WELCOME BROCHURE

PHD SYMPOSIUM

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE MOBILIZATION OF TESTIMONY

Ghent University, 15 – 17 june 2015

Practical Information

Location

All activities will take place in Blandijn, the main building of Ghent University's Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Gent).

Coffee and registration on the first day will be in the large meeting room on the third floor (English Studies). The easiest way to get there is to take the lift at the side entrance (on the corner of Sint-Hubertusstraat and Sint-Amandstraat) to the third floor. The lift at the main entrance only goes up to the second floor.

Internet Access

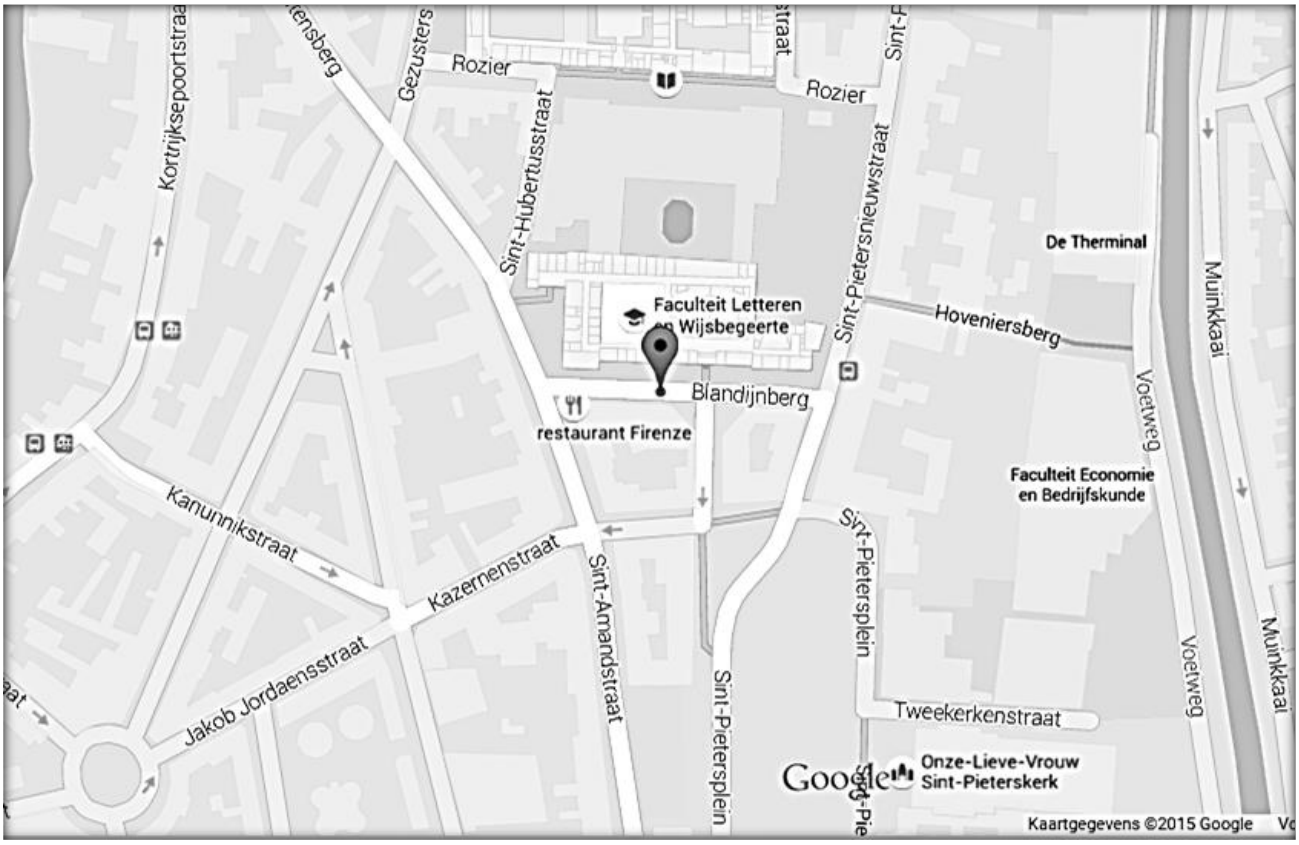
Symposium participants can connect to "UGent Guest" with the username "guestCmsi" and the password "xG43pw4d."

Further Information

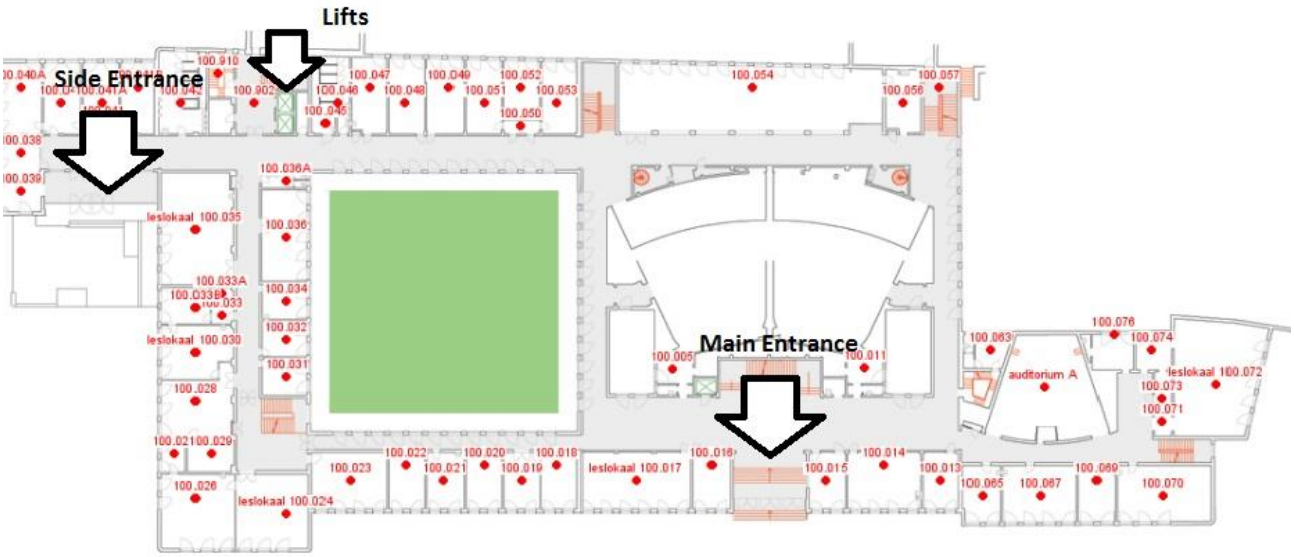
For urgent matters during the summer school, you can use the following mobile numbers:

- Sean Bex: sean.bex@ugent.be // **+32 (0)494 54 18 05**
- Prof. Dr. Stef Craps: stef.craps@ugent.be // **+32 (0)496 83 95 71**

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy



Floor plan of ground floor of Faculty of Arts and Philosophy



DIRECTIONS FROM STATION *Gent-Sint-Pieters*

Most international trains (including Eurostar and Thalys) arrive in Brussels (Brussel-Zuid/Bruxelles-Midi). There you can take the train to Gent-Sint-Pieters (the trains with final destination Oostende or Knokke / Blankenberge). There is a train from Brussels to Ghent every thirty minutes till around 12.30 a.m. The journey from Brussels to Ghent takes about half an hour.

