



October 2019 ,27-25
University of Toronto

Reclaiming Justice
Memory and Memorialization of Violence

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PROGRAM

Friday, October 25

George Ignatieff Theatre

Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue, University of Toronto

6:00-8:30

Opening Remarks

Lisa Myers, Independent Curator and Artist, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University

Introducing Dr. Erna Brodber

Ronald Cummings, Assistant Professor, English, Language & Literature, Brock University

Keynote Address

Erna Brodber

After the Looking Glass

Q&A Discussant

Andrea Davis, Chair of the Department of the Humanities, York University

Saturday, October 26
Innis Town Hall
2 Sussex Ave., University of Toronto

10:00-10:30

Opening Remarks

Professor Bonnie McElhinny, Principal of New College

Land Acknowledgement

Jon Johnson, Assistant Professor, University of Toronto

10:30-12:00

Plenary Panel: *We Will Stand Up: In Conversation with Tasha Hubbard*

Chair & Discussant: Kristen Bos

12:00-1:30 Lunch—Innis Café

1:30-3:00

Panel 1: *Resisting Violence, Making Memory and Demanding Justice*

Chair: Carmela Murdocca, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, York University

Malathi de Alwis

The art book in the aftermath of war

Pascha Bueno-Hansen

Transitional justice otherwise: Dissident genders and sexualities in the Andes

Alison Crosby

Trans/national contestations: Memorializing sexual harm in postgenocide Guatemala

3:00-3:15 Coffee Break

3:15-4:45

Panel 2: *Archives of Violence in the Middle East*

Chair: Dina Georgis, Associate Professor, Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto

Shekoufe Sakhi

*Human rights and the search for justice in the time of impunity:
A reflection on the Iranian case*

Chandni Desai

Memorializing genocide through Palestinian revolutionary culture

Chowra Makaremi

Rumor and the archeology of silence: Looking at state violence in post-revolution Iran through incomplete memories

Prison Poetry Book Launch

4:45-6:00

Shahrzad Mojab

Prison Poetry Project

Saeed Yousef

Writers, Rumours, and a Dozen Corpse

Nuzhat Abbas

trace press

SUNDAY 27, 2019
Innis Town Hall
2 Sussex Ave., University of Toronto

2:00-2:10

Land Acknowledgement

Niloofer Golkar, PhD student, Political Science,
York University

2:10-2:30

Music Performance

Moneka Arabic Jazz

2:30-2:45

شهرزاد مجاب

باز خواهی عدالت: یاد و یادمان سازی از خشونت

2:45-3:15

سعید یوسف

رونمایی ترجمه کتاب شعر: جان باختگان به بوی فردایی نو

3:15-3:30

Break

3:30-5:00

نمایش فیلم *Born in Evin* با حضور کارگردان، مریم زارع

5:00-5:30

گفتگو با شورا مکارمی و مریم زارع



BIOGRAPHIES

Malathi de Alwis

Malathi de Alwis is Visiting Professor of Socio-Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. She has written extensively on nationalism, humanitarianism, maternalism, suffering and memorialization and is a co-editor of *Tsunami in a Time of War: Aid, Activism and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka and Aceh* (2009), *Feminists Under Fire: Exchanges Across War Zones* (2003) and *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia* (1996). She is the editor and a co-curator of an object-related history of post-independent Sri Lanka entitled *Archive of Memory* (forthcoming).

Kristen Bos

Kristen Bos is urban Métis from Tkaranto. She is an Indigenous feminist, retired archaeologist, and riotous anthropologist. She is a graduate of the University of Oxford, a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto, and most recently, an alumni of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. She has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) Doctoral Scholarship and the President's Award for Outstanding Native Student of the Year. She is a collaborator and coauthor at the Technoscience Research Unit, which is an Indigenous-led research lab that focuses on environmen-

tal violence and environmental data justice. Her work brings Indigenous material culture to bear on questions of colonial, gendered, and environmental violence.

