigione?

Claire Sì.

Il Ragazzo Lui è lì, vero?

Claire No.

Non lo so.

Forse.

Il Ragazzo No, no, basta così, Claire. Smettila.

Claire Smettere di fare cosa?

Il Ragazzo Devi smetterla ora. La più piccola informazione che riesci a carpire, qualsiasi cosa, qualsiasi cosa al mondo che ti possa avvicinare a lui, tu la divori... Ma non me.

Claire Tu?

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire Cosa c'entri tu con questo?

Il Ragazzo Cosa c'entro io con questo?

Claire Puoi venire a Peterhead anche tu.

Il Ragazzo Stai facendo del sarcasmo?

Claire Puoi fabbricare iurte ovunque.

Il Ragazzo Sono stanca di questo.

Claire Stanca di cosa?

Il Ragazzo Di te. Sono stanca di scoparti.

Il Ragazzo fa per andarsene, Claire lo spinge.

Claire Non puoi lasciarmi.

Il Ragazzo Perché no?

Claire Perché io sono la vittima.

Il Ragazzo Fammi passare...

Claire Sono io la vittima qui. Non puoi ferirmi anche tu.

Il Ragazzo Per piacere, togli ti da davanti...

Claire Non ti sto davanti...

Il Ragazzo Tu mi stai davanti...

Il Ragazzo fa per andarsene, Claire lo assale.

Claire, Claire, to..., togliti...

Claire Baciami.

Il Ragazzo Claire

No.

Claire Fallo e basta.

Il Ragazzo spinge via Claire. Fa per andarsene, Claire lo assale.

Il Ragazzo Claire, levati!

La lotta è vera, agitata e lenta.

Alla fine Claire vince.

Sputa sul ragazzo.

Si rilassa.

Crolla a terra.

Esausta.

Claire Mi dispiace.

Mi dispiace tanto.

Il Ragazzo Dio.

Perché non ce ne andiamo tutt'e due?

Noi due da sole?

Potrei imparare a costruire una bomba.

Se solo potessimo alzarci e andarcene.

In Somalia

Per fare addestramento.

A Iona,

Per il festival della spiritualità.

Potremmo guardare i video dei jihadisti.

Potremmo stare con la comunità di lì.

Potresti pregare.

Potrei fabbricare una bomba con chiodi e bulloni e pietre e farla scoppiare dentro a uno zaino. Squarcerebbe tutto e tutti.

Potremmo farlo e basta.

Che ne pensi?

Claire?

Perché il tempo passa e

Se voglio lasciare un segno nel mondo, devo farlo ora.



Il coro canta 'La Canzone di Gavrilo Princip'

Alla mia età Gesù aveva fondato una religione.

Alla mia età Bob Geldof aveva salvato l'Africa.

Alla mia età Gavrilo Princip aveva sparato il colpo che aveva fatto scoppiare la Prima Guerra Mondiale.

Se voglio lasciare un segno nel mondo, devo farlo ora.



Il ragazzo si dondola sui piedi.

Claire Vedo un ragazzo... si dondola sulle piante dei piedi e poiché è giugno e il cielo è ancora chiaro e la sua figura si staglia contro il rosso del sole... avanti e indietro... mi chiedo se va a tempo con la nostra canzone.

E a quel punto dice.

Il Ragazzo Chi è di qui, se ne vada.

Tutti gli altri moriranno.

Claire Noi siamo confusi.

Per molte ragioni siamo confusi.

Sta ascoltando la musica.

Riesco a sentire il tunz, tunz, tunz della musica che gli esce dalle cuffie.

Avanza tranquillo.

Il Ragazzo Come se danzasse.

Claire Come se danzasse.

E' reale?

Siamo in un film?

Perché il signor Aziz è caduto a terra?

...

Sono di qui io?

Lo fisso...sconcertata.

Devo prendere il controllo della situazione... Sono io la responsabile... E' importante per la sicurezza di queste persone che io prenda il controllo...

CORRETE! TUTTI!

Claire Correte tutti?

Il Ragazzo Non riesco a non ridere.

Claire Cioè, diciamo che ho detto l'ovvio.

Il Ragazzo Tutto, improvvisamente, sembra così... melodrammatico.

Claire Ci sparpagliamo... c'è il panico...

L'allarme suona.

Il Ragazzo Ora c'è confusione... le sirene... l'allarme e l'inferno!

E' stranamente eccitante questa sensazione di trovarsi improvvisamente al centro degli eventi.

Claire Corro lungo il corridoio verso l'aula di musica. Per nessun'altra ragione se non che l'aula di musica mi è familiare. Mentre corro penso... cerco di capire... che sta succedendo qui?

Il Ragazzo Ed ecco una cosa interessante... Spero non vi dispiaccia... penso possa aiutare a capire. Se mai doveste perpetrare un omicidio di massa, è molto probabile che durante l'evento stesso passiate del tempo a pensare...

Questo è stupido.

Claire Questo è stupido.

Il Ragazzo Non è che uno non la prende seriamente. E' solo che quando ti trovi nel mezzo degli eventi, perdi te stesso.

Tranne quegli strani, stupidi momenti, quelle esplosioni improvvise di insicurezza che interrompono il tuo flusso...

Come un attore con un vuoto di memoria.

Come un commediante che si dimentica la battuta.

Il Ragazzo Questo è davvero molto, molto stupido.

Claire Corro...picchio... sbatto... una porta dopo l'altra... Quante porte ha questo posto?

Arrivo nell'aula di musica...

Sbarratela!

Dovrei tornare indietro?

Dovrei tornare indietro.

Dovrei trovare gli altri e portarli qui...

Appoggio la mano sulla porta per tornare indietro...

Ed è allora che vedo la signora Singh.
E' seduta in un angolo.
Con le mani sulle ginocchia.

Sta tremando.

Stai qui con me.

Claire Shh.

Shh.

Va bene. Va bene. Va bene.

Il Ragazzo Mi è rimasto un solo proiettile.

Per chi è?

Per chi di voi due?



Gli essere umani sono una specie di scimmia. Per lungo tempo si è creduto che i nostri parenti più prossimi fossero gli scimpanzé.

Come i primi uomini sulla Terra, gli scimpanzé si muovono in piccoli gruppi cacciando e raccogliendo... Gli scimpanzé sono territoriali. I maschi dominanti governano il gruppo. Se due gruppi di scimpanzé si incontrano nella foresta, lottano per stabilire il controllo del territorio.

Recentemente, una nuova specie di scimmie è stata scoperta in Congo. I bonobo.

Anche i bonobo si muovono in piccoli gruppi, cacciando e raccogliendo, ma i bonobo non sono violenti. I gruppi di bonobo sono governati dalle femmine più anziane. Se due gruppi di bonobo si incontrano nella foresta, i membri di un gruppo si accoppiano con i membri dell'altro gruppo per entrare in relazione.

L'essere umano ha in comune il 98% del proprio DNA con gli scimpanzé.

E abbiamo in comune il 98% del nostro DNA con i bonobo.

Il restante 2% siamo noi.



Claire Lui apre la porta con un calcio.

E ci trova.

Alza la pistola.

E in quel momento.

Vado verso di lui.

Gli prendo la mano.

Lo bacio.

Lo spoglio.

Lo accarezzo.

Lo accolgo dentro di me.
Lo accolgo dentro di me molto delicatamente.
E con tanta delicatezza e amore
Che lui ritorna in sé
La sua anima ritorna nel suo corpo
E nel momento esatto in cui lui viene
Lo vedo nei suoi occhi
Lui capisce
Capisce di essere capito.



Claire Cosa sei tu?

Il Ragazzo Sono il male dell'Europa
Sono un punto lunga la linea della mascolinità contemporanea
Sono un'espressione del fallimento nelle classi medie sgretolate
Io sono unico
Io sono tipico
Io sono il segno di come le cose stanno andando
Sono il passato
Sono il prodotto dello stato sociale
Sono il punto d'arrivo del capitalismo
Sono un orfano
Un narcisista
Uno psicopatico
Sono il vuoto in cui sei affogato
Sono malato.
Morto.
Perso.
E solo.

Sono l'assenza da cui emergono solo il buio e una domanda.

La sola domanda da porre.

Cosa bisogna farne di me?

Claire Tu sarai portato via da qui e torturato con scosse elettriche. Il tuo corpo sarà buttato sul metallo bollente. Ti bucheranno il palato e ti toglieranno la pelle del cazzo, ti bruceranno i piedi, ti taglieranno i muscoli, ti riempiranno le ferite di merda, per poi cucirti la pelle con del filo settico.

Ti ammalerai e diventerai debole.

Ma proprio quando starai per morire, verrai pulito, curato e guarito.

E io mi inginocchierò vicino alla tua testa e sussurrerò...

‘Proprio fuori da questa porta c’è un prato, un prato bianco con ranuncoli, querce e soffice erbetta. E’ un luogo meraviglioso dove non sentirai più dolore e sarai immerso nel verde e nella pace. E’ proprio fuori da questa porta. Così vicino. Se solo tu riuscissi ad andare lì. Se solo tu riuscissi a strisciare oltre quella porta, saresti libero.’

E io aprirò la porta e ti guarderò strisciare sui tuoi arti deboli e poi, proprio quando sarai arrivato sulla soglia.

Ti schiaccerò il collo e ti romperò la spina dorsale.



Il Ragazzo Ciao.

Claire Ciao.

Il Ragazzo Bello.

Claire Vero?

Il Ragazzo Stai ammirando la vista?

Claire Sì.

Il Ragazzo Le stelle, la luna, il mare.

Claire Il silenzio.

Il Ragazzo Silenzio, sì.

Claire Beh, tranne il vento.

Il Ragazzo Non c’è traffico, però.

Claire Sì, questo è strano.

Di solito c’è molto rumore qui.

Il rombo del traffico dell’autostrada.

Ma stasera è tranquillo.

Il Ragazzo Tutto il traffico si è fermato.

Claire Sì.

Come se l’avessero fatto per noi.

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Lo hanno fatto per noi.

Volevano che qui fosse tranquillo di modo che potessi parlarti.

Claire Che gentili.

Il Ragazzo Il mio nome è Gary.

Tu come ti chiami?

Claire Claire.

Il Ragazzo Ciao, Claire.

Claire Ciao, Gary.

Il Ragazzo Che bello questo, Claire, io e te seduti qui sopra nella brezza calda a guardare il mare e le stelle.

A parlare.

Claire Sì.

Il Ragazzo Ti andrebbe di stringermi la mano?

Claire D'accordo.

Il Ragazzo Ok.

Claire gli stringe la mano.

Bene.

Claire sorride.

Mi chiedevo, Claire

Ed io e te possiamo parlare quanto vogliamo comunque

Ma mi chiedevo

Mi chiedevo

Se volessi scendere dal bordo

Solo fare un passo indietro verso questo lato del parapetto.

Eh, Claire?

Claire?

○

Il Coro parla ad una sola voce.

Coro Claire.

Perché stai camminando nel Den di notte

Cammini lungo gli stretti sentieri?

Claire ansima.

Claire Non riesco a dormire.

Coro Poverina.

Claire Sto bene

Coro Devi sentir freddo.

Con addosso solo una t-shirt e le mutande

E scalza.

Claire Oh, sì.

Ahah, imbarazzante.

Me n'ero dimenticata. Non mi aspettavo di incontrare qualcuno.

No, sto bene. E' estate. In effetti ho caldo.

Coro E' autunno.

Claire Sì. E' autunno.

Coro *Perché stai camminando nel Den di notte indossando solo una t-shirt e le mutande.*

Claire Sto raccogliendo dei funghi.

Coro *Che tipo di funghi raccogli?*

Claire Finferli, fungo di Santa Catena, funghi pinaroli e porcini.

Coro *Che bei nomi.*

Claire Nomi adorabili.

Coro *Claire, che fungo è quello che hai in mano adesso?*

Claire Questo?

Coro *Sì, è bello.*

E' commestibile?

Claire No, è molto molto molto velenoso.

Coro *Come si chiama?*

Claire Amanita virosa.

Clare mette il fungo nella teiera e mescola.



Claire Io lo perdono.

Scrivo delle lettere. Contatto cappellani e psichiatri. Sono ospite in programmi radio dove sorprendo le persone per la mia straordinaria capacità di

Perdonare

Io lo perdono, dico.

Lui è perdonato.

Sono sui notiziari. Sono alla radio su *Womans' Hour*³⁰. La gente mi aggiunge su Facebook. Mi chiamano 'La donna del perdono.'

'Ma come fai?' mi chiede la gente. 'Come puoi perdonarlo, dopo quello che ha fatto. Quella bestia.'

E io rispondo 'Ci riesco.'

Lo faccio con amore.

E a loro questo piace. Sia su Facebook che nella vita reale.

E li sfinisco, gli psichiatri e i cappellani, li sfinisco con l'amore, e alla fine, mi invitano a incontrarlo. E così un giorno d'inverno guido fino a Peterhead e loro mi accompagnano oltre i cancelli, e lungo il corridoio e attraverso gli atri e nella stanza speciale per gli incontri come questi.

Salve, dicono. Mi sorridono, meravigliati.

Ma in tasca ho una piccola quantità di Amanita Virosa che ho fatto seccare e sbriciolato. Sarebbe difficile da riconoscere anche vedendola. E' solo polvere in una tasca, penserebbero se la vedessero. Ma non è polvere dentro a una tasca.

E' veleno.

Che lo ucciderà.

Attaccherà il suo fegato e lo ucciderà.

A loro questo non piacerà su Facebook.



Il Ragazzo E' una bella stanza questa.

Non sono mai stato in questa stanza prima.

Dipinta con colori accesi.

Guarda... hanno un contenitore per il tè.

Vuoi una tazza di tè?

Potresti fare una tazza di tè.

Non sono autorizzato a fare il tè.

Vuoi fare una tazza di tè?

Claire No, grazie.

Il Ragazzo Com'è andato il viaggio?

Ha fatto freddo ultimamente.

³⁰ Programma radio di attualità trasmesso su BBC Radio 4 diretto a un pubblico prettamente a un pubblico femminile.

Hanno fatto quella cosa quando sei entrata?

Qualche volta fanno una cosa...

Fanno 'hu hu hu', come degli scimpanzé o qualcosa di simile.

E' abbastanza orribile.

L'hanno fatto?

Claire No.

Il Ragazzo Beh, è già qualcosa.

Lui si siede.

Grazie per essere venuta.

Claire Grazie per aver acconsentito a vedermi.

Il Ragazzo Figurati.

Non appena ho ricevuto la tua lettera, ero parecchio entusiasta in verità.

Claire Entusiasta?

Il Ragazzo Per l'incontro.

Perché? Il mio terapeuta ha detto che potrebbe aiutarmi.

Il mio terapeuta dice che c'è una cosa.

Che a volte se incontri le persone a cui fai del male.

Se le incontri e ti scusi.

Questo aiuta.

Claire Hai bisogno di aiuto?

Il Ragazzo Ho difficoltà a dormire.

Claire Non lo sapevo.

Il Ragazzo Non dormo proprio....

Claire Da dopo gli eventi?

Il Ragazzo Da quando ero bambino...

Da sempre.

Facevo uso di erba, bevevo... sai.

Rimedi fai da te.

Ma non posso prenderli qui dentro, quindi...

Il mio terapeuta ha detto che incontrarti potrebbe portare a una riappacificazione.

Claire Hai incontrato qualcuno degli altri?

Il Ragazzo Gli altri chi?

Claire Gli altri che hai ferito.

Il Ragazzo Oh. Loro. No.

Claire Solo me.

Il Ragazzo Nessuno degli altri verrebbe.

Claire Alcuni di loro sono morti.

Il Ragazzo Neppure i non morti verrebbero.

Claire Magari i non morti non vogliono che tu dorma.

Il Ragazzo No, non può essere così... non credo ... cioè, non avrebbe senso.

Claire Dici?

Il Ragazzo Non sanno dei miei problemi con il sonno, vero?

Claire No.

Il Ragazzo Il mio terapeuta ha detto che dovevo incontrarti.

Ha detto che tu avresti voluto fare delle domande.

Ha detto che dovrei rispondere ad ogni domanda con sincerità.

Claire Ho solo una domanda da farti.

Il Ragazzo Spara.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Sinceramente?

Claire Sinceramente.

Il Ragazzo Ero arrabbiato.

Claire Un sacco di gente è arrabbiata.

Il Ragazzo Ero arrabbiato ed avevo una pistola.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Questo è tutto negli atti.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Non me lo ricordo bene. Qualcuno mi disse di un uomo di Leeds che aveva una pistola. Mi venne in mente che dovevo avere una pistola, così andai a Leeds e la comprai.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Sinceramente?

Claire Sinceramente.

Il Ragazzo C'era una ragazza.

Claire Non hai mai parlato di una ragazza durante il processo.

Il Ragazzo No?

Claire No.

Il Ragazzo Qualche volta mi dimentico cosa ho detto e cosa no.

Ero al processo ogni giorno e tu non menzionasti nessuna ragazza.

Il Ragazzo Una notte una macchina grigia si fermò fuori da casa mia.

La porta dietro si aprì e una ragazza cadde sul marciapiede.

Si stava facendo buio quindi non riuscivo quasi a vedere. Nell'auto c'erano tre uomini vestiti in bianco. La ragazza indossava una minigonna rossa. Non riuscivo a vedere molto. L'autista uscì dall'auto e la colpì. Indossava una di quelle camicie bianche... Non so come si chiamano. Le diede uno schiaffo. Il motore dell'auto era molto silenzioso, sai. Silenzio. La colpì di nuovo. Gli altri uomini seduti in macchina stavano a guardare. Le prostitute vicino al muro stavano a guardare. Poi l'uomo rientrò in macchina e se ne andarono.

