

Consistere and Muoversi: The Meeting of Human Being and Statue in Henrik Ibsen's *Når vi døde vågner* and Luigi Pirandello's *Diana e la Tuda*

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Abstract

The compelling mystery of sculpture as an art form – the shaping of a three-dimensional body from a lifeless material – has exercised writers, philosophers, anthropologists, and dramatists, among them Henrik Ibsen and Luigi Pirandello. This article poses the question: what happens to the verisimilitude of the statue on stage? Is there potential for fruitful confusion, hybrids, blendings, between human being and statue in drama? To explore this question, the article considers Ibsen's dramatic epilogue *Når vi døde vågner* (1899, *When We Dead Awaken*), and Pirandello's tragedy *Diana e la Tuda* (1926, *Diana and Tuda*). The petrification of the human being and the animation of the statue do not happen explicitly in the two dramas, but we are induced to imagine them through a series of symbols and allegories: characters become stone-like but not of stone, and statues become life-like but not alive. Both plays use these illusory metamorphoses to examine ideas such as the pseudo-artist, the artist, the model, the statue and the 'enemies' of art. To frame the discussion, this article adopts the concepts of *consistere*, to stand, and *muoversi*, to move, terms defined by the Italian philosopher Adriano Tilgher, particularly in his *Studi critici sulla estetica contemporanea* (1928). The analysis begins with a discussion of those artists in the two plays who strive to immobilise their own existence and that of the people around them; we then consider those characters who confront the artists and shift the balance in favour of movement. The article ends with a discussion of the complex balance achieved in each play between *consistere* and *muoversi*.

Keywords

Henrik Ibsen; Luigi Pirandello; Adriano Tilgher; sculpture; Pygmalion myth.

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The tension between life and art and the aura of mystery and power that surround the creation of a work of art have inspired a great number of artists and art critics, as well as writers, literary scholars, philosophers and anthropologists. This field is therefore by no means unexplored. As Kenneth Gross emphasises in his *The Dream of the Moving Statue* the relationship between sculptor and statue – in particular the fact that the sculptor is capable of shaping a human-like three-dimensional body made of a lifeless material – has been among the most prolific sources of interest and curiosity (Gross, 1992: xxi-xxii). We only need to think of the famous Greek myths of Medusa, the Gorgon that transformed human beings into statues through her gaze, and of Pygmalion, the artist that falls in love with his statue and wishes for it to become alive.¹

Yet, what happens when this mystifying relationship between human being and statue is represented in a drama? Can the human being ever be mistaken for the statue and *vice versa*? This is what I will illustrate by comparing the representation of the pseudo-artist, the artist, the model, the statue and the 'enemies' of art in *Når vi døde vågner* (1899, *When We Dead Awaken*), a dramatic epilogue by Henrik Ibsen, and *Diana e la Tuda* (1926, *Diana and Tuda*), a tragedy by Luigi Pirandello.² On an empirical level, to set a boundary between the human being and the statue should

1. The relationship between these two Greek myths and *Når vi døde vågner* has been examined by at least two scholars. Daniel Haakonsen has explored the connection between Ibsen's play and the Pygmalion effect, while Frode Helland has considered the link between *Når vi døde vågner* and the myth of Medusa as well as that of Pygmalion (Haakonsen, 1981: 269; Helland, 1997: 86-91; Helland, 1999: 140).

2. The similarities between these two plays have previously attracted the attention of some scholars. Bini briefly mentions the relation between *Diana e la Tuda* and *Når*

be an easy task, given that in Ibsen's and Pirandello's dramas no human being is suddenly petrified like in *The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf*, one of H. C. Andersen's fairytales, and no statue opens its eyes and starts to move like in *Don Juan*. The characters are therefore granted a dramatic fictional life and are 'alive' on stage for as long as the play lasts, while the works of art remain still and lifeless in their immutable form. How is a subversion of the traditional difference between an animated and a lifeless figure at all possible, then? How can a drama make us see human action, behaviour and thought and even objects in a way that transcends empirical knowledge? As I will demonstrate throughout this article, the boundary between human being and statue is not challenged by means of magic but through an illusion, the final results of which will be unveiled in my conclusion. The two plays are in other words two clear examples of how an invisible fantasy can take place, based on a series of animations and petrifications that are, however, purely figurative (ibid. 6). The petrification of the human being and the animation of the statue do not happen explicitly in the two dramas but we are induced to imagine them through a series of symbols and allegories: characters become stone-like but not of stone and statues become life-like but not alive.

In order to analyse *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* and their illusionistic mechanisms, I will make use of a philosophical framework based on the concepts of *consistere*, to stand, and *muoversi*, to move. These two terms were defined by the Italian philosopher Adriano Tilgher particularly in his *Studi critici sulla estetica contemporanea* (1928). He points out that his explanation of *consistere* and *muoversi* draws on that uttered by one of Pirandello's characters in *Questa sera si recita a soggetto* (1930, Tonight We Improvise). The life of the human being can move like a flux searching for change and renewal, but at times it can also stand still, trapped in forms such as ideals, attitudes, traditions or habits. Likewise, the work of art – which is usually believed to be irremediably fixed in its materiality – can also move: it only needs to be exposed to the eyes of spectators, who break its fixity by observing it from different perspectives (Pirandello, 1970: 16-18 & Tilgher, 1928: 189).