Erna Brodber

Erna Brodber who is a major novelist of the Caribbean, sociologist and social historian. She is also a community organizer and activist with decades of work in her own village in rural Jamaica. Her village and her stories take place on land that was once a slave plantation and before that the site of a large indigenous village in Jamaica. I have been speaking with her about what she wants to present and the format for the event. She has not yet given us a title for the talk but we asked her to combine her reading with a discussion of her work at Black space which is the name given to the community space she facilitates. She has said she is interested in speaking to the relationship between work on Black and Indigenous histories/memories in her community and lessons from organizing there for thinking about just futures and the unfinished project of emancipation.

Pascha Bueno-Hansen

Pascha Bueno-Hansen is an Associate Professor in the Women and Gender Studies department, and the Director of Sexualities and Gender Studies Minor at the University of Delaware. Dr. Bueno-Hansen has published articles and book chapters on sexual violence, feminicide, women of color feminisms, sexuality, race, transitional justice, internal armed conflict and social movements. She is the author of *Feminists and Human Rights Struggles in Peru: Decolonizing Transitional Justice* (2015), and the forthcoming book *Decolonizando la Justicia Transicional: Las Luchas Feministas y de Derechos Humanos en Perú* (2020). Her current book project is tentatively entitled *Transitional Justice Otherwise: Dissident Genders and Sexualities in the Andes*.

Alison Crosby

Alison Crosby is an Associate Professor at the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University. She was the Director of the Centre for Feminist Research at York from 2014-19. Her publications use a transnational feminist lens and participatory methodologies to explore protagonists' multifaceted struggles to redress and memorialize harm in the aftermath of political violence, with a particular focus on Guatemala. She is the author, with Dr. M. Brinton Lykes, of *Beyond Repair? Mayan Women's Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm* (2019) and *Más Allá de la reparación: Protagonismo de mujeres mayas en las secuelas del daño genocida* (2019). Her current project, *The Inhabitation of loss: A Transnational Feminist Project on Memorialization*, a collaboration with Dr. Malathi de Alwis, explores memorialization as a site of contestation in Guatemala and Sri Lanka and is funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Chandni Desai

Dr. Chandni Desai is an Assistant Professor in the Equity Studies Program at the University of Toronto. She is working on her first book "Captive Histories of Liberation". In it she excavates the history of Palestinian resistance culture and its circulation across geographies in the 20th and 21st century and archives the politics of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist thought, consciousness and praxis against colonial dispossession, warfare and genocide.

Tasha Hubbard

Tasha Hubbard is a writer, filmmaker, and an associate professor in the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta. She is from Peepeekisis First Nation in Treaty Four Territory and has ties to Thunderchild First Nation in Treaty Six Territory. She is also the mother of a twelve-

year-old son. Her academic research is on Indigenous efforts to return the buffalo to the lands and Indigenous film in North America. Her first solo writing/directing project *Two Worlds Colliding*, about Saskatoon's infamous Starlight Tours, premiered at ImagineNATIVE in 2004 and won the Canada Award at the Gemini Awards in 2005. In 2016, she directed an NFB-produced feature documentary called *Birth of a Family* about a 60s Scoop family coming together for the first time during a holiday in Banff. It premiered at Hot Docs International Film Festival and landed in the top ten audience choice list. It also won the Audience Favourite for Feature Documentary at the Edmonton International Film Festival and the Moon Jury prize at ImagineNATIVE. Her latest feature documentary is called *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*, a personal exploration of the impact of the death of Colten Boushie that premiered in the spring of 2019. It opened the prestigious Hot Docs Festival and won the top Canadian documentary prize. It also won the Colin Low Award for the top Canadian film at the DOXA International Film Festival.

Jon Johnson

Prior to joining Woodsworth College in 2018, Jon Johnson taught at York University and in the Transitional Year Program at the University of Toronto. His research is focused on urban land-based Indigenous Knowledge in Toronto and their representation through oral and digital forms of storytelling. He works actively within Toronto's Indigenous community in his capacity as a lead organizer for First Story Toronto, an Indigenous-led community-based organization that researches and shares Toronto's Indigenous presence through popular education initiatives such as storytelling tours of the city and its freely-available smartphone application. He practices forms of teaching and pedagogy, such as field trips, tours, and community-based social justice projects, that go beyond the classroom. He is particularly interested in projects that create mutually respectful and benefi-

cial collaborations between Indigenous communities and the university.

