

Follow-up workshop proposal – Gabriella Mazzon

Linear development as cultural metaphor in the humanities

Among the issues that clearly emerged from the discussion within the workshop “History is in the eye of the beholder?” (10.01.2014), the issue of the **construction of linearity** in the scientific modelling of cultural products is the one that claims further attention. The corollaries of this tendency to unilinear descriptions are mainly the **implicit construction of hierarchies** on the one hand, and the **obscuring of variation and alternative developments** on the other hand. Among the methodological dichotomies that were mentioned as crucial in the discussion are certainly the following:

Narrating – Describing (e.g. discourse structures implying dynamics of “change”; presence of identifiable “narrating voice” emanating from scientific accounts)

Narration – Fiction (e.g. implications of “progress” and “evolution” in reconstruction of events, exclusion/suppression of “alternative histories”)

Progress – Decay (e.g. in artistic styles, canons, language history; embedded teleology)

Academia – Society (e.g. in “scientific” accounts vis-à-vis “popular” accounts, i.e. participant narratives, complaint traditions etc.)

Centre Periphery (e.g. in capital city vs. countryside, “coloniser country” vs. colonies tension)

Some of these dichotomies are already at the centre of our studies, and the tension between the members of each can also be interpreted as cultural conflict. The possibility of describing these conflicts through alternative models (e.g. **networks** instead of lines) has also been mentioned.

I would like therefore to invite contributions concerning all the highlighted areas, with specific attention to the possible alternative representations (which also means alternative cognitive metaphors) of the relation between cultural products, events, behaviour patterns. As in the previous workshop, there should be an exemplification from specific studies, but this time I would like to encourage a further theoretical or meta-scientific reflection on possible ways to describe the same examples in ways that are alternative to the standard models.

Possible timing of the workshop:

Notification of participation (if possible with preliminary title) to be sent to the convenor: 15 February

Abstracts to be sent to the convenor: 05 May

Workshop dates: late May – early June (Doodle follows)