



**TESTIMONY, TRAUMA AND SOCIAL SUFFERING: NEW FRAMINGS/NEW  
DIRECTIONS**

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

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Conveners: Rosanne Kennedy (ANU) and Gillian Whitlock (UQld)

# **ABSTRACTS**

# **IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY SPEAKER**

## Poetic Testimony: Suffering and Trauma amongst Iranian Diasporas

This paper focuses on the modes of testimony used by Iranian diasporas to communicate their experiences of trauma and suffering. The Iranian diaspora is a diverse community living in Australia and form part of the international exodus following the 1979 revolution. Over one million Iranians were forced or made an existential choice to leave Iran after the overthrow of the repressive Pahlavi regime. The Iranian diaspora in Australia is from a diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is comprised of Persians, Kurds, Azeris, Arabs, Belochi as well as Muslims, Zoroastrians, Christians, Bahais and seculars, as well as others. The Iranian diaspora can be split into three phases. The first wave consists of those that left after the 1979 revolution; the second wave began soon after the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988); and the third wave is made up of those who are dissidents from the current regime (1999- current). This paper focuses on the modes of testimony and trauma and suffering experienced by the first wave of the Iranian diaspora in 'the west.'

The form of testimony used to bear witness to their experiences of displacement, violence and trauma is what I call 'poetic testimony'. This form of testimony is constituted by songs, poems and literary writings to illuminate their life experiences of the 1979 revolution. In this paper I argue that 'poetic testimony' is used to remember and pass on to succeeding generations experiences of violence, displacement, trauma and suffering lived by the generation of the 1979 revolution. The paper focuses on the power of literary representation to ask: how can 'poetic testimony' teach us about trauma and suffering? Can 'poetic testimony' offer a critique of violence and trauma? The paper seeks to address these questions through Camus' suggestion that there are many ways of 'bearing witness' to the violence of history. I argue that 'poetic testimony' is an important mode of testimony and represents Walter Benjamin's notion of 'fragments of truth'. Unlike, modern jurisprudence which looks to testimony as a form of 'collectable facts' this paper argues that testimony after war, violence, genocide, and displacement cannot be in the form of an orderly collection of testimony but rather is in 'capricious mosaics' of fragments of truth. The aim of this paper is to make these fragments 'visible' and 'dominant' and to ask: what are the modes of identification represented in these forms of 'poetic testimony?' And what experiences are represented in the 'poetic testimony' that bears witness to their historical experiences of trauma and suffering? What forms of testimony are found in the songs, poetry and literature identified by the participants in this study? Through the prism of 'poetic testimony' this paper aims to provide a critical understanding of suffering and trauma and why this mode of testimony is used by Iranian diasporas. It will explore the ways 'poetic testimony' foregrounds the historical events of 1979 and how and why it gives meaning to the displacement, suffering and trauma experienced by the participants in this study. It will pay particular attention to the ways 'poetic testimony' takes different forms according to different experiences, cultural memories and gender within the first wave of the Iranian diaspora in Australia.

### **Bio note:**

Dr Mammad Aidani is an interdisciplinary scholar based in the School of Historical Studies, Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne. His research on suffering, trauma and narratives of refugees and migrants interfuses with disciplines of social history, social theory, philosophy and anthropology. Mammad examines the cultural meanings attached to suffering and considers its meanings with the types of identities and modes of belonging that are emerging and shaping the local world of Iranian and Middle- Eastern diasporas. He is currently a Post doctoral Research Fellow at the School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne.

Lynne Bell

## Decolonizing Visual Testimony

Recent events such as the Indian Residential School Settlement Process (IRSSP 2006), the official Apology (2008), and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008) have created new frameworks of visibility and intelligibility for Survivor testimony about Canada's residential school network. The convergence of the above events in the last few years has generated a "discursive threshold" (Whitlock), enabling new speaking positions and cultures of public debate to emerge about Canada's colonial past, its apartheid educational cultures, and the legacies of the residential school system in a still-colonial present. The visual arts have a key role to play in the task of building collective public memory as a process of historical accountability. In recent years, contemporary Indigenous artists have worked with persistence, courage and imagination to create an important archive of visual testimony that bears witness to the residential school experience (among other issues). These artists belong to a 'cultural front' (Bhabha) that is intent on decolonizing the national imaginary with visual testimonies which, on the one hand, interrogate the rhetorical silences of dominant white settler histories, while centring Indigenous histories, points-of-view and knowledge, on the other.

This paper will focus on a number of recent site-specific image-events (installations and performances) by Aboriginal artists that testify to the genocidal and assimilative educational culture of the residential school system and its ongoing legacies. In these site-specific projects, the artist works as a postcolonial archivist or wild anthropologist, to assemble differing visual elements and signifying systems, in order to place before the viewer's eyes a set of visual testimonies about the material and imaginative violence of colonialism. In considering the affective and interrogative force of these projects, this paper will discuss a number of issues, including: How are artists attempting to bear witness to issues of social and cultural justice? What gives this art its constituency? How does visual testimony achieve historical and contextual agency? What is the role of the viewer in this particular testimonial exchange?

### **Bio note:**

Lynne Bell, Professor of Visual Culture and Co-Director of the Humanities Research Unit at the University of Saskatchewan, teaches and publishes in decolonizing visual culture. Recent publications include, "The Post/Colonial Photographic Archive and the Work of Memory" (*Image and Inscription: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Photography*, YYZ Books, 2007); "Satiric Spectacle, Camp Aesthetics and Anti-Colonial Critique in the work of Adrian Stimson" (*Canadian Art* 2007); and "Thinking Place: Animating the Indigenous Humanities in Education" (with Marie Battiste, Isobel Findlay, Len Findlay & James Youngblood Henderson, the *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, vol. 34, 2005).

Adam Brown

**"Can One Be So Guilty For Having Survived?":  
"Privileged" Jews, Holocaust Testimony, and the Paradox of Judgement.**

Lawrence Langer's concept of 'choiceless choices' is exemplified by the traumatic experiences of so-called 'privileged' Jews, those prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps and ghettos who held positions that gave them access to material and other benefits whilst compelling them to act in ways that have been judged detrimental to fellow inmates. 'Privileged' Jews are often judged to be 'complicit' in the Nazis' genocidal crimes. In 1986, Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi's paradigmatic essay entitled 'The Grey Zone' highlighted this complex and sensitive issue, an issue that remains at the margins of popular and academic discourse on the Holocaust. Levi argues that the ethical dilemmas such individuals confronted challenge, if not undermine, all attempts at understanding and representation, and warns that one should abstain from passing judgement on them. However, moral evaluations of 'privileged' Jews are invariably communicated through or imposed upon Holocaust testimonies and have a strong impact on their content.