There is also a direct train connection from Lille (France, station Lille Flandres) to Ghent. Be careful: get off in Gent-Sint-Pieters, not in Gent-Dampoort.

Outside the railway station Gent-Sint-Pieters there are numerous stops for buses and trams to the centre of Ghent. To get to the symposium venue, take tram 1 in the direction of Korenmarkt. Get off at Sint-Kwintensberg, and follow the road upwards between coffee bar Illy and snack bar ‘t Hoeksken (the street is called Sint-Kwintensberg). The Faculty building is on the top of the hill, on your left-hand side.

If you would like to take a taxi, we can recommend **V-tax**. They are relatively cheap and always available at short notice. Phone number: +32 9 222 22 22.

FOOD

Lunches and coffee breaks are provided on all three days of the symposium. However, here are some suggestions for people looking for dinner, or who are arriving early/staying late and are looking for a place to have a drink or a bite to eat when exploring Ghent's historic town centre.

Potatolicious

Verlorenkost 5

Homemade fresh soup, jacket potatoes, and salads. 5 minutes' walk from the symposium venue! Excellent coffee and cake too.

't Hoogtepunt

Sint-Amandstraat 6

Sandwich shop, across the road from the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy. Sells baguettes with a wide range of fillings.

Het Pakhuis

Schuurkenstraat 4

Grand, classy, and cosy. This restaurant has a cosmopolitan allure. For fresh fish and shrimp dishes especially, this is an excellent choice.

Komkommertijd

Reep 14

A vegan all-you-can-eat buffet in a nice setting.

Vooruit Café

Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23

The Café at Vooruit is a lively bistro built into Ghent's major cultural centre. The building dates back to the early 20th century and was originally used as the arts and festival centre for the Ghent-based Labour Movement.

De Gekroonde Hoofden

Burgstraat 4

Famous for its ribs and grilled meats. Near the medieval Castle of the Counts of Flanders (Gravensteen).

COFFEE

Julie's House

Kraanlei 13

A cosy afternoon tea house overlooking the Leie river in the middle of Ghent's historic centre. They serve a daily choice of delicious brunches, homemade cakes, and colourful homemade cupcakes.

Huize Colette

Belfortstraat 6

Hot-chocolate bar / second-hand bookshop. Taste their homemade pastries and chocolates. Enjoy a hot brew. Read one of the hundreds of books stacked high in every room.

Programme

	Day 1 (Monday 15/06)
12.00-13.00	Registration and lunch (Large meeting room, 3rd floor Blandijn)
13.00-14.30	**Keynote lecture** "Transcultural Remembrance / Transnational Accountability: *The Act of Killing*, Human Rights and the Global Memory Imperative" (Prof. Rosanne Kennedy) (Auditorium A)
14.30-15.00	Coffee/Tea
15.00-16.00	**Panel 1 - Testimony and Transitional Justice**: G. Pyndiah / G. Iecker de Almeida (chair: Prof. Eva Brems) (Auditorium A)
16.00-16.30	Coffee/Tea
16.30-17.30	**Discussion/Reading Session 1** (led by Prof. Rosanne Kennedy) (Auditorium A)
17.30-18.30	**Panel 2 - Perpetrator Testimony**: M. Pahl / A. Santerre (chair: Prof. Philippe Codde) (Auditorium A)
	Day 2 (Tuesday 16/06)
09.00-10.30	**Panel 3 - Testimony and Recognition**: S. Bex / R. Cole / M. Zirra (chair: Prof. Rosanne Kennedy) (Room 100.035)
10.30-11.00	Coffee/Tea
11.00-12.00	**Panel 4 - Memorializing Testimony**: H. Brown / S. Graefenstein (chair: Prof. Pieter Vermeulen) (Room 100.035)
12.00-12.30	Lunch
12.30-18.00	Guided tour Dossin Kazerne
19.30-…	Symposium dinner (Brasserie Ha')
	Day 3 (Wednesday 17/06)
09.00-10.30	**Keynote lecture "Humanity in Ruins: Beckett's Testimony"** (Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge) (Auditorium D)
10.30-11.00	Coffee/Tea
11.00-12.00	**Discussion/Reading Session 2** (led by Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge) (Auditorium D)
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-14.00	**Panel 5 - Testimony on the Borderline**: M-L. McNamara / M. Tali (chair: Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge) (Room 100.035)
14.00-15.00	**Panel 6 - Ethics and Aesthetics of Testimony**: M. Wasef / C. Van Dijck (chair: Prof. Stef Craps) (Room 100.035)
15.00-15.30	Coffee/Tea
15.30-16.30	**Panel 7 - Testimony and the Dynamics of Visibility**: J. Young / A. Prager (chair: Dr. Lore Colaert) (Room 100.035)

Day 1 (Monday 15/06)

12.00-13.00 (venue: large meeting room, 3rd floor Blandijn)

Registration and Lunch

13.00-14.30 (venue: Auditorium A)

Keynote lecture by Professor Rosanne Kennedy (Australian National University) – "Transcultural Remembrance / Transnational Accountability: *The Act of Killing*, Human Rights and the Global Memory Imperative"

14.30-15.00

Coffee / Tea

15.00-16.00 (venue: Auditorium A)

Panel 1: Testimony and Transitional Justice (chair: Prof. Eva Brems)

- Gitanjali Pyndiah (Goldsmiths, University of London) – "Human Rights and Truth Commissions"
- Gisele Iecker de Almeida (Ghent University) – "Reshaping the Past: How Brazil is Dealing with the Memory of the Dictatorship"

16.00-16.30

Coffee / Tea

16.30-17.30 (venue: Auditorium A)

Discussion/Reading Session 1 (led by Prof. Rosanne Kennedy)

Required reading (available on symposium website) in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, ed. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (2012): "Holocaust in Your Face" – Hugh Raffles and "Forensic Architecture: An Interview with Eyal Weizman" – Yates McKee and Meg McLagan.

