



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



ISRC – THE ITALO-SCOTTISH RESEARCH CLUSTER

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LLC DELC – Italian Studies

School of Literatures Languages Cultures Edinburgh University

ISRC - Diaspora Lab 1

Diaspora Theory and Comparative Perspectives

14 february 2013 (10am-5.30pm)

Balcony Room, Teviot, Bristo Square, Edinburgh University

Lab Organiser - **Dr Carlo Pirozzi**

Chair - **Professor Federica Pedriali**

Speakers

Dr Alex Murdoch (Scottish Centre of Diaspora Studies, Edinburgh University)

Title: **Diaspora Studies, Diaspora History and Comparative Diasporas**

Diaspora Studies has expanded by applying the concept more widely than it has ever been applied before. In a national context in particular, the need for a comparative approach has become increasingly apparent, but there has been less progress in developing agreed theoretical approaches to just what 'Diaspora Studies' represents. This short presentation will discuss the experience of the Scottish Centre of Diaspora Studies at the University of Edinburgh during its first five years of activity as a research centre.

Dr Alistair Hunter (School of Social and Political Science)

Title: **Bringing it all back 'home': diaspora and transnationalism**

This talk will seek to clarify two concepts which have been heavily deployed across the social

sciences in recent years to describe communities forming out of migration and displacement. Diaspora and transnationalism are concepts which overlap and are difficult to distinguish according to their respective (and contested) definitions. Nonetheless, a shared concern in both approaches is the relationship which individuals maintain with what they consider to be a point of origin or homeland. A more fruitful approach may be to infer the meanings of these two concepts according to how they are used, in practice, policy and academia.

Professor Antonella Sorace (Linguistics Department, University of Edinburgh)

Title: **Diaspora, bilingualism, and language maintenance: cognitive perspectives**

A diaspora creates the conditions for language change and language loss in a minority language community. I will focus on the interaction between cognitive and external factors involved in attrition and maintenance of a minority language in intergenerational transmission. I will show that bilingualism is essential to minority languages because no language survives if it's

not learned by children; minority languages provide opportunities for growing up bilingual, with a range of related benefits. I will conclude that the availability of information on bilingualism in minority language communities is crucial to language maintenance and revival programmes.

Dr Margaret Hills de Zarate (Queen Margaret University)

Title: **Marking Time: the madeleine, the memento and the accidental monument**

Drawing upon art psychotherapy work undertaken with displaced and refugee populations this presentation offers a brief exploration of the role of the symbolic or transitional object in relation to loss, memory and Diaspora

Valentina Bonizzi (Visual Research Centre, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee)

Title: **The Image Document: time and identity in the technical image**

Valentina Bonizzi will present her research and practice which investigate how the technical image captures time and physical displacement.

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Dr Elwira Grossman (GRAMnet, University of Glasgow)

Title: **Neither 'here' nor 'there': methodological approaches to migration and its diverse outcomes**

By focusing on the selected methodological paradigms such as Identity and Memory Studies, Gender Studies, Postcolonial/Postcommunist Studies, Cultural Studies and Narratology, the paper seeks to establish a common framework for researching migration-related phenomena in various disciplines. Among the questions to be addressed are the following: How can the existing paradigms be adopted and/or amended in a way that reveals rather than obscures the subject of study? Can geographical, linguistic and methodological borders be crossed successfully to avoid 'orientalising stereotypes'? How to secure a mutual exchange rather than one-way 'knowledge transfer'? And finally, Is there a land for in-betweeners who are 'neither here nor there'?

Perla Innocenti (MeLa, University of Glasgow)

Title: **Diaspora from the perspective of European cultural institutions: case studies on transnational partnerships**

The presentation will focus on the EU-funded MeLa - Museums in an age of migrations project (<http://www.mela-project.eu/>), in particular on the work of Research Group 'Network of Museums, Libraries and Public Cultural Institutions'. A series of real-life case studies exploring diverse European perspectives on interdisciplinary collaborations between cultural institutions will be discussed, highlighting cross-domain partnerships, cultural identity and cultural dialogue, heritage for the arts and sciences, European narratives, migration and mobility.

Professor Maddalena Tirabassi (Centro AltreItaliae sulle Migrazioni Italiane, Globus et Locus, Torino)

Title: **Italian public initiatives on migrations: research, centers, museums**

The presentation will start with a description of the 25 years of activity of the AltreItaliae Center that saw the development of Italian migration studies in the country. It will then expand to analyze the main projects carried on at national level, in particular the celebration of the 150 anniversary of the Italian Unification. It will end illustrating some transnational initiatives in the field of Italian migration studies.

Catriona Taylor (Artist in Residence at the Scottish Centre of Diaspora studies, Edinburgh University)

Title: **Visual art and Diaspora**

Emigration and Diaspora can be used as a metaphor for many things. Artist Catriona Taylor used the theme of emigration as a metaphor for personal loss during her Residency at the National Library of Scotland in 2007-2008. She is now the Artist in Residence at the Scottish Centre of Diaspora studies and intends to use her time there to explore and make art about Polish immigration to Scotland. Her talk will demonstrate how the theme of diaspora can be used as inspiration for visual art.