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LEOPARDI AND THE 'DESERT OF LIFE'

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"Se questi miei sentimenti nascono da malattia, non so: so che, malato o sano, calpesto la vigliaccheria degli uomini, rifiuto ogni consolazione e ogn'inganno puerile, ed ho il coraggio di sostenere la privazione di ogni speranza, mirare intrepidamente il deserto della vita, non dissimularmi nessuna parte dell'infelicità umana, ed accettare tutte le conseguenze di una filosofia dolorosa ma vera".¹

This stoic and indeed defiant statement was made by Leopardi relatively late in his life, in the *Dialogo di Tristano e di un amico*, written in 1832. However, the central metaphor used here - that of life as a barren, arid state - recurs frequently throughout his work, in both his prose and his poetry, in contexts that describe his own personal condition and/or that of humanity as a whole. The metaphor appears not only in the form of the word *deserto* (which derives from the Latin verb *desèrere* "to abandon", "to desert") and as analogous images that denote emptiness and aridity, but also where the key element of the metaphor is a word such as *eremo*, *ermo*, or *romito*, which derive from the equivalent Greek word for desert - *èremos* - , and which therefore extend the metaphor to the deeper meaning of "loneliness" and "isolation". Indeed, these words of Greek origin, and others with the same etymon *eremos*, are, according to Leopardi in the *Zibaldone*, "tutte poetiche per l'infinità o vastità dell'idea. Così la deserta notte, e tali immagini di solitudine, silenzio, ec."² For Leopardi, language consisted of *termini* and *parole*. Terms belonged to the sciences because they "determined" and defined the object, and, since they totally circumscribed it, their property was sterility and aridity. Words, on the other hand, did not present simply the naked idea of the object, but also "accessory images", and therefore were needed for "literature and beauty".³ Words, unlike terms, aroused *infinite idee*, *ricordanze*, and so gave language its force, richness, and variety.⁴ Consequently, amongst the *parole*, Leopardi considered metaphors "essential" to language,⁵ and the most

attractive and poetic of figures, both in poetry and in "ornate and sublime prose",⁶ because they suggested a multiplicity of ideas, especially if the etymology of the metaphor could still be identified and felt.⁷

In his Letters, especially in the period between 1817 and 1825, Leopardi used the desert metaphor and associated imagery with considerable frequency to describe the state of tedium he experienced, and to portray the physical world that surrounded him. To his home town Recanati, where everything was "death", "silence", and "universal sleep",⁸ the word was easily applied. In 1817, two years before his attempted escape, he bemoaned the fact that he saw no possibility of leaving Recanati, *quest'eremo che ora abborro*, where, he said, he was treated like an *eremita*.⁹ By 1819, at the height of his frustration at having been denied the freedom to make personal contact with scholars in other parts of Italy, at a time when his only lifeline with the outside world was an unpredictable mail service, the hermitage turned into a black "prison" (*carcere*), a "cave" (*caverna*), and an "animals' cage" (*serraglio*).¹⁰ By 1823 the Recanati to which he returned after his first unhappy six-month sojourn in Rome had become a "sepulchre".¹¹ In 1824, in declining an offer from Giampietro Vieusseux, who had invited *il romito degli Appennini* (as Vieusseux later called Leopardi)¹² to contribute scientific and literary articles to the Florentine journal *L'Antologia*, Leopardi gave as his reason the social and cultural vacuum that surrounded him in Recanati: "Io vivo qui segregato dal commercio, non solo dei letterati, ma degli uomini, in una città dove chi sa leggere è un uomo raro, in un verissimo sepolcro, dove non entra un raggio di luce da niuna parte, e donde non ho speranza di uscire. [...] Infatti io non so e non veggo mai nulla di nuovo, e fo conto di vivere in un deserto".¹³ Five years later, in 1829, when he returned to Recanati for the last time to spend what he called "sedici mesi di notte orribile", his desert had become his *Tartaro*.¹⁴