17.30-18.30 (venue: Auditorium A)

Panel 2 - Perpetrator Testimony (chair: Prof. Philippe Codde)

- Miriam Pahl (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London) – "Extending the Human Rights Discourse: Contemporary African Literature and the Perpetrator"
- Ariane Santerre (Université de Montréal / University of Western Ontario) – "The Language Used in the Nazi Camp Testimonies through the Prism of Human Rights"

Day 2 (Tuesday 16/06)

09.00-10.30 (venue: room 100.035)

Panel 3: Testimony and Recognition (chair: Prof. Rosanne Kennedy)

- Sean Bex (Ghent University) – "The Test of Time: A Testimonial History of Human Rights"
- Richard Cole (University of Alberta) – "The Trouble with the Underclass in the Rights Protest Novel"
- Maria Zirra (Stockholm University/Ghent University) – "'That good ol factory smoke/those ghreasy machines': Anti-Capitalist Sentiments in Wopko Jensma's Poetic Critiques of the Apartheid"

10.30-11.00

Coffee / Tea

11.00-12.00 (venue : room 100.35)

Panel 4: Memorializing Testimony (chair: Prof. Pieter Vermeulen)

- Holly Brown (Ghent University) – "Immunizing against Attica; an Exploration of the American State's Withdrawal of the Artifacts from the 1971 Attica Prison Uprising from Public Display"
- Sandra Graefenstein (Australian National University) – "Museums, Human Rights and Memory: A Transnational and Comparative Case Study"

12.00-12.30

Lunch

12.30-18.00 (Mechelen)

Guided tour Dossin Kazerne

19.30-…

Symposium Dinner at Brasserie Ha’

Day 3 (Wednesday 17/06)

09.00-10.30 (venue : Auditorium D)

Keynote lecture by Professor Lyndsey Stonebridge (University of East Anglia) – "Humanity in Ruins: Beckett's Testimony"

10.30-11.00

Coffee / Tea

11.00-12.00 (venue : Auditorium D)

Discussion/Reading Session 2 (led by Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge)

Required reading (available on symposium website). Richard Rorty's essay on "Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality" and Beckett's short story "The End."

12.00-13.00

Lunch

13.00-14.00 (venue: room 100.035)

Panel 5: Testimony on the Borderline (chair: Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge)

- Mei-Ling McNamara (University of Edinburgh) – "Testimony as Judge, Memory as Witness: Trauma and the Human Trafficking Survivor"
- Margaret Tali (Maastricht University) – Visualising the Borders of Europe: *Labyrinth* and *the Crosses Project*

14.00-15.00 (venue: room 100.035)

Panel 6: Ethics and Aesthetics of Testimony (chair: Prof. Stef Craps)

- Mirna Wasef (University of California, San Diego) – "Emigrant Activists: Testimony Through the Free Press"
- Cedric Van Dijck (Ghent University) – "Testimonies from the Trenches: Rethinking Modernism in the First World War"

15.00-15.30

Coffee / Tea

15.30-16.30 (venue: room 100.035)

Panel 7: Testimony and the Dynamics of Visibility (chair: Dr. Lore Colaert)

- Jessica Young (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) – "'Tell the World How 329 Innocent Lives Were Lost and How the Rest of us are Slowly Dying': Transnational Testimony, State Histories, and the Fight for National Recognition in the 1985 Air India Disaster"
- Ayala Prager (University College London) – "Democratizing Human Rights: Time, Trauma, and Testimony"

Guided Tour

On the second day of the symposium, participants are warmly invited to a guided tour of **Kazerne Dossin** in the picturesque and historic town of Mechelen, with its famous medieval cathedral, belfry, and city hall. This newly created museum, erected on the site of an 18th-century barracks, takes its history as a detention and deportation camp during World War II as a starting point to explore the concept of mass violence throughout human history. What makes this visit particularly relevant to the symposium's topic is the museum's exploration of this history of violence as a history of human rights violations. Participants wishing to attend will be asked to pay €30 (covering train fare, museum entrance, and guide).

More information at: www.kazernedossin.eu/EN/

Symposium Dinner

At 19:30, a symposium dinner will take place back in Ghent at Brasserie Ha' (Kouter 29, Gent). Anyone wishing to attend the dinner should email Sean Bex (sean.bex@ugent.be) by Friday 12 June, indicating which main course they would prefer.

Menu €40 (drinks included)

Aperitif and Hors d'oeuvres

Main Course

Filet of cod served with cherry and sundried tomatoes served and a spinach tagliatelle dressed with basil olive oil

Or

Duck breast served with chicory, caramelized apple, and potato croquettes with a Calvados sauce

Or

Tagliatelle with Mediterranean vegetables

Dessert

Tiramisu served with coffee or tea

Abstracts

Keynote Lecture 1

TRANSCULTURAL REMEMBRANCE / TRANSNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: *THE ACT OF KILLING*, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE GLOBAL MEMORY IMPERATIVE

Prof. Rosanne Kennedy

Monday 15/06 | 13.00 – 14.30 | Auditorium A

In this talk, I take Joshua Oppenheimer's documentary film *The Act of Killing* (2012) as a case study for considering the discourses and networks which enable the memory of a "forgotten genocide" to travel transnationally, to constitute audiences as witnessing publics, and to move human rights norms and practices across national borders. A transnational collaboration between an American and an anonymous Indonesian co-director and crew, *The Act of Killing* remembers the mass killings of half a million or more suspected communists in Indonesia in 1965-1966. With its controversial methods of capturing on film, and conveying to national and global publics, a perpetrator memory of the killings, the film raises issues that have been at the forefront of the study of history, memory and trauma over the past twenty-five years. I draw on a range of resources – including interviews with the filmmaker, film publicity, human rights campaigns, reviews and commentary by journalists, critics and researchers – to consider the discourses and frameworks that enable the film to travel transnationally.

In particular, I argue that the film assemblage exemplifies features of what Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2010) have termed the 'global memory imperative', while also revealing the cultural limits of this conceptual formulation. Their optimistic claims for Holocaust memory as a foundation for a global human rights regime rest, to a significant degree, on the status of the Holocaust as a shared collective memory for the EU, which is constituted through officially sanctioned commemorative rituals such as an International Day of Holocaust Remembrance. Amongst EU nation-states, this shared memory culture promotes respect for Holocaust memory, and, more broadly, memories of genocide, as well as norms about the value of human rights and justice for victims. But how widely and with what effects do the norms and values associated with Holocaust memory travel outside of Europe? In Asia? What kind of commemorative and counter-memory work do these norms legitimate? What resistance do they encounter?

