

FRANCO BUFFONI *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp. 19-25

INTO THE WILD: RIFLESSIONI E ANALOGIE

Christopher Johnson McCandless, alias Alexander Supertramp, like St. Francis leaves his father and his values. Alaska like The Marmore Fall. The bear with Chris like the wolf with Francis. But Francis had a strong ideology to support his rebellion, while Chris has just his love for the wild: too little to save him. Only Art is able to transform such rebellions into everlasting memories. Francis – writing his *Cantico dei Cantici* – invents Italian poetry. On the contrary Chris is able to write just his notes in his student-book. Happily two artists – Jon Krakauer and Sean Penn – succeed in turning his sacrifice into art.

JO ANNA ISAAK *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.27-44

MAN IN THE OPEN AIR: THE ROLE OF WRITERS AND ARTISTS IN THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Walt Whitman asserted that what was unique about the artists of his age was their connection with the land: “never before have we had man in the open air.” He felt that an art expressive of American identity had to come from the land itself: “The future spirit of our art must be inherently vast like our western plain, majestic like our forests, generous like our rivers.” From the age of Manifest Destiny to the age of global warming, artists who have engaged with the land have played an important role in shaping attitudes towards nature and in influencing environmental and social policies. This essay offers a brief sketch of the role played by artists and writers in the American environmental movement from the nineteenth century to the contemporary period.

America’s cultural coming of age in the nineteenth century coincided with its growing interest in, and concern for, the wilderness and the environment; the two movements developed in tandem and formed a mutually supportive relationship. The connection between art and the land has been reformed in different ways at different times. In the 1960s, a group of urban artists began taking their art practice out of the museums or galleries and into the landscape to make art in and with the land—art that became known as Earthworks. The engagement of these artists *with* the land led them, as it had their nineteenth-century counterparts, to a concern for the environmental damage that was being done *to* the land. Many contemporary artists, following this trajectory, are not just pointing out problems (as in the long tradition of photographers, painters, writers, and documentary filmmakers who have engaged in raising awareness and broadening public concern for environmental, social, and human-rights issues) they have made it their job to come up with imaginative yet workable solutions. In doing so, they are discovering the importance of their role in the stewardship of the environment.

ROBERTO BARONTI MARCHIÒ *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.55-76

“NATURA SELVAGGIA” TRA WILDERNESS E WASTELAND

This paper briefly retraces the idea of wild nature as it has developed in human history, starting from the Romantic sublime which still affects our perception of wilderness. However, this idea was modified when it encountered a typically American concept with great emotional and transformative force: the frontier. The Wild West is the place one travels to in order to leave behind the problems and contradictions of the modern world, looking for relief from our inner unrest and anxieties. Indeed, going westwards means nurturing our spirit and rekindling our desire for an authentic life, because a journey in the wilderness is always a voyage of self-discovery, renewal and transformation. It is the place of freedom in which we can recover our true self lost while living our artificial and alienated

life. In this context the authenticity and purity of wild nature is the last shelter from the corruption and artificiality of our soulless society.

The last part of the paper focuses on post-industrial ruins, abandoned urban areas and ghost-cities which, besides giving substance to the current anxieties surrounding our late capitalism, can be considered as contemporary forms of wilderness in which nature paradoxically becomes wild again and thrives.

CARLA RIVIELLO *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.79-100

LA “NATURA SELVAGGIA” NELLA POESIA IN ANTICO INGLESE: DALLA DESCRIZIONE DEL VISIBILE ALLA RAPPRESENTAZIONE DEL SENSIBILE

Old English poetic descriptions of “wild nature” are often descriptions of places where the exile lives in loneliness and feels physical and psychological pains. The “elsewhere” coincides with a realistic wintry North-European landscape characterized by unpleasant sensory perceptions as darkness and cold, that in turn evoke unpleasant emotions such as sorrow, anxiety, grief; the “elsewhere” is a place of absence, of loss, without light and heat, without the joy and harmony of social life. These complex representations use topoi, that are also shared in classical and medieval Latin tradition; Old English poetry shows indeed a complex semantic layering as a result of the complex cultural stratification of the society in which it is grounded. Analyzing some different poems – such as *Beowulf*, *Andreas*, *Wanderer*, *Seafarer*, *Menologium*, *Salomon* and *Saturn II* – this study aims to demonstrate how different modes of representation of this theme reveal in each poem a different degree of originality

