



Society for Italian Studies



CFP - SIS Themed Conference 2018

*Resistance in Italian Culture: Literature, Politics and Film,*  
5-6 April 2018, University of Sussex

**Organisers: Ambra Moroncini (Sussex University), Darrow Schecter (Sussex University),  
Fabio Vighi (University of Cardiff)**

Resistance to received ideologies, political conflicts and preconceived literary ideas has been a distinctive mark of Italian culture and society. From a literary point of view, one only needs to think of Dante as the poet of exile and resistance to the Pontiff's policies; of Boccaccio's women's resistance to traditional gender representation in his *Decameron*; of the Renaissance paradoxical praises (i. e. the *encomia* of the burlesque poets) which transgressed the canonical model of lyrical style of the 'Petrarchisti'; of the Classicist / Romantic debate of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; of Manzoni's resistance against injustice and of his "distrust of the ideological masquerades of power"; of Sibilla Aleramo's early feminist novels; of Calvino's own reflections on the difficulties, in post-war Italy, of creating a national literary role model; of other 20th century authors such as Franco Fortini, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Giorgio Caproni, who used parody, irony and controversial thematic and linguistic choices to oppose nationalistic rhetoric. Much closer to our time, the global success of Elena Ferrante's novels has highlighted that fiction which might favour popular writing over a highly erudite discourse may find some resistance to being accepted as valuable literature in Italian academic debates.

Politically, the Italian Resistance leading up to and following WWII can be seen as resistance to political dictatorship in the first instance. The lives and works of Gobetti, Matteotti Gramsci and the Rosselli brothers, to name but a few, are indicative of this civic and political *impegno*. But, as the works of Beppe Fenoglio, Natalia Ginzburg, Elio Vittorini, Roberto Rossellini, Renato Guttuso, Stefano Benni, Franca Rame, Dacia Maraini, Oriana Fallaci, Nanni Moretti, Daniele Lucchetti, Marco Tullio Giordana and many others suggest, the Resistance in Italy was and continues to be literary, cinematographic and artistic. That is, it can be argued that in the 20th century, the theme of resistance pervades Italian artistic, civic, and political life. It is at work in the best neorealist cinema, informs the protest movements of the *autunno caldo* and the demands of the *movimento di liberazione della donna*, and, somewhat polemically, can be seen as a driving force during the *anni di piombo*. More recently, opponents of Berlusconi and Renzi describe their commitment to transparency in public life as a form of resistance to undemocratic manipulation of information and political decision-making.

This conference will explore the theme of resistance in Italy looking at the literature, politics and aesthetics of innovation and subversion in Italian culture from Dante to the present. Whilst we hope to re-examine what one might designate as the classical Resistance (1943-45), we are equally interested in examining the ideas and practices challenging domineering tradition, illegitimate power and status hierarchies from early modern Italy up to now.

**Confirmed guest speakers:**

**Guido Bonsaver (University of Oxford)**

**Danielle Hipkins (University of Exeter)**

**Stefano Jossa (Royal Holloway University of London)**

We invite proposals for sessions (title, a 150 words abstract, university of affiliation and short bio for each speaker) by **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017**. Papers may be in Italian or in English, but speakers must be (or become) members of the UK SIS. Session proposals should be sent to [sussexsisconference2018@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:sussexsisconference2018@sussex.ac.uk). Conference delegate fee: £95 (lunch and refreshments for 2 days included). Post-Graduate fee: £80 (lunch and refreshments for 2 days included).