

ABSTRACTS

“Dying according to the rules.” The Intellectuals of *Diana* at the Front

MARTINA VOLPE

As Italy went into war against Austria in May 1915, a large number of intellectuals took part in the conflict and sustained the military offensive. The futurist movement activated creative energies in all quarters, and the literary reviews were animated by a great boldness. In this context, the publication of *Diana* especially stands out – a journal published in Naples between 1915 and 1917 with Gherardo Marone as its leading figure. Its 25 issues project two different images of the journal: favourable to the conflict and its rationale before its outbreak, it then became a place where to express collective disappointment: in the trenches, the contributors of *Diana* experienced the desperation of all youths of their generation and created a new essential poetry.

This essay focusses on the transition from futurist to a modern poetic culture, examining works published in the journal and unpublished letters enlisted journal collaborators sent to Gherardo Marone. As well as bringing to light the cultural merits of *Diana*, it is an opportunity to reappraise the work of some young writers, like Mario Cestaro and Annunzio Cervi, who died in the Great War.

“I want to be free of the remorse that weighs on me.”

Alberto Savinio and the Great War

GIULIA FERRI

One of the reasons Alberto Savinio took part in World War I lies in his quest for identity and his need to recognise himself as part of the Italian nation. He enlisted in the army in 1915 and spent two years in Ferrara in a military office. Distressed by this protracted inertia and wanting to actively contribute to the process of renewal he hoped the war would produce, he obtained to be sent to the Greek front and arrived in Thessaloniki in the summer of 1917, but had to settle for a simple translation job. So he unloaded all of his frustration in writing: on the

one hand, he gave a brutal description of the military world, showing its baseness, its mediocrity and its contradictions; on the other, he imagined the valourous career he was unable to achieve in real life. Thanks to writing, Savinio went beyond individuality, and was led by ambition toward social engagement, becoming a supporter of a process of cultural renewal tinged by nationalism and based on the dream of change induced by the war.

The “furrows of death” and the Darker Realism of Guido Cavani

FABIO MARRI

The poet and novelist Guido Cavani (Modena, 1897-1967), private soldier at the Italian-Austrian front on the Asiago plateau in 1917-18, transferred his trench experience to some early poems, still unpublished: in the longest one, *Il sabato santo*, he provides the poignant description of the death of a fellow soldier shot by a sniper. Several years later, he dealt again with those memories in a series of short stories, first published in newspapers or magazines then almost all collected in a volume in 1967, where the brutality and sometimes the moral degradation caused by the war predominate over the sacrifice and heroism of the soldiers. These stories deserve the same recognition as some of the most famous products of the Italian literature of the Great War, from Monelli to Lussu, from De Roberto to Stuparich, and the poems of Jahier and Rebora.

“War was beautiful and befitting to my spirit”. Luigi Bartolini as War Writer

LUCIO VALENT

Luigi Bartolini was a quintessential 20th century Italian intellectual. A painter, sculptor, poet, and writer, he practised most of the artistic forms of his time and was one of Italy’s greatest engravers. Between 1915 and 1918 he took part in the First World War as a gunner and wrote about his experience in *Il ritorno sul Carso*, printed in 1930. This book stands apart from war memoirs of the time: it makes no concessions to the interventionist pomposity that was rife after 1918 and has no strong ideological streak, although it is imbued with strong and yet imprecise war-rhetoric. With vivid accounts of Bartolini’s life, experiences, thoughts and personality, *Il ritorno sul Carso* is also as a con-

vincing and passionate story of one of the most tragic fronts in the Great War. Moreover, the book closes with a passionate denunciation of the way the demobilization of the army was implemented, and how it affected veterans's lives. The book is a valuable historical and literary source regarding a controversial time in Italian history.