Do the human beings and the statues in *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* manage to maintain an agreement or balance between their ability to *consistere* and *muoversi*? If not, by which of these two states are they overwhelmed, fixity or movement? I will start my analysis of the dramas

vi døde vågner in her *Pirandello and His Muse* (Bini, 1998: 28, 199 n. 25). More recently, in the last five pages of her article 'Reencountering Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* in Pirandello's *Diana e la Tuda*', Chomel deals with some aspects of the relationship between Eros and Thanatos in these two plays, focusing in particular on the representation of the models Irene and Tuda (Chomel, 2007: 248-253).

by taking into consideration the artists – Ibsen’s sculptor Arnold Rubek and Pirandello’s sculptor Sirio Dossi – who strive to immobilise their own existence, that of their models and that of anybody and anything involved in their work. Rubek’s and Sirio’s eyes are like those of Medusa: they can petrify their models, Irene and Tuda, and make them into statues, *Oppstandelsens dag* (the Day of Resurrection) and *Diana* respectively. However, neither Irene nor Tuda try to hide from the petrifying gazes of their sculptors. On the contrary, they show themselves in their nakedness despite realising that Rubek and Sirio are sucking movement out of their lives, becoming accomplices as well as victims of the enactment of the myth of Medusa.

I will then turn to those characters that dare to confront the artists and shift the balance in favour of movement. In opposition to Rubek and Sirio’s petrifying mission, the bear-hunter Ulfheim and the old sculptor Nono Giuncano attempt to eliminate fixity from life. They try to break the spell of Medusa, in an attempt to perform the same magic described in the myth of Pygmalion: they try to bring back to a life of movement the characters that have been transformed into ‘statues’ by the artists. Like Ulfheim and Giuncano, Maja and Sara – Rubek’s wife and Sirio’s lover respectively – rebel against the artists’ exploitation when it becomes clear that they are only being used. Will these ‘champions’ of movement be successful in their struggle or will everybody and everything be lost to fixity by the end of the plays?

Towards fixity

To maintain a balance between fixity and movement is a difficult task for any human being, but in *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* it appears to be an even harder challenge for artists. In order to explain why this is the case, it is necessary first of all to distinguish the artists from the pseudo-artists. As Marcia Muelder Eaton points out, the boundary between art and nonart has historically been very changeable. Artistic activity has been at times contrasted with pseudo-craft, and at times simply used as synonym of craftsmanship (Muelder Eaton, 1983: 15-28, 41-45). The difficulty of defining art and nonart is however easily overcome in Ibsen’s and Pirandello’s plays, where the meaning of these concepts is implicit but clear: the artist is someone who uses all his energy to create a masterpiece and fulfil his vision, while the nonartist only creates pseudo-works of art for money. For the nonartist, such as a sculptor or painter who makes portraits on commission, his creations are goods that can be purchased by affluent individuals and that will allow him to enjoy the flux of life. After having completed his masterpiece, even Rubek – deprived of his inspiration

– takes up the work of the nonartist and starts making portrait busts on commission. Although Rubek behaves as a nonartist, creating in order to make money, to a certain extent his artistic inclination still manages to emerge. This is why, as Rubek himself explains to Maja, his commissioned pieces can be seen on two levels. ‘Utenpå’ (outwardly)³ the portraits seem in fact to display exactly what the commissioner pays Rubek handsomely for, namely a ‘slående likhet’ (striking resemblance) between the model and the work of art (Ibsen, 2000: 250). ‘I sin dypeste grunn’ (at the deepest level), however, Rubek – unlike the nonartist – sneaks into his portraits something that the commissioner has not asked for, ‘noe fordektig, noe fordulgt ... noe lønning, som ikke menneskene kan se’ (something suspicious, something hidden ... something secret, which people cannot see), namely underlying traits of barnyard animals (ibid.). Compared to Rubek, the portraitist Caravani in *Diana e la Tuda* represents a further degeneration of the nonartist. His paintings are obscene and awful with unnatural poses and ridiculous subject and colour choices. He is celebrated in society not because he is an artist but because he is ‘alla moda’, in fashion, since, as Sara remarks, ‘i quadri brutti c’è sempre qualcuno che li compra’ (Pirandello, 2004: 632; there is always someone that wants to buy ugly paintings).⁴ His creations are suitable for the ‘crowd’, for all the people who cannot discern art. In addition, Caravani’s behaviour is seen as even more ‘vulgar’ and comical than his art. He is undoubtedly more interested in flirting with his models than in completing his paintings.

For the artist art is not a profession, a way to earn a living, but a way of life, a vocation. For this reason, Rubek calls himself *kunstner*, artist, and not *billedmester* or *billedhugger*, sculptor, while Sirio explicitly declares that he hates the idea of being called a sculptor as he finds this definition demeaning. Both Rubek and Sirio are obsessed by the idea of completing their masterpiece. They are ‘possessed’ and their fixation runs their lives to the point of acquiring pathological connotations and making them mad and sick. Justifying himself before Irene for never having touched her when she posed naked for him, Rubek states that he was ‘syk’, sick with desire to create the masterpiece of his life (Ibsen, 2000: 261). A similar obsession clearly drives Sirio too, whose compelling need to finish his Diana makes him physically ill, as he works in a sort of feverish delirium (Pirandello, 2004: 596). Moreover, artists are not like ‘ordinary’ men: they do not let themselves be driven mad by the beauty of their models, Irene and Tuda, but by their own creations. They are not interested in everyday life and distance themselves from anything that is part of it. During his dialogue with Maja, Rubek points out that an artist cannot replace his mission and

