

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE CONFERENCE 2024

Rome, 11th and 12th July

Call for Papers

“Selfscapes:” Identity Shaping at the Intersection of Self, Community, and Environment

Now that the old house of criticism, historiography and intellectual certitude is in ruins, we all find ourselves on the road. Faced with a loss of roots, and the subsequent weakening in the grammar of “authenticity,” we move into a vaster landscape. Our sense of belonging, our language and the myths we carry in us remain, but no longer as “origins” or signs of “authenticity” capable of guaranteeing the sense of our lives. They now linger on as traces, voices, memories and murmurs that are mixed in with other histories, episodes, encounters.

(Chambers 1994: 18)

The third-year students of the joint double-degree Ph.D. Programme in Germanic and Slavic Studies, founded in consortium by Sapienza University of Rome and Charles University in Prague, are pleased to present the Call for Papers for their Graduate Conference “*Selfscapes:” Identity Shaping at the Intersection of Self, Community, and Environment*, scheduled to take place at Sapienza University on 11th and 12th July 2024.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary framework that incorporates insights from literature, anthropology, ecocriticism, and cultural studies, this Call for Papers aims to explore the question of identity construction within the dynamic and productive interplay of selfhood, (D’Intino [1998] 2003) community ties, (Anderson [1983] 2006) and environmental influences. (Tuan 1977) The goal is to unravel the complex threads that weave together the individual narratives, the communal affiliations, and the environmental contexts that shape and are shaped by (cultural) identities. Hence, the use of the word “Selfscape,” which combines the words “self” and “landscape.”

Specifically, the conference focuses on the topic of identity related to its construction as an ecosystem or within one, be it natural, cultural, or both. In this perspective, it is not by chance that the word *οἶκος* (“oikos”), ancient Greek for “house,” “habitation,” constitutes the heart of ecology, both etymologically and ontologically. In fact, the effectiveness of said construction lies in the interdependent functionality of its environmental constituents, understood both in natural and cultural terms. These elements engage in a relationship of reciprocal determination based on resonance, correspondence, and inclusion, consequently involving contradictions, conflicts, and exclusionary practices as well, and are therefore subject to a constant process of negotiation resulting in the production and shaping of both the space and the individuals who inhabit it. By starting from the latter concept, we have outlined the methodological framework within which the conference will operate.

Call for Papers

Thus, the present Call for Papers welcomes submissions that delve into the multifaceted exploration of the evolving landscape of identity dynamics, encompassing both retrospective reconstructions and forward-looking reflections. Contributions can address but are not limited to the following topics:

ECO-IDENTITY. The ecocritical analysis of the intersection between literature, natural environment, and identity, aimed at revising questions like, e.g., European nationalistic ties to nature and the discourse on landscape in literature, fine arts, culture, and society; (Lekan 2004, Jordan-Bychkov [1976] 2010, Leerssen 2022, Iovino [2006] 2015)

POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES. The unmaking of the colonial selves and the shaping of new postcolonial identities with a focus on the relationship between communities and the environment, as well as on the cultural archive of a colonised community; (Fanon [1952] 1967, Said 1978)

MEMORY AND IDENTITY. The nexus between identity and memory, that is to say, the collective perspective as referred to the concept of cultural (Erll 2005) and individual memory, with the analysis of works in which the shaping of the self is pivotal, i.e., autobiographies or diaries; (D'Intino [1998] 2003, Lejeune 2005, Muratov/Iezuitova 1998)

TRAUMA AND IDENTITY. The relationship between identity and trauma, (Caruth 1995) i.e., approaches that challenge the idea of competitive and exclusionary (collective) memory tied to rigid boundaries of group identity – especially in those contexts where different histories of extreme violence and trauma seem to collide in a space conceived as limited; (Rothberg 2009)

NATIONAL IDENTITIES. The identity resulting from nation-building processes, e.g., homogenisation; identification; the production of literature and art as a nation's celebration; (Bhabha 1990, Leerssen 2010)

QUEER IDENTITIES. The exploration of identity within eco-queer and eco-feminist theories, i.e., the deconstruction of the norm, its dynamics, and the resulting power relationships between the parts involved; (El-Tayeb 2011, Trinh 1989)

FEMALE IDENTITY AND CANON. The presence/absence of the female gaze and perspective within the artistic and literary canon and official historical narratives; (Sapegno, Ronchetti 2007, Rossi-Doria 2007)

IDENTITY AND ALTERITY. The dynamic interplay between identity and alterity from modern to postmodern theory of knowledge, (Baudrillard 2008, Lotman 1999) with particular attention to the processes of hybridisation between the categories of self and other, human and non-human, and to the new pattern of relationships that emerges therein; (Braidotti 2002)

IDENTITY AND EDUCATION. The epistemological value of identity in research and pedagogical practices, particularly those rooted in self-reflection, self-study, narrative research, and qualitative studies, e.g., auto/ethnographic and systemic approaches. (Chang 2016, Mortari 2007)

IDENTITY AND FOLKLORE. Identity within an anthropological framework, i.e., the study of folklore as a significant means through which individuals and groups discover or shape their identities. (Dundes 1983)

Call for Papers

How to apply

We encourage Ph.D. students and young researchers to submit proposals related to the following research areas: (geo-)literature and comparative literature, linguistics, philology, comparative history, ethno-anthropological studies, philosophy, visual arts, and education.

Each candidate should provide an abstract, redacted in English and not longer than 300 words, along with an essential bibliography. The proposals should be accompanied by a short biographical note (up to 150 words) and sent to the following e-mail address: g.conference24@gmail.com.

The submission deadline is Friday, 19th April, and the acceptance will be communicated by Monday, 13th May.

Paper presentations will be held only in person at Sapienza University on 11th and 12th July 2024 (Edificio Marco Polo, Viale dello Scalo S. Lorenzo, 82). Additional information about the place and time of the Conference will be provided afterwards. Moreover, a link will be supplied to allow remote attendance.

Since this Conference addresses an international audience, English will be the conference's working language. Each participant will have a maximum of 20 minutes for their speech. Conference proceedings are expected to be published, and more details will be provided to participants later.

For further information, please contact the Organising Committee via e-mail at g.conference24@gmail.com.

The Organising Committee

Matteo Anecchiarico, Luca Baruffa, Anna Cavazzoni, Paola Ferrandi, Aleksandra Kishkina, Ilia Kozlov, Martina Mecco, Manuel Paludi, Kamala Rahimova, Roberta Ylenia Tartaglia.

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Con il patrocinio dell'Associazione Italiana di Germanistica / with the endorsement of Associazione Italiana di Germanistica

Con il patrocinio dell'Associazione Italiana degli Slavisti / with the endorsement of Associazione Italiana degli Slavisti

Call for Papers

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Call for Papers

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