Socialists at the Front: Consonances and Differences. Comparative Considerations on the War Memoirs of Emilio Lussu and Antonio Greppi

JACOPO PERAZZOLI

This essay compares two Great War memoirs, Emilio Lussu's *Un anno sull'altipiano* and Antonio Greppi's *Notti sul Carso*. The analysis focuses on the diversity of contexts and of writing modes in the work of these two Italian socialist authors: while *Un anno sull'altipiano* is a crude report of what happened to the Sardinian Brigade on the Asiago plateau during 1916-1917 and was written by Lussu during his Paris exile in 1936-1937, *Notti sul Carso* was composed by Greppi in around the same years but within fascist Italy, and is a more reassuring narrative of his experience at the front. The paper also contrasts the representation of the war by Lussu and Greppi, whose books stand as complementary narratives of the war, and neither of which, however, may be ascribable to the fascist rhetoric regarding the Great War.

Popular Diaries from the Great War: Narrative Strategies and Forms

PAOLA CANTONI

In popular writings at the time of the First World War there are to be found different levels of writing proficiency that represent an important test for the dynamics of literacy that were under way. This study aims to identify and describe the syntactic and textual mechanisms used by writers of different social and regional backgrounds in their diaries. The essay looks at a number of unpublished diaries as regards writing typology and structure, use of tenses, opening formulae, topic representation, narrative progression, and certain lexical peculiarities. Features of the authors' narrative awareness and the effectiveness of the texts are also discussed, as popular diaries sometimes display greater evocative power than literary texts and a charming sense of truthfulness and spontaneity.

The Myth of the “other” War in the Diaries (1939-1945) of Piero Calamandrei

VALERIA MOGAVERO

This essay analyses the “democratic interventionism” professed by the great jurist Piero Calamandrei during the Great War and focuses on the persistence of the “myth of the Great War” in the ethical and political roots of his opposition to fascism over the following twenty-five years. The work shows how the outbreak of the Second World War revived Calamandrei’s sense of the democratic aspirations and the ideals of the Risorgimento tradition, leading to their identification with the “other” war as a means to emphasize the aggressive character of the new 1939-1945 war and the distortion of the old ideals in the unnatural nazi-fascist alliance against the Western democracies. The essay also rereads the diaries written by Calamandrei during the Second World War and attempts to capture the modes and reasons for the claims made on every page regarding the democratic tradition of the Great War.

“War, about which there is nothing holy.” Literary Representations of the Great War in the Work of Slovak Priest-writers

DANA HUČKOVÁ

Although Slovak literature largely stagnated during the Great War, numerous works were produced as a reaction to militarism and to the inhumanity of war. Several writers from this period were Evangelical ministers or Catholic priests. Some (*e.g.*, Vladimír Roy, Ignác Grebáč-Orlov, and Vladimír Hurban Vladimírov) made direct experience of the front as field curates on the Eastern and Southern fronts. Others (*e.g.* Martin Rázus and Štefan Krčméry) were wrote about the consequences of the war for common people away from the front. Ivan Lilge-Lysecký, finally, was sent to the battlefields as an ordinary soldier. While most of these writers were Modernists, their works from the war period revived the genres of documentary Realism. The Great War also profoundly changed their understanding of the Church as an institution and of its social and moral mission. Aware of the discrepancy between Christ’s teachings and the involvement of churches in the war propaganda, the issue of faith as salvation from the horrors of war became crucial for them.

Scandals in Europe during WWI: the Illegal Gains

FABIO ECCA

The First World War was an industrial as well as military conflict, in which the quality and quantity of production helped determine the final outcome. In Italy and other countries, the industrial effort was made possible by the so-called “Industrial Mobilisation” policies. The leaders in the Industrial Mobilisation were such important figures as Alfredo Dallolio, David Lloyd George, Walter Rathenau and Albert Thomas (in Italy, Britain, Germany and France respectively).

Focusing the analysis chiefly on Italy (with some comparison with what occurred in other European Countries), this paper provides an overview of the system of management that oversaw production during the war and attempts to identify some of the gray areas that characterised the productive system in different countries, leading certain suppliers to realise significant excess profits.