Bio

Rosanne Kennedy is Associate Professor of Literature and Gender, Sexuality, and Culture at the Australian National University's College of Arts and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on trauma, memory, and witnessing in Australia and transnational contexts; life-writing studies; biography; and human rights and justice issues.

Keynote Lecture 2

‘HUMANITY IN RUINS’: BECKETT’S TESTIMONY

Prof. Lyndsey Stonebridge

Wednesday 17/06 | 09.00-10.30 | Auditorium D

Testimonies to the suffering of others, it is claimed, are key to the mobilization of moral sentiments that underpin today’s global human rights regime. For defenders of the progress of human rights, sad or sentimental stories are the means by which the rights-rich can come to tolerate, comprehend and even value the lives and identities of the rights-poor (Rorty). Others point out that these testimonies and the generous feelings and, sometimes, actions they provoke produce morally good but politically ambivalent consequences. While the stories of the abused are powerful precisely because they can elicit sympathy, care and, sometimes, political and legal recognition, that very humanitarianism paradoxically obscures the gross inequalities of rights and entitlements that give it cause (Fassin).

I tell you my story of pain so that you, whose life is so different from mine, might glimpse my humanity. But you only see that humanity in so far as it is in ruins, in so far as it is precisely not like yours. The growth in universal moral sentiment is not proportionate to the redistribution of global rights.

In this lecture I return to one of the founding moments of modern rights, the immediate postwar period, to suggest how contemporary worries about the mobilization of testimony were already making themselves present in the new age of rights that was rapidly emerging out of the ruins of Europe, its dominance and ideals.

My case history takes us both to a small chapter in the history of postwar humanitarianism, and to the beginning of a much larger one in the history of modern writing. In the early summer of 1946, Samuel Beckett went to work for the Irish Red Cross in the bombed-out ‘city of ruins’ Saint-Lô in Normandy. What he discovered there was a new and complex way of imagining what he described as ‘the having and the not having, the giving and the taking.’ This discovery coincided with Beckett’s famous decision to abandon English. The first-person narrators who wander through the three short stories that he wrote in French that year, ‘Le Fin’ (between 1945 and 1946), ‘L’Expulsé’ (October 1946) and ‘Le Calmant’, (December 1946), are both subject to a regime of humanitarian indifference and restless agents, stumbling in a second language, groping for a new narrative. These are the new clowns of the postwar age of compromised humanitarianism, ironists of their own suffering, chroniclers of the gap that had opened up between the rightless and the rest of the world. Beckett, I argue, sets up the terms for a justly uncomfortable engagement with the new aesthetics of the very humanitarianism that became so necessary as the world struggled not only to legislate for, but also to conceptualize, the rightless.

Bio

Lyndsey Stonebridge is Professor of Literature and Critical Theory at the University of East Anglia, where she co-directs the Writing and Rights Project as well as the interdisciplinary Humanities in Human Rights project. She specializes in Modern Literature and Critical Theory, particularly psychoanalysis, trauma theory, and, most recently, critical human rights and refugee studies.

Panel 1 - Testimony and Transitional Justice

HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRUTH COMMISSIONS

Chair: Professor Eva Brems, Ghent University

Professor Eva Brems heads up Ghent University's Human Rights Centre and teaches Advanced Study of Human Rights, Law and Gender and Islam and the Law in the Department of European, Public, and International Law at Ghent University. Her team's research covers numerous topics in domestic, international as well as comparative human rights law. She is particularly interested in issues relating to justiciability of human rights, and legal reasoning concerning human rights, as well as in dealing with diversity and gender.

Gitanjali Pyndiah, Goldsmiths, University of London.

In one of my chapters, I analyse the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) initiated in 2009 to assess the consequences of slavery and indenture on the islands of Mauritius under Dutch, French and English colonial rule.The Mauritian inquiry is unique in its focus as it investigates abuses committed during a period of more than three hundred years of colonial oppression (1638-1968) before the formation of the State, while most truth commissions are generally established by States to investigate wrongs committed by their own Governments or by previous administrations. Moreover, the human rights abuses were committed in an era where they were legal and justified under repressive systems. This paper focuses on the rhetoric of human rights and the 'rights to be human' as expounded by different movements before 1948.

The second aspect of this paper concentrates on the oral interviews undertaken by the commission with descendants of the victims. The TJC differs from the South African truth commission (TRC) in its approach to witnessing and testimony. The symbolic nature of the TRC is often attributed to the public hearings of witnesses televised nationally and internationally which aimed at involving the society in the process of reconciliation via 'catharsis and expiation'. Unlike the TRC, the TJC did/could not identify perpetrators, victims and involve civil society. Although some of the 212 hearings session conducted were held 'in public' where the media was invited to attend, the possibility of engaging civil society through national broadcasting of the hearings was not evoked.

This paper discusses the institutional rhetoric of human rights and the debates around mechanism necessary to engage civil society in decisions regarding reparations grounded in contemporary and democratic approaches to achieving justice and the protection of human rights.

RESHAPING THE PAST: HOW BRAZIL IS DEALING WITH THE MEMORY OF THE DICTATORSHIP

Gisele Iecker de Almeida, UGent.

Although history has in the past focused on heroes and monarchs, the focus since the New Social History of the 1960s and 1970s has been on the oppressed, the vanquished: women, workers, the black and LGBT

communities, etc. But a relevant aspect of transitional justice discourse is its focus on "victims." A major difference - in talking about victims rather than the vanquished - is the moral burden associated to the former category. No one can be against the victim. No one should question their version of events. It is as if whatever they said or did (or say or do) is accepted without further questioning. It is through the politics of victimhood that many problems of transitional justice discourse come to the fore.

The Brazilian current "wave of memorialism" is very interesting for this analysis, not only because military combatants were often not fighting for democracy, but also because the victimization conundrum is at the heart of the standoff between the Brazilian Truth Commission and the military. It would seem we are again talking about heroes/ villains, but this time under the guise of victim/perpetrator.

Everywhere one goes in Brazil the memory of the dictatorship is alive, in the names of avenues, squares and streets in honour of key figures from the military regime. Were those fighting against the dictatorship (the "real") heroes? This might not be what Brasilia white-collar workers had in mind when they established that the truth commission would seek the "reconstruction of history in cases of grave violation of human rights," but that is what the social movements see as necessary: to rename these public spaces, replacing the names of the military for the names of former guerrilla fighters or 'desaparecidos.'