Chowra Makaremi

Chowra Makaremi is an anthropologist and tenured scholar at the CNRS in Paris (IRIS-EHESS). Her work focuses on legal and ordinary forms and subjective experiences of State violence, particularly in situations of exile. It explores different forms of writing, including non-fiction narratives and documentary cinema. She has worked on migration controls and border government in Europe and coordinated several research collectives (*Locked out. Investigation on the confinement of foreigners* (Le Croquant, 2009); *Between reception and rejection. What cities do to migrants* (Le Passager Clandestin, 2018). She is also interested in violence and memory in post-revolution Iran. She directed the film *Hich. An Iranian story* (Alter Ego production, France, 82 minutes) in 2019, and published *Le cahier d'Aziz. At the heart of the Iranian revolution* (Gallimard, 2011). She leads the research project "Violence, State formation and memory politics: an off-site ethnography of post-revolution Iran" (ERC Starting Grant OFF-SITE, 2019-2023).

Ahmed Moneka

During my formative years in Iraq, I learned traditional songs and drumming in a family tradition that was brought to Iraq in the 12th century. Later, I was accepted into one of Iraq's top high schools for the performing arts where I learned a variety of artistic disciplines from theatre to singing maqam (scales and nuances) of Middle Eastern music. Through these experiences, I acquired many perspectives on our world and my place within it and continued attending the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Baghdad. During these years, I began to be especially moved by stories of human struggle and freedom and formed my convictions about human rights through my art, my voice and my song.

Moneka Arabic Jazz is a project I created to share my culture and tradition with the diverse local music scene. Growing up in Baghdad, Iraq, I learnt Arabic music skills (Maqam) and bathed into rhythm and groove of my African descendants, the Moneka

family. Jazz and Blues is a perfect genre to bridge my heritage with North American instruments and rhythm. My journey, somehow, brought me to Toronto, the so-called “meeting place”. Today I feel honoured to collaborate with amazing local musicians and share this Afro Arabic Jazz with all and everyone!

Shekoufe Sakhi

Shokoufeh Sakhi is currently a member of *Pathologies of Solitude* research network, project hosted at Queen Mary University, London. She has a doctorate in political science from York University, Toronto, with a specialization in political theory and philosophy. She acted as Executive Committee Director (2013-2014) of the Iran Tribunal Foundation investigating the Iranian state’s crime against humanity in the 1980s. She also testified as an ex-political prisoner at the Iranian People’s Tribunal hearings (2012). Among many documentaries, she participated in *The Tree That Remembers*, a production of National Film Board of Canada. Her most recent publication is “Ethical-Political Praxis: Social Justice and the Resistant Subject in Iran” in *Iran’s Struggles for Social Justice*: Palgrave 2017.



ABSTRACTS

Malathi de Alwis

The Art book in the Aftermath of War

Between 1993 and 2005, Walter Kempowski published ten volumes of testimonials, letters and reports that offered an extraordinary glimpse into the lives of those who experienced World War II in varied ways. It was entitled *Das Echolot* or Sonar because he sought to “sound out history with the help of many different voices.” Kempowski’s monumental compendium contained such diverse artefacts as a letter from a starving, lice-ridden Russian soldier, to an entry in a file about a Jewish woman’s suicide, to instructions from Himmler regarding the tending of a medicinal herb garden at Dachau. “Listening,” noted Kempowski, “can make it possible for us to finally come to terms with each other.” This paper seeks to reflect on Kempowski’s interpretation of ‘listening’ while also considering practices of ‘writing’ and ‘meaning making,’ all crucial to the task of ethnography. However, rather than focusing on how such practices are mobilized to further careers in academia, this paper will consider how a much wider, non-academic audience is ad-

dressed through the production of Art books. Thus, much of this paper's analytic focus will be on two post-war Art books in Sri Lanka -- *Incomplete Thombu* produced in 2011 and the *Archive of Memory* currently in the making. Both books engage memory, reflection and recounting and have been produced through the active involvement of the narrators who have contributed drawings to the former and have helped to craft the stories in the latter.

