

ISSN 1122 - 1917

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

3

ANNO XXVI 2018

MARE PUNICVM.

MARE DIBIV.

EDUCATT - UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

L'ANALISI
LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE
E LETTERATURE STRANIERE

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

3

ANNO XXVI 2018

PUBBLICAZIONE QUADRIMESTRALE

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA
Facoltà di Scienze Linguistiche e Letterature Straniere
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
Anno XXVI - 3/2018
ISSN 1122-1917
ISBN 978-88-9335-397-7

Comitato Editoriale

GIOVANNI GOBBER, Direttore
MARIA LUISA MAGGIONI, Direttore
LUCIA MOR, Direttore
MARISA VERNA, Direttore
SARAH BIGI
ELISA BOLCHI
ALESSANDRO GAMBA
GIULIA GRATA

Esperti internazionali

THOMAS AUSTENFELD, Université de Fribourg
MICHAEL D. AESCHLIMAN, Boston University, MA, USA
ELENA AGAZZI, Università degli Studi di Bergamo
STEFANO ARDUINI, Università degli Studi di Urbino
GYÖRGY DOMOKOS, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem
HANS DRUMBL, Libera Università di Bolzano
JACQUES DÜRRENMATT, Sorbonne Université
FRANÇOISE GAILLARD, Université de Paris VII
ARTUR GAŁKOWSKI, Uniwersytet Łódzki
LORETTA INNOCENTI, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia
VINCENZO ORIOLES, Università degli Studi di Udine
GILLES PHILIPPE, Université de Lausanne
PETER PLATT, Barnard College, Columbia University, NY, USA
ANDREA ROCCI, Università della Svizzera italiana
EDDO RIGOTTI, Università degli Svizzera italiana
NIKOLA ROSSBACH, Universität Kassel
MICHAEL ROSSINGTON, Newcastle University, UK
GIUSEPPE SERTOLI, Università degli Studi di Genova
WILLIAM SHARPE, Barnard College, Columbia University, NY, USA
THOMAS TRAVISANO, Hartwick College, NY, USA
ANNA TORTI, Università degli Studi di Perugia
GISÈLE VANHESE, Università della Calabria

*I contributi di questa pubblicazione sono stati sottoposti
alla valutazione di due Peer Reviewers in forma rigorosamente anonima*

© 2018 EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio universitario dell'Università Cattolica
Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano | tel. 02.7234.2235 | fax 02.80.53.215
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (*produzione*); librario.dsu@educatt.it (*distribuzione*)
web: www.educatt.it/libri

Redazione della Rivista: redazione.all@unicatt.it | web: www.analisinguisticaeletteraria.eu

Questo volume è stato stampato nel mese di gennaio 2019
presso la Litografia Solari - Peschiera Borromeo (Milano)

INDICE

- Beyond the Travelogue: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's
Plea for Italy in *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* 5
Leonardo Buonomo
- Руссоизм и герметические науки в образах некоторых
второстепенных героев Л. Н. Толстого 17
Raffaella Faggionato
- "They shoot the white girl first". Violenza nell'Eden:
Paradise di Toni Morrison 33
Paola A. Nardi

SEZIONE TEMATICA

EDIFICI D'AUTORE. ESTETICHE E IDEOLOGIE NELLA NARRAZIONE DEI MONUMENTI *a cura di Paola Spinozzi e Marisa Verna*

- Introduzione 45
Paola Spinozzi e Marisa Verna
- Il Tempio Malatestiano tra il sacro e il profano: lo sguardo di Joséphin Péladan
e Henry de Montherlant 49
Michela Gardini
- The *Tempio Malatestiano* as an Aesthetic and Ideological Incubator 61
Paola Spinozzi
- Sigismondo Malatesta, un criminale neoplatonico. Péladan lettore mistico
del Palazzo Malatestiano 79
Marisa Verna
- Monumenti, nazionalismo e letteratura nella Germania bismarckiana
e guglielmina. Theodor Fontane e Felix Dahn 91
Elena Raponi
- Au pied du mur. Les architectures narratives chez Philippe Forest 115
Julie Crobas Commans
- Hip Hop and Monumentality: Lupe Fiasco's Re-Narrativization
of the Lorraine Motel 129
Anthony Ballas
- The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: A conversation 137
Linda Levitt

RECENSIONI E RASSEGNE

| | |
|--|-----|
| Recensioni | 147 |
| Rassegna di Linguistica generale e di Glottodidattica a cura di Giovanni Gobber | 149 |
| Rassegna di Linguistica francese a cura di Enrica Galazzi e Michela Murano | 159 |
| Rassegna di Linguistica inglese a cura di Maria Luisa Maggioni e Amanda C. Murphy | 167 |
| Rassegna di Linguistica russa a cura di Anna Bonola e Valentina Nosedà | 175 |
| Rassegna di Linguistica tedesca a cura di Federica Missaglia | 181 |
| Indice degli Autori | 187 |
| Indice dei Revisori | 189 |

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL: A CONVERSATION

LINDA LEVITT

This essay is intended as a conversation: the voices of those who created the Vietnam Veterans Memorial have a story to tell. If language creates reality rather than representing it, then this is an etymological tracing of the Memorial. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial remains a discursive site, where visitors leave remembrances and tell their stories. The many voices and many stories reflect the polysemic nature of the Memorial, as the desire to be inclusive is essential to its design.