The desert, of course, was as much inside him as outside in the world that surrounded him. His loneliness and melancholy, his poor health, the *terribile noia* that overwhelmed him (labelled in the *Zibaldone* "la più sterile delle passioni umane", "figlia della nullità" and "madre del nulla")¹⁵ were apt to reduce him to a catatonic state, especially during his crisis of 1819: in June he told Giordani "sono due mesi ch'io non istudio, né leggo più niente, per malattia d'occhi, e la mia vita

si consuma sedendo colle braccia in croce, o passeggiando per le stanze";¹⁶ and in November: "Sono così stordito del niente che mi circonda, che non so come abbia forza di prender la penna per rispondere alla tua del primo. Se in questo momento impazzissi, io credo che la mia pazzia sarebbe di seder sempre cogli occhi attoniti, colla bocca aperta, colle mani tra le ginocchia, senza né ridere né piangere, né muovermi altro che per forza dal luogo dove mi trovassi".¹⁷ Four years later, in a letter to the Belgian writer Jacopssen, he recalled the total barrenness of his condition at this time: "Pendant un certain temps j'ai senti le vide de l'existence comme si ç'avait été une chose réelle qui pesât rudement sur mon âme. Le néant des choses était pour moi la seule chose qui existait. Il m'était toujours présent comme un fantôme affreux; je ne voyais qu'un désert autour de moi".¹⁸

Leopardi knew that only loving, human relationships could inject some semblance of vitality into his arid existence. In the early years of his correspondence, the exchange of letters with his "only friend" Pietro Giordani served as a slender lifeline supporting his need for intellectual fulfilment, and as an outlet for his emotions. In 1819 Giordani was, in Leopardi's words, "[la] sola persona ch'io veda in questo formidabile deserto del mondo".¹⁹ In 1825, while still in Recanati, and after eighteen months without any exchange with Giordani (in this period most of Leopardi's efforts were put into composing the *Operette morali*), he turned once again to the one person in the world "che mi ami e che io ami".²⁰ He wrote to Giordani: "Se tu mi mancassi al pensiero, in verità che il mondo mi riuscirebbe un deserto, dove io mi trovassi solo, senza relazione a cosa alcuna".²¹

Outside of Recanati he continued to have difficulty relating to the people and places around him. The superficiality of Roman life, both social and intellectual, created in him a deep melancholy and a constant feeling of loneliness. "Ho bisogno d'amore, amore, amore, fuoco, entusiasmo, vita", he wrote to his brother Carlo from Rome in 1822.²² At the same time, Rome's immense buildings and interminable roads served only to increase his alienation. Though he was well received in Bologna and Milan, he had difficulty mixing with the people with whom he came into contact, and whose view of the world he did not share. From Bologna in 1826 he wrote: "La mia vita [...] è stata sempre, ed è, e sarà perpetuamente solitaria, anche in mezzo alla conversazione, nella quale, per dirlo all'

inglese, io sono più *absent* di quel che sarebbe un cieco e sordo. Questo vizio dell'*absence* è in me incorreggibile e disperato".²³ In Bologna, shortly after this, what he called "un'amicizia tenera e sensibile"²⁴ developed between Leopardi and Teresa Carniani-Malvezzi, but it was destined to survive for just a few months. Though not particularly attracted to Florence or Florentines, he did strike up a good relationship initially with Vieusseux and his circle. In 1828 he wrote to Giordani from Florence: "Questi viottoli, che si chiamano strade, mi affogano; questo sudiciume universale mi ammorbata; queste donne sciocchissime, ignorantissime e superbe mi fanno ira; io non veggo altri che Vieusseux e la sua compagnia; e quando questa mi manca, come accade spesso, mi trovo come in un deserto".²⁵ In Florence, Leopardi's short-lived passion for Fanny Targioni-Tozzetti became, in this desert, a brief oasis that flourished more in his poetry of this period than in his social encounters with her:

Come da' nudi sassi
dello scabro Apennino
a un campo verde che lontan sorrida
volge gli occhi bramoso il pellegrino;
tal io dal secco ed aspro
mondano conversar vogliosamente,
quasi in lieto giardino, a te ritorno,
e ristora i miei sensi il tuo soggiorno.
(*Il pensiero dominante*)

Leopardi found his most enduring oasis during the last years of his life in his relationship with Antonio Ranieri. Unlike his earlier friendship with Pietro Giordani, which had developed from common intellectual pursuits, his attraction for the young and adventurous Ranieri, initially concurrent with, and a reverberation of, his passion for Fanny, was deeply emotional. Ever thirsty for loving companionship, at a time when his health was declining, he found in Ranieri the moral and physical support that he needed, so much so that, when between late 1832 and early 1833 he was temporarily separated from his Neapolitan friend, he suffered a bout of severe depression. In letters sent as many as three times a week from Florence during these months, we find Leopardi professing his all-consuming passion for Ranieri, and longing anxiously to be reunited with him as soon as possible. "Io t'amo come tu solo puoi intendere, e darei anche i miei occhi per consolarti, se valessero. Ti abbraccio come mia unica *causa vivendi*".²⁶ Elsewhere: "Scrivo brevissimo perché lo stato de' miei occhi è deplorabile. Ogni giorno divengo più infelice della tua lontananza, perché tutto il tempo che passo

senza te, mi pare ed è veramente perduto, essendo ogni mio piacere posto nella tua compagnia".²⁷ And again: "Ti sospiro sempre come il Messia. S'io *possa* abbandonarti, tu lo sai bene. Ti mando mille baci".²⁸

The literary history of the "desert" metaphor is, of course, a long one. It may be traced back to the Bible (which, incidentally, was called by Leopardi one of the "due grandi fonti dello scrivere",²⁹ the other being Homer), where the desert is the setting for the difficult journey of the Israelites as they are led by Moses to the Promised Land (though laborious, arid existence is suggested even earlier than this, in *Genesis*, where Cain, condemned to be a wanderer on the earth and a builder of cities, is destined to till barren soil). There is nothing extraordinary in the fact that Leopardi frequently used the same metaphor in his works. It is a *topos* that runs throughout Italian literature, from, for example, Dante ("Dà oggi a noi la cotidiana manna, / senza la qual per questo aspro deserto / a retro va chi più di gir s'affanna")³⁰ and Petrarch ("Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi", etc.)³¹ to Tasso ("Noi ... trascorriam le vòte / Piaggie e l'arene sterili e deserte"),³² Alfonso Varano (whose eighteenth-century poem entitled *Il deserto* was chosen by Leopardi for inclusion in his Anthology, the *Crestomazia poetica*),³³ Alfieri, who, like Petrarch, finds the desert a place of refuge ("sol nei deserti tacciono i miei guai")³⁴ and Foscolo's *Sepolcri* ("le Pimplèe fan lieti / Di lor canto i deserti").³⁵ I quote, as an addendum, just a couple of the many examples of the *topos* that are found in twentieth-century works (again limiting myself only to Italian literature): Camillo Sbarbaro: "Perduto ha la voce / la sirena del mondo, e il mondo è un grande / deserto. // Nel deserto / io guardo con asciutti occhi me stesso";³⁶ Mario Luzi in *Primizie del deserto*: "Di me non c'è traccia negli anni / se non come raccontano un viaggio / le impronte sulla sabbia d'un deserto";³⁷ Pier Paolo Pasolini in *Teorema*: "Come già per il popolo d'Israele o l'apostolo Paolo, / il deserto mi si presenta come ciò / che, della realtà, / è solo indispensabile".³⁸