Panel 2 - Perpetrator Testimony

EXTENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE PERPETRATOR

Chair: Professor Philippe Codde

Philippe Codde is a visiting professor of American literature and culture at Ghent University. He holds degrees from Ghent University (PhD, licentiate), Fordham University (MPhil), and Antwerp University (MA). He is the author of *The Jewish American Novel* (Purdue UP, 2007), a comparative analysis of postwar Jewish American literature in the context of the Holocaust, radical theology, and French literary and philosophical existentialism. His current research and teaching explore the ways in which the third generation of Jewish American novelists after the Shoah (particularly Jonathan Safran Foer, Nicole Krauss, Michael Chabon, and Judy Budnitz) seek to access, represent, and work through the traumatic past *in* and *via* their literature. As their grandparents' era becomes increasingly inaccessible, these witnesses-through-the-imagination resort to the imaginative investment which Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory" in order to capture a past that is commonly considered "beyond representation."

Miriam Pahl, University of London.

While social, political and academic discourses of atrocities focus on the victim experience, some contemporary African authors dare to take a closer look at the other side, the experience of the perpetrator. I argue that these authors contribute an unsentimental exploration of the" humaneness of the inhuman" and of the psychology and motivations of violence to the discourses that target resolution and reconciliation. Offering an alternative imagination of testimonials, they complicate the

notion of the human as the reference for human rights. Breaking the taboo to address the position of the violator, writers like Yvonne Owuor and Chris Abani emphasise the importance of acknowledging the perpetrator as a human being in order to overcome pain and trauma and enable reconciliation. This discussion ties in with Judith Butler's "Frames of War" and the focus in its reception on, again, the victim side and how bodies become "unmournable" if they were dehumanized first. African writing, as I will show, articulates the effects of the dehumanization of violators, and how the taboo that is created around them perpetuates the violence that emanated from them. Thematising that human dignity, and consequently also human rights, need to be attributed to victims as well as violators, these writers open up a new dimension in the discussions revolving around human rights and suggest further implications for the deployment of human rights.

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE NAZI CAMP TESTIMONIES THROUGH THE PRISM OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Ariane Santerre, Université de Montréal / University of Western Ontario.

Upon their return from the nazi camps, the first impulse of the survivors was to share their experience (Antelme, 1947). According to Maurice Blanchot (1969), this was not only due to the fact that they wanted to tell their story, but also, as their very individual humanity had been denied them, because they were finally able to speak as subjects, to say "I". In that sense, language constitutes the most immediate link between the survivors and those who have not lived through their experience but wish to understand and enforce human rights: the analysis of this testimonial language is crucial. Furthermore, those testimonies also contain precious information on the impact of language, mainly in the way the oppressors used language and how it affected the prisoners. Indeed, the testimonial narratives very clearly show how language can shape one's mind, and how it can have psychological repercussions, what John Langshaw Austin (1975) calls a "perlocutionary act". This paper's purpose is to examine the language contained within the nazi camp testimonies, and will be divided into two parts: the first one will analyze the language of the witness, and the second will study the language of the oppressors. The first part will seek to understand, through their language, the victims of human rights abuses. The latter part could contribute to preventing future violence: as Tzvetan Todorov (2010) has explained in his study of the totalitarian states, and as Josias Semujanga (2004) has shown in his analysis of the Rwandan rumours, it is within the discourse that the will to annihilate the people considered as "others" can first be detected. Knowing the precursor linguistic signs to human rights violations is still relevant today and can be learned from reading nazi camp testimonies.

Panel 3 - Testimony and Recognition

THE TEST OF TIME: A TESTIMONIAL HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Chair: Professor Rosanne Kennedy

Rosanne Kennedy is Associate Professor of Literature and Gender, Sexuality, and Culture at the Australian National University's College of Arts and Social Sciences. Her research focuses on trauma, memory, and witnessing in Australia and transnational contexts; life-writing studies; biography; and human rights and justice issues. As a scholar vacillating between legal and cultural conceptions of testimony within human rights discourses, she bring considerable expertise to bear on the interdisciplinary focus of the symposium. She is the author of, among many other essays, "Moving Testimony: Human Rights, Palestinian Memory, and the Transnational Public Sphere" (in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*; de Gruyter, 2014) and "Memory, History and the Law: Testimony and Collective Memory in Holocaust and Stolen Generations Trials" (in *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject*; Routledge, 2013). She is also a co-editor of *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time* (Palgrave, 2003), which blends the study of trauma and memory with perspectives from postcolonial theory to explore a range of traumatic personal and socio-historical experiences.

Sean Bex, Ghent University.

The recent debate amongst human rights scholars concerning the history of (human) rights and humanitarianism has developed into a deadlock. This debate between presentist and historicizing scholars has produced a plethora of 'histories' and 'overviews' of the development of contemporary rights discourses. Presentist scholars such as Samuel Moyn (*The Last Utopia*) or Pheng Cheah (*Inhuman Conditions*) argue that the development of today's dominant global moral and legal discourses through which victims claim and activists advocate for the recognition of their human rights is a recent geo-political phenomenon grounded specifically in the post-Cold War period. Historicizing accounts such as Lynn Hunt's *Inventing Human Rights* offer an opposing narrative, tracing human rights back to the French and American rights declarations of the late eighteenth century and the rise of humanitarian sympathy in the Enlightenment. Prompted by recent convergences of human rights and humanitarianism, Michael Barnett has added to the debate by describing human rights as the latest chapter in a longer history of humanitarianism dating back to the abolitionist movement in the early nineteenth century (Michael Barnett *Empire of Humanity*). As much as the theoretical legal-historical debate diverges, however, the grassroots means by which victims and activists make claims has remained constant. Testimonial narratives as a continuous literary genre lie at the heart of each age of these contested histories of human rights and can help to illuminate which rights are claimed, how they are claimed, and how their assertion has evolved. In doing so, they throw both sides of the theoretical debate into sharp relief. In my paper, I discuss two types of testimonies, slave narratives past and present, in the form of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, as well as two neo-slave narratives by Dave Eggers (*Zeitoun* and *What Is the What*). I argue that the similarity of the fundamental rights claims in these

testimonies illustrates the universality of rights claims across time, whereas the positioning of the testimonial subject in these personal narratives, vis-à-vis the nation and the transnational rights community respectively, reveals the uniqueness of their separate historical rights communities.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE UNDERCLASS IN THE RIGHTS PROTEST NOVEL

Richard Cole, University of Alberta.

