

24th Annual Carolina Conference for Romance Studies

VISIONS AND REVISIONS: ROMANCE UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS

Keynote Speaker:

Enrico Cesaretti University of Virginia

Between 'Degenerate Utopias' and 'Areas of Florid Ruin': Disrupted Topographies in the Italian Northeast



In *Iconemi. Storia e memoria del paesaggio* (2001), Eugenio Turri and photographer Mimmo Jodice provide a poignant visual and narrative map of the Lombard Po Valley, recording its drastic transformations in recent years.

More recently, the ISPRA Report on Soil Consumption released in June 2017 states that "Lombardy [. . .] confirms its status as the Italian region with the highest absolute values and percentages of consumed soil."

Inspired by Turri's words and Jodice's images, but also some of the work of David Harvey, another geographer who, in his *Spaces of Hope* (2000) paid particular attention to the (utopian & dystopian) transformative spatial dynamics of modernity and postmodernity, by Ursula Heise's environmentalist approach to utopia, and by material ecocriticism, my presentation frames cement and asphalt in the light of the notions of utopia and dystopia, and discusses the centrality of these substances (also) in the current phase of Italian history. More in particular, I focus on two case studies: an ecocritical reading of Milan's EXPO 2015 as both a material text and trope, (arguably a "degenerate utopia" to put it with Harvey), and a recent collection of short stories by Giorgio Falco (*L'ubicazione del bene*) which exemplify how capitalism continues to occupy and produce space.

Thursday, April 5th - 4:30-6:00

Toy Lounge, Dey Hall

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