Un'ora dopo lei era ancora lì.

Dissi... 'Ciao,

Sembra che tu abbia pianto.

Stai bene?'

Quel genere di cose. E lei sorrise.

Allora io dissi 'Ti piace *Call of Duty*?'

E lei fece sì con la testa così dissi...

'Ti va di giocare a *Call Of Duty* con me?'

Per gran parte del tempo giocammo in due.

Poi lei si addormentò sul divano.

Le misi addosso il mio sacco a pelo.

La luce del sole entrava dal mare, mi stava rompendo, schiariva lo schermo. Penso avessi mal di testa.

La guardai, lì stesa sul divano...

Morbida, come acqua o altro...

E pensai...

Quello di cui ho bisogno, è una pistola.

Claire Per ucciderla?

Il Ragazzo Per proteggerla.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Sinceramente?

Claire Sinceramente.

Il Ragazzo Sinceramente?

Credo che fossi diventato un po' ossessionato dagli aborigeni.

...

Il Ragazzo Senti... Claire...

Non mi sento molto bene.

Ho la bocca completamente secca.

Mi dispiace davvero.

Succede.

Se parlo... mi...scombussolo.

Mi dispiace davvero.

Claire No, non preoccuparti.

Claire si avvicina al dispenser del tè.

Claire Vuoi del tè?

Te lo verso io.

Claire versa del tè.

Sai il ragazzo,

Il ragazzo aborigeno,

Quello di cui hai scritto, che stava sugli scogli e le navi in acqua.

Ricordi?

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire Mi chiedo spesso, quando lo immaginasti.

Immaginasti mai di chiedergli cosa provò davanti a quelle navi?

Che cosa pensò?

Me lo chiedo e basta, perché ...

Non è possibile, non è proprio possibile che... dopo che la cultura non è cambiata di una virgola per sessanta mila anni... non è proprio possibile che, se tu avessi chiesto al ragazzo aborigeno cosa aveva provato alla vista di quelle navi, lui ti rispondesse ... in lingua aborigena ovviamente... qualcosa del tipo 'Grazie, cazzo! Cazzo, finalmente qualcosa di interessante succede qui intorno.'

E' possibile, vero?

Il Ragazzo E' possibile.

Claire mette una tazza di tè davanti al ragazzo.

Claire Quando sei entrato nell'aula di musica.

Io ero lì con la signora Singh.

Ricordi?

Il Ragazzo Non proprio.

Claire E puntasti la pistola contro di noi e dicesti,

'Ho una sola pallottola.

A chi di voi due volete che spari?'

Ti ricordi?

Il Ragazzo Mi ricordo, sì, sì.

Lo hanno detto durante il processo che l'ho detto.

Me lo ricordo ora.

Claire 'A chi di voi due volete che spari?'

Così dicesti.

Il Ragazzo Sì.

Claire Perché?

Il Ragazzo Sinceramente?

Claire Sinceramente.

Il Ragazzo Ero stanco.

Mi era rimasta ancora una pallottola.

In quel momento, pensavo che tutta la cosa fosse... una stupidata.

Volevo solo che fosse tutto finito.

Claire Ricordi che cosa dicemmo?

Il Ragazzo No.

Claire Entrambe dicemmo 'Io'.

Il ragazzo fa per prendere la tazza di tè.

Claire fa cadere la tazza giù dal tavolo. Si rovescia.

Il Ragazzo Perché l'hai fatto?



Custode Claire.

Claire Tu devi essere il nuovo custode.

Custode Sì.

Claire Quante sedie credi dovrei tirare fuori?

Ho messo un avviso nella bacheca

Dice 'Il coro è tornato, Come Prima'

Così le persone capiscono, non è vero?

Eppure.

Certe sere c'è qualcosa in tv...

Pensi che sia il caso di mettere delle sedie fuori?

Credi che qualcuno verrà?

Custode Penso

Che starai bene.

Le persone verranno.

Il coro canta: 'Siamo tutti qui'.

Coro Fuori è buio

Fuori piove ma

Qui dentro è caldo

Ci sono persone, tutti, l'uomo in disintossicazione

E le giovani madri del centro,

Waheed e Isaac, e anche Agnessa,

Qualcuno dalla chiesa,

I fedeli,

E siamo tutti qui, siamo tutti qui

Qualche volta Chantal e Kai piombano qui

E Simon porta sua sorella

E persone, tutti, il gruppo polacco,

Il ragazzo con attacchi d'ira

Ex-carcerati

E siamo tutti qui, siamo tutti qui.

Claire accoglie il Coro.

Claire Venite.

Non siate timidi.

Tutti sono i benvenuti qui.

Siamo tutti una grande pazza tribù..

Se avete voglia di cantare, cantate

E se non vi sentite di cantare

Va bene ugualmente.

Non tutti hanno sempre voglia di cantare.

Coro (*canta*) “*E siamo tutti qui, siamo tutti qui*”.

Fine.

Analysis of The Events by David Greig

Chapter 1: The title

Claire's story was inspired by the terroristic attack by Anders Breivik in Utøya, an island near Oslo on 22 July 2011. However, although throughout the play there are some references to Utøya a attack, as Joyce McMillan³¹ has pointed out, both David Greig and Ramin Gray, the director, have repeated many times that the play is not the story of the Norwegian event³². The title, actually, might confirm the playwright and the director's statement, by referring to events, and not one specific event of violence. Therefore, although influenced by a single fact, *The Events* refers also to other stories of violence. Actually, throughout the play characters refer to other specific and current situations of war and conflict that are well known all over the world. In addition, the story of Claire, the Boy and the Choir can unfortunately recall episodes of violence against communities that have happened not only in Norway, but also in other parts of the world. Thus, the title of the play might refer to episodes of violence that may happen whenever different cultures avoid dialogue and choose intolerance.

1.1 A Norwegian story

Art cannot respond to sudden event in a sudden way, it is always "a wise half-decade or so behind the curve"³³. David Greig with *The Events* has given the lie to this common idea that art comes always late and is able to analyse and discuss topics that are not contemporary any longer. Probably because violence and terroristic attacks have characterized with short moments of truce

³¹ McMillan, J. "Art Remains State of Independence." 9 Aug. 2013. viewed 10 Jan. 2015.

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/joyce-mcmillan-art-remains-state-of-independence-1-3037200>.

³² McLean, P. "David Greig's New Play Watches The Events Unfold." *BBC News*. 7 Aug. 2013. viewed 19 Apr. 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-23586351>.

³³ McMillan, J. "Art Remains State of Independence", cit.

contemporary times for a long time, Greig has been able to react to a situation of violence in a very short and immediate time. Actually, a few months after Anders Behring Breivik's terroristic attack in Oslo and Utøya, David Greig and Romain Gray went to Norway and talked to survivors, friends, journalists and politicians. They were trying to understand the reasons beyond Breivik's violence, whether they were social, political or religious.³⁴ Both Greig and Gray, in fact, were shocked by the Norwegian event and felt that they had to find a way, as a compulsion, to dispel the pain and the incredulity provoked by the fact. Although the playwright and the director have stated their story is fictional³⁵, they both confirmed that Breivik's terror attack has influenced the story of Claire. Greig and Gray have explicitly suggested some parts of the play that were inspired by the Norwegian event, whereas other details are implicitly connected to Utøya and recognizable by a close reading of the text.

The first reference to the Norwegian shooting and its perpetrator is the FAQ scene when the Choir asks the Boy some Frequently Asked Questions about his life, story and ideology³⁶. Similarly, the Norwegian criminal wrote a 'Manifesto' that includes also a series of answers to Frequently Asked Questions that summarize his ideology and criminal project. In addition, the passage when Claire interviews the politician could conceal a reference to Breivik's sympathising relation with the Norwegian right wing party, the Fremskrittspartiet (FRP). As Thorpe asserts, the Norwegian event was a massacre caused by a political and racial ideology³⁷. Andres Breivik, actually, killed many young representatives of the Arbeiderpartiet, Norwegian Labour Party in Norway. Furthermore, a reference to the left wing party and its slogan 'Alle skal med!', which means 'Everyone should be included', resounds in Claire's words "Everyone's welcome here"

³⁴ Simpson, P., "Interview: David Greig on His New Show The Events." *WOW247*. 3 Aug. 2013. viewed 19 Apr. 2015. <http://www.wow247.co.uk/2013/08/03/david-greig-on-the-events/>.

³⁵ Gardner, L. "Best Theatre of 2013, No 1: The Events." *the Guardian*. 31 Dec. 2013. viewed 6 Nov. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/dec/31/best-theatre-of-2013-no-1-the-events>.

³⁶ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., pp. 18-20.

³⁷ Thorpe, V., "UK Playwright Plans Show Drawing on Anders Breivik's Norway Killings." *the Guardian*. 24 Mar. 2013. viewed 19 Apr. 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/24/musical-anders-breivik-uk-premiere>.

both at the beginning and at the end of the play.³⁸ All these references might prove that the author conducted researches not only on Breivik and his political and social ideas, but also on Norway and its social and cultural components³⁹. The ritual of the ‘Berserking Viking warrior’, for example, is a direct reference to the Norwegian past history and culture.

Real life experiences influenced also the character of Claire. During one of Greig and Gray’s visits to Norway after 22/7, the couple attended a concert where a “charismatic wounded vicar” was directing a choir and, as Gray has stated, in that moment, Greig saw in the choir and the priest the crucial elements of his play⁴⁰. However, Greig decided not to give Claire a Norwegian nationality because it might have been too “rough”⁴¹. Coupled with the inspiration for his female character, that night Greig decided that he wanted a choir in order to bring on the stage a great sense of community.

Greig’s connection and knowledge of Norway and its society and culture can go back over to another play of his, *Being Norwegian*⁴². This play by Greig might confirm the special relation between the playwright and the Scandinavian country. The two protagonists, Lisa and Sean meet in a pub and spend an entire night talking about their lives and her Norwegian nationality. She refers continuously to Norwegian habits and her nostalgia for her homeland. Effectively, Greig already demonstrated to be interested and fascinated by Norwegian identity and society. According to Wallace, Greig considers this country as a perfect and ideal reality, “a kind of

³⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit. p. 11, p. 65.

³⁹ McLean, P. “David Greig’s New Play Watches The Events Unfold”, cit.

⁴⁰ McElroy, S., “And a Choir Shall Heal Them. David Greig’s ‘The Events’ Is Coming to New Haven.” *The New York Times* 13 Jun. 2014. *NYTimes.com*. viewed 19 Apr. 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/theater/david-greigs-the-events-is-coming-to-new-haven.html>.

⁴¹ Gray, R., Interview. “ATC’s Ramin Gray Dissects David Greig’s Controversial Play, The Events.” *theatreVOICE*. 21 Oct. 2013. listened 4 Mar. 2015. <http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/atcs-ramin-gray-dissects-david-greigs-controversial-play-the-events/>.

⁴² Greig, D., *David, Greig Selected Plays 1999–2009*. London: Faber & Faber, 2010, pp. 419-454.

utopian otherworld”⁴³. Therefore, it should not surprise if the terroristic attack in Oslo and the massacre in Utøya had a great impact on the Scottish author. It should not surprise if the event that tore apart Norway in 2011 obsessed him and drove him to write a play⁴⁴. When questioned about his decision to perform *The Events* in front of a Norwegian audience just two years after the bombing in Oslo and the massacre on Utøya, he answered that he wanted to offer Norwegians a positive and artistic occasion to think about the terroristic attack⁴⁵. Greig wants to offer to every victim of violence a place and a lapse of time for healing and reasoning about the event. In fact, considering that the play is from the survivor’s point of view, the story offers positive elements of psychological reflection without documenting the brutalities that hit the Norwegian community⁴⁶. In this particular case, *The Events* could be considered an act of resistance to a violent event because, through a fictional story, it also explores a real event and tries to understand the causes behind the violence⁴⁷.

Moreover, both the playwright and the director have confirmed that the conversations they had with some of the survivors to the Norwegian 21/7 inspired some lines and passages of the play. For example, according to Greig himself, Bjorn Ihler, a survivor from the Utøya massacre inspired the heart-touching part when Claire reveals to the Boy that she feels that she does not have a soul anymore⁴⁸. Bjorn Ihler had a great part in helping him understand the heart of the Norwegian event. When interviewing Ihler, Greig was surprised by the fact that during the event everyone tried to help and rescue everyone else. It might be possible that Ihler’s direct evidence has inspired Greig’s decision to write a play that not only looks for a reason for evil acts, but also

⁴³ Wallace, C., *The Theatre of David Greig*, cit., p. 159.

⁴⁴ McElroy, S., “And a Choir Shall Heal Them”, cit.

⁴⁵ Gray, R., Interview. “ATC’s Ramin Gray Dissects David Greig’s Controversial Play, *The Events*”, cit.

⁴⁶ Hansen, C., “Advarer mot sensor av Breivik-stykke.” *Bergens Tidende*. 4 Jun. 2014. Viewed 7 Apr. 2015.

http://www.fib.no/Documents/Presseklipp/2014/Manifest%202083/20140604_BT_advarer%20mot%20sensur%20av%20Breivikstykke_oppslag.pdf.

⁴⁷ McLean, P., “David Greig’s New Play Watches *The Events* Unfold”, cit.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

demonstrates that even in horrible situations people can be human⁴⁹. Greig has dramatized the stories of many victims, by showing also another side of the terror events – the loving and human acts of the victims.

Listening to the victims of the century's rage produces a new way of seeing, called *witnessing*, compelled by an unflinching ability (...) to face the (...) suffering and from within this terrible knowledge to somehow offer up surprising new, unsentimental affirmations of the human spirit⁵⁰.

Another passage of *The Events*, the gathering of people at the promenade might have been inspired by real life. In that particular scene, characters talk about the group of people using these words: “(...) flowers, singing, lamps (...) The atmosphere. It's surprising. The emotion. The love. Genuine love”⁵¹. The picture of people that stay together after the massacre could bring back to memory the immense crowd of people who gathered in Oslo some days after the terroristic attack bringing roses and their solidarity to the victims. Because of all the flowers, that parade was called ‘Rosetog’, that in Norwegian means ‘parade of roses’.



⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Malpede, K., “Theatre at 2000. A *Witnessing Project*” in Strozier, C., Flynn, M. (eds.), *The Year 2000: Essays on the End*. New York: New York University Press, 1997, pp. 299-308, p. 299.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Aas, E., Picture of the ‘Rosetog’ in Oslo on 25th July 2011. Copyright @Erlend Aas / Scanpix.

1.2 A European story of multiculturalism. The Aboriginal Boy

Breivik attacked not only the social democratic Norwegian ideology, but also Europe and its welcoming, multicultural, open, tolerant and secular identity⁵³. Greig's interest for the European continent, its identity and its values has always been alive and vivid in his production⁵⁴. Greig's plays faces the topic of internationalism and multiculturalism⁵⁵. Particularly, *The Events* reflects the international quality of his production by posing questions about living in a multicultural society. *The Event*, in fact, is a play about any European country experiencing immigration⁵⁶. No matter where it will be performed, it will always tell a universal and contemporary story⁵⁷. *The Events*, in fact, is a contemporary story of violence and of life after the violence. Moreover, considering that the set of the play is an anonymous rehearsal room, the event could happen anywhere in the world.

According to Kritzer, a political play presents and tries to ponder and understand situations and questions that are important for and within society⁵⁸. *The Events* presents the issue of multiculturalism, ponders different points of view and tries to understand what has happened, is happening and will happen on the stage. Firstly, *The Events* proposes an explicit dialogue about multiculturalism by widening perspectives and proposing different points of view about multiculturalism. Greig does not deny that there might be a critical condition related to multiculturalism and that it might cause difficulties for people to establish communication. However, Greig dares to propose a new possibility in the multicultural society by imagining an idealistic situation where people with different ideas can communicate. According to Gray, the

⁵³ McLean, P., "David Greig's New Play Watches The Events Unfold", cit.

⁵⁴ Wallace, C., *The Theatre of David Greig*, cit., p. 30.

⁵⁵ Reinelt, J. "David Greig", cit., pp. 203-222, p. 220.

⁵⁶ Gray, R., Interview. "ATC's Ramin Gray Dissects David Greig's Controversial Play, The Events", cit.

⁵⁷ McElroy, S. "And a Choir Shall Heal Them", cit.

⁵⁸ Kritzer, A. H. *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain: New Writing: 1995-2005*. Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 10.

character of the politician brings a different point of view concerning the dialogue about multicultural society⁵⁹. By letting all the parts speak, Greig not only questions his spectators and readers about current issues concerning multiculturalism, but also shows possible fears and doubts people can feel about living among different cultures⁶⁰. Greig gives voice and allows the politician to express his own opinion. The politician describes multiculturalism as something good as long as one feels in a dominant and more privileged position⁶¹. Moreover, this character says something that people usually consider a taboo – the fact that people might feel safer when surrounded by people with whom they share values and ideas. By introducing the politician’s point of view, Greig seems willing to exclaim that people should not be ashamed and scared of expressing their doubts and fears regarding multiculturalism. Whereas the politician may sound racist, but on the other hand practical and concrete when talking about social problems connected to immigration, Claire may sound more idealistic. She defines her choir as ‘the multiculturalism’ because it gathers up people from different social classes and contexts, cultures and countries⁶². Although recognizing the differences among cultures, she attributes the same value to people and different cultures. She adopts a point of view that Walker has defined as “non-European and non-male” based⁶³. In contrast, European and male could be the politician’s definition of multiculturalism. Greig might represent what Sierz⁶⁴ has defined as “the best British theatre” because his play imagines a world where changes are quick and the answer to violence and racism is communication and respect. Actually, in the time of a standard performance of about one hour and a half, Claire manages to communicate with many people with ideas different from hers and to have a confrontation with the Boy.

