Making one's point of view: Approaching literary analysis and critical theory through David Bowie's "Lady Stardust"

by Pietro Deandrea[1]

ABSTRACT: Some years ago I used a Bowie song, "Lady Stardust", for a warm-up activity at the beginning of a BA course in English Literature focusing on gender issues from the Romantic Age to the present. Resulting from that didactic experiment, this article aims at proposing ways in which Bowie's song and its lyrics can help students approach the interconnections between textual analysis and critical theory (Gender and Cultural Studies) by rooting them into language and social history. Furthermore, through reference to Sound Studies and 'aurality', it also invites the reader to reflect on how music can offer a valuable contribution for approaching literary and cultural studies, involving some pedagogical reflections inspired by Elena Madrussan's recent volume *Formazione e musica: L'ineffabile significante nel quotidiano giovanile* (Mimesis 2021).

KEY WORDS: Bowie; Gender Studies; music and literature; Sound Studies; Cultural Studies; textual analysis

[1] I wish to thank Marta Cariello and Serena Guarracino, for spurring me to put these thoughts on paper; Ivana Trajanoska, for inviting me to speak on "Lady Stardust" at the *Student Musical Spring 2021* at the University American College (Skopje); and RA Henderson, for her constant support.

February 2016: in the aftermath of David Bowie's death, feeling the need to pay him a very personal tribute, I included his song "Lady Stardust" (from his 1972 album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*) in my BA course on English Literature from the Romantic Age to contemporary authors; I presented the song in my first lecture, as a sort of warm-up activity. The course was centred on texts focusing (in varying degrees) on gender issues, namely Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom*, Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*—plus a number of single poems and essays. Resulting from this didactic experiment, this article aims at proposing ways in which Bowie's song and its lyrics can help students broach the interconnections between social history and critical theory (more specifically, Gender and Cultural Studies) by rooting them in textual analysis. Furthermore, my concern is not only with the lyrics: through reference to Sound Studies, in the concluding part of this article, I reflect on how the 'aurality' of music can be pedagogically valuable for approaching literary and cultural studies.

This sound-related aspect was established from the very beginning of my lecture. To start with, I made students listen to "Lady Stardust" twice, through a YouTube video that also showed the full lyrics, thus inviting them to perceive the song as a whole composed of sounds and words. I invite the readers of these pages to do the same, in the event they are not familiar with "Lady Stardust": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9ln_-4zaxg.

That done, I went through each stanza of the song, as follows.

LINES 1-4

People stared
at the makeup on his face
laughed at his long black hair
his animal grace

From the very beginning, my teaching strategy was based on the primacy of the literary text—to be enjoyed and explored as raw material before moving to its social, historical and theoretical suggestions. After all, shouldn't literature courses aim principally to develop students' autonomous skills in making sense of novels, poems and plays? Therefore, I focused on phonetic patterns and on their connection with content. In line 2 the assonance in [ei] between "makeup" and "face" emphasises the target of people's reproaching stare (l. 1) and laughter (l. 3). This is opposed by another pattern reinforcing positive connotations in l. 3, conveying the hair's length through the liquid consonance in [l]; metrically speaking, this happens in the longest line of the stanza, where a cluster of stressed syllables adds emphasis precisely to the "hair" image.

Going back to phonetics, it is noticeable how the rhyme culminates in the positive noun "grace".

This strategy established one point that I particularly wished to drive home with my students: the intricate relationship between form and message in a work of art, the idea that its formal features are not to be seen as cut off from its themes. The writer of children's books Gianni Rodari considered this aspect crucial to stimulating readers' imagination; he claimed that phonetic devices were not simply sources of aural pleasure, and argued for the cognitive function of rhymes (171-173). Personally, I believe that literature courses in academia should fulfil this pedagogical tenet; whenever possible, they should apply close readings that manage, while emphasising the internal workings of texts, to put such texts in dialogue with their historical and local contexts. This approach gestures at Cultural Studies' connections with structuralism via De Saussure, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes (Lutter and Reisenleitner 59-62) and with Cultural Studies' ongoing interest in strategies of textual analysis (Caponi and Vallorani 62-63).[2]