I turn now to Leopardi's poetry to consider the particular use that he makes of desert imagery. In his *canzoni civili* of 1818, which coincide with the time when Leopardi most yearned to find freedom and regeneration outside of the desert of Recanati, he portrayed the barrenness and inertia of contemporary Italy, restored after Napoleonic despotism to an even more despotic Regime under Austria, and contrasted it

with its vitality and greatness in the age of antiquity. Unlike ancient times, when young Greeks and Romans courageously gave their lives to defend their own country, nineteenth-century Italians, conscripted to serve under Napoleon, were obliged to fight and die for a foreign power on foreign soil. Recalling, in *Sopra il monumento di Dante*, the Russian campaign of 1812, Leopardi lamented the pointless and lonely deaths of so many young Italian soldiers who died victims of the elements on the barren Russian front, destined, like Italy herself, for oblivion:

Di lor quereia il boreal deserto
e conscie fur le sibilanti selve.

In *Ad Angelo Mai*, written just after Leopardi's crisis of 1819, the damning description of the mediocrity of contemporary Restoration Italy ("questo secolo morto", "questo secol di fango", "questa mia/ stanca ed arida terra") is more forcefully presented in terms of a steady, historical decline from an ancient age of illusions, in which people lived in harmony with nature, to the barrenness of the modern age dominated by science and reason, in which existence was overwhelming tedium. For Leopardi, his much-loved predecessor, Torquato Tasso, was the one who foreshadowed most of all this ultimate decline:

Ombra reale e salda
ti parve il nulla, e il mondo
inabitata spiaggia.

The crisis born of this disintegration of the original harmony that existed between humans and nature and the gods is confronted by Brutus in the poem *Bruto minore* with Titanic rebelliousness, as he protests against his unhappy destiny. His drama is acted out in solitude ("per l'atra notte in erma sede"), and is resolved in the total annihilation that comes with his defiant suicide. On the other hand, in *Ultimo canto di Saffo*, the desert of life experienced by the ugly, albeit talented, poetess Sappho, who is in love with the natural world but is rejected by it, was not born of historical circumstances, as was the case with Brutus, but was caused by some unexplainable mistake of Fate. Sappho's suicide becomes, then, not a defiant gesture, but the necessary elimination of an oddity in nature.

In *Inno ai patriarchi*, written in 1822, Leopardi presents for the last time in his poetry the contrast between a primeval

happiness in harmony with nature and modern-day aridity without illusions. In this poem, he reverses the desert metaphor, applying it not to the barren state of the modern world, but to the original idyllic peace and innocence of earthly paradise uninhabited except for Adam and Eve,

quando le rupi e le deserte valli
precipite l'alpina onda feria
d'inudito fragor; quando gli ameni
futuri seggi di lodate genti
e di cittadi romorose, ignota
pace regnava [...] Oh fortunata,
di colpe ignara e di lugubri eventi,
erma terrena sede!

The death and violence brought by Cain the fratricide break this initial, harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Now the tranquil, deserted landscape of paradise is transformed into the desert of anxiety and loneliness that is destined to pursue Cain and his descendants as they organise the first societies:

Trepido, errante il fratricida, e l'ombre
solitarie fuggendo e la secreta
nelle profonde selve ira de' venti,
primo i civili tetti, albergo e regno
alle macere cure, innalza [...]

The poem ends with the description of another secluded paradise, which has been lost only in modern times. The happiness of the state of nature, where illusions are intact, can, says Leopardi, still be found amongst indigenous peoples, provided so-called "civilised" societies do not violate their territories and introduce their own anxieties and unhappiness. The words that Leopardi uses to condemn the colonisation of California could be applied just as appropriately to the white colonisation of Aboriginal Australia that was occurring at the time he was writing, and to the loss of Aboriginal culture over the last 200 years:

[...] fra le vaste californie selve
nasce beata prole, a cui non sugge
pallida cura il petto, a cui le membra
fera tabe non doma; e vitto il bosco,
nidi l'intima rupe, onde ministra
l'irrigua valle, inopinato il giorno
dell'atra morte incombe. Oh contra il nostro
scellerato ardimento inermi regni
della saggia natura! I lidi e gli antri
e le quiete selve apre l'invitto

nostro furor; le violate genti
al peregrino affanno, agl'ignorati
desiri educa; e la fugace, ignuda
felicità per l'imo sole incalza.

