

**Penser et/ou panser le monde :
intentions, significations, limites #1**

Vendredi 4 juin 2021
Rencontre virtuelle (via Meet), 17h –
diffusion du lien via la liste de diffusion du MHiC-Lab
(et sur demande)

“Why me?”; it is often this question that sets the ill individual on a personal and social quest for the meaning of their illness. The illness’ irruption in one’s *own* time and in one’s *own* space creates in fact a rupture with the image and the expectations each person develops about themselves, which spurs human beings to acknowledge the life cycles of *their* body, forcing them to rethink the so-called “normal” cycles of life. Society exerts great influence on the process of distorting the everyday of the diseased, in that with its structures and practices it partakes in acknowledging what literary theorist Elaine Scarry has defined “world destruction”. Reconstructing and healing the world destroyed by illness is a task for medical science which, however, within the last years’ technical-scientific progress seems to have forgotten about the coexistence of the biological and social body of patients. Conversely, the literary narration of illness can heal such wound, and can thus be considered as a “counterpoint” to a purely scientific discourse. For this reason, the analysis of Giuseppe Pontiggia’s novel *Born Twice (Nati due volte)* is of particular merit. Thirty years after the birth of a son affected by a severe paresis, the author chooses to share with readers the same communicative strategies he enacted in reality with the doctors. Against the immutable, unbending diagnosis, the novel pits alternative readings, compiled of multiple voices and opinions, of the son’s disease. The hypothetical “if it were so” prevails then over science’s factual “it is so”, entrusting readers with the task of mediating the polyphonic narration of illness.

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Destruction and Reconstruction.

The tenuous relationship between illness and healing in Giuseppe Pontiggia’s *Born Twice*.



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