3. English translations provided for reference by the editor.

4. Note that the translations into English from the Italian texts are all my own.

vocation with what he calls 'ørkesløs nydelse' (useless pleasure) (Ibsen, 2000: 270). Everyday life is boring and meaningless for the artist. Sirio's words echo Rubek's considerations and are in fact even harsher. The artist in *Diana e la Tuda* does not have any understanding for those who choose a path different from his:

SIRIO Ciò che lui chiama "vivere" ... che cosa? viaggiare ... giocare, amar donne, una bella casa, amici, vestir bene, sentire i soliti discorsi, far le solite cose? vivere per vivere? ... come le bestie ... (Pirandello, 2004: 597)

(SIRIO What he calls "life" ... what? To travel ... to gamble, love women, have a nice house, friends, nice clothes, listen to the usual talk, do the usual things? Live to live? ... like beasts ...)

Sirio shows complete disdain for human beings and compassion only towards statues. When he witnesses the scene of the destruction of Giuncano's statues, he admits that he feels sympathy for the broken sculptures but disgust for the curious crowd rushing to see what has happened.

The artist goes even beyond the display of hatred towards the movement of life: he has to 'kill' movement itself. He has to 'stand still', be fixed himself in a form, an attitude or – as Marie Wells puts it – to be 'emotionally dead' (Wells, 1994: 154). This allows him to persevere in his artistic fixation and to use and manipulate others in his attempt to remove movement from their lives, too. Tilgher also underlines that the artist has to reach a level of indifference in order not to be distracted by 'una passione ... viva e reale e pungente ... che reclama per soddisfarsi l'oggetto reale al quale aspira' (Tilgher, 1944: 20; a passion ... living, real and pricking ... that strives to be satisfied by the real object it longs for). In Irene's words, he has to put 'først kunstverket – siden menneske-barnet' (the artwork first – and the human last) (Ibsen, 2000: 261). Irene and Tuda, as well as any other person that is part of the artist's plot and strategy, are de-humanised, 'frozen' in their function of instruments necessary to achieve a great artistic plan. Irene bitterly reminds Rubek that after having completed the statue she was of no use for him anymore. Moreover, Rubek later admits that Irene is 'something' he either needs or not. As a young artist, Rubek dismisses his relationship with Irene as an episode. Yet, it is only after Irene has left him that he fully understands that her presence is necessary for him to create works of art. Without her the casket containing his artistic talent remains locked. Sirio also objectifies his model. He is guilty of not only using her and other people as puppets but even of exploiting them and their feelings. As Tuda, Sara and Giuncano state, Sirio 'si è approfittato', has taken advantage of them all. He is exposed as an exploiter and yet he shows no sign of remorse and

mockingly laughs at all the other characters. Sirio is not able to care for anybody because his only interest is the completion of his statue: as he repeats, he only wants to work.

Despite being fixed in a form, Rubek more than Sirio experiences an internal struggle with the forces of movement that try to re-emerge in the course of the drama. Rubek emphasises that resisting Irene's beauty had not been an easy task. He also portrays himself as a guilty man in the final version of his sculpture and clearly admits his responsibility for having destroyed Irene's life. Whether we believe or not that his admission of guilt is sincere and whether we see his intention of a 'new life' with Irene as feasible or not, Rubek still shows signs of an 'awakening' to passion and free expression of his feelings:

PROFESSOR RUBEK (*lidenskapelig*). Vet du vel at just den kjærlighet – den syder og brenner i meg så hett som noensinne før! ... (*slår armene voldsomt om henne*). Så la oss to døde leve livet en eneste gang til bunns – før vi går ned i våre grave igjen! (Ibsen, 2004: 287-288)

(PROFESSOR RUBEK (*passionately*). You know, that love – it sighs and burns in me just as fiercely as ever it did! ... (*throws his arms around her*). So let us two dead ones live life to the fullest just once – before we go to our graves again!)

As I will come back to further on in this article, Rubek's awakening might well only be a temporary rush of enthusiasm before a possible return to his old ways with Irene. Yet, it has to be acknowledged that, on this particular occasion, Rubek shows a new side of his personality. There is in fact a considerable difference between the Rubek that did not even dare to touch his model, fearing that by doing so he would not be able to complete his masterpiece, and the Rubek that passionately embraces Irene. This kind of passion is never awoken in, or even faked by, Sirio, who has the courage to reject Tuda as she offers him herself and what remains of her life. It would thus appear that Sirio is 'past resurrection' and that the fixity of Medusa has irremediably taken over his life. Yet, without speculating too far, the age difference between Rubek and Sirio should be kept in mind when comparing the two: Rubek is an elderly man while Sirio is a young sculptor. As Rubek admits, he had a completely different approach to art and life when he was 'ennu ung' (still young) and it took him years to reflect on, and take responsibility for, his life-choices and actions (Ibsen, 2000: 261). Sirio's premature death not only does not allow him to finish his statue but denies him the possibility to 'mature', reach any kind of 'awakening', and reintroduce any kind of movement and change in his own life.

