

Abstracts

Anna Antonello, *The Chronicle of a Battle. German Literature in the Italian Literary Field through magazines (1945-1968)*

Based on the results of the examination of sixteen Italian cultural magazines published between 1945 and 1968, the paper offers an overview of the most eminent 'gatekeepers' of German literature and their favourite authors. Their different choices allow us to draw a picture of the struggle for supremacy within the literary field and, more precisely, to reconstruct the individual trajectories of those actors who tried to accumulate symbolic capital in order to impose their repertoires. The last part of the article analyses how the prominent writer Thomas Mann was introduced to the Italian readers as close both to the position of the liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce and to the Marxist critic György Lukács, depending on the review and its mediators.

Gabriele Bacherini, *Bernward Vesper: The «Jesus of Violence» Confronting the «Literature about Fathers»*

When it was published at the end of 1977, *Die Reise* became the literary sensation of that year, in a Federal Republic of Germany that was still shaken by the subversive fury of the Deutscher Herbst. Many critics blamed it for celebrating a bloodstained decade, but they could not directly blame the author, Bernward Vesper, who had committed suicide six years before, leaving the book unfinished. The silence imposed on this topic until the fall of the Berlin Wall left *Die Reise* completely forgotten, along with its many misinterpretations. The suicide of all the RAF founders, including Vesper's former girlfriend, confirms that *Die Reise* is not a piece of work regarding terrorism, but the tragedy of a whole generation, who lost themselves between the fear for an alleged Nazi resurgence and the conflict with some «fathers», such as Vesper's



father, who were actually Nazis. The article aims to ‘do justice’ to Vesper’s «novel-essay», also proving its unexpected artistic value.

Marco Battaglia, «*Theodiscae dictamina*». *Voice and Literary Canon in the Germanic Early Middle Ages*

The notorious label ‘Dark Ages’, coined by the Italian humanists, has long indicated an age of utmost decay for Western European culture, ranging from the break-up of the Roman Empire to the so-called Carolingian ‘renaissance’ (end of the 8th-first half of the 9th century). This is a legitimate though somewhat drastic judgment, since it does not recognize or, worse, deny that the breakdown of classical education (at least in its written forms) was the result of a slow and overall changeover. While concerning the economic, political and social spheres, it also affected both the religious and the cultural fields, some time joining their ranges, some other marking the hegemony of the former on the latter.

Maurizio Brancaloni, «*The Sorrow of Belgium*». *A Grotesque Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Although it may be claimed that the traditional *Bildungsroman* died out at the beginning of the 20th century, the coming-of-age novel, to be understood in a wider sense, seems to be more alive than ever. A recent example, Flemish writer Hugo Claus’s *The Sorrow of Belgium* (1983), a multi-faceted novel set in the German-occupied Flanders during the Second World War, seems to share with Joyce’s classic *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* quite a few features, such as the pervasive presence of Catholicism, a politically-charged representation of language and certain figures of imagination. This article aims at investigating how Joyce’s novel may have paved the way for the bizarre *The Sorrow* by showing how shared features are regularly transformed into grotesque or disquieting subject-matter by Claus as if that were his way to deal with the role model.

Sara Culeddu, *Hamsun in Italy 1899-1923. Multiple voices and trajectories of an early attempt of reception. An overview through paratexts*

The article is an overview of the very first reception of the work of Knut Hamsun in Italy and it is organised as a chronological journey through the translated texts and their related paratexts (i.e. titles, prefaces, covers, but also reviews, articles, letters, manuscripts and so on).



Among the paratextual elements, the paper aims to identify those ‘trails’ that can help defining the landmarks in the journey of the first Italian translations of Hamsun. Considering these trails in their ‘vocal’ expression, the analysis will move on to identify the (textual, contextual and intertextual) voices that participate in the journey of the translated texts. The first translations of the work of Knut Hamsun in Italy are all indirect translations: therefore, the essay investigates both the voices of the Italian translators and mediators, and the voices of the foreign intermediate translators and mediators.

Albert Meier, *The German Nose. Johann Caspar Goethe in Naples*

Johann Caspar Goethe’s *Viaggio per l’Italia* (1740) is an important document of the particular spirit, in which the early German enlightenment judged Italy and its catholic way of life. In his extensive travel account, written in Italian, the father of the poet Goethe shows himself as a very self-confident Lutheran, who condemns the characteristic religiousness of the Italian people as pure superstition without ever trying to understand these manners in their specific causes (something which only his son Johann Wolfgang, almost half a century later, will endeavour). The two weeks spent at Naples are to be seen as the culmination of Johann Caspar Goethe’s Italian experience. Hence their description in the *Viaggio* must be read as the quintessence of this moralistic interpretation of the Mediterranean culture: The German traveller explains the reality of Naples, *id est* in the midst of an earthly paradise, but overshadowed by the always threatening Mount Vesuvius, as an allegory of the general *conditio humana*.

