

*Costellazioni n. 10*

**Call for papers**

**“Eco-Leopardi”.**

***Apocalyptic visions and critique of the human in the poet of nature***

**Curators:**

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In an entry regarding an intended and never written *Lettera a un giovane del 20<sup>o</sup> secolo* made in his *Zibaldone* (Spring of 1827, in Recanati), Giacomo Leopardi described civilization as a “grande alleanza degli esseri intelligenti contro alla natura, e contro alle cose non intelligenti” (*Zib.* 4280). On the one hand, Leopardi saw civilization as an unstoppable colonizing force; on the other, in *La Ginestra*, the human alliance (alliance of the “esseri intelligenti”, that is) against nature (as embodied by the enduring threat of the destructive volcano) appears to be portrayed as a form of passive resistance opposed by the weak (humans) against the strongest (the volcano), in the same way that in the *Operette morali* it is the Icелander who succumbs to Nature personified, rather than the reverse.

Leopardi lived at the dawn of the geological era recently labelled ‘Anthropocene’, with reference to human impact on the Earth’s climate and environment. In the *Operette* the world is imagined before and after the spell of human existence on Earth, from a perspective that is non-anthropocentric and both cosmogonical (*Frammento apocrifo*) and post-apocalyptic (*Dialogo di un folletto e di uno gnomo*). Leopardi also dramatizes the metaphysical consequences of the Copernican revolution (*Il Copernico*). Given Leopardi’s departure from the anthropocentric stance, what place does he accorded to humanity in his cosmology, and how does he envisage relations between the human and non-human?

While philosophers in the West have all to some extent shared in the anthropocentric underpinnings Leopardi mocks, and while anthropocentrism still characterizes our global civilization and is the cause of anthropogenic climate and environmental changes, anthropomorphism and the rhetorical devices to which it gives rise (personification, prosopopoeia, and apostrophe) had long fallen out of favour as *démodé*, until ecocriticism began to explore the nexus between ecology and literary criticism and once again brought to the fore the relation between human and non-human.

As Bryan L. Moore maintains in his *Ecology and Literature* (with a deliberate inversion of the key words in the founding text of *ecocriticism*: William Rueckert’s *Literature and Ecology*), anthropomorphism need not always be synonymous with anthropocentrism, and can sometimes lend a voice to the voiceless.

This issue of the *Costellazioni* aims to promote a multi-disciplinary discussion of the work of Leopardi and specifically of his critique of anthropocentrism, of the use and implications of anthropomorphism, and of apocalyptic speculations in an age which Leopardi had the foresight to define as the “age of machines”.

**Suggested themes and/or key words:**

Romanticism, anthropocentrism, anthropomorphism, personification, ecocriticism, animal studies, human, non-human, and post-human.

**More in detail:**

- re-evaluations of Italian Romanticism, as also defined by reactionary nostalgia and a critique of modernity, in the light of the current post-human debate;
- representations of nature in Leopardi and the conflict between elegiac idealizations of landscape and musings upon environmental threats to humanity; ecological perspectives and apocalyptic visions in Leopardi;
- tensions between the critique of anthropocentrism and a leaning towards anthropomorphism in Leopardi;
- the relation of humans to their environment as encoded in by means of formal devices in the writings of Leopardi (apostrophes, personifications, prosopopoeia, metaphors, etc.);
- polarizations of human/non-human, natural/artificial, ancient/modern, etc. in an ecocritical perspective;
- allotropic dimensions and focalizations, and the role of animals in Leopardi.

All proposals, in the form of an abstract, are to be emailed to the journal’s editorial board by **30 April 2018** at the address [rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com](mailto:rivistacostellazioni@gmail.com).

No contributions should exceed 40,000 characters (including spaces: approx. 6,500 words in total).

We welcome contributions in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

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