

## The Remains of the Body | Legacy and Cultural Memory of Bodies in World Culture

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021 – University of Warwick

### Keynote speakers:

**Prof. Angela Wright (University of Sheffield) – Prof. Patricia Phillippy (Coventry University)**

### Call for papers

How did different cultures depict dead bodies at different times, and how were they understood as important and valuable? In which way is the body of a male hero represented? How does this representation differ from the body of a dead woman? How important is the body in issues of national identity and popular folklore?

From the representation of the dead body of Christ in the *Pietà*, sculpted by Michelangelo during the Italian Renaissance; passing through the angelic Disney depiction of the sleeping beauty; the pile of cadavers of the fallen in Eugène Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People*; until reaching the theme of the ghost in the gripping charade in Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller *Vertigo*, the remains of the body have crossed the world cultural imagery.

This conference, *The Remains of the Body: Legacy and Cultural Memory of Bodies in World Culture*, intends to tackle the current issue of how bodies are marked, organised and produced as cultural entities that leave traces into the world imagery after their total or partial material dissolution. Particularly, the conference's goal is to gather an interdisciplinary network of scholars exploring the way in which the body, or parts of it, is preserved and remembered in time in different aspects of cultural representation, in order to evaluate its cultural impact. Key concepts will be: sacralization/desacralization; the body as a relic of a past age; immortality and techniques for enduring fame; posthumous life; remembrance, memory and commemoration; and any other topic exploring the relationship between body, death and memory.

The preservation and re-evocation of bodies/corpses, or parts of them, can be related to various and different cultural manifestations (in film, literature, visual art and others) and examined by following four different paths (which are not to be considered as limitations):

1. The Gothic. Macabre scenes, folklore, ghosts, monsters and all the gory and gloomy representations dealing with remains of bodies. Also relevant are: carnivalesque deathly rites; the dance macabre; dead, apparently dead and/or sleeping bodies; dismembered bodies; ruined, wrecked bodies; zombies and 'abject' bodies; gendered dead bodies; the posthuman.
2. Religious relics. Martyrs and saints, whose bodies have been injured and shielded in places of worship, or every relic religiously preserved and adored. This could also imply incorrupt bodies which manifest themselves through impalpable bright appearances after death, through visions.
3. Nationhood and patriotism. The making of the nation involves a large amount of bodies: those of heroes who fight and sacrifice themselves, and those of ordinary people who support and raise statues and monuments not to forget them (also the tombs of unknown soldiers, which are scattered in many cities).
4. Heirlooms and pledges of love. They could be represented by romantic gifts, such as a lock of hair before the separation of lovers; a mourning jewel to remember a dear one by; or a little tooth guarded by mothers as a memento of their kids' lost childhood. Cemeteries, urns, statues and paintings are also meaningful legacies of bodies.

The conference aims at including papers from a broad chronological period and dealing with any geographical area with no restrictions. Applications are welcome from a large span of fields: literature, history, art history, classics, archaeology, theatre and performative arts, film studies, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, politics, medicine and the history of medicine, popular and folklore studies, material culture studies, architecture and urban studies, and others.

**Abstracts (250 words)** for twenty-minute papers together with a **short bio (150 words)** should be submitted by **30 December 2020** to the following email address: [remainsofthebody@gmail.com](mailto:remainsofthebody@gmail.com) specifying:

1)Title; 2)Presenter; 3)Institutional affiliation; 4)Email; 5)Abstract.

Follow the conference on Twitter: [@Remains2021](https://twitter.com/Remains2021)