Reflecting on rhymes allowed me to introduce the first of my COURSE LINKS, i.e. anticipations of themes and elements that would reappear later during the course—with the aim of establishing a network of intertextual connections. In this case, the reference was to Romantic poetry: I pointed to the shortness of these lines and to their rhyme pattern ABCB (though the first and third line are a sort of half-rhyme) as typical features of the ballad—a popular, song-like genre which was recovered as an inspirational source during the Romantic period, as a way to make poetry more accessible by tapping its oral roots, as in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (Lamont 413-414). As obvious as it may sound, I think students should often be reminded that poetry is supposed to be read aloud, and that poems and songs are close relatives.

The suggestions offered by the first four lines of "Lady Stardust" were not over yet: I deemed it appropriate to refer to the sociocultural context in which this song was produced. In the late 1960s and early 70s, within a general climate of revolution in customs and morals, David Bowie played a crucial role in bringing to the fore elements of sexual ambiguity. I showed my class the covers of his two 1971 albums preceding *Ziggy Stardust*: the first is *The Man Who Sold the World*, where Bowie languidly lies on a sofa in a woman's dress, in a photo compared to a Pre-Raphaelite painting (Pegg 291-293);[3] the second is *Hunky Dory*, with a close-up of Bowie pulling back his long hair in a Lauren Bacall/Greta Garbo style (Pegg 297-298). At the time, this gender play characterised Bowie's public figure: he was bending gender norms through the adoption of masks under artistic and theatrical influences (Chapman 199),[4] such as his experience with Lindsay Kemp's mime theatre and the new musical genre of glam rock. Incidentally, "Lady Stardust" was originally dedicated to the most important exponent

[2] The underlying importance of Cultural Studies as a critical paradigm for this article is elaborated on in the section "Critical paradigms: Cultural Studies".

[3] The reason this cover was not used for the album's American edition is still being debated by critics.

[4] According to Chapman, Bowie's strategy of assuming personae-masks started precisely with the cover of *The Man Who Sold the World* (199).

of glam rock, Marc Bolan: "[glam's] performers, generally, contradicted rock's accepted 'authenticities' that privileged 'honesty' and conventional masculinity over space-age style and theatricality" (Glen 414; see also Pegg 302). References to theatricality were most appropriate for my move to the next stanza of the song.

LINES 5-8

> *The boy in the bright blue jeans*
> *jumped up on the stage*
> *and Lady Stardust sang his songs*
> *of darkness and disgrace*

Once again, textual analysis was to me the most natural starting point; here, too, lines are replete with phonetic patterns, this time in [b], [dʒ], [ʌ], [s] and [d]. More specifically, the crucial moment when Lady Stardust begins his performance is reinforced by an assonance in [ʌ], while the performance itself is expressed through a consonance in [s] mixed with, and jarring with, a harder consonance in [d] which might be seen as emphasising the "darkness and disgrace" of the content of "his songs".

Further contextual elements offered themselves in connection with this stanza. Firstly, in ll. 5-7 gender bending becomes explicit thanks to "boy", "Lady" and "his". As Peri Bradley and James Page write, Bowie and his personae were "bringing about a gradual but unstoppable transformation in the criteria for gender performance" (590). Such an undermining of dominant binarisms would be further epitomised in the movie *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), where the protagonist T.J. Newton (played by Bowie) is an alien whose body is non-gendered, without male and female sexual parts (Lobalzo Wright 233, 237; see also October 246). This prompted my second COURSE LINK, this time in relation to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) where she imagines the androgynous mind as capable of facilitating artistic creation, as

> resonant and porous […] it transmits emotion without impediment […] it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. In fact one goes back to Shakespeare's mind as the type of androgynous, of the man-womanly mind. (Woolf 128-129)

Widely regarded as "the first modern primer for feminist literary criticism" (Goldman 97),[5] *A Room* has often been accosted to Woolf 's 1928 novel *Orlando* (Hussey 236), whose eponymous protagonist, too, goes through gender-bending metamorphoses.[6]

Secondly, Lady Stardust's gender fluidity coincides with the start of the stage performance: according to Patrick Glen, "Bowie illustrated that the performance of

[5] On the canonical nature of this text for feminist criticism, including the concept of androgyny, see Hussey 237-238 and Marcus 225-241.