Luca Panieri, *Particles Verbs: Contrasting Swedish and Danish*

In all Germanic languages verb semantics can be altered by means of particles, occurring both as a prefix and as a free form. This paper expands on the situation of Scandinavian, mainly comparing Swedish and Danish, so as to cast light both on the position of these languages as a whole within the Germanic linguistic landscape and on the mutual differences between themselves. Within the bounds of the descriptive aims of the paper, the main aspects of the interaction between the verb and its modifiers are dealt with, focusing on Swedish and Danish. Thus the major morphosyntactic, prosodic, semantic, lexical and derivational features linked to the prefixed and particle verbs are contrastively analysed and described, highlighting both the similarities and the differences between Swedish and Danish. The contrastive approach to the subject is



supplied with historical-comparative considerations so as to improve the understanding of the observed phenomena and set them into a broader context.

Bianca Patria, *The Language of Myth. Remarks on some heiti for giantess in Snorri's Edda*

Besides the *kenning*, the poetic category most fully discussed in the second section of Snorri's *Edda* is the (*ókennt*) *heiti*, a term usually translated as 'poetic synonym'. A large number of *heiti*, most of them never used in the surviving skaldic corpus, are listed in specific metrical lists known as *þulur* (sing. *þula*). The aim of this paper is to highlight some aspects of these *heiti* collections with an analysis of the *þula* known as *trollkvinna heiti* ('names of the trollwives'). Some observations of an etymological and morphological nature are made about 15 of the 61 *heiti*, selected for their semantic and formal features. Data concerning the use of these poetic terms in the skaldic corpus, and the strategies used to generate new *heiti* from well-established ones, lead to interesting conclusions. What to a modern reader may look like an aimless parade of erudition probably reflects a common practice in medieval Scandinavia, and one which played a major role in the construction of a literary identity through the preservation of traditional poetic material.

Giulia Puzzo, *Disiecta Manus. Paul Celan: for a relational lexicography.*

This essay intends to study Paul Celan's texts using a lexicographic method, which can map the most important semantic constellations of celanian poetry. Celan's language has always been considered difficult to understand, due to the density of its references and allusive expressions. The meaning of its terms is never univocal, it indeed discloses a stratification of senses progressively accumulated and reformed through each other: the words are continuously 're-semanticized' by the author. This language, however, becomes more understandable if it is observed as a whole in which the meaning of the words is composed of relations that intertwine with each other. The aim of this essay is to create a reading guide, in order to propose an interpretation of celanian language. The paper focuses, more in detail, on the different semantic fields which are related to the word 'Hand', through which the author conveys the most significant images of his poetics. Indeed, in Celan's imagination the 'Hand', fragment of the cabalistic tree, and being itself fragmented in various parts, represents a figuration of the poem, which is able to collect the remains of history and language into new possibilities of existence and meaning.



Marialuisa Lucia Sergio, «*Imperious Demands of Conservatism*». *Political Catholicism in Austria and Tyrol and the Correspondence between the Apostolic Nunciature in Vienna and the Vatican Secretariat of State (1904-1911)*

This paper, based on the documentation of the Vienna nunciature at the Vatican Secret Archives and at the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, analyzes the relationship between the Church hierarchies and the German speaking political Catholicism in Austria at a time (1904-1911) when the masses mobilization and the growing power of ideologies, in the same way as the separatist impulses of different nationalities, mark the end of the Habsburg dynasty and put the Catholic world faced with ultimate questions: the autonomy of the politics from the religious guardianship, the secular education systems, the danger of the anti-Semitism and of the *ethnicization* of the political conflict (instrumentalisation of the image of 'self' and of 'the others', 'image of the enemy'). The examined unpublished sources offer a new key lecture about the decline of the supranational Habsburg experience, in the light of the controversial relationship between religion and politics, between Catholicism and modernity.

Veronka Szöke, 'Fish' (*fiscaz) and 'water' (*flōdaz), a collocation attested in the Germanic poetic tradition

The present essay aims at investigating the dynamics that govern the process of composition through the device of the collocation, i.e., a cluster of words that show a tendency to co-occur within the context of the long line. The survey specifically deals with the collocation made of the lexemes *fiskaz ('fish') and *flōdaz ('water') and its occurrences in Old English, Old Saxon and Old Norse poetry. On the one hand, the Old English and the Old Saxon poetic works make a similar use of the collocation, the former in describing the world and its ordering principles, and the latter, in adapting and amplifying two fishing-episodes found in the Gospel. On the other hand, the Norse occurrences of the two words in combination stand apart and are disruptive with regard to their referents: here the naturalistic association of fish and water is part of contexts that hint at some disquieting sides of nature, and by means of reversals of expectations point out moral stances or play a satirical role.

