

NYU ITALIAN STUDIES PRESENTS:

# “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”:

## Giacomo Leopardi’s Theory of Infinite Desire

Prof. Alessandro Carrera (University of Houston)

*Introduction by Maria Luisa Ardizzone, New York University, NY*

October 18th, 6:30pm

Casa Library



In the light of today's debates about the nature of pleasure, desire, happiness, and enjoyment, Giacomo Leopardi's observations on pleasure and desire strike us as both Romantic and post-Romantic - and uncannily up-to-date with 20th century psychoanalysis and contemporary theory. In his absolute certainty that the only desire is infinite desire and that no object, no goal, no accomplishment will ever bring satisfaction, Leopardi's theory of pleasure is the missing link between the Enlightenment debates about happiness, Freud's death drive, Lacan's enjoyment, and Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of productive desire.



Alessandro Carrera is Director of Italian Studies and Graduate Director of World Cultures and Literatures at the University of Houston. He has edited *Giacomo Leopardi poeta e filosofo* (Cadmio 1998) and is the author of *La distanza del cielo. Leopardi e lo spazio dell'ispirazione* (Medusa 2011). His article, "The Consistency of Nothingness : Leopardi's struggle with 'solido nulla'" is in *The Movement of Nothingness* (D.M. Price and R.J. Johnson eds., Davies 2013). Carrera has also written extensively on Bob Dylan and has translated all of his songs into Italian (*Lyrics 1961-2012*, 3 vols. Feltrinelli 2016-2017).