⁵⁹ Gray, R., Interview. “ATC’s Ramin Gray Dissects David Greig’s Controversial Play, *The Events*”, cit.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 33.

⁶² Ivi, p. 35.

⁶³ Walker, E. P. “The Dilemma of Multiculturalism in the Theatre.” *TDR* 38.3 (1994): 7–10, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 243.

(...) political theatre (...) poses questions about society to which it does not already know the answer. And perhaps most importantly, political theatre has at its very heart the possibility of change⁶⁵.

Having considered that *The Events* could be 'alternative' in its proposing a dialogue between opposing parts, instead of violence, the play could be considered as an offer of new ideas and points of view different from the pre-existing social perceptions. Greig has proposed to see immigration not as a problem, but as a useful social means. The story of violence of the Aboriginal Boy might be the perfect example to bring a different point of view on the relation 'invader/invaded' when talking about immigration.

In order to talk about the relation 'invader/invaded', Greig seems willing to talk about events that are far away in time like Colonialism, but still good examples of failure of humanity. More than referring to Colonialism and its violence in general, Greig refers to Australian Aborigines. Actually, the Boy talks about the Illawarra River⁶⁶. David Greig chooses to narrate the story of Aborigines in Australia, a part of colonialism that has been particularly controversial for The UK and British society. Greig goes back in time to the 18th century and the character describes the content of ships by saying: "And on these ships are convicts; a condition of personhood the boy does not know; on these ships are officers and rating; conditions of personhood the boy does not know."⁶⁷ The description recalls Richard Broome's description of the beginning of English colonialism in Australia in 1788 when "ships containing 290 seamen, soldiers, officials and 717 convicts sailed into Port Jackson, to confront the Gamaraigal people of the Sydney area"⁶⁸. Furthermore, the Boy speaks about "class, religion, disease and a multitude of other instruments of objectification"⁶⁹ that are carried on the English ships. On the contrary, the English ships

⁶⁵ Greig, D., "David Greig" in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 66.

⁶⁶ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Broome, R., *Aboriginal Australians: Black responses to White dominance*. Sydney; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 2002, p. 26.

⁶⁹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 12.

carried people to Australia. Considering people as humans instead of problems and terrible threats could be the first step in the multicultural dialogue in Europe. In other words, Greig seems to suggest that to avoid violence among people, considering the other human beings with the respect they deserve might be the first steps towards a peaceful coexistence.

Although the critique against the use of violence by the British colonists could seem the cornerstone of this story of violence in the play, the great quality of the story of the Aboriginal Boy is that it begs the audience to rethink their role within society and their identities. Western society has always associated itself with the role of the strong conquerors, exporting culture and civilization all over the world. However, in the last years, dynamics of power have changed, a higher number of immigrants have come to Europe, and multiculturalism has begun to change the values and cultures of Western society. The same role of Europe and Western society as the conqueror and representative and exporter of its Christian and democratic values to other regions of the world has started to weaken. Europeans have abandoned the role of ‘invaders’ to turn into ‘invaded’. This might be the Boy’s point of view, who is threaten by immigrants and is ‘obsessed with aborigines’.⁷⁰ He recognises himself in the Aboriginal Boy and considers immigrants as problem. In order to protect his tribe and himself, he uses violence against the foreigners, the members of the choir, which he recognises as dangerous for his identity and his community. From his point of view, violence could be a ‘preventive’ precaution against the violence of the immigrants, whereas dialogue is synonymous for weakness⁷¹. The fact that the Boy uses violence against immigrants to protect his identity and his tribe means that he adopts the old point of view that was typical of colonists. Europeans have been colonizing the world, using terrorism,

⁷⁰ Ivi, p. 63.

⁷¹ Ivi, p. 17.

genocide and slavery since the 15th century⁷². Violence was the only way Europeans adopted when colonizing the world. However, Greig's interest may not stop at reconsidering whether violence is worth or not, but may be to ask his spectators to reconsider their positions and points of view in society. Indeed, the fact that the Boy speaks directly to the audience during the Aboriginal Boy scene could influence and help spectators to reconsider their identities and remember that their ancestors might have been 'invaders' themselves. In fact, he addresses the audience with these words:

If you could go back in time and speak to that boy, what would you say? You would stand on the rocks and you would point at the ships and you would say – 'Kill them. Kill them all'⁷³.

Greig challenges his readers to understand whether they are aborigines or strangers, 'invaders' or 'invaded'. Furthermore, Greig might seem to confirm that the past roles of conquerors and aborigines have been changing and that Europeans could be seen as the new Aborigines. In proposing a change of role and identity, Greig seems to prove the skill of theatre to "destabilize definitions and identities"⁷⁴. Therefore, the Aboriginal Boy's story may help to understand that categorizing and classifying people between 'foreigners' and 'aborigines' can impede the exchange and enrichment between different cultures.

Indeed, Greig discuss a very hot topic within contemporary society. Amelia Howe Kritzer asserts in her book *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain* that a few political plays have ever been able to discuss contemporary historical events, but have allowed spectators to distance from their own responsibilities and obligations in society at least for the time they are watching the

⁷² Jalata, A., "The Impacts of English Colonial Terrorism and Genocide on Indigenous/Black Australians." *SAGE Open*, 3.3 (2013): 12, p. 3.

⁷³ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 13.

⁷⁴ Kritzer, A. H., *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, cit., p. 2.

performance⁷⁵. In contrast, Greig discuss a contemporary issue and forces his audience to face their responsibilities also in the theatre. *The Events* is not afraid of dividing the audience because its goal is “to initiate a discussion about contemporaneity among contemporary spectators”⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ Ivi, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Sierz, A., “New Writing in Britain: How Do We Define the Contemporary? | The Sidcup Papers.” *The Sidcup Papers*, 17 Dec. 2008. viewed 11 Jun. 2015. http://theatrefutures.org.uk/sidcup_papers/2008/12/17/new-writing-in-britain-how-do-we-define-the-contemporary/.

Chapter 2: Dramaturgy

(...) violence is, in itself, unimaginative. (...) What tools are available to us if we want to intervene in the management of the imagination? Is it possible that art, the theatre in particular, could provide a way of cracking open the carapace of the imagined world and allowing us to glimpse, underneath, all the possibilities of its realities?⁷⁷.

Greig's writing that "leaves space to a world to be imagined" could be defined as "poetic and abstract"⁷⁸. It is poetic because it does not use explanations that are proper to the narrative style, and abstract in the sense of 'not concrete'. In contrast to the direct and shocking representation of atrocities on the stages of the In-Yer-Face generation, Greig chooses to represent the post-violence on the stage. According to Sierz, the representation of violence is disturbing also because it does not allow a dialogue⁷⁹. He adds that violent actions on stage are "primitive, irrational and destructive"⁸⁰. Conversely, *The Events* is more narration than action. As well as the actions of the In-Yer-Face plays, the word dimension in *The Events* is primitive and irrational – let us consider the references to rituals and the many inconclusive and illogical lines spoken by Claire. However, narration and words in the play are not destructive. They are essential elements for the existence of other words, words of communication and dialogue.

Having introduced that David Greig seems to have his ace in the use of words and narration, this chapter will analyse the writing techniques used by the playwright in order to talk about violence. Before a thorough analysis of words and vocabularies used by characters, the structure of the play – the absence of acts and stage directions – will be analysed.

⁷⁷ Greig, D., "Rough Theatre", cit., p. 218.

⁷⁸ Wright, I., "Working in Partnership", cit., p. 159.

⁷⁹ Sierz, A., *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today*. London: Faber & Faber, 2000, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Ivi, p.9.

2.1 Stage directions and dialogues

(...) contemporary dramatists leave open the possibility of change, locating this possibility in the centrality of dialogue. The plays open up dialogues among (...) people brought together by a particular issue. They imagine dialogues that have never happened, and perhaps will not. They create a rich dialogic relationship with the audience”⁸¹

There are no acts in *The Events*, which ends up by resulting in a non-stop performance with many scenes. Furthermore, Greig does not give temporal references. The structure of the plot does not respect a linear time line, and the chronological order of narration is continuously interrupted by memoirs, nightmares, hallucinations, dreams, flashbacks and confused dialogues that prevent a linear narration of the present. Subsequently, readers and spectators struggle to understand the chronological order of the events that take place throughout the play. Similar to post-dramatic theatre that in general focus attention more on single episodes and situations than on a chronologically linear performance of actions⁸², also Greig’s play prefers an episodic and discontinuous narration.

Coupled with a chronologically disrupted narration, *The Events* proposes no geographical specificity. Greig does not describe the settings, and, except for the references to some places that are simply named by the characters, place does not seem to have an important role in the play. The real place is the stage, where the trauma and the events can happen. On the stage, the past is important because Claire can remember and try to understand violence. However, the stage is also the place for reasoning and looking forward.

⁸¹Kritzer, A. H., *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, cit., p. 25.

⁸² Barnett, D., “When is a Play not a Drama? Two Examples of Postdramatic Theatre Texts”. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 24:1 (Feb. 2008): 14-23, p. 22.

Subsequently, the dramaturgy of *The Events* seems to intentionally obscure and confuse “boundaries of spatiality, temporality and individuality”⁸³. As a direct consequence, Greig has created a fictional story that can be performed everywhere and at any time. Readers and spectators might feel, indeed, that the story takes place somewhere indefinite and a-temporal. Greig has created a universal story of violence, without precise and specific references to historical times, places and specific people.

(..) the reading of dialogue and didascalie constitutes a mode of reception different from (...) that of witnessing a performance. A voice in the didascalie speaks to the implied reader as well as to theatre professionals. We don't need to eavesdrop⁸⁴.

According to Nelson, playwrights use stage directions as the basic means to bring their idea not only to readers, but also to spectators⁸⁵. He adds that dramatists may want not only their contemporaries, but also the next generations to read their texts⁸⁶. Subsequently, through stage directions the authors can communicate directly to readers and influence their interpretation of the play and their imagination. In contrast to this tendency, Greig tries to let space to his readers and spectators' imagination and interpretation. He might be motivated by the 'Brechtian' intention of not anticipating anything to the spectator⁸⁷.

However, David Greig does not erase completely stage directions from the play. Playwrights through stage directions “dictate (...) aspects of staging that are essential to the play” and

⁸³ Thompson, C., “Beyond Borders:David Greig’s Transpersonal Dramaturgy” in Müller-Wood, A. and Wallace, C. (eds.), *Cosmotopia: Transnational Identities in David Greig’s Theatre*. Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Filozofická fakulta : Litteraria Pragensia Books, 2011, pp. 103-117, p. 103.

⁸⁴ Frese Witt, M. A., “Reading Modern Drama.” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 25.1 (1992): 103–112, p. 104.

⁸⁵ Nelson, Erin, "Stage directions uncovered: the author's voice in modern English drama" (1999). *Honors Theses*. Paper 319.

⁸⁶ Ivi, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Basuki, R.. “Brecht’s Epic Theatre as a Modern Avant-Garde and its Influence on Postmodern Theatre/Drama”, *k@ta*, 4.2 (2002): 136-147, p. 143.

describe the image they have in his or her own mind⁸⁸. Greig chooses to convey some implicit idea through stage directions about characters and situations. Firstly, Greig, in the preface or extra-textual writing, talks about the Choir, underlining the importance of the sense of identity and belonging the Choir must have. Although this sounds more like a technical note, addressed more to technical personnel than to readers, those lines show the playwright's idea about the Choir. Greig explicitly describes the character of the Choir because it is necessary that the Choir is a solid community.

However, in *The Events*, as well as in real life, readers and spectators are observers of the events and get to know characters step by step, and as in real life, they could be deceiving and hiding their true opinion. There is no omniscient narrator or author that helps readers understand and not be deceived. However, Greig uses a strategy to characterise the Boy – the playwright describes his actions. “The Boy rocks on the balls of his feet”⁸⁹ is a stage direction that appears twice in the play, at the very beginning, just before Claire welcomes him and invites him to join the Choir, and later, before the massacre. Between the first scene and the narration of the event, readers and spectators have seen the Boy have many identities and they might feel disoriented and confused. However, when he rolls on his feet for the second time, both readers and spectators might recognize his attitude and associate it to him. It could be a way to identify him as the perpetrator of the shooting. Then, the Boy that committed the shooting is also the Boy of the first scene.

Similarly, Greig does not use stage directions in order to comment the characters' actions. Greig has his characters describe their own actions. The Boy describes his rituals and everything he does, feels and sees during his first berserking. Only when he faints, Greig's voice intervenes to

⁸⁸ Nelson, E., "Stage directions uncovered: the author's voice in modern English drama", cit., p. 23.

⁸⁹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 11, p.47.

describe his movements as those of a person in a berserking condition and compares his walking to that of a fox.⁹⁰

However, it might be right to specify that characters describe situations and actions in the present, but mainly in the past. Indeed, most of the times they narrate episodes, situations and events that have happened in the past. They relive that past. *The Events* is not the reproduction of an event; it is the narration of feelings, the remembering and healing of wounds. The ‘action’ has taken place before, on the stage of *The Events* characters can remember, suffer and reason. Claire relives the massacre by describing it. Greig lets her relive the violence and narrate it to spectators. Characters have the urge to analyse it and understand it. They talk about the past as if they were trapped in their past.

However, it may be important to remember that the entire event is described twice – firstly, from the victim’s point of view, and later, from the Boy’s point of view. The fact that characters describe and narrate violence exonerates readers from any judgment and allows them to feel the characters’ feelings. In particular, when Claire narrates the shooting event in the music room, readers might feel deeply involved and touched by her story. Although readers have to imagine what is happening because of the lack of stage direction, this strategy seems very powerful. The only survivor of the massacre narrates the story for the readers. She leads and takes them by hand and they run with her down the corridors of the building to the music room. While she tells her story, readers can imagine and feel all her panic and terror. She is a witness herself too. She has survived the massacre and her words are likely to be both full of panic and marked by pain. The fear of death and the pain for her loss. In other words, readers become witnesses to the event as much as Claire’s fear becomes the readers’ own fears. Apparently, the adoption of the victim’s point of view makes the scene intense and harsh.

⁹⁰ Ivi, p. 42.

Characters express themselves through dialogues. Dialogues dominate the script. Considering that Greig is not the director of his play, it might be possible to expect longer and explicative stage directions. However, Greig has worked side by side with Romain Gray and has attended the rehearsals. This cooperation and collaboration might explain why Greig did not feel the need to communicate to the director, the production and the actors his ideas towards his text. However, there may be a formal reason behind the poverty of stage directions in the play – the desire not to influence his readers and his audience. Greig has written a play about a violent event, but he does not say a word about the event or the events that take place on the stage. David Greig does not comment or express his point of view explicitly in *The Events*. He does not use autonomous stage directions in order to let his voice heard. Only characters express their feelings, describe situations and talk about violence, Greig does not. There is no room for the playwright's point of view. The only voices the audience can hear are the characters' voices and points of view. In *The Events*, Greig lets characters speak and manage the story. The protagonist guides the readers and spectators in her confused, shocked and traumatized status. Her feelings pervade and dominate the entire narration.

2.2 Words of violence and words of resistance

One of the characteristics of British theatre is love for words⁹¹. Greig seems to belong to this section of English theatre where words have a main role in the play and on the stage. *The Events* is, in fact, a play based on words that communicate both violence and resistance to it. Therefore, the play says 'the unsayable'⁹² and it proposes an alternative to violence. Actually, almost every page of *The Events* has words of violence and conflict, but also words of dialogue and openness. In order to mark this contrast, Greig has created a sharp dichotomy between two different

⁹¹ Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 5.

⁹² Greig, D., "Rough Theatre", cit., p. 213.

semantic vocabularies respectively for Claire and the Boy. The result is that the contrast between words of communication and tolerance and words of violence is neat and wide throughout the play. Greig chooses words in a very minute and precise way. Greig wisely provides two vests for his two characters. Whereas the Boy wears his vest throughout the entire novel, Claire sometimes surprises the readers with a ‘costume change’ by changing the register and her vocabulary. Notwithstanding the urge to mark the contrast between violence and good words, Greig does not end up reducing Claire to a stereotype. For instance, she is more complex than the stereotype of the lovely and good priest, because her suffering and pain are showing also her aggressiveness and hate. She shows her hate by speaking. Characters use words in order to express their personalities, feelings and desires and spread them to the public⁹³. Indeed, Claire’s words become vulgar when she speaks about cigarettes or angry when she steals a Twix. She says swearwords, such as ‘fuck’ several times throughout the play. Moreover, she swears against Catriona when they struggle to have a sensible dialogue and they do not agree about her obsessive behaviour. Swearing is a type of aggression – a verbal violence that hits spectators⁹⁴. Her swearing words might underline and make more real the characters’ feelings of stress and frustration. Similarly, her vocabulary becomes less polite but more realistic and down to earth.

The most meaningful lines of violence and aggressiveness are those when Claire imagines torturing and killing the Boy. In her words all her hate and suffering resound:

You will be taken from here and beaten with cable. Your body will be laid down on hot metal. The roof of your mouth will be gouged, the skin of your cock will be peeled, your feet will be burned, your muscles cut, shit will be smeared into your wounds, and the skin will be sewn up with septic string. You will become sick and weak. (...) I’ll stamp on your neck and break your spine⁹⁵.