To sum up, both dramas challenge the typical representation of the artist as someone that gives life to something that is lifeless. As Ernst Kris

and Otto Kurz have explained in their seminal work on the image of the artist, artistic activity has been generally associated with creativity. The image of the artist as creator has even been compared to that of God, the ultimate Creator, and goes hand in hand with the process of heroisation of the artist (Kris & Kurz, 1979: 54). Yet, what kind of creators are Rubek and Sirio? Comparing Rubek to Pygmalion, Frode Helland has observed that both prefer the statue to the human being. He also remarks that there is one essential difference between them. While Pygmalion strives to make the statue alive and liberate it from its immovable form, Rubek deprives the living Irene of life (Helland, 1997: 87-91). The same consideration applies as far as Sirio is concerned. I would therefore argue that in this respect the artists in Ibsen's and Pirandello's dramas are more similar to Medusa than Pygmalion.

At the very end of Pirandello's tragedy, once Sirio is dead, Tuda exclaims that she is guilty of everything. If we accept Alonge's description of Tuda as a completely subdued woman who only takes orders from the male characters, the model's admission of guilt makes no sense (Alonge, 1997: 102-103). Bini on the other hand proposes a view that to a greater extent takes into account Tuda's reaction: the model is a subject and not merely an object in the artist's hands. Besides being increasingly aware of the life of stillness that awaits her as Sirio's model and wife, she also embraces – as I will come back to in a moment – the role of creator (Bini, 1998: 38-42). Remarks on Irene similar to those made by Bini on Tuda have been made by Helland in his 'Irene: objekt eller subjekt?'. Irene is not a passive object: she recognises that her petrification is also her own fault, and, like Rubek, she emanates death like Medusa (Helland, 1999: 139-140). In other words, the models are partly responsible for their own *consistere*: they are guilty of having sacrificed themselves totally and of having underestimated the consequences of their sacrifice. Irene admits that she has subjugated herself to Rubek's will. Only too late does she realise that her sacrifice for Rubek is one that she never should have made. She has committed a 'crime' against herself by donating to the artist her liveliness. When Irene appears in the drama and meets Rubek for the first time since she finished modelling for him, she is still living the consequences of her sacrifice. As she explains, she has been 'dead' for many years: having donated her soul to the artist, so that he could then infuse it into the work of art, Irene is physically alive but spiritually dead, 'sjelløs' (soulless) (Ibsen, 2000: 263). However, as the drama proceeds, Irene is seen, just like Rubek, in her progressive 'awakening' to life. The flux of life seems to be running again in her veins. Yet, the time left for her to be awake is not enough to 'live' but it is just sufficient to realise that she and Rubek have never really lived before. As Irene herself admits, 'når vi døde vågner ... vi ser at vi aldri har levet' (when we dead awaken ... we see that we never have lived) (ibid. 280).

Compared to Irene, Tuda's wrongdoing against herself is even greater. The terms of her agreement with Sirio are in fact clear to her from the beginning: Sirio marries her only so that she will not pose for any other artist; the marriage has no other value to him. Despite being attracted to the 'man' Sirio and knowing that she is 'alive', she accepts the conditions of their pact, tempted also by the money and the status she will acquire as Mrs Dossi. She also hopes that Sirio might change his mind and fall in love with her in time. In addition, from the beginning of Act II Tuda starts noticing the signs of her physical and mental degeneration: she is becoming thinner and more restless. Giuncano also warns her that she is losing her vitality and transforming herself into a statue:

GIUNCANO – chiamala vita! – Bambina, tu ti movevi di più – guizzavi – ora un po' meno – e sempre meno, sempre meno – finchè – hai creduto di vivere? – hai finito di morire! (Pirandello, 2004: 638)

(GIUNCANO – call it life! – Child, you were more dynamic – you were sprinting – now a bit less – and lesser and lesser – until – you thought you were living? – you ended up dying!)

None of these facts and premonitions dissuade Tuda from posing in front of Sirio's petrifying eyes. Gradually overwhelmed by fixity, Tuda cannot awake or be awoken: her agony comes to an end only when her petrification is irretrievably completed.

What is the reason of the model's self-sacrifice? The most immediate answer to this question is that, like Rubek and Sirio, Irene and Tuda are artists and they are aware that with their bodies they can create works of art. Irene appears to be aware of the difference between art, what she felt she was creating with Rubek, and nonart, what she was 'producing' taking part in peep shows, commercialising her own body. Like Irene, Tuda knows that art has nothing to do with fashion and money, but comes from the artist's own creative drive. She even demonstrates that she is able to create art by herself, without any other artist's cooperation. It is in these terms that the first scene of Act II in *Diana e la Tuda* could be read, when Tuda is in Sirio's studio, in company of the dressmaker. Tuda behaves like an artist as she refuses to wear what is fashionable. After having dismissed the ideas proposed by the dressmaker, she arranges fabrics and lace on her body and puts her dress together with pins. The model is able to come up with outfits that exalt her creativity as well as her bodily features. In other words, Tuda is both the creator and the creation. Like Rubek and Sirio, the models are jealous of their role as co-creators of the statues, their 'children'. Irene and Tuda are dangerous when they feel a need to defend themselves, their roles and the material 'space' which they think they control. Their aggressiveness is underlined by the fact that they carry

sharp weapons and threaten people with them. Irene confesses that she is constantly armed and ready to kill, with a dagger, a pin hidden in her hair, a knife. Similarly, Tuda is described as pointing a hatpin at the witches, the two old models protected by Sirio, who, she feels, are invading her space, the studio.