The paper will explore the representation of 'privileged' Jews in several Holocaust testimonies of different genres, including those provided by 'privileged' prisoners themselves and other survivors commenting on victims in such roles. It will be argued that despite Levi's contention that moral judgement is undesirable when contemplating such extreme circumstances, it may also be unavoidable. In addition to written memoir, this paradox of judgement will also be highlighted in videotestimonies recorded at the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre in Melbourne. The role of the interviewer is a crucial factor in the representation of 'privileged' Jews, and this is particularly the case when interviewees are former 'privileged' Jews, and interviewers are themselves Holocaust survivors. The paper will argue that when confronted with such emotionally and morally freighted issues, judgement may itself be seen as one of what Saul Friedlander has termed the 'limits of representation.' It is in this way that testifying to the traumatic experiences of 'privileged' Jews complicates notions of 'voice,' potentially undermines efforts to 'represent the unrepresentable' and poses perhaps insurmountable obstacles to understanding.

**Bio note:**

Adam Brown teaches history and literature at Deakin University, and works in the testimonies department at the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre in Melbourne. He is currently completing a PhD on Holocaust representation, focusing on how moral judgements are communicated in portrayals of 'privileged' Jews in Holocaust memoir, historical writing and film.

## Where the Unspeakable Dwells: Persian women's Enfolding of Traumatic Memory

In this paper we explore the complex methodological and epistemological issues that arose for us in our ongoing fieldwork among Persian women in Australia. This diasporic group, who are predominantly Bahá'í, not only share a common historical identity in which religious law was unfavorable to women, but profound experiences of suffering and alienation following their exile from the Islamic Revolution. As with many testimonies and 'refugee narratives', experiences of trauma for Bahá'í are tightly bound up in 'bodies of knowledge', in both the performance of embodied memories of persecution, and the intimate knowledge that Islamic authorities collected about them and their families. In engaging with an ethnography of violence we became acutely aware of the problems embedded in an understanding of testimony predicated on public/private and telling/witnessing dichotomies. Our orientation to experiences of trauma has led us away from a dualist epistemology of telling and witnessing, and towards an analysis of the ways in which traumatic memories are known and communicated, enfolded and transformed in mundane and creative practices of ordinary life. Our paper is dia-ethnographic in orientation, in that it engages deeply with our own situated curiosity, and begins with the ways in which we became aware of the impacts of particular ethnographic techniques of inquiry. Not willing to reproduce traumatic relations, and redirected by the women's own telling silences, we became attuned to an embodied style and modality of memory making, and the specific, gendered situations in which trauma is remembered, forgotten and re-remembered. Examining the embodied experience of trauma in and through everyday, gendered practices means that the intertwining processes of bodies and memory takes analytic precedence over attention to narrative or symbolic outcomes.

### **Bio note:**

Dr Simone Dennis is a social anthropologist at the Australian National University. Her research interests are in the exploration of the sensual operation of the body in contexts of subtle power, great trauma, and ordinary domestic life. She is the author of two books; *Police Beat*, and *Christmas Island: An Anthropological Study*. *Police Beat* deals with a number of intersections, including those between police, emotion and work; emotion and musical production; the body and the senses; and between all of these domains and the subtleties of the practice of institutional power in contemporary Australian context. Moving away from the Weberian notion, that the legitimacy of power is rooted in the state's pursuit of self affirmation through displays of power and prestige, Dennis argues that while it is the case that the interests of the state are not in the sustenance of the people, the forms of power marshalled to maintain state power are subtle. In her work on Christmas Island, Dennis examines how the specific metaphors that islanders use reveal coalescences between the body of the self, the other, nature, and the nation to present a picture of migration and movement from the perspective of those who live within the migration exclusion zone. The work is also concerned with the ways in which multiethnic memories of the senses and vestment of these memories in the biotic, environmental and material life of the island reveal much about the operation of the national political apparatus on Christmas Island, and reveals the sensual life of the state. Dennis's latest research is framed by the ways in which science produces its knowledge, and the ways in which this knowledge is represented by scientists themselves. This research focuses on the ways in which the subtle operation of disciplinary power is brought to bear on scientific practitioners working with animal subjects.

Dr Megan Warin is a social anthropologist at Durham University whose teaching and research interests coalesce around themes of embodiment, food, memory and migration. Her research into anorexia examines concepts of commensality and relatedness, and her work on obesity with social epidemiologists in Australia bring class and gender to the fore of obesity studies. Her collaborative work with Simone Dennis investigates the phenomenological aspects of food, memory and trauma amongst the Persian diaspora in the UK and Australia. She is also investigating medical migration between Spain and the UK, examining how competing discourses of health care use, provision, and entitlement, metaphorically refer to wider issues concerning the permeability (or impermeability) of state borders, the endurance of national identities, and resulting difficulties in the construction of a European identity and citizenship.

Linda Devereux

**"In the Public Gaze": Masking Traumatic Memories of Conflict in the Congo.**

A few years ago my Grandma gave me an important family archive, a collection of faded yellow newspaper clippings from 1960 and 1964. The images show my father, my mother, my siblings and me caught up in the postcolonial violence in central Africa. Although these images were clearly in the public domain, and my Grandma had kept them for 30 years, I had never seen most of them before. The images were significant for my Grandma – perhaps as the only tangible artefacts to a piece of family history that was seldom discussed. In this paper I use the concept of postmemory to examine the forces that maintained a family silence and the process of 'handing over' of tangible artefacts to memory that gave one family a tentative space from which to begin to speak.

**Bio note:**

Linda Devereux grew up in Africa, Scotland and Australia. She is a lecturer at the University of Canberra where she teaches in the early childhood and literacy education programs. Linda has worked as the director of tertiary academic support services, and as a classroom teacher in a variety of settings including a remote Indigenous community in the Northern Territory. Linda researches and publishes in the fields of early childhood and tertiary literacy development, and in the socio-cultural construction of childhood. Her current doctoral work is an examination of childhood memory and war.