SAVERIO TOMAIUOLO *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.103-123

CONRAD E LA NATURA SELVAGGIA: LO SCRITTORE COME ANTROPOLOGO IN *HEART OF DARKNESS*

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a groundbreaking text not only from a stylistic and narrative point of view, but also because of its peculiar way of treating the “wild” and “dark” Africa, which is very different from the one conveyed by traditional travel narratives, by late-Victorian ethnographic studies and by “exotic” romances. The connection between the human and the natural landscape represents a fundamental element in order to study the novelty of Conrad's text, since Africa is described by him as a place defaced by Western colonial exploitation (specifically by the Belgian monarchy) and as very different from the myth of the uncontaminated lands. In this respect, Conrad anticipates the opinions of anthropologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss, who in *Tristes Tropiques* reflected on the impossibility to perceive in a “pure” way the territories he visited (as well as the people he met during his fieldworks), because these places had already come in contact with Western civilisation. More than any other anthropologist, Bronisław Malinowski has been associated to Conrad. The distinctive mark that Conrad and Malinowski share regarding the relationship with the (colonial) other is represented by the perennial oscillation between here (the places to which one belongs) and beyond (the unexplored places), and by the resulting dismantling of the ontological certainties that have been given for granted. As such, *Heart of Darkness* suggested, and continues to suggest, that it is the advanced West that identifies the real dark and unexplored lands.

AMEDEO DI FRANCESCO *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.125-144

PUSZTA: PER UNA VISIONE SELVAGGIA DEL PAESAGGIO UNGHERESE

The Hungarian puszta is synonymous with wildness. But it is also a site of memory where feelings of nostalgia and melancholia always take place. The world depicted in the novels of Gyula Krúdy (1878-1933) and Zsigmond Móricz (1879-1942) is partially real, and partially an imaginary vision which reflects an emotional relationship with the country. A typical character of this landscape is the betyár, a highwayman usually hidden in the reed thickets and cast out of normal society not only because of his outlaw condition, but also or particularly because of his wildness.

NICOLA BOTTIGLIERI *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.147-161

FERITE, DISCARICHE, FOSSE COMUNI E ALTRI LUOGHI SCELLERATI

Both in Greek mythology and the Bible the wounds inflicted to heroes (Prometheus), centaurs (Chiron) and Nature (Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) suggest a sacrilegious rift caused on Nature. Also, the furrow dugged by the plough can be compared to an injury inflicted to land, a violence anticipating the practice of writing and by extension – according to Lacan – the production of human language.

The fierce modernity of the last century has provoked purulent wounds hiding murders (mass graves) and, at the same time, exhibiting their rottenness through landfills, the uncanny space of the urban fabric. According to Zigmunt Bauman, landfills provide a model of language to epochal phenomena such as migrations. Men running away from Africa, pushed by desertification to the liquid landfill of the Mediterranean where they often drown or are recycled when they manage to disembark, are the metaphor of the disposal of urban waste.