If Irene and Tuda consider their ultimate sacrifice worthwhile, it is not for the sake of the artist, but for that of art itself or, more precisely, of their 'child', i.e. the creation of their artistic union with Rubek and Sirio respectively. The model is thus far from being only the 'source' of the work of art: she is herself creator together with the sculptor (Bini, 1998: 42). As Tuda explains to Giuncano, as a model, she can suggest changes and improvements to the work of art, being careful that the male artist does not notice it. The man-artist has to think that these changes come from his imagination and not from that of the model, who has to look 'senza pensieri' (Pirandello, 2004: 609; without thoughts). In other words, it is not only the father-artist that shapes the statue but also the mother-artist:

IRENE. ... Men denne støtte i det våte, levende ler, den elsket jeg – alt efter som der steg frem et sjelfullt menneskebarn av disse rå, uformelige massene, – for den var vår skapning, vårt barn. *Mitt og ditt.* (Ibsen, 2000: 274)

(IRENE. ...But the statue in the wet, living clay, I loved *that* – as a soulful human child emerged from these raw, unformed shapes, – for *that* was our creation, our child. *Mine and yours.*)

The metaphor of the work of art as 'the child' of the artist is – as Kris and Kurz have emphasised – very common in literary traditions and is often explained as an attempt to make the process of artistic creation more understandable using elements and experiences taken from life (Kris & Kurz, 1979: 115-116). The metaphor of the child fits particularly well within the dynamics of these dramas for two reasons. Firstly, the children in *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* have a father as well as a mother. Secondly, comparing the statue to a child emerges as a way to humanise the work of art and therefore to legitimise its ability to move. But how does the child move? I will begin by taking into consideration an element that Tilgher does not refer to in his definition of the concept of *muoversi* applied to the work of art. The statues in *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* change, develop or – using an expression more suitable to the metaphor of the 'child' – they grow up. The mobility of their appearance is linked to what Kris and Kurz call one of the most common practices associated with 'the equation of picture and depicted': 'the harm done to a person must also be visible in his portrait' (ibid. 73). For this reason, to begin with, *Oppstandelsens dag* and *Diana* appear as 'pure'

naked women full of energy and joy of life: the former is a 'heavenly' vision of the day of resurrection made of 'levende ler' (living clay) and the latter an image of the virgin goddess, Diana (Ibsen, 2000: 274). However, in both cases no trace is left of the more positive version of the statues and the 'children' are transformed – like their 'mothers' – into fearful shadows of themselves. In the final version, the cold marble statue representing Irene has lost 'lysgleden' (its joyful light) and has become a subdued 'mellemgrunnsskikkelse' (figure of the middle ground) in an almost 'hellish' vision of the resurrection, where Rubek, represented as a guilty man, is in the foreground, and people with animal faces swarm from the cracked earth (ibid. 275). Likewise, Sirio watches Tuda losing her 'grazia luminosa', luminous grace, and being transfigured by resentment and sorrow but does not intervene (Pirandello, 2004: 594). His Diana transforms herself from the young huntress full of energy into the obscure face of the moon goddess that can bring destruction and death, both representations that – as Green suggests in his work on the figure of Diana – are associated with this goddess in Greek mythology (Green, 2007: 290-291). Only in *Når vi døde vågner* is the statue's process of becoming linked to events and changes in the life of the artist as well as in that of the model. While Sirio is coldly aware from the very beginning of the result he wants to achieve with his statue of Diana, Rubek's vision of his masterpiece matures and changes with him. As Rubek himself states, his final version of *Oppstandelsens dag* is the outcome of movement in his life, of his new and more complex way of looking at the world.

Yet, the statues' potential to move is not exhausted once their last version is completed and, to demonstrate this, I will apply Tilgher's concept of *muoversi* to the statues in the two plays. In *Diana e la Tuda* Giuncano briefly suggests that the fixity of a statue can be broken, just as in the myth of Pygmalion. Talking about the statue, he states that: 'La vita gliela dà tu, se la guardi un momento' (Pirandello, 2004: 604; You give it life, if you look at it for a moment). The work of art is not doomed to fixity, since each spectator will give it a different 'life' by simply observing it from her or his individual perspective. In *Når vi døde vågner*, *Oppstandelsens dag* is said to be in a museum where it is stared at by fictional visitors. Rubek despairs at the thought that he is not in control of his creation's fixity since, as he expresses himself, the whole world has seen his masterpiece and may have discerned in it 'something' that is not even there. However, within the drama Rubek's statue remains unseen, given that it never physically appears on stage. Vigdis Ystad has explained in her article 'Livet som kunstverk' that *Oppstandelsens dag* emerges in the drama through the dialogue of those that talk about it. Rubek's masterpiece is therefore always at the centre of the play and it is

represented at its various stages of development, providing us with images that can be reminiscent of works of art by well-known artists, such as Auguste Rodin and Gustav Vigeland (Ystad, 1999: 59, 62-64). Yet, the final version of *Oppstandelsens dag* is only presented through the account of its creator: in Ibsen's play the finished statue is 'fixed' in Rubek's description, a portrayal that reflects only his own particular 'view' of the work of art. Irene has in fact not seen the final version of the statue, none of the other characters talks about it, and the museum-goers that have seen the statue are not given a voice within the drama. Rubek's masterpiece remains, in other words, only a narrative presence in the play. It is also in this sense that Irene's derogatory use of the word 'dikter' (poet) to reproach Rubek about the changes made to the original version of *Oppstandelsens dag* could be interpreted (Ibsen, 2000: 276). The Norwegian 'dikter', 'poet', refers not only to Rubek's supposed ability to 'dikte' – as Irene puts it – in marble, but, as indicated by the second meaning of the word, also to his capacity to tell stories, to lie. In the play, while we do not see any material evidence of Rubek's ability to make statues, we discover his ability to create statues made not of marble, but only of words.

