

In a famous passage of *Survival in Auschwitz*, the memoir that emerged from his harrowing experience in a concentration camp, Primo Levi strives to recall from his memory Canto 26 of Dante's *Inferno* – a canto that narrates the mad flight and tragic fall of the Greek hero Ulysses. Levi's account of Ulysses' speech to his companions in *Inferno* 26 turns into the prism through which the reader of *Survival* journeys across nearly three millennia of European history, from the obvious, albeit oblique, echoes of Homer's *Odyssey* to the rise of a new epochal phenomenon that we have come to describe as Humanism and to the horror of the Nazi concentration camp. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the text that allows Levi to glimpse a sign of humanity in this horror, a modern hell that man created on earth. It is in light of the role that Dante plays in *Survival* that this conference aims to assess Dante's place vis-à-vis modernity: his role as a modern author in vernacular; his prophetic impetus; his theological and political vision; his influence on later writers from Giovanni Boccaccio to John Milton and beyond, as well as on artists from Michelangelo to Dali.

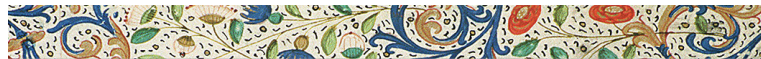
This conference—much like Dante's *Comedy*—transgresses disciplinary boundaries, bringing together scholars from English, Art History, Philosophy, Religion, History, Political Science, and Italian to explore Dante's role in informing the modern imaginary; his vision as a prophet and modern author; literary and artistic works inspired by *The Divine Comedy*; the reception of Dante's work in early modern Europe and beyond; the challenges of teaching Dante in a rapidly evolving academic environment; and the question of freedom – a key issue in the moral and theological economy of the *Comedy* and possibly the most crucial question that Dante's poem poses to its modern readers.

Funding for this conference is provided by the Armand Hammer Endowment for the UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies.

Advance registration is requested, online at
cmrs.ucla.edu/event/dante-and-modernity/
No fee. Limited seating.

Self-pay parking in lots 2, 3, 4, and 5. Parking information at
main.transportation.ucla.edu/campus-parking/visitors/

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UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies

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10745 Dickson Plaza Box 951485
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Dante + Modernity

UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies
October 20-21, 2017

Dante + Modernity

Friday, October 20, 2017

UCLA Royce Hall 314

8:30 Coffee and light refreshments

Welcome and opening remarks

9:00 **Massimo Ciavolella** (UCLA), Director, CMRS

Andrea Moudarres (UCLA), Conference Organizer

9:15 **Albert Russell Ascoli** (Italian Studies, UC Berkeley),

President of the Dante Society of America

“Quanto durerà l’uso moderno...”

10:00 Break

SESSION I—Chair: **Andrea Moudarres** (Italian, UCLA)

10:15 **Claire Honess** (Italian Studies, University of Leeds)

“Si presaga mens mea non fallitur’: Dante as Political
Prophet and Poet of Community”

11:00 Break

11:15 **Arielle Saiber** (Romance Languages & Literatures,
Bowdoin College)

“Fire-Breathing Rainbows and Interlocking Rings: Modern
Mathematics and the Mystery of Dante’s Encounter
with the Trinity”

12:00 Lunch

SESSION II—Chair: **Catherine Whittinghill Illingworth**

(Comparative Literature, UCLA)

1:15 **Diane Luby Lane** (Founder, Get Lit-Words Ignite)

“The Power of Poetic Language: Dante and the Modern Theater
of Education”

1:45 **Giuseppe Mazzotta** (Italian Language & Literature,
Yale University)

Yale University)

“Dante’s Idea of Liberty and its Modern Iconoclasts”

2:30 Break

2:45 **Jason Aleksander** (Letters & Sciences, National University)

“Free Will as Hermeneutic Praxis in *Paradiso* 3-7”

3:30 Break

3:45 **David Lummus** (French & Italian, Stanford University)

“Was Boccaccio’s Dante Modern?”

4:30 Break

4:45 **Robert Harrison** (French & Italian, Stanford University)

“Dividing the Modern World between Them: Dante and
Shakespeare”

5:30 Reception

Saturday, October 21, 2017

UCLA Royce Hall 314

9:00 Coffee and light refreshments

SESSION III—Chair: **Sarah Cantor** (Italian, UCLA)

9:30 **Bronwen Wilson** (Art History, UCLA)

“Stone Matters: Sandro Botticelli’s Drawings for Dante’s
Inferno and Early Modern Mining”

10:15 Break

10:30 **Heather Webb** (Italian, University of Cambridge)

“Consortual Vision in Botticelli’s Illustrations of *Paradiso*”

11:15 Break

11:30 **Jacqueline Marie Musacchio** (Art, Wellesley College)

“Dante for Sale”

12:15 Lunch

SESSION IV—Chair: **Thomas Harrison** (Italian, UCLA)

1:30 **Martino Marazzi** (Literary, Philological & Linguistic Studies,
Università degli Studi di Milano)

Università degli Studi di Milano)

“Rise and Fall of an ‘Imperial’ Dante. The Fascist Project of
the Danteum, from Rome to Ravensbrück”

2:15 Break

2:30 **Deborah Parker** (Spanish, Italian & Portuguese,
University of Virginia)

University of Virginia)

“JFK’s Dante”

3:15 Break

3:30 **Efraín Kristal** (Comparative Literature, UCLA)

“Melancholy at the Center of the Globe; or Peter Sloterdijk’s
Interpretation of Dante’s *Inferno*”

4:15 Break

PRESENTATION + PERFORMANCE

4:30 **Uri Rom** (Buchmann-Mehta School of Music, Tel Aviv University)

“Setting Dante - an Ever New Challenge”

original settings of Dante’s poems interpreted by

Sharon Rostorf (Buchmann-Mehta School of Music, Tel Aviv
University)

Concluding remarks

5:15 **Massimo Ciavolella** (Italian, UCLA)