[6] In Marcus's view *Orlando*, "whose writing was intertwined with that of *A Room of One's Own*, […] exposes the sexual nature of the ostensibly sex-transcendent 'androgyny' that has fuelled so much debate in Woolf's criticism" (222).

gender and sexual orientation is mimetic rather than a pre-discursive certainty" (414); here one can detect the influence of Lindsay Kemp and of his "approach to continuously performed identities" (412). Quite naturally, I was drawn to another COURSE LINK, since the recourse to performed identities may be traced back to a tradition of literary masks that my course would repeatedly encounter: Robert Browning's Victorian poems known as dramatic monologues, where he gave voice to historical characters speaking their minds (Bertinetti 213); Virginia Woolf's employment of "shifting narrative personae" in, again, *A Room of One's Own* (Goldman 97); and contemporary poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy, whose collection *The World's Wife* (1999) exhibits a gallery of fictional and historical women voicing their gender view on their partners, as in "Mrs. Icarus": "I'm not the first or the last / to stand on a hillock, / watching the man she married / prove to the world / he's a total, utter, absolute, Grade A pillock" (128).

Thirdly, gender bending allowed me to broach critical theory and the idea of gender, slowly established from the 1960s thanks to second-wave feminism, as a concept going beyond biological essentialism, that is to say sexual difference as a discursive construct (Pasolini 89-90). Inevitably, leaping over to the 1990s, I broached Judith Butler's work and her concept of identity as "a kind of impersonation […] of imitation for which there is no original" (Barry 147). I also deemed important to mention Butler's seminal *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), where gender is posited as a role to be performed and interpreted, sometimes against the opposing performativity of dominant discourses that stylise and congeal (through repetition) an apparently normative 'sex'. In this perspective, drag and transvestitism become subversive and liberating, through their unveiling of the constructed and performative nature of gender and of normative heterosexuality. Those who do not conform to the regulatory norms can be punished by society (Pasolini 94-95), as in the case of the threats and abuse received by Bowie and his fans in the early 1970s (Bradley and Page 590).

I was then led to the fourth aspect suggested by lines 5-8, embodied in the phrase "darkness and disgrace". Going back in time, I presented an overview of the norms that people such as Lady Stardust had to stand against. In the years immediately following the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act (which allowed private homosexual acts among those over 21), Britain lived through a period where new spaces for transgression were constantly vying with conservative control, as shown by Glen's apt research into the music press. Bowie is often considered "responsible for opening up questions of sexual identity which had previously been repressed, ignored or merely hinted at in rock and youth culture" (Hebdige 61-63, qtd. in Glen 409). Some steps he took in this direction have been widely commented on: in 1964 he appeared on BBC to claim men's right to long hair (Glen 412), which takes us back to the "long hair" mentioned in line 3;[7] in January 1972 he declared himself

[7] This is one thing today's students should be reminded of, for the sake of proper contextualisation: how negatively men with long hair were perceived by public opinion, and not only in Britain. In his autobiography, French musician and actor Jan Sarrus (member of the band and comic group Les Charlots) remembers the daily terrors he had to undergo around 1965, for some culminating in "la tonte en pleine rue", "the shearing in the middle of the street" (Sarrus 46, trans. mine).

homosexual in a historic interview for *Melody Maker*, the first person to do so openly (Watts 9; see also: Pegg 306-309, Glen 414); finally, critics often describe at length the July 1972 performance of "Starman" at BBC's *Top of the Pops*: "My jaw dropped as I watched this orange-haired creature in a catsuit limp-wristedly put his arm around Mick Ronson's shoulder" (Critchley 9-10).

