

Emeritus Professor of Italian Studies

**[Department of Modern Languages: Italian Studies \(/schools/lcahm/departments/italian/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/italian/index.aspx)**

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### About

My current responsibilities (2012-14) are directed to teaching and researching on Leopardi. The first complete English edition of his notebooks (*Zibaldone*) will be published in 2013 ([www.birmingham.ac.uk/leopardi](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/leopardi) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/leopardi>))

### Biography

I graduated in modern languages at Cambridge and moved from a post at the University of Kent to the chair of Italian at Birmingham in 1994, where I was head of department from 1994 to 2002 and again from 2005 to 2008. My teaching and research interests in Italian Studies have ranged from the reception of Dante since the Middle Ages to contemporary literature and the work of Umberto Eco, with a strong research focus on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### Research

My research interests include literary theory, problems of reception and trans-cultural adaptation, textual interpretation, and the relations between oral and written culture in modern (post-18th century) culture.

The main project I am engaged on at the current time is the production of the first complete critical English edition of Giacomo Leopardi's notebooks, the *Zibaldone*, with an introduction, notes, commentary and indexes. I am jointly responsible for this with my colleague Franco D'Intino, and publication in the US and UK (Farrar, Straus and Giroux / Penguin) is expected in 2013. The work is being carried out under the auspices of the **[Leopardi Centre \(research/activity/leopardi/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/leopardi/index.aspx)** at Birmingham which I co-founded in 1998.

### Other activities

Convenor of the international conference 'Thinking in Fragments: Romanticism and Beyond', held at Birmingham with the support of the AHRC, 16-17 December 2010.

### Publications

#### Books (since 1999)

- (with Ann Hallamore Caesar): *Modern Italian Literature*, Cambridge, Polity, 2007.
- (with Marina Spunta, eds.): *Orality and Literacy in Modern Italian Culture*, Oxford, Legenda, 2006.
- (with Franco D'Intino, eds.): *Leopardi e il libro nell'età romantica*, Roma, Bulzoni, 2000.
- *Umberto Eco: Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction*, Cambridge, Polity, 1999.

#### Selected recent articles and chapters in books

- (with Nick Havely) 'Politics and Performance: Gustavo Modena's *dantate*', in A. Audeh and N. Havely (eds), *Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century. Nationality, Identity, and Appropriation*, Oxford, OUP, 2012, pp. 111-37.
- 'Sognar libertà : Gabriele Rossetti e la poesia estemporanea', in G. Oliva and M. Menna (eds), *I Rossetti e l'Italia*, Lanciano, Carabba, 2010, pp. 17-36.
- 'Sozzo a vedere: corpo e tabù nell'ultimo Leopardi', in C. Gaiardoni (ed), *La prospettiva antropologica nel pensiero e nella poesia di Giacomo Leopardi*, Firenze, Olschki, 2010, pp. 179-193.
- 'Dante, Leopardi and *The City of Dreadful Night*', in Z.G. Barański and M. McLaughlin (eds), *Dante the Lyric and Ethical Poet: Dante lirico e etico*, Legenda, Oxford, 2010, pp. 210-226.
- 'Franco Moretti and the World Literature Debate', *Italian Studies* 62, 1, spring 2007, pp. 125-35.
- 'Poetic Improvisation in the Nineteenth Century: Giuseppe Regaldi and Giannina Milli', *Modern Language Review*, 101, 3, July 2006, pp. 701-14.
- 'Voice, Vision and Orality. Notes on Reading Adriana Cavarero', in Caesar and Spunta (eds), *Orality and Literacy in Modern Italian Culture*, Oxford, Legenda, 2006, pp. 7-17.
- 'Poetic Improvisation and the Challenge of Transcription', in B. Richardson (ed), *Theatre, Opera, and Performance in Italy from the Fifteenth Century to the Present*, Leeds, Maney, 2004, pp. 173-84.
- "'Mezz'ora di nobiltà': Leopardi e i suoi lettori", in L. Melosi (ed), *Leopardi a Firenze*, Firenze, Olschki, 2002, pp.461-472.
- "'The central man of all the world': l'esaltazione di Dante nell'Ottocento europeo", in I. Balzelli et al (eds), *La cultura letteraria italiana e l'identità europea*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2001, pp. 31-38.
- 'The Node: Eco and the Meaning of Joyce', *Journal of Romance Studies* 1, 2, summer 2001, pp. 53-72.
- 'Leopardi e l'organizzazione del tempo come tema nello Zibaldone', in *Lo Zibaldone cento anni dopo. Composizione, edizioni, temi. Atti del X Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani*, Firenze, Olschki, 2001, pp. 665-671.

- 'Eco et la mort de l'avantgarde', in J. Petitot (ed), *Au nom du Sens: autour d'Umberto Eco*, Paris, Grasset, 2000, pp. 407-420.

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