Keywords: Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Maya Lin, Jan Scruggs, commemoration

Monumental space permits a continual back-and-forth
between the private speech of ordinary conversations and the
public speech of discourses, lectures, sermons, rallying-cries,
and all theatrical forms of utterance.
(Henri Lefebvre¹)

Two black granite walls. Each wall: 246 feet, 8 inches long. The walls meet at an angle of 125 degrees, 12 minutes, pointing exactly to the northeast corners of the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. Fifty-eight thousand, two hundred and twenty-nine names are sandblasted into the walls, the names of the men and women killed or missing in action in Vietnam.

Before the official dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a candlelight vigil was held at the National Cathedral. Every name on the Memorial was read aloud. The vigil continued for 56 hours. Names are engraved on the wall chronologically, marked by the date of death. Jan Scruggs, founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, recalls: "A Medal of Honor winner who had volunteered to read names lasted five minutes before he broke down. He read the rest of the names on his knees"².

November 18, 1965: Benjamin Brooks. Ronald Henry Chittum. Richard Crosby
Clark. Lindsey Houston Crow. Louis Sam Gutierrez. John Frederick McDermott.

This project is intended as a conversation: the voices of those who created the Vietnam Veterans Memorial have a story to tell. If language creates reality rather than representing

¹ H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 1992, p. 224.

² J.C. Scruggs – J.L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Harper & Row, New York 1985, p. 143.

it, then this is an etymological tracing of the Memorial. Its language is rich in connotation, borne of the personal experience and meaning-making of those who give voice to it.

Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: “The use of names was a way to bring back everything someone could remember about a person. The strength in a name is something that has always made me wonder at the ‘abstraction’ of the design; the ability of a name to bring back every single memory you have of that person is far more realistic and specific and much more comprehensive than a still photograph, which captures a specific moment in time or a single event or a generalized image that may or may not be moving for all who have connections to that time”³.

Maya Lin was an undergraduate at Yale University when her design was selected from among 1,400 submissions in a public competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Her design, the black granite walls rising out of the earth, defied conventions of statuary that are typical of war monuments in the United States.

June 17, 1969: Jerry Ashburn. Robert Askam. Wilfredo Ayala-Reyes. Danny Baker. Bill Berstler. Hiris Blevins. Ronald Campbell. Derrick Core. Francis Frechette. Roger Rosenberger.

Research is a conversation as well. Theorists engage in discussion with each other, and with their objects of study. In their work on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz remind us that commemoration requires conversation as well: “Before any event can be regarded as worth remembering, and before any class of people can be recognized for having participated in that event, some individual, and eventually some group, must deem both event and participants commemorable and must have influence to get others to agree. Memorial devices are not self-created; they are conceived and built by those who wish to bring to consciousness the events and people others are more inclined to forget”⁴.

The memorial was intended to remember the people, not the war. Some people wanted to celebrate and glorify the Vietnam War, but the design was not intended to do that. American billionaire and Navy veteran Ross Perot supported fundraising for the memorial and gave financial support to the design competition, but he certainly did not support the design.

Jan Scruggs, founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, recounts his conversation with Perot after the design was selected:

“You’ve made a big, big mistake,” Perot said. “It’ll only be nice for the guys who died. It’s not heroic.”
 “Yes, it is,” Scruggs replied.

³ M. Lin, *Boundaries*, Simon & Schuster, New York 2000, n.p.

⁴ R. Wagner-Pacifici – B. Schwartz, *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past*, “American Journal of Sociology”, 97, 1991, 2, p. 382.

“It’s something for New York intellectuals.”

“You don’t understand.”

“It’s twenty-first century art.”

“That’s only what you think”⁵.

Americans tend to have a rather awkward relationship with death and grief. Consistent expectations for mourning are absent. Also absent are means of determining how to reshape life in the absence of a loved one. This was powerfully enacted for the men and women whose sons, daughters, brothers, boyfriends, and best friends did not come back from Vietnam alive.