The other side of this process of cultural change is represented by the repressiveness of norms which culminated in the hostile reception of some Bowie concerts in the U.S. In the song, it is alluded to not only by "darkness and disgrace", but also by the markedly melancholic tone of "Lady Stardust" as a whole (Pegg 129). The repression historically operated by normative structures led to numerous COURSE LINKS, since we were going to read passages from works such as Mary Wollstonecraft's pioneer feminist pamphlet *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), where women's condition is compared to slaves' and the author's enlightened belief in improvable reason prompts a call for equality in education as a necessary starting point for the betterment of both women's condition and social relations at large (Wollstonecraft 167; Poovey 344); Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" (1842) and its description of patriarchal violence against non-submissive wives; Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and the proto-feminist spirit of its protagonist, elevated to a "feminist classic" by many gender theorists in the 1970s (Newman 454); Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), with its Ibo pre-colonial society based on strict gender divisions and on the silencing of women's voices, as poignantly argued by Florence Stratton's feminist reading of this anti-colonial classic (Stratton 22-38); and the witch-hunts in 17th-century England as performed in Caryl Churchill's play *Vinegar Tom* (1976), where old unmarried women were persecuted because of their non-conforming status and attitude, and even more so when their social role was based on grassroots medical lore which was seen as a menace by institutionalised medicine (Deandrea 29).

LINES 9-15 (CHORUS)

> *And he was alright,*
> *the band was all together.*
> *Yes he was alright,*
> *the song went on forever,*
> *and he was awful nice*
> *really quite outta sight*
> *(*[2nd time]: *really quite paradise)*
> *and he sang, all night long*

Thanks to the building up of words such as "alright", "altogether", "forever" and "paradise", the stage performance narrated here is suggestive of a utopian dimension which connotes a potential for change. Bowie himself once declared in an interview that he made up Ziggy Stardust out of a wish to create "alternative worlds" (Shaw). In this case, the COURSE LINK was constituted by Christina Rossetti's other-dimensional,

dream-like world in her long poem *Goblin Market* (1862), which imagined forms of sexuality not necessarily heterosexual (Hay 163-168).

Just as Rossetti's fairy world might be at once exhilarating and dangerous, here too some expressions may be seen as double-edged: "awful nice" and "outta sight" represent optimistic enthusiasm as Americanisms (Pegg 129), but if taken literally might be interpreted as references to rejection ("awful") and social constraints ("out of sight"). Enmeshed in the difficulties involving gender bending, Lady Stardust's performance cannot help being poised between celebration and lament. These meditations led to commenting upon one typical trait of Bowie's language, that is to say its recourse to allusion and ambiguity—which may be taken as the linguistic equivalent of his gender bending. As Richard Fitch writes, "the key to understanding the attraction of Bowie's work for the intellectually and culturally curious lies in his playful manipulation of allusion" (20). My main teaching purpose here was to present polysemy, ambiguity, allusion and covert meanings as a core element of literature and literary analysis—and Bowie's lyrics offered me an invaluable chance to do so.

LINES 16-19

> *Femme fatales emerged from shadows*
> *to watch this creature fair,*
> *boys stood upon their chairs*
> *to make their point of view*

The emergence "from shadows" extends the previous sub-textual interpretation of "outta sight" as exemplifying social marginalisation. Nevertheless, in lines 16-17, it is Lady Stardust's outstanding appearance that is brought to the fore, thanks to the alliteration on [f] culminating in "fair": his/her mesmerising otherness is further reinforced by the inversion in "creature fair" and the French-origin expression at the beginning of this stanza.

Another instance of polysemy is noticeable in line 19: beside its literal meaning, "their point of view" carries metaphorical significance, such as developing one's own true self, one's identity, which may imply not conforming to the expectations of mainstream norms. It is noteworthy that many critics tend to emphasise this one aspect of Bowie's influence on people's lives, including theirs (and my own): the way in which his oeuvre has acted as a liberating, enriching force, going well beyond sexual liberation. Bradley and Page see in Bowie's influence on gender identity the epitome of a wider resistance to cultural regulation:

> Bowie signifies a radical and liminal fissure, where meaning becomes fluid and able to elide boundaries and restrictions […] instrumental in widening the possibilities for multi-faceted and fragmented identities for everyone. (583, 586)

In the heartfelt tone typical of many Bowie fans, philosopher Simon Critchley states:

> There is a world of people for whom Bowie was the being who permitted a powerful emotional connection and freed them to become some other kind of self, something freer, more queer, more honest, more open, more exciting […] Millions of self-conscious mini-Hamlets living out their loveless hells in scattered, sundry hamlets, towns and cities. (17, 30)

Similarly, Sean Redmond writes that Bowie "allowed me to create a mobile version of myself" (381). More generally, isn't this what many people expect from literature, and envision as literature's main function—to help students and readers' perspectives open up, to widen their horizons? And here a COURSE LINK offered itself in the shape of an excerpt from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's long narrative poem *Aurora Leigh* (1856), where literature does become a means of liberation and self-achievement for the eponymous protagonist. Educated on a stifling Victorian "score of books on womanhood" (12, ll. I.427), Aurora then discovers the real joys of literature:

> We get no good
> By being ungenerous, even to a book,
> And calculating profits… so much help
> By so much reading. It is rather when
> We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge
> Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
> Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth–
> 'Tis then we get the right good from a book. (20; ll. I, 702-709)

This will be the starting point for Aurora's vocation, for the conquest of her right to write, "closely connected with every wider choice that women might wish to make" (Kaplan 9).

LINES 20-25

> *I smiled sadly*
> *for a love I could not obey*
> *Lady Stardust sang his songs*
> *of darkness and dismay*
>
> *CHORUS*
>
> *Oh, how I sighed,*
> *when they asked me if I knew his name*

Phonetically, these lines contain further contrasting patterns of sibilant sounds (associated to the song's 'narrator' and to Lady Stardust's impassionate singing) vs. harder sounds, such as the alliteration between "darkness" and "dismay" which reinforces the gloomy meaning of the two words.

However, rather than in phonetics (a facet of literature I had already tapped into, at this point of my class), these lines are most significant in their intertextual richness. "A love I could not obey" was commented on by critics as an implicit allusion to Lord Alfred Douglas's description of his love for Oscar Wilde—"I am the love that dare not speak its name", from his 1892 poem "Two Loves" (Pegg 129; Donadio 194). Thus, I was given a chance to touch not only upon the idea of literary intertextuality as a fertile dialogue between texts, but also on another trait shared by Bowie and literature, i.e., his Wildean employment of masks and poses, which may be compared to the role of characters in fiction.

With regard to this, Pierpaolo Martino considers Wilde a foundational figure for Bowie's poetics of inauthenticity (*Filosofia* 17-37).[8] In the song, Wilde's unfortunate experience resonates with the punishment and/or exclusion meted out by laws and rules towards non-normative gender behaviour, with the "darkness and dismay" that Lady Stardust sings of. The final line of the song, recalling the episode in the Gospels where St. Peter denies Jesus, is likely to be seen in relation to pessimistic thoughts around the love that cannot be mentioned.

In spite of these despondent aspects, the "sigh" concluding the song (where, phonetically, the sibilant pattern triumphs) remains open to contrasting interpretations, at once suggesting heartfelt longing and sheer sadness. Bowie's emphatic singing of this line expresses both feelings, embodying its ambiguity—as Critchley aptly notes, "Bowie's genius lies in the meticulous matching of mood with music through the medium of the voice" (33).

CRITICAL PARADIGMS: CULTURAL STUDIES

Once I had completed the analysis of the song with all its textual, contextual and literary implications, I opened up my teaching frame in order to show students what we had been doing from the perspective of critical theory. The mention of the post-war emergence of 'mass culture' and of the birth of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in 1964 was a way to point to something that students might take for granted today: the importance of valuing 'marginal' and popular forms of culture as objects of study, alongside literature and 'high' culture in general. I felt that the lesson we were about to finish—placing Bowie alongside literature and critical theory and seeing all of them as mutually illuminating—should be seen as embodying the way in which Cultural Studies reject the idea of hierarchy among forms of culture and research fields. Moreover, Bowie's gender bending constitutes a telling example of an idea characterising Music Studies' and Cultural Studies' interest in the so-called subcultures: how music can undermine dominant ideologies, reconfiguring power relations. Finally, this class on "Lady Stardust" could be framed in

[8] Martino magnifies this Wilde-Bowie connection through an apt analysis of Todd Haynes's 1998 film *Velvet Goldmine*, which magically envisions Wilde as the true father of glam rock (*Filosofia* 20, 32).

the constant and deep interest of Cultural Studies in issues around education and the function of teaching, teachers and academics (Vallorani 27-32).