Kate Douglas

## Ethical Responses to Childhood Trauma Testimony: Mandates for Scholarship

The climate for writing auto/biographically about childhood has shifted greatly in the past ten years because of controversies affecting the genre. Still arguably one of the darlings of the publishing industry, the autobiography of childhood has been branded a "difficult" genre—a consequence of high-profile 'hoaxes' and suspicion over adult authors' abilities to faithfully recall childhood memories—particularly post trauma. Most successful autobiographies of childhood are now held up to intense scrutiny by critics. Consider the recent controversy surrounding Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (2007). Beah's story of his time as a child soldier in the government army during the civil war in Sierra Leone resulted in Beah becoming an unofficial spokesperson for the plight of child soldiers. In his autobiography, Beah testifies to the murder of his friends and family, to the killings he committed during his time as a child soldier, and to his eventual rescue and redemption. Beah's autobiography was challenged by *The Australian* newspaper. The newspaper disputed the veracity of some of the dates presented by Beah, and in doing so, raised more general questions about the credibility of Beah's story. However, other critics (particularly those in the U.S.) have been reluctant to criticise Beah's autobiography—perhaps for fear of undermining the good work done by Beah in bringing the issue of child soldiers to public attention. Beah's narrative has also been defended on the grounds that Beah most likely suffered memory loss as a result of his trauma.

In this paper I want to use the Beah controversy as a starting point to consider the ethics of critiquing post-war childhood trauma narratives within scholarship (including the 'use' of these texts in teaching and publishing). Even considering the axioms of autobiography scholarship—for instance, the gap between childhood experiences and adult recollections, the fragility of memory, and the vicarious appeal of traumatic representation—critics remain divided on (and yet deeply preoccupied with) how we might respond ethically to these childhood trauma narratives. For example, how can we critique the inevitable mediations that these stories proceed through from experience to publication? And can our scholarly mediations address the complexities of childhood trauma narration and expand the conventional limits of witnessing? I am also interested in the extent to which critical responses to childhood trauma testimony might reflect particular national and cultural preoccupations about childhood trauma and social suffering.

### **Bio note:**

Dr Kate Douglas is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Creative Writing and Australian Studies at Flinders University (South Australia). Her primary research interest is the social work of life writing—the ways in which life narrative texts engage with the politics of the moment and affect social change. Her research investigates who is authorised to write autobiographically at particular historical moments, and the technologies they use to record their lives. Kate is the author of *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma and Memory* (forthcoming Rutgers, 2009) and *Trauma Texts* (with Gillian Whitlock) (forthcoming Routledge, 2009). With Gillian Whitlock, she has recently edited two special issues of the journal *Life Writing* (5.1 and 5.2, 2008) titled 'Trauma in the Twenty-First Century'.

## "Our will against their might": Testimony as Political Action in the Tibetan Diaspora

The Tibetan diaspora consists of the approximately 130,000 Tibetans who have fled, and continue to flee, their homeland since its occupation in the 1950s by Chinese forces. Since the beginning of the Tibetan diaspora in 1959, English language testimonies – ranging from personal oral accounts to full-length autobiographical texts – have emerged as central forms of cultural and political practice, frequently gathered and circulated as part of the political and rights-based activities of the Tibetan independence movement.

The post-World War Two period has been characterised not only as the "age of testimony" but also as the "third age" of human rights, with institutional frameworks emerging for the hearing of the rights claims of individuals and peoples against state actors. At the same time, scholars have begun to examine the "conjunctions" between the telling of life stories, and global human rights movements and claims. In the Tibetan context, the human rights paradigm has increasingly offered possibilities for narration as well as an interpretive framework within which narratives of Tibetan political experience can be understood. However, beyond addressing individual trauma and human rights abuses, Tibetan testimonial practices emerge as deeply collective, speaking fundamentally to the anti-colonial and collective right of self determination.

This paper examines the emergence, development and institutionalisation of modern Tibetan testimonial practices, considering the ways in which the Tibetan experience of diaspora, occurring during the Post-War period, has given rise to the development of Tibetan testimony. In and through diaspora, Tibetan refugees have been exposed to modern rights-based political concepts and practices. The liminal spaces of exile have produced contact zones for the formation of important relationships of collaboration between Tibetans and non-Tibetans, and given rise to key acts of border-crossing witnessing and testimony central to the emergence of this form of non-violent political action within Tibetan refugee communities.

### **Bio note:**

Julie Fletcher is currently postdoctoral research fellow on the ARC funded "Policing Just Outcomes" sexual assault project being undertaken by researchers at Victoria Police and Edith Cowan University. She completed her PhD in 2008 within the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University. Her thesis, *Witnessing Tibet: life narrative as testimony in the Tibetan diaspora*, examines the development of testimonial and witnessing practices within the Tibetan refugee community since 1959 as a form of non-violent, rights-based, transnational, cross-cultural and collaborative political practice, arising as response to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and associated with the increasingly globalised "new social movement" context of the Tibetan independence movement. This timely research has become increasingly salient in the wake of the 2008 "Tibetan People's Uprising" and the impending (March 2009) 50th Anniversary of the Lhasa Uprising, escape of HH Dalai Lama, and the beginnings of the Tibetan Diaspora.

Rosemary Jolly

**Testimony, Trauma Theory, and Multi-Generational Effects of Violence:  
South African Child and Adolescent Testimony.**

Violence understood as a social, rather than individual, experience demands a radical reassessment of many of the foundational categories of trauma theory. How do we conceive of the victim/perpetrator dyad in social terms? If the purpose of testifying to one's experience of abuse is not purely therapeutic, but positioned rather as an attempt to reflect upon the structural conditions that led to the experience of violence – conditions which may well still obtain at the moment of testimony – how is the addressee of this narrative of social critique constructed?

I use the troubling figure of childhood experiences of violent abuse narrated in subsequent testimony to frame some current deficits in trauma theory. Specifically, I examine two sets of testimony from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, one from a woman, Sheila Masote, and the lesser known testimony of a man, Moegamat Williams. I argue that the inattention paid to the imposition of strict gender roles during adolescence, and the erasure of adolescence itself in the equally strict imposition of the binary roles of innocent child and demonic adult perpetrator, have played a major role in obscuring what such testimonies have to say about the structural conditions obtaining that enable childhood abuse and its multigenerational proliferation. Such impositions hold their imaginative purchase in the figure of the innocent child. However, far from enacting benevolence, this figure erases the connection between subjectivity and agency, and perpetuates a culture of assigning blame for childhood experiences of violation that is deflected away from the addressees of the testimony. This overwrites communal responsibility for building an alternative social fabric that would engage childhood and adolescent testimony on its own terms.

