

**Transformative Memory:
Confronting the Past in Grand-Scale Socio-Economic Change
Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom
1-3 June 2020**

Call for papers

Memory studies and the heritage sector have developed a sophisticated set of theoretical concepts and practical tools to analyse and represent the singular events and violent episodes of history, often framed in terms of “trauma.” Consequently, confrontation with the past is often understood as a pathway to post-conflict reconciliation, democratisation, and social inclusiveness. However, we have been less concerned with understanding and shaping individuals’ and communities’ responses to more “slow-moving” and dispersed transformations, despite the fact that these can be highly consequential, disruptive and even traumatic. Thus, the manifestations of environmental change have resulted in the loss of homes and livelihoods, and the creation of new types of refugees. The rapid transformation of local and global economies, growing levels of digitisation and the reliance on artificial intelligence has meant that millions of workers have had to re-tool and live with the disappearance or transformation of industries and professions on which they had relied and with which they identified. Those same economic transformations have challenged established welfare states and standards of social care at the same time as mental health systems are struggling to help people cope with new professional demands and the toxic side-effects of economic and political restructuring. Rising inequality has led to a shift in political landscapes and has facilitated the mobilisation of right-wing forces that have skilfully employed a politics of memory to their advantage. And in the midst of such large-scale and diffuse processes of socio-economic and environmental change, individuals and communities continue to grapple with histories of violence and divisions. Practices of remembering and commemoration are then deeply interwoven with how communities understand and manage their place in these emerging and decisive transformations.

This conference will seek to move memory and heritage studies beyond an exclusive focus on “conflictual pasts” in the traditional sense, while not neglecting the importance of understanding collective responses to historical violence. We aim to bring together a group of scholars to discuss memory from a holistic perspective of large-scale transformation processes. The following areas have been identified as starting points for framing discussions, but we welcome proposals that lie beyond these streams:

- Post-industrial communities
- Reconfiguration of welfare and social care systems
- Post-conflict divisions in society
- Changing political landscapes
- Environmental change

Please submit abstracts (300 words max) and a short bio (in one document) by March 10, 2020 to transformativememory@gmail.com