

Heritage, Memory and Conflict Journal (HMC)
Issue 1/2025

Call for papers

Heritage Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration in Times of Crisis

edited by
Mario Panico and Ihab Saloul

For this issue of the [Heritage, Memory and Conflict Journal \(HMC\)](#), we invite contributions that explore how heritage and memory narratives construct individual/collective categories of **victimhood** and **perpetration** in times of crisis and conflict from diverse political geographies, historical contexts and transnational perspectives.

The issue will investigate the narrative and rhetoric strategies of heritagisation through which individuals or communities are constructed as enemies to be vanquished, entities to be kept at a distance, or victims to protect. We also seek to grasp the relationalities that characterise the justification adduced by the different sides of the conflict, including the ways in which concepts of the “self” and the “other” are embedded in understandings of the past in the present. These strategies create binarisms that circumvent nuance and often monolithically prioritise certain (national or cultural) identities.

The issue critically examines **how heritage and memory narratives forge some subjects as “ultimate perpetrators” while others are labelled as “absolute victims”**. Doing so, these narratives influence public perception, morality, and policies, that different political agendas then use to justify or induce violence against others (whether they are human or nonhuman).

This process can be witnessed in the conflicts and contexts of war, violence and genocide, for instance, from the First and the Second World War and the Holocaust through to the political and humanitarian crises such as the war in the Gaza Strip and Ukraine. It can also be traced in wider narratives of terrorism, in the de-humanisation of colonial legacies and anti-migration rhetoric, e.g., in the Mediterranean and the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as ecological traumas. We want to underline not just **why** “victimhood” and “perpetration” are implemented, but also **what** political and cultural influence they have when conditioning the meanings of heritage and conflict. We are interested in **how** the subjectivities are constructed as epistemic categories, embodying single people or entire communities **through the use/abuse of specific imageries or tropes connected to the past, invoked to justify or elaborate acts of violence, or to reclaim social justice**. This categorisation is not limited to how past narratives are exploited only in conflicts. It is also at the base of other societal issues that affect our present: **racism, territorial sovereignty, ownership and settlements, gender and sexual discrimination, nationalism, neoliberalism, and a new understanding of what cultural heritage is (or what it should be, based on this perpetration/victimhood binarism) and to whom it belongs**.

Possible areas of interest may include – but are not limited to – the following, which can be approached with various theoretical and methodological perspectives:

- Theoretical reflections on narrative constructions of perpetration and victimhood as epistemic categories in memory and heritage discourses, online and/or offline;
- Case studies demonstrating how the notion of the “ultimate perpetrator” or “absolute victim” are represented or fabricated. In particular, we are interested in how these categories were or are used in the media, in the legal sphere or in politics; in fiction and non-fiction; in museums, memorials and cultural heritage, etc.;
- Emotions and affect in narratives of victimhood and perpetration (e.g., fear, disgust, anger, pride, nostalgia);
- Art, memory activism, and community-based actions as counter-discourse in relation to victimhood and perpetration.

Authors are invited to submit abstracts of **no more than 300 words**, together with a **150-word biography**, by the **30th of October 2024**. Please send your proposals via email to **Mario Panico**, email: [m.panico@uva.nl].

After selection, the full articles (**6000-7000 words max, including bibliography**) are to be submitted by the **1st of March 2025**. Images are permitted (a maximum of five, in high resolution and copyright-free, authors are responsible for securing this authorisation before publication).

If you have any questions about the issue, do not hesitate to write to the editors Dr. Mario Panico and Prof. Ihab Saloul [m.panico@uva.nl].

Calendar and deadlines

30th October 2024: deadline for abstract submission

15th November 2024: response from the editors

1st March 2025: deadline for article submission

1st April 2025: peer-review results

30th June 2025: publication of the special issue

About the Journal

Heritage, Memory and Conflict Journal (HMC) is an international, peer-reviewed, diamond open access Journal published by **Amsterdam University Press**. Its main scope is to critically analyse the tangible and intangible remnants, traces and spaces of the past in the present and the remaking of pasts into heritage and memory, including processes of appropriations, restitutions and mediatisation. This interdisciplinary journal addresses the dynamics of memory and forgetting, as well as the politics of trauma, mourning and reconciliation, identity, nationalism and ethnicity, heritage preservation and restoration, material culture, conservation and management, conflict archaeology, dark tourism, diaspora and postcolonial memory, terrascapes, migration, borders, and the mediated re-enactments of conflicted pasts. HMC covers the fields of memory studies, cultural studies, museum studies, arts and media and

performative studies, postcolonial studies, ethnology, Holocaust and genocide studies, conflict and identity studies, archaeology, material culture and landscapes, conservation and restoration, cultural, public and oral history, critical and digital heritage studies. By crossing academic, artistic and professional boundaries, the journal aims to offer an interdisciplinary space for the rich scholarship in these fields and to contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which memory sites and discourses operate as vehicles at local, national and transnational levels. For more information about the journal, see:

<https://www.aup-online.com/content/journals/26665050>