In contrast, the female character is able to pronounce words of real love:

⁹³ Reinelt, J. “David Greig”, cit., p. 216.

⁹⁴ Sierz, A., *In-Yer-Face Theatre*, cit., p. 8.

⁹⁵ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., pp. 52-53.

I take his hand.
I kiss him,
I hold him, I strip him.
I stroke him,
I take him into me.
I take him into me so gently,
And with so much tenderness and love (...) ⁹⁶.

Talking about the language of characters of his plays, Greig has said:

My characters are very articulate about themselves –they may never be able to get to the point, they may never know exactly what they are trying to say, but they have a wide range of words at their disposal and they are not hindered, they are not faking it. They can be inarticulate in an articulate way. Any character I write is able to speak freely. ⁹⁷

Whereas swearing and aggressive words may appear necessary in order to show Claire’s anger and hate, bad or provocative words are not pronounced by characters to express their suffering, terror and pain. For example, when the victim and the shooter remember the shooting event in the music room, they do not swear, but define the situation as “silly”⁹⁸. Swearwords might risk to ruin the feel of pain of Claire, and the desperation of the Boy and to devaluate the dramatic tone of the scene. In other words, the description of the violent action appears more powerful without using ‘aggressive’ words.

2.3 The word ‘tribe’ and its meanings in the play

Both Claire and the Boy use the word ‘tribe’ and they use it several times throughout the play. When talking and discussing the meaning of ‘tribe’, their words display a significant semantic gap⁹⁹. To put it differently, although they both talk about the same topic, they do not understand each other because they give the same word ‘tribe’ two completely opposite meanings. According

⁹⁶ Ivi, p. 51.

⁹⁷ Greig, D. and Fisher, M. “Interview Mark Fisher & David Greig” in Müller-Wood, A. and Wallace, C. (eds.), *Cosmotopia*, cit., p. 25.

⁹⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 9.

⁹⁹ Botham, P., “From tribe to chorus: David Greig’s *The Events*.” *Tcg circle*. viewed 8 Apr. 215. <http://www.tcgcircle.org/2014/07/from-tribe-to-chorus-david-greigs-the-events/>.

to the Boy's point of view, a likely definition of 'tribe' would be "A city surrounded by walls continuously under the threat of barbarian foreigners always ready to conquer the city. Tribal warriors must protect the tribe. They have to sacrifice their social relations with the members of the tribe in order to be always physically and mentally ready to protect the tribe itself. The most efficient example of tribal warrior is the Viking warrior who goes berserk in order to find the anger to kill off the enemies". As an atavistic version of community, the Boy's 'tribe' is made of apparently fixed identity markers – bonds of blood and tradition – and of lonely people. He admits that being lonely is difficult, but that he got used to it¹⁰⁰. Coupled with a sense of danger, suspect and exclusion, loneliness is one of the negative feelings his words might recall.

In contrast, Claire could define the word 'tribe' as "A community that welcomes vulnerable people helping them to heal in case of terrible violence. The tribe is a hut where warring souls can reconcile. Its members can feel free to follow their feelings and desires without being afraid of loving or appearing weak and tender. The tribe helps members to understand and accept other people". Claire's idea of community opens and ends the play. Although the Boy will destroy her tribe, the effects of the destruction will not be permanent, because at the end of the play she welcomes another 'big crazy tribe'¹⁰¹. Furthermore, Claire's idea of community can induce a positive sense of belonging and hospitality in the readers.

2.4 Violence on TV and social media. Attempting and failing to communicate.

Nadine Holdsworth describes Greig as "deeply invested in the possibilities of the collective imagination, pursuing ideas across different media as well as linguistic and stylistic boundaries"¹⁰². Greig's willingness to experiment with structure and storytelling clashes together

¹⁰⁰ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 18.

¹⁰¹ Ivi, p. 65.

¹⁰² Holdsworth, N., "David Greig" in Rebellato, D. (eds.), *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009: Voices, Documents, New Interpretations*. New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013, pp. 169-189, p. 169.

different theatrical styles and techniques¹⁰³. He catches styles directly from reality and contemporary means of communication. For example, in *The Events*, Greig chooses TV and social media, Facebook in particular, two ‘places’ where his readers and spectator are accustomed to experience violence. In *The Events* there is a relationship between the artistic expression about traumatic events and the media’s constant publications regarding them¹⁰⁴. Theatre and TV news differ for the fact that whereas news simply report and describe violent events, dramas demand spectator to experience every shade of the event¹⁰⁵. Greig feels that theatre involves spectators almost physically, whereas TV traps spectators among series of images and accounts without helping them to understand¹⁰⁶. In addition, spectators of the news have developed a kind of behaviour that distances them from the constant and common harm and violence they see on TV, whereas violence on stage may result less disturbing¹⁰⁷. Paradoxically, the impact of ever-present bombing of violent thoughts, images and videos is less strong for an audience than watching simulated violence on a stage. Perception and experience are finally together in theatre¹⁰⁸. Theatre, indeed, offers the possibility to pause and actively think about violence, not only watch it passively¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, as David Trend has stated in his book *The myth of media violence*, “media violence convinces people that they live in a violent world and that violence is required to make the world safer”¹¹⁰, similarly, the Boy uses violence because he wants to protect his tribe from the violence he sees in society¹¹¹. In contrast, Greig tries to propose a world where violence makes the world less safe and where alternatives to violence, such as dialogue and communication, can forge a more peaceful society.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Karlsvik, M. “22/7 Sett Fra Nabostammen.” *Dramatikkenshus*. 15 Mar. 2012. viewed 14 Apr. 2015. <http://dramatikkenshus.no/pub/dramatikkenshus/Arkiv/?aid=1926&viewall=1>.

¹⁰⁵ McLean, P. “David Greig’s New Play Watches The Events Unfold”, cit.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ridout, N. *Theatre and Ethics*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 58.

¹⁰⁹ Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Trend, D. *The myth of media violence: a critical introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007, p. 58.

¹¹¹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 61.

The talk-show interview is a stratagem to narrate four stories of violence. Readers can imagine Claire suddenly stopping, facing the public and introducing the narrator. Due to this particular strategy, readers may on the one hand feel that their stories address not only the priest but also readers themselves, and can on the other hand understand the identity of the characters. Considering that the same actor plays all these four characters, their identity could probably be very difficult to guess if Claire did not introduce them explicitly. Although the scene may appear very static, the use of this narrative artifice makes the scene similar to a TV show. Readers are the spectators, Claire is the host and the narrators are her guests. She introduces them to the audience. They are the father, the journalist, the friend and the politician. These guests have in common the fact they are linked to the Boy in some way and their stories say something about him on different aspects of his life – private, public, political and cultural. These stories are pieces of the same puzzle. Once put together we have a picture of the perpetrator of the mass shooting event. Nevertheless, a possible purpose of Greig's for adopting this narrative trick might be that he wants his reader to consider and comprehend how often TV and media are able to influence, confuse and manipulate people about the reality of facts. David Greig criticises mass media that impose certain truths and reclaims the monopoly of narrations and imagination¹¹². In this particular case, Greig is likely to show the effect of some superficial, sensationalist and tabloid shows that create a model for narrating events, realities and truths. Greig uses the talk-show interview because it is way of communicating to which his audience is likely to be familiar. The playwright wants to awake his readers' minds and show them that different paths can lead to truth¹¹³. The 'talk-show' is curious and frantic, but it does not give an appropriate and 'right'

¹¹² Greig, D., "Rough Theatre", cit., p. 214.

¹¹³ Ibid.

answer to Claire's question. She will have to talk directly with the Boy in order to hear, maybe, something 'honest'¹¹⁴.

Although Claire's dialogues with the father, the friend, the journalist and the politician have been just presented as failing attempts to know the truth about the violent event, they could also be interpreted as examples of positive communication on the stage. As a matter of fact, although their opinions are different and contrasting, they manage to initiate a dialogue and communicate. The element that defines a conversation as successful is not the achievement of an agreement, but the fact that parts in conflict manage to have a confrontation¹¹⁵. In an interview with Mark Fisher, Greig has stated that he aspires to demonstrate that communication is possible, even if it seems to fail¹¹⁶. In *The Events*, he might have accomplished his mission to show how people can manage to communicate despite dissimilar points of view. Therefore, storytelling can become a precious means when multicultural and cosmopolitan characters manage to establish a conversation because they cross cultural borders. Moreover, even if characters do not succeed in sharing the same point of view, they bring differences to face each other and to establish a dialogue. However, another part of critics claims that David Greig's plays often shows lonely characters which often portray both a sense of aspiration, desire and development, and a sense of failure and resignation.¹¹⁷

Greig poses an ethical question to his spectators about the role they think they have in social media and the truth they accept to believe. The reference to Facebook users who empathise and sympathise for Claire when she displays forgiveness toward the Boy may be a critique against

¹¹⁴ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 63.

¹¹⁵ Müller, A., "Cosmopolitan Stage Conversations – David Greig's Adapted Transnational Characters & the Ethics of Identity" in Müller-Wood, A., and Wallace, C. (eds.), *Cosmotopia*, cit., p. 84.

¹¹⁶ Greig, D., Fisher, M., "Interview: Mark Fisher & David Greig", cit., p. 27.

¹¹⁷ Reinelt, J. "David Greig", cit., p. 216.

social media and the behaviours of social users. People show compassion and sympathy for her, but the guards in the prison they are not able to understand her real feelings and intentions behind her smile and courtesy. Greig likely refers to the widespread habit to click the thumb-up by Fb users when commenting pictures or status posted by other users. As they appreciate something with a quick ‘like’, they can change their mind and decide to ‘dislike’ it by pressing the thumb-down. Although the Facebook mode of expressing feelings might appear superficial, Claire seems to care about Facebook users’ opinions – or better ‘likes’. She might embody the contemporary social media users whose choices sometimes depend on the number or likes they have on their page.

I forgive him, I say.
(...) And they like that.
They like it on Facebook and they like it in real life as well.
(...) It’s poison.
And it will kill him.
It will erode his liver and it will kill him.
They will not like that on Facebook.¹¹⁸

According to Rodríguez¹¹⁹, social media have undermined real social interactions turning people into empty consumers who have lost their abilities to communicate if not behind a screen. Greig seems to show the hypocrisy of contemporary society when experiencing violence.

It seems to me that drama always had to reflect the violence forging of our world. And the refinement and changes in presentation of that violence in theatre continue to keep pace with the kinds of violence we inflict upon one another¹²⁰.

Failure is our element. Theatre has changed a little as society. Yet many of us have ended up curiously buoyant, not, let’s hope, consoled but braced by the beauty of what we are attempting, in art as much as in politics. We are sustained by the thing itself, (...) it is remarkable how many of us feel that even if it has been a lifetime of failure, it has not been a lifetime of waste¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁹ Rodríguez, V., and Dilek I. “Combining the Epic with the Everyday: David Greig’s *Dunsinane*.” *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen* 5.2 (2012): 56–78, p. 65.

¹²⁰ Nevitt, L., *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. xii.

¹²¹ Hare, D., “All back to the canteen.” *the Guardian*. 24 May 2003. viewed 1 Jun 2015.

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/may/24/politicaltheatre>.

Social media have influenced also playwrights' imagination and writing styles¹²². Global and social media have penetrated into global societies and in relations among people¹²³. Relations and conversations take place through cell phones, text messages and social pages such as Twitter and Facebook. Although people can always be in touch with each other through instant messages and the Internet, the time for conversation has been highly reduced. Conversations in real life are always more and more difficult and people have lost their ability to listen to, empathise and understand people they deal with every day. Furthermore, digital media have accelerated and convoluted the structure and language of plays that are always more and more frequently characterized by short and blurred dialogues and sudden changes of scene¹²⁴. Greig's language in *The Events* could be an example of the cultural osmosis in contemporary theatre that Sierz has pointed out¹²⁵. The structure of *The Events* is, actually minimal. Almost all the play might sound like a fast tit-for-tat between Claire and the Boy.

Coupled with the 'talk-show' multiple interview and the reference to Claire's friends on Facebook, another reference to the modern way to communicate might be found in her argument with Catriona about the Boy's reasons behind his violence. Catriona is complaining because Claire is not able to connect with her. In a time when people are always 'connected' to each other, where wireless connection is always available, and mobile phones always ring and call, Claire cannot connect with her partner and have a true conversation with her. The following part well describes one of the main concerns of Greig about contemporary human incapacity to communicate and have a real relation with other people.¹²⁶ It might be pertinent to draw a

¹²² Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 10.

¹²³ Rodríguez, V., and Dilek, I., "Combining the Epic", cit., p. 56.

¹²⁴ Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 10.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Rebellato, D., "Utopian Gestures: David Greig's texts for theatre" translated in Lanteri, J. (eds.), *Dramaturgies Britanniques (1980-2000)*. *Écritures Contemporaines*. Paris-Caen: Lettres Modernes Minard, 2002, pp. 125-48, p. 126.

parallelism between the scene in *The Events* and the entire play of *San Diego*¹²⁷, where mobile phones, beeps and rings crowd the scene while the Pilot and Laura continuously miss calls and the possibility to connect sincerely with each other.

Claire He's human.

If he's human I can connect with him –

The Boy Connect?

Claire Yes.

The Boy Claire, at this moment, you can't even connect with me.

And I'm trying.

I'm really trying.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Greig, D., *David, Greig Selected Plays 1999–2009*, cit., pp. 4-121.

¹²⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 38.

Chapter 3: The scenes

3.1 The Chimps and Bonobos scene

The scene of the chimps and bonobos might resemble a science documentary about evolution. Specifically, the Choir reads or pronounces the ‘documentary’, which seems to propose a scientific base for the nature and dynamics of relations among human beings, especially for the use of violence. The scene may present as inescapable the fact that humans are both violent and peaceful because they have inherited part of their DNA from both peaceful animals, the bonobos, and the species of chimpanzee. The first, in fact, have as leader old females and are interested in relations, whereas chimps are territorial and interested in controlling the territory and their leaders are dominant males. At a first glance, it might be easy to understand that this scene may refer to Claire’s and the Boy’s behaviours and associates them respectively to Bonobos’ and Chimps’¹²⁹, Greig seems to explore also the meaning of being human and of what distinguishes humans from other animals. Furthermore, Greig seems to decline the concept of violence as a human condition. Humans are neither Chimps nor Bonobos. Human beings have a part of their DNA that is what differs them from animals and makes human species uniquely human. The 2 per cent¹³⁰ might be the ability to communicate through words. Communicating through words is what makes humans different from any other species. Speaking defines human species. The ability to communicate defines an individual. Anja Müller had recognized a strong relation between communication and identity in Greig’s plays. According to her, in fact, both communication and identity in his plays depend on the characters’ choices¹³¹. Whenever a character communicates with another character, their identities find a compromise and they face each other. For example, when Claire meets the Boy in the prison and decides to spare his life, she decides not to become like him, someone who

¹²⁹ Hutton, D., “Edinburgh Fringe Review: The Events.” *A Younger Theatre*. 4 Aug. 2013. viewed 24 Feb. 2015. <http://www.ayoungerteaatre.com/the-events-david-greig-traverse-actors-touring-company/>.

¹³⁰ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 50.

¹³¹ Müller, A., “Cosmopolitan Stage Conversations”, cit., p. 101.

kills people. In other moments of *The Events*, the survivor has to make choices that will define her own identity. Whereas bonobos and chimps act in a way which is based on instinct and they act respectively peacefully and aggressively, Claire and the Boy can communicate. Subsequently, they can make choices and decisions.

Coupled with the ability to communicate by using words, the skill of taking decisions is what distinguishes humans from animals. The possibility of choosing is the mark between humans and apes. Whenever a terrible act of violence is committed, it is common to define the responsible as ‘a beast’, in order to indicate that a “human being has transgressed the standards of human emotion and behaviour”.¹³² In contrast, the ability to think and to empathise with other people defines the human species.¹³³ Claire and the Boy take decisions. Because of that, - although their actions can be judged right or wrong – they are human because they evaluate situations and conditions and do not act urged by pure instinct. During the Aboriginal Boy’s story, Greig seems to point out that it is wrong to consider humans as objects and deprive them of their dignity as human beings. Similarly, Greig might point out that behind any choice there is a man or a woman, and not a beast. “Greig dramatizes how his characters react to the multiple possibilities and chance occurrences of their lives.”¹³⁴ Furthermore, he likely asks about “responsibilities for the sufferings of others”.¹³⁵ Recognizing human beings their status of humans implies recognizing everyone their responsibilities towards other human beings.

3.2 The ‘Welcome’ scenes

The Events begins and ends with an act of hospitality. In the very first scene, Claire welcomes a stranger, whereas at the end she welcomes a choir. According to Derrida, the first phase of

¹³² Conroy, C. *Theatre & The Body*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 23.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Reinelt, J. “David Greig”, cit., p. 217.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

hospitality is asking the name of the person asking for hospitality¹³⁶. Greig demonstrates to know the conditions of hospitality in real life, but he wants to ignore them on the stage and he lets the story happen. Thus, considering Zaroulia's statement that a cosmopolitan act like welcoming a stranger exists only inside legal conditions¹³⁷, Claire does not take into consideration these 'legal conditions and limitations', but welcomes the Boy although he does not declare his identity. The priest turns the act of hospitality from a legal act into an act that Derrida would define a "poetic act"¹³⁸. In Greig's plays, acts of hospitality are poetic and utopian. Hospitality acts in *The Events* are utopian because they show the limits of contemporary world, and poetic because they use imagination to propose an alternative to social and ideological limitations spectators experience in everyday life.

