

WRENCH

Whispers of Time

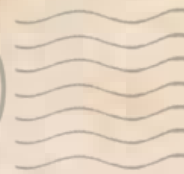
Heritage as Narratives of Climate Change

HERITAGE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A VIDEODICTIONARY (IN PROGRESS)

CONTRIBUTORS

Baghetti, Carlo
de Varine, Hugues
Decolonize This Place
Dey, Sayan
Morosini, Stefano
Reardon, Kenneth
Recchia, Francesca
Tomka, Goran

Greco, Francesca
Gruppuso, Paolo
Kisic, Visnja
Morel, Hana
Valisena, Daniele
Valdpaus, Loes
Wang, Ywen
Warren, Julianne
Zaina, Francesco



A Belmont Forum Project

EDITORS

Samuele Andreoni
Claudia Consolo
Andrea Gulisano

REVIEWERS

Marco Armiero
Giusy Pappalardo

Introduction

Climate Change is often a complex topic to address. When we look at it from the perspective of Heritage, we immediately think of the imminent and probable loss of buildings, objects, and sites that hold meaning for communities, cities, or entire civilizations. Droughts, floods, storms and cyclones: in our semantic baggage, climate change is usually perceived as a sudden, striking event that leaves behind destruction and bitterness. Yet climate change can also be silent and slow, altering routines and habits in ways that are not easily captured through metaphors of destruction and annihilation.

We therefore need new words and concepts that help us understand climate change on different levels, and grasp the varying degrees of impact it has on our livelihoods. To do so, a key exercise is to broaden our understanding of Heritage, expanding it to include forms of heritage that are not conventionally recognized as such.

This video dictionary offers perspectives from scholars, activists, and heritage-related workers who can widen this horizon, providing new ways of understanding heritage and how it could be — or already is — affected by climate change.

In these pages, we present a first constellation of lemmas that, in our view, broaden and deepen the understanding of the heritage–climate change nexus. On one side, several definitions help us frame the field: climate change, climate mitigation, and the many nuances of heritage—heritage-making, heritage politics, living heritage, heritage in the Anthropocene, heritage as commoning, and pluriversal heritage.

We also include specific forms of heritage that may appear very distant from one another—ranging from military heritage to wetlands and water subalterns, up to food habits and working-class literature.

We then widen our perspective through practices and methodological insights: critical walking, community-based planning, ecomuseums, and the reuse of uncomfortable heritage. Finally, we engage with concepts and approaches that further expand our framework, including care, decolonization–abolition, degrowth, and legitimacy.

This list of lemmas is not exhaustive; it is our first attempt at systematisation.

This document is also a call to contribute to the ongoing construction of the videodictionary. If you think a lemma should be added to this thread and would like to record—or suggest someone who could record—a voice for the videodictionary, please write to wrench.coord@gmail.com

List of lemmas

Click on the lemma to access the corresponding video in our Media Library

1. **Care**
Valdpaus, Loes
2. **Climate Change**
Morel, Hana
3. **Climate Mitigation**
Morel, Hana
4. **Critical Walking**
Valisena, Daniele
5. **Community-Based Planning**
Reardon, Kenneth
6. **Decolonization-Abolition**
Decolonize This Place
7. **Degrowth**
Tomka, Goran
8. **Ecomuseum**
De Varine, Hugues
9. **Food Habits, Climate Change, Cultural Heritage**
Dey, Sayan
10. **Heritage and the Anthropocene**
Zaina, Federico
11. **Heritage as Commoning**
Decolonize This Place
12. **Heritage Making**
de Varine, Hugues
13. **Heritage Politics**
Recchia, Francesca
14. **Legitimacy**
Warren, Julianne
15. **Living Heritage**
Kisic, Visnja
16. **Military Heritage**
Morosini, Stefano
17. **Pluriversal Heritage**
Kisic, Visnja
18. **Reusing Uncomfortable Heritage**
Wang, Ywen
19. **Water Subalterns**
Greco, Francesca
20. **Wetlands**
Gruppuso, Paolo
21. **Working Class Literature**
Baghetti, Carlo

Abstracts

Care

Loes Veldpaus

Loes Veldpaus is a Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Urban Planning at Newcastle University, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape.