**Bio note:**

Professor Jolly is principal investigator of a project, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, on gender based violence and HIV/AIDS, located in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; and co-investigator of a SSHRCC project comparing syphilis and related STIs prior to penicillin and contemporary HIV/AIDS in the rural South African context. These projects are situated in the nexus of public health, cultural and human rights discourses (see "For Northern Displacements: Understanding the Meaning of Madness in Global Constructions of AIDS," *The Global South* 1.1 (Winter 2007):55-65). She is completing an ms. for Chicago and Liverpool University |Presses on the role of South African narratives in conceptualizations of human rights, and the violation of those rights, in post-apartheid culture (see "'Going to the Dogs': Humanity in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, *The Lives of Animals* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in Poyner, ed. *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual* (Ohio UP, 2006): 148-171).

Rosanne Kennedy

**Decolonising Trauma Studies:  
Israeli and Palestinian Testimony and Transnational Witnessing Publics**

In the past several years, there has been a growing archive of testimony from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, including Human Rights testimony, memoirs, testimony from Israeli soldiers, and films such as *Waltz with Bashir*. Yet, Israeli-Palestinian testimony has not been widely taken up by trauma scholars. Specifically, issues concerning their production, reception and circulation of testimony, as well as issues of agency, victimhood, complicity and beneficiary, have not been widely discussed to date. In this paper, I draw on Judith Butler's discussion of unspeakability and the charge of anti-Semitism to consider some of the issues that may have contributed to the critical neglect of these archives. I then consider some of the issues raised by two very different bodies of testimony: testimonies of Palestinian suffering resulting from Israel's recent 22-day military operations in Gaza (Dec 27, 2008-Jan 18, 2009), named Operation Cast Lead. These testimonies are presented in the recent Human Rights Watch Report, *Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza*. In particular, I am interested in the framing of these testimonies to legitimate Palestinian suffering. I also consider testimony from Israeli soldiers who served in Hebron between 2001-2004, collected and presented by *Breaking the Silence*, and circulated through the internet, which raise an entirely different set of issues.

**Bio note:**

Rosanne Kennedy teaches in Gender, Sexuality and Culture in the School of Humanities at the Australian National University. She has published on trauma, testimony and witnessing in *Biography*, *Studies in the Novel*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Life Writing* and *Aboriginal History*, and has edited (with Jill Bennett) a volume on cross-cultural approaches to traumatic memory, *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time* (London: Palgrave, 2003). She is currently editing a special issue of *Humanities Research* on Post-Colonial Witnessing, and is working on a book, *Decolonizing Trauma Studies*. She convened a conference (with Simone Gigliottic) on 'Testimony and Witness: from the local to the transnational' at the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University in 2006.

Lia Kent

## Transitional Justice and the Politics of Victimhood in East Timor

A central aim of East Timor's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) was to contribute to individual healing and national integration through seeking and exposing the truth about a violent past. Like other truth commissions, the CAVR was underpinned by a 'therapeutic ethic', that is, a belief in the therapeutic power of testimony for both individuals and nations (Colvin: 2003; Shaw; 2007; Moon: 2006).

In the light of burgeoning expectations of truth commissions, this paper explores some of the emerging, local effects of the CAVR. Specifically, I explore the way in which the CAVR has fostered local memory practices, including the construction of memorials and commemoration of massacres, and advocacy for victims' reparations, which is contributing to an emerging discourse of 'victims' rights' in the post-conflict period. This discourse is fostering a new political space in which some victims are exercising political agency and voicing their demands for redress and recognition to the state. I consider the possibilities and limitations of this emerging victim consciousness and the extent to which it may form the basis for solidarity amongst a diverse group of victims, contest official categories of recognition, and contribute to a 'democratising truth' (Humphrey 2003). These developments suggest that discourses of transitional justice are not simply received or contested, but are transformed, and given new meanings within a specific local context.

### **Bio note:**

Lia Kent is in the final year of her PhD Candidature at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis explores the local effects of the transitional justice process in East Timor, including the way in which ideas of transitional justice and victims' rights circulate within a specific local context. Her research has involved fieldwork in the districts of Suai, Los Palos and Liquica, and has included interviews with survivors who participated in the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) and Serious Crimes Investigations and Prosecutions process. Over the last nine years, Lia has worked in East Timor for a range of international and national organisations, including the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, Oxfam International, and the Judicial Systems Monitoring Programme.

**The Art of Indirect Witnessing : Doris Salcedo, Claude Lanzmann and Serge Klarsfeld.**

Doris Salcedo is a Columbian artist living and working in Bogota whose work concerns memory and suffering. Salcedo's work has been called "the art of the witness; the art of the secondary witness to be precise, the witness to lives and life stories forever scarred by the experience of violence..." ( Basualdo et.al., 96)

W.G. Sebald, says Doris Salcedo, "poses a question about how to form a language in which terrible experiences, experiences capable of paralysing the power of articulation, could be expressed in art." It is no coincidence that Salcedo refers to W.G.Sebald, whose approach to memorializing the Holocaust in his novel *Austerlitz* is distinctly indirect, analogous to the way many of us have learnt about it : through layers of narratives, through witnessing the testimonies of survivors.

The question of whether it is possible to represent the Holocaust and its reverberations has concerned artists, film makers and writers for more than half a century. Ivonne Pini (2) describes how Salcedo's work manages to transcend a number of the binaries which plague art makers, addressing both the past and the present, memory and experience, aesthetics and politics, survivors and perpetrators : "(her) art as a condensed experience, one with profound historical meaning, in which the story of each protagonist of an act of violence mixes with those of other members of the community. Aesthetics and politics join together to develop an ethical conscience that not only operates in the restricted space of the original investigation but also affects survivors of collective suffering."

My paper seeks to contextualize Doris Salcedo's work within a larger framework of the representation of indirect witnessing traumatic events in images by situating the approach taken by Salcedo in relation to two examples of Holocaust representation in other mediums, namely cinema (Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*) and photography/text (Serge Klarsfeld's book *French Children of the Holocaust*). Each of these have significant similarities in their approaches to trauma suffered by others, characterized by avoiding the use of images of atrocities themselves; by "assuming responsibility towards the bereaved" in Salcedo's words, (1) and by going beyond describing specific instances of catastrophe.