CONCLUSION: THE SPECIFICITY OF SOUND

> *Sound […] sends the body moving,*
> *the mind dreaming, the air oscillating.*
> (LaBelle 468)

When I started that course with a full class on Bowie, I was consciously aiming at training my students to strengthen their skills at textual analysis (phonetics, rhyme, metre, genre, polysemy and allusion, intertextuality among literary works and artistic fields, function of characters), at connecting text and context, and at reflecting on critical theory (queer theory, cultural studies).[9]

Due to the bizarre working of memory, today I am not so certain that I managed to expand on all the aspects mentioned in these pages. However, there is one thing I am certain of: at the time, my reflections focused exclusively on the *lyrics* of "Lady Stardust"—that is to say, on its words, as if the song (and music in general) were reducible to its linguistic aspects. In consequence, after that class I have been pondering on how a literature course could further benefit from the inclusion of songs and music, turning to that area of Cultural Studies known as Sound Studies or "aurality", which concentrates on the practice of listening that generates knowledge (Chiriacò 144-154). More specifically, I was spurred by pedagogist Elena Madrussan's recent volume *Formazione e musica* (2021), centred on how one's musical experience can contribute to the relationship between subject and world. When considering the practice of listening to music as a textual, social but also acoustic event, Madrussan sees its implications as an ineffable and subjective aesthetic experience going beyond materiality and rationality (17, 23, 81),[10] and providing a gateway toward self-knowledge (24-25, 94-95).

This process transcends everyday reality, but does not necessarily elude it—on the contrary, it can enrich reality with significance (101-102). Nicola Laieta similarly describes it as "una sospensione di sé, un'assenza necessaria al proprio ruolo nel reale, essenziale per rigenerare le energie e affrontare la complessità della realtà" (46).[11] Madrussan compares it to what Roland Barthes defined (in his *La chambre claire*, 1980, in relation to photography) as "punctum": something in a work of art that strikes us through surprise and unexpectedness (86). Redmond, too, describes his listening to

[9] For a wider perspective on the elaborate connections between music and literature, see Martino, "Introduzione".

[10] On music as an iconic language exceeding words and systematising attempts, see also Martino, "Introduzione" 10. LaBelle writes that "sound embeds itself in the creation of meanings, while remaining elusive to their significations" (474).

[11] Laieta's pages are included in a collection of contributions which try to answer the editors' call: "potresti scegliere una canzone che per te intercetti un tratto essenziale del tuo modo di intendere e fare educazione, di insegnare e di formare?" (Cappa and Villa 12).

Bowie as follows: "I felt immobilised, enraptured, cut free from the physical and psychological limitations of place, space and body, and I was exhilarated as a consequence" (381). On these perceptual foundations, listening to music can trigger a process of knowledge, insofar as the surprise and the pleasure generated by the act of listening can be channelled towards impassioned interest, further research, cultural experiences, thus producing knowledge rooted in the subject more solidly and emotionally (Madrussan 109).

From a pedagogical perspective, this practice represents an informal kind of education which is usually (and unproductively) not included in formal teaching (46): Madrussan aptly argues that education in general needs spaces where these informal ways of producing knowledge, rooted in real life and deeply-felt interests, might merge with formal educational structures and practices (92). In other words, society needs educators who can valorise and activate these multiple circuits of signification.

Even though I was not aware of this at the time, I like to think that I was attempting something of the sort when I included Bowie in my course: to enrich the reach and significance of formal literary education with the subjective, ineffable and informal experience triggered by listening to music. And by listening, for example, to the melancholic vein running throughout "Lady Stardust" (including the triumphant lyrics of the chorus), enhanced by Bowie's voice and Mick Ronson's poignant piano. Thus, if my introductory class on "Lady Stardust" succeeded in achieving this goal, even partially, my initial definition of "warm-up activity" will have been proved to be reductive.

