

26th AISNA Biennial Conference

Crossing Territories.

Recognition across Time, Space and Textuality in the US and Beyond

Department of Humanities, L'Aquila, September 23-25, 2021

In proposing recognition as the main theme for the next AISNA conference, we wish to bring into focus a concept that is central to understanding the multifaceted connections between transcodification, transmediality and transculture. A polysemic term covering a wealth of meanings (“acknowledgement of existence, validity or legality;” “knowledge that something has been encountered before;” “appreciation;” “sensing and encoding of data by a machine”), recognition works as a relay that governs a vast array of phenomena, from the assessment of artistic achievements to the struggles for political and social inclusion. Furthermore, it opens up multiple directions of research which intersect “post-millennial” discourses and reconnect the theme of recognition to the history of the United States, as well as to the Pan-American, trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic history.

One direction is primarily concerned with cultural codes and the role that translation, transmediality, the mixing of languages, and encounters of different cultures have long played in US artistic and literary production. The impact of manifold processes of transcodification on inter-American and transnational cultural exchanges cannot be overestimated and is further amplified today by the power of social networks as tools for the production of texts and events that position and reposition social, artistic and/or political groups. With regard to these phenomena, recognition permeates the repeated attempts to intersect, interrupt and rearrange received norms and discourses: e.g. recognition in transparency of the original work(s) illuminated by the process of transcoding; recognition of how the so-called “original” and its rewritings and/or adaptations, modify, legitimize and mutually re-legitimize each other; recognition of how processes of adaptation and transcodification affect the role and prominence of the author; recognition of the interplay of two or more cultures in translation.

Another important direction for research concerns the dynamics that regulate the recognition of group and gender identities. The changes vigorously advocated for by the activism of minorities are increasingly breaking down received social boundaries and assumptions. In this context, the theme of recognition is deeply intertwined with the processes to acknowledge and contain experiences that are allegedly not directly regulated by the market, such as family ties, community building practices, reproduction rights, inclusive citizenship. In all the above cases, the “embeddedness” of social relations within market economy has historically produced crystallized and codified boundaries that are now under scrutiny in society, cultural production and academic discourse.

A third direction concerns more explicitly U.S. history and politics. In these areas of research, the concept of “recognition” invites scholars to explore the processes through which individuals and groups came to define, refine and invent their identities in relation to broad and evolving concepts such as “American citizenship” or with regard to their racial, class, gender and ethnic belongings.

The AISNA conference will offer an opportunity to focus on the critical understanding of all this variety of historical and social phenomena and their multifarious cultural and discursive representations. We invite panel proposals from a wide range of academic fields on the state of the art of American Studies with specific regard to the concept of recognition, looking at it from two points of view: on the one hand, as a relay in artistic and literary transcodification, and, on the other, as a relay in the processes of attribution of social value to individuals and groups - including gender, race and ethnicity in their synchronic and diachronic dimensions.

Themes may include but are not limited to:

- North-American Studies and World Literature
- Transcodification processes and transmediality in intercultural, transcultural and trans-border exchanges
- Cognition and recognition in translation
- Multilingualism in US culture and society
- Historical analyses of the models of integration in the US society: multiculturalism, melting pot, migrant cultures.
- Orality in American history and culture
- Recognition in rewriting, adaptation, parody, pastiche
- Music and performance studies
- Transcodification and Digital Humanities: from physical to digital archives/texts
- Recognition and representations of biodiversity and neurodiversity
- Eco-cosmopolitanism, neuro-cosmopolitanism, and the multiple forms of recognizing and mediating diversity
- Intersections of human/non-human/artificial intelligence in both fiction and science fiction
- Construction, reconstruction, and codification of cultural, literary, historical and political traditions: archives as sites of construction and reconstruction of recognizable traditions
- Recognition in social and political activism; recognition in the public sphere
- Geographies, territories, maps, cartographies of the US
- Archives as sites of construction and reconstruction of recognizable traditions
- Animal studies
- Public history and transmediality
- Exceptionalism vs. globalism in the analysis and study of the position of the US in the world
- The role of the Supreme Court and Federal Courts in coding and adapting social changes
- Misrecognition and unrecognizability; cultural appropriation; “lost in translation”.

The deadline for panel proposals is April 20, 2021. The submitted proposals will be reviewed by the conference organizer committee and the AISNA board. A selection of max. 20 panels will be issued by May 5, notified to the submitters by email, and published on the Conference website.

Submissions should be written in English and include:

- a panel title
- a clearly stated description of the proposed topic in no more than 300 words
- contact details of the panel’s coordinator or coordinators (max. 2), including professional affiliation.

Each panel will host no less than two and no more than four papers, including the coordinator’s or coordinators’. We remind aspiring coordinators that their task will include a brief introduction of the speakers, a strict monitoring of the observance of the allotted 20-minute time for each presentation, and a supervision of the following question and answer session, aimed to stimulate a fruitful discussion in the last but essential part of each panel.

All panel proposals should be sent by e-mail to the conference organization

(aisna2021univaq@gmail.com), as well as to the secretary of AISNA, Anna De Biasio (segreteria-aisna@unibg.it).

N.B.: We hope that we will be able to meet in L’Aquila for the 2021 AISNA conference.

However, should the COVID-19 crisis not allow safe traveling and participation in face-to-face events, the conference will move to a digital format (blended or fully online). We will keep you updated as to the developments of the pandemic and the applying public health guidelines.