(1) Basualdo, Carlos, Nancy Princenthal, and Andreas Huyssen. Doris Salcedo. Phaidon Press Ltd, 2000.

(2) Interview with Charles Merewether (in Basualdo et al 2000 p145)

(3) Pini, Ivonne. Doris Salcedo Shibboleth. ArtNexus No. 68 - Dec 2007 <http://www.artnexus.com/NewsDetail/19240> Accessed 26.10.08

**Bio note:**

Johannes Klabbers received his Phd in Fine Arts in 2003. He is an artist and writer who lectures in and coordinates the Master of Arts Practice programme at Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga, Australia. He is currently completing a Master of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Monash University. He is interested in auto/biographical approaches to thinking about art, and art and writing about genocide. He recently presented a paper "Soundings : Auto/biographical Reckonings" at the IABA conference at the University of Hawai'i.

**"Social Documentation of Childhood and Youth Trauma Testimony:  
Toward an 'Ethics of Attention' in Supporting Inter-subjective Resiliencies"**

As Judith Herman has observed, emergent public consciousness about the effects of psychological trauma is likely to be rooted in flourishing social justice movements. Feminist theorists have consistently shown that childhood trauma operates along a continuum of multi-directional mechanisms that enforce relations of domination through interlocking sites of historical and contemporary vulnerability and control. These sites include but are certainly not limited to the hetero-normative patriarchal family, the colonialist residential school, the neocolonialist feminization of poverty, forced migration, sex tourism, and the practices of covert and open warfare. The resulting systematic manufacture of intergenerational vulnerabilities to violence and mistrust produces experiences of isolation that undermine collective, as well as individual, well-being. Further, it can obscure opportunities for empowered solidarity among potential allies, because the links across ideological bases operating in each situated site of trauma may not be immediately apparent, or may be obscured by the impact of crisis. As a result, the project of attending to the voices of survivors of childhood traumas engages political dimensions that range from the interpersonal, to state and economically defined conditions of access to resources, to counter-publics with a stake in healing affected communities, which are always already co-violated by the abuse of children.

One of the challenges surrounding childhood testimony relates to the limited public space afforded to children, youth, and their experiences, or to the ways these are reinterpreted by dominant perspectives, through practices of social documentation. In journalistic and child protection projects, for example, the child's control over testimony can be compromised and experienced as an additional encroachment, even in the midst of best intentions. Bearing witness requires an informed community that is willing and able to attend to the perspectives of children and youth, a project that remains only marginally sustainable in contexts of compounding crises.

This paper seeks to position the project of attending to the needs and aspirations of children and youth who have endured systematic violence within what Sue Campbell has termed an "ethics of attention" to the possibilities of "relational remembering," which can support greater individual and collective resiliencies in the face of such violence and loss. Drawing on Denise Chong's *The Girl in the Picture: The Story of Kim Phuc, the Photograph and the Vietnam War* and experiences of a local network of youth in government care, this project considers the vulnerabilities of children and youth to symbolic interpretations and appropriations in narratives constructed by adults for purposes that may not be consistent with or fully mindful of childhood developmental processes and needs, nor of the effects of those interpretations in impacted communities. In efforts to affirm the emergent and potential agency of children and youth within and beyond contexts of violence that exceed their control, this work addresses the roles that adults take in rendering accounts of child and youth testimony, for past selves and present others, together with the vitality of youth witnessing in peer-positive environments. The paper invites consideration of the multiple dimensions that relational remembering engages, and contributes to theoretical discussions about child and youth testimony in efforts to respect the futures of children impacted by trauma's tolls, symbolic and material.

**Bio note:**

Marie Lovrod is Special Lecturer in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She completed her Ph.D. in Autobiography and Feminist Theory at the University of Calgary, has directed both women's studies abroad and diversity education programs in Canada, Europe and the United States, and has published several articles and book reviews. She is currently working on research that addresses representations of childhood and youth, and their political functions in a range of contexts, from the localized to the transnational. Marie is deeply committed to building knowledge communities that respect research and learning environments as spaces shared among participants.

**"My Protector Not My Tormenter":  
Muffled Testimonies and Mortgaged Citizenry in Postcolonial Zimbabwe.**

Zimbabwe is a conflict zone pitting an intolerant and authoritarian regime and advocates of democracy. The regime has mobilised and deployed an anti-Western propaganda based on the revolutionary logic that since it fought and defeated colonialism, then citizens owe it unquestioned allegiance. In the name of this logic, the regime has committed atrocities on citizens. Despite the widespread reports of traumatic experiences that result from torture, it is interesting to note that the voices of the sufferers are still being ignored or not taken seriously and that the regime still enjoys support from within and also in the Southern African region. The period between July 2008 and January 2009 saw unprecedented levels of human suffering with the cholera outbreaks, shortage of basic foodstuff, high inflation, closure of schools and hospitals and abductions of activists and opposition party members. As all this was taking place, negotiations for a government of national unity (GNU) ZANU PF and MDC were underway. One precondition that the MDC set for joining the GNU was the unconditional release of all activists. Today the MDC has entered the GNU but the activists are still in prison. The court proceedings have shown how the legal process is flawed and impartial. The testimonies of the abductees reveal how the charges are trumped up and how severe the suffering of the abductees has been.

