

Raffaele Milani

Docente di Storia dell'Estetica presso l'Università degli Studi di Bologna
milani@philo.unibo.it

In Defense of Nature – Abstract

The aesthetic experience that we achieve in nature will be not analyzed as a value in itself, needing as such of conservation, and able to create the necessity of protection, but rather as an adjunctive topic, which follows those, more substantial, provided by biology and ecology. The path which is followed in almost the whole "ökologische Aesthetic" but also in a good part of the Environmental Aesthetics in English, these from the necessity of Defending Nature to the search of aesthetic reasons to do so. That means a strong difference from the theories of natural beauty, characteristic of previous periods, because the necessity of conservation did not completely belong to these. As to the works of Art that need to be preserved and protected, in the case of nature, we have many other reasons that prompt a sto protect it (biological, moral, economical reasons); as for art, the aesthetic value is the sole motive. However even if this is not completely true (the works of art are preserved also as ethnological and hystorical documents). The important issue is the syssymetry thus created between the natural beauty and the artistic beauty. The later is assumed as a primary value, a value in itself while natural beauty is assumed as a derived value. The natural beauty exists in our heart, not because we are prompted to consider worthy of conservation what provide us an aesthetic pleasure in nature, but as far as we find in the aesthetic value one more reason to reinforce a conviction which we already possess: that nature is to be respected.

Biography

Raffaele Milani teaches History of Aesthetics in the Philosophy Department at the University of Bologna. In recent years he has focused his research on comparative aesthetics, and edited the Italian translation of Etienne Souriau's *La corrispondance des arts* (Alinea, Firenze 1988). He is also the author of *Categorie estetiche* (Pratiche, Parma 1991), a detailed survey of the main aesthetic categories to which scholars and writers have referred over the last three centuries. He has contributed widely to important Italian journals of aesthetics, such as "Rivista di Estetica", "il verri", and "Studi di estetica". His recent work, *Il Pittoresco. L'evoluzione del gusto tra classico e romantico* (Laterza, Bari 1996) analyzes the relationship between natural beauty and artistic beauty, comparing the baroque, classicism, rococo and romanticism. Before the agony of nature and the decline of art, the vision suggested by the picturesque still offers useful lessons and perspectives today. *Il Pittoresco* (awarded the Hanbury Botanical Gardens International Prize) is a book about art, the beauty of nature, the discovery of the landscape, the pleasures of travel and excursions. *Il fascino della paura. L'invenzione del Gotico dal Rococò al Trash* (Guerini, Milano 1998) is an overview of the pleasure of terror in literature and the arts, from the eighteenth century to today. In his latest book, *The Art of the Landscape* (awarded the Calabria International Prize), Milani addresses the issue of natural

landscapes as an aesthetic category. Making use of a wide array of materials drawn from philosophical tradition, literature and art, *The Art of the Landscape* is a detailed guidebook to the aesthetic experience of landscapes. Milani calls the reader's attention to a special consciousness, originally established during the pre-Romantic age, which is a distinctive feature of contemporary spirituality.

Previous publications include:

Il cinema tra le arti (Mucchi, Modena 1985)

Tecniche dello sguardo (Mucchi, Modena, 1988)

AA. VV. *Idee dell'arte*, see under the heading *Paura* (Alinea, Firenze 1991)

Raffaele Milani has been a Research Associate in Aesthetics at the University of Bologna since 1974. He has participated in international symposiums and held lectures and seminars on aesthetic categories, the comparison between the arts, synaesthesia and the media, aesthetics and the landscape.