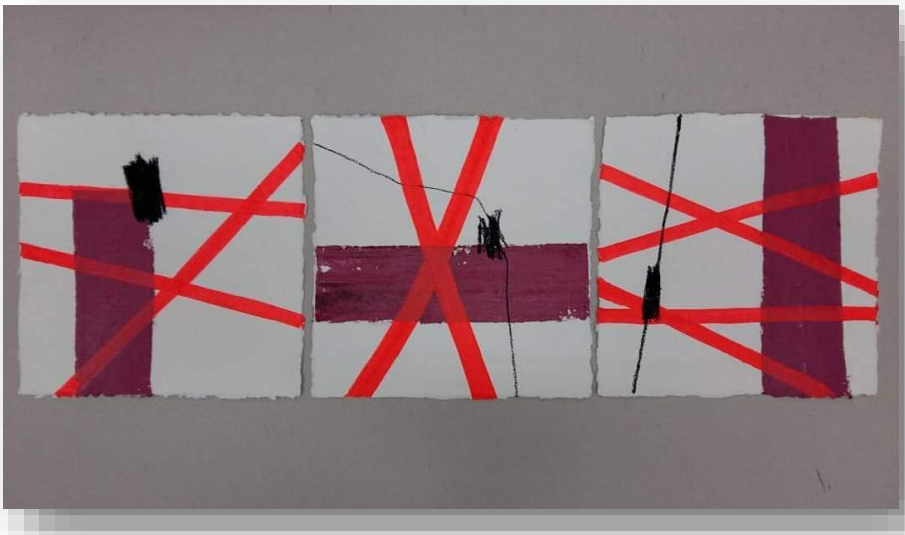
75 years of Auschwitz in the memory of Europe:

from Paul Celan to George Steiner



UCM – International Conference
Faculty of Philology, Building D, Lecture Hall
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The script editor Juan Mayorga has asserted that in order for Auschwitz not happen again, every European must have been there at least once in his life, with his heart and memory. On January 27, 1945, the Red Army liberated the extermination camp and what the soldiers found was the entry to hell. Francesco Rosi was able to portray this moment in *The Truce* (1998), a film adaptation of the homonymous novel by Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz. Levi's work is essential to understanding what happened in Europe at that time. His oeuvre is also crucial to underpinning the importance of remembering in order to avoid a repetition of the horrific past and to better comprehend our present.

Almost a century later, we invite you to gather for the International Conference "75 years of Auschwitz in the memory of Europe: from Paul Celan to George Steiner" in order to reflect on how the Shoah continues to paradigmatically mark the present. We will discuss the crucial role that the memory of Auschwitz has played and continues to play in culture and philosophical thought, which goes hand in hand with the reflections and writings of the survivors and others who have dared to think about the world after Auschwitz. This conference will engage in a transdisciplinary dialogue, including the different arts, human and social sciences. As Reyes Mate, author of *Por los campos de exterminio* (2003) or *Memoria de Auschwitz* (2003) points out, the duty of memory does not consist in establishing a sentimental relationship with the past, but in recognizing that it asks us to reflect on and accept the challenge of confronting our past.

This conference will also pay tribute to two essential figures in the field of philosophical thought of the 20th century: Paul Celan, whose 100th birthday is being celebrated this year, and George Steiner. The first, a Jewish poet of Romanian origin, was captured by the Nazis but survived the war after being interned in a labor camp. The poetry in *Poppy and Memory* (1952), inspired by his escape from death, is one of the most shocking and powerful on the horror of the extermination camp. Celan's writing made him an essential voice of the 20th century and demands a unique analysis of that devastating Europe, with dialogues and interpellations to thinkers such as Heidegger or Adorno.

George Steiner was one of the first to recognize the importance of Celan's oeuvre. The author of some of the most lucid essays on our time passed away last February, so this conference will also pay tribute to him, reviewing his contribution to contemporary thought about the Shoah and the future of the European continent. Steiner's *The idea of Europe* (2005) describes "the fall of Europe into inhumanity" as a result of a wound that had been bleeding for a long time.

The main objective of the conference is, in short, to give continuity to the legacy of what Auschwitz and other camps in the heart of Europe and to stress that, 75 years after their liberation, engaging in memory work is more necessary than ever due to the disappearance of the last survivors. It is thus also an attempt to "return to Europe its roots that amnesiacs are trying to uproot", in the words of Géraldine Schwarz.

The conference, which will be held in a blended mode at the Faculty of Philology of the Complutense University of Madrid between January 25 and 27, 2021, aims to be a space that is open to the challenges that the duty of memory opens in our time from the analysis of artistic creations (literature, plastic, performing and visual arts), essays and critical thinking in Europe and in the rest of the world in an intense century that is cementing our collective future.

Proposals (abstract of 300 words max.) in any of the following languages: Spanish, English, German, French, can be sent **until December 12, 2020** to the following address: congresoauschwitz75ymemoria@gmail.com. The review committee will communicate the acceptance of the proposal to its author **before December 22**.

Organization: Department for German Studies and Slavic Studies
Department for Spanish Language and Literary Theory
Department for Linguistics, Arabic, Hebrew and East Asian Studies

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