This paper seeks to explore the implications of this development to the future of the nation by situating the debate within the discourses trauma and testimony. Both trauma and testimony are related to the notions of 'accuracy' and 'truth'. Torture is the deliberate infliction of physical pain done to elicit 'truth'. The reforms in the penal processes have led to it being declared as gratuitous on the basis of its immorality and also inefficiency. Foucault, for example, argues how the transition from the public spectacle of violence on the body to the adoption of surveillance and less physical means characterise the modern penal methods. Relying on Jeremy Bentham's idea of the panopticon, Foucault argues that modern institutions have relied on less physical forms of social control.<sup>1</sup> Despite this transition, torture remains a tool employed to elicit 'truth' in most countries. Testimony is the account that transmits the experiences and memories of a victim and survivor of atrocity/atrocities. Testimony assumes the witness' ability to traverse from his/her solitude and make a connection with the external world and reveal the 'truth' about his/her experiences. Thus both trauma and testimony bear on objective realities about the existence of a source of suffering and a sufferer in an objective world that can mediate and intervene to ameliorate the situation. The question which rears its ugly head in the Zimbabwean situation is: what has to be done if the testimony is muffled or subdued. This question leads to the concept 'muffled testimony'. The concept seeks to reveal the impediments to testimony. The revolutionary logic has been deployed to muffle testimony and also to hold the citizens captive. The citizens are expected to unquestionably surrender to the whims of the ruling elite, hence they are a 'mortgaged citizenry', a concept derived from Fanon's analysis of the violence suffered and endured by his Algerian patients. For Fanon, his patients had 'mortgaged future' because the violence used as a way of pursuing politics was just equivalent to getting into debt in order to pay debt.<sup>2</sup> The concept is further elaborated by Kennedy's analysis of trauma and subjectivity in Zimbabwe's contemporary literature.<sup>3</sup> The idea of a 'mortgaged citizenry' serves a double purpose. First, it highlights how citizen agency has been stifled by a regime that uses violent means to prolong its hold on power. Thus the violence used to challenge the colonial is used to fight the citizenry. Second, it serves to show how the revolutionary logic has bound the citizenry and condemned its future to the whims of the regime. The citizenry has loaned its future and will continue to be held captive. This paper relies on the political developments in Zimbabwe and how they have overshadowed the testimonies of the victims some of whom are still held in prisons, despite the formation of the GNU, whose formation was supposed to have been preceded by their release. While their testimonies are making

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<sup>1</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (translated by Alan Sheridan), London: Penguin Books, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1961.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kennedy, "Mortgaged Futures: Trauma, Subjectivity, and the Legacies of Colonialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*", *Studies in the Novel*, 40 (1&2), 2008: 86-107.

their slow and informal entry into the public domain, the excitement over the GNU and the political and economic imperatives that is facing the GNU may ultimately overshadow and silence them. The paper builds on available reflections on how testimony opens up new conceptual spaces for envisioning human suffering, and how politics needs to be reconceptualised as a moral imperative to ameliorate human suffering.

**Bio note:**

Kudzai Matereke is a PhD candidate in the School of History and Philosophy at the University of New South Wales and a lecturer in Philosophy at the Great Zimbabwe University in Zimbabwe. His research interests are in African philosophy, Postcolonial Studies, globalization, African education, social and political theory and cosmopolitanism.

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Colm McNaughton

**Representing Intergenerational Trauma in Ireland on Radio**

In July 2007 I visited the north of Ireland to make a radio documentary for Radio Eye (Radio National) about intergenerational trauma in this troubled land. In this presentation, I will examine the difficulties I faced in representing the painful realities of life for many people in the north of Ireland - and how I dealt with them within the limitations of the medium of radio. Some of the key questions I will address are:

- What is intergenerational trauma? How can its complexities - and the brokenness of the people who experience it - be translated into radio?
- How did I deal with and represent my own experiences of living in the north and growing up in a cross-community household?
- How to get access and talk with different sides of the conflict, and related to this, how was I to represent people/communities/political movements I fundamentally disagree with.
- What are the strengths and weakness implicit within the medium of radio in representing such matters?

In February 2008 'Awakening from history?' the documentary that resulted from this trip was played on Radio National. It won a Walkley Award in November 2008.

**Bio note:**

Colm McNaughton is a thirty-something Irish Australian, who spent some of his childhood in a Catholic family in Northern Ireland. He returns at the height of the highly charged 'marching season' to find out how realistic the peace and reconciliation movement is. He meets and records some heavy characters from both sides of the sectarian divide and confronts the way violence brought trauma into his own life. A tough story which has room for just enough optimism in the midst of the fatalism that still infects the 'Irish Question'.

Amy Nethery

*The People's Inquiry into Detention as a "Theatre of Justice":  
Asylum Seekers and the Narrative of Asylum*

From its introduction in 1992, the mandatory detention of asylum seekers has been a controversial aspect of Australia's immigration policy. The political struggle over the detention of asylum seekers has largely been a contest to control the narrative of asylum. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the federal government dominated this narrative using various techniques aimed at silencing and discrediting asylum seekers. Using the mainstream media, the federal government's discourse about asylum seekers and their journeys to Australia overshadowed, and even silenced, the experiences of the asylum seekers themselves. In response to this process of silencing, asylum seekers and their advocates sought to reclaim their stories, and their experience, through protests, letter writing and advocacy projects. One such advocacy project, the People's Inquiry into Detention took the form of a 'theatre of justice', which acted in lieu of the courts by providing an opportunity for asylum seekers to give testimony of their experiences. Though it could not dispense justice or compensation, the People's Inquiry provided an audience for asylum seekers' testimonies, and an opportunity for collective catharsis. This paper examines the People's Inquiry as an opportunity to recalibrate the narrative of asylum and ensure that the experiences of asylum seekers enter into the social history of Australia.

**Bio note:**

Amy Nethery is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights at Deakin University, Melbourne. Her thesis examines the social and political function of immigration detention in Australia, and her approach is interdisciplinary, drawing on history, law and social theory. Her research interests include political responses to forced migration; the history of administrative incarceration; and theories of bureaucracy and governance relating to national boundaries. Amy has a long-standing interest in the treatment of refugees in Australia, and has been active in establishing networks and linking together other researchers in the field in order to further inform government policy on the area.

## Nina Philadelphoff-Puren

### *Poems from Guantanamo: Testimonial Literature and the Politics of Genre*

*Poems from Guantanamo: The Detainees Speak* is a remarkable collection of poetry written by seventeen men while they were confined in the United States Military detention centre in Cuba. Against the backdrop of restrictions on detainee expression in Guantanamo Bay, these precarious acts of writing have been heralded as exemplary acts of speech on the part of the men who wrote them, rare texts which reveal the 'innermost feelings' of the authors. While seeking to affirm the spirit of these evaluations, this paper argues that there are risks attending the uncritical conflation of these poems with the 'voices' of the men who composed them. As well as eliding the complex conditions that attend the writing of these texts, to acclaim the poems as 'voices' is to shade from view the continuing attacks on the detainees as subjects of narration, particularly those that deprive such persons of the power to litigate the crimes committed against them. Through a close-reading of a key poem in this collection, Jamah Al Dossari's 'Death Poem', this paper will seek to highlight the limits and possibilities of both literary and non-literary testimony about human rights violations. In particular, it will argue that both literature and law must be read in the War on Terror to make visible the textual and generic dimensions of the suffering of those who have been detained in its name.