Claire welcomes the Boy who appears as a 'stranger' in other parts of the play. Firstly, although he claims to belong to a 'tribe', he is lonely. Secondly, he appears like a lost soul. The journalist describes him as someone "wandering through the blasted waste of modern life desperately searching for something he can hold on to"¹³⁹. According to Bauman, the stranger is neither a friend nor an enemy. The stranger is "an eternal wanderer, homeless always and everywhere, without hope of ever arriving"¹⁴⁰. The Boy is confused for a friend at the beginning, but then he shows himself to be an enemy.

Coupled with the idea of the stranger and identity, the sense of belonging is one of the main topics that Greig most frequently investigates in his plays¹⁴¹. The 'welcome' scenes explore the

¹³⁶ Derrida, J., *Of Hospitality*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. California: University of Stanford Press, 2000, p. 29.

¹³⁷ Zaroulia, M., "What's Missing is My Place in the World: The Utopian Dramaturgy of David Greig" in Müller-Wood, A., and Wallace, C. (eds.), *Cosmotopia*, cit., pp. 32-49, p. 44.

¹³⁸ Derrida, J., *Of Hospitality*, cit., p.2.

¹³⁹ Greig, D., *The Events*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ Bauman, Z., *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991, p. 79.

¹⁴¹ Müller, A., and Wallace, C., "Neutral Spaces & Transnational Encounters" in Müller-Wood, A., and Wallace, C. (eds.), *Cosmotopia*, cit., pp. 1-13, p. 2.

concept of community and of place. On a multicultural stage, where plurality and differences live together, “strangers are accepted as strangers and a different experience of community emerges”¹⁴². When Claire welcomes the Boy, at the beginning of the play, and the members of the Choir, at the end, she says, “Everyone’s welcome here”¹⁴³. She invites them to join her “big crazy tribe”¹⁴⁴. The ‘here’ is where the community is. The community defines both the place and Claire’s identity. In other words, relations define someone’s identity and sense of belonging to a place, and not the place itself. In contrast, the ‘here’, the place, is the identity marker for the Boy. In fact, just before starting shooting, he says, “Everyone who belongs here, go. The rest of you are going to die”¹⁴⁵. Claire seems confused and she does not know anymore the place where she belongs¹⁴⁶. Whereas his obsession for the territory might recall those of a dominant male chimpanzee, her interest for relations puts her close to a wise senior female Bonobos.

I’m very interested in community or the sense of the history of a place. There are lots of speeches in my plays where someone will look at the ground and imagine its past or talk about the social structure of a home or the sense of belonging¹⁴⁷.

Greig intentionally may use the word ‘here’ and avoid giving too many geographical details in order to speak freely about the sense of belonging to a place. The place of belonging in *The Events* is the rehearsal room. Whereas Greig’s previous experience with *Suspect Culture* brought him to choose anonymous places, such as airports, shopping malls, hotels as settings for his plays¹⁴⁸, the rehearsal room is ‘the place’ where everything happens. However, it is also many places. It is a place of multicultural encounter and a place of violence. The same room, thanks to the power of imagination, opens up its walls and becomes a coastal path in Scotland or a view on the Australian Illawarra River. The rehearsal room also becomes a prison, with long corridors and

¹⁴² Zaroulia, M., “What’s Missing is My Place in the World”, cit., p. 47.

¹⁴³ Greig, D., *The Events*. London: Faber & Faber, 2013. P. 11 e p. 65.

¹⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Ivi, p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Greig, D., Fisher, M., “Interview: Mark Fisher & David Greig”, cit., p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Rebellato, D., “And I Will Reach Out”, cit., p. 5.

a coloured cell. According to Greig, a prison cell is the perfect place where to perform political theatre¹⁴⁹. Actually, the prison cell is the place where Claire and the Boy finally manage to talk and have a dialogue. The rehearsal room could be, also, seen as a good example of ‘contact zone’ that Mary Louise Pratt has defined a “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today”¹⁵⁰.

3.3 The FAQ scene

As chapter one has already pointed out, list of questions in Anders Breivik’s Manifesto inspired the Frequently Asked Question scene. This sort of conversation between the Boy and the Choir reveals many details and curiosities about him and his ideology. For example, readers get to know that the Boy’s favourite hobby is playing *Call of Duty* and that his favourite movie is *Lord of the Ring 2*. *Call of Duty* and *Lord of the Ring 2* are respectively a violent video game and a fantasy movie mostly based on war. Greig might have chosen very popular recreational things in order to send a clear message – the Boy is violent and surrounded by violence. In fact, everything he likes is violent and with an aggressive message. However, the answers might sound too stereotyped, predictable and obvious. Moreover, some of the answers given in this passage will be contradicted during the meeting in prison. For example, when talking with Claire in prison, the Boy admits to take drugs and to drink¹⁵¹. Moreover, his father refers to his probable homosexuality¹⁵². These incongruences may sound like lies.

However, it might be important to underline that during the FAQ scene it is not the Boy to answer the questions, but the Choir. When writing this scene, Greig has been probably inspired

¹⁴⁹ Greig, D. “David Greig” in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 68.

¹⁵⁰ Qtd in Müller, A., and Wallace, C. “Neutral spaces and transnational encounters”, cit, p. 6.

¹⁵¹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 58.

¹⁵² Ivi, p. 25.

by Martin Crimp and his *Attempts on Her Life* and his “unattributed speeches”¹⁵³. Crimp in the script version of his play, indeed, managed to obscure the identity of the speaker by using dashes instead of the names of the characters¹⁵⁴. Similarly, in the FAQ scene, David Greig confuses the readers regarding the identity of the speaker. In fact, the Choir both poses and answers the questions to which the Boy is supposed to answer. By using this stratagem, Greig may aim to explore the way of communicating within human society. The answers given by the Choir could refer to very popular and well-known recreation activities that might imply that users and players are violent people. Greig might have decided to use stereotypes in order to show a typical behaviour that people can have when they try to simplify and generalize when talking about tragedies and their perpetrators. According to Sierz, British theatre and its narratives teach spectators about reality in particular by introducing clearly the characters and their aspects in order to mark the lack of ability of people to get to know their fellows in the real world.¹⁵⁵ In *The Events*, David Greig lets the Choir introduce the Boy exactly in the same way real people would do – using stereotypes. In other words, Greig unveils real social dynamics in his play. He probably has in mind the Lehmannian concept of ‘respons-ability’¹⁵⁶, according to which, when responding to a question, the person, who is answering, is also responsible for what he or she is saying. In this specific case, the members of the Choir may take responsibility for what they are saying about the Boy. The members of the Choir may embody a particular behaviour in contemporary society that often tends to express personal belief as if they were universally true. Taking responsibility for someone else’s words is a huge responsibility that is often underestimate and abused in contemporary society. In other words, it might be possible to conclude that the message is more important than the speaker is. In this specific case, the message, however, is not always true. To conclude, Greig is likely to show the superficiality of

¹⁵³ Barnett, D., “When is a Play not a Drama? Two Examples of Postdramatic Theatre Texts”, cit., p. 16.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ Ridout, N. *Theatre and Ethics*, cit., p. 59.

opinions about tragic event, their victims and mostly, their perpetrators. Similar to Lehman's definition of post-dramatic theatre that often questions the bond between speaker and spoken text and explores the role of the character on a stage, and humans in real life, in relation to the written word¹⁵⁷, while questioning the bond between the characters and the answers to the FAQ, Greig questions the bond between people and truth.

3.4 Rituals

In *The Events*, there are three rituals. However, only two rituals are performed in the play – the ritual of the berserk warrior, The Boy's ritual to become a berserk warrior and Claire's shamanic rite. During rituals there seems to be a peak of tension and emotions involving both the characters and the audience because rituals are representing something present and feelings related to something that is happening now. Rituals are the most real thing in a play.¹⁵⁸

The communality of theatre, and its foundation in a kind of spiritual ritual of transformation, is to me what makes it the most important place in which these questions of change, these questions of belief, can be discussed by society¹⁵⁹.

The transformation that is realist and happens 'now' on the stage could be a 'ritual'¹⁶⁰. They are "rites of passage"¹⁶¹ because they involve a passage either from a state or from a symbolic site to another¹⁶². The berserking ritual may be defined both as a ritual of passage and as a ritual of war, considering that it implies a transformation from man to warrior, berserk warrior, ready to fight against the enemy. Moreover, this first ritual introduces also a "political real/symbolic

¹⁵⁷ Barnett, D., "When is a Play not a Drama? Two Examples of Postdramatic Theatre Texts", cit., p. 18.

¹⁵⁸ Nesteruk, P. "Ritual, Sacrifice, and Identity in Recent Political Drama - with Reference to the Plays of David Greig." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 0.1 (2000): 21–42, p. 36.

¹⁵⁹ Greig, D. "David Greig" in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 69.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "Rites of passage" is the English translation of the original French "Les rites de passage" by Arnold van Gennep, who formulated and classified rituals within society. He distinguished three phases of the transition: separation, transition and incorporation that correspond to rites such as, respectively to each phase, funerals, pregnancy, betrothal and initiation and, lastly, marriages. (Van Gennep, A., *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1960. PP. vii-viii.)

¹⁶² Nesteruk, P. "Ritual, Sacrifice, and Identity in Recent Political Drama", cit., p. 29.

distinction” between a dominant group – the Choir – and the ‘other’ – the Boy¹⁶³. *The Events*, if read from the tribe’s point of view, can become a story about a strong ‘us’ who has been attacked by an individual¹⁶⁴.

The Viking warrior ritual might work also as collective memory, myth and tradition. It creates and anticipates that common code and cultural references – a background – the spectators need when observing the ritual¹⁶⁵. The ancient ritual, indeed, anticipates the Boy’s berserking ritual. Compared to the first ritual, the Boy’s berserking attempt may appear less serious, ‘less religious’ and out-of-context, because the Boy is not a warrior and he is not going to fight a war. His reasons behind his decision to become berserk and use violence against other people are not clear. Moreover, the fact that he relives something that belongs to the past makes his ritual inappropriate and illegitimate. Furthermore, his ritual could appear fake and false because it has been pulled-up from its natural context. In fact, the Boy does not go out in the nature to attempt his first berserking, but watches a documentary¹⁶⁶. However, in both rituals, the aim of the transformation – becoming furious in order to kill the enemies – appears a sinister and ‘wrong’ goal. Considering that, both the berserk warriors and the Boy unleash their furious violence against their enemies when they cannot defend themselves, both rituals result into berserking rituals, losing their war- action connotation.

It can be possible to draw a parallelism also between the Boy’s ritual and Claire’s ritual. Firstly, Claire’s ritual is a healing ritual, whereas the Boy’s ritual will cause violence and death. Her ritual seems to bring back the sacred in a violent world, whereas the Boy’s berserking attempt is

¹⁶³ Ivi, pp. 37-38.

¹⁶⁴ Karlsvik, M. “22/7 Sett Fra Nabostammen”, cit.

¹⁶⁵ Alexander, J.C., Giesen, B., and Mast, J. L., *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 33.

¹⁶⁶ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 42.

more concrete and practical. The first one recreates a dream-like situation, whereas the Boy's ritual resembles a nightmare. Secondly, the Boy is alone when doing his ritual, whereas Claire is with the Choir. However, even the healing ritual becomes a nightmare for the Choir whose members decide to abandon her. The Choir, whose members are both witnesses and victims, cannot afford to assist Claire during her ritual and they abandon her. The Choir's words "We don't want to dwell on what happened. We want to forget. Perhaps forgetting is best"¹⁶⁷ seem to confirm that the Choir is the same Choir that was victim of the Boy's blind violence. Whereas the victims want to forget, Claire is not able or does not want to forget them. Therefore, insisting on death and negative feelings seems to cause her own loneliness. Whereas the Boy was already alone, she will be left alone because of her obsession for going back to the day of the event. She might be responsible for the rift in her community.

3.5 The fight and the description of the event

The fight between Claire and the Boy, or better Catriona, is the only scene of physical contrast throughout the entire play. Greig prefers descriptions of violence instead of violent actions. This choice might hide a different purpose than simply avoiding violent shocking acts on the stage. "Language reinforced the way things are. Description is neither neutral nor separated from the things that it describes"¹⁶⁸ Actually, when describing the shooting, Claire is neither neutral nor separated from the event. On the contrary, the effect of narrated and imagined violence on spectators is intense and dramatic because someone directly touched and involved in the event describes the violence. As Greig has stated *The Events* attempts to give a place where to heal

¹⁶⁷ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 41.

¹⁶⁸ Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 29.

from the horror and pain caused by violence¹⁶⁹. Similarly, “speaking is a form of healing. Until you’ve told your story – even if you intellectually understand you’ve been wrong – the memories may remain a source of secrecy, pain or shame. Speaking and being heard is a modest but profound beginning”¹⁷⁰. However, Claire is not the only character who describes the event. In addition, the Boy describes it and he does that from his own point of view. Instead of proposing only the point of view of the victim, Greig calls the attention on the killer’s thoughts and addresses his words directly to the audience:

Now noise – now sirens- now alarm and pandemonium! Its’ strangely intoxicating this feeling of suddenly being at the centre of events. (...) Now, here’s an interesting thing – I hope you don’t mind – I think it sheds lights; if you ever perpetrate a mass shooting event you are almost bound to spend at least some of the time during the event itself thinking – This is silly. (...) It’s not that one isn’t taking it seriously. It’s just that when you’re at the centre of events, you lose yourself.¹⁷¹

Acting the event would present it from a unique perspective, probably the playwright’s or the director’s point of view. By describing the event, Greig allows his audience to live the violence in all its shades. He widens the horizon of opinion and feelings by challenging ordinary and common way to talk and represent violence in theatre. According to Nevitt, some ways of representing the violence in theatre mostly prefer not to analyse and discuss violence and the context in which it happens¹⁷². In contrast, Greig analyses every single shade of the event, even the killer’s mind right in the moment of maximum violence.

Coupled with the analysis of violence, Greig may present an implicit analysis of contemporary society. “Violence tells us things about the culture that produces it”¹⁷³. In *The Events*, violence is everywhere, but the immersion is more on the aftermath rather than on the event itself. Similarly,

¹⁶⁹ Greig, D, Gray, R. Interview. *Herald Scotland*. 16 Jul. 2013. viewed 22 Nov. 2014. http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/13113941.Author_David_Greig_and_director_Ramin_Gray_discuss_a_new_play_which_deals_with_the_aftermath_of_an_atrocity/.

¹⁷⁰ Faber, Y., *Theatre as Witness: Three Testimonial Plays from South Africa*. London: Oberon, 2008, p. 24.

¹⁷¹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 49.

¹⁷² Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 41.

¹⁷³ Ivi, p. 29.

whenever a violent event caused by racism happens, society spends much time talking about its causes and its consequences. It might be a way to turn around and face somewhere else. For this reason, *The Events* may avoid to dedicate too much time to the violent event in order to discuss the relation between contemporary society and the causes of violence.

3.6 The ‘What-ifs’. Different alternatives to the end

According to David Edgar, in drama and fiction, real world and imaginary world establish a dialogue to create something new and express dreams, ambitions, fears and impulses, both good and bad.¹⁷⁴ Claire is the personification of all human fears, hopes, desires, anger, urge for revenge, all feelings that are in contrast to each other. Her conflictual feelings and desires that change throughout the play express the possibility of fantasy. Her desires change. Greig is interested and fascinated by the possibility of fantasy and of changings.¹⁷⁵ Both individuals and their convictions can change. The possibility of change is at the heart of Greig’s political theatre¹⁷⁶.

(...) theatre is an experimental playing out of possibilities in time. It builds upon the question ‘what if?’ (...) we establish a given set of possible conditions and then observe what happens if we put people into those conditions (...). Theatre reminds us constantly of the contingency, the changeability of things¹⁷⁷.

David Greig wants to propose several alternatives, different possibilities to imagination¹⁷⁸. The different possibilities he proposes in *The Events* are four different endings and solutions for the encounter between Claire and the Boy. Greig imagines four different reactions of Claire to the violence. Greig imagines that her “believes change, her desire changes and the circumstances change”¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁴ Qtd in Sierz, A., *Rewriting the Nation*, cit., p. 49.

¹⁷⁵ Greig, D. “David Greig” in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 68.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Greig, D., “Rough Theatre”, cit., p. 219.

¹⁷⁸ Ivi, P. 212.

¹⁷⁹ Greig, D. “David Greig” in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 68.

Before discussing the different endings, it might be useful to explore the attempts of Claire to change the past. Actually, she imagines to have changed the past in three different moments – when she prevents the shooting, when she talks about having adopted the Boy and, then, when she talks about the Imaginary Baby. According to Jill Dolan, utopias in performances are just brief glimpses of a better world, they are “evanescent” and are not finished, but processes that spectators can see for a short time on the stage.¹⁸⁰ Greig proposes a utopian possible ending when Claire goes back in time and imagines stopping the murderer from killing her community. She imagines that if she had made love with the Boy, she would have been able to understand him and made him feel part of her community. Therefore, the tragic event would not have happened. This could be the meaning of the sex scene between the two characters – Claire’s attempt to help the Boy and prevent the event. According to Reinelt, Greig’s romances in all his plays and sex scenes express a metaphysical desire and need to relieve the sense of emptiness that is common in contemporary existence.¹⁸¹ Thus, the love scene could show how intimacy could be the way to prevent the tragic event to happen, to solve loneliness and remove the feelings of being a stranger and an outsider.¹⁸² Despite her dream about the past, she cannot go back in time, she cannot prevent the Boy to be born, to become a lonely man and to kill her community. Greig is clear about the fact that in real life the past cannot be changed. The present and future can. According to Zaroulia, the heart of Greig’s theatre stands in his ability in proposing different possible ideas of the future.¹⁸³

Having explored the role of imagination in trying to change the past, let us move on to discuss the different endings Greig proposes for *The Events*. Firstly, Claire’s attempt at suicide. Readers

¹⁸⁰ Qtd in Zaroulia, M., “What’s Missing is My Place in the World”, cit., p. 34.