There is a wide range of definitions of care, but one of the most frequently cited is offered by Fisher and Tronto (1990): “a species activity encompassing everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world, including our bodies, our selves, and our environment, so that we can live as well as possible.” Care is often understood primarily as an act of conserving or protecting something from loss or decay. However, caring practices are far more diverse: they include researching, visiting, dreaming, retelling, protesting, organizing, refusing, wandering, and many others. It is important not to diminish the value of conservation as a form of care, while also recognising that it represents only one modality among many. Care can also be understood as a relational practice, a way of establishing and sustaining connections between ourselves and the beings, places, or histories to which we feel responsible. In the field of heritage, this relational perspective invites us to rethink conservation and safeguarding not merely as technical operations or “actions directed toward capital,” but as practices that enable the creation of relationships across time. Through care, we cultivate connections with someone, something, or somewhere in the past, present, and future, expanding the meaning of heritage beyond preservation alone.

Climate Change

Hana Morel

Hana Morel is a researcher and consultant focusing on policy, sustainability and heritage at UCL - University College London. She works across both national and international contexts and advocates for the critical role of archaeology and heritage in achieving sustainability.

Climate change refers to the long-term variation in Earth's temperature and environmental conditions. Throughout the planet's history, the climate has undergone significant transformations over millennia; indeed, several major climatic phases, such as glacial periods or epochs of extreme drought, are well documented. These long-term shifts are considered natural forms of climate variability, in contrast to the rapid changes observed in recent centuries. Contemporary climate change can be summarized through three key dimensions: speed, scale, and cause. Whereas past climatic transitions unfolded over thousands of years, today they occur within mere decades. Temperature records show a relatively stable trend until the industrial era, when a marked and continuous increase begins. The primary drivers of this acceleration are human activities, including the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels such as oil and coal, alongside various forms of pollution. From this perspective, climate change becomes perceptible in everyday life through increasingly frequent phenomena such as rising sea levels, heatwaves, glacier retreat, and prolonged droughts. There are also indirect consequences, including food insecurity, migration, conflict, and economic instability. When the perception of climate change becomes abstract or distant, heritage can serve as a powerful interpretive lens. Heritage conveys the histories of places and communities, revealing how societies have interacted with their territories and environments across time.

Climate Mitigation

Hana Morel

Hana Morel is a researcher and consultant focusing on policy, sustainability and heritage at UCL - University College London. She works across both national and international contexts and advocates for the critical role of archaeology and heritage in achieving sustainability.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate mitigation refers to human interventions aimed at reducing the sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or enhancing their sinks, with the objective of limiting long-term global warming. Heritage, in this context, is not an abstract notion but encompasses the ways we build, inhabit, and make sense of our environments, as well as the traditions and practices that shape everyday life. Exploring the relationship between climate mitigation and heritage reveals that many historical and ancestral practices offer valuable insights for reducing emissions today and for learning how to live with the planet rather than merely on it. In contemporary climate policy, carbon sequestration has become a central priority, given that carbon dioxide, produced in large quantities through human activity, persists in the atmosphere for centuries. While numerous technological solutions exist, the past also provides important resources. Indigenous and traditional practices offer particularly compelling examples: water-harvesting systems, community-based land and water management, rotational grazing, agroforestry, and low-impact fishing all demonstrate sustainable modes of living that foster reciprocal relationships with ecosystems. These practices not only contribute to mitigation but also embody forms of environmental knowledge and care that can inform more just futures.

Critical Walking

Daniele Valisena

Daniele Valisena is a postdoctoral researcher in environmental history at the University of Barkley.

Walking is one of the most immediate ways of relating to the environment. It enables us to explore space through embodied movement and to establish a relationship with places by becoming momentarily part of them. It is an art of noticing, of making visible what is often overlooked or concealed. Walking can also become a critical practice when it resists purely objective forms of observation. It allows us to analyse what is happening on the surface and beneath it, drawing on the “geo-storical” approach (a term coined by Daniele Valisena), which integrates historical, ecological, geological, and geographical perspectives. When applied to heritage, this approach helps reveal infractions, discontinuities, and incongruences that complicate the apparent linearity of memory processes.

Community-Based Planning

Kenneth Reardon

Kenneth Reardon is a professor of urban planning and community development at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Urban planning, as a formal discipline, took shape in the early twentieth century, with Patrick Geddes often regarded as one of its foundational figures for his emphasis on understanding the interrelations between people, place, and environment. His idea of studying and organising “place-work-folk” laid the groundwork for planning approaches that later expanded across the urban scale. Over time, however, planning practices increasingly reflected the interests of upper social classes, privileging economic priorities over the needs of working-class residents. In response, alternative approaches emerged that sought to re-centre community agency.

