



## Leopardi Studies at Oxford

In collaboration with  
Laboratorio Leopardi, Università La Sapienza - Roma  
Dipartimento Culture e Civiltà, Università di Verona  
Leopardi Centre, University of Birmingham

June 2021

### **‘Contaminations – Leopardi and the Modern Self from Romanticism to Modernism’**

#### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Leopardi Studies at Oxford is organizing a two-day conference to take place at Christ Church, Oxford in June 2021, on ‘Contaminations – Leopardi and the Modern Self from Romanticism to Modernism.’

The conference aims at gathering the legacy of the recent revival of Leopardi studies in the UK. Following the 2012 publication of the first integral English translation of Leopardi’s *Zibaldone* undertaken by an international team of scholars and translators lead by the Leopardi Centre of Birmingham University, scholarship on Leopardi is enjoying a Renaissance in the UK, with a series of prize-winning publications (2020 MLA’s Scaglione prize for Italian studies to Martina Piperno, 2019 AAIS Book Prize to Paola Cori), the creation of new research centres (Leopardi Studies at Oxford, 2018) and interdisciplinary projects (‘Leopardi occulto, gotico, irrazionale’ and ‘Literature and Psychology’ at the Leopardi Centre of Birmingham, 2018).

The conference aims at transcending borders, reaching out to scholars at world level, and to act as a catalyst for the international research network that has been developing steadily since the pioneering opening of the Leopardi Centre in Birmingham, and that now includes the Laboratorio Leopardi in Rome, and the research project ‘L’eredità di Leopardi’ run by the Dipartimento Culture e Civiltà of the University of Verona.

## The theme of the conference

Contamination can be considered as the defining principle of Leopardian discourse. The attention devoted by recent scholarship to the *Zibaldone*, the autobiographical writings, the experimentation with prose, has shifted somewhat our perception of his discursive universe, disclosing his *oeuvre* as an organism that feeds on an extraordinary richness of other discourses (from anthropology to science to popular culture, to aesthetics and metaphysics). The ensuing dynamic and often contradictory, ebb-and-flow movement between ancient and modern, between poetry and prose, between genres, and between different aesthetic theories and practices, positions this *scrittura* both as unorthodox in the Italian context, and absolutely central to the European context it unarguably belongs to. The notion of contamination is however not merely descriptive of this discursive universe, not merely an interpretive tool, but the very mechanism at work, the proverbial ghost in the machine of Leopardi's *modernity*. Nowhere is this more visible than in the formidable construction of a Self that straddles two centuries, and different galaxies of thought, form, discourse, reaching out to the self-obsessed, 'contaminated' Selves of Modernism, and finding there familiar meeting ground.

Leopardi's writing can not only help us to read his time and the powerful transformations occurred throughout Romanticism, but can be seen to significantly forerun the spirit of Modernity.

Scholars interested in participating and contributing a paper may wish to consider the following areas of interest subsumed to the idea of 'contamination':

### **Romantic contaminations**

Romanticism and Romantic Discourses: aesthetic, philosophical, political, and scientific thought

Leopardi and Nineteenth-century poetry and poetic theory

Leopardi and the lexicon of Romanticism

Reception of Leopardi in the Nineteenth Century

### **Contamination leading to hybridism**

Leopardi, the autobiographical novel, the operetta, the journal, and the letter

The Twilight of the Lyric Self in the Canti: transitions, transformations, excisions

### **The Contaminated Selves of Modernity**

Writing the Modern Self(ves)

Listening to the Self: Leopardi and the pathologies of Modernity

Leopardi Reception in Modernism and Modernist Discourses: aesthetic, philosophical, political, and scientific thought.

An abstract of no more than 400 words an essential bibliography and a brief biographical profile should be sent to [olmo.calzolari@keble.ox.ac.uk](mailto:olmo.calzolari@keble.ox.ac.uk) by 30th November 2020. The official languages of the conference will be English and Italian.