¹⁸¹ Reinelt, J. “David Greig”, cit., p. 218.

¹⁸² Thompson, C., “Beyond Borders: David Greig’s Transpersonal Dramaturgy”, cit., p.103.

¹⁸³ Zaroulia, M., “What’s Missing is My Place in the World”, cit., p. 48.

understand that she was about to commit suicide only when Gary asks her to come back to the other side of the parapet. Moreover, the fact that readers do not know that she wants to kill herself might confuse the Boy's request to hold her hand. The suicide surprises readers also because the peaceful and quiet atmosphere while Claire and Gary are talking does not sound dangerous or worrying.

Secondly, the meeting of Claire and the Boy in the prison. Considering that Claire has given clues to the audience about her plan to poison the Boy to death, the audience becomes her silent witness, almost accomplice of her vengeance. While someone could be in favour of her plan, somebody else could reject it. The important fact is the special relation of exclusive intimacy that the character and the audience have in this scene. However, surprisingly Claire changes her plan and spares the Boy's life. That may be an act of resistance to violence. Moreover, Claire implicitly explains the reason why she decides not to kill him. Her face-to-face conversation with him may appear the factor that motivated her afterthought. In fact, the Boy has just explained to her the reasons behind his killing violence. However, before ending their conversation, she remembers the fact that both she and Mrs Singh would have died in order to save another person. Claire would die instead of letting somebody else die, even if that person is a murderer. Greig proposes an alternative according to which violence is not the only way to solve situations of conflict. However, this might be considered as a simple interpretation. Greig might have decided to adopt an "unresolved openness"¹⁸⁴ by not unveiling Claire's reasons behind her decision.

Lastly, the most violent 'what if' – the torture of the Boy. Furthermore, "some critics find fictional violence more troubling if it is enacted by positively framed characters rather than by villains who are ultimately punished"¹⁸⁵. Claire's violence would result extremely disturbing and would destroy the idea that an alternative to violence is possible. Moreover, she would leave her role of victim to become a new perpetrator of violence and pose a matter of ethics. The problem

¹⁸⁴ Müller-Wood, A., "Cosmopolitan stage conversation", cit., p. 82.

¹⁸⁵ Nevitt, L. *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 25.

of revenge is, in fact, an ethical issue in contemporary society. Therefore, Greig may be willing to explore the limits of this ethical problem in the play and with spectators. Indeed, Greig and *The Events* make the ethical problem of revenge and torture a “social affair”¹⁸⁶ because it represents a social behaviour in front of an audience. Subsequently, if the spectators are involved in a discussion about ethics and characters’ identities and behaviours, they may struggle to understand how they really are.

We watch ourselves watching people being watched in our watching (...). Because so much ethics is concerned with questions such as the relationship between how people seem and how they are, this situation of mutual spectatorship raises the ethical stakes in theatre in a way that is not quite possible anywhere else.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Ivi, p. 14.

¹⁸⁷ Ivi, p. 15.

4 The characters – Claire and The Boy

4.1 The journey from darkness to light. The resistance to violence

Claire wrestles with darkness and tries to make it go away. And that's me as well – I don't like darkness, I prefer light. But if there's to be any integrity in one's writing, you have to go towards the darkness, otherwise it's not very valuable if you happen to find some light. I think this is certainly the most full-on attempt that I've made to go towards darkness, to see if I can't wrestle something redemptive from it. And I'm not sure if it does, I don't know.¹⁸⁸

Doubt, hesitancy, (...) uncertainty – these are the ways we go towards the truth. Slowly. Unsure of ourselves. (...) And through the darkness we go. Slowly we walk forward putting out our hands to feel the damp walls of the cave. Looking for the light.¹⁸⁹

Although Claire is a priest, no connection to religion and *sin* ever appears in the play. Therefore, the cause of her lost soul is not sin, but violence. Talking about sin would have made the cause of event less concrete and more spiritual, whereas the goal of Greig is to explore concretely and practically the real cause of the event – violence. Violence has brought away Claire's soul from her body and left her in total darkness made of suffering and fears, unexpected dark reactions, nightmares, despair and obsessions¹⁹⁰. She displays many of the behaviours of a traumatized person. According to Cathy Caruth, a trauma is "the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena".¹⁹¹ Claire displays all the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. At first, she is not able to come to terms with the violence of which she has been victim and she is obsessed for the word *why*. Greig and Gray spent many days to understand what had happened in Utøya and wished to find, in *The Events*, an explanation to a

¹⁸⁸ Simpson, P., "Interview: David Greig on His New Show The Events", cit.

¹⁸⁹ Greig, D., *Damascus*. London: Faber & Faber, 2007, p. 94.

¹⁹⁰ Kingston, T., "Ciara by David Harrower, and: The Events by David Greig (review)." *Theatre Journal*, 66.2 (2014): 264–266, p. 266.

¹⁹¹ Caruth, C., *Unclaimed experience : trauma, narrative, and history*. London : The Johns Hopkins University press, 1996, p. 91.

kind of violence such as the bloodbath in Utøya¹⁹². In addition, they interviewed psychologists, who confirmed the idea that survivors need to find a reason¹⁹³. According to David Greig, the will to understand and the obstinacy in founding a reason for acts of violence is nothing more than a way to turn our eyes, minds and hearts away from the darkness.¹⁹⁴ Greig seems to care particularly about this type of reaction to violence as a way out to the pain and a direct consequence of facing violence and darkness.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Claire seems not to know herself anymore. “Greig’s characters do not know themselves” and are not aware of their feelings and wishes¹⁹⁶. For instance, she has lost her ability to recognise her good nature. In addition, she cannot read her own feelings when she claims to Dr. Palmer that she is not angry.¹⁹⁷

Claire is the only character who is called ‘victim’ in the play. When arguing with Catriona, she calls herself ‘a victim’ and for this reason, Catriona cannot abandon her. Similarly, also the father, when they talk during the interview scene, says that she is a victim and for this reason, according to him, people in general are kind and fair to her. However, she goes through different moods and emotions throughout the play. She is also about to become an avenger. Some “thirst for revenge” moves her.¹⁹⁸ Coupled with her urge to understand, this human impulse to revenge is another element Greig tries to investigate throughout the play. Analogous to some traditional female characters of ancient Greek tragedy¹⁹⁹, the impulse of revenge and hate sometimes moves her. Although she is a priest and spiritual leader of a peaceful and multicultural community, she is able to imagine, say and plan horrible acts of revenge and violence. She uses cruel and evil words

¹⁹² Wicker, T. “The Events: ‘What Do We Do about Evil?’” Telegraph. 2 Aug. 2013. viewed 6 Nov. 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-features/10190565/The-Events-What-do-we-do-about-evil.html>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Greig, D, Gray, R. Interview, cit.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Thompson, C., “Beyond Borders: David Greig’s Transpersonal Dramaturgy”, cit., p. 114.

¹⁹⁷ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 25.

¹⁹⁸ Thorpe, V., “UK Playwright Plans Show Drawing on Anders Breivik’s Norway Killings”, cit.

¹⁹⁹ Haynes, N., “Violence, Destiny and Revenge: Why Ancient Greeks Still Rule the Stage |.” *the Guardian*. 4 May 2014. 28 Apr. 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/04/violence-revenge-ancient-greeks-rule-stage>.

when she imagines what she wants to do to the Boy. Chapter 2 has already discussed her words, pointing out that anger and hate incite Claire. Analysing her character, however, may be important to try to understand if she could be able to put into practice her ‘imaginary punishment’. At the end of the play, she will demonstrate that she does not want really to kill the Boy. However, Greig instils an idea into people’s minds. Although she is a ‘good’ characters, her mind can think horrible things. Subsequently, the very first quotation opening the play from *The Tempest*, “This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine”²⁰⁰, could be referring to Claire. Before the shooting, violence was probably not part of her life. However, darkness has, actually, surprised, shocked and changed her existence. Violence has become part of her life, by making her a victim, a survivor and a witness.

Adriana Cavarero has studied the effects of terroristic attack on victims and witnesses, and she has observed that *terror* indicates a physical experience of fear connected to the desire of escaping “flying” away precisely. She has opposed dynamism caused by terror with the static and freezing fear typical of the *horror* and re-defined acts of terrorism as “acts of horrorism” because they hit helpless and causes stasis in the victims and witnesses²⁰¹. Claire seems to experience the effects of both terrorism and ‘horrorism’ throughout the play. Remembering the feeling of her soul leaving her body there might be the desire to escape:

At that moment I felt something.
A feeling I’ve never had before, a feeling of tearing, of something pulling away
from its moorings suddenly and in its wake – an overwhelming absence.
It was a feeling as precise and physical as any feeling I’ve ever had.
And the moment I felt it, I knew what it was.²⁰²

This amazing metaphor silently defines the violence in the rehearsal room as a ‘tempest’ that has removed the soul from its safe harbour, letting a huge emptiness and an inability to forget and go

²⁰⁰ Shakespeare, W., Gill, R., *The Tempest*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 88.

²⁰¹ Cavarero, A., *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Trans. William McCuaig. New York: Columbia UP, 2009, p. 4.

²⁰² Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 15.

forward. While on a first time Claire experiences terror, then horror paralyzes her. The use of unreasonable violence against helpless and harmless people may originate her horror.

Having in mind Cavarero's definitions of terror and horror, terror might be the force that motivates the Boy. Thus terror provokes action and movement, while horror does static panic, it might be possible to define his 'fear of the other and of the stranger' as terror, and not horror. His own fear leads him to shoot and kill in order to protect those he considers of his kind. As well as Claire, the Boy too is a witness of violence against a woman. However, whereas she tries to communicate and not to use violence as an answer to violence, he finds in violence the means to fight back violence and his fears.

However, Greig might be saying that violence, when experienced directly in first person changes people lives by letting them see darkness. The good part of his message could be that it, once violence gets someone, that person is not necessarily destined to become 'bad'.

Claire is the character who embodies the act of resistance of Greig's theatre. In fact, although she is a victim of violence, she tries, with her own means and strength, to survive the aftermath of the event. Claire *is* the resistance to violence. She wants to go to Peterhead Prison in order to "turn dark things into light"²⁰³. However, as the author himself has stated, there is no certainty that Claire manages to go beyond darkness and reach light. However, she manages to change throughout the play. Similarly, readers and spectators have the possibility to change thanks to the character²⁰⁴.

²⁰³ Ivi, p. 44.

²⁰⁴ Greig, D., "David Greig" in Edgar, D. (eds.), *State of Play 1 : Playwrights on playwriting*, cit., p. 69.

4.2 One face and multiple identities

The body is a “conceptual framework – for the understanding of human relationship with the world”.²⁰⁵ The framework that Claire sees everywhere is the Boy’s body. His body influences and defines all her relations. “No matter to whom Claire looks to for explanation or comfort, she only and always sees the same face”.²⁰⁶ Her obsession gives him many identities throughout all the play. In other words, the perpetrator of the shooting is also the Aboriginal Boy, Dr Palmer, Catriona, Gary, the father, the friend, the politician and the journalist. The fact that the woman sees the Boy’s face in everyone with whom she has a relation may define her relationship with the world. A world of violence has broken her world, her life and her relations into pieces.

The most evident example of Claire’s obsession for the Boy is the fact that she sees his face also in her partner, Catriona. The readers can understand that he has shifted his identity from the killer to Catriona because Claire calls him ‘Catriona’. This shift of identity between the perpetrator of the massacre and Catriona can be confusing and destabilizing. Furthermore, from the very beginning it is not clear whether Catriona is still alive or not. The fact that the priest talks about her in the past tense, might make the readers believe that Catriona has died during the event too.²⁰⁷ Considering that, Claire could enact “mourning dialogues”²⁰⁸ with Catriona, in order to keep her relation and her partner still alive.

Claire not only sees the Boy’s face in Catriona, but also hears his words when Catriona speaks. For example, Catriona and the Boy share thoughts and ideas. In other words, Catriona’s lines sometimes echo the Boy’s thoughts. Greig, as a poet, uses repetitions and contradictions in

²⁰⁵ Conroy, C., *Theatre & The Body*, cit., p. 7.

²⁰⁶ Kingston, T., “Ciara by David Harrower, and: The Events by David Greig (review)”, cit., p. 266.

²⁰⁷ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 14.

²⁰⁸ Hagman, G., “Beyond Decathexis: Toward a New Psychoanalytical Understanding and Treatment of Mourning.” In Niemeyer, R. (eds.), *Meaning Reconstruction & The Experience of Loss*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001, pp. 13-31, p. 23.

dialogues in order to connect and allude to specific topic.²⁰⁹ When Catriona proposes to her partner to go away and gives her two choices – joining a spiritual community in Iona or going to Somalia and become kamikaze terrorists – she pronounces words that belong to The Boy’s vocabulary, such as “bomb”, “guerrilla” and “jihadi”.²¹⁰ Moreover, when she says that it could “tear a hole through everything and everyone”, her words may recall to the readers The Boy’s words when he talks about the berserk warrior and he wishes ‘the coming of a conjuring flame (...) burning us all’²¹¹. Secondly, Catriona’s intention to leave a mark on the world immediately recalls the Boy’s plan to be “etched into a lot of minds”²¹².

Giving many roles to the same actor is, actually, one of the features that make Greig’s narrative style transgressive, indeterminate, fragmented and discontinuous²¹³. Greig’s narrative style involves readers and spectators in alternative ways to know and relate with the characters. He challenges the expectations of the audience towards the characters and their psychological traits, not only by giving the same body to different roles or characters, but also by attributing the same subjectivities, sentences and behaviours to different characters²¹⁴.

4.3 Deprivation of identity and dehumanization

Except in the scene of Claire’s attempt at suicide, the Boy’s name is never pronounced. Neither Greig nor his characters call the Boy by name. Not even the characters who know him call him by name, as though they did not want to be associated with him. In particular, both the politician, who refuses to call the perpetrator of the shooting event by name, and the friend at school, who specifies that they are not friends and that he used to know him, reject him entirely. According to

²⁰⁹ Reinelt, J. “David Greig”, cit., p. 216.

²¹⁰ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 46.

²¹¹ Ivi, p. 17.

²¹² Ivi, p. 19.

²¹³ Thompson, C., “Beyond Borders: David Greig’s Transpersonal Dramaturgy”, cit., p. 107.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Gray, in contrast to reality and mass media that usually make perpetrators of horrible events popular and famous, Greig wants to remove any specific identity from him and make him powerless, because the identity of the victim is more important²¹⁵. The deprivation of the name, might not only underline the urge to deprive of any power the perpetrator of the shooting²¹⁶, but also suggests that “any ordinary man”, who chooses violence instead of dialogue and confrontation with different cultures and people, could be able to commit a terrible act of violence²¹⁷. The Boy, indeed, appears as a normal person. “He is not psychotic. His politics aren’t deeply worn. His childhood was tough but not catastrophic. He did no paramilitary training, so whatever the reason it isn’t *a* reason”²¹⁸. Nothing too tragic or shocking in his life can justify his violence.

Although depriving the Boy of a proper name may be an attempt to de-power him, it might be another piece in the scenario of dehumanization violence can provoke. Coupled with his name, he is not a person, a human being anymore; he becomes a thing, or better, the personification of the ‘demons’ of our contemporary society. When Claire asks the Boy ‘what are you’ instead of ‘who are you’, he becomes the result of the economic and cultural misbehaving of the world and society. Greig’s readers are familiar with topics like crises of the society, politics and economics and their consequences on individuals are current issues in contemporary society. Therefore, Greig’s audience can manage to figure out how he has become “a blankness out of which emerges only darkness”²¹⁹.

I am a Europe-wide malaise
I am a point of continuum of contemporary masculinity
I am an expression of failure in eroded working-class communities
I am unique

²¹⁵ Gray, R., Interview. “ATC’s Ramin Gray Dissects David Greig’s Controversial Play, *The Events*”, cit.

²¹⁶ McElroy, S. “And a Choir Shall Heal Them”, cit.

²¹⁷ Greig, D., “Rough Theatre”, cit., p. 218.

²¹⁸ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 37.

²¹⁹ Ivi, p. 52.

I am typical
I am the way things are going
I am the past.
I am the product of welfare state
I am the end point of capitalism
I am an orphan
A narcissist
A psychopath
I am a void into which you are drawn
I am sick.
Dead.
Lost.
And alone.²²⁰

Loneliness is the last thing in the list. Loneliness is what dehumanizes people, because loneliness deprives human beings of their natural social instinct and character. Similarly, Claire complains for the fact that in a shop she has to interact with “a machine. A great big electronic machine”. The lack of relations with other humans will bring her to say, “What am I? An animal? A bucket of meat at a metal trough? A cow? Am I cow? Is that what I am? Easing myself slowly through the abattoir? Mooing towards my own erasure?”²²¹.

4.4 Empathizing with the characters

But theatre depends not only on willing suspension of disbelief but also on empathy. For while no one believes literally in what is shown onstage – no actual atrocity is actually being committed – many spectators will invest emotionally in it. Although what is shown is make-believe, they take it close to their hearts. And because the actors are always real people breathing the same air as the audience, the public tends to empathize strongly with them.²²²

According to Brecht, theatre should provoke in spectators an effect of alienation and distancing, in German *Verfremdungseffekt*, in order to avoid spectators’ empathy for characters and let them free to understand the characters and the story²²³. In point of fact, Brecht seems to consider

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ivi, p. 23.