In other poems of the same period, aridity and isolation appear as a more direct description of Leopardi's personal physical and mental condition. In *La sera del dì di festa* the *grido* of fame and glory of the ancient world has faded into total empty silence, to be replaced by Leopardi's own *grido* in the desert of his condition of lovelessness ("Intanto io chieggo / quanto a viver mi resti, e qui per terra / mi getto, e grido, e fremo"). In *L'infinito*, written in 1819, the year of his crisis, the isolation of monte Tabor on the edge of Recanati is the setting for this particular poetic experience. Here, however, the *eremos* suggested in the "ermo colle" of the first line ("Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle") does not function as the infertile abode of some solitary hill-dweller, but rather as the launching pad for a journey of the mind that momentarily releases the poet from the spatial and temporal confines of his imprisonment. In the later *Il passero solitario*, the image of the "hermit" returns once more to describe the loneliness he feels in the spring of his life in his home town:

quasi romito, e strano
al mio loco natio,
passo del viver mio la primavera.

This state of alienation in his youth, reconfirmed in the metathesis from *romito* to the word *rimota*, which appears further on in *Il passero solitario* ("Io solitario in questa / *rimota* parte alla campagna uscendo"), is the anticipation of the desert world that awaits him in old age, when the world will be *vòto*.

Leopardi wrote virtually no poetry in the five years after 1823. Then in Pisa in 1828 the world spoke to him again. This period of poetic silence is documented in the poem *Il risorgimento* as a time when his aridity suffocated all emotions and illusions:

Piansi spogliata, esanime
fatta per me la vita;
la terra inaridita,
chiusa in eterno gel;
deserto il dì; la tacita
notte più sola e bruna;
spenta per me la luna,
spente le stelle in ciel.

Now, in 1828-1829, the memories of his lost youth return to speak with him. In the poems *A Silvia* and *Le ricordanze* the desert appears not in terms of a lost golden age of antiquity - classical or biblical -, but as the loss of youth, and the presence of the all-engulfing aridity of adulthood. Silvia dies in the flower of her youth, "pria che l'erbe inaridisse il verno", before her spring could wither in the winter of adulthood; Nerina in *Le ricordanze* becomes the bitter-sweet memory that penetrates what he calls here his "deserto, oscuro [...] stato mortal". Into the deserted window of his adult life Nerina is projected as a sweet, diaphanous mirage:

O Nerina! [...] Dove sei gita,
che qui sola di te la ricordanza
trovo, dolcezza mia? Più non ti vede
questa terra natal: quella finestra,
ond'eri usata favellarmi, ed onde
mesto riluce delle stelle il raggio,
è deserta.

In this desert, love too provides the possibility for regeneration. In 1823, in the poem *Alla sua donna*, the Platonic woman figure *dea-idea* had appeared as his "viatrice in questo arido suolo". In the later *Aspasia* cycle of poems, which coincide with his emotional involvement with Fanny Targioni-Tozzetti in the early 1830s, love is portrayed as a passion that has as its equivalent and resolution a passionate desire for death. With the possibility of this new infinite happiness, the world, by contrast, appears as an uninhabitable desert. From *Amore e morte* :

Forse gli occhi spaura
allor questo deserto: a sé la terra
forse il mortale inabitabil fatta
vede omai senza quella
nova, sola, infinita
felicità che il suo pensier figura.

