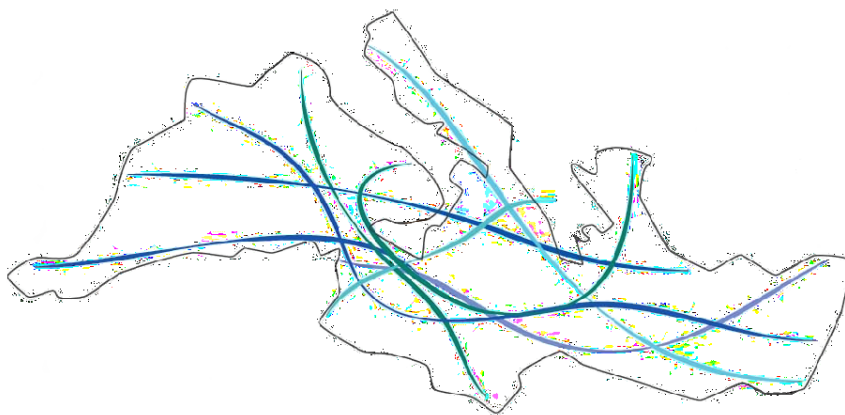


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CARMEN LUCIA MOCCIA

**Scritture/Riscritture.
44th International Conference of American
Studies. University of Salerno, 11-13 May
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Scritture/Riscritture.
44th International Conference of American Studies
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CARMEN LUCIA MOCCIA
University of Salerno

The University of Salerno has recently staged the study days on literature organized in the framework of the 44th International Congress of American Studies, promoted by the *Circolo Amerindiano ONLUS di Perugia* and the *Circolo Amerindiano di Salerno*.

The conference, chaired by Rosa Maria Grillo, took place from 10 to 13 May 2022, with a numerous attendance of scholars from Italian and foreign universities. The participants, although coming from diverse backgrounds, were united by the study of the cultures of the American continent.

The title *scritture/riscritture* (writing/rewriting) opens multiple points of reflection. Of course, it is impossible to give a complete account of the conference in the short space of a report, thus we will discuss only some contributions.

Piero Gorza, author of report on the relationship between orality and writing in the land of Mayas, leads us into a dimension of song/prayer, in which meaning and significance are not literal; on the contrary, they need to be renegotiated (reinvented) from time to time on the base of a *discard* (deviation, context, criteria), filled with the presence of the involved actors. Enigmatic words in the prayer, being “pure”, generate such discard and, at the same time, allow the return of images that build memory, despite being always the same. This polysemous characteristic of keeping the same and saying different things is the common thread that takes us back to writing and rewriting.

Pedro Pitarch, in *La escritura del jaguar*, has interpreted the topic of writing and rewriting in the conception of the collective writing of indigenous people in Chiapas. For the Chiapas people, writing is linked to the afterlife and to the world of spirits and death. Particularly significant is the role of the missionary, seen in the collective imagery as a figure intent on writing. In Chiapas he would represent the materialization of the malaise that has always linked writers to death. Writing is a source of disease, especially a disease of memory: in accordance with Socrates and Phaedrus, writing entails coercive power, reduction of memory, as well as loss of exchange,

whereas the sounds generates dialogue. And this lack of exchange makes writing a source of absence: because of the implicit and primary characteristic of the same, the verbal interchange, which allows the presence, fails. Thus, how to fight the ills produced by writing and why a body get sick? According to the Chiapas indigenous culture, writing produces infirmity. Words have been introduced into the body of the patient; the curator must speak to the words and somehow persuade them to leave the body. 'La escritura del jaguar', the red and the black ink, are the obvious manifestations of degeneration, spots related to advancing age, to chemical and biological processes that among the natives represent the unequivocal sign of a writing, which must be eradicated with words.

In the contribution titled *From living memory to rewriting*, Dilian Ferrer deals with the novel *Yo soy Napëyoma, relato de una mujer raptada por los indígenas Yanomami*, autobiographical tale of a little girl kidnapped by the Yanomami population. Beyond the personal history of Napëyoma, according to Ferrer the novel is a real historical document, which anthropologists, historians and experts have repeatedly studied to reconstruct the live of the Yanomami society. A few years later the first edition, the autobiography has been enriched with new and defined details that better summarize the events of Napëyoma, who, after having run away from Yanomami world, was not welcomed by her family of origin, because she was mother of two children born in the two decades spent away from native home.

Among the other contributions, *Estereotipos de género en México: una comparativa* by Berenize Galicia Isasmendi offers us an interesting contribution on the artist Regina José Galindo. Regina, born and grown up in Guatemala, proposes performances aimed at amplifying her malaise against a closed and hostile dictatorial regime, which through a relentless censorship restricts not only the freedom of expression, but also the normal course of daily life. The artist, author of poems filled with an intense feeling that, in addition to chanting intimate and personal memories, denounce the female condition in her country, approaches art as a subsequent phase in her poetry. According to Isasmendi, Regina uses her own body as an essential part of the artistic language; her performances become the natural consequence of her expressive needs, as if the body may express in a more urgent and immediate way the thoughts of the artist. A sort of rewriting without restraints. Using her body as a tool to transform the absence into presence is an act of female vindication in every performance. Her works come from the awareness that women suffer an individual and collective pain, they are not based on empathy but on a collective revenge, in which the idea the basic idea is that when one advances, all advance. In this sense, the artistic potential of the performative body is an invitation to the reflection, understood as writing and rewriting of a new direction, paths and ways of redemption, female emancipation.

Camilla Cattarulla, in her presentation on *Reescrituras de la primera misión apostólica vaticana*, deals with the Catholic mission in Chile held between 1824 and 1825 by the Apostolic Vicar Giovanni Muzi, the abbey Sallusti and the prelate Giovanni Mastai Ferretti, future Pius IX. The mission was unsuccessful, as it was not able to bring order in the Hispanic-American Church, but the reports are an important source of the opinions of the Holy See on the South-American Church. Particularly, the diaries of Mastai Ferretti have been a source of the novel of Carpentier *El Arpa y la Sombra*. According to Cattarulla, in this “rewriting” Carpentier starts the aesthetic elaboration of the American contexts, thus establishing relations and categories between Europe and America. The writer use the paradox of imagining the future pope reading Voltaire and Rousseau, reproducing a dialogue to establish a relation of equality between Europe and America, an equality constituted by the political ingenuity of both American and Italian liberals.

All the presentations have addressed new topics and shed new light on the studies of the American literatures. Being impossible to summarize them here, we remind that the videoclips of all presentations can be watched on the YouTube channel of the *Circolo amerindiano di Perugia*¹ and that the proceedings of the conference will be soon published.

Finally, the conference has been the occasion for giving the prestigious award of the *Circolo Amerindiano di Perugia* to Rosa Maria Grillo for her long scientific activity, which have marked not only the history of the Amerindian circle, but also that of American studies. Grillo is the eleventh recipient and first woman in 44 years of life of the *Circolo*.

¹https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_yzkm09IL74m87rgtMdg2A/featured