



Transitions of memory. Narratives of violence in the 20th and 21st centuries

International conference, 15-16 October 2021

Transitions of memory continues the activities of the Fossoli Foundation Study Centre along the lines of the previous Sites of Transit in Europe from WWII to the present. History, Spaces, Memories (2018) from which was taken the volume Camps of Transit, Sites of Memory. Past, Present, Perspectives about to be published by Peter Lang as part of the Cultural Memories series. The conference is rooted in the primary mission of the Fossoli Foundation, which is responsible for promoting research and preserving and conveying the history and memories of the Fossoli Camp and the places of memory in Carpi connected to it, the Museum and Monument to the Political and Racial Deportee in Carpi and the former synagogues.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The conference invites scholars from all disciplines interested in the topics of memory to confront the subject of the memory of violence, its stratifications, narratives and transitions during the 20th century and up to the present from a multidisciplinary and comparative point of view. Insights are requested that relate to the different methods and multiple tools for recounting a traumatic event, from historical reconstruction to representation in artistic and architectural form, from the collection and presentation of testimonies to the use of media and new technologies.

The papers can focus on Italian or foreign experiences – even making comparisons – and consider one or more aspects related to history, memory, the organisation of space, function and their narratives and representations, using a mono- or multidisciplinary approach.

The conference will be divided into four sessions:

Session I. Places and modification of the traces of violence

The topic to be discussed in the session is how architecture contributes to changing the memory of trauma, its practices and its image by obliterating and replacing parts of buildings or cities. With regard to the specific case of places of memory, attention is drawn to those projects that by intervening directly on the material component of the artefact provide for the modification or cancellation of elements on an architectural scale – from decorations to symbols, not to mention entire parts of buildings – or an urban scale – from symbolic places and buildings to entire areas of cities – thus expressing the different policies of memory over time and producing the continuous rewriting of its collective values.

Session II. Violence and dynamics of memory

The focus of the session is on the memory of violence and its dynamics over time, with respect to both the collective and public sphere and the private sphere. Priority will therefore be given to research that, rather than illustrating traumatic events, focuses on the forms of memory of them, such as anniversaries and changes in the civil calendar; rituals associated with places of memory;

the role played by mass culture; the intergenerational transmission of trauma; the activity of associations; memorials and their function in the cultural transmission of the events of the traumatic past; the connection between memory practices and forms of processing mourning.

Session III. The border as a place of trauma: stories and narratives

The session looks at the relationship between the border – as a geographical and cultural space of division/union/fusion/transition – and violence. The contributions may concern individual cases of trauma and stories of violence that have had, or still have, liminal and crossing spaces as their theatre – the Berlin Wall, Northern Ireland, the Italian eastern border, the Mexican-American border sought by Trump, or even the Mediterranean as a liquid border – or narratives (films, documentaries, museums, journalistic discussions, literature) where the ambiguous institution of the border – which can divide or be crossed – creates violent and traumatic situations.

Session IV. Memory of violence: conflicts, revisions and denials

This session reflects on the relationship of individuals, groups and societies with the past and on the conflicts of memory that arise with respect to violent disruptions and traumatic events such as wars, periods of dictatorship, terrorist massacres, genocidal violence. The papers address violent settings and events from the perspective of interpretation and narrative after the fact, paying particular attention to some aspects that characterise memory conflicts including the interweaving of memory of the violent past, (re)construction of identity and assumption of responsibility, the elements that make up so-called transitional justice, public communication, the relationship between remembering and forgetting and cases of revisionism and denialism.

While we are confident that the anti-Covid-19 regulations in force will allow participants to attend in person, presentations will still be streamed for both speakers and the public.

Scientific Committee

Andrea Borsari (University of Bologna)

Lorenzo Bertucelli (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)

Matteo Cassani Simonetti (Fossoli Foundation Study Centre, University of Bologna)

Robert Gordon (University of Cambridge)

Giovanni Leoni (University of Bologna)

Marzia Luppi (Fossoli Foundation)

Roberta Mira (Fossoli Foundation Study Centre, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)

Guri Schwarz (University of Genoa)

Patrizia Violi (University of Bologna)

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The selection requires an abstract in Italian or English of 800-1,000 words and a concise biographical profile of up to 300 words. The abstract must indicate the topic and specific object of analysis, the objectives and the methodology followed. A reference bibliography of up to ten titles (whose characters will not be counted) is also required. Based on these criteria, the proposals will be evaluated and selected by the conference's scientific committee.

Abstract, profile and bibliography must be sent no later than 1 June 2021 to both of the following e-mail addresses:

ricerca@centrostudifossoli.org; amministrazione@centrostudifossoli.it

ref: Call for papers Transitions of Memory

Selected authors will be notified by 30 July 2021.

The authors of the studies selected to participate in the conference must submit an unpublished scientific paper in English or in Italian with a maximum length of 5,000 words or 35,000 characters, excluding bibliography, by the date of the conference (14 October 2021). The papers collected will undergo a peer review process for publication in a scientifically relevant volume. The text must be written following the editorial guidelines that will be provided.

If the number of submissions accepted is greater than the number of presentations that the conference can host, also in compliance with any anti-Covid-19 regulations in force next October, the scientific committee reserves the right to include a part of the studies only in the published text without any presentation during the conference.

Papers selected for publication must be sent no later than 14 October 2021 to both of the following e-mail addresses:

ricerca@centrostudifossoli.org; amministrazione@centrostudifossoli.it

ref: Essays Transitions of Memory

Deadlines:

1 June 2021 submission of abstract, profile, bibliography

30 July 2021 selection results

14 October 2021 submission of the final paper

For further details:

ricerca@centrostudifossoli.org