²²² Sierz, A. *In-Yer-Face Theatre*, cit., p. 7.

²²³ Basuki, R.. “Brecht’s Epic Theatre as a Modern Avant-Garde and its Influence on Postmodern Theatre/Drama”, cit., p. 141.

empathy as an obstacle to the process of transformation and liberation the spectators can go through while watching a play. In other words, Brecht's spectator becomes an external uninvolved observer with the ability to face and understand the images of the real world theatre is depicting²²⁴. In other words, Brecht's theatre sends a message to the audience and forces spectators to see the difference between fictional story and real world.²²⁵ Similarly, Greig has also stated that there is a distance between spectators and actors and that theatre is the bridge that can intermediate between fictional and real worlds²²⁶. Greig seems willing to challenge his readers and audience in empathising with his characters in a situation of extreme violence.

Readers may easily empathise with the victim, Claire. A mourning performance brings on the stage the past in order to show it to 'secondary witnesses' who are expected to empathise with victims²²⁷. The community of the audience that witnesses the victim's narration of the trauma shows compassion and empathy towards the character²²⁸. Indeed, Claire mirrors people's fragilities and fears. She is, actually, in her fragilities the closest character to the public that feels familiar with her weaknesses and emotions of loss, bewilderment and confusion. Although readers might hesitate to admit they empathise with Claire's thirst for revenge, she embodies people's most repulsive instincts and makes those more human and less evil. According to Sierz, spectators can feel repulsion for horrifying actions at theatre, but also get involved and appreciate what they see on the stage and, thus, discover new parts of themselves²²⁹. Readers may empathise with Claire and her pain because of an "imaginative process [that] connects what we see on stage with our own sense of our own bodies".²³⁰

²²⁴ Ivi, p. 142.

²²⁵ Ivi, p. 147.

²²⁶ McLean, P. "David Greig's New Play Watches The Events Unfold", cit.

²²⁷ Moss, J., "The Drama of Survival: Staging Post-Traumatic Memory in Plays by Lebanese-Québécois Dramatists." *Theatre Research in Canada / Recherches théâtrales au Canada*, 22.2 (2001):8, p.1.

²²⁸ Malpede, K., "Theatre at 2000. A Witnessing Project", cit., pp. 302-3.

²²⁹ Sierz, A., *In-Yer-Face Theatre*, cit., p. 9.

²³⁰ Nevitt, L., *Theatre and Violence*, cit., p. 23.

The playwright's use of a "disruptive strategy"²³¹, such as giving different roles to the same actor, may impair the readers' ability to establish relations and empathise with the Boy. However, readers might empathise with him as a victim of violence himself. Specifically, he appears to be a victim of a broken and problematic family situation, of bullies at school, of some poor quality literature and racist political ideas. Empathizing with the Boy and his hate seems a hard work, however, empathizing with his loneliness and frustration might result an easier task for readers and spectators. Similarly, empathising with the father might be difficult, because he is not concerned about his son's life until the event, which apparently took him unaware. In other words, he seems not to know his son. However, the readers might empathise with the father in his attempt to fix his mistakes by not moving away but staying close to his son. In addition, readers might empathise with the father as a victim of the public opinion and mass media. Similarly, readers might be empathy impaired towards the journalist, who could represent some poor quality literature and improper writers who do not give words the importance they deserve. He himself underestimates his own piece of work, the book that seems to have had an influence on the Boy, but on the other hand, he complains because his fame has been ruined. In contrast, the readers might empathise with the friend who appears as a victim of newspapers and media profiteering. Moreover, readers may empathise with him as a victim of bullying at school. As well as the Boy, he does not have an idea of society as a benevolent community. However, he could sound immature when he asserts that being popular or unpopular at school might affect people's idea of life. Lastly, empathizing with the 'racist' character of the politician may be arduous considering that the politician points his finger against Claire's choir as "state-founded propaganda for multiculturalism". To conclude, the element that these four characters have in common is that all of them seem rejecting the possibility that they might have had a role in the Boy's explosion of

²³¹ Thompson, C., "Beyond Borders: David Greig's Transpersonal Dramaturgy", cit., p. 107.

violence against the Choir. Furthermore, they do not appear able to ‘read’ the event from a human point of view – they do not show concern about the victims or the killer, but only for their own personal situations.

All characters are problematic and pose the spectators in front of the dilemma of empathy in situations of violence like the shooting of the story. As soon as the audience gets to know the reasons behind the characters’ actions, their ideologies and their thoughts – their ‘whys’ – they may reject any empathy towards them. Greig does not give any magic formula for empathising with them, but proposes once again an alternative. ‘Understand’ instead of ‘knowing’ the characters.²³² For example, when the priest imagines preventing the shooting by making love with the Boy and says, “He understands that he is understood”²³³, she empathises with him even if she does not know him. Once again, Claire represents the alternative to a violent world and established point of view that stays on a superficial layer instead of digging and engaging in acceptance and communication with the other. This path could be an alternative in order to manage to interpret, understand and empathize with people without depriving them of their uniqueness and humanity.

²³² Thompson, C., “Beyond Borders: David Greig’s Transpersonal Dramaturgy”, cit., p. 116.

²³³ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit. p. 51.

5 The Choir

5.1 The Choir as community

The role of the Choir is, actually, fundamental to inspire the political spirit of a multicultural community on the stage. The Choir itself makes *The Events* an “experience stronger and more important than just a play”²³⁴. The Choir is the character that has in itself the sense of community. Sense of community and subjectivity share the stage in Greig’s plays²³⁵. In *The Events*, the Choir is a collective character, Claire’s community. Whereas contemporary British theatre tends to express the collective voices of minorities and local communities within Britain²³⁶, in *The Events* the collective character is not identified easily with a minority within British society. The Choir is a community that could live anywhere in the world. Moreover, an important feature of the community is that it needs to be multicultural and, at the same time, have a strong sense of identity, as David Greig has written in *Note to The Choir*²³⁷. Whereas the Boy is dehumanized and he does not have any proper name, the members of the Choir are called by name and identified as asylum seekers, vulnerable people, elders, immigrants, young mothers, people who join the Church, ex-offenders, and people in rehab. All the members of the community are important to make the collective identity of the Choir – multicultural.

Although the sense of identity is strong, the fact that the Choir is on the stage poses a big question mark on its condition and its meaning. Community is something “temporary, partial and provisional” both in an age of terrorism that characterizes contemporary world,²³⁸ and in *The Events* where a terroristic attack is the cause of the death of the members of the Choir. As well as

²³⁴ See ultra interview Hermansen.

²³⁵ Middeke, M., Schnierer, P. P. and Sierz, A. (eds.), *The Methuen drama guide to contemporary British playwrights*, cit., p. xv.

²³⁶ Kritzer, A. H. *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, cit., p. 25.

²³⁷ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit.

²³⁸ Etchells, T., *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*. London: Routledge, 1999, p. 26.

in theatre, in the real world community is “any kind of certainty”²³⁹. However, a new and renovated choir every night brings on the stage the idea of resistance and transformation²⁴⁰. The Choir might bring the idea of a “community which endures in the face of violence”²⁴¹. The members will not be the same, but the idea that new people will always gather to make a community is extremely positive and hopeful. According to Cramer, Greig “believes that in human sociability is cause for optimism.”²⁴² In *The Events* the audience can feel that violence will never stop people from coming together and forming a community.

Theatre is literally a form of re-presentation: creating the presence once again of something that is not there, of something that is no longer there or cannot be there, a place where one tries to represent what cannot be represented.²⁴³

Although the topic of religion does not seem to be influential in the play, Greig has stated that the choir could be perceived as a religious community, because it represents the “basic faith in the group.”²⁴⁴ However, the playwright has stated that a community can have a double nature – both inclusive and exclusive – and can provoke respectively a sense of identity and belonging and, on the other hand, a feeling of loneliness and weakness. Probably pushed by the desire to test these two sides of a group, Greig had imagined that the Boy could be a member of the Choir in order to see whether the Choir could react by accepting or excluding him²⁴⁵. Then, this idea has been excluded.

5.2 The Choir, the stage and the audience

In Ancient Greek the ‘polis’ was the centre of social life and theatre was the best place to present and discuss social situations and problems. Representations of real issues were performed in the

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ See ultra Hermansen interview.

²⁴¹ Gardner, L. “Best Theatre of 2013, No 1: The Events”, cit.

²⁴² Cramer, S. “The Traverse, 1985-97: Arnott, Clifford, Hannan, Harrower, Greig and Greenhorn”, cit., p. 175.

²⁴³ Vanhaesebrouck, K. “Reboot Your Culture! Theatricalizing the Unbearable.” *Image & Narrative* 14.3 (2013): 19–33, p. 22.

²⁴⁴ Thorpe, V., “UK Playwright Plans Show Drawing on Anders Breivik’s Norway Killings”, cit.

²⁴⁵ Karlsvik, M. “22/7 Sett Fra Nabostammen”, cit.

theatre. In ancient Athens, for example, it was common for citizens to discuss public issues in theatres²⁴⁶. Going to the theatre was not only a recreational habit, but also a way to obtain information about public topics²⁴⁷. Indeed, theatre not only represented the real world, but also gave examples of public life and solutions to public problems.²⁴⁸ As for ancient Greek theatre, affecting on current issues and on spectators is the most evident feature of contemporary political theatre.²⁴⁹ Particularly, *The Events* revolves around a contemporary problem and affects immediately everyone among the audience. The fact that the choirs that joined the production were local choirs, make the play a “civic event”²⁵⁰. In particular, the Choir makes the stage a place where people gather in order to discuss about an event that has involved an entire community.

The stage of *The Events* takes an even different connotation than a normal theatre stage. Actually, during the Norwegian productions, the audience and the Choir members met onstage, moved by the urge to contact and exchange their feelings and impressions.²⁵¹ In this particular play, “there is a transaction between two communities: the performers onstage and the improvised community that constitute what we call an audience”.²⁵² In particular, *The Events* allows spectators “to let their voices heard, to participate actively and express their ideas, opinions and feelings about the play”.²⁵³ In *The Events*, spectators stop being a “silent partner”²⁵⁴, but can interact with this collective character at the end of the show.

²⁴⁶ Brantley, B. “Review: In ‘The Events,’ a Shooting Leaves a Survivor in Purgatory.” *The New York Times* 12 Feb. 2015. viewed 18 Mar. 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/13/theater/review-in-the-events-a-shooting-leaves-a-survivor-in-purgatory.html?_r=0.

²⁴⁷ McElroy, S. “And a Choir Shall Heal Them”, cit.

²⁴⁸ Kritzer, A. H. *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain: New Writing: 1995-2005*, cit., p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 26.

²⁵⁰ McElroy, S. “And a Choir Shall Heal Them”, cit.

²⁵¹ See ultra interview Hermansen.

²⁵² Griffiths, J., “A Communal Turn of Events | Everything Theatre.” *Everything Theatre*. 8 June 2014. viewed 5 July 2015. <http://everything-theatre.co.uk/2014/08/a-communal-turn-of-events.html>.

²⁵³ Freshwater, H. *Theatre and Audience*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p .59.

²⁵⁴ Benjamin, W., Bullock, M. P., Jennings, M. W., and Eiland, H., *Selected Writing Volume 1: 1913-1926*. Cambridge, Massachusset: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 6.

No more theatre or expensive spectacles for a passive audience of consumers – but a truly collective enterprise in political and artistic research. A new type of relationship between the ‘doers’ and the ‘lookers’ is being experimented with. Perhaps it will succeed in helping hundreds of thousands more to let go of their alienated social roles, to be free of mental Stalinism, to become political and creative doers they dream of being.²⁵⁵

According to Lyn Gardner, Theatre-people have carried out with some sort of urgency experimentations in creating a close relation between spectators and performers in the last decade.²⁵⁶ However, “precisely how audiences produce meaning in negotiation with the particular, local theatrical event, fully contextualized ... has only rarely been analysed or modelled in any detail”²⁵⁷. The audience is fundamental for theatre to take place.²⁵⁸ Therefore, the Choir is a mirror of the audience.²⁵⁹ In *The Events*, Greig seems to explore the interaction between audience and the play and its limitations, by physically involving the spectators.

(..) in contemporary society everyone becomes an audience all the time. Being a member of an audience is no longer an exceptional event. Rather it is constitutive of everyday life ²⁶⁰(...) So deeply infused into everyday life is performance that we are unaware of it in ourselves or in the others. Life is a constant performance; we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time. Performance is not a discrete event.²⁶¹

According to Kritzer, English community theatre, involves actively the audience by making community-based productions: the communities of non-professionals are volunteers and they join performances whose aim is to celebrate or remember events or special issues for the community.²⁶² The idea of making theatre with non-professional actors come from the theatrical techniques of the Brazilian theatre director, Augusto Boal and his Theatre of Oppressed²⁶³. Boal’s performances, that were structured more as workshops than real shows, involved temporary

²⁵⁵ Lebel, J. qtd in Freshwater, H. *Theatre and Audience*, cit., p. 57.

²⁵⁶ Qtd in Freshwater, H. *Theatre and Audience*, cit., p. 57.

²⁵⁷ Knowles, R., *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004, p. 17.

²⁵⁸ Freshwater, H. *Theatre and Audience*, cit., p. 1.

²⁵⁹ Griffiths, J., “A Communal Turn of Events”, cit.

²⁶⁰ Abercrombie, N., and Longhurst, B., *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*. London: Sage, 1998, pp. 68-9.

²⁶¹ Ivi, p. 73.

²⁶² Kritzer, A. H. *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, cit., p. 19.

²⁶³ Ibid.

audience and allowed common people to participate and express their voices regarding social and political issues. The format has been exported in the rest of the world, engaging other types of ‘oppressed’ communities, and being performed in other sites than public streets such as prisons and schools, but still maintaining the formula of the community as actor.²⁶⁴ Similarly, the production of *The Events* involved many non-professional choirs in the project, making the audience “active instead of passive”²⁶⁵. In particular, the production gave the choirs the role of a collective group. The Choir does not know everything about the play and the plot. The Choir acts like an audience on the stage because it gets to know the story scene after scene. Having on the stage non-professionals may have caused unexpected reactions from the members of the Choir. For this reason, the production dedicated special meetings to introduce and explain the project to the choirs, without, though, unveiling everything about the script²⁶⁶. The Choir must not know everything, otherwise the effect of ‘fictional reality’ and alienation in the Choir would not be possible.

“The effect of having a choir of non-actors onstage was disarming and highlighted at once both the truth of the event and the artifice of our recreation of it. It was both the best example of Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* that I have experienced and the purest example of an onstage chorus as the representation of a collective of citizens.”²⁶⁷ “Part of the play is the experience of watching the choir being affected”²⁶⁸. The fact of having real people, non-actors, may bring the spectators to recognize themselves in the Choir. By recognizing themselves in the Choir, spectators may feel a sense of community and “togetherness” throughout the play²⁶⁹. Furthermore, the audience may feel the possibility of listening to their ideas and emotion on the stage through the character of the Choir.

²⁶⁴ Ivi, pp. 18-19.

²⁶⁵ Freshwater, H. *Theatre and Audience*, cit., p. 55.

²⁶⁶ See ultra interview Hermansen.

²⁶⁷ Kingston, T. “Ciara by David Harrower, and: *The Events* by David Greig (review)”, cit., p. 266.

²⁶⁸ Griffiths, J. “A Communal Turn of Events”, cit.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

5.3 Songs. The voice of violence and resistance

The role of the Choir is so relevant in the play and in the production that, initially, the play had been taken for a musical. Although *The Events* has nothing to do with musicals, the importance of music in this play is undeniable. “Words, music and dance combining to tell a story are the most primal means by which humans understand each other. I can barely imagine doing a play which didn’t have music central to its being”²⁷⁰. Greig’s love for music on the stage originated from his collaboration with Suspect Culture, one of the most remarkable Scottish theatre companies of these years. The group has always mixed theatre text with other forms of art – music, dance and design.²⁷¹ Greig’s “spirit of plurality”²⁷² continues to characterize his production. Particularly, the heart of *The Events* is the community of the Choir that, not only is involved in dialogues with the characters in the aftermath of the tragedy, but also mostly sings²⁷³. The Choir sings songs, which are in strong relation with the rest of the plot. The language spoken by the Choir is harmonised with what is going on in the play. The alienation effect of contemporary western theatres tends to use music, which is not pertaining to the action, in order to barge in the story and interrupt it²⁷⁴. In contrast, David Greig has synchronised and connected music and songs with the different moments of the story. According to Weiner, avoiding creating the alienation effect and proposing an action as objective truth create a sense of disappointment in the audience. However, the Choir, through its lyrics, speaks a language that not only refers to the action, but also seems to remark and underline it and the characters’ words. Greig has stated that Ancient Greek tragedy inspired him. Albert Weiner, in his essay about the Greek tragic chorus, has pointed out the difference between dramatic and theatrical elements within a play and defined dramatic elements all those functional and abstract elements connected with the narration

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Rebellato, D., “And I Will Reach Out”, cit., p. 2.

²⁷² Fisher, M., “Plurality of Scottish Theatre.” *International Journal of Scottish Theatr*, 3.1 (2002): 2, p. 2.

²⁷³ McLean, P. “David Greig’s New Play Watches The Events Unfold”, cit.

