



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

HORIZON EUROPE
PROJECTS FUNDED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

TRAUMA - Traumatized Subjects: Mental Health, Violence, and the Fabric of Europe Between the Wars (1918-39)

TRAUMA examines the transnational and trans-medial circulation of key discourses regarding mental health and violence that emerged in interwar Europe (1918–39). I argue that, although the conflict between competing ideologies (Fascism; Liberal Democracy; Communism) undermined the construction of European identity, discourses about mental health and violence played a vital role in fostering the formation of ideas, practices, and values that would later become a central part of the fabric of Europe. Focusing on Britain and Italy and combining cultural studies, medical, legal, and transnational history, TRAUMA explores the depiction of mentally traumatized World War I (WWI) servicemen committing violence. Analyzing sources such as medical and legal texts, novels, periodicals, war memoirs, and handbooks for soldiers, TRAUMA tracks the negotiation of transnational discourses about veterans' mental health and violent behavior across Britain and Italy. Due to their antithetical nature, nationally, politically, and medically, and the opposite roles played by their veterans after WWI, these two contexts offer a unique window into the European experience of war trauma and its effects (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder; domestic violence) and allow to trace the cultural shifts and historical processes (e.g. the de-mythization of the soldier; the rejection of the war) that informed the later socio-cultural construction of Europe. Conducted within three leading universities – Padua (return phase), Georgetown (outgoing phase), and Hamburg (secondment) – TRAUMA promotes debates on how cultural studies can address Europe's most pressing concerns, as testified by the EU4HealthProgramme 2021–27, and fosters international collaborative research on mental health, trauma, violence, and European commonality. Through a range of outreach activities involving academic and non-academic audiences and institutions, TRAUMA will have major impacts at cultural, social, and educational level.

UNIPD Supervisor: Matteo Millan

MSCA Fellow: Stefano Serafini

Department: Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World

Coordinator: Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy)

Total EU Contribution: Euro 265.099,19

Call ID: HORIZON-MSCA-2022-PF-01

Project Duration in months: 36

Find out more: <https://cordis.europa.eu/projects/en>