Community-Based Planning (CBP) is one such approach: it foregrounds the active participation of residents in shaping planning decisions, emphasising that communities themselves should identify and address their own problems, that neighbourhood-level associations can grow into effective structures for mobilising and resolving diverse challenges, and that fostering a balanced coexistence between long-term residents and newcomers is essential for building synergistic and inclusive urban environments. CBP has informed numerous initiatives worldwide, including the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative in Boston, the Killarney Community Centre Project in British Columbia, the Vivisimeto River Project in Sicily, and the East St. Louis Action Research Project in Illinois, projects that are well documented and provide valuable precedents for other community-driven planning efforts. Within the WRENCH project, we draw on the principles of community-based planning to co-produce the People's Plan, a tool designed to explore and activate the relationships among communities, heritage, and climate change.

Decolonisation - Abolition

Decolonize This Place

Decolonize This Place is an art collective based in New York City that organises around Indigenous rights, Black nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, de-gentrification, and economic inequality.

Heritage is not confined to the past; it is equally embedded in the present and oriented toward the future, and for this reason, it requires protection across temporal scales. The struggle against climate change intersects with broader social movements that defend the rights of air, water, and land, as well as those advocating for the abolition of prisons and borders. Addressing climate change demands a planetary perspective that exceeds the territorial limits of individual nation-states. Its negative effects are already visible and widespread, impacting not only human populations but all living beings; this shared vulnerability underscores the need for forms of protection, cooperation, and solidarity across people, communities, and species. It is essential to recognise, however, that not all individuals or communities experience these conditions in the same way. The global landscape is shaped by structural violence and capitalist logics that impose a singular model of life, often at the expense of ecological and cultural plurality, an imposition that ultimately threatens planetary survival. Colonialism can be understood as capitalism enacted through violence, persisting today in forms that differ from those of the past yet remain deeply consequential. Imagining a world freed from colonialism, capitalism, and systemic violence opens the possibility for the coexistence of multiple worlds, diverse, interdependent, and all real. Within the WRENCH project, we approach the heritage-climate change nexus through lenses informed by decolonial debates, seeking to foreground these pluriversal and relational ways of inhabiting the planet.

Degrowth

Goran Tomka

Goran Tamka is a professor of faculty of media and communications from Belgrade. He works in the intersection of culture, politics and economics.

The principle of degrowth invites us to question the priorities that structure contemporary societies. Much of public policy and economic discourse remains anchored in the measurement of value through indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), even though aspects such as health, well-being, and quality of life cannot, and should not, be reduced to these metrics. Numerous events that are socially and ethically harmful, including war or crime, nonetheless contribute to GDP growth, raising a fundamental question: is growth inherently positive, and for whom?

The concept of degrowth resonates with debates in the heritage field, which likewise faces the need to reassess its priorities. The long-standing practice of accumulating objects over centuries and placing them in museums is not always the most appropriate or ethical response.

Not everything requires preservation, particularly when certain materials perpetuate forms of violence, trauma, or domination that communities may not wish to transmit to future generations. Degrowth thus offers a lens through which heritage can be re-imagined, not as an ever-expanding archive of objects, but as a field capable of making selective, situated, and ethically grounded decisions about what to maintain, what to transform, and what to let go.

Ecomuseum

Hugues de Varine

Hugues de Varine, former president of ICOM and a long-standing advocate for working with marginalized communities around the world, is widely recognised as one of the pioneers of the ecomuseum movement.

The term ecomuseum emerged between 1971 and 1974 to describe a movement later associated with “new museology,” initiated by local communities seeking to undertake their own heritage-making processes. Although “ecomuseum” is not an officially standardised category, despite emerging legislation in some regions, such as Italy, and lacks a single comprehensive scientific definition, this is characteristic of concepts and practices that originate within social movements. Broadly speaking, ecomuseums differ from traditional museums because they seek to integrate ecological, social, and economic dimensions and are fundamentally rooted in the communities where they emerge. They are commonly understood as the dynamic interplay of three core elements: heritage, community, and territory. Through negotiated agreements among these components, ecomuseums interpret and activate heritage by fostering community engagement and by conceiving the territory as a space for local economic, social, cultural, and environmental flourishing.