WORKS CITED

Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. *Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*. 1856. Penguin Classics, 2006.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 4th ed., Manchester University Press, 2017.

Bertinetti, Paolo. *English Literature: A Short History*. Einaudi, 2010.

Bowie, David. *The Man Who Sold the World*. Mercury, 1971.

---. *Hunky Dory*. RCA, 1971.

---. *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. RCA, 1972.

---. "Lady Stardust." www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9ln_-4zaxg. Accessed 21 Jul. 2021.

Bradley, Peri, and James Page. "David Bowie—The Trans Who Fell to Earth: Cultural Regulation, Bowie and Gender Fluidity." *Continuum*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2017, pp. 583-595.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.

---. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, 1993.

Caponi, Paolo, and Nicoletta Vallorani. "La chiave del discorso: Le pratiche discorsive, la letteratura e il tempo." *Introduzione ai Cultural Studies: UK, USA e paesi anglofoni*, edited by Nicoletta Vallorani, Carocci, 2016, pp. 47-66.

Cappa, Francesco, and Angelo Villa. "Premessa." *Nel segno di una canzone: Autobiografie musicali e formazione di sé*, edited by Francesco Cappa and Angelo Villa, Mimesis, 2021, pp. 11-13.

Chapman, Ian. "Authorship, Agency and Visual Analysis: Reading (some) Bowie Album Covers." *David Bowie: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Eoin Devereux *et al.*, Routledge, 2015, pp. 196-214.

Chiriacò, Gianpaolo. "*Around the sound*: Paesaggi e prospettive tra etnomusicologia e studi culturali." *Introduzione ai Cultural Studies: UK, USA e paesi anglofoni*, edited by Nicoletta Vallorani, Carocci, 2016, pp. 143-159.

Critchley, Simon. *On Bowie*. 2014. Serpents Tail, 2016.

Deandrea, Pietro. "Introduzione a *Gatto Vinagro*." Caryl Churchill, *Teatro V*, edited by Paola Bono, Editoria & Spettacolo, 2018, pp. 24-32.

Donadio, Francesco. *David Bowie, Fantastic Voyage: testi commentati*. 2013. 2nd ed., Arcana, 2016.

Duffy, Carol Ann. *La moglie del mondo*. Translated by Giorgia Sensi and Andrea Sirotti, Le Lettere, 2002.

Ferguson, Moira. "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Problematic of Slavery." *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Wollstonecraft*, edited by Maria J. Falco, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, pp. 125-147.

Fitch, Richard. "In This Age of Grand Allusion: Bowie, Nihilism and Meaning." *David Bowie: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Eoin Devereux *et al.*, Routledge, 2015, pp. 19-34.

Glen, Patrick. "*Oh, You Pretty Thing*: How David Bowie 'Unlocked Everybody's Inner Queen' in Spite of the Music Press." *Contemporary British History*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2017, pp. 407-429.

Goldman, Jane. *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Hay, Jonathan. "Queer Victorian Identities in *Goblin Market* (1862) and *In Memoriam* (1850): Uncovering the Subversive Undercurrents of the Literary Canon." *Exclamation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, no. 2, 2018, pp. 149-172.

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Routledge, 1979.

Hussey, Mark. *Virginia Woolf A to Z: A Comprehensive Reference for Students, Teachers and Common Readers to her Life, Work and Critical Reception*. Facts on file, 1995.

Kaplan, Cora. "Introduction." *Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, The Women's Press, 1978, pp. 5-36.

LaBelle, Brandon. "Auditory Relations." *The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, Routledge, 2012, pp. 468-474.

Laieta, Nicola. "CSI: In viaggio." *Nel segno di una canzone: Autobiografie musicali e formazione di sé*, edited by Francesco Cappa and Angelo Villa, Mimesis, 2021, pp. 45-54.

Lamont, Claire. "Ballads." *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832*, edited by Iain McCalman *et al.*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 413-414.

Lobalzo Wright, Julie. "David Bowie: The Extraordinary Rock Star as Film Star." *David Bowie: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Eoin Devereux *et al*., Routledge, 2015, pp. 230-244.

Lutter, Christina, and Markus Reisenleitner. *Cultural Studies: Un'introduzione*, edited by Michele Cometa, 2002, Bruno Mondadori, 2004.