²⁷⁴ Weiner, A. “The Function of the Tragic Greek Chorus.” *Theatre Journal* 32.2 (1980): 205–212, p. 211.

of the story, while theatrical elements are related to the '*mise en place*'.²⁷⁵ Considering Weiner's definition, the Choir of *The Events* may be a dramatic element, a dramatic character whose absence would change completely the plot of the play. The songs of the Choir succeed in transmitting, once again, both the violence and the desire to resist to it. Music, another form of art that appears the perfect complement to theatre on the stage of *The Events*, sings the two souls of the play.

The Song of Gavrilo Princip alludes to violence. Gavrilo Princip was, actually, the murderer of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg. The Boy pronounces the lyrics of this song twice on the stage. They could be his 'motto', his inspiration to leave a mark in the world. Only later, the Choir sings the same song, just before the re-living of the shooting event, as if the Choir was introducing formally the violent event. The song also says something unforgettable across history.

Whereas *The Song of Gavrilo Princip* resurrects an historical violent event in order to talk about the present time, *Bonkers* is a very contemporary song by the well-known British rapper Dizzee Rascal. 'Bonkers' is the Boy's favourite song²⁷⁶. A song about violence and crime. It is indeed the right song to represent him. Later in the play, we will get to know that he is, actually, prone to like violent diversions. A pair of lines of the song could fit particularly well with the character if the Boy, when the songs says "and all I care about is sex and violence".

A completely different atmosphere falls on *The Events* when the Choir starts singing *How Great Thou Art*. God appears for the second time in the play. The first time God is mentioned, Claire complains for the fact that he has not answered her prayers for help after the event²⁷⁷. God and

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 22.

²⁷⁷ Ivi, p. 14.

religion may sound helpless and worthless from her words. In contrast, the Choir's song glorifies God, its beauties and goodness. The Christian hymn that is one of the most famous praying hymns in the world, might involve the all audience. It, indeed, brings love and compassion on the stage. The song is so involving and wonderful, that spectators are "swept into [its] emotional harmonies"²⁷⁸. Despite the horrible violence, the community is still able to sing love words. This positive message could be an act of resistance against violence and the temptation to remove any trace of spirituality and love as reaction to the massive pain and delusion. Actually, when the Choir sings "Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee"²⁷⁹, the soul is not lost anymore, but it is singing beauty and love.

Another song of resistance ends the play. *We're all Here* is a "specially composed ballad"²⁸⁰, that may resume and include the concept of resistance of the entire play. Indeed, the phrase aims to say that violence and racism have not won. Furthermore, the borders between imagination and reality, between characters and spectators are crossed. In fact, the song might even involve the audience in the performance, by addressing the audience as the next choir²⁸¹. However, the fact that a singing choir ends the play may remind us of the very beginning of the play that is opened by a song sung by the Choir. The end could be both a form of closure, and a way to bring spectators back in time, to the day of the shooting and warn spectators that violence could happen again²⁸². Wherever a community gathers, there the community might be the object of violence. However, whenever a community is hurt and ripped apart, a new community will come to life.

²⁷⁸ Kingston, T. "Ciara by David Harrower, and: The Events by David Greig (review)", cit., p. 266.

²⁷⁹ Greig, D., *The Events*, cit., p. 31.

²⁸⁰ Cavendish, D. "David Greig: 'I Always Knew I'd Put The Events in Front of a Norwegian Audience'."

www.telegraph.co.uk. 5 Apr. 2014. viewed 19 Apr. 2015.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/10742089/David-Greig-I-always-knew-Id-put-The-Events-in-front-of-a-Norwegian-audience.html>.

²⁸¹ Rebellato, D., "Local Hero: The Places of David Greig" *David Greig Festival*, University of Lincoln, March 2014. Conference paper.

²⁸² Brantley, B. "Review: In 'The Events,' a Shooting Leaves a Survivor in Purgatory", cit.

According to Cavendish, the conclusion of the play affirms the power of life²⁸³. “It is their singing which has the last word on the power of community to overcome even the darkest deed”²⁸⁴.

²⁸³ Cavendish, D., “David Greig” cit.

²⁸⁴ Jones, A., “Edinburgh 2013: The Events - David Greig’s Play Drawn on Anders Breivik’s Norway Killings.” *The Independent*. 6 Aug. 2013. viewed 19 Apr. 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/edinburgh-2013-the-events--david-greigs-play-drawn-on-anders-breiviks-norway-killings-8748119.html>.

Interview to the Hege Hermansen, coordinator of the choirs for the Norwegian production of *The Events*.

You were the stage director and coordinator of the choirs during the project. What tasks did your role consist of?

Once the choirs had agreed to join the project, I had all the contact with the leaders during the process. I had a great communication with the assistant director of the English production, Polina Kalinina who had done it all before. Since the choirs were not meant to know everything, it was important to know how to communicate – not to ruin the experience for them.

We met the choirs twice in front of the performance. The first one was a presentation of the concept and of Brageteatret. The second one was a song rehearsal, where they got their performance-script with the cues and notes. We went through the show, I told them what happened around the cues without telling them the context, and then we practiced on the songs, several times. It was also important, maybe most important of all, that they had a good time. It is a serious and dark content, so it was important for us that the choirs, the actors, and everyone around us had a good time and fun to make this a very good memory for the choir-members.

During the rehearsals I was an ordinary stage manager, I coordinated the actors, the artistic team, and the administration. I was also responsible for the props and the costumes.

We met with the choir two hours before the performance. We did go through all the songs, decided who should do the different tasks (FAQ etc.) and I answered all the questions they had. Many of them were excited, but nervous, since they did not know what they were into. About 45 min before the show they met the actors, which also always was a nice moment. Both actors are quite famous here in Norway, and for many it was half the joy just to meet them. (Also somewhat reassuring, none of them would have been there if it wasn't any good.)

After the cue, I made sure that all the props were on the right place, that everybody was ready, that the choir were on their places (they are not trained actors, and don't always understand why it can be a bad idea to make a phone call or go to the toilet 2 min before the start). When the actors, the choir, the technicians were ready and the time was right, I opened the doors for the audience, and when they were all set and ready, I let the choir enter the stage.

During the show I sat on stage and followed the show, served them coffee in the "pause-section" and had the line on the end. I cued some of the choir members when to start the FAQs, when to sing the lullaby, etc.

After the show, I had a long talk with the choir members, before we packed the stage down and loaded the tour car.

Could you explain your timetable to select the choirs and the schedule of the show at Brageteatret? How long did it take to organize the choirs and how long did the touring company reside at Brageteatret?

We started the research and booking of the choirs in the fall 2013, and had our first presentation tour in January 2014. The second tour was in March and the premiere was 27th of March. We toured about a month with this show. Since we only toured in Buskerud, our region, the number of places, choirs and audiences was limited. Norway is not UK.

What were the criteria you adopted in order to choose the choirs? How many choirs did you select?

We had 12 different choirs and one of them played with us twice. Norway does not have as strong choir-tradition as the UK, and some of the cities we visited were quite small, for example "Sigdal," who has 3500 citizens and one choir. It was important for us that the choirs really wanted to join this project. Motivated by different reasons, they all had very good ideas behind saying 'yes' and we enjoyed them all very much, from the small ones to the big ones.

A strong identity of the choirs is a prerequisite David Greig has explicitly requested. Do you agree that the choirs that joined the show had a strong sense of identity? Did they express their identity through their songs or also in other ways? Were the choirs multicultural?

I think all the choirs really had a strong identity but in different ways, and some of those ways became clearer during the process when we got to know them well. We had a big choir on the opening night that was almost the same as in the script. A big multicultural choir led by a priest who works for inclusion. Members were quite expressive about their identity. But we also had a very small choir in one of the small places, also led by a priest, whose members were much more discreet about their feelings about multiculturalism, but still as strong.

The choir with maybe the strongest identity on this tour was the one from Hole, the place where Utøya is. They experienced the mass murdering close to their homes, bodies and minds. The presentation tour to this choir was very special. They were tired of all the different projects that never could let them move on with their lives, and they were afraid this whole thing was speculative, especially since we could not tell them the entire story. But as the talk went on, and they got answers to all their questions and understood the meaning behind the project, actually everyone wanted to join. They sang *Amazing Grace* as their song, and the ending of the performance became quite strong. They were also invited to do the show a second time in Oslo. We don't usually play in Oslo, but we did this time, and it was very special with this choir. They were glad to do it twice and the actors, the choir and the audience became very emotional by the end of the show.

When you explained the project to the choirs, what were their reactions?

Most of them found it exciting and understood the reasons why they couldn't know everything. Very few were critical and wanted to start a discussion if it was too soon to make the show and ethically right to make money on a tragedy. Some were afraid of being taken aback during the

performance, but we focused a lot on making them feel safe, and that we didn't want to fool them in any way. We used a lot of time with them, got to know them, and they trusted us.

Choirs' members were not professional performers. Joining a touching and dark play like 'The Events' could have been harsh. What were their reactions after the performance? Did the members of the choirs feel comfortable on the stage when they interacted with Claire and The Boy? I am thinking in particular about the FAQ scene and Claire's ritual to recollect her soul.

We were very curious about how they would react during the shows, especially the first times. It all went very fine. After the performance they were excited, hugged everyone. I think it was a mix of "thank god it went well", "it actually were fun!" and some sadness that it was already finished. Very many of the choir members said to me that they would wish to do it once more and many of them went to see other choirs in other cities. I think all of them felt comfortable on stage, this was also because Heidi and Rolf Kristian, the actors, are really nice "down to earth" persons and made everyone feel safe and good before the performance. The FAQs always went fine, even if the choir members sometimes mixed the lines, and asked other questions than the script said. It was interesting here to see how they reacted to his answers, some of them were provoked, even though they knew it was all a play. They were trapped in the middle. Claire's ritual was the one thing they knew almost nothing about. We Norwegians are really stiff and tight people, but they followed Heidi and run screaming around the room with their arms against the roof. That was impressive. If there was an "uncomfortable" moment, it was after the fainting, when one of the choir members were to talk to Claire as Sinclair. It is said in the script that Claire starts the conversation, but she always used some time to "wake up". After the first time I told the choir this to make them feel safe, but that resulted in Claire waking up and Sinclair just waiting next to her. It resulted a quite boring and long pause. We agreed not to say anything to the choirs, and afterwards "Sinclair" started to be really comforting, holding Claire's hand, touching her arm. It became a really touching moment in the silence before she spoke.

Many journalist and critics have drawn a parallelism between the chorus in Greek tragedies and the choir in 'The Events'. However, in contrast to many Greek tragedies, in 'The Events' the choir is an active character, it is Claire's community and expresses a sense of collective identity and belonging. The choir is essential in showing the 'political' role of theatre, as a place where people gather and talk over social situations and problems. Did this 'political' spirit motivate the choirs to join the performance?

I do not think it motivated the choirs to join the performance. We introduced the communitarian and political spirit of the choir both on the first and the second presentation rounds, and I think it was good for singers to know their "role" during the performance. I think they understood the importance of their role only when the show was over. They understood that the part they had played, both as their selves, as a choir, as political spirit and as the community itself had made the whole experience stronger and more important than "just a play". We played in many small cities as I wrote before, and the collective meaning about what's "right and wrong", and judgement of public people are quite strong.

During the performance, though, the actors could really feel judgement and feelings both from the audience and from the choir. The choir members sometimes made some sounds when they disagreed, and rolled their eyes to each other, again- trapped in the middle. After the performance, when the audience and the choir met on stage to hug and discuss, and some of the choir members had to express their meaning to the actors, and all were gathered in one big "mess of meanings" it was definitely a "Greek choir" feeling over the whole situation.

David Greig has stated that a community can be both inclusive and exclusive. Could we say that the choir in 'The Events' is both inclusive and exclusive? If yes, in what ways does the choir include or exclude The Boy?

I would say that the Choir is both inclusive and exclusive, and its nature changes during the performance, as in real life. It starts out to be very inclusive to both Claire and The Boy, and it turns in the middle of the FAQs, where The Boy shows no anger in what he did, but talks about it easily. In this scene, it is easy to draw the line to Breivik, who had the same ease and lightness during the trial and it is a natural reflex to exclude The Boy. After this scene they struggled, both with The Boy and with Claire, how long they would be willing to stand by her side in the hunting for justice. From the sequence where she mentions the prison, something happens in the choir. It is easy to see who agrees to kill him, who disagrees, and those who really are struggling. They did all this with clear sounds and one woman also whispered “don’t do it ... don’t” right before Claire removed the tea cup from him. I’m not sure if she knew that she said it loud.

What were the reactions of the public? Did the presence of the choir on the stage bring the fourth wall down?

Right after the performance, they were all kind of exhausted. Both the choir and the audience had felt different and contrasting feelings several times throughout the play and I’m not sure if everyone had accepted the end of the show yet. They all had a lot to say to each other, and needed to talk about it right away. I think it’s a kind of performance you need to sleep on before you can define a concrete feeling. I think it did bring the fourth wall down. If it had been the same choir every night, it wouldn’t be, but since the choir and the audience watch each other for the first time, and the actors are watching both of them for the first time, it is not only A watches B playing C.

***The Events* and the multilingual performance**

Since it was premiered at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh on 4th August 2013, *The Events* has been touring throughout Europe and the U.S. for two years and performed more than one hundred times. Commissioned by Actors Touring Company and Drammatikkens hus in Oslo, *The Events* can also be proud of its international and multicultural productions – the British Young Vic, the Norwegian Brageteatret and the Austrian Schauspielhaus Wien. This example of international co-operation well represents the multicultural character of the play. Although the three productions bear the signature of Ramin Gray, they worked separately with different actors respectively in England, Norway and Austria, and could develop their own personalities. However, they also have elements in common. For instance, the formula ‘two characters and a choir’ has been used with a particular attention to the role of the Choir. The majority of British and Norwegian reviewers have described *The Events* as a play extremely connected to and dependent on the presence of a choir on stage. That element, so vivid and realistic, brings real people and their feelings on stage²⁸⁵. The Choir is the element that has made the show and around which the play revolves.

However, the three productions could work together and made something unique. Ramin Gray wanted the British, Norwegian and Austrian actors to perform *The Events* all together on the same stage and speak their own language²⁸⁶. Actually, from the 10th to 12th of July 2014, *The Events* was performed at Young Vic by a multinational and multilingual staff. Claire was performed every night by a different actress, while the Boy was played by about three different actors every night. The most relevant element is that all actors played in their mother tongue. The

²⁸⁵ Collins-Hughes, L., “‘The Events’ Uses Local Choirs for Vocals, Minus a Script.” *The New York Times*. 6 Mar. 2015. viewed 14 Sep. 2015.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/07/theater/theeventsuseslocalchoirsforvocalsminusascript.html?mwrsr=Email&_r=0.

²⁸⁶ Trueman, M., “Tag Wrestling in Three Languages: The Events Stages a Radical Coup de Theatre.” *the Guardian*. 4 Jul. 2014. viewed 19 Apr. 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jul/04/the-events-play-tag-three-languages-shooting-breivik>.

audience and so the Choir were helped by surtitles²⁸⁷, but their attention was naturally on how the characters managed to communicate and interact to each other while speaking different languages²⁸⁸. If understanding the Boy was for Claire a huge mission even when they communicated in English, in these particular three performances, Claire struggled to understand even what her interlocutors say, because they do not share the same language²⁸⁹. Theatre can have people speaking different languages while being together, sharing the same small place and trying to communicate. That multilingual and multicultural stage mimics perfectly the world situation: a small place inhabited by people with different cultures who try to communicate even if they speak different languages.

Linguistically speaking, English stops being the ‘lingua franca’ that makes communication easier. In these performances, the language becomes weak and useless, whereas actions and gestures become codes to communicate. Dominic Cavendish saw *The Events* in Norway, at Drammen Teater, and he has stated that, although unable to understand the Boy’s words when he was pointing his gun against Claire, he could perceive the gravity of the situation²⁹⁰. Similarly, Claire does not understand what her interlocutors say to her, but she feels their feelings, their hate and their violence, and to them she decides to react with no violence. As Derbhle Crotty, the actress who has played Claire twice during the three performances, pointed out, Claire cannot hate the Boy if she does not understand him.²⁹¹ The language could have been an obstacle, but this lack of a shared language allowed the performers to ‘listen’, ‘hear’ and ‘feel’ each other²⁹². According to Sam Clifford, actor with ATC, who played the Boy during those special dates, *The Events* “transcends beyond the English language. It is just as powerful in any language” because it

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Clifford, S. (actor), “Imagine a Boy.” *ATC Theatre*. 22 Jul. 2014. viewed 10 Sep. 2015.

<http://www.atctheatre.com/blog/imagineaboy>.

²⁸⁹ Crotty, D., (actress), “Hi. Come in. Don’t be Shy.” *ATC Theatre*. 22 Jul. 2014. viewed 10 Sep. 2015.

<http://www.atctheatre.com/blog/hi.comein.Dontbeshy>.

²⁹⁰ Cavendish, D., “David Greig”, cit.

²⁹¹ Greig, D., *The Events*. London: Faber & Faber, 2013. P. 21.

²⁹² Clifford, S. (actor), “Imagine a Boy”, cit.

manages to wonderfully explore and dig out feelings and conditions that are beyond words²⁹³.

Claire stops seeking for an explanation, she accepts the violence that has hurt her and decides to react in a no-violent way.

It might be Gray and the entire co-production's intention to send a message – language and culture are not an obstacle only if rejecting violence becomes a universal value. According to Gardner, *The Events* has been successful in posing questions, among other themes, also about society.²⁹⁴ These multilingual performances of *The Events* seem to propose a realistic picture of contemporary multicultural societies, but they have also added something more. The idea that society can cope with linguistic and cultural barriers, and with violence.

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²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Gardner, L. "Best Theatre of 2013, No 1: The Events", cit.

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