Thus far in Leopardi's poetic journey we have seen the desert metaphor essentially in terms of the opposites ancients versus moderns, inspired feeling versus poetic barrenness, youth versus adulthood, love versus human isolation. But it is in *Canto notturno* and *La ginestra* that the desert metaphor assumes its fullest significance. Now, in these poems, the desert becomes the dwelling place of all humanity, without any limitations of time or space: ever since their first appearance, humans have always lived in the unhappy desert

of the universe, suffering mental and physical pain at the hands of an unfathomable and cruel destiny. In contrast with the biblical desert, which is seen as a necessary pathway to future salvation, liberation through myth or religion is for Leopardi purely a mirage. Indeed, he now deliberately and defiantly exploits biblical sources in order to reinforce his rejection of religious solutions, and, more specifically, to denounce the spiritualism professed by the Tuscan liberals. In the *Operette morali* of 1824, he had already portrayed human existence as of no consequence in Nature's mechanical cycles of production and destruction. Now in *Canto notturno* the desert takes on these same vast, cosmic proportions ("Che fai tu, luna, in ciel? dimmi, che fai, / silenziosa luna? Sorgi la sera, e vai, / contemplando i deserti"). In this desert world, no Moses is called upon to lead the shepherd-nomad to the Promised Land, no God is invoked in an attempt to free the desert wanderer from ever-present solitude and tedium. On the contrary, the poem, especially in the allegory of the arduous journey of the "vecchierel bianco, infermo, / mezzo vestito e scalzo", is Leopardi's response to the optimistic view of the human voyage expressed in, for example, Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water [...] He guides me along the right paths". Both Leopardi's shepherd and the psalmist express a desire to escape from their present predicament. Leopardi: "Forse s'avess'io l'ale / da volar su le nubi, / [...] più felice sarei"; Psalm 55: "Had I but wings like a dove, I would fly away and find rest [...] and live in the wilderness". While the psalmist relies on blind faith in a future salvation, the shepherd-Leopardi is prepared to confront the plain truth that from the moment of birth (of both the individual and of humankind) "la vita è male" and "è funesto a chi nasce il dì natale". Here we have the antithesis of, and protest against, the religious optimism of the sort expressed by Alexander Pope as "One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right". Nor is there any suggestion here, in Leopardi, that humans bear responsibility for evil on account of some Adamitic fall from perfection. Rather, in *Canto notturno* we have what Cesare Goffis calls the "antimito di Caino",³⁹ the rejection of the original myth where Cain, the wanderer in the desert of the world and the bearer of remorse, traditionally represented the ever-present link with a prehistoric Eden of happiness.

The poem *La ginestra o il fiore del deserto* is an even more direct denunciation of religious optimism and of the illusion of

a future happy state, whether in an after-life or in a pseudo-utopian society. At the outset, in the poem's epigraph, Leopardi exploits a biblical quotation ("E gli uomini vollero piuttosto le tenebre che la luce") to condemn the blindness of his age's faith in religion and scientific progress, by transferring the original biblical meaning of divine light to that of the light of reason. Reason alone can lead us to conclusions that are, as he said in the *Dialogo* quoted at the beginning of this paper, "painful but true". The arid truth is: that Nature is a cyclic force that is completely indifferent to the existence, suffering, and death of humans, and to the appearance and disappearance of the societies they build; that humans are destined to live in a fruitless wasteland where happiness is unattainable. In the opening lines of the poem, which describe the barren slopes of Vesuvius where the fragrant broom-plant grows, Leopardi now assembles all the main *parole* denoting aridity and isolation that he has used in his previous poetry, in order to heighten the effect of the desert *topos* :

Qui su l'arida schiena
del formidabil monte
sterminator Vesevo,
la qual null'altro allegra arbor né fiore,
tuoi cespi *solitari* intorno spargi,
odorata ginestra,
contenta dei *deserti*. Anco ti vidi
de' tuoi steli abbellir l'erme contrade
che cingon la cittade
la qual fu donna de' mortali un tempo,
e del perduto impero
par che col grave e taciturno aspetto
faccian fede e ricordo al passeggero.