Food Habits, Climate Change, Cultural Heritage

Sayan Day

Sayan Dey is a decolonial thinker, researcher, and historian from India. He works as an Assistant Professor and Department Chair (English Studies) and Vice-Chair (The Committee for Research, Innovations, Consultations, and Training) at Bayan College (Affiliated with Purdue University Northwest), Oman.

When we speak of food habits, we often think first of their biological dimensions, digestion, nutrients, or their sensory aspects, such as taste and smell. Yet food practices are deeply entangled with cultural traditions, heritage, and climate change. What people eat is shaped by the place they live, the traditions that define it, socio-economic conditions, and the surrounding climate. In hot and arid regions, for example, only certain crops can withstand extreme temperatures, and maintaining hydration becomes essential. Communities without modern preservation technologies rely on specific techniques to store food, while those with limited economic resources turn to more affordable, often humble, ingredients. These examples show that food habits are not merely personal choices but adaptive cultural responses to environmental and social conditions. For this reason, it is necessary to rethink how we understand food practices and to broaden our perspective to include their ecological, cultural, and historical dimensions.

Heritage and Anthropocene

Federico Zaina

Federico Zaina is an archeologist and works as the head of The Department of Collection and Research at the Museo Egizio of Turin.

The term Anthropocene was coined about 25 years ago by Nobel Prize, winning scientist Paul Crutzen to designate a new geological epoch shaped by direct and indirect human activities, including population growth, large-scale infrastructure development, and urban expansion. Although a precise starting date has not been formally established, many studies situate its origins around the Industrial Revolution, with a marked intensification in the 1950s known as the “Great Acceleration.” Today, the concept remains controversial: the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) has not officially confirmed the Anthropocene as a geological epoch, yet acknowledges its value as a framework for understanding the profound planetary impacts of human activity and the damage it continues to cause. Over the past seventy years, human actions have transformed entire landscapes to build roads, housing, cities, and airports, producing severe environmental consequences and eroding historical memory. Despite this, the destruction of heritage is rarely analysed as a phenomenon directly linked to the Great Acceleration and, by extension, to the Anthropocene. This conceptual gap has contributed to the absence of robust national and international policies aimed at safeguarding heritage in the context of rapid socio-environmental change.

Heritage as Commoning

Decolonize This Place

Decolonize This Place is an art collective based in New York City that organises around Indigenous rights, Black nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, de-gentrification, and economic inequality.

Across the world, multiple forms of oppression persist: wars, the Palestinian struggle, colonialism, patriarchy, and gentrification among them. From a Western perspective, these realities often appear distant because they do not affect us directly. The practice of commoning challenges this distance by cultivating a universal vision in which all people are equal citizens of the planet, entitled to the same rights and opportunities, and connected through relationships of mutual responsibility. For such a vision to be possible, air, soil, and water must be understood as common goods, and we must recognise that events occurring far from our immediate surroundings nonetheless shape our own lives. Commoning, therefore, requires learning to look beyond the borders of the states we inhabit and to acknowledge our interdependence. It is sustained by relationships and represents a first step toward collective freedom. Heritage, similarly, is constituted through relationships: it is the accumulation of stories, experiences, and knowledge that can be transmitted only through acts of sharing. This is why commoning and heritage are deeply intertwined. Both are lived through people, through the connections they build, and through the practices and values they choose to hold in common.

Heritage Making

Hugues de Varine

Hugues de Varine, former president of ICOM and a long-standing advocate for working with marginalized communities around the world, is widely recognised as one of the pioneers of the ecomuseum movement.

The act of making heritage is often carried out automatically and unconsciously. Heritage is frequently imagined as something static or “dead,” a set of objects to be preserved intact for future generations. Yet another form of heritage exists, living heritage, which evolves continuously. Living heritage is vital for communities because it enables them to construct their own personal and collective “collections,” of which they are both custodians and curators. This form of heritage can be reshaped at any moment, responding to present needs, perceptions, and aspirations. Such a dynamic understanding lies at the heart of practices like the ecomuseum, which stands as a key example of heritage-making in action.

Heritage Politics

Francesca Recchia

Francesca Recchia is an independent researcher and writer. She works on the geopolitical dimension of cultural practices in countries in conflict and the relation with intangible heritage.

