

Second International Poetry Forum Conference *Science in Culture*.

CALL for Papers

*Arts of Welfare and European Cultures of Care.
The Role of the Arts in the Evolution of Health Care and Education
(1793 – 1948)*



University of St Andrews
Byre Theatre Studio & Parliament Hall

3-5 October 2018

Conference Organisers:

Dr Rossella Riccobono (University of St Andrews)

Prof. Claire Davison (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

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Before social welfare could exist, it needed to be imagined.

The epoch when the full establishment of the concept of the welfare state in the U.K. and other European countries occurred, 1890-1948, indeed coincides with the phenomenon of European Modernism, conceived here not just as an aesthetic, but as a socio-political phenomenon of visionary reform. The dazzling achievements of the 1890s-1940s in terms of modernist arts have been minutely charted over the past decades, and the modernist context superbly brought to life. While much has been made of the interactions between Modernism / suffrage or Modernism / war, however, another epoch-making social revolution was underway, whose correlation with the arts remains more tenuous.

These were the year in which debates on social health as a reaction to the new felt issues of modern society, violence and alienation, psychiatric disorders, and the traumas of the two World Wars were reflected in poetry and prose, theatre, painting, music, radio broadcasting, advertising, film, medical advancement and healthcare, urban architecture. Examples of these are Luigi Pirandello's *Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio operatore* (1915, 1925), Paul Valéry's *Le cimetière Marin* (1920), T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922), Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *Three Guineas* (1938), José Ortega y Gasset's *La deshumanización del arte* (1925), Eugenio Montale's *Ossi di seppia* (1925, 1928), Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930), Federico García Lorca's *La trilogía rural* (*Bodas de sangre*, *Yerma*, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*) (1932-36), Wanda Wulz's experimental photography such as *Io + gatto* (1932), Walter Ruttmann's *Acciaio* (1933), Samuel Beckett's *Murphy* (1938), James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), — to name only a few.

For centuries, organised care traditionally belonged to the religious and philanthropic ambits. Following the lesson of the Enlightenment, the American (1776) and French Revolutions (1789) and *Declaration of the Human Rights* (1793), the birth of the modern democratic state paved the way to the process of secularisation of those services of assistance to the citizen. Although there are examples of 'caring cultures' in European countries – charitable council-run organizations active since the Renaissance for the assistance of citizens in need in Italy (examples are the cities of Florence, Milan, Modena, Parma, Trieste and Venice); the Elizabethan poor law in England; the beginning and rapid growth of hospitals from the 1750s across Europe following the rapid growth of population in 18th-century Europe, and the influence that private efforts had on public opinion – the idea that the state should take responsibility for its people's welfare began taking on in Europe in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but took full shape in the 1930s.

Although other forms of public education, health care, and social security were implemented earlier in Europe (the Soviet and fascist states created their own welfare states to pursue totalitarian ends), it was not until the end of World War Two, thanks partly to the influential Beveridge Plan published in war-time Britain in 1942, that the 'modern welfare state' was adopted throughout Western society as a norm of modern liberal democracy.

The social history of the welfare state has been studied in depth before, however, the role that art and artists played in the conception of traditional caring cultures and state-action in the

healthcare of citizens has received considerably less critical attention, and remains sketchy to this day. Furthermore, while national programmes of welfare, and accompanying narratives of the common good assured by a caring state have been addressed individually, little attention has been given to the repercussions of welfare reform from one European country to another. Nor has the immense appeal to the imagination whether conjuring up images of a more benevolent state, or turning state-of-the-arts science into tales that appealed to the imagination. These are precisely the issues that this conference aims to explore, concentrating on the role that the arts had in the evolution of healthcare and education between the French revolution and *Declaration of the Human Rights* in 1793 and the actualisation of the Welfare State in the U.K and the *Stato sociale* in Italy in 1948, preceded by the *État-providence / Protection sociale* in France in 1945. Particular attention will be laid on the interstice between sciences and humanities in order to allow an interdisciplinary debate around the advancement and innovation in society in both healthcare and education.

We welcome papers on the following topics:

- Representations of welfare in poetry and prose
- Art and propaganda
- Educational programmes and schools
- The role of literary salons in the literary discourse around human rights and support of citizenship
- Architectural design in response to state blueprints for welfare
- Magazines, advertising campaigns, broadcasting and consciousness raising
- Representations of state support in film and theatre
- Comparisons between narratives and icons of welfare from one European country to another
- Welfare and trans-European border crossings

Although we welcome proposals for papers in connection with all European languages and cultures, the official language for the Conference is **English**.

All proposals will be peer-reviewed.

Abstract proposals (350 words) for 20-minute papers with a short biographical note (max. 150 words) should be sent to: **science.culture@st-andrews.ac.uk**

Deadline for submissions: **15 May 2018**