

CRA-INITS NEWS
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Carla Rossi Academy – International Institute
of Italian Studies***

26th International Conference

(10-12 March 2022)

Conflict and Literature: Narratives of Struggle

Organized by

The Department of Germanic and Romance Studies University of Delhi

Conflict and Literature: Narratives of Struggle

10-12 March 2022

“Man of my time: You killed again, as always, as your fathers killed...”

Salvatore Quasimodo

Almost ten percent of the world’s population lives in a state of low intensity or full blown conflict either in a civil war or in situations where rival gangs fight each other and the local population. The youth is particularly ubiquitous in these conflict situations as we have seen recently in the case of the victorious

Taliban entering the Afghan capital or the MS 13 street gangs of San Francisco. This phenomenon spans the entire XXth century and images of the Falangists during the Spanish Civil War, and Italian Resistenza come readily to mind. Indeed vigilante groups like Baader Meinhof in Germany, Red Brigades in Italy, terrorist organizations like ETA and drug cartels have traditionally relied on an infusion of youthful energy to swell their ranks. On the other hand, conflict situations are also marked by youth movements that defy authority in a bid to right injustice as is clear from the movements that fight fundamentalism, violence and police excesses.

Unsurprisingly, conflicts and wars fuel literature and other art forms. The depiction of war has resulted in new genres of literature and each of the movements detailed above from the war time memoirs to the narco novels of Latin America, Spain and giallo of Italy have been trendsetters. Often these narratives are an alternative to mainstream historical and political discourses as in the case of adolescent literary texts depicting Southern Cone dictatorships or graphic novels which deconstruct metanarratives with zany humor.

How does conflict manifest itself formally and aesthetically in a text? Does the inscription of conflict have wider ramifications for literature in that it contributes to an amplification of the idea of text. In this context we have only to remember the war chronicles of George Orwell or Ernest Hemingway or the documentary photographs of Danish Siddiqui as pictures say what a thousand words cannot.

We invite papers with an interdisciplinary approach to texts on war and also those that have challenged existing discourses in the fine arts, performing arts and film. Possible themes could include the texts of revolutions, caste and class wars, conflicts of the individual with society, the Self and the Other and all kinds of intragroup and inter group struggles.

Professor Minni Sawhney, Head of the Department, head@grs.du.ac.in and Professor Ramesh Kumar, Coordinator of the seminar swamiramesh1@gmail.com.

10 March, 2022

2:00 PM – 2:35 PM

ISLAMIC VIOLENCE AND WISDOM BETWEEN PERDITION AND SALVATION IN DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

*by
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Abstract

Dante, probably impressed by the descriptions of a contemporary, the Florentine Dominican Riccoldo da Montecroce, in the Divine Comedy refers to Baghdad and Samarra as emblems of Islamic scientific excellence, but also of the risk of a proud and destructive rationalism. On the one hand, the Islamic symbolism in Dante's poem indicates admiration

for the intellectual greatness of Muslims, heirs and followers of the great master Aristotle. On the other hand, it expresses a severe judgment against Islam, perceived by the Tuscan poet as a heretic theology devoid of freedom and, therefore, of that true selfless love which in Christianity indicates the only pure form of Truth. In any case this heresy can be ultimately saved, in a spiritual sense, from the infinite divine mercy; but only through a mystical way, according to a perspective indicated by St. Thomas Aquinas and the Sufi Ibn Arabi. After all, every religion of love offers salvation, while the hatred of men is always blasphemy and damnation. In this sense, what Dante's poem reveals in Paradise XIX (106-114) is fundamental: many Muslim Ethiopians full of loving feelings will be much closer to the mystery of Christ than several hypocrites who are inside the Roman Church as legitimate members. And, certainly, the same can be said of several pure-hearted Middle Eastern Muslims of Avicenna's land, the Persian country, and therefore of pure-hearted Muslims in general. This is the message of the Divine Comedy, described by Pope Paul VI as "Evangelium Pacis": a book of tolerance and peace.

Biobibliography

Marino Alberto Balducci is associate professor in the section of "Italian Studies and Christianity" at the Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Stettin in Poland, where he teaches Christian Literature and Religious Artistic Patrimony. He graduated at the University of Florence in Italian Literature. Then, he specialized as a Dantist in America, getting his Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut. Since 1993, he has directed the research center Carla Rossi Academy in Tuscany. He has been a visiting professor in Switzerland, Australia, India and at the Harvard Summer School. He is the author of articles and books on various periods from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. With a preface by Mario Luzi, he published poems inspired by his Indian experiences. His recent volumes are Dante and the Islamic Heresy and Dante's Hermeneutics, with a preface by the president of the Italian Dante Society Marcello Ciccutto. Presenting a project on his free version in poetic-interpretative prose of the Divine Comedy, he won the "2021 Dante Prize of Tuscany".

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