Heritage politics raises a series of fundamental questions: Who protects heritage? Who makes decisions about it? For whom is heritage preserved, and who benefits, directly or indirectly, from its conservation? What priorities guide these choices? And which narratives are mobilised to tell the stories and histories of a place, particularly in contexts marked by conflict? Understanding how a country's political structures and power relations shape both heritage and its narrative frameworks is essential. Heritage is never an innocent or neutral domain; assuming otherwise would be naïve. Powers engaged in warfare, whether states, institutions, or geopolitical actors, exert significant influence over what is preserved, how it is interpreted, and whose voices are amplified or silenced. Recognising these dynamics is crucial for analysing heritage in conflict areas and for exposing the political interests embedded in processes of selection, preservation, and representation.

Legitimacy

Julianne Warren

Julianne Warren (she, settler) is a poet-scholar and land and justice advocate. She holds a Ph.D. in conservation ecology from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and an MFA in Creative Writing from the Institute of American Indian Arts. She lives and works in Lower Tanana Dene Lands Fairbanks, Alaska.

Robert Pogue Harrison writes that only the dead can grant us legitimacy—something humans need and crave. Julianne Warren, poet-scholar and advocate for land and justice, invites us to reflect critically on this notion, opening a space for rethinking how legitimacy might be framed within heritage discourse. This contribution offers a poetic reflection articulated in three parts. Part I begins with meditations on father-daughter and father-mother relationships, on possessiveness and ancestral heritage, on repetitions, stories, and thresholds of maturity. Part II shifts attention to legitimacy within fossil relations, to “fossil kin” in Zoe Todd’s sense, and closes with a provocative question: Have fossil beings formed a ruthless movement to divest from human notions? Part III turns to the dead to which Warren surrenders, opening a space for emotional reflection on the multifaceted forms of legitimacy that can shape critical heritage discourse.

Living Heritage

Višnja Kisić

Višnja Kisić is an art historian, heritage scholar and an eco- culturologist at the University of Arts Belgrade. She is also a caretaker of an initiative called The Forest University.

Living heritage is commonly defined as the ensemble of practices, knowledge, and skills transmitted from one generation to the next, hence its characterization as “alive.” Its continuity depends on human custodians, who act as both transmitters and interpreters of these traditions. However, Višnja Kisić proposes a more expansive understanding of living heritage, one that extends beyond human practices to encompass all species inhabiting the planet. She argues that we are currently living within a “capitalistic, colonial Anthropocene regime of destruction, death, and extinction,” a condition that threatens the very foundations of life. In this context, she suggests that the planet itself should be understood as heritage—the true living heritage. Only by recognising Earth in this way can we begin to reconnect with it rather than remain separate, and to grasp the relationships, dependencies, and conditions that make life possible.

Military Heritage

Stefano Morosini

Stefano Morosini is a Professor of environmental history at the University of Bergamo.

Military heritage can initially appear dissonant, as the domains of heritage and the military evoke seemingly opposing logics: the former is associated with memory, identity, and preservation, while the latter is often linked to destruction and loss. Military heritage is therefore frequently controversial. A well-known example is the Monument to the Liberators of the Soviet Union in Riga, demolished in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Yet there are contexts in which this type of heritage is not perceived as contentious. In the Alpine region, for instance, the material remains of the First World War are closely tied to local memory, family histories, and broader narratives of European identity. In the context of climate change, military heritage also acquires an additional layer of significance: it serves as a material witness to environmental transformations, revealing how landscapes shaped by conflict are now being reshaped by ecological change.

Pluriversal Heritage

Višnja Kisić

Višnja Kisić is an art historian, heritage scholar and an eco- culturologist at the University of Arts Belgrade. She is also a caretaker of an initiative called The Forest University

Pluriversal heritage offers an alternative vision to the dominant approaches that have shaped heritage until now. Western occupation and colonial expansion have historically deprived many communities of their cultures, territories, and ways of life. Today, global imaginaries still tend to classify populations along hierarchies of being—more or less “civilised,” more or less “educated,” more or less “capable” of self-governance—hierarchies grounded in Western epistemic and political parameters. The Western European model that once colonised much of the world continues to shape heritage practices through international organisations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and international development agencies. Laurajane Smith describes this dominant framework as the authorized heritage discourse, which can also be understood as the “modern heritage regime.” A clear example is the museum that displays cultural objects from Indigenous communities whose lifeworlds were suppressed or dismantled through colonisation. Such institutions often reproduce the very power structures that produced dispossession in the first place. The pluriversal heritage approach invites us to decentre Western perspectives in both thought and practice, and to recognise instead a plurality of cultures, epistemologies, and heritages that coexist and interact without any single one claiming universality. It calls for an understanding of heritage as relational, situated, and multiple—an interconnected constellation of worlds rather than a single dominant worldview.