November 18, 1968: Jeffrey Randolph Beardsley. Michael John Cromie. William Benjamin Ezell. David Rodney Holt. Dale William Johnson. Joaquin Rodriguez. Ignacio Sanchez. Willie J. Washington, Jr.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial creates a space where that kind of absence can be resolved, where people who lost friends, people who cannot speak of what they have witnessed or what they have lost, have been able finally to give voice to it. Being able to utter those words, those names, has an incredible power.

Jan Scruggs: “To engage in revisionism, to say that Vietnam had been glorious, would be a lie. Such revisionism would miss the lessons, miss the mistakes, and make the sacrifices and deaths doubly meaningless”⁶.

Battling over the design didn’t end with that conversation between Ross Perot and Jan Scruggs; it was just the beginning. The media took increasing interest in the debate between those who opposed the memorial design and those who supported it. Secretary of the Interior James Watt, with the National Park Service and the National Mall under his charge, threatened to withhold the construction permit for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Scruggs and the Memorial Fund members agreed to a compromise: a statue and a flag would be added to the memorial site.

Jan Scruggs, to Maya Lin: “Aesthetically, the design does not need a statue, but politically it does”⁷.

⁵ J.C. Scruggs – J.L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Harper & Row, New York 1985, p. 68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Frederick Hart, designer of The Three Servicemen statue: “I don’t like blank canvases. Lin’s memorial is intentionally not meaningful. It doesn’t relate to ordinary people, and I don’t like art that is contemptuous of life”⁸.

Frederick Hart, on own his design: “The portrayal of the figures is consistent with history. They wear the uniform and carry the equipment of war; they are young. The contrast between the innocence of their youth and the weapons of war underscores the poignancy of their sacrifice. There is about them the physical contact and sense of unity that bespeaks the bonds of love and sacrifice that is the nature of men at war. And yet they are each alone. Their strength and their vulnerability are both evident. Their true heroism lies in these bonds of loyalty in the face of their aloneness and their vulnerability”⁹.

What Hart means as historically accurate is the positioning of the soldiers, their uniforms, their youth and their ethnicity – the three figures represent an Anglo, a Hispanic and an African-American soldier. Despite Hart’s expression of ethnic diversity among Vietnam veterans, many ethnic groups were not represented. Women were not represented either.

Diane Carlson Evans, founder, Vietnam Women’s Memorial Foundation: “The journey for many of us still isn’t over. Many are just beginning their healing. But this is our place to start”¹⁰.

Eight women killed or missing in action in Vietnam are among the 58,229 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Some 11,000 women volunteered to serve in Vietnam, mostly in the health professions. Women who served in the Armed Forces felt slighted by Hart’s exclusion of a female figure in his design. This exclusion opened the door for equal gender representation, and the Vietnam Women’s Memorial was added to the site in 1993. Now women are equally represented as a result of the statue, but they are overrepresented when the number of women who served in Vietnam is compared to the number of men who served.

Overrepresentation can create a case for misrepresentation: would a person born after 1975, when the last American soldiers left Vietnam, understand that women were not drafted into the military but volunteered to serve? What does the “separate but equal” representation of women at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial say about the role of women in the military, and in Vietnam in particular?

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁹ <http://www.eagerarms.com/memorial-ceremony-2012.html> (last accessed 2 April 2019).

¹⁰ M. Bousian, *Statue honors female veteran veterans memorial: many at capital unveiling say it is part of the healing process*, “Los Angeles Times”, 12 November 1993, p. 1.

John Wheeler, chairman of the board of directors, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund: “We have become trustees of a portion of the national heart”¹¹.

Wheeler’s comment to his colleagues in the VVMF implies a unified nation. This was, above all, the goal of these veterans: to mend a broken nation, to heal a wound that divided a country. It is too simple to think antiwar protesters and war supporters make two sides of this schism. The story of the Memorial, as it took shape, revealed something about the United States: there are not two sides. This is not a bicultural nation; it is a multicultural nation. Looking at the binary opposition of men and women, we understand how two statues ended up at the memorial site. So many components of the ‘multi-’ that is the culture of the United States are not represented – Native Americans, Asian Americans, among others. If the names on the wall had been allowed to speak for all whom they represent, would it have been sufficient?

Tom Carhart, Vietnam veteran, an early advocate for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and an outspoken opponent to Maya Lin’s design: “I believe that the design selected for the memorial in an open competition is pointedly insulting to the sacrifices made for their country by all Vietnam veterans. By this will we be remembered: a black gash of shame and sorrow, hacked into the national visage that is the Mall... Black walls, the universal color of sorrow and dishonor. Hidden in a hole, as if in shame. Is this really how America would memorialize our offering?”¹².