Erna Brodber

After the Looking Glass

After the Looking Glass shares the path which this presenter took to her realization of herself as an 'intellectual worker'. The journey begins with parental influences, elementary and high school influences and the happenings at the local university of the West Indies where I met Lloyd Best's term, 'intellectual worker' and found that it resonated with my sense of what I hoped to be. After post graduate shifting from university to university and from discipline to discipline, I stopped for a while at the medical school of the University of Washington in Seattle where I learnt from a patient that there is something called a social mirror in which every mentally healthy human being should be able to see herself. From my interaction with him, I came to the understanding that I and my kind, who cannot see ourselves in our society's looking glasses - the books we read, the courses we do-, are psychiatrically disturbed. There are a variety of mirrors. Since 1968 it has been my task to construct a looking glass in which we with our particular status can see ourselves. I share this process.

The books came. To the extent that my eyes will allow me, I will read them.

Pascha Bueno-Hansen

Transitional Justice Otherwise: Dissident Genders and Sexualities in the Andes

This paper examines the emerging attention to dissident genders and sexualities in the transitional justice processes of three Andean countries, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. The selected cases illuminate the historical trajectory of state-based attempts to address harms against this population. A Latin America based transfeminist and decolonial approach brings into focus how this population negotiates new political openings, demands justice, and works with creative and artistic registers to find voice and locate the place of enunciation in the individual and collective body, as well as construct collective memory and alternative narratives and images.

Alison Crosby

Trans/national contestations: Memorializing sexual harm in postgenocide Guatemala

What does it mean to remember and memorialize sexual harm experienced in the context of genocidal violence? Survivors – here referred to as protagonists – themselves continuously contest attempts to reduce their multifaceted histories of violence and resistance to a singular ‘event,’ a process that often relies on the replication of (neo)colonial stories of abject individuated victimhood. Memorialization practices such as memorials, monuments, tombstones, archives, museums, photographs, murals and art installations have transnational dimensions; the traveling of racialized gendered tropes, signs, claims, and power relations across borders informs and shapes how and by whom the experience is represented and redressed. Drawing on eight years of feminist and participatory research with Mayan women protagonists who survived sexual violence in Guatemala and new transnational research on memorialization, this paper

reflects on the varied hyphenated terrain of feminist, human rights and transitional justice discourses through which memorialization of sexual harm is co-constructed. It examines the complex, differentiated relationality between protagonists and those who accompany them, researchers included, and the implications therein for the shape and content of memorialization practices.

Chandni Desai

Memorializing genocide through Palestinian revolutionary culture

The Palestinian people have been enduring the al-Nakba (catastrophe) – violent and structured dispossession and massacres - from 1948 till the present. The nakba not only constituted the theft of Palestinian land, the exodus of a majority of the Indigenous peoples of that geography from their homes and lands, but also the pillaging and destruction of Palestinian material culture and heritage. Israeli state formation and its historical national narratives are built upon the erasure of Palestinian culture, history, identity and life, which I discuss in this paper as genocidal practices of memoricide, toponymicide and politicicide. As a means of resisting and refusing their erasure, Palestinian revolutionaries produced various cultural institutions and radical art forms as a way to preserve their history, collective memory as a nation, while also opposing colonial and imperialist historiography. This paper will analyze the works of three cultural producers, the painters Tamam Al-Akhal, Ismail Shammout – who are well known for depicting the nakba in their paintings; and Monica Maurer – an internationalist that worked with the Palestinian Liberation Organizations Film Unit to record various Israeli attacks on Palestinian life in Lebanon. I argue that memorializing Palestine through cultural production has been one of the most significant anti-colonial and anti-imperialist practices that Palestinians have had to use

in their struggle to document and record their history. The recording of history through memorialization is necessary and significant in the absence of a state and official “state” archives; the fragmentation of the Palestinian people; the ongoing colonial and imperialist violence that Palestinians are subjected to, and as a strategy for mobilizing resistance and passing on history to the next generation.