The "underclass," a term laden with heavy theoretical baggage, gained popularity in the 1960s as a diagnostic index for the bottommost rank of society into which the working poor were always sinking. As Mark Pittenger clarifies, the "underclass" functions as a oppressive term in the American lexicon precisely because this socially constructed category "was often represented primarily as the product of fixed behavioral and cultural traits, and only secondarily as the spawn of socioeconomic factors." This paper situates the racialized logic of the underclass against the cultural backdrop of the human rights revolution. It asks to what extent the category of the underclass was created or justified by the escalating calls for the recognition of human rights for African Americans, and whether the protest novel as a cultural site knowingly or unknowingly plays out the negative consequences associated with rights recognition. My contention is that because human rights have the discursive power to create, confer or withhold recognition, cultural depictions of the suffering underclass always run the risk of turning public sympathy into a voyeuristic trap that can do more harm than good to the victimized and powerless. Locating this tension in Chester Himes' novel, The End of a Primitive—a tale about the interracial relationship between struggling black protest novelist and a white female humanitarian aid worker in Harlem—the essay shows how the potential for upward mobility in the age of rights often becomes stalled in cultural representations which train white liberal spectators to recognize suffering at a safely pleasurable distance. As Himes addresses the paradox of rights recognition, he confronts the limitations of the protest novel as a form of cultural testimony that attempts to recode the white racial imagination; its complete dependence on compassion of others risks reinforcing a hierarchy between African Americans and their putative liberators.

"THAT GOOD OL FACTORY SMOKE/THOSE GHREASY MACHINES": ANTI-CAPITALIST SENTIMENTS IN WOPKO JENSMA'S POETIC CRITIQUES OF THE APARTHEID

Maria Zirra, Stockholm University.

In Wopko Jensma's volume *i must show you my clippings* (1977), the poet and visual artist repeatedly juxtaposes references to apartheid confinement, censorship, interrogation and torture with references to the Holocaust as an industry of death, and with a Marxist critique of the commodification of the vulnerable racialized human body in emergent capitalist societies. While the first two terms of comparison are representative of a number of intersecting discussions about literature depicting human rights violations in the twentieth and twenty first century, the third, inspired thought it was from principles of common humanity and solidarity has fallen into disuse.

This has occurred for obvious reasons more or less connected to the failure of communism, on the one hand, and also to competing narratives of cultural hegemony of Russia and the US in Southern and Western Africa during the Cold War years (Popescu), on the other. Given the primacy of liberal bias in contemporary humanitarian discourses which often associated with one-size fits all "human rights regimes" (Kirn), it is not surprising that the spirit of internationalism, social egalitarianism and workers' revolt that animated and sustained the 1970s-1980s anti-apartheid movements has fallen through the cracks of the historical record. Yet, the picture of mid-century anti-apartheid activism would be incomplete without the vocabulary of civil disobedience and the critique of commodification provided by Marxist thought: literary works such as Jensma's testify to this cultural constellation. By analyzing Jensma's poetry against the backdrop of the early 1970s workers' strikes and the prominent anti-capitalist sentiments of other literary figures involved in anti-apartheid activism, I want to consider the implications of the erasure of internationalist solidarities in the literary memory of apartheid as recollected in our present times as well as its relevance to contemporary humanitarian discourses about invididuality and trauma. I will also attempt to derive a framework for studying literary memories of activism in a South African context from my reading.

Panel 4 - Memorializing Testimony

IMMUNIZING AGAINST ATTICA; AN EXPLORATION OF THE AMERICAN STATE'S WITHDRAWAL OF THE ARTIFACTS FROM THE 1971 ATTICA PRISON UPRISING FROM PUBLIC DISPLAY.

Chair: Professor Pieter Vermeulen

Professor Vermeulen is an Assistant Professor of American and Comparative Literature at the University of Leuven. Until recently, he was an Assistant Professor at the University of Stockholm. His work focuses on the fields of critical theory, the contemporary novel, and memory studies. He has just finished a second monograph, entitled *Contemporary Fiction and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form*, on the paradoxical productivity of intimations of the end of the novel in early twenty-first-century fiction. The book discusses the work of, among others, J.M. Coetzee, Teju Cole, Lars Iyer, Hari Kunzru, Dana Spiotta, and James Meek, and was published by Palgrave Macmillan in January 2015.

Holly Brown, Ghent University.

The response to the 1971 uprising at Attica Correctional Facility, in which 32 prisoners and 11 prison employees were left dead, lingers as one of the most brutal examples of state repression on American soil. The five-day insurrection ended with state troopers storming the prison, and indiscriminately killing both inmates and the hostages whom the prisoners had taken in order to try and procure their demands for better living facilities, religious freedom and education. After decades of effort, archivists persuaded New York's state police to return the artifacts from the riots to the NY

State Museum in 2010. In May 2014 however, the state rescinded the public's access to the materials asserting that the sensitive nature of the some of the artifacts raised "privacy issues."

This paper will use Robert Esposito's explorations of how immunitary discourses function in contemporary society as its starting point. It will explore how the logic of the prison as an apparatus of immunization that protects a whole and healthy public sphere has been extended to prevent the artifacts being shown within the public institution of the museum. The repression of the Attica artifacts can therefore be seen to offer a fascinating microcosmic view of society's mechanisms of self-preservation. More broadly, however, the wrangling between different state institutions concerning the place of these objects in public memory also asks us to look at their significance as objects of protest in our current epoch of hyper-incarceration in the United States, a situation that can be placed within a genealogy of "peculiar institutions" which keep unskilled African-Americans in liminal symbolic and political spaces.

TESTIMONY AND MEMORY IN THE MUSEUM: THE CASE OF THE WAR AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM

Sandra Sulamith Graefenstein, Australian National University, Canberra.

Over the last two and a half decades, we have witnessed the emergence of a new type of museum dedicated to representing violent pasts through a human rights lens. In an attempt to contribute to the emerging field of human rights museology, this paper focuses on museum uses and functions of testimonies provided by the Korean "comfort women", who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during the Second World War. It thereby uses the *War and Women's Human Rights Museum* in Seoul, South Korea, as a case study, arguing that the different types of testimony displayed in the permanent exhibition serve two main purposes: to demand social justice from Japan through presenting evidence and to gain social recognition in Korea and the world through establishing a culture of remembering. Exhibition material such as audio–visual accounts, wall stones with inscriptions of quotes by the women who were affected, artworks created by victims recalling the traumatic experience as well as casts of their hands and faces can firstly be described as testimony in the evidentiary sense. Attempts to suppress the public memory of the "comfort women" issue, like the ongoing government campaign, instigated by the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe, re-enforce the importance of this site as a representation of voices of dissent. The second purpose relates to the use of testimony as a means of helping to establish a culture of remembrance that restores the dignity of the victims in Korea and beyond. The museum was founded by seventeen former "comfort women", who foregrounded symbols of remembrance in the museum that closely relate to their experience. These symbols, such as the image of a butterfly and the statue of a young Korean girl sitting on a chair, represent what had been taken from them: their innocence and youth. By exploring this issue from a point of view that considers the interlocking of testimony and commemoration, I intend to carve out social and political uses of the human rights idea in the public museum.