Maya Lin’s choice of black granite for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was widely misunderstood. She did not see black as a color, but as a reflective surface. “Reflective” here has manifold meaning: Lin knew that visitors looking at the memorial would not only see rows upon rows of names, they would also see their own image reflected back to them. The confluence of the self and the memorial causes you to reflect on your relationship to death, to war, to the names of the dead. The reflection is also hopeful: beyond the image of your own face are the open sky, perhaps a banner of clouds running through it, and people standing and walking behind you, reminding you of the thread that connects you to every other human being.

Carhart calling the Memorial a “black gash of shame” seized the attention of the media. It captured the lingering pain and anger of Vietnam veterans who were not welcomed warmly home, as other returning veterans had been. For the media, it was a controversial story. For the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, it was a painful reminder of the wound they so desperately wanted to heal.

Brigadier General George Price, one of America’s highest ranking black officers, at the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs hearing, January 27, 1981: “I have heard

¹¹ J.C. Scruggs – J.L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation*, p. 30.

¹² T. Carhart, *Insulting Vietnam Vets*, “New York Times”, 24 October 1981, p. 23.

your arguments. I remind all of you of Martin Luther King, who fought for justice for all Americans. Black is not a color of shame. I am tired of hearing it called such by you. Color meant nothing on the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam. We are all equal in combat. Color should mean nothing now”¹³.

Controversy over the color of the memorial was resolved on racial grounds, not on aesthetic grounds. After that, says Scruggs, no one mentioned making the wall white¹⁴.

Bob Doubek, first Executive Director, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund addressing the National Capital Memorial Advisory Committee, October 24, 1979: “The Vietnam war has been the collective experience of the generation of Americans born during and after World War II... Over 2.7 million Americans served in Vietnam. More than 57,000 people died and over 300,000 were wounded... The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is conceived as a means to promote the healing and reconciliation of the country after the divisions caused by the war... It will symbolize the experience of the Vietnam generation for the generations which follow”¹⁵.

The desire to create a space for national reconciliation is a gesture of great humanity. Compassion rendered a memorial even more powerful than intended: it is a space of not just national but also personal reconciliation. We live in universes of conflict and struggle. Opportunities to resolve our pain are not always available. Sometimes we lack the tools to make those spaces for ourselves. Sometimes our culture denies us those spaces. That was certainly the case with Vietnam veterans, and there are too many stories told that brim over with pain and sorrow.

Maya Lin: “I like to think of my work as creating a private conversation with each person, no matter how public each work is and no matter how many people are present”¹⁶.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a space where healing can happen because the memorial does not make traditional demands on you. It does not ask you to be patriotic, to be nationalistic, or even to be American. It asks you to remember. The rest is up to you. This is the marvel of the design, and this is why extraordinary things happen at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. When it was dedicated in 1982, it was so markedly different from any other monument on the National Mall. Curiously, visitors and veterans were not afraid of how to respond to a memorial that spoke in a new, eloquent way.

¹³ J.C. Scruggs – J.L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation*, p. 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁵ J.C. Scruggs – J.L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation*, p.16.

¹⁶ M. Lin, *Boundaries*, n.p.

Marita Sturken: "The importance of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial lies in its communicability, which in effect has mollified the incommunicability of the veterans' experience"¹⁷.

Maya Lin: "I always wanted the names to be chronological, to make it so those who served and returned from the war could find their place in the memorial...A progression through time is memorialized. The design is not just a list of the dead"¹⁸.

Because Maya Lin insisted the names be listed chronologically, temporal incidence is rendered in physical space. Standing before the wall, running your fingers gently across the names of the dead, seeing your own reflection and the reflection of the sky and clouds beyond... wherever you stand, it is at a moment in time when the lives of those individuals represented by those names ended.

What happens in these temporal slices, then, is reconciliation that would otherwise not be possible: a woman making a rubbing of her son's name finds herself standing beside a veteran who was in her son's squadron, a friend he wrote home about, who has come to pay tribute to his lost comrades. Tears flow. They put their arms around each other, two bodies enmeshed in both grief and healing. Two strangers find each other, find themselves.

The stories of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are extraordinary. These stories are not about war but about camaraderie, brotherhood, family, sacrifice, and most of all, love. Would we grieve if we did not love?

March 29, 1972: Larry Batts. Henry Branner. Ollie Crenshaw Jr. Dennis Peterson. David Shelton. William Todd. Kenneth Vos. Charles Wanzel III. Barclay B. Young.

¹⁷ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1997, p. 64.

¹⁸ M. Lin, *Boundaries*, n.p.

RECENSIONI E RASSEGNE

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE
L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

ANNO XXVI - 3/2018

EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario dell'Università Cattolica
Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano - tel. 02.72342235 - fax 02.80.53.215
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (produzione)
librario.dsu@educatt.it (distribuzione)
redazione.all@unicatt.it (Redazione della Rivista)
web: www.analisinguisticaeletteraria.eu

ISSN 1122 - 1917



9 788893 353977