The state and position of the statue in *Diana e la Tuda* is very different from that of *Oppstandelsens dag*. In Pirandello's work the statue of Diana is on stage for the whole play, though concealed behind a white curtain, and is unveiled when the final scene begins. For most of the drama, *Diana* is only fixed in Sirio's vision of it, one that is not even explicitly disclosed by him. The only indication that we have about how the statue might look is Tuda herself as we see her posing: she is standing imitating – as mentioned at the very beginning of the play – the 'piccolo bronzo del museo di Brescia, attribuito al Cellini' (Pirandello, 2004: 591; the small bronze in the museum in Brescia attributed to Cellini). As the white curtain is finally drawn, Diana appears illuminated on the stage and can be granted movement by the gazes of the spectators: '*Nello studio ... Solo la statua, con la luce che cola dal lucernario, appare distinta*' (ibid. 659; In the study ... only the statue, with the light falling from the skylight appears distinct).⁵ Unlike in *Når vi døde vågner*, in Pirandello's play, the statue is finally unveiled in all its materiality.

5. A picture of the statue by Libero Andreotti employed for the performance of this drama is available for instance in Pirandello, 1994. Moreover, even the statue that Tuda is imitating with her pose can still be found in Brescia, Musei Civici d'Arte e Storia, Sezione Collezionismo, legato Brozzoni, n. 142. For a picture of this bronze that, as was discovered later, represents Virtue and is not by Cellini see Panazza, 1968: 92.

Back to movement

Artists and models petrified for the sake of their ‘children’ and statues brought to life by the gaze of their observers: is this all too much to imagine? While stressing that the idea of animated statues has become an integral part of the way we relate to these objects, Gross also points out that this *leitmotif* entails numerous variations. At times fantasy is simply not enough: not everybody for instance falls for or is content with a mere illusion of movement (Gross, 1992). The statue becomes an enemy whose material stillness is a provocation, a showing off of its likeness to death. What I want to consider here is therefore how Ulfheim, Giuncano, Maja and Sara – who appear too aware of the empirical difference between dead and living material to be fooled by the fantasy of the moving statue – relate to the concepts of *consistere* and *muoversi*. Do these characters also resist the fantasy of the petrified human being? Do they at least believe that fixity in life can occur?

Let us start by taking into consideration Ulfheim and Giuncano, for whom art clearly equals only fixity. As Ulfheim points out, marble is dead and it resists any attempt to be brought to life. Giuncano has come to despise this material just because of its fixity. For this reason, he has given up art and destroyed all his statues. He would start creating new statues only if, once chiselled, they could be infused with a ‘pasta ardente’, burning paste, and become – like in the Pygmalion myth – living creatures made of living material (Pirandello, 2004: 602). Yet, he realises that this is impossible and that the only alternative in order not to ‘betray’ movement and action is to reject art completely. Similarly, Ulfheim admits that there are no ‘kunstverker’ (artworks) to be found in his castle (Ibsen, 2000: 285). He stays away from art and other dead materials and hunts only living material, anything that is wild and untouched by artificiality. Ulfheim and Giuncano on the whole agree that the stillness of art is not attractive. Unable to be charmed by the illusion of its movement, they reject art altogether since they can only see it *consistere* and associate its fixity with that of death. As Michel Serres argues in his *Statues*, the origin of the statue is in fact connected to death: statues were and are still a means to immortalise in fixity a deceased. They become an alter ego of the living body, one without vitality, apt to preserve a decaying corpse (Serres, 1987: 22-23, 48). Bearing in mind these considerations, we can also interpret Ulfheim’s remark on the similarity between death and sculpture: the bear-hunter compares in fact his killing of bears with Rubek’s shaping of statues. At the same time, Sirio rightly guesses that Giuncano’s hatred of statues has its roots in his own fear of becoming old and coming closer to death.

Just as they repel art because it means fixity, Ulfheim and Giuncano despise fixity in life. Nevertheless, as I shall demonstrate, they both realise

that *consistere* is a threatening but at times unavoidable part of the life of any human being. As the bear-hunter explains to Rubek, the worst scenario is to 'be stuck' in a particular situation – or metaphorically speaking – in a particular unchangeable form or attitude:

GODSEIER ULFHEIM. Nei, i førstningen er ingenting slemt. Men så kan en komme til en snevring hvor en hverken vet frem eller tilbake. Og så står en fast, herr professor! Bergfast ... (Ibsen, 2000: 286)

(LANDLORD ULFHEIM. No, at first it is all fine. But then one can come to a passage where one does not know the way forward or back. And then one is at a standstill, Professor! As still as a mountain ...)

Moreover, once again the connection between statuary art and death comes into play: all human beings end their lives in the ultimate form of fixity, namely death itself. Both Ulfheim and Giuncano bear the signs of ageing, but their vitality is still evident thanks to particular features: Giuncano has young eyes and sharp sight; Ulfheim has a powerful voice that we hear even before we see him on stage. There is, however, a considerable difference between them. Ulfheim is not afraid of living his life to the full as long as he has the strength to do so. The bear-hunter is compared to a faun-like monster with goat legs and horns and shares with Pan his wild and natural uninhibited drives: he chases Maja with vehemence and is determined to 'conquer' her. For Ulfheim – who has never been ill – there is no point in being one of the living dead and wasting the life one has left. On the other hand, Giuncano is imprisoned in his old body. He is 'agonising': his vitality is trapped and he feels like a 'vecchia carogna da seppellire, e calarci sopra la terra' (Pirandello, 2004: 637; an old carcass that should be buried and covered with earth). For this reason, though he is in love with Tuda, he rejects any physical contact with her. Unlike Ulfheim, he is progressively becoming 'dead material', like a statue:

GIUNCANO ... tra poco, come loro non mi muoverò più ... Queste mani indurite! Questa faccia! (*S'afferra quasi con schifo il corpo*) Tutta questa forma qua! (ibid. 608)

GIUNCANO ... soon, like them (i.e. the statues) I won't move any more... These hard hands! This face! (*Takes hold of his own body almost with disgust*) All this form!

