

**Masterclass in the Doctoral School in the Humanities
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Issues in Critical Heritage Studies: managing dissonance

The Masterclass will present a particular issue in critical heritage, that of the management of dissonance. It will start with a general and introductory discussion of heritage as a means of using material and immaterial legacies in the constitution of a discursive space in the present. This space is often characterized as an opportunity to create cohesion and identity but can also function as a space in which different perspectives emerge and compete. This multiperspectivity can be seen to form the basis of the notion of dissonant heritage, or ‘heritage dissonance’. The topic of dissonant heritage will thus be treated within a cultural studies framework strongly based on constructivist approaches to identity formation.

Starting from this introductory and methodological premise, the Master class will look at heritage dissonance with particular reference to two areas: colonial heritage in Great Britain and the built heritage of totalitarian or non-democratic cities in Europe.

Colonial heritage in Great Britain

The end of empire and the transformation of Great Britain into a multiethnic society has begun to pose the problem of the way in which the material heritage of the colonial period, evident in the streets, statues and museums of Britain, can be interpreted in a ‘post-colonial’ and inclusive manner. The discussions about the nature of this heritage and its interpretation constitute an potent example of dissonant heritage and multiperspectivity. The masterclass will look in particular at the issue of the legacy of slavery and the ways in which this legacy has been managed and interpreted in relation to the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, the issue of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol, the report on colonialism in the National Trust, and the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery (UCL).

The built heritage of totalitarian regimes in Europe

The totalitarian or non-democratic regimes of twentieth-century Europe left an important architectural and urban heritage. This heritage can be iconic and propagandic, as in the case of the Valle de los Caidos near Madrid, or functional to the development of state-led industry, as in the case of Dimitrovgrad in Bulgaria, Stei in Romania and other small industrial towns. The Masterclass will look at the ways in which this dissonant heritage has been dealt with by the European Cultural Route ATRIUM (Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Europe’s Urban Memory) and by the Urban Agenda Culture and Cultural Heritage Partnership, Action 10 “Dissonant Heritage”.

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