

# **Bridging Memory Studies across Languages**

## **A Workshop for Interpretation and Language Students**

organised by PoSoCoMeS, the working group for post-socialist and comparative memory studies of the Memory Studies Association (MSA)

**Monday 21 June 2021, 4-6 pm Central European Time (Paris/Berlin/Warsaw)**

Registration: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZhLOYIM6RPOnz-XID3kfQw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZhLOYIM6RPOnz-XID3kfQw)

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This workshop aims to sensitize interpretation and language students to some of the challenges involved in translating key concepts in the interdisciplinary field of memory studies between different languages, and to allow them to practice some of the skills required to interpret academic discussions and presentations in this field.

It will serve to prepare an online plenary session opening the annual conference of the Memory Studies Association (Monday, 5 July, 3-5 pm Central European Time) where scholars and practitioners from different disciplinary and linguistic backgrounds will discuss the challenges of doing memory studies in different languages. (See page 2 for a description.) Most of the plenary session participants will also take place in the preparatory workshop.

During the workshop, participants will exchange ideas and discuss specific examples of translation difficulties. Part of the workshop will consist of interpretation practice for students (from English into any other language, though other language combinations with Arabic, Croatian, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian are also possible), followed by a feedback session.

The workshop is free and open to all after registration (please use the link above). Students interested in practicing their interpretation skills at the workshop and the subsequent plenary session and receiving feedback from experts are encouraged to contact the organisers in advance, stating their language combination and background in memory studies (if any). PoSoCoMeS will issue a participation certificate to students who serve as interpreters during the workshop and the plenary session.



## Plenary session “Bridging Memory Studies across Languages” (Monday 5 July, 3-5 pm CET)

One of the MSA’s aims is to bring together scholars and practitioners not only from different disciplines, but also from different linguistic backgrounds and national cultures of research. This is in line with a broader debate in the humanities and social sciences about the effects of the increasingly monopolistic status of English as the *de facto lingua franca* in scholarly communication.

Memory Studies deals with topics that are often intensely specific to a particular national, regional, or linguistic context, and involves the study of traumas, conflicts, and emotions that are frequently difficult to articulate even in one’s own language, let alone in translation. Thus our field is particularly vulnerable to three types of pressures exercised by the Anglo-globalization of academia.

The first of these is *loss in translation*. The vocabulary of memory studies has been profoundly shaped by its emergence in German, French, and English-language academia, to the detriment of pioneering conceptual contributions by e.g. Polish or Hispanophone scholars. Case studies of important local topics tend to be noticed internationally only if they are published in English, and the distorting effects of the translation effort this involves are not always acknowledged or discussed. Meanwhile, languages such as Arabic have not even developed a terminology that would render memory studies understandable to monolingual readers of those languages.

The second effect results from the increasing *pressure to publish in English* as a requirement for career advancement and job security. Coupled with top English-language journals’ refusal to consider papers already published in other languages, this means that many important publications reach their original communities with some delay and after double translation.

A third and related effect is *internal colonization*. While there has been much debate about the global inequality between Western scholars as concept producers and their Eastern and Southern colleagues as mere data providers, a similar imbalance has also emerged within many countries between multilingual, internationally connected researchers and their monolingual peers.

This plenary discussion brings together polyglot scholars from different corners of our field and at different career stages to address these effects, provide illustrations from their own experience, and talk about practical ways of bridging memory studies in different languages.

The discussion will also serve as the inaugural event for a series of efforts to bridge memory studies in different languages under the auspices of PoSoCoMeS and in collaboration with translation/interpretation schools and language programs in different countries.

### Participants:

- Alicia Salomone (literary & cultural scholar, University of Chile)
- Kateryna Botanova (art critic and curator, Basel)
- Kornelia Kończal (historian, LMU Munich)
- Samer Al Nasir (legal historian & social psychologist, UNED, Spain)

### Convenors and co-moderators:

- Lana Lovrenčić (art historian, Institute of Art History, Zagreb)
- Mischa Gabowitsch (historian & sociologist, Einstein Forum, Potsdam)