#### **Bio note:**

Dr Nina Philadelphoff-Puren lectures in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies, Monash University. She has published articles on law, literature and trauma testimony in *Feminist Theory*, *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, *Law and Critique*, *Law and Literature* and *Life Writing*. Her current research projects include forms of hostile witnessing in the War on Terror, and the writing of rape in colonial Australian law and literature.

**Digital Storytelling: the Tensions of Participatory Media and Institutional Uses of Testimony.**

A highly structured narrative form, "digital stories" are audio-visual vignettes of approximately 3 to 4 minutes in length which present a first-person voice over in conjunction with personal archival photographs and music edited together on consumer-grade computers and software. "Digital storytelling" is a global movement that aims to (in the words of Smith and Watson) occasion testimony and life narrative and in doing so assist "people in using digital media to tell meaningful stories from their lives" (The Centre for Digital Storytelling). Originating in Berkley California in the early 1990s, digital storytelling is a growing practice in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Europe, advocated and disseminated by government and education institutions (such as the Australian Centre for the Moving Image; the BBC; Ball State University USA) and not-for-profit arts organisations (such as Hi8us in the UK) through outreach programs, workshops and events.

This paper will examine the discourses around digital storytelling, examining how the movement presents itself as "a stunningly effective means of giving a voice to people whose voices are rarely heard" (Breaking Boundaries). Digital storytelling aims to both occasion and archive testimonies from select communities who are often perceived as being under represented in mainstream media culture and normally unlikely to participate in 'art' or 'cultural' events run by mainstream institutions. What conclusions about the social and institutional uses of testimony can be drawn from this swell of activity focussed on the collection of testimony from groups such youth, migrant communities, the economically disadvantaged, and the elderly? How are such uses realised in the growing online digital storytelling archives 'housed' outside the communities that generate them? In considering these issues, I will also examine the possible ramifications of digital storytelling's codification of testimony into a pre-determined narrative and formal structure on the social uses (and usefulness) of the narratives the movement seeks to bring into being.

**Bio note:**

Anna Poletti lectures in Writing at Charles Sturt University. Her research investigates the intersections of technologies of cultural production and consumption, youth cultures, and life writing. In 2008, her book *Intimate Ephemera: Reading Young Lives in Australian Zine Culture* was published by Melbourne University Press. With Gillian Whitlock, she co-edited the Winter 2008 special issue of *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* on autographics, and with Paul Atkinson she co-edited a recent issue of *Southern Review* on the limits of testimony.

Kay Schaffer

**Testimony and the Ethics of Witnessing:  
After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa**

A decade has past since the opening of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in March, 1996. The TRC provided a model of restorative justice and reconciliation to the world through its processes of telling, listening and healing through forgiveness.

The two-fold mission of the TRC involved not only the uncovering of the 'truth' of the past but also the ethical reception of testimony by listeners. After the TRC, the government initiated a number of memorialisation projects designed to re-write the nation's history and pay tribute to the heroes of the Struggle, like Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and the Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum in Soweto, as well as many local community memorials, public monuments and hero statues. These public memory sites, mainly political in motivation, address the TRC's first goal of uncovering the 'truth' of the past and creating a new memory archive for the nation. The second goal of ethical witnessing, especially by white listeners, requires an ethic of care and a recognition of difference within the nation, beyond the realm of politics.

This paper addresses a particular instance of the second of these two forms of memorialisation and witness. It examines the ethically driven work of Antjie Krog, Kopano Ratele, and Nosisi Mpolweni-Zantsi, colleagues at the University of the Western Cape, who returned to the unfinished business of the TRC in regard to the seemingly incoherent testimony of Mrs. Notrose Nobomvo Konile. Their transcultural project bears witness to what Derrida might call an act of hospitality, a 'welcoming of the other', engaging in 'an art and a poetics' that exceeds even as it depends upon the political.

The paper acknowledges the efficacy of this ethically driven act as it impacts in small and often indeterminate ways to facilitate individual healing and open dialogue within fractured communities and between those communities and the state. The renewed witnessing enacted by this cross-cultural research team impacts on the personal lives of all participants, even as it unfolds into broader social relations of reciprocity and dialogue, keeping alive the interconnectedness of beings and the multiple possibilities for our becoming.

**Bio note:**

Kay Schaffer is an Adjunct Professor in Gender Studies at the University of Adelaide and in the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia.

## Children born of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Constructing Secondary Trauma

Sexual violence in armed conflict has been internationally recognized as a grave abuse to women's rights as well as a psychological weapon of war. Since the genocide in Rwanda and ethnic-cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, literature written by Feminist academics has contributed to the discussion of sexual violence as a method in denigrating culture and local masculine dominance, a genocidal method in destroying the enemy through the deliberate transmission of HIV/AIDS, and as a psychological procedure to affect future generations through the systematic use of forced impregnation and the birth of "enemy children." This paper will explore how trauma experienced in the post-conflict period is conceptualized through children who were born of wartime sexual violence. In exploring the marginalization of such children, this paper will argue that state and non-state actors construct a child born of wartime sexual violence as a symbol of collective victimhood, while simultaneously displaying him/her as a spectacle to discipline the nation damaged by conflict. This paper will first explore how the recovering nation uses the child as a spectacle to construct a stable national identity while reclaiming itself as a sovereign power. Second, this paper will question how post-conflict modes of recovery deal with secondary sources of trauma. It will explore how trauma experienced by war rape survivors is transferred onto their children. In doing so, it will question how secondary trauma is conceptualized through these children whose marginalization occurs through the nature of their conception.

### **Bio note:**

Donna Seto is currently working on her PhD in Political Science and International Relations at the Australian National University. Her PhD thesis titled "Children born of Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations" primarily focuses on the contestation of mainstream International Relations by including the experiences of marginalized non-state actors such as women and children. Donna completed her Master of Arts degree in Political Science at York University and a Bachelor of Arts Honours at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Donna's academic interests include identity politics, gender and militarization, Postmodern and Postcolonial theory, Critical Security theory, refugees and international human rights.