Reusing Uncomfortable Heritage

Ywen Wang

Ywen Wang is an associate professor at the Design School - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in China.

Uncomfortable heritage refers to forms of heritage that are not widely recognised or celebrated, yet undeniably belong to the historical fabric of a place. In academic literature, it is often described as difficult heritage, negative heritage, or unwanted heritage. This category includes buildings and sites associated with political or ideological regimes; such as prisons, psychiatric institutions, or architectural remains from Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, or the former Soviet Union, which embody painful or contentious aspects of collective memory. It can also encompass rural or mountain structures that, rooted in a different historical moment, no longer fit easily within contemporary social or economic contexts. Protecting and interpreting these forms of heritage is essential, but doing so requires resisting the temptation to erase, sanitise, or reinterpret their histories for the sake of modern sensibilities. The concept of uncomfortable heritage is not limited to the physical structures themselves; it concerns the relationship between present-day society and the histories these sites represent. Decisions to preserve, transform, or neglect such places shape how communities confront memory, identity, and responsibility, even when the past they evoke is inconvenient or unsettling.

Water Subalterns

Francesca Greco

Francesca Greco is an expert in international hydropolitics and a Marie Curie researcher at Bergamo University.

Water is a natural resource that is often overlooked in heritage studies, despite its centrality to human and ecological life. Climate change disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups across the world, including minorities living within wealthy and highly developed countries. In the water sector, phenomena such as floods, droughts, inadequate irrigation systems, water privatisation, and water or land grabbing all produce severe and uneven impacts on populations. The term “water subalterns” refers to the groups most affected by these processes, those who bear the consequences of environmental degradation and political-economic inequalities. Water is therefore not only an environmental issue but also a social one, deeply intertwined with class, gender, ethnicity, and other axes of vulnerability.

Recognising water as a site of inequality, struggle, and heritage allows us to understand how access to this essential resource shapes identities, livelihoods, and the capacity of communities to endure and adapt.

Wetlands

Paolo Gruppuso

Paolo Gruppuso is an anthropologist researching water landscapes, nature conservation, and more-than-human socialities at the intersection of social anthropology and the environmental humanities. He currently holds a DFG Eigene Stelle research grant for the project ‘Rethinking Wetlands (ReWet): An Environmental Anthropology’, based at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (LMU).

In the early twentieth century, Frederic Clements defined wetlands as transitional zones between terrestrial and aquatic environments. A wetland can gradually evolve into a prairie and eventually into a forest; this ecological succession highlights how wetlands embody the historical accumulation of processes and activities that maintain soil moisture. Despite being essential to planetary life, wetlands are among the ecosystems most threatened by urbanisation, capitalist expansion, and climate change. In the Global North, vast wetland areas were destroyed over the past two centuries, largely through drainage and land reclamation. Their ecological importance began to be more widely recognised around the 1950s, when the term “wetlands” gained prominence as a way to describe and protect these environments. Today, wetlands are understood not only for their ecological value but also as spaces where environmental sustainability, cultural practices, and multispecies relationships intersect. They represent living archives of ecological history and cultural interaction, making their preservation crucial for both biodiversity and heritage.

Working Class Literature

Carlo Baghetti

Carlo Baghetti is a contract researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, LEST) for a project on transmedia narratives of work

In recent years, working-class literature has gained increasing attention in Italy. At its core lies the desire to speak in one’s own voice, rather than allowing historically dominant subjectivities to narrate or mediate working-class experiences. This stance is becoming more visible in the public sphere and has begun to take on recognised institutional form, most notably through the Working Class Festival, inaugurated in 2023. Although this resurgence is particularly vibrant today, it is part of a longer transnational history. Contemporary working-class writing builds upon earlier traditions, contributing to the formation of a literary heritage that operates as a mode of resistance. Central to these struggles is the assertion of a collective voice within social and cultural spaces—a refusal to remain silent, marginalised, or spoken for. Working-class literature often exposes the incompatibility between dominant production systems and the flourishing of human, natural, and environmental forms of life. In this sense, it can be understood as a form of living working-class heritage: an insurgent archive of experiences, struggles, and imaginaries that continues to shape, and be shaped by, the communities from which it emerges.

WRENCH

*Whispers of Time
Heritage as Narratives
of Climate Change*

A Belmont Forum Project
2026



PCI2024-153536