Chowra Makaremi

Rumor and the archeology of silence:

Looking at State violence in post-revolution Iran through incomplete memories

After the 1979 revolution, the Iranian society witnessed a decade of collective violence, while the country was undergoing a long-lasting external war with Iraq. How can we approach these events that were precluded in the hegemonic historical narratives of the revolution and the Islamic state, yet continue to inform current political life in Iran in both explicit and implicit ways?

Narratives, data and archives of post-revolutionary violence are entwined in different enterprises of memory. Memories of State violence are carried in testimonial and literary forms, practices of commemoration as well as truth-seeking enterprises (human rights databases, people’s tribunals) compiling thousands of individual case records. These memories in diaspora circulate back to the Iranian society through various digital channels. They solidify in different forms of memorialization framed by legal claims. In the same time, in Iran, archive manipulation and production, and sustained cultural policies, draw another history of violence based on denial. Consolidating State legitimacy, and the emotional and moral order, these official narratives initiate a new memory politics. These different ‘narrativizations’ of a violence, whose official archives and basic facts remain precluded, redefine the frontiers of political participation,

belonging and legitimacy, by carving new relationships between constrain and adhesion, submission and cohesion. Memories and counter-memories share in common the ambition to establish empirical data, where silence and rumor prevailed. But what if, instead of fighting silence and rumor, we started from there as sites of observation that help us understand the effects and processes of collective violence, both on individuals and on groups? I would like to focus on one particular trajectory of a woman political prisoner, from her political engagement with a marxist group in 1979 to her arrest, detention, release, and death in exile in 1985. The traces left from this life are manifold but all very fragmentary and ambiguous: these traces (fragments of memoirs, testimonies by others, paintings...) shed a light on a particular life and experience, but they also shed some shadow on what must remain unspoken – because it is shameful, uninteresting, not enough political, or for any other untold reason that only adds to the mystery of silence. Why then should it be interesting and thought-provoking to inquire into this constellation of traces? Because they allow us to explore the frontiers of what is acceptable and unacceptable, even in the writing of counter-memories, they allow us to explore and reflect on the texture of silence, and the community of values and affects within which the notion of resistance is understood, and a violence becomes speakable, and transmissible. I believe that understanding how and why memories remain in the shadow, and why some emotions are excluded from collective memories of violence, can help us apprehend the frames of memorialization. The question is: how to include back into the narrative of violence what is remaining outside of these frames, and outside of the picture?

Shekoufe Sakhi

Human rights and the search for justice in the time of impunity: A reflection on the Iranian case

In 2012 close to one hundred witnesses testified at Iran Tribunal against Islamic Republic of Iran. Aside from the experts all the witnesses were ex-political prisoners and relatives of dissident men and women murdered and executed during the 1980s. Their testimonies, along with hundreds more gathered by different human rights organizations, are now part of the oral history of the formation of the Islamic state of Iran following the 1979 revolution. In light of the state's organized attempt at re-writing and manufacturing the Iranian history, these testimonies are invaluable resources for the creation of a counter-history. These counter-historical accounts are the continuation of an off-cite Iranian resistance by different means. Without denying the value and place of human rights organizations and their efforts in documenting the Iranian state's atrocities in the 1980s, this presentation is a critical reflection on the limiting effects of such practices when it comes to the creation and preservation of a historical memory in a larger sense. Testimonies and witness accounts are parts and parcels of making memory, but what kind of memory do we make when we give and collect evidences of the details of a crime? How does this process affect the event of memory making? What is being collected and what is being omitted? What happens to the intricacies of the protagonists' lived experiences, subjective and objective, *of* and *in* that historical event which they are testifying about? Through a close look at a few of these testimonies, my own included, I will discuss the importance of striving for ever fuller accounts of the encounter between an oppressive state and its dissidents, accounts beyond the recollections of the violence committed and the suffering endured, especially for an ongoing struggle and resistance, which is the Iranian case.