Panel 5 - Testimony on the Borderline

TESTIMONY AS JUDGE, MEMORY AS WITNESS: TRAUMA AND THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR

Chair: Professor Lyndsey Stonebridge

Lyndsey Stonebridge is Professor of Literature and Critical Theory at the University of East Anglia, where she co-directs The Writing and Rights Project. She specializes in Modern Literature and Critical Theory, particularly psychoanalysis, trauma theory, and, most recently, critical human rights and refugee studies. She is author, most recently, of *The Judicial Imagination: Writing after Nuremberg* (paperback, 2014). Other publications include *The Destructive Element* (1998) and *The Writing of Anxiety* (2007). She is currently completing a new book, *Reading Statelessness: Rights, Writing and Refugees*.

Mei Ling McNamara, University of Edinburgh.

> "Ordinary memory constructs past events according to the logic of narrative in which one event connects to others in a whole, integral story. Traumatic memory has no social component; it is not addressed to anybody, the patient does not respond to anybody; it is a solitary activity." (Kaplan 170).

Human trafficking is one of the gravest human rights abuses that exists in society today. In the United Kingdom, criminal groups regularly target the most vulnerable and often "invisible" migrant populations working within its industries. These migrants inhabit a twilight existence and their testimonies - often marred by psychological trauma – are often challenged by an institutional culture of disbelief within the British justice system. While they must bear witness to authorities to ensure their safety, it is the impossibility of witnessing (Agamben 34) such events that creates fissures of memory within the dichotomous construct of state recognized status structures. The framework by which testimonies are judged for credibility, compounded with the pressure on victims to provide linear narratives from inchoate memories (Herman 93) affords them little time with which to speak through their traumas and reconfigure their positions in the constellation of abuse.

My paper examines how testimony, trauma, and the resulting structures of power that process individuals post-exploitation can create a new type of liminality for victims: a voiceless, status-less, vulnerable terrain of 'non-being' that further raises questions of agency, control and criminalisation. What has emerged in my research is that trafficked victims are often more traumatised by subsequent processes of state identity structures - which focus on an individual's immigration status - than on safeguarding them from future harm.

Documentary film can play a vital role in providing visual testimony to support survivors and its findings could urge governments to adopt a more rights-centred approach by providing greater

insight into the complex challenges many people in slavery face. My trans-disciplinary work examines this issue through the lens of human rights, trauma, criminal justice and documentary ethics. A presentation of this research, including from my own documentary work, will serve as a basis for discussion on this topical issue.

VISUALISING THE BORDERS OF EUROPE: *LABYRINTH* AND *THE CROSSES PROJECT*
Margaret Tali, Maastricht University.

In my paper I discuss the exercise of human rights via the medium of visual art and theatre. I focus on two recent examples of collaborative artistic practice, *The Crosses project* (2014) initiated in Berlin and the performance *Labyrinth* (2015) organized in Amsterdam. Both of these projects have been created in collaboration with communities of migrants and local groups of artists, respectively We Are Here group and the We Are Here Cooperative, Malian community members in Berlin and the Center of Political Beauty. I read these two community art projects as examples of events of public testimony to renegotiate and visualize experiences of "entering Europe" from the perspective of migrants. In my presentation I am particularly interested in the ways that the narratives of *Labyrinth* and *The Crosses project* represent borders, discuss their nature and operation. Although borders carry differing roles in the two narratives, these examples nevertheless offer interesting and complex case studies for the perception and exercising of borders in contemporary European. While visualizing borders, I suggest, the two narratives simultaneously turn their representations mobile rather than stable (Boer 2006), also understanding them as sites of negotiating and redoing.

Panel 6 - Ethics and Aesthetics of Testimony

EMIGRANT ACTIVISTS: TESTIMONY THROUGH THE FREE PRESS
Chair: Professor Stef Craps

Stef Craps is a research professor ("docent BOF-ZAP") in English and American literature and culture at Ghent University, where he directs the Cultural Memory Studies Initiative (formerly the Centre for Literature and Trauma). Craps is the author of *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and *Trauma and Ethics in the Novels of Graham Swift: No Short-Cuts to Salvation* (Sussex Academic Press, 2005). His next book projects are an introductory guide to the concept of trauma for Routledge's New Critical Idiom series and an edited collection provisionally titled *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies* (with Lucy Bond and Pieter Vermeulen). Much of his current research focuses on the ways in which postcolonial literature in English bears witness to the suffering engendered by colonial oppression. Through a number of case studies he investigates the specificity of colonial traumas in relation to the hegemonic trauma discourse, analyses the textual strategies deployed to give them literary form, and explores the ethico-political stakes involved in the postcolonial memory work this literature undertakes. He also examines how, why, and to what effect the memory of the Holocaust is evoked in literary texts that

connect the Nazi genocide of the European Jews with other exceptionally destructive, criminal, and catastrophic histories, such as slavery, colonialism, and other genocides. Additional research interests include literary responses to climate change, the representation of perpetrators, and imaginings of Europe and the Congo.

Mirna Wasef, University of California, San Diego.

In 1981, President Sadat exiled Coptic Pope Shenouda and removed him from his ecclesiastical position, signifying a government ordained violation of religious freedom and the universal right of religious expression. In reaction, emigrant Copts living in Western societies enacted robust activist campaigns geared to informing the public of the human rights violations in Egypt. Most beneficial to their activism was their independently established Coptic Press.

These Coptic journals, published and circulated in America, Canada and Australia gave detailed analyses on specific legal violations of human rights by the Egyptian government, most prominently in the case of Pope Shenouda, and called for direct action by the journal's subscribers. These journals best exemplify the relationship of witnessing and testifying to an international community, on behalf of a transnational Coptic community, demonstrated in the journal's various articles, witness accounts of atrocities and firsthand testimonial narratives, denoting both collective memory and lived experiences of a Coptic emigrant group. Moreover, these journals called on emigrants to partake in human rights activism in Western Democratic societies as a way of pressuring the Egyptian government to make local change. In essence, by being outside the bounds of the Egyptian government, and therefore not under Egyptian state censorship laws, these emigrant Copts were able to organize and use their diverse experiences and accounts to create international awareness for an issue suppressed in their native country.