On the whole, the bear-hunter and the sculptor emerge as the defenders of movement in life, a role that they embrace as a mission. Ulfheim clearly warns Rubek and Irene of the dangers of the path they are following and of the approaching storm. He tries to save them from being 'stuck' and caught in a death-trap. Similarly, throughout the whole Act I, Giuncano

tries to persuade Sirio to give up sculpture and save himself from the dangers of his artistic obsession. However, if they are willing to give advice to save someone who is in a life-threatening situation, Ulfheim and Giuncano are also ready to use any means, even violence, to sweep away anything that threatens to deprive the woman they fall in love with of movement. Ulfheim is prepared to shoot the 'tam rovfugl' (tame crow) watching over Maja: he is ready to 'get rid' of Rubek, should he deny Maja her freedom (Ibsen, 2000: 285).

There is also no doubt that Giuncano is capable of a similar 'animal' force since he *does* kill Sirio at the end. Confusion on this point might well have arisen due to the surprisingly many versions of the ending of *Diana e la Tuda* that have been outlined in critical literature on Pirandello's tragedy. Aldo Borlenghi argues that Sirio kills Tuda strangling her, while Paolucci interprets Sirio's death as an accident (Borlenghi, 1968: 88 & Paolucci, 2002: 102, 109). Bassnett-McGuire on the other hand sees Giuncano's act as the result of the heat of the moment (Bassnett-McGuire, 1983: 115). While the first two interpretations hardly find any grounding in the text, the last one is – in my opinion – improbable. There are elements in the text that from the beginning of Act III indicate that Giuncano is capable of killing, and ready to kill, Sirio. Giuncano is described as 'feroce', wild, as he cannot stand Sirio torturing Tuda for his statue (Pirandello, 2004: 591). Just before the murder, the old sculptor seems to be planning his final revenge against Sirio, as he states:

GIUNCANO (*a Sara*) Andate via! Andate via! Non avete più nulla da fare qua voi! Lasciateci soli. Qui ora si farà giustizia. (ibid. 659)

GIUNCANO (*to Sara*) Go away! Go away! You don't have anything to do here anymore! Leave us alone. Justice will be done here and now.

In other words, Giuncano attacks and deliberately strangles Sirio 'come una belva', like a beast, with his own bare hands, just as Ulfheim wrestles and kills bears (ibid. 660). The old artist's hatred for Sirio has reached its climax, as he has to avenge the 'killing' of two 'living' women for which he holds Sirio responsible: Sirio's mother, 'una donna veramente viva' (a woman who was really alive) who died probably giving birth to Sirio, and Tuda, whom he is progressively 'consuming' (ibid. 610). Yet, by fixing Sirio's life in death, the old sculptor has betrayed his beliefs. In this respect, the blindness that strikes Giuncano immediately after Sirio's murder can be interpreted as a punishment for having betrayed – by killing Sirio – the principle he stands for, movement in life: he has created another statue, the cold corpse of Sirio. The sacrifice of Sirio's life comes too late, since Tuda is already lost and her life cannot be recovered: as she repeats, nothing is left, neither for her or for anybody else. After the murder,

Giuncano is motionlessly uttering the word 'cecità' blindness: he has become yet another victim of Medusa (ibid. 661).

Unlike Giuncano, Ulfheim seems to act in time to 'save' at least Maja. He offers to free her from her entrapment – a four-year long marriage to Rubek – and appears to be granting her freedom and fresh air before she can be petrified in a stagnant life-situation with Rubek. Maja is still full of energy and vitality: she has 'et livfullt ansikt og muntre drillende øyne' (a lively face and cheerful, mischievous eyes) (Ibsen, 2000: 267). However, Beret Wicklund is right to point out that Maja is losing her vitality as her relationship with Rubek is starting to wear her out and 'et anstrøk av tretthet' (a trace of fatigue) has appeared on her face (ibid.). Rubek has failed to give her the dynamic life she wanted and all she can wish for at this point is change and renewal (Wicklund, 1999: 204). As the play ends, having decided to patch up their broken lives, Ulfheim and Maja are seen descending the mountain together towards what might well be the beginning of a new phase of their existences. Whether for Maja her life with Ulfheim will be different from her life with Rubek remains however unclear as the text leaves space for speculation on this matter. Although Ulfheim insists that he has no interest in art, this is most probably not entirely true: he rejects visual art and sculpture in particular but appears to have a fondness for storytelling. As Maja quickly discovers, the bear-hunter's castle is only a fictional construction, which in reality is nothing more than a squalid and derelict cabin: just as Rubek had attracted Maja with his alluring promises, Ulfheim tries to lock her with 'stories'. Ulfheim seems almost on the verge of admitting this to Maja when she asks him whether there are works of art in his castle and he softly replies 'Nei – kunstverker er der riktignok ikke; men –' (No – there are really no works of art; but –) (Ibsen, 2000: 285).