Madrussan, Elena. *Formazione e musica: L'ineffabile significante nel quotidiano giovanile*. Mimesis, 2021.

Marcus, Laura. "Woolf's Feminism and Feminism's Woolf." *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, edited by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, Cambridge University Press, pp. 209-244.

Martino, Pierpaolo. "Introduzione: Note sui rapporti tra letteratura e musica in ambito anglofono." *Words and Music: Studi sui rapporti tra letteratura e musica in ambito anglofono*, edited by Pierpaolo Martino, Armando, 2015, pp. 7-23.

---. *La filosofia di David Bowie: Wilde, Kemp e la musica come teatro*. Mimesis, 2016.

Newman, Beth. "A Critical History of *Jane Eyre*." *Jane Eyre: Complete Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, by Charlotte Bronte, edited by Beth Newman, Bedford, 1996, pp. 445-458.

October, Dene. "The (becoming wo-)Man Who Fell to Earth." *David Bowie: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Eoin Devereux *et al*., Routledge, 2015, pp. 245-262.

Pasolini, Anna. "Gender Studies e cultura." *Introduzione ai Cultural Studies: UK, USA e paesi anglofoni*, edited by Nicoletta Vallorani, Carocci, 2016, pp. 87-103.

Pegg, Nicholas. *The Complete Bowie*. 2004. 2nd ed., Arcana, 2005.

Poovey, Mary. "The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer". *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, the Wollstonecraft Debate, Criticism*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, edited by Carol H. Poston, Norton, 1988 [1984], pp. 343-355.

Redmond, Sean. "Who Am I Now? Remembering the Enchanted Dogs of David Bowie." *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2013, pp. 380-383.

Rodari, Gianni. *Grammatica della fantasia: Introduzione all'arte di inventare storie*. 1973. Einaudi, 2010.

Sarrus, Jean. *100% Charlots: Autobiographie*. Éditions Ramsay, 2004.

Shaw, Des, producer. "David Bowie: Verbatim." *Seriously…*, BBC Radio Four, 30/1/2016 (h. 20.00), bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1WR4VJROdbQgGnrpPpLHKqR/david-bowie-in-his-own-words. Accessed 7 Dec. 2017.

Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. Routledge, 1994.

Vallorani, Nicoletta. "Cultural Studies: Istruzioni per l'uso." *Introduzione ai Cultural Studies: UK, USA e paesi anglofoni*, edited by Nicoletta Vallorani, Carocci, 2016, pp. 25-46.

Watts, Michael. "Oh You Pretty Thing (Interview with David Bowie)." *Melody Maker* (UK) 22 Jan. 1972, in *Bowie on Bowie*, edited by Sean Egan, Souvenir Press, 2015, pp. 5-11.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 7th ed., edited by M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt, Norton, 2000, pp. 166-192.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. 1929 and 1938. Oxford World's Classics, 1992.

Pietro Deandrea is Associate Professor in English and Postcolonial Literature at the University of Torino, Italy. His monographs are *Fertile Crossings: Metamorphoses of Genre in Anglophone West African Literatures* (Rodopi 2002) and *New Slaveries in Contemporary British Literature and Visual Arts: The Ghost and the Camp* (Manchester UP 2015). He also teaches courses on literary translation, and has translated fiction, poetry and drama, including writers such as William Shakespeare, Moniza Alvi, William Beckford, André Brink, Ethan Coen, John Graham Davies, Buchi Emecheta and Abi Morgan.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5584-8450

pietro.deandrea@unito.it

Deandrea, Pietro. "Making one's point of view: Approaching literary analysis and critical theory through David Bowie's 'Lady Stardust'." *Altre Modernità*, n. 27, *Emergenza, sperimentazione, programmazione: didattica ibrida e collaborativa nel sistema universitario*, Maggio 2022, pp. 225-238. ISSN 2035-7680. Disponibile all'indirizzo: <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/AMonline/article/view/17891>.
Ricevuto: 23/07/2021 Approvato: 20/03/2022
DOI: https://doi.org/10.54103/2035-7680/17891