In this desert of existence, which in the poem assumes cosmic proportions (where the earth is, in the vast universe, just an "oscuro granel di sabbia"), any expectation of divine redemption, or of a future, perfect, human society founded on irrational myths, is purely an absurd illusion. Again, as if in defiance of the biblical Word (e.g. Jeremiah: "The Lord says, 'I will condemn the person who turns away from me and puts his trust in the strength of mortal man. He is like a bush in the desert, which grows in the dry wasteland'"),⁴⁰ onto this barren landscape Leopardi introduces, as a new model for human existence, the fragrant *ginestra*, which has no grandiose plans for present or future life, but bravely recognises mortal existence for what it is. Though Nature is invincible, and one's destiny unalterable, humans, says Leopardi, can achieve a similar nobility by facing up to the insignificance and fragil-

ity of their existence and, in a new social pact that denounces conflicts and hatred, that proclaims divine love a false illusion, put their trust in their fellow humans, so that they may help each other "con vero amor" to reduce the impact of the inescapable facts of human existence: growing up, suffering mental and physical pain, growing old, and dying. Leopardi's final message demands of all of us the commitment to strive for a more just, more compassionate, and more equitable society, in which the difficulty of living is confronted and eased for our youth and our adults, in which the suffering of elderly people is alleviated, in which death is faced with dignity. It is a message as relevant today as it will be tomorrow: the desert is ever-present, let it not be populated with mirages. Rather, let the nomad-travellers help each other and lovingly support one another as they complete their journey across the wasteland.

NOTES

1. G. Leopardi, *Tutte le opere*, a cura di W. Binni, con la collaborazione di E. Ghidetti, Firenze, Sansoni, 1969, vol. I, p.181. All future references are to this edition of Leopardi's works.

2. Leopardi, vol. II, 670 [Zib. 2629].

3. Vol. II, p.60 [Zib. 110]; and p.357 [Zib. 1226].

4. Vol. II, p.474 [Zib. 1701-2].

5. Vol. II, p.387 [Zib. 1333].

6. Vol. II, p.636 [Zib. 2468].

7. Vol. II, p.474 [Zib. 1702-3].

8. Vol. I, p.1024.

9. Vol. I, pp.1038 and 1045.

10. Vol. I, pp.1058, 1064 and 1074.

11. Vol. I, pp.1169 and 1179.

12. Vol. I, p.1242.

13. Vol. I, p.1179.

14. Vol. I, pp.1345 and 1347.

15. Vol. II, p.499 [Zib. 1815].

16. Vol. I, p.1079.

17. Vol. I, p.1089.

18. Vol. I, p.1165.

19. Vol. I, p.1090.

20. Vol. I, p.1198.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Vol. I, p.1130.

23. Vol. I, p.1242.

24. Vol. I, p.1254.

25. Vol. I, pp.1320-1.

26. Vol. I, p.1393.

27. Vol. I, p.1398.

28. Vol. I, p.1399.

29. Vol. II, p.299 [Zib. 1028].

30. *Purgatorio*, XI, 13-15.

31. *Rime*, XXXV, 1.

32. *Ger. Lib.*, IX, 9, 1-2.

33. G. Leopardi, *Crestomazia italiana. La poesia*, introduzione e note di G. Savoca, Torino, Einaudi, 1968, p.241.

34. "Tacito orror di solitaria selva", 14.

35. *Dei sepolcri*, 232-3.

36. "Taci, anima stanca di godere" (*Pianissimo*).

37. *Forse dice l'addio*, 18-20.

38. P. Pasolini, *Teorema*, Milano, Garzanti, 1968, p.197.

39. C. Goffis, "L'antimito di Caino nel *Canto notturno*", *Leopardi e la letteratura italiana dal Duecento al Seicento*, Atti del IV Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani, Firenze, Olschki, 1978, pp.633-8.

40. Jeremiah, 17, 5-6.