In contrast to Irene, Maja does not get involved in artistic matters: her marriage with the sculptor is a 'game'. Just like Sara in Pirandello's drama, she is the artist's sexual partner and is neither interested in nor allowed to have anything to do with art. However, unlike Sara, Maja is able to read the artist's mind. Rubek is right to notice that Maja is a 'tankeleser' (mind-reader) since she understands him much more than she shows (ibid. 268). She is perfectly aware of her position and is ready to compromise in order to secure the best possible 'deal' for herself and keep her flux of life going. Maja might well be suspicious about Ulfheim's promises of a new life together. Yet, for the time being the bear-hunter's proposition is good enough for her: whatever the future holds, at this precise moment her partnership with Ulfheim allows her to move away from her boring life, stuck with Rubek. For Sara on the other hand to remain in control of her life appears to be a much harder task. The mechanisms working in the artist's mind are beyond her understanding. For this reason, in Bini's view,

Sara fails to comprehend Sirio's real intentions and her own function in his plan (Bini, 1998: 43). When she grasps that she is being exploited, just like Tuda, and that she has been an instrument in Sirio's hands, she leaves repeating 'basta' (Pirandello, 2004: 658; enough). For her this 'game' has gone too far: as she reveals to Giuncano, her vocation in life is that of being the exploiter and not the exploited. Yet, when she leaves the scene, she has no hope of awakening to a new life. The fire of life keeping her in movement has been extinguished and she has become petrified in her evil and cynical attitude. In other words, Sara, just like Maja, gives up on the artist when the circumstances are not convenient anymore. Nevertheless, while Maja is moving with Ulfheim towards what might be her possible new life, Sara is 'stuck' in fixity, like all the other characters in *Diana e la Tuda*.

Conclusions

When the human being meets the statue on stage, all sorts of hybrids and blends between the two of them become possible. It should be clear enough by now that magic has nothing to do with this. Tilgher and Pirandello's notions of *consistere* and *muoversi* should be interpreted metaphorically. The existence of all human beings and of all statues appears as a continuous succession of fixity and movement, according to which of these states has temporarily gained the upper hand. As *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* get closer to the end, the time comes to draw conclusions about the results of the competition between fixity and movement: the outcome of the final struggle turns out to be different in Ibsen's and Pirandello's plays.

In *Når vi døde vågner*, the statue *Oppstandelsens dag* – at the centre of the characters' dialogues – remains unseen. As a matter of fact, the statue is imprisoned in a museum, where the eyes of the characters and of the spectators of the drama cannot reach it. For this reason, while it is given movement by the fictional visitors of the fictional museum, within the drama it remains in fixity. The myth of Pygmalion does not apply to *Oppstandelsens dag*. On the contrary, the legend of statues coming to life works for the statue-like characters. Rubek, Maja, Irene and Ulfheim have all been petrified by the gaze of Medusa before the start of the play, since they appear fixed in a particular attitude: Rubek and Maja are imprisoned in their marriage, Ulfheim is the lonesome bear-hunter and Irene is a 'marble' woman. Yet, in the course of the dramatic action, they all experience an 'awakening' to a new life and the spell of the Gorgon Medusa is reversed. Whether we imagine that Rubek and Irene's relationship as living beings could have lasted in the long run or not, the

avalanche is the only means that can eternalise them in a moment of movement, before fixity has the time to prevail and make them into statues again. Ulfheim and Maja in contrast are the only characters that are still 'moving' as the play ends, descending the mountain in order to start 'et slags menneskeliv' (a kind of life) (Ibsen, 2000: 284). Their 'awakening' does not consist in an individual change, but in their recognition of the common benefits of their being together. Although for the time being they are moving together as hunting companions, they too will most likely encounter a new moment of fixity, because – as Ulfheim explains – beginnings might well be unproblematic, but the risk of remaining 'stuck' increases as one progresses.

In *Diana e la Tuda*, by the end of the tragedy all the characters have become statues. Medusa has looked them all in the eyes and fixed them in a particular form, depriving them of movement: Sirio is dead, Tuda declares herself a nothing, Giuncano is blinded, and Sara is frozen in her evil attitude. Summing up the meaning of the drama's ending, Tilgher states that Pirandello's tragedy ends with the defeat of fixity given that Sirio who – having petrified Tuda's life – is finally strangled by Giuncano (Tilgher 1927: 58). However, in contrast to what the Italian philosopher suggest, *Diana e la Tuda* concludes with the victory of fixity over movement. Sirio, and not Giuncano, has ultimately 'won', since he has managed through his own death to transform everybody into dead motionless material. Paradoxically, the only movement left in the end is that of the statue. In fact, Diana, which remains the only illuminated element on stage, is finally visible and ready to come to life through the eyes of the observers: the myth of Pygmalion has worked, at least for Diana.

At the end of the plays, Ibsen's and Pirandello's characters and statues have reached different imbalances between the categories of *consistere* and *muoversi*. All in all the result of the contest ends up a draw. Yet, as a final remark, let us consider the texts as works of art themselves. We might then come to the conclusion that throughout the dramas – whether they are read or seen as a performance – the real winner is movement. Any reader or spectator of *Når vi døde vågner* and *Diana e la Tuda* can remove these texts from their fixity by looking at them from different perspectives and seeing in them whatever they want, even things that – as Rubek might protest – are not even there.

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