Utilizing the case of Pope Shenouda, this paper will examine the reaction and activism of Copts living abroad and the use of the free press as a method of testifying and advocating on behalf of human rights issues. Moreover, this paper will examine how the emigrant Coptic Press demonstrates the relationship between witnessing and testifying, and the real social and political accomplishments of human rights work advanced by emigrants.

TESTIMONIES FROM THE TRENCHES: RETHINKING MODERNISM AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Cedric Van Dijck, Ghent University.

In early September 1914 the head of the war propaganda bureau, Charles Masterman, convened a meeting of leading Edwardian authors, among them Bennett, Hardy, and the poet laureate Robert Bridges, in order to recruit them for the war effort. This gathering set the tone for how the First World War was to be written on the home front. Near the actual battlefields of war as well, Paul Fussell argues, traditional and technically prudent literary conventions persisted. But where were the modernists? The question of what happened to modernism *during* the war (and not that of the

impact of the conflict on the 1920s) has only recently become the focal point of critical attention. In my paper I intend to explore how the testimonies we encounter in the trench journals and unit magazines of the British army enable us to challenge the long-standing notion of war literature as conservative, and to re-appreciate the continued modernist experimentation during WWI, the inaugural traumatic event of the twentieth century. Written "by the lights of shells bursting around," these accounts of individual war experiences register the fragmentation and uncertainty of life in the trenches, and consistently reflect on their own narrative status: Which language do we use? How to frame a massive phenomenon for human comprehension? Which forms can most truthfully represent the reality of a humanitarian crisis? "Writing about war," as Kate McLoughlin puts it, "is often writing about the difficulties of war representation." It is precisely these difficulties and questions – the so-called representational crisis of modernity – that have come to define modernism at large. Yet while the modernist movement owes much of its existence, as Perry Anderson argues, to the "the imaginative proximity" of socio-political revolution, the actual encounter between modernism and the Great War has more often than not eluded critical attention.

Panel 7 - Testimony and the Dynamics of Visibility

"TELL THE WORLD HOW 329 INNOCENT LIVES WERE LOST AND HOW THE REST OF US ARE SLOWLY DYING": TRANSNATIONAL TESTIMONY, STATE HISTORIES, AND THE FIGHT FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION IN THE 1985 AIR INDIA DISASTER

Chair: Doctor Lore Colaert

Doctor Colaert is a research fellow of the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) and member of the research group 'meta- and public history' at the History Department of Ghent University. She studied history in Ghent, and was an exchange student at the University of Groningen. Her master's thesis "Rwanda, war of memory. Historical truth and memory in a society in transition" was a first exploration of the ethical consequences of historical memory in the context of transitional justice. In her Phd project (Oct 2009 – Sept 2013), with the title "The dead as the black holes of democracy. Digging up memories of civil war and dictatorship in Spain (1936 – 1975)", supervised by prof. dr. Deneckere, she investigated the pursuit of acknowledgment by victims of the Spanish Civil War and dictatorship. She analyzes the performances and discourses that surround the exhumations of mass graves in Spain, to capture how hegemonic memory in Spain is contested by the victims of a suppressed past. The acknowledgement of victimhood and loss seems to be crucial for the legitimacy of contemporary democratic regimes that cope with a painful past. This case-study explores how new conceptions of justice and political belonging take shape in this so-called 'age of atonement'.

Jessica Young, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

On June 23, 1985, a bomb exploded on Air India Flight 182, downing the plane off of Ireland and killing 329 people, mostly Canadian citizens of Indian ancestry. In the wake of the bombing, neither

Canada nor India claimed national ownership of the tragedy, effectively "unhousing" the event while disassociating it from longer histories of human rights violations against Sikh populations in Canada and India. Thirty years later, this tragedy can tell us much about how transnational disasters are recognized (or not) by states and why, the status of citizenship claims by immigrant and minority populations, the spaces available for mourning and memorialization, the omission of past wrongs in the national imaginary, and the possibilities for the circulation of testimony. This paper will elucidate the conditions and locate the spaces and mediums through which recognition in its many forms becomes possible, as well as highlight the histories of human rights violations these modes of commemoration elide. First, I will examine the creation and implications of the first memorial to the victims of Flight 182 in Ireland, a neutral third space. Next, I will examine Bharati Mukherjee's canonical and often reprinted short story, "The Management of Grief" (1988), against the non-fiction, and non-circulating, expose she wrote with her husband, Clark Blaise, that presented testimonies from the victims' families alongside investigative journalism. This uneven circulation implies that fiction travels in ways that non-fiction and testimony cannot, but at the same time, I argue that histories of state violence are lost when reality is translated into fiction. I will conclude with a brief look at Canada's post-9/11 recognition of the Air India tragedy as a "national tragedy" within the framework of the "war on terror," creating a narrative that continues to eclipse longer national histories of state racism, exclusion, and human rights violations.

DEMOCRATIZING HUMAN RIGHTS: TIME, TRAUMA, AND TESTIMONY

Ayala Prager, University College London.

The history of the development of the trauma concept, as this paper will argue, can simultaneously be understood as the history of the way that testimony has been employed in the pursuit of human rights. Be it the psychoanalytic abreaction of the First World War, the politicisation of Holocaust memory, the post-Florence Rush push for reform with regards to childhood sexual abuse prosecutions or the formalisation of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder diagnosis, trauma's development has seen the widening of the bounds of victimhood – a victimhood that allows its bearer not only to verbalise their pain, but to receive recognition of their human rights in so doing.

After a brief introduction to the ways that the history of trauma and the history of the human rights discourse of our era intertwine, this paper will turn its attention to two case studies: the publication history and content of Primo Levi's *If This is a Man*, and the testimonies presented in South African journalist Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull.* Analysing these texts both in isolation and conjunctively, this paper analyses the way that the survivor's voice can both invite, and resist, integration into a conversation of human rights. For whilst the survivor's recounting of their personal history can contribute to the fight for national or individual justice, the potential of testimony to prolong a non-vindicated state of victimhood is – as these texts reveal – a concurrent possibility. Asking whether testimony itself can sometimes amount to a violation of human rights and, in addition, how public

and private concepts of human rights differ, this paper seeks to locate the place of testimony within a human rights discourse across conflict, place and time.