VINCENZO SALERNO *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.163-172

NÓSTOS, ÁLGOS. NOSTALGIA DI ERMANNIO REA

Nostalgia is the last book – published posthumously – by Ermanno Rea. It should be read as the ultimate ‘chapter’ of the literary trilogy of «returns and farewells», dedicated to Naples and composed of three books: *Mistero napoletano*, *La dismissione* and *Napoli ferrovia*. Naples is, unquestionably, the most recurrent geographical and literary *topos* in the narrative prose of Rea from which the writer – as with all the novels of the so called Neapolitan trilogy – cannot disregard the typification of ‘Nature’ in the narrative space and, at the same time, of the characters that populate it. It is ‘nostalgia’ – referring to the first Greek etymology of the word, synthesis of *nóstos*, ‘return’ to a geographical place and *álgos*, ‘pain’ due to the distance from that place – the sentiment that leads the protagonist Felice Lasco back to his birth-city, even in the most derelict part of its urban areas, the *Rione Sanità*. Therefore, the definition of Nostalgia characters cannot escape the nefarious influence of the ‘spatial’ context drawn down among the narrow spaces of the neighbourhood: it is a vertical geographic layout, a natural tension between sea and hills, made up of narrow streets, ancient buildings and crumbling; the subsoil of steep stairs, of «hypogea, altars, carved sepulchres». It is probably only a name, a *flatus vocis*, an imaginary place – one of the many «unknown and wonderful» Neapolitan sites – wrapped in a cloud of mystery. *La Sanità* is the «tragic and violent» scenario in the history of two different «natures», inseparably linked in their tragic destiny.

MARZIA BIANCHI *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.175-180

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE RELIEF. REPORTAGE FROM LESVOS ISLAND

Nell'agosto del 2016 sono partita per l'isola di Lesbo spinta dalla necessità di capire cosa stesse accadendo sulle coste Europee.

Ho deciso di viaggiare senza fotocamera perché sono convinta che alcune situazioni vadano prima comprese e rispettate e poi fotografate. Le poche immagini realizzate sono state realizzate grazie ad uno smartphone pubblicate in seguito dal blog *Zeroviolenza.it* a corredo di alcuni editoriali. Scatti di una ricerca che si sta trasformando in un progetto molto più ampio.

Con persone da tutto il mondo, abbiamo camminato fino alla punta estrema a Nord dell'isola e pulito le spiagge. Calette sperdute diventate veri e propri cimiteri di giubbotti ed effetti personali. Mondare le spiagge, raccogliere quei giubbotti, i gommoni e i detriti dei naufragi dei profughi per trasformarli in qualcosa di "mondo", puro, pulito. L'ONG che si occupa di rendere accettabile il passaggio di queste persone, agli occhi dei residenti, si chiama Lighthouse Relief e "crea" borse, portafogli e piccoli oggetti utilizzando proprio questi materiali e vendendoli simbolicamente ai propri sostenitori. Finanziano così le attività e lasciano questi oggetti artigianali ad uso dei profughi nei campi. Come diceva Chomsky, la natura umana migliore ci spinge a "creare", non a distruggere.

La natura umana non è così diversa dalla natura selvaggia deturpata. Questo è il bivio della "natura umana" che racconto con le foto e che ho visto laggiù, ma che se solo ognuno decidesse di vedere, troverebbe dietro casa. Chiamiamo il nostro pianeta Mondo, da "mundum" che vuol dire 'puro, pulito'. La nostra generazione però ha trovato un mondo sporco e credo stia a noi pulire una piccola parte, tentare di riportare le cose alla loro natura, al "selvaggio".

CRISTIANA PUGLIESE *Trame di letteratura comparata* 1 (2017), pp.189-205

NO SAFE HOUSE: HOMES, HOUSES AND THEIR PEOPLE IN *SAVE THE REAPER* BY ALICE MUNRO

Nei racconti di Alice Munro la casa non è semplicemente un'ambientazione, ma un luogo altamente simbolico. Il far visita o ricevere visite, siano queste gradite o sgradite, desiderate o indesiderate, indica sempre un momento di importanza cruciale nello sviluppo della trama e dei personaggi. Il contributo prende in esame la funzione delle dimore e dei personaggi che le abitano o le visitano in *Save the Reaper*, uno dei racconti più ricchi e complessi dell'opera della scrittrice.