Tony Simoes da Silva

**"The Quest for Belonging in Hostile Lands":  
Narrating Trauma in Recent White Zimbabwean Life Writing**

"But at the end of the journey one finds oneself recalling those famous words uttered by the original Mr Kurtz – 'the horror, the horror' – and then wondering whether this is forever to be Africa's literary fate, at least from the perspective of white writers: darkness and more darkness" (Alexander McCall Smith, 40)

Lauren St. John opens her memoir, *Rainbow's End* (2007), with a detailed and gory description of the massacre of a white family whose farmhouse her own family has since taken over, at the height of the nationalist war. The scene of "the terrorist attack" is vividly recreated, and although the author shows an overt awareness that times have changed on the opening page – "terrorists or nationalists depending on your point of view" (2007: 1), ultimately what remains with the reader is the horror of that moment when a white family is shattered forever. The site is inscribed with the deep trauma of white African identity, of belonging and expulsion, and the unintended irony of the farm's name. Africa, another white Zimbabwean memoirist notes, *All the Way Home* (2007), has a cruel sense of humour and "every positive is inevitably counterbalanced with a negative." (40) White Zimbabwean, Peter Godwin's *When the Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006) also opens with a death, though in this case of natural causes. It is nevertheless a traumatic event giving rise to the act of self-writing that sets Godwin in pursuit of the story behind contemporary Zimbabwe's chaotic political and social situation. As he travels back and forth to Zimbabwe over the years of his father's illness, he bears witness to the collapse of what was once Africa's own 'rainbow's end'. In all these cases, the personal story of suffering signifies simultaneously as credible testimony with potential significant political ramifications.

This paper will explore the conference's central themes by examining how the personal story of the white Zimbabwean rewriting a national narrative of liberation into a litany of 'natural African disasters'. Conscious of its limited relevance in the context of contemporary global life writing of "social suffering and collective trauma", I posit that the largely positive response life writing by white Africans attracts raises important issues about the production and consumption of trauma and testimony more generally.

**Bio note:**

Tony Simoes da Silva teaches in the School of English Literatures, Philosophy and Languages at the University of Wollongong. He is the author of *The Luxury of Despair: George Lamming's Fiction as Decolonizing Project* (Rodopi, 2000) and researches and publishes on postcolonial writing in English and Portuguese, with a focus on Southern Africa.

## Catherine Summerhayes

### *Waltz With Bashir* (2008): Animated film and the Narration of Trauma Stories.

Humanity's business of remembering and forgetting terrors and horrors is well known, well documented and continues to be studied at length. I am interested particularly in Israeli director Ari Folman's film *Waltz With Bashir* as a film which both shows and documents the process of remembering a time of horror, which notes the structure of forgetting and displays the sounds and images that haunt so many of the Israeli conscripts who witnessed (or not) the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982. Animation as a documentary form is recently acknowledged sub-genre. It is used to create filmic scenes and subjective states in the viewer that are sometimes not so easily available with live action film. Animation is an immersive and yet innately reflexive filmic form. It allows a perceptual distance in the receptive act, which in no way takes away from the immediacy of the stories it tells. Animation allows us to turn our attention to every detail we see and every sound we hear in a film: any excess is explicitly directed towards the film's intention.

There is no mystery as to why Folman used animation for this film; the mystery rather lies in the complex relationship we the viewers make with the animated style used by him, and how we, as well as Folman, understand the relationship between the film's stylized images and ongoing histories they represent.

#### **Bio note:**

Dr. Catherine Summerhayes is a Lecturer in Film and New Media at the School of Humanities and Art Theory, School of Art, Australian National University. Her work has recently been published in several national and international journals and anthologies, including a major article, 'Haunting Secrets - Tracey Moffatt's *beDevil*' in *Film Quarterly* Vol. 58:1. Her monograph on Moffatt's films, *The Moving Images of Tracey Moffatt* was published by Charta Edizione, Milan and New York in September 2007. Currently, her primary areas of research are Documentary and New Media.

*Forbidden Lie\$*: What is to be said about honor killing?

In the wake of the hoax, the career of the scandalous book is uncertain. Many are unceremoniously pulped, in utter condemnation. In 2004 this was the fate of Norma Khouri's story of honor killing, *Forbidden Love*. For this book there can be no apology or afterword that will ease its passage into a life after the hoax, and it is highly unlikely that a new and celebrated publication will rescue Norma Khouri's reputation as an author. Unexpectedly, in the aftermath of the hoax, the fate of Khouri and her book has been much more interesting: they are the subject of a major feminist documentary film by Anna Broinowski, *Forbidden Lie\$*, that offers a rigorous consideration of the hoax, and its importance in debates about the politics and ethics of transnational and crosscultural feminist engagements with life narrative now. Since its first release in 2007, the film has been commercially successful, and it has been awarded several prestigious prizes as an innovative documentary. It reincarnates the hoaxer and her book into a renewed vivid presence that opens questions about representations of honor killing.

A series of questions arise from all of this, and they set some terms for the discussion of the Broinowski film here, for we are compelled to question what justification can there be for this return to Norma Khouri and *Forbidden Love* now. Does the remediation of this hoax text make reparation, does it engage in terms of "fair trade", or does it repeat the injury? Does it indicate some shifts in the rhetorical registers of truth telling and terms for a more critical approach to the politics of representation in and around honor killing that were so spectacularly exploited in the hoax? Can this hoax be used to open a space to imagine a more complex dynamics for the work of testimony and giving witness in pursuit of human rights? What value can there be in approaching issues of authenticity and practices of truth telling in the visible and verbal presence of Norma Khouri? Does this remediation of nonfiction memoir to documentary film reposition the reader as a more self reflexive spectator? All of these questions germane to the Khouri hoax and Broinowski's return to the scene of the "crime" are sharpened by recent feminist debates about the terms of a more "just advocacy" and the uses of human rights discourse as a rhetorical and political framework that carries narratives of "distant suffering". Unexpectedly perhaps, Broinowski's remediation of the Khouri hoax in documentary creates new and problematic space in current debates about these issues.

**Bio note:**

Gillian Whitlock is a professor in English, Media Studies and Art History at The University of Queensland, and she is co-convenor of the "Testimony, Trauma and Social Suffering" conference. Her most recent book is *Soft Weapons. Autobiography in Transit* (Chicago, 2007) and she is currently working on a book about postcolonialism and life writing.